

MEDIATIONS
FOR MENTAL
HEALTH



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BATES

THE MEDITATIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

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In loving memory of Neil.

On the Issues of Care

1. We know the value in times of war, that can be placed upon the capture of an enemy weapon; to take it apart piece by piece, reverse engineering its design, providing us with the necessary knowledge in order to build a perfect replica, or to indeed improve upon the original design. One does not simply remove the paint from the exterior alone and then expect that the creation of an object that looks exactly the same visually will function in the same way as the actual weapon when it is merely a statue of such. This would be akin to building the shell of a car and expecting it to function as a car should without any consideration for what is underneath.

It follows therefore, that we must ask why it is that when we speak of many physical and mental health issues an individual may experience, why we would expect to create a lasting correction by analysing the exterior alone; this would be akin to a repair of the exterior alone following a plane crash and then not even considering why the plane crashed in the first place.

2. As the plane that crashes due to malfunction will not be repaired solely by repairing the exterior alone, the human mind or body will not be repaired by addressing the exterior alone. A person has high cholesterol? 'Let us feed them less cholesterol' they say, a person is suffering from depression? 'Let us feed them a drug of course to address this symptom and make all appear as it should be.'

You see, cholesterol is a case where we have at last looked deeper and a result of which is to realise that painting over the cracks of the exterior can actually pose a greater longer term risk; not only have we failed to analyse and address the source of the issue but we shall now fail to recognise its presence at all by hiding the valuable signs it attempted to provide us with.

3. You are depressed? Let us therefore address that hormonal imbalance that you have placed upon yourself, let us not consider the complex beauty of the human psyche and peel back the layers to address the source of that unhappiness for that is a task of greater work and one that can be brushed aside; out of sight and out of mind. But is it out of mind? Does the new coat of paint prevent the plane from a further malfunction? No, of course not! Then why would we simply paint over the cracks when we apply this principle to the human body or mind?

4. 'But I am a simple painter, I have no knowledge of matters such as that of the metal work specialist, the scientists of aerodynamics, the mechanics and electricians.' For that I may commend you in your honesty and no doubt with that sole focus on your profession alone, a fine painter you may be! Stick to the task at hand and if you perceive imperfections in your canvas then it must be raised to those who are responsible for the canvas. 'Ah yes, the project manager, they had already employed other specialists to complete their tasks before mine and now my work is to take place on a perfect canvas.' The delegation must be admired, for a project manager to attempt to have equal skills and knowledge in a multitude of areas as great in each as the experts in that area would be impossible; the electrician has spent a lifetime studying his art, the aerodynamics specialist the same, so too the mechanic, yourself as the painter and the same applies to the project manager in the art of their planning, procedures and their skills of delegation. Yet it would seem that we expect the

general medical practitioner to not just have knowledge in a multitude of complex fields relating to health, but to also know more in those areas than those who have specialist knowledge and expertise dedicated to that particular area alone and indeed we encourage this act as part of their education; if we just employ the painter we can fix the appearance and all will be well. Paint over the wounds that the nutritionist could heal, paint over the wounds that the psychologist could heal and then, once enough time has passed that the paint no-longer serves to hide these wounds as they continue to grow; we shall paint over them some more.

5. What of the Mental Health therapist or councillor? It is true, that the general practitioner may be asked to send a person to therapy to address their wounds on occasion, this is a delegation that is within their set rules; but they fail to see that it is a delegation of care and maintenance to the wound itself; maintaining its existence, encouraging its growth and power rather than its destruction. Why therefore, would we expect that this wound shall heal? It can not be the case if we are sympathising with it, reinforcing its existence and convincing the owner that this wound is indeed part of them; they will instead become part of the wound; they express its qualities through their daily interactions. Now that wound is greater than it is in itself, it is now so great in power that the person lives in accordance with its desires.

6. Do they appear to you as if they are above you? Speaking down to you in the same manner of which a parent may educate their child? You can of course feel the love and care in their words, but within you now lies another feeling; as you are not a child; instead you feel yourself being patronised by these words, yet you struggle to see the harm they are inflicting due to the care they portray also. But see it or not, that feeling will reinforce your ailment; you are now sure you are the one who is not of equal mind and status to them, you are not fine, you can not see reason in the way a normal adult such as they can. You are now sick my friend and therapy, despite its good intent, has reinforced your illness.

