

Dharmette: Living in the Body

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So I find it useful, sometimes amazing, to make a distinction between two different places where we live. Sometimes we live in our thoughts. Some people call it living in the head. And the other is to live in our bodies. And it turns out that living in our thoughts, it's an amazingly rich world. There's so many fantasies you can have and thinking about the past and the future and construct all kinds of ideas and live in those ideas.

And so it's pretty entertaining, just like going on Netflix. But if you spent your whole life on Netflix, you would have a pretty truncated life. The other is to be living in the body. And the body includes the mind, includes the thoughts as well. But to live and inhabit the body from the inside out, and to feel the fullness of our life from that place. Initially, it might seem that that's the boring place to be, that nothing happens there.

In fact, for some people, they have very little sensations below the neck. They don't spend much of their life there. But we were designed, by evolution, to have all our senses operating in order to manage in the environment. Environments that we don't live in anymore, we live in the environment many of us can now live in, is the real estate of a little screen. And so just to interact with that screen, you don't need to have a lot of senses operating. But in losing touch with our body, we lose touch actually with a huge part of our natural capacity to be human, to be alive.

So much information, so much emotion, so much understanding. It comes through the body, it comes with the body. The body is not a hunk of flesh. The body is a phenomenally sophisticated processing process, organism or device, and we lose touch with so much of who we are and our capacity for understanding, for wisdom, for healing, for empathy, for deep connection to ourselves, if we're not connected to our body. So to come to a morning like this, think of it as an opportunity to live in your body.

And some of you, if you're like me, won't do it continuously. Your attention will go up into that head again, into the thoughts. And rather than feeling discouraged by that, become really curious about the difference for you of when you're living in the body and thinking, if you need to, versus thinking and disappearing from the body. How does that feel different? What's the experience like? Which of them seems richer, which of them seems more satisfying?

Which of them is conducive to a unification, a feeling really connected to all of yourself here? And chances are it's living in the body. So try to live in your body this morning, live through the body. Imagine that the center of your attention is not in the head, the center of who you are is not in the head. But the center of who you are is somehow in the torso, maybe around the diaphragm or solar plexus or in the belly or something. And then awareness radiates from there outwards to include all of it.

And see what that's like. See if you can enter into a steady, comfortable, comforting way of just being in your body today when you're sitting, when you're walking, and see what the difference is. And if you have the opportunity to, if it happens accidentally that you go into your head and start thinking, take that look, use that as an opportunity to be curious. How's this different from how it was to be in my body? And the more you can actually feel and see that difference, the wiser you'll be about what's going on. So I hope you enjoy the morning.