

Teah Strozer
Week Three, *Life Hurts: Responding with RAIN*
April 20, 2015
“How to Be Honest With Ourselves”
©2015 Tricycle Magazine



Welcome back. This is our third time, and we're going to talk about RAIN—the acronym RAIN.

So, in a way, what we've been doing is trying to see ourselves more clearly. And as we see ourselves more clearly, it's more possible to make wholesome choices, and we develop the ability to respond, rather than be reactive, in situations. So when things come up that are difficult for us, we need some skill to be able to process that difficulty in a way that is going toward freedom and toward waking up.

You know, the Buddha, when he woke up, he didn't say, "I got rid of you," you know? The "you" part is—he wouldn't have said "the ego." He probably would've said "the self." Anyway, what he said was—he didn't say, "I got rid of you." He said, "I see you. I see you." And you know, it's kind of magical. In the seeing of these egoic systems, just by seeing them and not adding energy, not grasping or averting, they begin to dissolve, because they're not solid. You know, well, I might as well say that. There's, as I said before, there's no solidity in there.

So what's happening when we believe a thought, or when we make more drama out of an emotion—an energetic arising of emotion—what we're doing is we're kind of—this is a image I just thought about yesterday—it's as if we think there's a mannequin in there, a "me" in there, like a mannequin, and we make these paper-mache clothes, and we slap them on the mannequin, and we think they're going to, you know, we're building this identity on this mannequin, and it's going to be stable and work, and so on and so forth. But, actually, there's no mannequin there. So, in order to build these identities, we have to keep adding glue to this paper-mache clothing. I'm using this analogy, right? And we have to build and we're constantly building and rebuilding all of these identities by talking to ourselves, and by believing these thoughts and emotions.

And as we begin to be able to see clearly, and not do this putting glue on, which is basically grasping and averting, there's nothing that's holding it up. So it's like the *dharma* rain falls down on this paper mache, and it dissolves the glue. And eventually, all of these identities and ways that we think of ourself as a separate thing dissolves. That's the promise, and it's true. So, what is the skill to be able to not grasp or avert?

So the R in RAIN means "recognize," just the ability to know what is happening at that moment. So that's why we have to build a strong being-present muscle, because if we're not able to stand as the observer when we recognize what's happening, we'll get sucked right in.

Teah Strozer
Week Three, *Life Hurts: Responding with RAIN*
April 20, 2015
“How to Be Honest With Ourselves”
©2015 Tricycle Magazine



So the first thing, R, is very important: just to recognize, “Oh, there’s anger here. Oh, there’s jealousy. Oh, I just had a thought of blame to that person.” If we’re not conscious of that thought, what’ll happen is, when you meet, let’s say, that person, you’ll meet them from that thought, already blaming, already thinking you know something about that person. And then, if that happens, you’re not able to really meet that person. Let’s say the person is coming to you with some flowers, and apologizing. It’ll be hard to you to really open and accept that if, right away, you’re defending yourself. So it’s really important to know what is happening as it is happening, to develop this strong being-present ability, paying attention in the moment.

And the nice thing about having a body is, is that it helps you be present, because the body is present all the time. So if you’re constantly, continually bringing yourself—like I said, continuity of being present—if you bring yourself back to the body, there’s a real chance that you’ll know what is happening *as* it is happening.

I think that’s all you need to know about that.

The A stands for “acceptance,” or “acknowledge,” or “allow,” but I’m beginning to think that this “acceptance” word is kind of okay, so long as we really remember that it’s not necessarily that we *want* what is happening. It’s not that kind of acceptance. It’s acceptance in the sense that, whatever it is, is already there. This is really important, because if we resist what has already come to be, it’s a recipe for failure. It’s a disaster.

And you always lose, because it’s already there. So the path is about being open: being willing to be with whatever is arising. That is a very deep kind of renunciation, because you’re renouncing your idea of what you want to happen. You’re renouncing manipulation. You’re renouncing a sense of division. No. Just, “I am willing to be with what is already here.”

