

JUST SITTING IS THE CENTER

March 2007 newsletter

'Just sitting' is the central practice of "The Embodied Life".

What is this sitting? Formally it is called "sitting meditation" (Zazen). Unfortunately the word meditation has many images and conditioned ideas, maybe 'just sitting' is more helpful and less evocative of past learning.

'Just sitting' means that one gives oneself as completely as possible to Life while in a sitting position. Whatever arises in the moment is part of 'just sitting'. Sounds, sensations, smells, thoughts, feelings are the scenery or passing fragrances of 'just sitting'.

Reflection: you and I are representative of a great, great moment in the history of Life: after billions of years Life is becoming conscious of Itself through you and me. Please take your time with this sentence: after billions of years Life is becoming conscious of Itself through you and me. Consider this marvelous and transformative fact.

When did "red" become the living experience of 'redness'? When did a heart first thrill and appreciate that 'thrilling-ness' at the sound of a child's laughter? Other mammals clearly have feelings including attachment and loyalty yet the capacity to feel these things and know that one is feeling them (awareness) is very, very recent in biological time.

When:

- you clutch in your gut at the pain of another and long to ease their suffering,
- a taste is both satisfying and deeply appreciated,
- the curve of your lovers back absorbs you more than any landscape,
- your heart aches for an unknown mother's loss,
- a Beethoven sonata connects you to all of Life,
- sunlight and shadow absorb you into their ineffable dance,
- the truthfulness of an idea resonates through your whole body,

Then:

Love Dawns

You are experiencing the fruits of this great evolving experiment: stated again, it is that Life can know Itself through you. The corollary is that Life takes care of Itself through you. We can also call this the dawning of Love.

And 'just sitting'?

It is here that we dedicate ourselves to Life that is only Life, before our interpretations, opinions, and evaluations. THIS directness, this intimacy: beyond good/bad, right /wrong, happy/sad, comfortable/uncomfortable. THIS is our dedication to Life.