

MyQuest

By Daniel Labbe

Today's Meditation - Recently I have become amazed by the vast arsenal of intelligence and capability that is available to each of us as human beings. Most of us are brought up to rely ~~solely~~ solely on our intellectual intelligence, our thinking abilities, to navigate our way through life. But this is only one - and not the wisest - intelligence that we have access to. For example, our bodies have their own intelligence that operates far beyond our comprehension and awareness. We digest food, heal, detoxify, and function in so many ways ^{each, going} ~~the~~ on without ~~the~~ the need of our participation. No one can argue that our bodies don't have their own intelligence. How is this useful? Well, consider this. Maybe you're at work and you notice you're feeling "antsy" - you have this vibrating energy in the pit of your stomach, you're bouncing your leg faster than a hummingbird beats its wings, and there's tightness in your chest. What so many of us do in this situation is ~~to~~ we either try to relax or we try to distract ourselves ~~and~~ until the uncomfortableness goes away. But what if we considered that our bodies are actually trying to communicate with us. What would the message be? Maybe we are repressing some anger, some annoyance. Maybe we are worried about something. If we gave credit to our bodies and decided that this "body intelligence" ~~is~~ truly is intelligent we might want to investigate the message rather than get rid of "the symptoms." After some mindful investigating, maybe you realize that you were ~~trying~~ trying to ignore the annoyance you feel toward a certain co-worker. ~~For~~ If you give your body some credit, maybe you also realize that it would

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be beneficial for you to confront your co-worker and settle the issue in a healthy, respectful way. The uncomfortable feelings were ~~the way~~ ^{the ways} of your body was trying to get you to face this issue. So many of us consider such "symptoms" as annoyances to be overcome. But maybe there's more behind it all.

Then there's what I call shadow intelligence. Ever work on a problem but find yourself making no progress at all? Maybe you worked all day on it to no avail. Then you go to sleep. The next day you drag yourself back to the problem only to find the answer quickly rise into your ~~awareness~~ awareness. Or how about this. Ever reach a point in your life where you felt "stuck", stagnant, and purposeless? For days or weeks you ruminate on the patheticness of it all. Then some arbitrary event in your environment - a book, a TV show, something a person says - seems to trigger an epiphany of grand importance and now you find yourself catapulted into a life of excitement and vibrancy once again? Our minds are constantly working on the problems we face and our minds do this work behind the veil of our awareness. We have no idea it's going on!

Then there's our emotions. Rather than trying to create perfect happy emotions, why not treat them with respect and see that they also are intelligent messengers?

For today's meditation I wonder if we can spend some time thinking about the amazing wisdom available to us from these forgotten sages. Our thinking minds may not be our most reliable source of wisdom, though it is the one we have control over, the one we can take credit for. Maybe

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That's why we often idolize intellectual intelligence. It's time we give credit to the unsung heroes, the quiet Sages working in the shadows.

Current Events - We have a religious room here at old Colony where ~~other~~ religious groups have allotted times to meet. The Buddhist Prayer hours are on Tuesday and Thursday nights. For the last couple of years no one has been making much use of this time. I occasionally went to meditate, but I was always alone. I don't claim Buddhism as my religion, but it ^{is the} ~~is~~ only one available in prison that resembles my spirituality.

The good news is that I have been able to attract the interest of a few guys that would like to make use of this time. For now we are going to meet once a week to meditate, then read spiritually relevant material and ~~do~~ discuss our thoughts on what we read and how we can apply it to life in prison.

I'm very excited about this because it is such a great help to ~~a~~ have other like-minded people to meet with and support each other in our efforts. Prison can be a very negative environment and to work on personal and spiritual development by yourself is a hard road to go in a place like this. Wish us luck!

I'm giving a presentation on May 2nd for the Speaking Without Fear class we have here. I'll be teaching the guys principles ~~a~~ of speech organization. I'm also a member ~~o~~ of Toastmasters. We meet every Friday night. I love giving speeches. It's exciting and I actually do well at it so I feel like I'm helping guys out. It feels

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good to do well at something positive and productive.

Things with my new cell-mate are going great. So many things seem to be falling into place for me. I'm making sure I use this positive momentum for all it's worth.

The only problems I've been having lately is my tendency to fall prey to loneliness. Some days, about two days out of every two weeks, I become very depressed. On these days I find it nearly impossible to roll out of bed. I feel sad, lonely and like all my efforts go unnoticed. I feel like I'm spinning my wheels in the mud - I'm trying like hell, but I'm not getting anywhere. I wonder: Is anyone even reading my blog? Does anything I do even make a difference? These thoughts have a powerful hold on me. Luckily I can usually pull myself out of the mud within a couple of days. Just 3 years ago such depressions would last 1-2 weeks and often had serious consequences. Suicidal urges, ~~and~~ and just total and utter devastation. Now it only lasts 2 days and I don't become suicidal. That's progress!

For years my bipolar tormented me. It still does, but I've learned many skills for dealing with it. I wish I was able to learn these skills years ago, before I ended up making the worst decisions of my life. I used to go through extreme mood swings. I could get a new job, do fantastic, be on top of the world, then suddenly find myself in total despair, suicidal, and completely unable to function. Then there were manic episodes where I would just up and run off to California or I would do other equally crazy things only to come down a week or two later and wonder "What the hell was

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I thinking? I dragged my loved ones through it all with me. ~~So~~ Anyway, I still get depressed, mostly lonely and I feel like all my efforts go unnoticed, without effect. But then I'm able to use my skills - CBT and self-talk, DBT and other similar skills are a tremendous help. I learned these skills here in the R.T.U. mental health Program. I wonder why none of the counselors I had on the Street taught these skills?

I saw a show on PBS that talked about ^{how} CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) is now considered the most effective treatment in managing mood disorders. All it is is monitoring and challenging many of the destructive or irrational thoughts that we ~~at~~ have and all too often believe as true. Simple, really, but very effective. I suggest Dr. Martin Seligman's book Learned Optimism for anyone interested in the research that led to the creation of CBT.

Well, until next time. Happy travels on your Quest.

Answer to last puzzle - Put your money where your mouth is.

New puzzle - SMUPOKE

Quote of the Day - "Deep within man dwell those slumbering Powers; Powers that would astonish him, that he never dreamed of Possessing; forces that would revolutionize his life if aroused and put into action." Orison Sweet Marden

If you have any questions or comments, contact me at:

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