It’s a kind of a surrender, because the self is not going to want to necessarily do that, especially if what’s arising is difficult. It’s going to want to do something, manipulate something, control something. No. We just want to allow, accept, be willing to be with whatever’s arising. There’s jealousy here. Okay, how does that feel? There’s a sense of a lack of self-worth. There’s a judging mind. There’s a thought of, “I’m not good enough.” Am I willing to stop and allow that moment of truth to be there?

Yes, I am, because I’m studying the self, and that’s how it’s appearing right now. So, yes, I am. Okay. How does that feel?

Teah Strozer
Week Three, *Life Hurts: Responding with RAIN*
April 20, 2015
“How to Be Honest With Ourselves”
©2015 Tricycle Magazine



I am looking for something. Where is it?

Ah. Yeah. This is really neat. Oh, I see. It's under the next one. Okay, the next one is I: “investigate.” This is a really—they're all important, but this is a really, really important one. If this doesn't happen, there is no transformation, there is no possibility of real freedom. So the I is “investigate sensations in the body.” So the first one, R: recognize what's happening; you're present to know what's happening. The second one is “allow”: name it, accept it, be willing to let it be there. Let's say it's anger. So there's a—usually, almost, there's a trigger thought, and then there's a welling-up of energy. So the I is, “Investigate what happened to the body.”

Well, if there's anger there, usually the heart starts pounding, the muscles start contracting, there's maybe a flush of energy. That's a kind of neat feeling. It's a flush of energy. The face gets red. This is what we call anger. But anger is just a word. What really is happening are these physical sensations that may be uncomfortable. But for me, when there was pain, when there was real pain for me, my whole throat would just contract like this.

It was not comfortable in any way. But I'm willing to feel it, because I'm willing to let what just is arising be there, because I want to study it. I want to understand it. So if these sensations we call “anger” are there, go to the body... and wait... and breathe and wait and breathe and wait, until the body releases whatever happened, and it's open and relaxed again. When I was living in the monastery, I used to have this, I would practice this with people, and right in the middle of a conversation, if something happened, if some feeling arose, I would say, “Excuse me, I have to feel something.” And, because it was in a monastery, we could do this.

And then I would stop, and I would breathe and wait and breathe and wait, until the body returned to openness. If you don't tell yourself stories, if you don't make a drama out of what just happened, or push it away, the body can only hold onto that kind of contraction for about 90 seconds, two minutes, at the most. That's it. And if you allow the energy, the body to process the energy, anger is gone. It's over.

And then what often happens, especially with anger, you might have a different emotion come up, which is almost always hurt, maybe fear, sometimes, but almost always, you've been hurt. And then you feel what *that* feels like. It's an energetic transformation. Sometimes the way I think about it is like, if you have thoughts of no self-worth, and you've had those thoughts for years and years and years and years, you've believed those thoughts, you've given that neural pathway a lot of energy, and it's kind of like building up a kind of a column of energy.

Teah Strozer
Week Three, *Life Hurts: Responding with RAIN*
April 20, 2015
“How to Be Honest With Ourselves”
©2015 Tricycle Magazine



You know, I’m making this up, but it’s an image I used to think about. Whenever something—some thought of hurt, usually, and you want to hide from the hurt, and energy comes up, it takes energy to bring that up. If you don’t do anything, if you don’t use energy to push it away, which stays in the body—the energy doesn’t go away; it stays in the body if you push it away—and if you don’t make a drama out of it, that’s *also* feeding it a lot of energy, if you don’t do either of those things, if you just let the energy that brought up this new emotion of some kind—an emotion’s just energy of some kind—and you let it dissipate, a little bit of that old, karmic storage of energy is gone. It’s my experience.

And every time you do it, every time anger comes up and you don’t do anything, you just allow it to be there, feel it, let it pass...*whisht, whisht, whisht, whisht, whisht, whisht, whisht, whisht*. So I used to have gigantic demons, huge demons. They were strong. And one of my demons was, “You’re no good.” Actually, I talked to myself with a lot more vulgarity than that, but “you’re no good” is good for now. Bang, bang, bang! Whip, whip, whip! And then, eventually, it was like this little, little, teeny-weeny demon. You know, “You’re no good.” “Hi. I recognize you. How’re you doing?” Oh... and eventually, not even comes up at all. If we don’t keep recreating this sense of me... dissolves. That’s the promise, and it’s true.