







Scratch critiques Daniel, and Daniel critiques Scratch

March, 2005 – October, 2006

Author	Message
<p>Daniel Mackler Site Admin</p> <p>Joined: 03 Aug 2006 Posts: 525 Location: New York City</p>	<p>Posted: Sun Oct 29, 2006 12:56 pm Post subject:  quote  edit  IP Scratch critiques Daniel, and Daniel critiques Scratch</p> <hr/> <p>I found a few old posts of mine from early 2005 that I saved in MS Word. I was using the name Truthtraveler on the forum then, not Daniel Mackler. These posts were mistakenly deleted from the old forum (my administrative misuse of the "pruning" function) and I am glad to be able to repost them – because they are particularly interesting and informative.</p> <p>The background: I was critiqued by a forum member named "Scratch," who, after engaging in some public back-and-forth posting with me, deleted his posts. (He later returned as "Scratch II," and then deleted his posts again.) What remains are my critiques of his posts, which, from what I recall, basically address every point he made in his posts. [Regardless, I think this document comfortably.]</p> <p>Note: I do not presently stand by all the things I wrote then! I think I was somewhat grandiose – at least more so than I am now – and missed the mark to some degree. But you be the judge.</p> <p>-Daniel</p> <p>P.S. I plan to comment on these posts from my present point of view after doing the reposting.</p> <hr/> <p>Daniel Mackler</p> <p>http://iraresoul.com</p> <p>Last edited by Daniel Mackler on Sun Oct 29, 2006 1:11 pm; edited 1 time in total</p>
<p>Daniel Mackler Site Admin</p> <p>Joined: 03 Aug 2006 Posts: 525 Location: New York City</p>	<p>Posted: Sun Oct 29, 2006 1:04 pm Post subject:  quote  edit  IP</p> <hr/> <p>FIRST EXCHANGE WITH SCRATCH</p> <p>Background: Scratch wrote a lengthy critique of my iraresoul.com website and my point of view, and then later deleted it. Unfortunately I have no record of his original post, except as follows, in what I quote of him. What follows is my first reply to him.</p> <p>FROM: March 26, 2005</p> <p>Hi Scratch,</p> <p>Sorry it's taken me so long to reply. I've been working on a different project and haven't had a chance until now.</p> <p>Scratch wrote:</p> <div data-bbox="587 1816 1344 1879" style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"><p>You strike me as a sincere seeker, and I applaud your uncompromising passion for truth, your commitment to honesty,</p></div>

and your courage to squarely face your own shadows and sorrows. That said, I know you will welcome a few observations and questions.

You are right – I most certainly do welcome your observations and questions, and have been thinking them over for the past few weeks. I agree with much of what you say, and some of it I question.

Scratch wrote:

First, I think we can agree that neither one of us is fully enlightened - which means that neither of us possesses full self-awareness, perfect integrity, or complete objectivity.

Agreed. I'm not fully enlightened...yet.

Scratch wrote:

You've probably come to the conclusion, as I have, that the spiritual path is sometimes perilous. In our partial blindness, it's exceedingly easy to fall into self-deceptive traps - and to have motives that are unclean and hidden from ourselves.

Agreed.

Scratch wrote:

As you know, the shadows within don't want to be brought to light - our inner wounds resist healing, our deep untruths resist honest examination. From my understanding of your essays, I believe we are in agreement on these points.

You're partially right here about my agreement. Yes, there is always some resistance to healing, because of the painful ramifications inherent in the healing process, but underneath that there remains a desperate desire for the shadow to be brought to light at all costs... But I sense you would agree with this too.

Scratch wrote:

It is also clear that, as humans, we possess certain frailties of mind. History is littered with ideas that were carefully reasoned, seemingly self-evident, widely accepted - and flat-out WRONG. The brain and its beloved children - our thoughts - are notoriously unreliable as reflections of reality. No matter how strongly we FEEL something to be true, it doesn't make it so.

Feelings can be distorted, no doubt, but they can also tell the truth. When ancient traumas are resolved the unconscious dissolves, and then feelings have no choice but to be right on the money!

Scratch wrote:

If we accept these points as given, we must also draw the logical conclusion, that on the spiritual path we must be exceedingly humble, cautious, and precise to avoid potential pitfalls.

If we recognize ourselves to be largely dishonest, yes, it's terribly

wise to be cautious and precise. But what about if we recognize ourselves to be largely honest? The most humble route then can be the most daring one.

