

[The tombstone for Andrew Gunn McIver is in the Forest Hill Cemetery also
LOSS AND SELF-RECOVERY

What does “recovery” mean, getting back to where we were or regaining something that was lost? Or both? Just as we can’t step in the same river twice, getting back to where we were is hopeless. You can’t go home again, especially when you never were home in the first place. As for regaining something that was lost, do we even know what was lost? LOL.

The doctors and hospitals are filled with the phrase “new normal.” What a depressing thought. There is no such thing as a new normal. There is just normal and “normal” is as normal does. Pick up your bed Lazarus and walk. That’s the way to find “normal.” I tried to follow the doctors and nurses suggestions to go for the “new normal,” but finally gave that up and just worked with what was there. That then felt normal.

“I ran to the rock to hide my face.
The rock cried out “No hiding place!”
The rock cried out “I’m burning too,
And want to go to heaven the same as you.”

We are thrust or plunked down or back into life after sudden change. How do we know where we are? If it’s not obvious, then it is in the knee-jerk reactions, reactions that happen before we can reach them with any self-control.

These reactions, when realized, can be overwhelming and sleep or lying down is often the only solution. Rather than face the awkwardness of the moment, the raw uncomfortableness of being a sore thumb, we retreat into the shadows of sleep. We turn away and hope or vow to try again later.

I can’t manage to stay naturally on-point forever, but I give it my best shot and then seek shelter. My attention is not unwavering, except perhaps briefly. Then, like a gutter ball, I roll off course instead of continuing straight on. I take refuge in shadows rather than light. It’s just too bright.

What I tell my kids is, “just put one foot in front of the other

[The tombstone for Andrew Gunn McIver is in the Forest Hill Cemetery along the road and carry on." I know from my greenhouse days that plants have to just harden off or they will be too rank – weak. Things are still in flux, but I can feel the “setting in stone” coming, as change hardens into form. And waiting for the mold to set is nerve-wracking and I try to remain flexible while I still have any control. These times without Self are precious. I know that I should cherish them, but I can only do so much cherishing, like: when I feel like cherishing. We all know that the surest way to make something go away is to like it. LOL.

Each day I make some progress in taking life straight, just as it is. And where and when I fall down is just that, the end of that day and the moment when I seek shelter in naps or sleep. I can face it more each day; each day I’m tougher. Change brings change, and change (for me) takes some getting used to, acclimatizing. It seems that I form and reform, endlessly.

As for getting comfortable, I believe we sentient beings can pretty-much get comfortable almost anywhere. Before we know it, we have set up shop and are already in reanimation-mode, populating our environment with our Self, building cocoon after cocoon – housekeeping. It’s suffocating when there is no fresh air. And the Self is dead-set on closing all the loops and plugging up all the holes to reality, preferring cloying claustrophobia to fresh air every time.

I will add on here a comment I made for my friend Heather MacKenzie yestersay because it clarifies something about our inherent inner-secretary and executor and what we call “The Self.”

Heather: Let’s be clear. We could not function day-to-day without a personal secretary or executive. That’s hard-wired, so to speak. Where it rises to what we call “The Self,” IMO, is when our attachments, prejudices (for, against, or neutral), and fixations begin to accumulate on the executor. Like barnacles on a rock or pilot fish on a shark, whatever we become attached to or fixated on is what in the dharma is sometimes called “elaboration,” anything more than is needed to function.

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And so, to answer your question, I am not without an executor. The same Awareness that is (at heart) within you is also within me, meaning the awareness that cannot be altered. That's identical from before my stroke and after my stroke. And that was reassuring to discover!. What is missing or very-much less is the elaboration, what we pejoratively call "The Self," everything that is added on by us as a matter of housekeeping, prettying up the executor with our preferences until it amounts to an obscuration.

So, we are talking about encumbering the executor with our crap, so to speak, our BS, prejudices and druthers. And, even now, in the comparative silence of the present (so to speak) I can hear the scurrying of the rats and mice of elaboration working overtime to dress up this empty space of light with curtains and clouds of obscuration.

Any changed state, once changed, lends itself to decoration. As I become comfortable in my new space, there are those tendencies who want me to be more comfortable than is necessary and before I know it, I will find myself ensconced in a new Self, one with all the bells and whistles I don't need, but can't say no to.

To me, a more interesting question is, since the present is not dualistic, how much dualism or relative truth (from the past and future) is required for us to know we have been for a swim in the present and what we have learned from that experience. The present is the home of all experience. Even when we dwell on the past, we do it at the expense of the present. That concept interests me a lot.

For those of you who would like to have access to other free books, articles, and videos on these topics, here are the links:

http://traffic.libsyn.com/spiritgrooves/Links_to_Michael_Erlewine-V2.pdf

"As Bodhicitta is so precious,
May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,

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And may it ever grow and flourish”