

I have two talks I am going to give this morning. The first is a short version and the second, a longer version. The short version is in keeping with the Eastern viewpoint of simplicity of statement and few words. I'd like to talk this morning about self-control and its relationship to wellness and health. The short version. Self-control is the ability to decide what you want to do and the ability to do it. I'll repeat that one more time. Self-control is the ability to decide what you want to do and the ability to do it. Thank you very much. End of talk. ☺

Now let me ask each of you, and here we get into the longer one, but don't forget the shorter one because everything we are going to say is going to reflect back to that. There is really nothing more than that sentence. But for those of you who have tried any kind of self-control endeavor, and we all do, it's a very difficult task, as we shall see. How do we decide, how do we know if we are doing it for ourselves or if we are doing it for somebody else. Exploring this can give us wonderful insights into how we would like to live our lives and visions of elegance, and once we do decide to explore to what extent we can learn to have the ability to follow through on what we have decided.

So, this is both a very, very difficult concept and any kind of simplistic statement really doesn't do justice both to the difficulty or the elegance of it.

There is an old Sufi story which goes as follows. Nasrudin, who was the wise fool of the Sufi stories, traveled frequently from Persia to Turkey and every time he would pass customs, because he was a shady looking fellow, they would search the donkeys that he took across the border to look for jewels, diamonds and other kinds of drugs and contraband, but all they found in the saddles of the donkeys was hay. And Nasrudin took many trips back and forth between Turkey and Persia and every time they would search, all they would find was hay. And sometimes they would only find hay on one saddlebag, sometimes in both, and yet he was getting wealthier, and wealthier, and wealthier. Nobody could understand this, everybody became angrier and angrier and the next time he crossed the border the search was so thorough they ripped the saddlebags to pieces and inside they found hay. What's going on? Finally, one of his close friends said, Nasrudin, you must tell me, I will tell no one else. How are you getting so wealthy. He said, I steal donkeys.

The very concept of self-control is so pervasive that in many ways we don't look at it, we look around it, we look behind it, we check the saddlebags of it, but we don't look at the concept.

I would suggest to you, and I'm clearly coming from my own belief, the obvious commitment that I have made to this area, that this may be one of the central concepts in health care, and not only in health care in religious and philosophical systems. Now if you look at religious traditions, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, there is a talk of ethical self-restraint, Confucianism, there is a talk of living a certain morality. If you look at psychological systems, you take behavioral you obviously have concepts of self-regulation, if you take analytic concepts, such as White's, the concept of competence, if you look at Seligman's work on learned helplessness, you find that ⁱⁿ each of these, the concept of control is very important. If you look at nontraditional disciplines, such as Castenada, the concept of personal power, power over oneself, a sense of self-control. So it feels like a very important concept, and one which we need to tackle centrally rather than look at parts of it.

Now let me ask each of you just for a moment to take a simple area of your life, free associate whatever might come up, an area in which you would like to develop more self-control, and noticed when you haven't had it. In simple terms, have you ever done something which you didn't want to do, or have you ever not done something which you did want to do. Just come up with some examples, because I would like you as we go through the discussion this morning to keep that example in mind and hopefully we can come to a very sophisticated and precise way of understanding it. Okay, particularly for those of you who aren't going to be in the workshop this afternoon, it would be good for you this morning to have that example, for those of you that are, keep it and we'll work on it more this afternoon.

LOOKING AT DOMAINS OF SELF-CONTROL. Now the first thing we need to look at, or at least one of the variables that we have to look at with regard to self-control is what domain or theme are we talking about. Basically if

you look down this side, we can call that reality or life. We start with the body level and here I have internal aspects of the body, physiological cues, somatic responses, and external body, behavior, action. The next level is our mind level, and under mind I have used that as kind of a grab bag term, I've included cognitions, thoughts, I've included affect which is really an interaction between the body and our cognitions, and I've included perception. Ego or self is in a sense the self-construct that we use, how we define ourselves. Intimacy can have a variety of dimensions including interpersonal male/male, male/female, family, intimacy with children, professional is the realm in which career, occupation, and finally I put spiritual.

