



Anyone Else Suffer From Active Laziness?, by Sif Anna Dal

I was recently reading a book about a boy who becomes acquainted with philosophy through the need to answer questions about living and dying and the meaning of life after his mother is killed in a car accident.

In the book, the boy is introduced to "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying" by Sogyal Rinpoche. Within the pages of the book, the boy is introduced to the concept of "active laziness", the need to keep busy in order to avoid thinking about one's own mortality, or even about other important things, like what makes the individual happy. Or, in other words, it's easier to keep oneself distracted than face one's own demons -- and for people who believe they have no demons to face, are you alive?

There is always plenty of discussion to be found about the fast paced nature of today's society, and how people today fill their lives with endless activity and distraction. Consumerism is a big part of that distraction. Rinpoche views all of this as avoiding thinking about the nature of living and dying; the short time that we have on this plane and what we do with that time, and how we feel, or experience that period of living.

It certainly rings true for me. Even with four children to raise and care for, a degree to finish and a household to maintain and keep running smoothly, I often feel I need to be doing MORE. I often lament at not having the energy or time to do MORE. So many people I know are the same. Busy to the point of breaking down, but unable to cut right back because, well, because - they don't even seem to be able to articulate why.

[...]

I know I often feel lonely, not because I'm alone - I'm hardly ever alone - but because I fail to connect with other people. Now, I have to ask myself, is the person I most fail to connect with, is actually me? Would I be better at connecting with other people if I understood myself better? And how much do other people actually connect with one another (...)? Is shooting the breeze really connecting? Is being in the same place as someone, talking to them, the same as actually connecting with another person? Or is it just another way to distract oneself from being with oneself?

Frenetic energy springs to mind. It's everywhere. Everywhere we go, all the social media, shopping centers in particular, are BOOMING with frenetic energy. If a person isn't comfortable in the calm quiet

places, isn't that a problem? If you cannot sit in a room with another human being without speaking, without the tv or the radio on, or something else to distract you -- the computer, the phone, the book -- can you really say you know how to be with yourself and with another person?

I sometimes sit just with myself and my thoughts. I don't often with someone else and our thoughts.

Anyone else suffer from active laziness?

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