

The Roots of Separation

Where does this whole experience of being a separate self get started in the first place? How do we get so caught in having the experience of actually identifying with a bundle of ideas instead of who we really are?

When we are totally fused with our mind-made self, we can't seem to reach back before the genesis of the one who is looking. But as we relax our identification with who we thought we were, even just a little bit, we can begin to feel our way back into the beginnings of the experience.

As babies we do not have the benefit of cognition at first. We develop that gradually as we mature. At first, we just have feelings and we feel that we ARE our experience, whatever it is, because we don't yet have the dualistic mechanism that says "this is me here, and that separate thing is what I am experiencing." That kind of dualism is the job of the mind. So what seems to be happening is that our experience in that time before our mind filters our experience is set like a foundation stone upon which all that the mind later develops cognitively is built.

I am not a neuroscientist. I am just feeling my way back into this territory myself, looking for the roots of this experience of the identification with a thought-based idea of self, and reporting my best sense of this.

Anyway, what seems to be happening is that there is a foundation of very immature feeling-based material upon which we then build as cognition begins. If we felt welcomed and safe and were able to connect deeply with our caregivers as babies, then I suppose we would not need to build a great edifice of childish defense mechanisms once we gained our mental faculties, but that is not what generally seems to happen. If we can't connect with our caregivers and feel that something is wrong, we naturally fuse with this feeling of wrongness, and assume the problem is us.

Then when cognition becomes possible we build a whole structure of thought about who we are that is based on this feeling of not being OK, being wrong, broken or such, because we immediately feel the need to do something to cope better with an uncomfortable or unsafe feeling situation. As far as I can see, this is the genesis of the entire construction of the separate self and all of the things that it is up to.

The reason we identify with it is that our cognition is such an attention-getter because it's always on the move creating some kind of a commotion while thinking about everything. Over time our attention on our cognition becomes habitual and the one who developed the cognition, the true nature, silently waits until the commotion dies down. It does not ask for our attention. It just is.

487 Words

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