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Presents

Belief

by

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Belief

In infancy we are constantly using a center of consciousness found in the solar plexus to assess our new existence. Feeling is the foundation of that exploration. When we have enough references and our minds develop sufficiently we add ideas to our tools for survival. Earliest ideas are learned by rote and repetition with feeling being the filter of discrimination. As a capacity for abstract thought develops, the advantages of beliefs come into play. These are ideas grasped and accepted by feeling and empowered to action by emotions. Emotions are reactions to feelings repeated often enough to become habitual.

Belief is at the core of human experience. Adding ideas (the mind) to feelings (the emotions) is a balancing act. They provide comprehension of our expanding horizons from mother to home to world to universe. We depend upon beliefs.

Ideas may seem to become more important than feeling as the balance is tilted toward the intellect. However that only appears to be the case. Intellectual curiosity may become so stimulating that it obscures the fact we accept ideas because of our feelings about them or the circumstances in which they are presented. I've found myself believing ideas because a group accepted them and I wished to belong. Then again I've stridently held beliefs as an emotional reaction to easily manipulated, gullible groupthink. Go figure.

Most ideas to which we are emotionally attached can be evaluated by trying them out. When ideas rooted in material reality are subjected to experimentation and provide consistent comprehensible results they become elevated from hypotheses to knowledge. Practical spiritual concepts not only can be but should be tested as well. When those experiments yield results they often arrive as the light bulb goes off in your head, expanding your spirit with the illumination of understanding. That is wisdom. Both knowledge and wisdom begin with belief.

Now there's a tricky aspect to the nature of beliefs. They aren't necessarily right or good. Ideas and emotions should be evolving as we grow and experiment. The only true assessment of them comes from reflecting on the nature of our experiences. To feel the results of our actions based on ideas and modify our behavior accordingly is the heart of the spiritual experience. When mind and emotions are in balance the heart opens. The persistent inner dialog quiets. At those moments just being *is* action. It doesn't mean beliefs fade away but rather they are held lightly as a collection of tools for use, not absolutes.

Here are a few personal discoveries. If I feel emotional distress when a belief I espouse is questioned or ignored by other people there's something wrong with my emotional attachment and very likely that idea needs to change. The universe doesn't care what I profess to believe; how I act reveals the reality. Beliefs I've held that don't stimulate action or illumination may be fun but futile. When I feel the need to force my beliefs on others the motivation is selfish not spiritual.