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Now what I'm going to suggest is that when we talk about self-control, we need to look at what level we are talking about. Now sometimes we get into conflict between the different levels. For example, there was the cartoon by William Hamilton in the New Yorker several years ago in which you had two hip looking people in a cave in India and there was a candle flame coming up. And the woman said, "Jake, in case we don't find enlightenment, do you think you can still get your Pontiac dealership back?" Now, when one wants to clarify Pontiac dealership versus spiritual enlightenment, is to look at the distinction between the content, the black letters of the different levels, and what I'll refer to as the domain or the context which are the red letters, they are exactly the same, only the context or the domain, body, mind, ego, intimacy, professional and spiritual, by the way spiritual is sort of transcending the blackboard, is to look at what dimension or goal you have for yourself-control strategy.

Now in terms of the first part of our definition, the ability to decide what you want to do, partly is a decision of which dimension are you

going to call forth at this particular time in your life, as salient. If you call forth a professional dimension as context there is a variety of self-control strategies that you can use including they may be important professionally to look good and have your physical appearance healthy, you may direct your mind cognitions toward that, your sense of self may be in the service of the professional work, intimacy, all of us know that we can be very friendly and charming to get what we want professionally, but we need to be clear that we are using intimacy in the service of professional. Okay, spiritual in the service of professional has a variety of things. Pema Chodron has talked about that in terms of spiritual materialism, in other words you use the spiritual area to get ahead professionally, the one which has been for me a lot teaching meditation, and am I doing this for my career or am I doing this for a real service, the confusion of context. Now, therefore you can see that each of the contents along the left hand side can be used for each of the context, but it's important to know why you are using it. Going back to the body level, one more example just to make sure this is clear, on the body level there is a variety of if you want to work on your body, nutrition, stress management, exercise, things like that, the body is your context, there is a variety of strategies you can use. You can use body strategies, you can use progressive relaxation. Several of the body therapies, Rolf, Lowen, Reich before them, use the body in order to release tensions in the mind, so in a sense, they are using the body to help the mind, sometimes the mind, for example, autogenic training, relax yourself, you are feeling warm, using the mind to help the body.

now shift
to strategy

So hopefully this has helped clarify the distinction between what is the goal you are using it for, and what are the strategies that you use. Now we get into lots of trouble choosing which strategy, is it time for me to be intimate, is that the sphere I'm in, is it a professional sphere that I'm

in now, and what I'm going to suggest to you this morning is that we use different types of self-control strategies depending upon the sphere that we are in. The same strategy is not going to work across all different contexts. For example we see that a strong sense of self or ego is very important in the professional sphere, we'll see it as very important initially in the intimacy sphere but less important later on in the relationship, in fact a strong ego can get in the way. We'll see that a strong ego is very dysfunctional if it can't be transcended in the spiritual sphere, so there is going to be different types of self-control strategies and different constructs of the self-control necessary depending on where we are on this matrix.

ADEPTS The first level is a body level. Here we have a gentleman referred to as an adept that is sticking a needle through his cheeks. This was a study done by Peletier and Peper. This fellow can also do some rather amazing things. He takes glass bulbs and then crushes them and chews them up, things like this. Now you might be asking yourself why is he showing a slide like this, presumably none of you are going to want to stick needles through your cheeks. The reason adepts are important, is they show the limit or the potential that we have to control our bodily functions. In terms of stress management or pain management, the kinds of strategies that these people use are very important because they suggest that we all could learn the strategies. In this particular case the fellow uses what is referred to as an opening up, or mindful meditation strategy. He doesn't focus on any particular sensation, but rather takes in everything, an example of that would be, I'll ask you, hopefully you are listening to my voice, but as you listen to my voice, I would like you to also notice the sensation of the chair on you, kinesthetic feelings, your buttocks on the bottom of the chair, your

feet on the floor, your back on the back of the chair, now keep listening to my voice as you do that. Now not only do you have these sensations in and on your, body, you hear auditorily, my voice, and maybe you feel the fan, but also, gee, look at all the colors of different people and faces and just the amazing amount of different kinds of visual sensations, and now we have visual sensations, now don't lose my voice, keep my voice there and you feel all those sensations on your body.