I sense you feel I am much less honest with myself than I believe myself to be.

Scratch wrote:

In my opinion, the spiritual seeker resembles a scientist. We try to be very observant and objective. We probe ourselves for potential biases. We make careful analyses, and from these, make tentative theories, which we maintain a willingness to revise or abandon in the face of contrary evidence.

Agreed.

Scratch wrote:

The reason I like the analogy is because good scientists are disciplined and precise in their thinking, impersonal, honest, and humble.

I agree with all of this...except impersonal. If a scientist is truly impersonal then he is out of touch with himself. I find impersonal scientists totally dull. And mostly they contribute NOTHING to the greater good.

Scratch wrote:

When one reads a scientific journal, one notices the great pains taken to utilize precise language, to avoid making broad generalizations, and to acknowledge epistemological limitations.

Most scientists who publish in scientific journals are terrified to step out of the box and take a risk. And heaven forbid they look too deeply within. That is the true risk.

Scratch wrote:

Again, due to our inherent capacity for self-deception, I believe the spiritual life should be approached with the same kind of rigor, precision, caution, and care.

Why such caution? Let's be daring and try something new for a change! What have we really got to lose?

Scratch wrote:

When I'm finished writing a piece, I retrace each and every sentence, asking myself, "Is this true? Can I know with 100% certainty that this is true?" I often find myself discarding large portions of work, which, under honest scrutiny, reveal themselves to be untrue - or simply unknowable. Sometimes sentences need to be re-worked, or I need to do further thinking on a subject, so that I might more accurately clarify what I mean.

I agree, and I try to apply this same rigor to my writing.

Scratch wrote:

Language is an imperfect tool, and I find it's a terrible, if not altogether impossible, challenge to avoid stating un-truths (which is why I generally prefer silence!).

I don't agree. I think language is a pretty darn good tool for getting across a point. In fact, I think it's the best one we've got. I myself am tired of being silent. I'm ready to speak.

Scratch wrote:

My friend, you are a bold writer, which makes for fantastic reading. Unfortunately, boldness often comes at the cost of precision and caution, and therefore may not always lend itself to truth-telling.

I find that most of the people I alienate are not alienated by my lack of precision...but precisely because of my precision! They realize what I'm saying and it terrifies the hell out of them.

Scratch wrote:

Let me give an example of what I mean. One of your essays is entitled: "Most Meditation Teaches Mice To Be Happy With Their Lot." The theory is provocative, and no doubt contains some degree of truth, but can you say with certainty that it's absolutely true? Do you know for certain that it's a statement of fact?

I'm pretty darn sure. I've been observing this one for a while, and I'll put my money behind it.

Scratch wrote:

There are people who have devoted a lifetime to exploring or researching various kinds of meditation. Even they wouldn't be qualified to make such a broad statement.

And I know lots of psychologists who have been researching and practicing psychology their whole professional lives, and I wouldn't refer a patient to them! They're twisted as hell!

Scratch wrote:

How can you know what "most" meditation teaches?

By looking at the results!

Scratch wrote:

Have you inventoried ALL types of meditation?

I've inventoried every one I've come across, and most have come up severely lacking. Since first reading your critique (and from studying the links you provided), I now actually wonder if all meditation itself is not inherently dissociative at some level. All this mindfulness may just be preventing people from feeling their deeper feelings. I don't get

the sense the Venerable Henepola Gunaratana has gone to his fullest depths at all. He actually seems quite compromised to me, and because of what he leaves out, I sense he himself is quite contented to let his sleeping dogs – that is, his own buried traumas – lie.

I wonder what he would think about my website.

Scratch wrote:

Can you know with absolute certainty what's inside another person's head or heart?

Yes. This is what empathy is about. Pre-traumatized children have it in abounding measure, as do people who have avoided certain degrees of trauma, or have resolved a great degree of their traumas.

Scratch wrote:

Unless your answer to both questions is 'yes', then you cannot, with integrity, make the statement that "Most Meditation Teaches Mice To Be Happy With Their Lot." The best you can say is "In my experience..." or "In my opinion..." Or you can qualify the statement with "Some meditation..." or "Meditation sometimes...."

Perhaps if I followed your advice it would help others take my ideas more seriously. But I doubt it. I've spent years doing what you suggest I do, that is, qualify all my deepest feelings, to the degree that I've lived crippled with my qualifications.

