



**Meetings (3rd Sunday)
81 Greville Street**

Next - 18 June

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Issue 64 - May 2000

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Editor's Note

We have about 10 possibles to date for the proposed gathering on the Victorian/NSW border. It seems advisable to hold it a few weeks later than originally planned. I will be looking at the options on our return at the end of June and will put some detail in the next newsletter. If you are interested and haven't yet replied please leave a message, drop a line or email. The present distribution is 60 by mail and 10 by email if you want to convert to email please let me know.

Thanks to subscribers of material to this issue and for verbal feedback from a number of you. I was delighted by the letters of response to last month's content. I think this is a good way to maintain continuity. Warwick reports that Byron Katie will not be coming to Australia this year.

DIALOGUE MEETINGS SYDNEY AREA				
LOCATION	DAY OF MONTH	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
City	Third Saturday	Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379 018 410 127
Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394

Clontarf	Fourth Sunday	49 Peronne Avenue Clontarf	11am Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379 018 410 127
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Letters

What a delightful and refreshing contribution from Maria Dolenc (*Issue No. 63*). It was brief and clear and said more to me in a few words than many of the articles ten times the length. May there be many more such contributions. Thanks also for the recipe for Transformation Soup.

Halcyon Evans

I would like to comment on the article about "Passive Perception". (*Issue No.63*) It is stated: "the greatest block to wisdom is knowledge". I can't see that at all. Historically there have been a great many wise men who have at the same time been extremely knowledgeable. We could begin with Socrates, but for a contemporary example we could consider Douglas Harding. Douglas knows more (has more knowledge about) philosophy, religion, literature, etc., than almost anybody I can think of. Yet, is he not at the same time a man of great wisdom? So which came first - the knowledge or the wisdom - the chicken or the egg?

I would say, rather than "the greatest block to wisdom is knowledge", that for the purpose of seeing who you really are, it doesn't matter whether you have knowledge or not.

Regards, John

John Toler

A few comments on Issue 63. Terry's item on 'Short Cuts' had real meat in it with prime quality in the statement that 'life is the real teacher'. This is so true, provided the authentic teacher is the resonance from direct experience not hearsay or yammerings from conditioned brain-food (education, dogma, thoughts, etc.)

The reason I refer to the resonance rather than the experience itself is because the latter is fleeting whereas the resonance comes from residual attitude which defines accurately where one is 'at' like a mind-compass.

I agree wholeheartedly with K's views on meditation, and other techniques, provided there is no assumption that unconsciously leading a contemplative life is NOT a technique but the tempo of being, into which clarity can seep like a fluid drip.

This state has no goal and no purpose, not even learning (though profound insights frequently occur) and it is solitary. With no-one to discuss the insights they implode and change one's inner mindscape willy-nilly. Like Terry says "everything is true" whether OK or not OK which are simply brain assessments as is K's 'choiceless awareness'. Where choice exists the brain is at work. Awareness is in the being.

Immediacy is involvement in the revelation of emergence. "plodding observation

and analysis" as well as impatience are observable avoidance of what is whilst it-is-ising. So long as they exist - observably - one is either in a pixieland of fantasies or looking at a dead butterfly with a pin through it.

The delightful piece on Paris and her budgie makes for a wry comment; has she budged yet? Kids' clarity of perception is too often knocked out of them through ridicule and adult superiority. Hopefully she was born into the right family.

All the best,

Rome Warren

In his 'No shortcuts' article Terry says "Finally everything is true and everything is OK". Perhaps the key to understanding what he is getting at lies in the word 'finally' because we have recently been introduced to the work of Byron Katie which is underpinned by the principle of distinguishing between what is true and what we believe to be true. Any comments?

Eddie Baigum

Seeing 1 - Too Simple?

There is a lot of background activity to the Nowletter and the Dialogue group meetings which takes the form of private exchanges between meetings. I was recently talking to Wendy about why I am unable to communicate the essence of headlessness more successfully than I do. Why do so few 'see it'? There are a number of possible explanations and as someone said to me "headlessness is only seen as an answer by someone who has asked the question". Another possibility and one that is becoming increasingly convincing, as far as I am concerned, is that what headlessness reveals is far too simple, obvious, accessible for most of us to even consider it as a respectable answer.

Several years ago, after a dialogue meeting at which we'd discussed 'enlightenment' and 'seeing' someone asked me what I thought these words meant. I can't remember my exact reply but I said something like "I think it is to do with awareness free of identification with any thing, event or process that arises in that awareness". My interrogator thought for a moment and then said "Well Alan, if you don't mind me saying so, that is a pretty low level of enlightenment". We have often joked about this and even talked of offering courses in 'Lowlevel Enlightenment' in the belief that there would be quite a significant demand from the majority who'd failed to crack the 'real' thing. The big time as it were.