So, this one adept has perfected that style of being able to take in everything and not focus on any one thing... what's referred to as mindfulness meditation, or opening up meditation, at least one style of it. He is able to maintain an EEG alpha, in other words he is not processing the information, but merely being open and receptive to it. He is able to not bleed, he is able to do these kinds of feats without a phenomenological feeling of pain, and so has enormous control of his body. Now there are other types of strategies, there is an adept that takes a cognitive flexibility, a freedom of thought. Now what's your reaction to the picture? Now this is in terms of perceptual control, how much are we able to deal with and experience as opposed to saying, aha, pretty sunset. One of the strategies of mindfulness meditation involves being able in psychological terms to dishabituate, in Zen terms it's called seeing the flower the 500th time like you saw it the first time. To keep your door to the perception clean, like a young child, from each time seeing something afresh. Where most of our reality in terms of ordinary awareness is a constructive reality, the question is how can we get back to a perceptual control when we let go of the words and cognitions that go through our mind and can just be with perceptual experience.

VIEWS OF HUMAN NATURE. Each of us has a view of human nature, of how we view other people. And if I were to ask you at a gut level, think of

your views of how other people at their core, of yourself at the core, do you see people as basically good, trusting, do you see them as basically evil or amoral or out to get you? Do you see them as kind of neutral, depending on different environments. Think to yourself, because you do have a view, I will guarantee it of other people. You may not have thought about it very concretely, but you have a view of how you view other people. Now, the Freudian view of human nature, when he talks about civilization and its discontents, is a view of people who are basically amoral, the id is a sort of uncontrolled passions that sort of shoot forth and the ego which arises from the id, at least in id psychology writings of Freud, really have to control it but it has nothing to control it with because the id is really everything. So people Freud says the Christian commandment Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself is only stated because people's basic nature is so contrary to that, that people are basically aggressive, and they are evil and they are amoral. So, you have got to be on your alert in dealing with these people and in terms of self-control strategies, it's kind of like keep it down, don't let that id get out. The Rogerian view, or client-centered view or humanistic view is really a Theory 2. They said people are basically good inside, there is a delicate and loving human nature, and therefore you can be very trusting of yourself and very trusting of other people because what's basically there is good. The type of control we need is really an acceptance to learn to accept ourselves. A Theory 3 view of human nature is a behavioral view. Also an existential view which basically says, like the philosopher John Locke, that people are much like a tabula rosa, blank slates. This view says we are conditioned by our environments, for good or for worse. Existentially its existence precedes essence. There is no essence to us until we begin to act, and then we create ourselves. So in a different type of model of control, more on decision making is going to be important.

In a spiritual view or transpersonal view would be one that is very similar to the client centered or the humanistic view, that there is a basically good nature within us, but it says that basically good nature within us is also part of all of us and part of something larger than us, a large self rather than just a small self. So different theories of human nature are going to effect the way you see self-control.

One view says that behavior is a function of the environment. This is a radical behavioral view and basically then for that type of self-control, the Skinnarian model, you look toward the environment in order to control yourself. And that is your exclusive focus. Bandura refers to this as a unidimensional undeterminism model.

A second view is that behavior is a function of the person. This is very much the existential position. Now this is your view of human nature, we can control everything, we have free choice, people are born free, but the person is really the one that controls behavior. Then you are going to have a different focus. (I think the slides are stuck, there we go.)

Okay, this view evolves from Bandura in terms of a reciprocal determinism, that the environment and the person can interact. But it also adds a dimension of behavior and if for those of you familiar with the new physics, we are really talking about a model of omnideterminism. In other words, everything effects everything, your behavior, your environment, your person, your thoughts, it is all interrelated, and so you can't just say it's the person that's in control, or its the environment that's in control, but we really need to be very sensitive to the variety of factors, and you can't come up with simplistic solution, and this is a model that I use, an omnideterminism model, an interactive model.

DIFFERENT MODES OF CONTROL: Assertive/change and

Yielding/Accepting. Now what I've tried to do, is I've tried to again going back to our first sentence, to get more precise in terms of this self-control

and I have divided it into two constructs which I'm not totally happy with. One of them is assertive and let me try to say what I mean by the assertive construct. Assertive is action oriented, its change oriented, its an attempt to get things done, its setting goals and following through on the goals, its instrumental, often its very rational, so one construct of control is assertive. This is a very Western concept, its the stereotypically masculine concept. The other concept is yielding. Yielding is a different type of control. There was a student that I was teaching meditation to and what she said was that she would start to become very centered, very mellow, and then she would catch herself and sit upright, and then she would start to become very centered and she would catch herself, and she said, I didn't have the self- control to let go of control. I imagine all of us at some point in our life have had the experience of wishing we could just be looser. Someone came up to me and talked about the conference in terms of playing more, the acceptance, the yielding, the softness, and the different type of self-control, but it requires a control to let go of control, it doesn't just happen. So two different constructs. This is an Eastern construct, a stereotypically feminine construct.

