

LIFE AS A BUBBLE
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I never fail to continually amaze myself at what a slow learner I am and how easily I get carried away by every wind that blows. It does not take much for me to get distracted and totally blown out by some new idea or desire.

My habitual patterns run deep. I have no idea how deep because I have never seen the end of them yet. And I know (or am told) that they obscure whatever truth I am behind or beneath them. Like wearing dirty sunglasses, I vainly try to see something called life through a glass darkly. I have no choice.

The Buddhists would have it that these ingrained habits arise not only from this life I am now living, but also from the many (innumerable) lives I have lived previously and that my hard habits are just passed on forward through time. I don't know about that, but as one Buddhist teacher said to me, "We are the dregs. In all of the time there has been up to now, we are the ones who never got it, the most dense ones," the ones who ignore the obvious ways to wake up.

The same is true with my desire to change this world we all live in, hopefully for the better. Yet as I get older I see clearly that despite my good intentions, I would have to change myself before I could do much for the world, for I really am entrenched in my habits.

And I am not alone. Looking around me, I see others like me, encased in their own habitual patterns, trying to get out, but also easily carried away with one daydream or another. I call these daydreams "bubbles" and I have no choice but to wait for each bubble to pop or be popped by the realities of life. I am, as the song says, "Forever blowing bubbles," creating new ones.

And it is not like I have just one distraction or bubble. I have lots of them going all at once, a real bubble bath. And each bubble encapsulates me, insulates me from the reality I claim to be seeking. And float away I do, wrapped inside of them, unable so it seems to escape until they run their course.

The Tibetan Buddhists have explained to me that it is just like in my nighttime dreams, when I sometimes try to wake up. It could be for a drink of water or that I have to go to the bathroom. Again and again I get up and drink the water, but am still thirsty because I never did wake up and am still just dreaming. Somehow, I can't move myself to wake up.

The Buddhists say our whole life is just like our nighttime dreams, a dream from which we are having trouble awakening. They say life itself is one big bubble we eventually have to wake up

from. This is why I study the Tibetan methods of mind training, ways to stop ignoring the obvious and just wake up.