



Life is Relationship, by Charlotte Joko Beck

Every moment of our life is relationship. There is nothing except relationship. At this moment my relationship is to the rug, to the room, to my own body, to the sound of my voice. There is nothing except my being in relationship at each second. And as we practice what grows in our life is this: first, our realization that there nothing but being in relationship to whatever is happening in each moment; and second, our growing commitment to this relationship. Now that seems simple enough -- so what interferes? What blocks our commitment to a specific human relationship, or to studying, to working, to having a good time? What is there that blocks relationship? Because we don't always understand what it means to be in relationship to the present moment, we search. [...] What are we searching for? Depending on our particular life, our background and conditioning, what we search for may seem different from one person to another; but really we're all looking for an ideal life. Although I am at the center of my life, being in this center doesn't interest me. Something seems to be missing right here, so I'm interested in searching for the missing part. What if we cease this looking, searching? What are we left with? We're left with what's been right there at the center all the time. Underneath all that searching there is distress. There is unease. The minute that we realize that, we see that the point isn't the search, but rather the distress and unease which motivate the search. That's the magic moment -- when we realize that searching outside of ourselves is not the way. We begin to see that it isn't the searching that's at fault, but something about where we look. And we return more and more to the disappointment, which is always at the center. We're in pain and we use the search to alleviate that pain. We begin to see that the pain comes because we are pinching ourselves. The very peace we've been searching for so hard lies in recognizing this fact: I'm pinching myself. No one's doing it to me. --Charlotte Joko Beck