Simple awareness - 'aware capacity here' is what is revealed by the headless experiments. Why is it not enough?

It is, in fact, how we see at all times in spite of our determined overlooking of it. Even when we do see it, the first question remains - why is not enough? After all, it might be all there is! It is not that this realisation makes me enlightened, that

would be absurd, but that the identification-free awareness is what the word 'enlightenment' might really mean. THIS is it. I have never felt comfortable with the traditional Indian notion of "You are That!". I think - THIS is it - gets much closer to essence.

Is it not enough because we pay far too much attention to and give far too much authority to the hyperbole of the gurus and, consequently, tend to look for ecstatic experiencing, visions splendid, even Krishnamurti who was very dismissive of religion and its superstitions talked of 'The Other' - all mere concepts to those who are not actually experiencing them. And when I do get a taste of these wonders myself it might be worthwhile to consider them just as unusual brain states and get on with what really matters which I think is, you guessed it, just THIS.

As I pondered the question I remembered a message which Alan Rowlands sent in to the LookforYourself email conference in 1998 and which I'd kept in my 'gems' file. He has kindly agreed to let me reprint it below.

Alan Mann

Seeing 2 - Illumination of the world

Hello everyone,

Sometimes, when I feel I have no other resource, I come back to Seeing. It was like that today, and I am not even sure that Seeing is a resource because I often feel it has not done much for me. But I came back to it today and these are some of the things that happened...

My flat is full of doorways and I often have to go from one room to another. It occurred to me to wonder whether anything actually goes through the doorway when I do this (as it obviously does when I have friends here). I watched very carefully, but could never detect anything going through. What did happen was that the empty space of the doorway rather suddenly became much larger and its boundaries disappeared. Then there was a different view, looking curiously serene and beautiful.

At the bus stop, looking at the faces around me, I had these thoughts...

When you look at the face of another, stranger or friend, that appearance you call 'their face' does not exist for them at all. They are as empty as you are, whether they notice it or not. You normally think that other people own faces and are projecting or imposing them upon the world, including you. But it is the other way round. YOU have to be there for that appearance to spring into being. Look away for a moment and it is gone; look back and it is recreated. They literally don't have it for themselves; you create it for them. Even if there are other people around, the appearance of that face is only given where you are. This is the 1st - person experience, and the realisation of this is so indubitable,

and so extraordinary, that I wonder we don't go around in a constant state of amazement. On this basis there are no ugly, threatening or alien faces, they are all just right as they are, lit up as if painted by a great artist there and then. And, wonder of wonders, they do not come from what I have been calling 'other people', they come from me. I am indeed 'sole heir of all the world'. (And what indeed are 'other people'?). I think in this realisation is the seed of love...

Later, in the bus, I began to question why I expect Seeing to do something for me. Should I expect it to cure my unhappiness, set my life to rights? Isn't it almost a vulgarisation of Seeing to expect benefits from it, whether material or psychological? Have I been bulldozed by the enlightenment industry into thinking my life should be always peaceful and problem-free? Have I been browbeaten by the Krishnamurtis and Andrew Cohens of this world into thinking that I must be fundamentally transformed and that everything after that will be different? I have read so much about this that I am exhausted and disillusioned; it never works, I cannot aspire to such things. I am too ordinary.

Seeing is ordinary. It just shows me the way things are. Looking out of the bus window I began to take in those faces and figures again. They seemed to look like those paintings of people in the street by Lowry that used to be fashionable - a look of inevitability, of perfection almost. I wondered if this could be what people mean when they talk about Isness or Thusness. There were no problems or questions, but it was clear that there was nothing here to be illumined, though the world could be. At that point two tears rolled down my cheeks.

At my destination, the Royal College of Music, I was to meet an ex-pupil I had not seen for several years. We played to each other and shared music. At one point he said, 'what was that funny stuff you were saying to someone about perception before my lesson some years ago?' I had no recollection of this, and would never have thought of sharing Seeing with this particular person. But tonight I did, of course, and it was a joy to find someone I had thought totally pragmatic and unspiritual so completely get the point.

Sharing Seeing is wonderful and is one of the best ways of being clear oneself. We should all do this, and I do not think there would be so many intellectual doubts and quibbles if we did so. Many young people are simply waiting for something of the sort.