7. If a man is to be declared obese as a result of his height and weight then another of equal height and weight must therefore also be obese. 'But this second man can not be obese, look at him!' Yes, he has far less body fat and more muscle so we must consider this too when we judge whether a man is obese or not. Similarly, if we say a man is obese based on a reference point we may suggest that a man needs medical intervention when he falls just above that marker we have created that signifies risk; if he visited a week sooner and was indeed a mere two pounds lighter, but lighter enough to just fall below the risk marker, is it right that he would be deemed healthy? Do we suggest that an athlete who runs a single 100th of a second quicker than a qualifying time is a fast runner and the one who falls a single 100th of a second behind our qualifying time is a slow runner? It may even be that the qualifying runner is at the peak of their career and that second runner is much younger and has 5 or more years of potentially improving that time. How can they improve? In their strength, acceleration, stamina, start and running technique; each we can analyse in more detail; the technique of each section of their stride, the movement patterns of their arms, their torso positioning, their stride length and more. As their coaches and the athlete undertake this process they may do so by also analysing the effects changes to one aspect may have elsewhere. We could increase the strength of the quadricep muscles to add more power and, if we find we can do so without altering their size and thus aerodynamics, does

this mean that they can now implement this change without a negative affect? Perhaps, but next they will consider the impact of the change in relations between the whole muscular system; the technique must not be impacted negatively due to the change in strength of one muscle relative to that of all others. The performance of the whole does not depend on the strength of each individual component in themselves, but also the way in which they relate to every other component too. The athlete is lucky to have such assistance, for it would be easy to instead simply prescribe them with a drug to make them faster; as is the approach we tend to take with an individual who wishes to improve their mental health.

8. When science serves us with new findings that can progress our infrastructure we will see a government praise its researchers and delight in their nations ability to innovate. However, if we were to apply this to the progress in health research the first considerations are not the publics health; the affect of implementation on the economy and the pride lost at admitting the previous advice was incorrect are considered to be far more important than that of their peoples immediate health. Should they not see that those who admit to their own errors gain trust rather than attempting to cover up an error by shifting their stance slowly over a number of years during which, the public become increasingly aware that they are still giving incorrect advice? It is admirable to admit a fault; science will always progress, our most rational theories may sometimes be disproven later on; unless, we made a graver mistake of never giving advice at all, we will always have these situations arise, it is part of human progress and should be viewed with a mind of reason; an opportunity to be the government overseeing a wonderful breakthrough science has made for humanity's future. Consider the aspect of trust, for he who has no ill feeling of being proven incorrect and therefore will always be open to expressing his mistakes or his uncertainty; is that not a person of which we would trust when they are indeed expressing certainty?

How we Should See Mental Health - Through the Constellation

Let us imagine a sphere the size of a beachball and within it an exact replica of a section of our universe containing billions of stars; let's say you are looking at and through this replica universe, you notice a star disappear and look closer. More stars disappear, some new ones appear, some are changing size, occasionally dramatically. You then notice another correlation and look once more with intent; it appears there is a relation between a change to the stars on the right-hand side of the sphere relative to a change on the left. There appears to be a very small dark sphere, barely approaching the size of that of a marble, in the precise centre of this small spherical universe where any new stars appear to be produced from. Through the exact point of longitude where the opposing hemispheres join, you see it marked by a narrow path way, like a dark clear beam from the centre sphere to the surface of the sphere, perhaps we can compare it too the image of a whole drilled directly through the intersecting point of the left and right side, from the surface to the core. This spherical universe of ours is called the Constellation...

From birth and even before, we begin to place the first stars in our constellation, these are the memories of our earliest experiences being stored according to their power and direction of that power; that is, the emotional tag we have attached to them. To the right we have the star for the first time you remember seeing grandma, she gave you that first sweet, you liked staying at grandma's; a very strong positive emotional tag, and thus a larger star: the largest in the right hemisphere of the constellation, the side of only positive experiences. Now look to the left of our constellation, a big star is added early on with a negative emotional tag and therefore we place this on the side of all negative experiences. Why is this star the largest yet? It was the first time as a baby you had that thought: 'mums gone'. Now, whilst this star may quickly fade in brightness and its size quickly diminish as it begins its journey from the centre of the constellation, it can express that energy once more through its impact on the proliferation of future stars we add to the constellation; experiences that are perceived as being akin to that initial experience of being left by mum are stored with larger negative emotional tags than they would carry otherwise. As far then as these stars may travel from the centre of the constellation with time their existence remains.

