

Buddhist Basics: The Mechanics of Freedom

The Moment of Existential Awareness

- **What Am I? Who Am I? Where Am I?**



And What Should I do About It?

What Am I?

The Bio-Computer: A Metaphor

- **I am programmed to see the world the way I see it.**



- **I am programmed to organize ten thousand points of stimuli into a perception of the world.**

What Am I? First Stage: The Operating System



The operating system is the first layer of my programming and provides basic conditioning between my physical self, the hardware, and the rest of the programming.



For the bio computer this level of programming is the first definition of the world I perceive.



It tells me the difference between black and white, light and darkness, what a ceiling, street, tree or snow is.

Different cultures are taught to experience different realities from this level of programming.

What Am I? The Ego Mind: Programmed Consciousness



Part of the programming is to create the 'I' or 'me'. I call this 'ego mind'. 'Ego mind' is the stream of consciousness that is self reflective.



This self-reflective or self-consciousness structure is 'the part of me that defines itself as a personality, separates itself from the outside world, and considers itself a separate entity from the rest of nature and the cosmos.' (Urban Dictionary)



Who Am I? Second Stage: Application Programming



Now that I experience a 'me', this level programs me to know who I am. Who am I in relationship to the other members of my family? How am I defined by my family?



I am programmed to know what a man is and what a woman is and what is expected from me concerning love, sex and marriage.



I am programmed to experience in-group/out-group boundaries. Who am I in relationship to my community? What is my role? How am I defined? I am also programmed in how to relate to others; to other groups, other races, other economic classes. It is on this level that my sense of aesthetics is created.

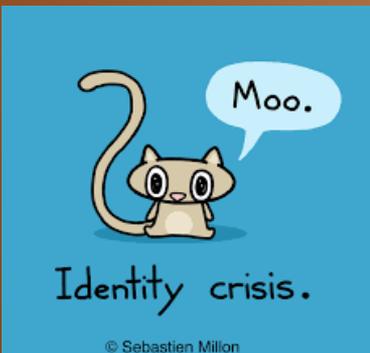
Who Am I? Graphical User Interface: Personalities and Identities



This programming supports the sense I have of myself and the presentation I show others.



It is where I personalize the programming from the application level. I create 'personas' or masks.



I often have different personas or identities for different groups. As a child I experienced a personality at school that was different from my personality at home.

Identities: Different Ways I Experience Me

- Each identity will create a different experience of me, for myself and for others.
- When I think in different languages I experience myself differently. Grammar tells me a lot about the kind of identity a person has available.

Who Am I?

In Church



At a Party



As a Soldier



In German



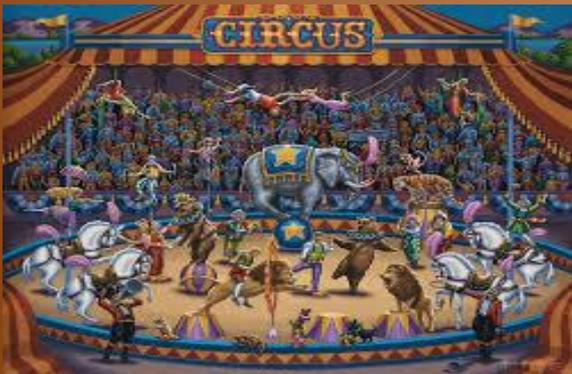
Where Am I? Creating the Matrix/ Maya/Samsara



The programming creates an illusionary world, like a dream or a movie.



The Buddhist term is Samsara, or wandering, through this lifetime and multiple incarnations. The Hindu term is Maya or a magic show like a circus.



My experience of this world overlaps other people's experience and creates a social or common sense.

Where am I? The Multiplex

- **Another way to understand the matrix and the ego mind is to see it as a movie. The experience of a movie is neither the film nor the projector, it is a process in which I get lost. This process is the ego mind.**
- **We also tend to repeat the same movie, some people live in a horror movie, others in an action movie and others in a romance.**



Looking Deeper: What Underlies Everything?

The universe is made up of things with form: cars, atoms, galaxies, thoughts and so on. We call this the World of Form.

- **But the World of Form is fundamentally empty, everything with form is only a manifestation of this Emptiness or absolute Potentiality.**

- **Emptiness is Exactly Form**



- **Form is Exactly Emptiness**



Examples of Manifesting Forms



Waves are continually formed from the ocean. Although each wave is distinct it is still water and a manifestation of the ocean. The Potentially manifests Form in a similar way.



Another example is the leaping flames on the surface of the sun. The form of each flame is distinct and individual but all of the flames are part of and manifested from the sun.



A third example is a dust storm. No one would say that the individual dust particles are anything but earth.

What is This World Like? Change

- I find three things are constant, always there, inescapable. The first is change, everything changes.



Duration, things come into existence, mature and cease to exist. Everything is somewhere in this process.



Opposites, things move back and forth between opposites. Everything is somewhere between opposites.



