

THE TWO SIDES OF LIFE

I have been asked what have I noticed that is different since my recent stroke. Aside from “everything,” I’ve notice one remarkable thing and I’m remarking on it here. LOL. It has to do with grasping a subject as opposed to letting a subject just arise, and I will have to attempt to explain.

I no longer find myself suggesting or putting things forth, i.e. thinking things up out of the blue. Instead, I now find myself more able to RESPOND to situations, but with a much more accurate and direct response. I probably should expand on this a little since it could go in one ear and out the other.

Where before I came up with all kinds of things, most sort of spontaneously (ideas, suggestions, themes, and so on), now I don’t find myself doing that. Yet, I do find myself more able to respond in immediate situations (quite spontaneously) and with useful information.

Whether this is a natural response on the part of stroke victims because of the clarity that results from blasting off a large part of the Self or what, I can’t say. And I don’t know how to phrase this, but I will hazard a try. For example, I find myself listening to what I myself say more than I can remember. In other words, instead of just understanding what I am saying, I too now feel I am benefiting and being informed by what I say (or what comes through me) in response to questions or situations that naturally arise.

I am not saying I feel any more “psychic’ than I use to or am in any way “telling fortunes.” That’s not it. What I do experience is the ability to strike to the heart of a situation, separating the wheat from the chaff and getting right down to the nitty-gritty. I was always pretty good at this, but I don’t remember my being part of whatever listening-audience there is, like: hearing myself speak. Now I do. I am going in deeper and with much less distraction than before. And it’s just happening instead of my doing it, if that makes any sense.

At the same time, as mentioned, I don’t find myself naturally coming up with much, which I used to. Instead, I now find myself responding more meaningfully to questions. Another

way to phrase this is that instead of grasping topics or ideas and bringing them forth, I now depend on letting these same topics and ideas reveal themselves as they will. It's basically 180-degree reversal in technique.

So, gain some, lose some. Another way of saying this is that I am able to listen better than before, but not just passively. My response to what I hear (like verbally) is to get right at the point. That is quite different than I remember.

And I have been watching this kind of switchover for decades, each of us gradually transitioning from coming up with stuff, making things happen, to the reverse, letting things happen. However, since the stroke, this trend seems to have sprung forward more emphatically. It always takes some getting used to, learning to let-go and allow things to just naturally happen instead of making them happen. It's a major difference, but also it is kind of subtle. Which side of the equation are you are? Ask yourself that.

Another way to say all this is that there is no real choice. After a certain point, this is the only way one any of us can do things, letting them happen as opposed to making them happen. Like the old song by Anthony and the Imperials, "Just Two Kinds of People in the World," any one of us is biased (or even limited) to one approach or the other. And, in my experience, it is time or age related.

When we are younger, we make things happen; as we get older we let things happen. Either way, things still happen from both sides

[Photo by me.]

"As Bodhicitta is so precious,
May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,
And may it ever grow and flourish"

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