



1-3-2000

Dear David,

Sorry I broke my promise to get this - these to you PDQ — and I want to thank you for nudging me to dig up my original & pass it on. Non-zen folks just didn't get it — I was sparked by Roshi's excerpt from Mel's book in Shambala Sun & wanted to recommend it in my article, but they didn't get it — so I "went on," only to be ~~waylaid~~ waylaid by dualistic editors. I like the originals.

I have 3 more stories of Roshi + me to tell you that are special to me — as yet in "oral traditions" — I've told them but haven't recorded or written them. AND — I'm such a packrat — I'm not sure I can find Roshi's picture — I'll try, + let me know time cut off — it is a good picture and I hope to see you when you're over here soon!

cheers to you + your wonderful
+ continuing endeavors. — Sue Kabuto

word & took
out + changed
2 times was
"versus"

Psychotherapy & Z

BY SUE ROBERTS

Sue Roberts is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, twenty plus year advertiser with OPEN EXCHANGE, and our official sixties generation "keeper of the flame." Sue offers private counseling services in San Francisco and Berkeley.



My sixties-generation values directly affect my approach to psychotherapy. We sought truth, justice, humor, creativity, spirit, adventure, community, joy and love. We searched the world and we also searched within.

"I give you this Zen riddle: a double moon," said my Zen teacher Suzuki Rochi, speaking at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center during the September full moon in 1968.

When I was outside looking at the moon, I happened to rub my eyes, opened them, and before I focused I saw two moons! I ran to my teacher, exclaiming I had the answer to his koan, and we burst into laughter.

Later, I thought that the concept of the double moon could possibly mean the moon we see *plus* the moon we think we see, a metaphor showing the difference between true reality and our perception of reality, which is often clouded by our own interpretations and personal baggage.

The same contrast exists within ourselves; our true self *and* the self we perceive—or create, or expect, or judge to be.

A Zen approach of trained mindfulness can help us become more aware of the true self as well as the perceived self. This expanded view can also be helpful in psychotherapy.

Both therapy and Zen make it possible for us to look at ourselves and others with compassion by trusting what we know through intuition as well as what we have been taught. Through either approach we can reach the same goals: self-understanding, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others.

New therapy clients sometimes come to me with a deep fear that they may be pushing away an awful truth about themselves. Their awareness may be severely limited because they lack the techniques, information, or understanding to comprehend a wider, deeper view of themselves and their relationships with others. Stuck without knowing a wider way, they can hold themselves as wrong, bad, hopeless, or unlovable.

Still, we can learn to become unstuck, to break away and invite self-awareness. My teacher said: "When you fall on the ground, use the ground to push back up." I use this insight to help my clients to accept mistakes as a given, then to learn, atone, grieve, benefit, and—ultimately—to be amused.

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ZEN AND THE PERCEPTION OF TRUTH IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

By Sue Roberts

*As sent to
Open Exchange publisher*

Sue Roberts is a licensed psychotherapist, and a twenty-year member of Open Exchange. Here she speaks about the influence of Zen and the '60s on her practice. See her ad on page.....

"I give you a zen riddle, a koan----a 'double moon,'" said my Zen teacher Suzuki Rochi, speaking at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center during the September full moon in 1968. When I was outside looking at the moon, I happened to rub my eyes, opened them, and before I focused I saw two moons! I ran to my teacher, exclaiming I had the answer to his koan, and we burst into laughter.

Later, I thought that the concept of the "double moon" could possibly mean the moon we see, and the moon we think we see, a metaphor showing the difference between true reality and our perception of reality which is often clouded by our own interpretations and personal baggage. The same contrast exists within ourselves; our true self and the self we perceive, or create, or expect, or judge to be our true self. A Zen approach of trained mindfulness can help us become more aware of the true self as well as the perceived self. This expanded view can be helpful in psychotherapy.

My sixties-generation values directly affect my approach to psychotherapy. We sought truth, justice, humor, creativity, spirit, adventure, community, joy and, love. These same values resonate with the direct experience promoted in Zen philosophy. Westerners have traditionally focused on intellectual, rational understanding. The Zen philosophers employ meditation to awaken our intuition through which we acquire knowledge and, in that knowledge, learn to accept and value ourselves, each other, our environments, and our experiences.

The goal is self-enlightenment. The two approaches, the science of psychology and the belief system of Zen, are a powerful combination in bringing about self-understanding and self-acceptance. These are the ultimate goals of both disciplines.

Both therapy and Zen make it possible for us to look at ourselves and others with kindness and compassion by remaining open; trusting what we know through intuition as well as what we have

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been taught. By applying both modes of thought to reach the same goals of self-understanding, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others, we can find a safe, neutral, kind, wide viewing place where we can release ourselves from the merciless judgments of ourselves and those with whom we live, work, and play.

Therapy clients who have decided to get help in understanding and making changes in their lives have come in with a deep fear that what they have been pushing away is the real truth about themselves. At first, they are unable to realize that their awareness is severely limited because they lack the techniques, information, and understanding to comprehend a wider, deeper view of themselves and their relationships with others. Stuck without knowing a wider way, they can hold themselves as wrong, bad, hopeless or unlovable.

