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the Emergence Explorer

Questions for the Week of August 21, 2006



"On the Nature of Holes"



- Is a learning disability, a "hole?"
 - How do I know that it isn't me who has the hole?
- Has my inability to picture me pregnant kept me from being pregnant?

Do you know?

This Week's Questions

[These questions were posed by Colleen A.]

Questions asked from [The Layers of Aloneness - Introduction](#)

[Question 1] As a special education teacher who has worked with many students labeled Learning Disabled, I've often thought of their knowledge as "Swiss Cheesed." Is a learning disability, a "hole?"

[Answer] Great question, Colleen. The answer? No. A learning disability is not a hole and in fact, we all have "swiss cheesed" learning. Thus, while I can see what would make you use this metaphor, what you are calling "disabilities" would better be described as "symptoms"; the symptoms of people who learn

"differently."

For example, most normal folks struggle to understand how kids with Asperger's think. Why? Because normal folks do not treat ideas as trees to climb to the highest branch. In truth, kids with Asperger's are easy to understand given you have the skills to follow how they process ideas. And to mediate their learning style with gentle and patient but firm focusing reminders.

Similarly, most teachers struggle to get kids with ADD to be interested in required curriculums. However, kids with ADD simply process information, and relationships, differently than many other folks. In this case, to call their processing style a "disability" is ironic because, if my research is at all correct, the ADD processing style IS the norm.

Sadly, we humans tend to find fault with everything we can't experience as being easy. In a way, we treat "struggles" as the proof something is broken. Then, whenever we see this brokenness, we assign labels to it and look for medical or therapeutic remedies for what we now call, "conditions." For instance, in the case of ADD, we label kids who prefer connecting to others at the expense of connecting to ideas as a learning disability. And as a condition often requiring medical interventions.

In truth, ADD is a processing style, just like Asperger's and OCD. And while people who live this way to extremes do frequently require help, in truth, there are at least four processing styles, any one of which can be done to an extreme. ADD is just one of the four.

As for your question about "Swiss-cheesed" learning, what may be of some help here would be for me to describe some things I do consider to be "holes" in peoples' abilities to learn. Some examples? "Colors" for color blind people. "Sounds" for deaf folks. "Greek" for English speakers. "English" for Greek speakers.

What makes these things, "holes?" Just one thing. They all involve a person who has a "hole" in their ability to sense certain kinds of information. They literally go into shock when they try to take it in. Moreover, this shock is not at all related to their learning "style." Rather, it is related entirely to a sensory deficit and not to any processing deficit.

What I mean is, with "colors" for color blind people, these folks literally cannot take in and process colors in the same way as normal folks can. They literally have a hole in their ability to sense color.

Likewise, when English speaking people hear "Greek" sounds, they literally cannot hear many of these sounds and stay conscious. For instance, English speaking people often go into shock when they hear the sound of the letter "gamma" or the pronunciation of the Greek word for "tea." They literally cannot hear these sounds. This means English speakers have a hole in their ability to take in certain kinds of Greek information. In fact, this hole actually renders them close to deaf with regard to certain Greek sounds.

This "deafness" is a true learning disability. Why? Because it applies to all English speaking people regardless of how they process their thoughts and ideas.

[Question 2] As a teacher, how do I know whether a hole is mine or a student's? For example, sometimes I'll explain something, repeatedly, in different ways, to a student who isn't "getting it." Of course, I usually think I get it and that this hole is the student's "hole." However, I know, in theory, it could be me.

My question is, how do I know that it isn't me who has the hole? In other words, how do I know that it isn't a hole in me which keeps me from giving the student a clear explanation?

[Answer] Try this. Try looking from the student's perspective.

You and I have had many conversations wherein I've tried to get you to see yourself stuck in Layer 2. Here, I was the teacher and you, the student. So how did I do as a teacher? Not well. In many of these attempts, I failed to get you to see yourself as being in Layer 2, other than mentally and after the fact. So is it only you who did not "get it?" Definitely not. And while your question is about times wherein you are the "teacher," in the cases I'm bringing up, I am also the author of the teachings.

So the question is, can I have a hole in my own ability to experience my teachings? The answer? Absolutely. In fact, were it not for the holes I have with regard to my own teachings, I would have long ago quit teaching them, as I would have long ago lost interest in them. In other words, I love teaching because I "learn how to be a teacher" by "teaching how to learn." And because there is never an end to learning how to be a teacher. Just as there is never an end to what you can learn as a student.