If we are to apply the laws of gravity to our miniature universe, which of course we must, we can also say that the larger the star the greater its resultant force of pull; this force therefore will be expressed throughout our constellation and as such affect our perception of all other future experiences, thoughts and actions. Those most pleasurable or painful experiences are represented on either side by the largest and brightest stars and as such have the biggest impact on our lives.

In the small centre sphere one can find harmony, like that feeling you have when full of gratitude and inspiration as only in the centre can a thought, state of being or a persons energy be at its optimal level. It is that passageway from the centre to the surface that every single thought must take in order to successfully make a decision based on reason alone. In order to pass without distortion, the constellation must be in a perfect state of balance; that is, there must either be no stars, or an exact mirror image of pull strength on both sides.

The pull strength of a previous experience and thus, its influence over our future thoughts and decisions, is dependant upon the strength and polarity of its emotional tag; that is, the largest stars in either hemisphere of your constellation will have the greatest pull strength. But another factor is the age of the event, with a more recent event having a greater pull strength due to its closer proximity to the centre sphere, than that of one of equal size but from a much more distant event. As such, a poor dinner that you may have had last night will affect your food choices today to a greater degree than an equally poor dinner you consumed ten years ago. Or, take the time you first fell off your bike, you cut your knee and cried as a result, it is this painful experience that will strongly influence that fleeting thought the following day as to whether or not you should challenge yourself by attempting to ride without your hands on the handle bars.

Please imagine another scenario to enable me to show how your own constellation can take form in way of memories and knowledge. Despite its implausibility, imagine that you have no memory, no experiences, and let us say you are living in an age of the hunter gatherer. You begin to feel hungry and start to search for food. Wondering through woodland and into an open plain, you soon come across a lake. You see animals drinking from the lake. You see a variety of colourful, vibrant plants surrounding the sides of the lake stretching back as far as you can see. Many of these plants have fruits hanging off their branches, the fruits look incredibly appealing as they glisten in the afternoon sun. You perceive this place as a little paradise, you have your choice of the fruits, or even the deer you see drinking from the lake. Internally, you have already begun associating this place as being one of a positive experience, even before you consume any food. Once you consume that food and indeed you enjoy it too, you increase the positivity further and store this experience including all visual aspects of the environment as such. Then let us say that the next time that you find food is somewhere similar; again there is water, there are animals drinking from the water, those experiences are going to add up over time enhancing their power in the constellation through their highly pleasurable association with finding food. Although the first time, without any memory or experiences we can say that you eventually got lucky in your quest for food, you now have some knowledge and experiences to call upon. Thus, the next time you are looking for food, you may see tropical trees in the distance and will wonder if there's a lake there too and thus potential it is a location where you may find food. This is how all our previous experiences have an effect on the decisions that we make depending on how we have perceived those experiences. Conversely, if we now imagine though that in this later example, you walked through the trees on your search for a lake and food and as you find the lake you realise that you have been stalked by a tiger, from which you barely escape; you now have a strong negative experience which balances positive emotions towards this type of location. In future you will be more cautious, the lake is no longer a fantasy for it is no-longer perceived as only positive.

There is nothing to stop our constellation expanding and as we add more experiences, remember this; *every* experience, which includes our thoughts as a thought in itself is an experience too, is added to the constellation; most may barely shine for a moment, some even just appearing and disappearing without being noticeable in the middle of the sphere; brushing our teeth and such others that we deem as no deviation from our normal daily experiences.