What is This World Like? Physical Pain



Physical pain is inevitable

Occasionally someone is born unable to experience pain. These individuals usually die young because they are unable to stop external damage that pain warns of.

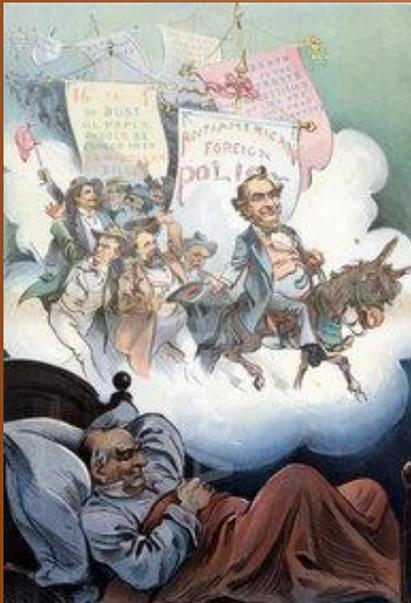
Pain and suffering are different. Often people will engage in sports and accept increased physical pain to experience psychological pleasure.

Acceptance of the inevitability of physical pain allows us to avoid suffering.

What is This World Like? The Ego Mind has no Permanent Self-nature



The ego mind is described as being similar to a flight of bees – the bees being thoughts and the ego being the swarming of the bees. Without the bees there is no swarm; without the thoughts there is no ego mind.



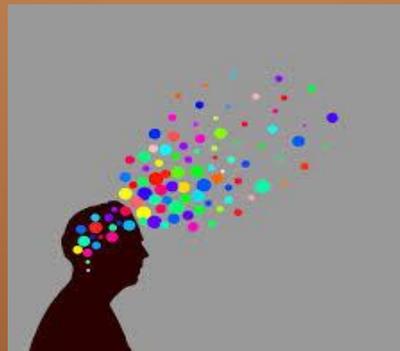
One description is that of a dream. 'Reality' is being dreamed and the ego mind is the player on the dream stage. When I awaken each night, I am unconcerned with the me and my wants in the dream world. When I awaken from the non-dream world and this I ceases, I am equally unconcerned.

Looking Deeper: The Ego Mind Component Parts

My ego mind is made up of thoughts. Often thoughts are combined with feelings. Without thoughts my ego mind disappears.

Out of nowhere thought/feeling units come up, are there for awhile and disappear.

My ego mind uses time to fill up my attention so I'm always thinking. It consists of two kinds of thoughts; original thoughts when new things happen and repeating thoughts to fill up the rest of the time space.



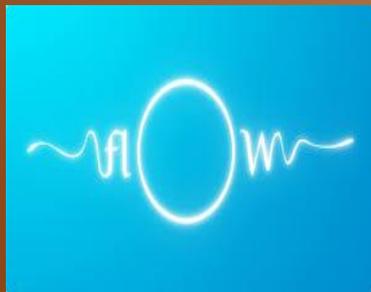
The Marks of Existence: Three Things that Govern my Life



Change is constant. Nothing remains the same. I often want to keep things the same, like a relationship. This leads to suffering.



Physical pain is inevitable; Psychological suffering is not.



Me, or the ego mind, exists as a process. I do not exist as an object like a chair or a movie projector. I, my ego mind, resists and denies this reality which causes me immense suffering.

What is the World Like? Transitory Joy and Ongoing Dissatisfaction



- **I find myself continually dissatisfied. Since there is nothing permanent, whatever I get, I will lose including my own existence.**



- **Sometimes I'm happy but the happiness is transitory and only leads to ongoing dissatisfaction.**

What Causes the Dissatisfaction?

I find myself craving things; sex, money and fame. This is the same awake or asleep, I still want things. I also want to avoid things or situations. My life consists of endless attachment to things I want and aversion to things I fear. This continual aversion is the root of anger.

After getting whatever I want, I become disappointed and just want more.

I, as ego mind, want to exist and to continue to exist. I crave existence. This core attachment is also known as greed.



There is a Way to Escape the Craving and Attachment



I can free myself from the ongoing dissatisfaction by detaching myself from persons, places and things; by giving up craving.



I cannot do this by will power since my programming will continue to create the craving.



I can do this through insight, insight into what the world really is and what I really am.

Applying this Insight: Freedom from Delusion



- **When I experience myself, the ego mind, as fundamentally empty, the insight shows me that there is nothing craving anything. This frees me from fear and consequently anger.**
- **When I experience the world as fundamentally empty, the insight creates freedom from thirsting for the things of the world.**
- **Both insights, as I see things as they really are, frees me from delusion or intentional ignorance.**

The Three Poisons



- **Intentional ignor-ance is the root poison that binds me to the wheel of continual suffering. I experience this as delusion and confusion.**



- **From ignorance comes attachment, craving persons, places or things. This corresponds to the psychological state of greed and passion.**



- **Aversion to person, places and things is also caused by ignorance. This corresponds to anger and aggression.**

The Three Wholesome Mental States



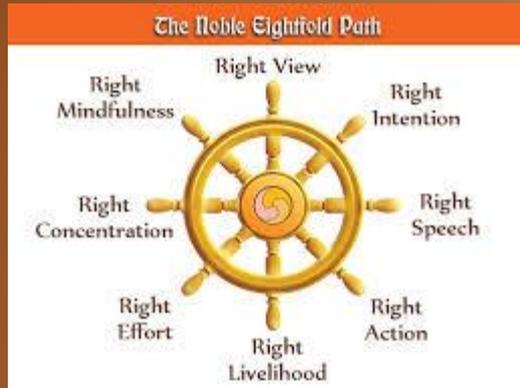
While Ignorance is the root poison that binds me to the wheel of continual suffering. I can overcome ignorance by cultivating wisdom.