What I'm saying is, as a teacher, you either connect to the student during the lesson or you don't. No connection. No learning. And while better teachers can connect to their students more often, even the best teachers fail much more than they succeed. This means they never finish learning how to teach.

What I'm saying is, the "holes" are always in both people. Always. Why? Because holes are always simply that people cannot connect. To each other, or to something in our world. This makes holes simply blind spots in peoples' abilities to connect to the beauty in each other. And to some beauty in our world. Especially, to the beauty in learning and in teaching.

So how do you fix this blind spot? Simply stop blaming, and it will all work out. Translation. Stop trying to solve problems in Layer 2, and just give in to that you might just need to be connected to a teacher in order to solve your problems. Together.

It's also a lot more fun that way.

[Question 3] The more time passes without me getting pregnant, the more I picture myself with just one child. I still daydream of having one or two more children. And I try to picture these scenes. But it takes more and more energy to do this. Where I'm going with this is, I sometimes blame myself for not having gotten pregnant, because I don't possess an unwavering image of having any more children. My question is, which came first, the chicken (my lack of more children) or the egg (my lack of the pictures of more children)? In other words, has my not being able to picture being pregnant kept me from being pregnant?

[Answer] No. In fact, neither answer is "true." Moreover, if you stop and think about it, no one ever knows the answers to chicken and egg questions. This, after all, is the point of the metaphor; that there is no real answer to the question. Interestingly enough, these answers function very similarly to Zen koans. You know. "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" Here, the question is fractally similar to the many absurdities we experience in life. There is no knowing the real answer, because we cannot rule out that the two things are simultaneous, rather than sequential.

So why do Zen Koans exist? To make us dig deeper into life. And to make us realize the absurdity in a lot of our questions. That you believe you have prevented yourself from getting pregnant because you have not pictured pregnancy well enough is certainly one such absurdity. It could just as easily be that you

simply could not picture what was not meant to be. Or forty other equally absurd possibilities, such as that you really doubted that your next child would be born into a good enough family. Or that the world wouldn't accept him or her. Or ten thousand other Layer 2 nonsensical excrements.

My point? Please stop doing this to yourself, Colleen. It makes your born child's life more stressful, and gives her a bad example for what a woman is responsible for. In other words, Colleen, you are a wonderful mother. And your daughter is lucky to have you. So stop asking absurd questions and just enjoy the child you have.

[Question 4] When I saw Michelangelo's sculpture of the "David" in Florence, the tour guide told us Michelangelo had said that "the David was always in there, in the marble. I simply chipped away all the stone around it." This statement has always amazed me. Is the "David" the hole that an artistic genius could see? If so is the hole, the "wholly perfect thing;" the "holy" thing?

[Answer] Yes.

[Question 5] Would it be better to think of a hole as being more like an opening through which things can pass, like a straw or a siphon, than as a void? If yes, then is it correct to say, we need unclogged spiritual "holes" in order to allow things like creative juices to flow through us? Or like a liquid soap dispenser, the more we pump (or work our creative muscles), the more likely the hole will stay clear.

[Answer] About holes being more than just voids, you are so right. Holes are never just voids.

About them being openings though which things can pass though? Here, Colleen, is where I'm not sure your metaphors work. You see, while your metaphors are beautiful, holes are more points at which the space / time we know dissolves than actual holes into some other place. This means nothing in our world can pass through, or even into these "holes," and still exist. Not liquid soap. Not creative juices. Not ourselves. Not even light.

In truth, then, nothing whatsoever can pass in either direction; into, or out of a hole, and still be what it began life as. Nothing. Moreover, nothing in our world can even enter these holes and still exist. Which means these holes can never be clogged, because nothing we know of can even exist within these holes to clog them.

Do you now have more questions than when you began? Me too. You see, understanding "holes" is a lot like understanding "love." The more you know, the more you realize how little you know. Why? Because we cannot actually see these things. They simply lie beyond our visual reach.

