

Nobody ever said that a Zen master had to be patient!

By Ian Deavin

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I found myself being very impatient today in a quite general sense, after a series of frustrating events and released it in a physical gesture (that someone probably thought was all about them), but in noticing this I realised that it was quite natural to be impatient. Probably not a particularly useful social posture, but quite natural – so I can stop beating myself up for being impatient and ask - how does that fit with the notion of personal development?

So what is Zen – or any other sort of Personal Development all about?

Congruence

Balance

Resilience

Reality

Clarity

Fulfilling our Humanity – intellectually and emotionally (spiritually) and physically (Achieving our Potential) – as individuals and as group beings.

And in there it may be that not being patient is entirely appropriate – also it does not necessarily mean that you have to be likeable.

Peter Atkins in his book “On Being” says “it is of some interest to me to know what will happen to my body, for it is an old friend, we have been together for many years, and I am still rather fond of it despite its various idiosyncrasies and mounting imperfections”. While Atkins goes on to state his understanding of “Dualism, the fantasy that Mind is distinct from its substrate Body as represented by Brain” This nonetheless demonstrates beautifully the western cultural linguistic sundering of self into “Me” and “my body” so often leading to an adversarial consideration of needs and desires.

Increasingly we are recognising that the “brain-me” actually arises from the “body-me” – there is not one without the other – no brain without body, no body without brain. Perhaps then no humanity without both brain and body – even if “I” am not aware of the linkage on a day to day basis.

However it does seem to be true that as “I” become aware of and come to trust the “mind/body” self then many aspects change in positive ways. Mind in this instance including both conscious and subconscious.

Perhaps the intellectual scientific approach does not yet go far enough in its consideration of just how embodied is the brain or indeed how embrained is the body. The link it seems is not just intimate it is absolute in its intermingling – separation is not possible or desirable – quite the reverse in fact, apparently the human organism performs optimally when most integrated. Notwithstanding the achievements of mind/brain intellect or indeed of pure physicality which may be regarded as extremes to which our humanity can go but lacking somewhat in balance. Rare indeed is it to find an intellect well aware and connected to its body or visa versa.