Every one of us gives birth to our own constellation and despite the fact that it is created by our initial external experiences, the way we perceive those experiences with respect to their emotional tag has an impact on how we perceive future experiences as well as the direction of, and emotional tag applied to, our internal thoughts: all of which over time create and then edit our values map; that is, both moral and foundational values. Picture the person, who feels a higher resentment than most to people who swear in public. No doubt they have experienced an event, or more likely in this case a combination of events as would apply to teachings by way of the environments they grew up in, parents, teachers and such, that have created this perception and as must be the case; the swearer has just attacked the persons values more so than it may have done to another. Whilst you may consider it just a slight over reaction on their part, they may be offended by your perception to their reaction; as you may be too when they spoke of you overreacting to the time they failed to give you adequate notice of cancelling a planned night out. The importance we place on these moral values is the result of our unique constellation of experiences and the subsequent affect it has on their values.

As more experiences are added through our lives, they create another everchanging network and that is the one of the aforementioned foundational values. These are the values that define a person; the value placed on all aspects of life and the society we have created, such things as; appearance of their body, the importance of their physical health, their clothing choices, interests, career choices etc. It is the correlation of these values as a result of the status of a persons unique constellation that dictates how important something is to the individual. Of great importance with regards to a persons mental health is to understand this, but to then also understand that these two networks are never static, thoughts and experiences are ever present and therefore, the constellation is always in motion and any adjustment in the constellation will have a corresponding adjustment in the values network.

Any alteration to the constellation, through its resulting shifts in the values network, is what we would then term the creation of a new environment; that is, if we consider even no change in an external environment, the values shift, no matter how small it may be, will see the relationship between the person and their environment change and thus, the environment as perceived by the person has indeed changed. We know that issues with an individuals mental health arise when they fail to adapt to a new environment and as such, we must give the understanding of their values network the upmost importance if we wish to enable them to adapt to the new environment; for first they must be aware of the new environment. Whilst many of these shifts are small and can change the environment gradually over time, in the case of emotionally traumatic experiences in particular, these shifts can be sudden and dramatic.

The Meditations

1. Self-love is born from knowing this: without that nose I used to hate I would not have excelled with my love of makeup and fashion that has given me the most wonderful career and life. For it is that pain of being teased in my childhood, that void in beauty and appearance of which I felt, that in turn created the high value in appearance that has seen me thrive.
2. Of your loathing to your overactive mind let me ask you this: as you read these words can you see the way I have chose to love my own and allow it to flourish? Just because the mind is not a thing of which we can see or touch such as a violin, it does not mean that it is not a talent that can be nurtured, a skill you can practice and for the one who loves doing so that skill will find its direction and serve them greatly in life.
3. Do you hold any resentment? Then know this: the greater it shines, be it conscious in the moment or not, it is incredible to watch the power of its presence but to do so will only cause yourself harm. In choosing to simply watch as it shines so brightly, you will likely soon be watching with ill health.
4. 'But you don't know what they did to me!' you may say. Consider this, did that loveless parent not cause you to provide the kindness and love that you now show to your own children? Are you not proud of those children also and not want to change them? If indeed you are, then tell me what you would like to change once more; for in changing your own upbringing you would be changing yourself, in changing yourself you would change the character you admire and love in your own children.
5. Why did they insult you when you had done nothing to them? Maybe I should ask why you have allowed it to be an insult to you? For anytime we pass judgement we only really judge ourselves; they see their failings in themselves in comparison to the way your friends smile around you, the way you have created your own family and independence, the way the boy they once like is now your partner and as such they have seen themselves as below you. It is a sad place to be and in the need to raise the perception of themselves relative to you, they will find a way to attack and bring you down.
6. Should we hold so much hatred when it was so long ago, those memories of being bullied at school? If it were not for the emotional power of that pain, would the pain from your lisp have not created the great writer you are? Had the pain from that pointed tooth not in anyway led to the path you took in becoming the highest of all cosmetical dental surgeons?
7. Yes, many do feel the desire for the feeling of being loved as they would like by a parent, but then why would they ever grow if they have all they ask for. But this of course is an impossibility, for by the nature of events as this; any imbalances will be restored. That is, the challenge may well come from being bullied, or a particularly strong adversary to balance that of the overly supportive parents.
8. Before you tell me that you would of course be happy if you were doing a particular profession, but you are too old, or it is too risky financially as you have to pay bills or such;

show or tell me about all the hours of time you spend in its pursuit anyway in the evenings and weekends because you love it so much. As only if you can do so can we remove all of those excuses.

