

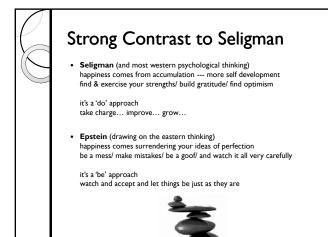
Going to Pieces : Overview

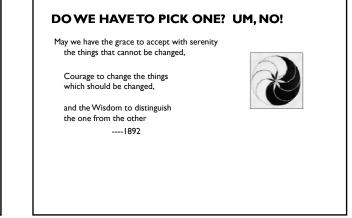
- Blends Buddhist/ mindfulness ideas with psychology
- Attempts to balance two competing ways of experiencing Ego's need to 'do' and our inherent capacity to 'be'
- Letting go/ letting it be in the face of struggle offers freedom and a path to happiness
- Mindfulness is the pathway to 'letting it be'

Set aside established notions

- Zen Story
- There is a smart and eager University professor who comes to an old Zen master for teachings. The Zen master offers him tea and upon acceptance, the Zen master pours tea into the cup until it overflows. The professor politely expresses his dismay at the overflowing cup and the Zen master keeps on pouring.
- Then he says 'a mind that is already full cannot take in anything new.' 'Like this cup, you are full of opinions and preconceptions'. 'To find happiness, you must first empty your cup'.





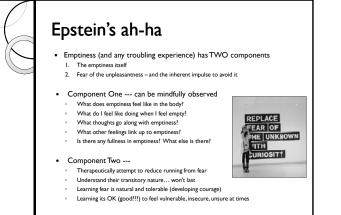


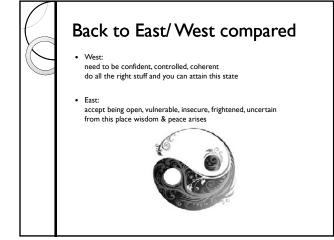
Back to Epstein

- At 16 polled all his classmates "are you bothered by an inner sense of emptiness or insufficiency" nearly 100% of his classmates responded "YES"
- Wanted to cure his own ennui/ sense of being disconnected/ emptiness
- Began the search ... how?



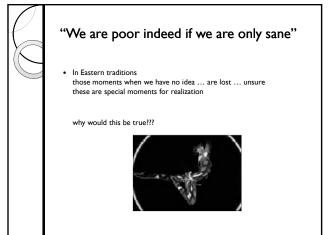
Psychological Answers (self psychology) self esteem grows in proportion to how mirrored a person feels Therapeutic answer --- reflect back warmth & acceptance in therapy (very consistent with Siegals ideas) Did this work? Patients became needy & demanding --- never enough of this interpreted inability to accept his inherent limits --- helped but still empty he was approaching their emptiness as a problem to be fixed What was the alternative? Accept that emptiness can't be eliminated focus instead on HOW emptiness is experienced - mindfulness





Taking a look at Ego

- The 'I' of the personality the part of personality that interfaces with the world
- Ego strength is considered beneficial/ the goal of much psychological focus
 We individuate/ become self sufficient/ self determining/ in control
- In psychoanalytic tradition this is called integration
- Donald Winnicott famous psychoanalytic self psychologist
 It is unhealthy to deny or fear the innate capacity of every human to become unintegrated, adgresonalized, and feel as though the world is unreal
- Unintegration involves the capacity to 'be'
- The capacity to 'be' allows us to feel real
- · Created when parents allow a child to be him/herself without a sense of abandonment



Can we cultivate those moments?

Becoming aware of the vast amount and sheer pointlessness of much of our moment by moment thinking

- Thinking is a way to avoid/ distance from immediate EXPERIENCE
- Trying to control outcomes
- Two approaches: manipulate/ distance when we like something but think it won't last (attachment) devalue/ push away what something that isn't perfect (aversion)
- · Result: Isolating and not being touched by what is actually present

• Start to relax the mind

Cultivate a mind that can wholeheartedly embrace disappointment as much as it embraces beauty

Mindfulness ala Epstein

- Develop perpetual curiosity/ Bare Attention Careful noting of everything in mind-body as it unfolds
- Observing functions of the mind take precedence over reactive ones
- Keep a running commentary in the form of ongoing labeling · Learn to separate sensory experience from emotional reaction
 - THIS OFFERS FREEDOM FROM THE WAYS WE ISOLATE FROM EXPERIENCE get sad/ distance when we like something but think it won't last devalue/ push away what something that isn't perfect

instead

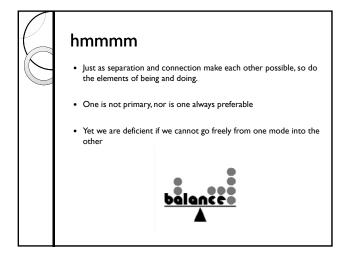
touch the imperfection/ transience of the world without being oppressed by it

Sheesh

• Pg. 72

- We justifiably complain of feeling unreal because we are busy keeping ourselves at arm's length from the biggest reality of all --- the transience of which we are a part
- · And that we can control/ protect against negative outcomes

Interesting Interplay We must loosen the influence of the ego in order to feel connection to others and to experience We must tighten the influence of the ego in order to accomplish daily tasks of living and focus on the goals of living • We must loosen the influence of the ego to accept that our efforts and goals do not always come to fruition in the manner we wish We must tighten the influence of the ego in order to find a rudder and • direction after life has slapped us with some disappointment Best view of ego: expanding and contracting/ coalescing and dissolving/ separating and merging ... -1





- Can we translate the curiosity and tolerance of mindfulness into a self acceptance that allows greater intimacy with others?
- When we feel unworthy/ imperfect (and don't we all?) \ldots it is very difficult to be genuine with another person
- The capacity to be 'unintegrated'/ unsure/ imperfect --- creates a capacity to be less self-conscious/ guarded
- Mindfulness provides this capacity