Now I say, open the channel and let the truth speak, and let the cards fall where they may. If you walk with fire at your heels, the wooden bridges will burn, and the stone will stand!

I actually wonder what your deeper point of view is regarding the subjects I bring up on my website. Do you (along with the Venerable Henepola Gunaratana) find it acceptable for non-enlightened parents to have children? Do you see how the non-enlightened invariably traumatize their children? Do you see the inherent unhealthiness of sex between non-enlightened people? How about masturbation? What do you see as the point of life? Do you believe it is possible for a person to become fully enlightened? Do you believe you can get there?

Scratch wrote:

I think it's terribly important that, as truth-seekers, we aim for uncompromising integrity... ESPECIALLY on small points that seem insignificant. In my experience, small, seemingly unimportant distortions often hide or support much larger deceptions.

And you believe my larger deceptions are what?

Scratch wrote:

I read somewhere that since the beginning of time, anywhere from 70 to 110 billion people have lived on earth. We've all

shared in common the fundamental "human condition" - our basic broken-ness.

No! What we share is a basic, deep, fundamental core of truth. That is what we were created with. That is the universal. The brokenness is secondary, foisted on us by trauma. When you say we all share a fundamental brokenness, you imply that no one could ever fully heal from their damage and once again fully manifest their connected truth.

Scratch wrote:

I think it would be a bit arrogant to assume that we are somehow "special" or "unique" in terms of our own personal stage of spiritual enlightenment.

Arrogant, yes, if we were wrong. But not arrogant at all if we were right.

If someone became fully enlightened would they be arrogant to label themselves as such?

Do you find the Venerable Henepola Gunaratana arrogant for calling himself "venerable"? I suspect he is more arrogant than he realizes.

Scratch wrote:

Mathematically, the odds are highly against the possibility that we are as "special" as we think we are. But the bottom line is, we have no way of knowing one way or the other.

So do you not believe we can know truth? Do you not believe knowing truth is special?

Scratch wrote:

We can't know what's in another's head or heart, we can only know ourselves. Moreover, does it really matter where we are on the path, relative to others?

We most certainly can know others. This is what it means to relate to others. When you gain access to a certain side of yourself, you can relate to it in others...even when they don't necessarily relate to it in themselves, because they remain blocked by their unresolved traumas.

Scratch wrote:

My friend, you say that the "majority are insane," and throughout your writings, the implication seems to be that your insights are "rare." Perhaps they are, I'm in no position to argue with you.

You have read my implications correctly. That's exactly what I mean. But regardless, you are in a position to argue with me. And I welcome you to do so.

Scratch wrote:

What do you personally gain from entertaining the beliefs that the majority of people are insane and that you're spiritually elevated from the norm, if only a little?

What does anyone gain by manifesting and expressing the truth of who they are?

Scratch wrote:

How do you feel inside when you believe that most people are insane and you're somehow different? Feelings of superiority? Separateness? Loneliness? Anxiety? Despair?

Perhaps you are more comfortable with the Venerable Henepola Gunaratana, who says little of boldness, at least in the writings that I have read. It strikes me that he's hiding from himself. This is comfortable.

Scratch wrote:

Speaking for myself, I've found that I am often extremely arrogant and judgmental when it comes to how I view my level of spiritual development as it compares to that of others.

When I see that you have written that you are "often extremely arrogant and judgmental," I take that to mean that you often believe yourself to be highly self-delusional, and therefore to misjudge others radically. I don't feel the same about myself, not at least that strongly.

I trust myself much more.

Scratch wrote:

It's okay and natural for me to have these thoughts, but it's best that they be brought out in the open, into the light, and not denied and stuffed away in dark corners where they may secretly sabotage my progress on the path.

I agree.

Scratch wrote:

You say in your statement of purpose that that your ideas "are written with the intention of speaking the truth..." and not "intended to protect denial." Again, I would ask, is that true? Are you absolutely certain that's true?


Yes. I write with full intention to speak the truth, and I have no intention of protecting denial.

Where you specifically sense I fail, please, critique me. That's what I'm here for.

