Hi Folks,

Two Friday's ago we had an opaque conversation about choice and decision. We tried tackling that again last Friday. We talked about how choosing in the case of no option is possible. That lead us to acceptance or re-creation. How do you get from choice to acceptance? If choice is distinct from decision, then choosing what is can be profound. It could look like acceptance. It's about your state, Roger suggested we do an experiment with that.

Rachel's left hip hurts. Roger asks her to describe it very specifically in terms of size, shape, color, volume, and location. After a few minutes of this, the pain moves and changes its characteristics. No, really. Then Roger asks can she choose it, like you are friends, and that changes it again for a bit. But then somehow it hurts and becomes "other" again. We can all try this at home.

This phenomenon is similar to the case where your child wakes up in the middle of a night because they are bothered by a monster. You sit with the child and talk about the monster, basically create a story about the monster, including what it looks like and what it likes to eat. Once the monster is known, it doesn't bother the child as much.

We all have potential to change physical manifestations, and someone once even made a tumor go away. That doesn't sound easy, but illustrates the range of possibilities. However, if your purpose is that you are trying to "solve" something, then you are creating it as "other" and not choosing what is. That doesn't actually work.

What would it look like if we were to focus this attention on other people? It might look like compassion.

Roger lead us in a kind of guided meditation about the stress in our bodies and how we can identify and describe it. First we define it, then let it be what it is, then be willing to have the phenomenon disappear. For Liz it is was a muscle across her upper chest. For others it was a blob that could be shrunk to the size of a pea.

Some of this brought up the question about boundaries and are there really boundaries between us or the group or the institution or humanity or the world...maybe boundaries are also a self created phenomenon.

We talked a bit about the difference between recreating and putting our attention on something. Roger suggested that recreating had two parts 1) the willingness to stay with something, to learn about it and 2) the willingness to entertain the possibility that we are the source of the thing. The premise is that recreating allows change in the thing. That resisting the thing keeps it separate and gives it some kind of power. When we recreate something it is similar to choosing it (thus our conversations last week).

We discusssed that this method could hold some self recrimination and could feel a bit nasty. Roger suggested that too is part of recreating the thing, that this recreating makes us feel the self-recrimination. I am choosing to judge myself about this! I am manifesting self-recrimination.

We have to have some skillful means about this too. When we name a thing we still choose whether to engage bypass. This happens here also. We also have to be aware of the ecological context of doing this, of dissolving something.

Roger said this is all talk about "state." I have to admit that this concept is illusive for me. So I hope we can address it more next week.

There is a cautionary tale here……it can feel good to recreate and accept and this may turn into some thing that looks like passivity. We might not deal with the things we need to deal with.

Homework: 1) Find something you are resisting and practice recreating. 2) recreate another human being.

Thank goodness this class has easy homework, see you Friday, Dianne and Liz