Greetings to all,

Alan Rowlands

If you receive this by email it means you are on the list for the email edition. If this is not what you want, please let me know

A Christian fit for Burning? - Anthony de Mello

"As your perception is, so will your action be. The thing to change is not your action but your outlook", said the Master.

"What must I do to change it?"

"Merely understand your present way of looking is defective".

Anthony de Mello

Although I have seen regular references to his work and writing I have only recently come across Anthony de Mello thanks to the loan of a couple of books from Peter Marjot via Francis Chan.

First my notes on reading his book ' Awareness' and then a contribution from the Vatican. The blurb to the book ' Awareness' describes it as a guide to spiritual life with emphasis on awareness as the key to understanding what is going on. De Mello strikes me as a Christian Krishnamurti although I doubt K would appreciate me making such a connection. The chapter ' Listen and Unlearn' is one of the best expressions of dialogue I have read. Here is a taste:

Some of us get woken up by the harsh realities of life. We suffer so much we wake up.....Still, if you haven't been bumped sufficiently by life, and you haven't suffered enough, then there is another way: to listen. I don't mean you have to agree with what I'm saying. That wouldn't be listening. Believe me, it really doesn't matter whether you agree with what I'm saying or you don't. Because agreement and disagreement have to do with words and concepts and theories. They don't have anything to do with truth. Truth is never expressed in words. Truth is sighted suddenly, as a result of a certain attitude. So you could be disagreeing with me and still sight the truth. But there has to be an attitude of openness, of willingness to discover something new. That's important not your agreeing with me or disagreeing with me. After all, most of what I'm giving you is really theories. No theory adequately covers reality. So I can speak to you, not of the truth, but of obstacles to the truth. Those I can describe. I cannot describe the truth. No one can. All I can do is give you a description of your falsehoods, so that you can drop them. All I can do for you is challenge your beliefs and the belief system that makes you unhappy. All I can do for you is help you to unlearn. That's what learning is all about where spirituality is concerned: unlearning, unlearning almost everything you've been taught A willingness to unlearn, to listen.

On the nature of the self he states that the results of finding out what you really are devastating. He says "...terrific or terrifying depending on your point of view". I have queried this claim before as I cannot understand the fearful aspect. I wonder what he could mean. The critical point of view, following the discovery or revelation is the post -discovery viewpoint - free at last? Where is the terror and what is terrified?

There are examples of where I felt he was minimising important issues. In a chapter headed ' All' s Right with the World" he tells a crocodile story which is all about

nature ' red in tooth and claw' but doesn' t really touch on what I consider to be the problem of evil which the tale is meant to illustrate. I think the cardinals are right about that. (see below)

I was interested in his comments on redemption following our recent discussions with the folk at The Academy of the Word

Hopefully we will break out of the rigid patterns we have all developed , out of what our thoughts and words have imposed on us . Hopefully we will see . What will we see? This thing that we choose to call reality, whatever is beyond words and concepts. This is a spiritual exercise connected with spirituality -connected with breaking out of your cage, out of the imprisonment of the concepts and words. How sad if we pass through life and never see it with the eyes of a child. This doesn' t mean you should drop your concepts totally; they' re very precious. Though we begin without them, concepts have a very positive function. Thanks to them we develop our intelligence. We' re invited, not to become children, but to become like children. We do have to fall from a stage of innocence and be thrown out of paradise; we do have to develop an "I" and a "me" through these concepts.. But then we need to return to paradise. We need to be redeemed again. We need to put off the old man, the old nature, the conditioned self, and return to the state of the child but without being a child. When we start off in life, we look at reality with wonder, but it isn' t the intelligent wonder of the mystics; it' s the formless wonder of the child. Then wonder dies and is replaced by boredom, as we develop language and words and concepts. Then hopefully, if we' re lucky, we' ll return to wonder again.

I have an ongoing ' agreement to disagree' relationship with people who hold that enlightenment has nothing to do with moral behaviour or right action. I found an ally in de Mello who makes no bones about it "...nobody can do wrong in awareness... if I do wrong it' s a sign that I' m not free".

He is a great story teller and believes that stories offer the shortest route to the truth. He tells one about a lunchtime meeting with an astronomer friend who talked about the universe, a hundred million galaxies expanding at two million miles a second, etc. When he left the restaurant he had a different perspective on life. He said, when you get that feeling - that is awareness. Presumably, he meant that the information generates a new, deeper feeling of wonder and so on. Can it really be described as an increase in awareness. There is an increase in information and of wonder and the awareness is of the increase in both but not of the universe. Concepts about the universe and perception of the effect of the new concepts.