Daniel Mackler

<http://iraresoul.com>

Daniel Mackler
Site Admin

Posted: Sun Oct 29, 2006 1:13 pm Post subject:   

Joined: 03 Aug 2006
Posts: 525
Location: New York City

SECOND EXCHANGE WITH SCRATCH

Background: Scratch wrote a second lengthy critique of my point of view (which he later deleted as well), but I saved my reply to him:

FROM: March 28, 2005

Scratch wrote:

I don't think you're being fully honest with yourself. Let me put it another way: I believe you've sold yourself on some very compelling stories - fictions that provide you with a sense of identity (meet certain ego needs), that color and distort the world you see, that cause you a great deal of pain, and that you're prepared to defend with great vigor. I'll identify these stories, and I'll be very direct about what I think, but I don't expect you to hear a word I say. I really don't. I sense that you possess a strong emotional attachment to your stories, along with a stubborn certainty in your rightness. How can one say anything to a man like this, and be heard? You already have all the answers! But I'll try anyway, because on the off-chance that you do hear, you will save yourself maybe years of unnecessary suffering.

I feel you're entirely wrong, but I find this interesting nonetheless.

If you change one clause in this entire paragraph, it would sound like something I might write...about the far majority of people. I would change "you've sold yourself on...[ideas]...that cause you a great deal of pain," to this: "you've sold yourself on [ideas] that deny you a great deal of pain, the pain necessary for your growth to a more honest level."

Then the paragraph would read true.

Scratch wrote:

Please excuse me if I come across as harsh at times. I've decided to borrow some of your trademark boldness.

God bless boldness! It makes the reading much more engaging. Let's not beat around the bush, let's burn it!

Scratch wrote:

We disarm dangerous thoughts by bringing them into the light of awareness. Until you practice mindfulness for yourself, you may not understand what I'm saying.

More and more you're selling me on the idea that mindfulness is dissociation - dissociation from the true self...

Scratch wrote:

You say that people are suffering because they're asleep ...

No, people suffer not because they're asleep, but because they're only partially awake and have no idea where to go with their painful feelings. They're stuck. Fully asleep people (i.e. fully dissociated people) live in bliss. Full dissociation mimics enlightenment, and most people think dissociation is enlightenment.

Scratch wrote:

...and what is the greatest obstacle to awakening? I bet I know what you're going to say - unresolved traumas. But I would say false beliefs. False beliefs keep people asleep. For instance, the belief that I already have the answers.

What makes you so confident that you are right?

Scratch wrote:

If someone thinks he already knows the answers, that's going to keep him from waking up, isn't it? Learning is impossible for the know-it-all.

True. How do you know this does not largely apply to you?

Scratch wrote:

Have you heard of the book [Extraordinary Popular Delusions & The Madness of Crowds](#) by Charles Mackay? It's humbling, really, to what extent we're a herd animal.

Again, you're going on the assumption that "we" are the same, and that to be human is to share this universal brokenness – and that being a herd animal is an inherent part of being human. I don't feel part of this herd at all.

Scratch wrote:

Yet people will swear that their beliefs are their own, that they have rational foundations - they'll throw a fit if you question them, and even die to defend them! We're so paranoid about germs, but I don't see people handling beliefs with good hygiene. And beliefs will kill you quicker, they really will! Nothing is more potentially dangerous than a belief, but we collect and trade them like baseball cards.

Yet it strikes me that you cling to certain of your beliefs that contradict mine to such an intense degree that you are not at all open to some of my beliefs...

Scratch wrote:

Don't tell me that you're above the sleeping masses, that you're immune to this sort of thing.

Why not? Do you believe no one is above the sleeping masses? Again, it sounds like at some deep gut level, you, without even realizing it, cannot conceive of a person who knows truth through and through.

Scratch wrote:

Speak your truth boldly, but never forget that you might be wrong. Be wary of dogmatism, rigidity, blanket statements, over-confidence, self-certainty. If the cognitive sciences teach us anything, it's that our brains are terribly unreliable.

And yet you write with such confidence...

Scratch wrote:

As you know, the brain acts as a filter. By necessity, we're left with hopelessly incomplete impressions.

You consider being delusional to be an intrinsic part of being human. Need it be?

Scratch wrote:

Science doesn't exactly know why the enormous human brain evolved the way it did, but we can be reasonably sure of one thing - it didn't evolve for truth's sake.

But it can now.

Scratch wrote:

Have you ever noticed that the most spiritually and intellectually advanced people are often the most humble? The more they know, the more they realize how little they know. Einstein called the intellect frail and feeble. This was arguably the greatest mind of the 20th century! If his intellect was frail and feeble, how much more so yours and mine?

