The Way Emergences Happen

How We Discover the Beauty in Life

This visual article briefly describes the way emergences happen, the five levels at which emergences occur. In essence, this sequence of five experiences shows the way healing progresses, from denial, to recovery, to becoming a teacher of recovery.

Step [1]: the "Failure-to-Connect Experience"

(In this experience, you are unaware that you even have a box)

This is a little story about the way emergences happen. It has taken us many years to find these words. More over, finding these words has been hard and so, to us, this little story is a big deal. A very big deal.

Perhaps what is also important to mention is something which is probably already obvious to you. That putting the moments in which peoples' lives change into words is always hard. For everyone. Even for us.

We didn't know this when we started though. More over, we have been very stubborn. How stubborn? We have actually been trying to find these words for almost ten years now. Why? Because we wanted to find a way for people to share what happens in these inspiring moments.

Even before we had these words though, we knew what happens to people in these wonderful moments. What happens is, people change inside, forever and ever.

“Emergences” is what we call these wonderful, forever-and-ever moments. "Emergences" are what make peoples' lives change for the better.

Here you see our first little drawing. What does it show?

It shows what we now know to be the first step in every life changing event, the beginning time in every single wonderful discovery. Actually though, this step is not really a step. It is just an experience. It is the experience of having no idea we are missing a step. Everything seems fine.

How could we not know? Well, this is what our little story is about. But for now, just know that in the beginning, we feel so fine that, even when we are asked, we still say there is nothing missing. I'm OK, we say. I'm doing well.

And we are OK. Mostly, that is. Except, of course, when we get near whatever is hidden in the box.

What is hidden in the box?

Perhaps the mysterious source of the fights we keep having with our spouse. Or perhaps the disagreements we sometimes have with our kids, or our parents, or with the boss. You know, the fights we hate to have but keep having and never know why? The ones we promise ourselves never to fight again and then somehow, we do anyway, over and over and over?

Sometimes too, when it gets really bad, we tell ourselves we will never ever talk to that person again. Ever. But since not talking to the person can get very lonely, (and because inside, we really do want to talk to this person), eventually, we always do talk again. Even though we promised not to. Unfortunately, because we have not yet realized there is a box, let alone that something important is in it, sooner or later, we end up having that same fight again. The same way we always have. The same fight, just on a different day.

It's not our fault, though. Really, it's not. It's just that no one has ever taught us that we should be looking for boxes.

Step [2]: the "BLocked Experience"
(In this experience, you discover that you have a box)

What happens next? Next we discover the box. Yea!

So what is this like, to discover we have a box? Actually, it's not too pleasant, really. One day we think

we are fine. The next day, we discover we are not fine. One day we think we are the Dali Lama. The next day, we find out we are the Dali unLama. In truth then, discovering you have a box is more like discovering you have the measles, only worse. With boxes, you feel like you have the bumps and itches on the inside rather than on the outside! Holy cow! What a bummer!

What also happens is your head gets stuck. Where? It gets stuck in thinking about how this box must have been there all along. And in how you never saw it, not even once. How could this have happened, you ask yourself? How could I not have noticed this box?

We call this yucky place, being in shock, and sometimes, you can be in it for a long, long time. Eventually though, you get OK again. But then, you realize, something else has happened too. What has happened?

You can not longer have those same old fights over and over again. Why? Because right in the middle of doing the over-and-over thing, you see it for what it is; a plain old, ugly, yucky, over-and-over thing. So what do you do now? At first, you think some more. Then, just when your head hurts so bad you think it might break open, and spill out all over, you give in. And you ask for help.

So what kind of help do you ask for now? You ask for a guide. Someone who knows how to help people to find the way to get inside of boxes. And get back out and live to tell about it.

But why would you want to get inside of that terrible, painful, yucky old box anyway?

Actually, you don’t. But something tells you, if you don’t go in there, you will keep on feeling yucky. So you kick and scream, or you cough and complain, or you read the carpet, or you read the air. In fact, you try every trick you've ever used to get you out of doing a "thing you don't want to do." But because you have changed, these tricks don't work anymore. Why?

