

Questions for July 6th Book group Chapters 18 & 19

Dancing with Life by Phillip Moffitt

Offered by Sue Greer

Chapter 18 Basically this chapter offers an overview of the 4th Noble Truths and the Eight fold path. The concept that resonated most clearly to me was the distinction made between collective dogma and authoritative beliefs of a religion, that can lead to fundamentalism and separation, and the true choice of spiritual dedication that aligns with an awake and aware life. This distinction shows how to begin to open to a life of choice and practice of insight rather than accepting the inherent suffering of a life within a dogmatic view.

Your thoughts on this brief chapter?

Chapter 19- Before we explore and name the four noble truths and the eightfold path, The question I want to ask, since you began meditating, not knowing of the eightfold path, have you seen changes in yourself in actions, beliefs, self-knowledge and presence in your everyday life? Before being told of the interplay of these fundamental pieces what changes have you experienced that you might be able to identify as pieces of the eightfold path?

1. Do you feel that you live from a spiritual orientation?

2. The path or “dance with life” of these fundamental pieces of inner awareness begin to change us. How have you changed because of your dedicated practice?

These may be subtle or overt changes of becoming more internally self aware? Do you live from trust rather than control?

3. The eightfold practice begins to **unfold** what holds us in our separation from our true self, It is a “matrix of behavior understanding and practice, from this view we are able to find Peace of Mind and meaningfulness in our life.” Does it comfort you or discourage you to know that this can be a lifelong **unfolding** to discover your liberated spirit?

4. The Eight are- Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

Right view- to bring observation and reflection to the mind and from that develop core values and ways of thinking. (start with clearing mental patterns that create our suffering)

Right Intention -to dedicate yourself to not cause suffering to yourself or others. Choice of actions.

Right Speech- What you state you create. Here we are guided to use our words wisely and without harm. Our voice has essence and authority, so use our speech to promote peace and awareness, You can begin to hear what you say as a reflection of truth rather than suffering,

Right Action- To be consistence in who you are, to be true to your senses and convictions. Listen to your body and the responses you have to your actions to direct what you do.

Right Livelihood – Have your work be ethical and again do no harm. Positive and helpful work of which you give your life's energy to positive activities.

Right Effort- Here we are being guided to pay attention and find ways to focus our energy. We are not lazy, or slothful: we complete task and encourage others. What we do matters.

Right Mindfulness- this path is that of being in the present moment and from the aliveness of the moment having clarity of our choices. We become aware that we are in the NOW and choose not to respond from pain or suffering but from the freshness moment, Great liberation!

Right Concentration- our mind is unified and clear. Here you can apply your wisdom and learned awareness to your daily life.

Each one of these paths supports and interconnects both our practice and dedication to practice but also keep us UNFOLDING from our contracted biases of life and gives our lives more satisfaction and more depth of TRUTH. Lives lived AWAKE

Are there questions or thoughts about these 8 ways of liberation and how they resonate for you? Is one seem more challenging or difficult?

5. pgs 213 the eight-fold path is a way to live from spiritual orientation, its not a “to do list” but an untwisting of the binding of the self-“a matrix of behaviors, understanding and practice “that gives peace and meaning to our lives?

Any examples you might have to share?

6. I appreciated the example showing how growth can sometimes feel stagnant or slow, even after years or decades of dedicated meditation, vigilant self-assessment, and accumulated wisdom. When this question was asked of the Dalai Lama, he acknowledged that periods of stagnation or gradual awakening do occur and he himself has experienced these periods over his years of practice. He advised knowing that this is a life long “unfolding” and keep your commitment, and dedication. The idea of “the great awaking” of nirvana can come in an instant but “dancing with life” we can experience such a life of full quite AWAKENINGS that “untangle” us to live fully.

Those of you who have experienced changes in your life through this path, anyone care to share a guiding story of change and growth over the years? Or new practitioners, what have you experienced as changes in your subtle awareness to your life and your suffering?