I cultivate detachment to counter greed and passion.

- **I cultivate loving kindness to counter anger and aggression.**
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What To Do? The Eightfold Path



WHAT IS THE MIDDLE PATH?

- Also known as the Eightfold Path
 - 1. Right view: Know the 4 Noble Truths
 - 2. Right intention: Know what we want
 - 3. Right speech: Seek to speak only the truth
 - 4. Right actions: Don't kill, lie, steal, be unchaste, or consume drugs/alcohol
 - 5. Right livelihood: Uplift our beings
 - 6. Right effort
 - 7. Right mindfulness: Keep control of your thoughts
 - 8. Right concentration: Meditate

Right Concentration: Meditation

- **When I meditate I concentrate on a physical or mental object. There are a number of techniques and a number of things to concentrate on, like chanting or a yantra.**



- **Meditation is not a relaxation practice, nor is it about having visions or out-of-body experiences. I experience a state of consciousness that lies beyond waking, dreaming, or deep sleep. It's a slowing down of my mental activity through single-pointed concentration.**
- **I can be freed from the delusion of a separate self.**
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Four Stages (Dayanas) of Meditative Practice



- In the first stage I release passions, desires and unwholesome thoughts. I feel rapture and a deep sense of well-being.
- In the second stage, my intellectual activity fades and is replaced by tranquility and one-pointedness of mind. The rapture and sense of tranquility remains.



- In the third stage, the rapture fades and is replaced by equanimity and great clarity.
- In the fourth stage, all sensation ceases and only mindful equanimity remains.
- This is pure experience with no "experiencer." Through this direct experience, one sees the individual, separate self to be an illusion.

Right Mindfulness: I Keep Control of My Thoughts



- **Mindfulness is a whole-body-and-mind awareness of the present moment. When I am mindful I am fully present not lost in daydreams, anticipation, indulgences or worry.**

Mindfulness also means I observe and release habits of mind that maintain the illusion of a separate self.



- **I drop the mental habit of judging everything according to whether I like it or not. I become fully attentive to everything as-it-is, not filtering everything through my subjective opinions.**

Mindfulness: Four Frames of Reference

Mindfulness of Body and Mindfulness of Feeling/Sensations



- **Mindfulness of Body:** I regard my body as a physical form with no self attached to it. There is no soul or self-essence inhabiting my body. Body practice is a whole-body-and-mind practice; a physical action done with meditative focus.

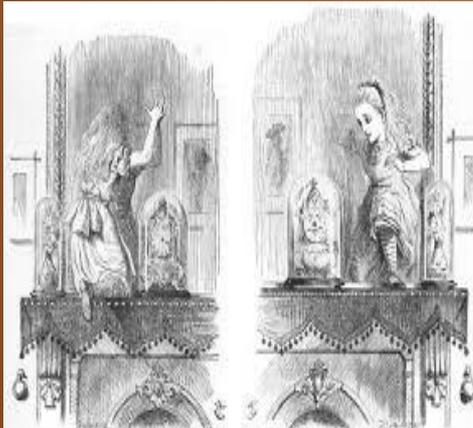


- **Mindfulness of Feeling or Sensations:** Sensations are sensations, not *my* sensations. They are all impermanent. I have no soul to which my feelings belong. When pleasant sensations arise it's fine to enjoy them, but I don't cling to them. This can cause me to live in the past and ignore the present.

Mindfulness of Mind and Mindfulness of Mental Objects



- **Mindfulness of Mind or Mental Process:** I contemplate mind as mind, or consciousness as consciousness, without identifying with my mind. This involves dispassionately observing myself. Is there calmness, or agitation? Is there focus, or distraction? This is by no means an intellectual exercise. I don't form ideas or opinions. I simply observe.



- **Mindfulness of Mental Objects or Qualities:** I contemplate the phenomenal world. All phenomena are empty of self-essence. The distinction I see between this and that is something I am projecting. A particular phenomenon exists as a mental object, not as a thing-in-itself. It is impossible to separate the world from the way I'm programmed to see it.

Practice Practice Practice: The Pathway to Freedom



- **Since my ego mind is constructed from thought/feelings processing, the more I practice controlling thought the more I can experience the world not bound by thought.**



- **This allows me to understand the phenomenal world and my self as they really are. This is the source of all freedom**

