

*The more
compassionate
you are,
the more
generous
you can be.
The more
generous
you are,
the more
loving-friendliness
you cultivate to
help the world.*

Thich Nhat Hanh



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Our mystic is indicating how we can participate in creating a better world by cultivating certain qualities within our Being. However, upon hearing these words, your *unconscious mind* has automatically accessed the *opposite* of each desired quality. Your **mind's** job is to make sense of things to help you navigate the world. It does this by first noting *differences* via comparison, and then drawing a conclusion. In the case of polar opposites, the mind uses negation. It discerns compassion by the *absence* of anger and judgment, and visa versa. Generosity is determined by the *absence* of avarice or hoarding. And loving-friendliness is detected by the *absence* of hate and meanness. In other words, *the mind identifies each experience by the absence of its opposite*. Other words might arise in your mind to describe the opposite, but the *unconscious process* remains the same, regardless of the name you use.

The *unconscious* concludes it is best to set up one polarity *against* the other based on what is pleasurable and what is painful – mentally, emotionally and/or physically. That creates an *unconscious drive* to move you *toward* compassion (pleasurable) and *away* from anger (pain), *toward* generosity and *away* from avarice, and *toward* loving-friendliness and *away* from hateful-meanness. (This can also work in the opposite way with someone finding compassion more painful than anger and thus holding onto the anger and moving away from compassion.) The problem here is that this conclusion creates *unconscious* clinging to one pole and *unconscious* avoidance of the other – and compassion, generosity and loving-friendliness based on clinging and avoiding is not what our Mystic is asking us to cultivate.

With our *unconscious mind* setting up what is pleasurable against what is painful, we find ourselves back in the same dilemma - wanting to release inner conflict and struggle, but unable to accept “what is happening” because we are clinging to one outcome and avoiding

its opposite. So what do I do when I'm feeling angry, stingy or hateful? Deny, suppress, or repress? The question becomes *how* to cultivate the desired qualities without setting them up as better than, and as more desirable than, their opposites, which puts us right back where we began?

Understanding the Tao of Dilemma and its paradoxical nature frees you to relax in the presence of *both* generosity and avarice, *both* compassion and anger, and *both* loving-friendliness and hateful-meanness. Relaxation in the presence of *both* experiences means you have understood that you cannot have one without the other. The clinging to one and the avoiding of the other is no longer necessary because you *perceive* that both are needed. The hidden harmony between the two is now clearly present as *an organic unity of the two poles*.

This perception *neutralizes* your unconscious polarization toward one and away from the other, and catapults you *out* of your thinking mind *into* the realm of Presence (the NOW). It is here you can find for yourself the generosity, compassion and loving-friendliness that have no opposite. By realizing that *both* poles of these polarities are needed and exist by design, you paradoxically open the door to the compassion, generosity and loving-friendliness that have no opposite anywhere.

I invite you to explore the presence of this unconscious process by delving into your own inner struggles around these qualities. Relaxing into the darker shadows of our depth reveals them to be part of the Wholeness of life, there by design, and, finally, not statements about who we are.

Please join me again next month for another Reflection. Meanwhile, may your heart and mind open to the Presence that surrounds us all with the Compassion, Generosity and Loving-Kindness that has no opposite.

Ragini