

Through the looking glass of self

Dualities in life are often experienced in pairs of negatives, such as pain and pleasure, happiness and despair, or the-either-or principle which congers up helter-skelter images of life and living. I have learned from my yoga practice that I can experience through duality behaviors, extraordinary positive outcomes. I was not required to choose. I could have this and that. The application of these dualities has changed how I approach life. Effortless and focused, I perform the yoga postures. I am firm, yet relaxed as I breathe into and out of each movement. Being steady on my feet, yet flexible in mind and body, I maintain my balance as I hold each pose. And with intent, I live as much of what I practice on the mat off the mat in response to challenges I create in my life and those originating from outside sources.

You see, the postures never end. I move from one pose to the next and even the breath, the inhales and exhales, are postures. And so it is with life. We move from one life event to the next. And just as in yoga, the illusion is that the breath is a break in the action, but it is not. And in our daily walk, completion of a task or resolution to a specific challenge does not denote downtime. Life continues to be. My steps are firm and my walk is relaxed. I am not attached to a specific outcome. Effortless and focused, I pay attention to what is and make my choices accordingly. By remaining steady, I see what is as it is, I am flexible, open and receptive to change with my mind and my body sharing the same space at the same time and I can therefore create or maintain balance in my personal world.

I want to take a few moments here to readdress nonattachment to outcomes. As I look at my life and those occasions when I do my best work, it is in moments when I am not concerned about the what, when, where, or how of the outcomes. What I am doing, I do without thinking about the next moment and I remember these moments because they tend to be rare occurrences, not the norm. For most of my life, my actions were motivated by wanting this or not wanting that. Life was a struggle to gain something or to avoid something. This should not have been, but in order for that not to be, there would be a need for some serious self-checking.

Self-study, a spiritual practice, is one of the tools I used to look into my inner sanctum. Going within meant putting a spotlight on my abyss, so, who am I? And, who am I not? Those questions became the focus of my explorations. Spiritual teachings suggest that we are divine awareness on a divine mission to realize the truth about ourselves.

Nonattachment to outcomes frees us from the entanglements we find ourselves in when we attach to ideas about people, places, things, and circumstances, our distorted perception of reality and self. We are no longer like fish swimming upstream, in direct opposition to insight that thwarts the natural flow of the self being revealed. When we let go of results and embrace the process allowing right action to unfold without our help, we can accomplish great things. And those moments, where I observed I had done my best work, are no longer the exception; they have become the norm. Nonattachment is living in the present, being open to new and different, and releasing what came before.

N'Balance