Because once you know a box exists, you can never not know it exists. In fact, this not knowing thing is true even when you work really hard to not know it's there. Like when you eat or drink so much it makes you forget you exist. Or when you bury yourself so deeply in your job you forget you get tired. Whatever you do, though, it ceases to work. And no matter how you try, you simply can not stop seeing this dreadful old box.

Finally, then, you admit it. The time you can hide from this part of your life is over. Now and forever. The end has come.

So what happens next?

You move on to the next step. Before you do though, you do one more thing. Sadly, you admit, once again, to yourself, you are not yet the Dali Lama. Maybe by next Tuesday. But not today.

Step [3]: the “Basic Experience”

(In this experience, you discover that something good exists inside the box)

[3] The “Inside the Box” Experience (a first level emergence)

The “Basic Experience”

(In this experience, you discover that something good exists in the box)

Afterwards, you have 2 new points of view with which to understand this experience.
[1] You have the Inside the box Experience, and [2], you also remember that you once had a Block.

Here we are at the next part of our story, the part in which we actually go inside the box. Whoa, do we feel scared right before we go in. Why? Because right before we go into that box, we feel something. We feel certain that life as we know it will never be the same again. And we are right. Life will never be the same. Except we think it will never be as good as it was. And in truth, it will never be as bad as it was.

Unfortunately, knowing this *before we go into the box* is nearly impossible for us humans. Why? Because we just get scared too easily. By what? By things that look and feel different than what we already know. Jeez. After all, look how easily we get scared when we see someone whose skin is a different shade than ours is. Or when we see a holy place that has different doors and windows than ours, or different music and seating arrangements.

The truth is, then, we humans get scared very easily. And very often. Just like babies do. As to why this is, I sometimes think it is because compared to the real Dali Lama, we *are* babies.

Sometimes though, I wonder if even the real Dali Lama gets easily scared too. More over, sometimes, when I am in a really happy, serene place, which doesn't happen too often at all, I think that he, too, is just like us. Only he knows he is. And this makes all the difference. Whatever the case, we go into the box. So what happens after we go in the box? Does anything change?

Yes. In fact, a whole heck of things change. For one thing, we get scared less. So although we still at times get scared just like before, because we now know what is in the box, we get scared less. And being less-scared is a good thing, don’t you think?

We also get what big people sometimes call, "perspective," something which is a very important thing to

grownups. And sometimes to babies too. Why? Because every time we get it, we get smarter and braver. How?

Going into a box gives us a new way of seeing what's out here, in the rest of our lives. Big people call this thing, a new point of reference. So what is it like to get a new point of reference?

It's kind of like playing a connect-the-dots games only way more fun. More important, just like playing a connect-the-dots game, after we connect these dots, we get to see something we never even guessed was hiding there. We get to see that what was scaring us is not so scary. How? We connect our first discovery, "knowing there is a box," to our new discovery, "what it's like to be inside the box."

For us, this is like we become the Dali Lama for a moment. Only we are not him. We are us!

Wow!

Step [4]: the "Personal Experience"
(In this experience, you discover that you can use the good you found inside the box)

Are you getting tired? Do you need a nap?

If you do, it's OK. Fine, really. We like talking to you. And if you want to take a nap, we'll be right here when you get back. As for those of you who would rather we keep going, here is what happens next.

Remember, when we left off last, we were looking inside the box. Then after we did, we felt better. A whole lot better. After all, we got to see that the thing inside the box wasn't at all as scary as we once

thought it might be.

OK. So is this all there is to this discovering boxes thing?

Sometimes, it is. Why? Because some folks, after they unBLock a box, feel so much better they feel they would be fine if they were to stay there for the rest of their lives. And it really is quite fine if that's what they do. After all, not all of us aspire to Lama-hood.

For those of us that do, though, we seem to always want to see more. And want to explore more. And want to discover more and learn more. Why? Because we, the aspiring-to-Lama-hood people, have a hard time letting this discovery be all that we learn. Why? Because we somehow know that if we ever want to achieve Lama-hood in this lifetime, that we need to do the next part too.

