

Session 10: The Gluttony for Enthusiasm

This deadly estrangement is characterized by the delusion of the mind that **there is such a thing as final satisfaction**. When trapped in this delusion, we find ourselves restless with the mundane and somewhat boring satisfactions that we have. The serious struggle it takes to work through the details of moving toward the completion of projects we have taken on can seem more than we can bear. Surely there is something more satisfying than situations in which our enthusiasm no longer carries us.

This deadly estrangement is characterized by the addiction of the heart that cries out **I don't want to miss out**. When difficult opposition or struggle becomes my lot, I am restless for something more satisfying. It is hard for me to be determined by my situation, unless being determined enthuses me. Existing long in an empty sort of space seems intolerable to me. I am surely missing out on what life is supposed to be.

This deadly estrangement is characterized by this trap of the will: **I scatter my energies in many half-baked ways**. Without even thinking about it, my will may find the detailed work of finishing something boring and rush on to something more invigorating. Or I may seem to me that I have been at some mode of living for too long for it to be interesting any longer, so my will wanders toward other options. And if a good option comes by, I find myself moving there before I have considered the consequences of abandoning something and starting something else. Over time I can be quite embarrassed over how many things I start and do not finish, or how many things I quit before I get to the true depth of that option.

This deadly estrangement is the typical mode of Escape from Reality by Enneagram Personality Type 7

As a mode of escape, personality type 7 is an escape from the *Attuned Working* aspect of authenticity.. Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a propensity or an obsession with this mode of escape. Personality type 7 persons are restless activists who fear that they may miss something or need something different from what has become too routine and boring. They tend to be playful, energetic, always in motion, and often charismatic in their outgoing attention and innovative leadership. We tend to like them until we get a sense of how burned out they can become and how needy they may be for something more. Settling into one thing is seldom their choice. They may astonish us with the number of plates they keep spinning in the air. Like an Albert Schweitzer they may do all these things well, but more often each of their many things tend to be superficial and short lived.

Having a personality that overemphasizes enthusiasm for novelty need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their enthusiasm with compassion. Carol Burnett and Leonard Bernstein are probably type 7 personalities who put their enthusiasm to good use. The escape here is identifying with the style of

experiencing fresh activities that excite and charm and foster enthusiasm. This restlessness is an escape from being attuned in one's actions to the Ground of Being that calls for an ongoing consistency through thick and thin. This entails an obedience that seems to crimp the restless style of personality 7, even as it leads toward a truer freedom – a freedom from restless novelty into the creative persistence that knows itself connected to the deep matters of living.

Gluttony is a quality that describes this estrangement, for the type-7 personality tends to substitute many novel experiences for the richness of staying in touch with that profound humanness that is always fresh because it is being supported by and called for by the Eternal workings of the cosmos.

Attuned Working

When our enigmatic attentionality pays attention to the “No Self” in its relation to the future, we also discover something about the Overall Reality in which the “No Self” is embedded. Reality is not a fixed fate automatically working itself out like a piece of recorded music. Rather, Reality is an “open-to-options” fluidity that can turn out in a large number of different ways, many of which can seem impossible or miraculous to our self-contained personality and ego establishment. It is in this sense that “*Attuned Working*” means living *beyond fate*. It means giving up all fatalism. This does not mean that we create our own reality, as so many false teachers claim. We do indeed create the worlds that our minds believe to be true, but these creations are all human made and therefore illusory in some or all of their components. The effects of these self-created mind-worlds on the actual course of history are unpredictable and typically tragic in some way or another. These self-created mind-worlds always involve some sort of neglect of Reality and thereby yield disappointments so extreme that despair eventually overwhelms the so-called “reality creator.” So I am calling this aspect of the “No Self” not “creating reality” but “*Attuned Working*.” The Jesus in John's Gospel says, “My Father is working still, and I am working.”¹ That is *Attuned Working* – working in the context of “what-is-doing” in the overall course of things. *Attuned Working* pays attention to what is going on and then is obedient to that “working,” not in some robotic fashion, but as a free being attuned to the real options. Such living can be very powerful; our tiny little actions can instigate an echo from the whole of Reality.

When out of his deep awareness and honesty, Martin Luther nailed some discussion topics on a cathedral door, he could not have imagined the echo Reality would give to his action. It was as if the whole of European history turned on the pivot of this man's persistent working. Some of Luther's responses may not have been well tuned, but he nevertheless rang a bell of *Freedom* that enabled nobles and peasants to break with the stodgy traditions and the oppressive familiarities of that time and place. Many of the consequences of Luther's actions were unintended and some may be judged tragic. Nevertheless, his attunement to what was so in his time joined with the existing trends and potentials, creating an avalanche of historical change. Luther's *Attuned Working*,

¹ John 5:17 Revised Standard Version

combined with the *Attuned Working* of others, set in motion a new era of human living that was less estranged from the deep Truth of our human existing.

In the lives of most of us, *Attuned Working* may not be Luther-level dramatic, but each of us has in our essential being this same potential for *Attuned Working* within the times of our lives. We are manifesting *Attuned Working* when we act out of our sense of how the cultural, political, and economic liberation of women is relevant for all of us in today's world. We are manifesting *Attuned Working* when we act out of our sense the relevance for all of us of the care of the Earth – its climate, its soils, its water ways, its diversity of species, and so forth. Our *Freedom* can manifest as *Attuned Working*, as creative living within the actual challenges of our times. Flight from these challenges is not *Freedom*; it is cowardly compulsion, or greedy obsession, or some other cop-out of estrangement from our real lives.

We may also call this aspect of our essential “No Self” “*Obedient Implementation*,” for it involves the application of our intentional power to the historical circumstances within which our intentional power is to be manifest. By “*Implementation*,” I am talking about getting things done – a quiet adding of something useful or perhaps joining a march of protest on some sick Jerusalem that may result in a noticeable uproar. Such placements of our bodies may not result in torture or death, but scorn of some sort can be expected as part of the overall response to any persistent action that is attuned to the actual course of Reality. Illusions are so firmly established in the lives of the multitudes, and especially the lives of most current leaders, that we can expect scorn and surprisingly angry persecution from some members of the well-established “Liars Kingdom.”

Attuned Working can break through our personality habits as a *state of being* that happens to us from time to time. And we can also come to realize *Attuned Working* as a permanent *quality* of the “No Self” that we never need to leave.

Exercises:

1. With what descriptions of estangment do you identify in these readings?
2. What descriptions of authenticity most caught your attention.
3. Do with a partner (or by yourself) the following repeating-question exercise: (One partner asks the question, listens to an answer, says thank you, and repeats the question. The exploring partner keeps answering this same question over and over. Do this for five minutes. Then switch questioner and answerer and repeat the process.)

What is it you do not want to miss?

Repeat the process with this question:

How are you scattering your energies?

4. Share or write your reflections on this session.