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Target

3 messages

Nicole Taras <relyingonjoy@gmail.com>
To: KEVIN FREIDBERG <kevinfreidberg@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 18, 2013 at 8:44 PM

kevin - this is what I actually meant to write about last email but got diverted onto the sanga subject! So here is another metta mail subject... :-)

Given my physical disability and need for 24 hr a day caregivers, I have almost no time alone and undistracted. This makes it hard to meditate in any formal sense so I usually do my meditation in five or sometimes fifteen minute intervals usually when I am waiting for someone - there are never any bells. The other day my meditation moment occurred in the Target parking lot. It was the first relatively warm sunny day in April so rather than shop with my husband I decided to wait for him outside. I found a good sunspot next to Target's front door and decided since I had a few minutes alone I would meditate.

As soon as I began meditating obtrusive thoughts started coming in. I faced the busy parking lot in a strip mall and so a lot of cars were driving by and stopping at the stop sign in front of me. It seemed that everyone at the stop sign sat a little longer on the break to stare at me. Because I was meditating I felt self conscious although I logically knew that no would guess I was meditating -- my eyes were open, I was sitting in my wheelchair (not lotus!) and my hands don't do mudras. It was my wheelchair and strange body they stared at. Plus, I was in a suburb, the staring quotient is significantly higher in the suburbs where seeing a wheelchair user is uncommon. I've been started at all my life, mostly I am immune, however, this day it bothered me and I chalked it up to meditating.

I decided I should stop meditating and just enjoy being outdoors. I took a look around and found a lack of natural beauty to blame for my inability to meditate. Maybe it is impossible to feel good meditating without any semblance of beauty around, after all, meditation centers have beautiful grounds, gardens and halls. I had never seen anyone teach dharma without at least one flower in their vicinity. No wonder I couldn't do it - I had the parking lot, red lamp poles, minivans, sequinned teenagers, diesel truck exhaust, No Parking signs...and further off neon lights of Best Buy, Walgreens, Office Max, Burlington Coat Factory, Holiday, Arby's and the Target bullseye. There was not even a spindly parking lot tree to contemplate relative beauty on.

I drove my chair over to the gravel pit (garden?) next to the disability parking spots thinking maybe I could find beauty in the rocks there - nature held beauty and rocks had to be natural. Natural or not, they held no beauty being all a uniform size, shape and color. Surrounded by an absolutely manufactured environment I figured that since I'm human perhaps I could learn to see suburban sprawl as my natural habitat? Didn't work.

I went back to my sunspot outside Target's front door and decided to meditate anyway. I took a deep conscious breath and inadvertently inhaled cigarette smoke from a man standing a few feet away. I must have been in at least a semi-conscious state as I was able to notice my anger and discouragement at the smoke in time to turn this momentum toward opening to the moment just the way it is -- defiled by cigarette smoke, manufactured, and all. Instantly, I felt the relief of not judging even as my asthmatic lungs tightened up. Maybe meditation started here?

Cars went by and people stared but this did not ruffle me. I looked up at the sky through trees of red parking lot lamps. In slivers of uninterrupted blue between buildings and lamp poles, I reflected on the sky's ultimate expanse. Despite commercial disruption the sky's nature remained open and expansive beyond understanding. The sky is just as my mind, I reminded myself, the open expanse is always here and the beauty and nature I seek can only be found within my present experience. In remembering this, I felt the shedding away of extraneous thought, and for a fraction of a second I experienced my own true nature of open expanse.

Buddhist centers have gardens to remind us of the natural beauty we can find within - but being a confined city human sometimes strip mall parking lots need to do the trick.

KEVIN FREIDBERG <kevinfreidberg@gmail.com>
To: Nicole Taras <relyingonjoy@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 19, 2013 at 3:11 PM

Hey Nicole, would you like me to send out both submissions? They're both really good. I just wasn't sure if you meant for both to go out. Thanks as always for sharing your wisdom.

Metta,
kevin

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Kevin Freidberg is an advertising copywriter.
He's **good**. You should **call** him **612-594-6599**.
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Nicole Taras <relyingonjoy@gmail.com>
To: KEVIN FREIDBERG <kevinfreidberg@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 19, 2013 at 4:16 PM

yes that's fine, i just decided to separate them since they're different topics. :-)

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