I surely hope you don't consider Einstein to be one of the most spiritually advanced people – or take him to be a spiritual role model. I'm no Einstein expert, but I consider him at least partially lost in dissociated physics formulas!

I feel you're trying to convince me that I'm broken. Why is it so important to you?

Scratch wrote:

...certainty is one of the truth-seeker's greatest enemies, and self-doubt one of his greatest friends.

Self-doubt certainly has its value (as I write in my essay on self-doubt), but WE CAN KNOW TRUTH! And when we know it, we can be certain that we know it. If we had no certainty, no one would write anything, and nothing would advance. We'd just be lost in utter vagueness. By the way, you appear to be terribly certain that you have analyzed me correctly. Again, what makes you so certain?

Scratch wrote:

I think it was Lao-tzu who said, "Those who know don't speak, those who speak don't know."

And yet, Lao Tzu wrote down his philosophy...

Scratch wrote:

Meditation is dissociative insofar as one dissociates from what is false, and associates with what is true. One dissociates from self (little "s"), and associates with Self (big "S").

Yet what makes you so certain that you are ridding yourself of the false and associating with the truth. You haven't convinced me at all!

Scratch wrote:

One dissociates from the transient, illusory, and subjective - and associates with the permanent, real, and universal. One dissociates from suffering - and associates with deep, abiding peace. One dissociates from the universe as seen through our delusional stories - and associates with the universe as it really is. One dissociates from the insane dialogue that never shuts up, that running narrative that is our false identity - and associates with the profound silence that is our true identity.

But again, what makes you so sure that you're heading in the right direction? Suffering less (i.e. peace) is no clear indicator at all of growth. I sense there is a deep rage within you, buried under a thick wall of denial and dissociation.

Scratch wrote:

What seems obvious to me - and I know I'm not the first to say this to you - is that you have very little, if any, first-hand experience with meditation.

And yet, if you live in as much denial and dissociation as I suspect you do, what seems obvious to you might be quite profoundly incorrect...

Scratch wrote:

I can't imagine that anyone who has meditated - at least not in a manner resembling Henepola Gunaratana's method - could see meditation as anything but a valuable spiritual tool.

Yet look at Henepola Gunaratana. I read other papers by him on the internet, and while he strikes me as a largely kind and human and wise person, I still feel great deficits in his wisdom, whole blocked-off areas in his perspective. One wonders how he got there using such a supposedly foolproof method of meditation...

Scratch wrote:

If you actually practiced meditation, rather than theorizing about it, rather than drawing outlandish conclusions in order to squeeze it into your narrow, theoretical, trauma-based conception of the world, here's what I think you'd discover: you are not who you think you are, your traumas are not what you think they are, your parents are not who you think they are, your childhood was not what you think it was, and the world is

not what you think it is. In other words, your universe, your entire identity, would be turned upside down and shaken to its foundation.

That's precisely what you fear, is it not?

This sounds intensely like you're projecting your deeply denied, largely unconscious conception of yourself...onto me. Again, change a few words and clauses and I feel this largely applies to you.

I find it odd that you wrote in your first posting that you related so much to my essays and my point of view... Were you just being pleasant for the sake of forging common ground with me?

Scratch wrote:

I have a theory of my own, and I think you'll find it fascinating. It goes something like this: You're uncomfortable with meditation because a part of you recognizes that it will do exactly what it promises: reveal your stories for the fictions they are, challenge everything you think you know, irrevocably shatter your beloved illusions, and maybe, just maybe, give you a little PEACE.

Yes, but false peace. Dissociation. Death to true growth. Death to truth. I'm actually much less miserable than you seem to realize. I have my illusions, but they are not what you think they are...

Scratch wrote:

My guess is that you had a traumatic childhood.

...as did everyone who had parents who were not fully enlightened...i.e. everyone.

Scratch wrote:

If this is the case, you have probably identified with your painful feelings for so many years, that your life would feel utterly empty and boring without them.

This to me sounds like the writing of someone who has no idea what it means to resolve traumas and truly evolve parts of oneself toward enlightenment.

Scratch wrote:

Peace would actually feel foreign, uncomfortable. You are addicted to suffering - it happens! Yes, you have identified with your emotional captors, and you would rather remain hostage than face the unknown void that freedom offers.

Freedom is not a void. Freedom is emotional integration. Freedom is connection with the true spirit. No void there at all.

