

Looking for Consciousness

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I live in the Southern Costa Rican forest and have a lot of time to listen to the silence. I feel like celebrating when I realize I *am* conscious (*which isn't nearly as often as I'd like or expect*). I assume the idea that we are made 'in God's image' has a whole lot to do with it. The human form is very cool, but so are tigers and dolphins and eagles. It must be our consciousness, and especially our consciousness of our consciousness -- knowing we exist, realizing more or less (*usually much less than more*), when and how and where we are (*the "why" word we won't deal with in this mere mortal speculation*), that's so unique.

Take a few seconds to realize you exist. Can you do it? Will your expertly distracting, deviating ego allow it? What a gift, to exist! What an exponentially even more wonderful gift, to *realize* we exist! We should be shouting, smiling, and thanking with deep heartfelt sincerity the Universe/ God/ the Field/ Source/ Higher Power/ etc. for this outrageous luxury, this awesome awareness of consciousness, so fragile and fleeting (*it tends to become quickly muddied in normal, mundane, internal and external affairs*).

Are we able to stop thought and time with meditation? Can we realize we aren't just 'ourselves'..., that we have billions of cells ideally cooperating with the rest of 'us', while maintaining priority loyalties to themselves first? More symbiosis is going on in and around us than we could (*or perhaps would care to*) imagine.

The notion that we are just ourselves makes conscious conversation a real challenge. To really engage in conscious conversation, being conscious is a prerequisite, right? We've got to dive down a little to get to it. It's usually not very accessible on the surface; with so much normal and habitual conflict, all our metric tools, credentials, cross-currents, congestion, confusion and excess baggage, we often find ourselves splashing clumsily in a choppy surface where everyone else is trying, also clumsily, to sort out the conscious from all the other stuff. Together we sometimes make some very odd-shaped waves of bizarre communication.

Even with a serious look on our faces, we've come up with outrageous stuff like:

- '*Indians*' - when we really mean Native Americans, not people from India who Columbus thought he'd run into over 500 years ago (*and we apparently are still buying into his blunder*);
 - '*Americans*' - when we really mean citizens of the United States, rather than all the people of 'the Americas', including Canada, Mexico, Central and South America;
 - '*Ethnic cleansing*' - when there is actually very little 'cleansing' involved;
- and on it goes. With all the strange mixes and combinations of words we've thought we understood the meaning of, but actually have morphed into something else (*i.e.*, '*progressive*', '*conservative*', '*liberal*', '*Christian*' *used to have positive connotations*), conscious conversation is nearly impossible.

When we are blessed to have conscious conversation with another human, it is truly delicious and makes our lives feel valuable and worthy of our deepest gratitude. While I wish we could have it in all aspects of our existence, it requires us to be uncommonly generous with the treasures we all possess - humility, tolerance, forgiveness, open-mindedness, mutual respect, friendliness, good will. "Namaste" (*I honor the light within you*), is a beautiful expression, so long as we understand what it means and are being sincere.

We are all truly connected, but often confused. Are we even aware of which level we're meaning to engage – with others, ourselves, God, the environment? Are we aware of pre-conditioned, pre-programmed thoughts and assumptions that are affecting us? Can consciousness happen when the mind is busy? When we are thinking? It seems a quantum leap from 'consciousness' to 'conscious thinking' to 'conscious articulating, sharing and communicating'.

Communication between individuals is one level of challenge; between nations quite another. Dispensing with dysfunctional rhetoric and anti-productive posturing, acknowledging and respecting our mutual existence and humanity, conversing consciously as fellow humans – these will mark the beginning of our much longed-for Golden Age, not just for our species,

but for all life on our planet. I, we, have a long way to go..., I'm not clear that we will ever get there or even that there is a place to get to.

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