

CLASS TWO: beginning the stories exercise

This semester, we're going to focus on what keeps us out of the present moment, in a practical and hands on manner. We'll start by looking at our internal stories, what our attachments to them are and how they produce an identity for the ego to rest upon.

STORIES:

- are out of the moment
- come from old mind conditioning
- fix us in a idea of 'who' we are, what "reality" is

We're starting by taking a look at our internal stories. What makes them arise? How do they keep us in the small sense of self? How do they remove us from the present?

Everyone in class has been given a small notebook. Keep the notebook close to you during the day; in your back pocket, in your purse. When you notice a story has arisen, jot it down in the notebook. No need to go into a long theme, just write down enough that you'll be able to recall it later. Don't judge and pick them, thinking some are better than others, just write down everything you can.

Here are a few of my own examples:

- I'm going to the store to buy the notebooks. Park next to a car that has a right wing political bumper sticker on it. Story: about an imaginary conversation with the owner of the car, along with assumptions about what kind of persons they are.

- A traumatic memory has come up, am feeling vulnerable and fragile, it's time to go to a guitar lesson. A story comes up, "perhaps I shouldn't go to the lesson, my eyes look too red, I'm too emotional, I won't be able to play..." (p.s. lesson was fun)

-Out shoveling snow at noon. Story, "why didn't my husband shovel any of this before he left for work. This is way too much for me to handle alone!"

-Go to meditate. The candles on the altar are burned way down into the candlesticks, hard to remove. Story: So who was the last person to sit in here? Why wasn't this taken care of?

- Headache arises. Story: Oh, no, not today! I have way too much to do!

Pull out those notebooks and start jotting down. Everyone has the class e-mail list. Please feel free to share any stories that come up with the rest of the class to keep us all inspired!