Scratch wrote:

And if peace could be found so easily, that would make your

years of suffering *meaningless*. Ouch, that would be a bitter pill to swallow - I can see why you wouldn't want to consider it!

And I can see why you would not want to see the inherent unhealthiness in dissociation – or even recognize the dissociative elements in your “healing” process. And I’m not talking about dissociation from your unhealthy sides. The way to heal is not to dissociate from one’s unhealthy sides, but to delve into them...and resolve them.

Scratch wrote:

Furthermore, if you gave up your painful feelings, your entire story would fall apart, would it not? You could no longer imagine yourself as the tragic hero, the sufferer. You *want* to continue identifying with your suffering because without it - who would you be? Yes, dissociation from suffering would appear a very bad thing to someone who secretly loves his suffering!

Rationalization.

Scratch wrote:

Here's what else I think you love. You LOVE your notion of "unresolved childhood traumas," and for good reasons. It's proven a very convenient, advantageous story for you. It lends meaning to your suffering, helps make sense of it all. It allows you to assume the role of the victim, and to villain-ize one or both of your parents - along with the society that allowed them to breed. It justifies your feeling lousy. In fact, glorifies it! You tell yourself that by feeling lousy, you are heroically facing your inner darkness, where a lesser man would have run and hid. As the story goes, your lousy feelings are not only justified, but indicative of spiritual attainment. How wonderful! You bear your righteous domain name and nom de plume like purple hearts. RareSoul! TruthTraveler! As you become enlightened, climbing lofty spiritual peaks, you look down upon the slumbering masses, and savoring your superiority, you pass judgment upon them. The cherry on top is playing savior to others who have been traumatized by wicked parents, and rescuing unborn children from those you deem not fit to mate. Isn't that *special* - your concern is for the children! You are a martyr, a savior, a god among men - praise be to you, TruthTraveler!

Rationalization – and angry, nasty rationalization at that.

Scratch wrote:

Please! Give me a break! That's what I call an insane story - and it absolutely smacks of ego!

...to you.

Scratch wrote:

Listen, I'm not trying to be cruel.

No, you're desperately trying to defend your denial, and you have to do whatever it takes to achieve this end.

Scratch wrote:

Wonderful news, or horrible news, depending on how you choose to look at it. *Your parents didn't traumatize you.* It's impossible for one person to traumatize another. That's the big lie! We can only traumatize ourselves.

Now it's my turn to go, whoa there! Pardon? We can only traumatize ourselves?

This is intense rationalization. I've never even heard anyone go this far...let alone someone who finds my web essays "fantastic reading."

Pardon me for using an extreme example, but tell me, how does a little girl who is raped by her father traumatize herself?

Scratch wrote:

Your Hallmark fairy tale expectations traumatized you, and they will continue to haunt you until you decide to wake up.

And did the little raped girl's Hallmark fairy tale expectations traumatize her as well?

Scratch wrote:

That suffering you're feeling is not redemptive; it's useless garbage. It serves no purpose. You're fooling yourself and you're spinning your wheels. You're not resolving anything by constantly reliving your pain.

It sounds like this was your experience, and you are taking the incorrect leap of universalizing them...and applying them to me.

Scratch wrote:

You resolve your traumas by recognizing the fact that YOU caused them - that's the only way.

And our little hypothetical girl should therefore accept the blame or responsibility for her own screwed up life...and that will resolve her traumas? Oh god, it won't!

Scratch wrote:

If I think my parents traumatized me, I need to wake up! Because somewhere along the line I picked up some crazy ideas about what parents should be.

Crazy ideas? It sounds convenient for you to pathologize healthy ideals. Then you don't have to do your inner work.

Scratch wrote:

My father didn't traumatize me - I traumatized myself by demanding that father should be different, by telling myself a story about how fathers SHOULD be, by buying into fairy tales about fathers! It's not the hitting that wounds us - we'll play

tackle football, get injured far worse, and not become emotionally damaged - no, it's the stories we tell ourselves about the hitting, the belief that it shouldn't have happened.

Does Henepola Gunaratana believe this sad rationalization too? Again, what do you think he'd say to this dialogue between us?

Scratch wrote:

People should be enlightened - says who? Humans have been unenlightened for thousands of years. You and I have both admitted to being unenlightened ourselves!

I never said I was unenlightened. I just said that parts of me remain unenlightened. Parts of me are quite enlightened.