This is my first contact with De Mello . He sounds as though he would have been be a great companion. As we drove around Sydney Francis and I wondered whether his remarkable openness to other spiritual paths and his open contempt for a dogma driven Christianity would have got him into trouble with his order or whether he is

evidence of a greater openness within the Catholic church than we were aware of.

A couple of weeks later I stumbled on this quote which is inserted as an opening to the first chapter of ' The Trial of the Man who said he was God' by Douglas Harding:

*Nobody can be said to have attained to the
pinnacle of truth until a thousand sincere people
have denounced him for blasphemy.
A de Mello*

Peter Marjot then unearthed a document signed by Messrs Ratzinger and Bertone which showed that the Vatican had finally caught up with him. It is entitled "Notification concerning the writings of father Anthony de Mello". It was signed by the Pope on 24 June 98. This is an eight page argument which accurately demonstrates how de Mello falls short meeting the letter of the faith and concluding that he cannot therefore be trusted by the faithful. The document is too long to reproduce here but I include the main part of the summary as follows:

But already in certain passages in these early works and to a greater degree In his later publications, one notices a progressive distancing from the essential contents of the Christian faith. In place of the revelation which has come In the person of Jesus Christ, he substitutes an intuition of God without form of image, to the point of speaking of God as a pure void. To see God it is enough to look directly at the world. Nothing can be said about God; the only knowing is unknowing. To pose the question of his existence is already nonsense. This radical apophaticism leads even to a denial that the Bible contains valid statements about God. The words of scripture are indications which serve only to lead a person to silence. In other passages, the judgement on sacred religious texts, not excluding the Bible, becomes even more severe they are said to prevent people from following their own common sense and cause them to become obtuse and cruel. Religions, including Christianity, are one of the major obstacles to the discovery of truth. This truth, however, is never defined by the author in its precise contents. For him, to think that the God of one's own religion is the only one is simply fanaticism. "God" is considered as a cosmic reality, vague and omnipresent; the personal nature of God is ignored and in practice denied.*

Father de Mello demonstrates an appreciation for Jesus of whom he declares himself to be a disciple. But he considers Jesus as a master alongside others. The only difference from other men Is that Jesus is "awake" and. fully free, while others are not. Jesus is not recognized as the Son of God, but simply as the one who teaches us that all people are children of God. In addition the author's statements on the final destiny of man give rise to perplexity. At one point he speaks of a "dissolving" into the impersonal God, as salt dissolves in water". On various occasions, the question of destiny after death is declared to be irrelevant; only the present life should be of interest. With respect to this life, since evil is simply ignorance, there are no objective rules of morality. Good and evil are

simply mental evaluations imposed upon reality.

Consistent with what has been presented, one can understand how, according to the author, any belief or profession of faith whatever in God or in Christ cannot but Impede one' s personal access to truth. The Church by making the word of God in Holy Scripture into an idol, has ended up banishing God from the temple. She has consequently lost the authority to teach in the name of Christ.

With the present Notification, in order to protect the good of the Christian faithful, this Congregation declares that the above-mentioned positions are incompatible with the Catholic faith and can cause grave harm. (End of "Notification concerning the writings of father Anthony de Mello".)

**knowledge gained by negation*

The arguments produced to demonstrate that De Mello is out of order are exactly what most readers of this newsletter would find themselves in agreement with. In other words, de Mello would be a much more welcome and compatible contributor to our gatherings than Ratzinger, for instance. It is interesting that the church has no room for the living light and expends its energies in justifying the past. It is the old issue of knowledge versus perception, of the letter versus the spirit. We have recently witnessed an example of this in the resistance of the die-hard Sydney Anglicans to their new primate. Three hundred years ago another Christian heretic had this to say about it all:

Once more we will distinguish of Christians. These are Christians that place and desire all their happiness in another life, and there is another sort of Christians that desire happiness in this. The one can defer their enjoyment of Wisdom till the World to come, and dispense with increase and perfection of knowledge for a little time: the other are instant and impatient of delay, and would fain see that happiness here, which they shall enjoy hereafter. Not the vain happiness of this world, falsely called happiness, truly vain; but the real joy and glory of the blessed, which consisteth in the enjoyment of the whole world in communion with God; not only this, but the invisible and eternal, which they earnestly covet to enjoy immediately: for which reason they daily pray "The Kingdom come" and travail towards it by learning Wisdom as fast as they can. Whether the first sort be Christians indeed, look you to that. They have much to say for themselves. Yet certainly they that put off felicity with long delays are to be much suspected. For it is against the nature of love and desire to defer. Nor can any reason be given why they should desire it at last, and not now. If they say because God hath commanded them, that is false; for he offereth it now, now they are commanded to have their conversation in Heaven, now they maybe full of joy and full of glory. Ye are not straitened in me, but in your own bowels. Those Christians that can defer their felicity may be contented with their ignorance. (Traherne - Centuries 4/9)

They have indeed much to say for themselves - always talking, never looking! As this is an article about de Mello I think I should allow him the last word in the form of one of the stories for which he is notorious and which I must acknowledge, in fairness to his inquisitors, was included in the Notification:

A public sinner was excommunicated and forbidden entry to the church. He took his woes to God. "They won' t let me in, Lord, because I am a sinner". "What are you complaining about?" said God. "they won' t let me in either!"

