

Spatial Consciousness

By Jonathan Lewis Smith

Viscerally real space exists all around you right now, and that reality is demanding. There is spaciousness to consciousness. I am usually thinking about what's in front of me. Where thoughts of work connect me to my office and the faces of my coworkers, thoughts of my family create a mental map of everywhere they live across the United States. Even ideas of vacation resound images of a beach with warm white sands and clear water – imagination yes, but connected to reality in a powerful way.

I am a millennial, at least I think I am, but I am no longer a child being defined by society. I must take care and have the mind to build a life; doing that successfully now is as consuming today as it must have been in generations past. I want to participate with society in only healthy and sustainable ways but since when did that entail removing myself from the equation? As easy as some people make it seem, I am not always being spatially conscious of my habits. Not all my consumption is eco-friendly and not every choice I've made has been selfless.

I cannot be responsible for Wildfires in California, hurricane devastation in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico, terrorist attacks and the failures of our socio-economic system. I am trying to pay my bills like everybody else. My problems are my own and that awareness dominates unless I am lucky enough to think of my family; where they are and how they are doing. My friends too make me feel connected with more than the immediate. The patterns I depend on can change but not without careful thought, and imagining friends and loved ones is enough to break me free from the barriers around my consciousness. It is with imagination I can do more than achieve the minimum.

Millennial's are often grouped together, and when I think about what that means I see mild images of smartphones and adolescence, but overwhelmingly my mind

goes to September 11th and the airplane attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. I was not there, but I feel somehow close to the trauma, somehow closer to millions of people whose experience of the world was shaped the just like mine, as if the images that followed 9/11 are identically mirrored experiences shared between every person who saw them.

Even a cursory thought would confirm that reality isn't true. So many people in my generation and across all ages have wildly different perspectives and ways of living well. There are real differences between the way even shared memories are felt and there's a world beyond so full of experiences it makes the narratives at least I live by less encompassing. It does not seem as important that people have the same experience as it does that they remember to have their own experience.

I cant be terribly hard on myself nor can I ignore the millennial's dilemma. What qualification or opportunity do I have to make a difference is a reasonable question, even with years of academic experience that's just school and I am left unsure of what impact I am supposed to be having. I can add patterns and habits to my life but only after thinking a little forward and looking into the space-time of my own awareness.

There is room to believe in the collective effect others like me are contributing to in their own small way. My own knowledge of the world already seems dated, but when in time was a person ever aware of all things? Never. But even with my smartphone and the Internet and the ongoing occurring of humanities genius it's hard to keep up, as if so much of myself is connected to the world that whatever happens is equally present and unknown, waiting just past the known to be discovered.

I actually start to feel obligated when spatial consciousness asserts itself, like I could go to California and fight wildfires right now. But history is happening to fast to run everywhere, help everyone, and keep up with everything - so there's got to be some way to think straight while the world is a zig-zag. When I imagine a way, it is by trying to see the barriers around my own understanding fall away and to let spatial

consciousness fill my natural thoughts. As inaccurate as the imagination might be that space is the ground people share even when they are not in the same room.