CAN YOU COMBINE THE TWO: any questions on these? (Can you combine the two?) You're ahead of me. Nice point, elegant point. The question was can you combine the two? Actually you can leave now you already know where this is going!

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF EACH MODE. I have further tried to divide these two constructs into positive and negative dimensions. The reason I've done this is because the yielding construct those who believe that or who are that, the East for example, criticize the West or the assertive construct saying its negative, its overcontrolling, its too rigid, its the Type A

person. And what I think is really there are very positive aspects to assertiveness as well as some negative ones, and that we need to look very carefully at both of them, and we have a dividing line here, which the distinction that I make is when you are positive assertive, you are in control, and we will define this more specifically, but we know it, the feeling of we're in control, we're saying what we feel, and yet we're putting our message out but we aren't driven. Here's where we get driven. We're out of control, we're, here we can be angry and we can put out a message and you can be very clear about it, here you put out your message and you're out of control, and you just know it. Please don't tell me to relax, it's only my tension that's holding me together. Now some of the research that I've done with Type A individuals, executives clearly have the positive qualities.

Last week I was back at U.S. Steel and I was giving a workshop for their executives in Pittsburgh, and these people have obviously got excellent assertive skills, they are leaders, they have a certain charismatic quality, but also they are literally killing themselves by the way they push themselves, and yet when we first present to them the idea of a yielding type of control, it frightens them because they are afraid if they let go of the tension, they will lose the positive assertive as well as the negative assertive. Okay, so we need some sensitivity to what we call the negative assertive. Since I'm going to come back to this a lot, negative assertive I call Quadrant 3, you'll see that in a moment. Positive assertive I call Quadrant 1, so really the goal is to move from Quadrant 3 assertiveness, to get rid of that and move more up to Quadrant 1, at least on the assertive side.

On the yielding side, again we have the positive and negative. Positive yielding. For many of us in the West it is a very difficult concept. Imagine that you have just done a task, you've been goal oriented and you have been

successful, you've been raking leaves. The fellow says, I went to a lot of trouble to rake up those leaves. Little kid comes and jumps in the leaves, started playing around in them. And then you come along and the kid looks up at him and goes Look, and a leaf sails in the air and lands on the guys nose, his head. Now, imagine you have done your task, and you're real pleased with it, whatever that task is, in a work setting, in a home setting, you've accomplished something and somebody comes along and messes it up. And your back to the end of a project, you're just about to finish it, and a colleague says, No, that's not going to work. Okay, what do you do, how do you feel? Huh? Okay. (Laughter) I love this, the kids playing in the leaves. Its the beginning of the switch from an active control strategy to a yielding control strategy. It is so difficult, because once we turn our attention on a specific mode, the active mode, we want to get that goal! So to be able to yield becomes very difficult.

I'm not part of the Jamaica tourist bureau, but in this slide I love these two people diving off with the caption Jamaica is letting your self go. What type of experiences allow us this positive yielding, allow us to let ourselves go. It is not a self-control strategy that we are taught. Very often in educational systems through models, we don't have many images how do you let yourself go in a positive way. Don't be afraid to give some of yourself away, it will all grow back. Again the positive yielding. Clearly in the intimacy sphere, which is the type of yielding control that we want.

You don't want to keep your cards close to your chest, you want to be able to yield, to open up, to harmonize in the relationship, a different type of control.

This was a class I taught at Stanford, and I had a fellow who was a 250 lb. karate expert who drew this picture, this is a type of ink painting,

in Japan its called sumie. It's a very delicate brush stroke painting. And this guy clearly had the assertive skills, you wouldn't want to meet him in a dark street at night and tell him he looks silly. And also he really had a real gentleness and a real delicateness, so in response to your question, clearly its important to be able to have both types of strategies and to know when to use them, what context or domain you're working in. You are going to use a different strategy in an intimacy context, or a spiritual context, than you will in a professional context. Okay, then you get your negative yielding. Negative yielding which is Quadrant 4, positive yielding is Quadrant 2, is letting go too much, its letting yourself go, but not in a positive sense, its diffuse, its passive, its gee I don't know what I want to do with myself, I'm confused, I'm sort of wishy-washy, depressed, okay, kind of a paper bag feeling. Now all of us have all of these different feelings at different times, I'm just trying to find someway to draw the boundary between being in control and being out of control.

