

ACCOMPLISHING NOTHING

~ Russell Delman August 2011 newsletter

Zazen- sitting meditation- is my home.

Though variously peaceful, uncomfortable, quiet, chatter-filled and delightful, it is always just what it is. Of course my whole life is always just what it is, yet in all other situations I can have the illusion of accomplishing something.

Every morning I come to my cushion, reminding myself in an embodied way that “just this” is enough. “Just this” means just being, just breathing, just sitting here, just living.

Without this ground, I am forever on a treadmill of accomplishment. My self-worth becomes intertwined with my ‘to do’ list. The day’s completions translate as “good” days or “bad” days. Meaningfulness becomes equated with doing.

My practice is called Shikantaza or ‘just sitting’. It is crucial that this is not practiced **for** something: not for enlightenment, not for mindfulness, clarity, stress reduction, health, or spiritual growth. **There needs to be one place in our lives that is not about anything else. Just Being** (and not even accomplishing ‘being’).

I also have the strong voice of the doer, the one who gets great satisfaction from work. I deeply value this part of me. Work includes all our deeds in the world, everything from our job to doing the dishes. The feeling of fulfillment from these deeds is essential to our lives.

Often when I suggest a sitting practice, people complain that they do not have enough time. They need to make every moment count. I say the busier you are, the more helpful it is to just sit. Other ways of ‘wasting time’: traversing the internet, watching TV, idle chatter, etc. while sometimes restorative are not the same as ‘just sitting’. The value of not doing anything can never be overstated or understated. It actually exists in its own timeless universe.

Let’s not fall into the dualistic trap of choosing between doing and being. Know that it is impossible to realize the naturalness of Being through doing. You can’t turn “Being” into an accomplishment. Everyday I have my goals, my ‘to do’ list, my accomplishments. And everyday I bathe in the fresh water of not-doing. I encourage you to join me in spending some of your day just sitting and accomplishing nothing.

Sitting is "actively resting"

Too much "actively" and we loose the naturalness of Being

Too much resting and we simply get lost in mind

How much "actively"?

How much "resting"?

Let's practice together.....

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