



The Test for Meditation in Action, by Shinzen Young

When we first come into this life we form a self in order to cope with the world. The baby has a rather scant self and commensurately little ability to deal with the world. We develop a self to deal with the world, but we also develop the habit of solidifying that self, and that solidifying habit congests the flow of nature, leading to suffering.

The process of going from infancy to adulthood could therefore be called the process of forming a solidified sense of self. Some adults decide to start growing again, that is, to go from being an adult to being a super-adult. In order to do that, one has to learn the process of unsolidifying the sense of self.

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The unsolidified self (which could be called the big self or the no-self) begins to arise within the super-adult. That no-self has to gradually learn how to deal with more and more complex aspects of life, just as the solidified self did.

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At the beginning, the no-self may not be able to do anything except sit there --or maybe chant. Gradually the no-self learns how to do more complex things, like, maybe, sweep the yard. Eventually it learns how to talk, how to drive a car, how to carry on contract negotiations, and anything else that needs to be done. But, just as for the self, it takes a while for that no-self to learn how to do things. Eventually most of ego's activities get taken over by the no-self activity. The no-self knows full well how to get out of the way of trucks.

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There are two ways that people can fool themselves. One is "I have to sit in a certain posture, and have the body absolutely aligned perfectly in order to meditate". Â The second is "I don't ever need to sit in a posture like that; I meditate in daily life".

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The way that you know if you're meditating in action is to see if you can stop on a dime any time you want. You should be able to go, at any time, into an absolutely stable, motionless state without struggle if you're really "meditating in daily life."

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--Shinzen Young, from an Interview with Charles Tart