Scratch wrote:

Where we disagree is on the nature of, and the route to, enlightenment.

True. Totally true.

Scratch wrote:

For you, enlightenment involves the resolution of traumas caused by outside events. For me, enlightenment involves the realization that nothing external ever causes trauma - NEVER.


Well, I guess that's the crux of our difference.

Daniel Mackler

<http://iraresoul.com>

Daniel Mackler
Site Admin

Joined: 03 Aug 2006
Posts: 525
Location: New York City

Posted: Sun Oct 29, 2006 1:14 pm Post subject:  [quote](#)  [edit](#)  [IP](#)

THIRD EXCHANGE WITH SCRATCH

FROM: March 30, 2005

Scratch wrote:

I sincerely apologize for anything that came across as angry or nasty. I was aiming for boldness, and maybe I got carried away. No disrespect or harm was intended.

No need to apologize. No harm caused at all. I was just pointing out what I saw.

On the contrary, I really have appreciated your boldness. And just so you know, your boldness fueled more boldness on my part. In my opinion our mutual boldness was necessary to strip down our points of view to their basic essences.

Scratch wrote:

Anyhow, let's not talk back and forth at each other. We've stated our positions, which only seems to have further entrenched us in our own viewpoints.

I think we've both fleshed out our respective points of view nicely and clearly – which to me signifies a successful exchange. It has certainly benefited me. As for becoming “further entrenched,” I myself view it as further clarified...at least for myself.

Scratch wrote:

You and I are operating from a different premise regarding the “true self.” I think that's the crux of our difference.

Yes, I would agree that we view the “true self” differently, but I don't think it's the crux of our difference. I still think the crux relates more to trauma and what resolution of trauma really is.

Scratch wrote:

In your estimation, what is the true self?

True self: the basic essence of who we are as a person, at our very core. This true self lies underneath our unresolved traumas. In the parts of ourselves where we have not resolved our traumas our true self remains disconnected from our conscious mind. Those are the parts of us that remain unenlightened. In the parts of ourselves where we have resolved our traumas, we are connected to our true self – and we are conscious...and thus enlightened.

Scratch wrote:

One's true self could be called God-Self or no-self.

God-self – yes. No-self – NO!

Scratch wrote:

If I could sum up my understanding of every great spiritual teacher who ever lived, every great spiritual tradition that ever existed, I would be left with one pithy sentence: “To know thyself is to know there is no self.”

Alas, we differ!

So in closing from my side, I have appreciated this exchange very much, and have learned much from it – and probably will continue to learn from it. You've set some challenges for me that I haven't yet solved to my own satisfaction – and knowing me, I won't rest easy until I do. I also wish to put some more serious time into exploring the books you've recommended.

So all in all, thank you. It's been a pleasure!

Daniel Mackler

<http://iraresoul.com>

Daniel Mackler
Site Admin

Joined: 03 Aug 2006
Posts: 525
Location: New York City

Posted: Sun Oct 29, 2006 1:16 pm Post subject:   

FOURTH EXCHANGE WITH SCRATCH

FROM: April 6, 2005

Scratch wrote:

I need to move on, folks. I'm "scratching" my posts, along with my user account and email address.

Too bad! I understand that our exchange of ideas seems to have run its course (for now, at least), but I would have hoped you'd have left your postings up! I think the exchange had a certain value, not only to myself but to others.

But I trust your reasons. So, all the best.

And warm regards in return.

Daniel Mackler

cc

Joined: 06 Oct 2006
Posts: 47
Location: Long Island, NY

Posted: Mon Oct 30, 2006 10:58 pm Post subject:

Wow, what an exchange Daniel. Thank you for sharing. I will have to read this again to gain even more insight.

I gave up meditation a while ago. It is a lot like hypnosis; dissociative (is there such a word?). It (meditation) came in handy as a defense, when I was suffering from the manipulative methods of gurus and traumas that were surfacing a bit too intensely (I didn't know my limits to pain).

Many thoughts and feelings are going thru my mind right now. It's hard to put them down on paper because I am pressed for time. And I see that there are so many other posts that I need to read. I am glad I started with this one though. You guys are so fast with your thoughts.

Cesar thanks for sharing the info on "attachment to the perpetrator". Wow!

I want to share my feedback but I am too busy trying to catch up to the posts. I will post when I can. Thanks again guys.

So much to read, oh my God!!!

Ps. I like the new look of the forum.