Such negative self-judgment not only feels awful, but is potentially overwhelming. Because of this, there is an effort to bury these feelings. Unable to accept a negative-self image, people often attribute their own negative thoughts and behaviors to others, further clouding the truth.

We carry our preconceptions and beliefs in carts we push ahead of ourselves. We are afraid of doing without them, sensing that they give us protection and self-definition. Social pressures require us to appear more than we really are, to buy into perfectionist ideals and to live a machine-like hectic pace that rushes us past the truth. We fear being left out, not being considered, falling behind. If Noah appears to not have much room on the ark, we scramble to look good, or at least not to appear abandoned

Life might welcome us into a new place, but it may not have room for our cart and its load. Can we question these dearly held ideas, this insistence on what we are certain must be? Zen and psychotherapy look at attachments to old ways of thinking with acceptance, questioning, and awareness of consequences.

We can break away, slow down, invite self-awareness, find our ground. My teacher said: "When you fall on the ground, use the ground to push back up." We have a sensing, a tuning that will

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allow ourselves to accept mistakes as a given, and to learn, atone, grieve, benefit, and even, ultimately, to be amused. Zen and psychotherapy are tools we can use to be in touch with our internal sensing and tuning mechanisms, which in turn help us feel the real connections that sometimes seem hidden in our lives.

original

Sue Roberts is a licensed psychotherapist and has been in Open Exchange for twenty years. Her ad is on page . She states, "My 60's generation values affect how I approach psychotherapy. We sought truth, justice, humor, creativity, spirit, adventure, community and joy! I had the opportunity to integrate these when I became a zen meditation student in 1967."

Zen and the Perception of Truth in Psychotherapy

"I give you a zen riddle, a koan---'double moon'"

Zen teacher, Suzuki Rochi, 1968 talk on
September full moon, Tassajara Zen Mountain
Center

Giddy under the moonlight, I happened to rub my eyes and saw two moons before I focused. I ran and sat next to my teacher, exclaiming I had the answer to his koan, and we burst into laughter.

Later, I thought "double moon" could mean the moon itself and ^{then} the moon we think we see, ^{the contrast between the truth} and how we ^{perceive} and interpret through a veil of our own twists and baggage. As a therapist this seemed to make more serious sense, though not so much fun!

Bringing attention again and again to what our teacher called "things-as-it-is," there is ^{still} another "double moon." Sensing the oneness of all things, we receive and recognize what comes to us as already having a "twin" inside and through ourselves. This "oneness twin" resonates and reflects what's already existing, known and felt. Desiring to be more aware, we can rely on this reality moment by moment ^{through trained mindfulness.}

It's Not Easy Being Green and Everything

How's this Zen view helpful in psychotherapy? So many of us have narrow, distorted perceptions from fears and beliefs about ourselves. Stuck without knowing a wider way, we can hold ourselves wrong, bad, hopeless, unlovable or laced with failure. This self-judgement feels so awful and potentially overwhelming we sometimes bury it under the rug in denial. It still jumps around, makes spots and messes and digs holes and long tunnels!

In the pace and push of today's world, we're sometimes affected by a pervasive fear of being left out, of not being considered, of falling behind. It's as if we think God and Noah don't have much room on the ark, so we're scrambling to look good or to at least not appear abandoned.

Therapy clients who've decided to at last face the truth about their lives have come in with a deep fear that what they've been pushing away and fearing is really the ^{whole} truth about themselves, not realizing ^{how they've} actually squeezed their truth awareness down to a knot hole.

I ^{suggest} a more inclusive Zen view, one that provides for a resting in being ordinary, knowing we're never out of ordinary even when "making special." ~~We~~ get a chance to leap out of what ~~we've~~ perceived ourselves to be and get suddenly and repeatedly expanded and enhanced by coming into wider awareness and belonging. With this grace comes the responsibility to now pay more attention than ever before and carry this knowing

into your everyday actions. This includes lining up the mindful conditions that promote achieving a neutral, safe, kinder viewing place inside yourself. You're less a victim of merciless and narrow judgement--yours or someone else's--with this good roomy space. You have a sensing, a tuning that accepts mistakes as "in the cards" and knows how to learn, atone, grieve, be amused, and even benefit from problems you've helped cause.

In therapy and Zen you can agree to treat anything you find out about yourself with kindness and compassion, refusing to make premature judgements, ^{Knowing} there's so much more to be revealed and received by just staying open that you become willing to hang out.

"Catching" the Truth

Out of the corner of your sensing "eye," you fléetingly pick up how things are. They might not match what you're up to, what you want. Do you turn away to follow the story you've already set out? Do you peek more? Do you snatch the truth's coattails and embrace it because it gives you a base and all the raw materials to understand and build what's next? When do you back up to read the signpost of your generous friend who has the scoop? After all, the truth is you saying hello to yourself all over again, so you choose to be part of it all since you are anyway and your next round of being you again is coming up!