So how do we know holes even exist? Simple. We can see what exists around holes. And herein lies one of the best clues we have to understanding the nature of holes. (And the nature of "love" as well) You see, because we can see what is around holes, in a sense, we can see how holes affect our world. And us. So, while we cannot see the actual holes themselves, we can see the effect these holes have on our world. What we could very much call, "the symptoms" holes create.

Here, then, is how we can roughly approximate what holes are. We can explore the symptoms. Now consider what this implies, starting with this idea.

Everything in our world is made from light. Including us. This is what makes me so sure human consciousness is rooted entirely in our ability to visualize movement. Light is what happens when the

things in our world move. Thus, "visualizing movement" is seeing light. And because everything in our world is made from light, everything we see must be moving.

What else does this mean? It means that since everything in our world is made from light, visualizing light (visualizing what "moves") is the nature of "human consciousness." Why? Because "consciousness" is, by inference, the ability to see everything which exists. In our world, anyway. Which, by the way, is why, when we want to know if someone understands something we tell them, we ask them, "Do you see what I mean?"

To us, the "meaning" always derives from "what we can see." Which is what makes the essence of our "wounds," a wounded visual ability. Wounds asides though, let me ask you something. Is what I've been saying making it harder for you to understand holes? If so, please know, this difficulty is a good thing. You are supposed to be experiencing it. In fact, experiencing this difficulty is the proof you are beginning to understand holes. You see, holes are what you "cannot see." Not even in our imaginations. Which is why trying to picture holes feels like an impossible task. It is impossible. For us humans, anyway.

OK. So we cannot even imagine what holes look like. And I've just told you that the "meaning" we feel always derives from "what we can see." So how do we know what holes even mean is we can not see them? The answer? We infer this meaning. How? By observing what happens to what we can see of what immediately surrounds these holes. What I mean is, while we can never see the holes themselves, we can see what immediately surrounds these holes, the proximate matter which borders these holes. More important, we can also observe what happens to this proximate matter, which gives us at least one way to mentally visualize holes. We can visualize them as having the same qualities as the astronomer's "black holes." Which, is actually true.

This means we can learn something about holes by asking ourselves what is known about black holes.

So what do we know about the astronomer's black holes? We know that nothing in our world can pass through these holes and survive, including light. This is, after all, why we call these holes, "black holes." Inside these holes, it is truly black. There is no light whatsoever.

Here then is the real clue to understanding holes. No light can pass through them. Now consider what this means.

As I've already said, every single thing which exists in our world is made from light. At least, everything we humans can be conscious of. This allows us to define human consciousness as "the skill of picturing movement." Why? Because light is movement. The ultimate movement, in fact. It is movement at the fastest speed allowable in our world. Which makes it the ultimate physicist's constant. And a critical element in Einstein's theories of relativity.

So no light can pass through these holes. In a sense then, the basic substance from which everything in our world is made, including ourselves, cannot pass through these holes. What good then does knowing they exist do us?

Knowing they exist explains what "wounds" are. And points us in the direction of healing. Why? Because all "wounds" are holes in our ability to be conscious. All of them. Every one. This includes everything

from broken hearts and phobic fears of birds to lung cancers and toe fungi.

Moreover, while we can never actually see the wounds themselves, we can see what exists in the space immediately around these holes. And in doing so, stop falling into them. And into disintegrated human endeavors such as blame and rationalizing.

In the end, then, what you've suggested about holes being related to our spiritual condition is true after all. But rather than that we need to unclog these holes, in truth, we simply need to see what exists around them. Kind of like seeing water pour on the invisible man.

This then allows us to effortlessly circumvent these painful disintegrations and in doing so, remain conscious. Of our world, anyway. And more important, of each other.

So in the end, what does this make "holes?" It makes them the ultimate "wounds" in our very world. And the ultimate, "what we can not see." This makes learning to love "not knowing" the ultimate path to spiritual life. And the ultimate path to the other mysterious thing I mentioned earlier; the ultimate path to love itself.

[Question 6] Is surrendering to the idea that we have a hole and delighting in not the knowing a leap of faith?

[Answer] A leap of faith? Yes. In fact, it's one of the biggest leaps you can take, Colleen. On the other hand, once you have taken this leap, it usually becomes rather easy to feel delight in "not knowing." At least, about the person, place, or thing you admit this about. Of course, we have to admit this not knowing many, many times in a lifetime. Even so, I can say from personal experience, it gets easier as time goes on.



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