Alan Mann - Research by Peter Marjot

The reason angels can fly is that they take themselves so lightly.

G K Chesterton

Passive Perception - A New Paradigm? 2

(This letter from Rome follows on from her article in the last issue, No. 63 - Ed)

An interesting series of events/insights occurred to me last night. As nearly as I recall they were these:

When I received your ' proof ' *that was Rome' s article in the last issue no. 63* of the outpourings sent to you recently and read the printed words I was devastated to find how meaningless it seemed. The impact, focus, passion, etc., had gone; only the shell of words remained.

If I felt nothing; how could anybody else? Your sense of nonsense is absolutely right. So I popped the question. WHY?

The series of answers struck home in me. We learn nothing but second-hand knowledge through the brain. Yes, I ' knew' that but knowing can only go so far!

The REAL lessons are all through cause-effect resonance according to the individual' s needs. The lessons are so subtle everything written or spoken leads us away from the truth of it.

The most potent lessons - with hindsight - occur every seven years approximately. Looking back on my own life seven is pretty accurate. How we deal with the cycle frames the lesson for the next cycle. A lesson learnt dissolves . A lesson ignored becomes more challenging and confronting.

It has taken all of these decades for me to see that we do indeed invoke ' karma' in our own lifetime. We can deal with it and see it transmuted into good karma or leave it in consciousness by sleepwalking through it as we tend to do when we

are not awake.

A whole person (if there are any) does not attract negative energies nor can we THINK ourselves into being whole as such a question OR answer does not exist in a holistic life. Thought cannot encompass it.

We can be aware when holism is 'missing' by observing our living relationships. Only now is it clear to me that we are all attractants to the MISSING factors in ourselves; as these seek their counterpart in wholeness.

This is NOT a perception of dualistic good/evil but of holograms. As a child I grew up in a very controlled family and atmosphere. When I was 14 my brother took control of my life. It never occurred to me that I could be independent until I was about 50. So, okay, I was retarded.

Even then, I ignored countless lessons involving considerable losses and disasters and entered yet another relationship in which a man took control. I was totally irresponsible. That is, I was unable to respond totally with all of my senses. (Gender had nothing to do with it).

In this way, instead of learning through independent 'control' I handed over my affairs to men unable to control their own, let alone mine. Being 'controllers' they thought they were responsible; being controlled I thought the same. Mutual irresponsibility created chaos!

In my seventies I am only now attempting to create order from disorder. If I can do so, fine. If I can't I cannot. In other words, whatever the outcome, it will come from responsibility. WOW! I can't tell you how good that feels, whether it works or not.

As a result of these insights, it seems likely to me that EVERYONE can benefit by observing their own relationships through feelings and attitudes rather than words.

The 'lessons' of life come through negative aspects which we tend to ignore. If we focus on their impact/effect in our own lives we can actively heal our own wounds. In other words, observe how the 'faults' in your partner operate and affect your own attitude. The reason he/she came into your life was to teach you and, simultaneously learn from the mirror image.

When EITHER one changes the relationship changes. The best relationships and outcomes can evolve when BOTH change, learn and heal. We can also exorcise the ghosts of memories that haunt us.

Rome Warren

The way is not difficult; only there must be no wanting or not wanting.
Chao-Chou

Group Meetings

Sydney

Academy of the Word Seminar Programme - Under St Peter's, Devonshire St.,
Surry Hills

Second Tuesdays 6.15pm - Healing & Well-being

Fourth Tuesdays 6.15pm - State of the World

Dr Alex Reichel (02) 9310 4504

Satsang with John David. Thursdays - ongoing - From 7-9pm. Friends Meeting
House - 119 Devonshire St., Surry Hills (3min from Central Station)

Call Open Sky (02) 9300 0234 for details.

Nowra

Dialogue Group meets every first Saturday of the month from 4-6pm
The Tea Club, Berry Street, Nowra - Opposite Roxy Cinema - Call Riche 4421 5947