So, here is really the quadrants. We have positive assertiveness, and we have the positive yielding, quadrant 2.

MATCHING MODES TO PERSON TO GOAL . There was a fellow at Santa Cruz who was a pretty shy, withdrawn person, using again not a trait model, but a descriptive model of an individual, he was pretty shy, pretty withdrawn, didn't exactly know what he wanted to do with himself, and he said, aha, I need to do something that is going to help me, and so he began to learn on his own about meditation from one of the training organizations. And he practiced it by himself alone, and he practiced it more and more and he became shier and more withdrawn. That may not have been a bad strategy for him, but not as a single strategy. You would also want to teach him assertive skills, you want to teach him social skills, you want to teach

how to make contact with other people. Similarly some of the Type A individuals want to know how to set better time management, more goals, be able to accomplish more. Again, they are going to drive themselves into the converse problem, they are never going to get out of the bag if they only use one type of strategy. So we may need to learn self-relaxation strategies, they need to learn how to let go of goals and just enjoy the process of it, to be in the here and now, the moment, meditation like techniques. So you can begin to match strategies to a person and not always use one particular strategy.

INTEGRATION, BALANCE OF MODES. There is a line from the Bhagavadgita who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is enlightened among men, he does all actions disciplined. This is a very beautiful quote, action in inaction. Inaction here refers to meditating, where you are sitting very still, very peaceful, you're doing nothing, and yet there is action in inaction. Your blood is flowing freely, your heart is beating, you're breathing, something very beautiful about life that's occurring. At the same time we want to do actions, but you want to do them with inaction, in other words, go through the ways of the world, do a task, set goals, but keep a certain stillness and peacefulness while you do it. So it's really that classical yin/yang, it's really the ability to do both, to set goals for yourself, meet the goals, but not be driven by the goals, to do no actions but to see the beauty in the movement that can occur in that. So an integration between the two.

FUTURE RESEARCH. How many people here are health care professionals that work in some kind of service capacity? Okay, the next part I'm just going to take a few minutes with, because I think it's important in terms of how do you view self-control strategies. Let me suggest a system's model looking at therapist, person, relationship, assessment of concern, matching techniques to person to concern, evaluation and follow up.

If you've done clinical work or research on self-control strategies,

we've reached a plateau in our knowledge, in other words right now we don't know whether meditation or progressive relaxation or hypnosis or biofeedback is more effective for a particular person. The literature shows that all of those are more effective than doing nothing, but we don't know if any one of them is more effective than any other one, so that the excitement about self-control strategies is still there, but there seems to be a plateau. And so how can we get more sophisticated about that? First, who is teaching the strategy, the therapist, the health care professional, who is using it is going to depend on how they use it. If you take meditation, and if you are analytically oriented, you are going to use it as a way to bypass the rational intellectual defenses to get to primary process thinking, to bypass resistances, regression in the service of the ego. If you are a behaviorist, you're going to use self-regulation strategies for stress management. If you are client centered or Rogerian, you use a technique like meditation to give a person more of a sense of individual responsibility and to understand that part of themselves that's inside, innate and good. If you're transpersonal, you'll use it to see a sort of oneness of the spiritual dimension. So that how the strategy is used will depend first on the therapist. Second it will depend on the client or patient. Yet sometimes meditation used to be in vogue as a strategy, people would come in and request it. Some people didn't like it because it spoke of spiritualism and gurus and candles and incense and stuff like that, other people did like it for the mystery of it. Hypnosis: some people now like hypnosis some people are frightened of hypnosis. Some people like the scientific instrumentation of biofeedback, some people don't. So the expectation of the client can be important in matching the self-control strategy to them. Thus, the belief system of the client, if they believe they can change, I will abandon my search for truth and am now looking for a good

fantasy, we've done some work in terms of do people believe that a self-control strategy can help them, before you can teach them one you need to know that they are willing to learn it and at least believe that there is a chance of success, otherwise they will sabotage and resist.