Do we really? Do we really need to do the next part?

Maybe. No one knows really. As for achieving Lama-hood, no one we know is even sure this is a possibility for us normal folks. Beside, some folks think we already have achieved Lama-hood but just don't know we have. Wouldn't that be a bummer!

If you ask me, though, I think we haven't quite yet, and that if we want to have a chance at Lama-hood, that we need to try really hard not to try so really really hard. If you get what I mean. Or not. Either way though, if we stop now, we will still have a really good life. Only we will not quite reach Lama-hood. Not yet, anyway. If we do want more, though, what do we do next?

What we do next is, we spend a whole lot of time being unable to stop thinking about the dots you just connected, the dots which connect the time you did not know the box existed to the time you went in and saw what was in the box.

Please know, this kind of thinking about dots is very, very hard. I guess that's why it is very, very optional. Mostly, too, it happens only to people like me, people with big heads. This is not to say we have big ego’s though. It just means we have big empty spaces in our heads which we just love filling up.

Some people call us “learners.” Others call us things that our mommy's said we should never say, unless we want to get into trouble. Some people like getting into trouble, though. And some people like saying these troubling words. Whatever the case though, what is really important is what we call ourselves.

So who are we? In truth, we are courageous explorers. Why? Because we are people who keep looking inside boxes even when we get really, really scared. Sometimes too, if we keep looking long enough and hard enough, we also make a new discovery. We discover a third point.

This third point is what I've added to the drawing I've placed above. It's the point we use to connect our previous two points, [1] the Inside the Box experience, and the [2] Outside the Inside the Box experience, to how we used to live our lives. In other words, this new point helps us connect what we just discovered to whole rest of our lives.

This third point is a very big, important one. And when we see it, it means, we are getting closer to Lama-hood.

Step [5]: the "Teacher's Experience"
(In this experience, you discover how emergences happen)

OK. If you have made it this far, you know that what is coming is very important. In fact, we are about to go where very few men and women have gone before. No. Not Star Trek. Even better. How can this be? Because if you have made it this far, then what has happened to you is, you feel inspired to teach what has happened to you to others.

Unfortunately, finding the words to teach what has happened is just about the hardest thing a person could ever do. Why? Because what you're really trying to do is to get people to make the same discoveries you have made. Only you have yet to discover that this is what you are trying to do. So you do what everyone else does when they don't know this. You talk about doing it.

This place is a very lonely place. It is also where a lot of the most wonderful, incredible, amazing people live, for long, long times. In fact, I would guess that there's not a single human being who reaches this point who does not spend most of their life trying to tell other people about what they have discovered.

Unfortunately, "telling people" is not what "teaches people." "Telling people" is just the way teachers talk to each other about teaching people.

So what happens if you get to this point, the point wherein you can't stop aspiring to Lama-hood? You become a teacher. And there are a lot of ways you can become a teacher, only we usually don't recognize most of ways as the way you become a teacher.

Grand mothers and grand fathers who have made it this far are usually some of the best, most wonderful-est teachers we can ever study with. Sadly, many people see them only as old people and worse; as useless.

They are not useless. They are teachers. And we need them so badly, it just makes me cry to think how badly we miss seeing most of them as the wonderful teachers they are.

My grandpa was one of these teachers. And when he was teaching me one day, my family just told him to shut up. God, how I wish I could have heard what he never got to say to me.

Sometimes, too, I worry, when I'm teaching, that people will tell me to shut up too. In truth, it's already happened. A lot, in fact.

Has this ever happened to you too? Has anyone ever told you to shut up when you were trying to teach them something?

I hope not. Or if it has, I hope you will not quit teaching. And that you don't ever shut up. You see, the most beautiful thing we could ever discover is that we are *all* teachers. And that we *all* make discoveries. And that we all can reach Lama-hood.

More over, I, for one, would really like to hear about your discoveries. Really, I would.

After I take my nap, that is.

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