9. So many times I have said I have. I have this, I have that and yet of course forget this; I have far less and yet, greater in the same moment. The less as I only have my mind, the greater once I realise the power of it.

10. As children we indeed find being told 'no' hard to handle, especially when we quickly are made aware that the newest trend items, or clothing brands etc bare a huge influence on your position within in your own hierarchy. We quickly learn that having these things is pleasurable and the opposite is painful. It can not surprise us therefore, that we as adults are as we are today; chasing the newest car, flocking to the designer clothes sales and displaying all to our peers for recognition.

11. In answer to that question we ask 'Why me?', let me tell you this; what has been brought upon you is what is needed for your own growth, to lead you to that of what will fulfil you most in life. Consider what challenges you have faced have not shown this to be true; for without ever experiencing challenge we would never have felt the need to learn to walk.

On The Human Survival Mechanism

Let me briefly tell a story relating to a lady I know. This lady was relatively young and had recently got engaged but a traumatic experience was soon to follow by way of which she lost her fiancé in a plane crash. This tragedy consumed her so much that with any attempt she would make to return to normal life her emotional state only regressed once more. In speaking to her on recollection of these initial months, when prompted she recalled that there were occasions where she momentarily did feel at peace; moments when she had decided to spend some time painting. She laughed as despite drawing being a childhood love she had never really painted before and certainly not as an artistic expression in her adult life. When I asked what it was she had painted in those moments she said, she was unsure why, but she had begun attempting to paint the Minoan Palace in Crete, but not as it remains now, for she had visualised its appearance surrounded by people in the peak of the Minoan civilisation. At the time we were speaking of this, it was a few months following the loss and the lady had just returned from Sicily, she had become close to suicidal and hope that the change of environment would perhaps save her. She told me it was a strange choice of location as she had not felt compelled to travel there before now. I asked if she did any painting on the trip to which told me that she had not however, she did spend a lot of time visiting and admiring pieces of art and of course ancient landmarks. It was at this stage that I said I could tell her the reasons for the location and her choice of activities.

‘What do you mean?’ she said.

‘Tell me what your fiancé did?’

‘Well, he was a writer’ she replied. At this moment I could see her pause as she was considering something.

‘It was a huge dream and ambition of his, to travel to many historic locations of which we had not discovered their importance until relatively recently and therefore their culture and beliefs are new to us, he wanted to travel to many of these locations and to publish a book describing the real and accurate history of the people who inhabited the areas at the time in order to show how their culture, religions and society contrasts to western society today. Infact, it was during one of these trips that the plane crash occurred’

‘This is fascinating I said! So why are you not pursuing painting yourself when life is not only telling you that you should be doing so but it is even telling you what to paint?’

‘But, I am never going to be skilled enough to compete with the level of the artists who manage to make a living from their work, I am too old and can only practice when I am not at work.’

‘Just paint.’ I said.

Although she was only able to do so around her full time employment, she was soon spending every evening and weekend doing so and most of her thoughts now related to this new endeavour. She continued to work during the day and paint in the evenings for sometime before she approached me once more with an idea. Today, she is the creator of a book of paintings of historical temples and monuments from ancient civilisations and with each can be read a brief description of what life may have been like for the civilisation at the time. She also mentors others in ways of using art not just as a pursuit in itself but as a means to explore their creativity through matters that are important to them. Is she happier now? What do you think?

It is worth noting with this story the gradual indicators or signs that she began receiving from the moment that huge value shift was created. These signs are a result of the human survival mechanism which is always chasing the optimal position for a person to sustain their survival and with the evolution of our species being largely the evolution of the human brain, that survival mechanism is in tune with this. Therefore, if the perceived ability to survive begins to fall by way of a decrease in a persons happiness in their environment, the survival mechanism will work to encourage them to see how to adapt to this value shift. Of course, in this case the value shift was huge, instantaneous and the grief was such that the signs such as the urge to and the enjoyment of painting were not responded to initially. In cases of such that emotional state may deteriorate further, prompting larger signs and in extreme cases of those who have perceived death, the survival mechanism will result to desperate measures and the person feels so compelled to do something it literally blinds them from all other thoughts, it is their calling and in following it they adapt to their new environment.