MOTIVATION ISSUES. In two sentences motivation is one of the great overlooked variables in therapy and what we've done is we've tried to set up some assessment scales of motivation to assess the strengths of motivation and clinical outcome. One thing that is very interesting that we have found is that you need to look at what will happen if they succeed in changing that would make them not want to change. People come in and say yeah, I want to change, I want lose weight, stop smoking, get on better, do better in my work. If they were to succeed, what would a problem be. Okay, its very important to assess that again as part of motivation before teaching the strategy. I guarantee that there will be something that will change that may adversely affect them. It needs to be looked at, not that it can't be overcome, but it needs to be looked at.

THE THIRD VARIABLE IS THE RELATIONSHIP, that some approaches put enormous emphasis on this. The old Rogerian approach, Truax and Carpoff's work, talk about two-people interaction, accurate empathy, trust, when you use a self-control strategy, you need to do it within the context of the relationship, even asking people to close their eyes can be a very scary thing. They need to trust you enough. Okay, so relationship is very important, even though we are talking about a technique.

ASSESSMENT OF CLINICAL CONCERNS, why are they coming in. In the case of stress, some of the research shows that people feel stress somatically in their body or cognitively. Some feel it both. Those who feel stress primarily somatically in which you are lying in bed at night and your mind is very calm

but you have hot flashes through your body, somatic stress. Conversely, you're lying in bed at night, your body is very calm, but your mind is racing. Okay, cognitive stress versus somatic. What's been found by Schwartz and Goleman and Davidson is that cognitive stress can be helped by cognitive strategy, meditation, hypnosis, some focusing technique. Somatic stress can be helped by like progressive relaxation or exercise. But a cognitive strategy is not that effective with a somatic strategy and vice versa. So if somebody comes in with a somatic stress and you only have one self-control strategy that you use, you are going to give them adverse effects. So matching the strategy to the person. Those people that have both cognitive and somatic stress then you teach them to meditate while they jog. Okay, so the assessment of the clinical concern.

INTERVENTION SELECTION. Again, based on this information we would want to look at how does it fit with a clinical concern, what is the client's perception of the intervention selection, why are you as therapist using it, and what is the relationship within which it's being used. Again, I hope you can see that what I'm suggesting is we need enormous sophistication and precision in using self-control strategies, that they are not global panaceas.

TEACHING OF INTERVENTION, ADHERENCE AND COMPLIANCE. Again, an overlooked area which is just coming into vogue now. Specifically, how do you teach the strategy to somebody, are there good ways to teach them, how do you lead them, how do you insure that strategies are practiced. The research is quite clear that these techniques work in proportion to how often they are practiced. How do you increase the probability of practice. Evaluation, again part of any treatment regime, it's important to say is it working, is it not working. If it's not working, using some type of systems model, evaluate, are you teaching it well, are you looking at adherence and compliance, do you need a different intervention, is it the appropriate clinical concern. So some kind of feedback

model in terms of evaluating your clinical work very carefully.

AND THEN TERMINATION AND FOLLOWUP. Okay, so really its an interactive systems model, the view of which the self-control strategy is located, but our exclusive focus shouldn't be on the self-control strategy without looking at all the aspects of it. .

SUMMARY So what we've done is we've taken our short sentence self-control is the ability to decide what you want to do, and the ability to do it, and we have refined that. We've said how do you decide, which domain or context are you looking at, what type of self-control are you talking about, we look at some ways of assessing ourself in terms of the different types of self-control strategies, where we would fit on the four-quadrant model. We've said that different types of self-control strategies may be necessary for different people at different times depending upon the domain or context in which they are operating. Now I started with a simple sentence because it is important to keep the perspective of what the simplicity of this is, but it is also important to realize enormous sophistication and precision is necessary.

In conclusion I would like to tell an old Zen story which deals with the issue of integration, which deals with the issue of which self-control strategy is really correct. The West would argue of course that goal oriented assertive, action oriented change oriented strategies are the truth and the way. The East such as Lao-tze would argue that yielding, gentleness, softness is the truth and the way. Lao-tze talks about the strong rock in the center of a river, the river is divided by the rock, the river yields, and yet eventually the river will eat away the rock, so there is strength in yielding. So which is the truth. Which one is really more powerful?The story goes like this. There was a mountain, my arm is a mountain. At the base of the mountain was a lowly peasant stone cutter, chop, chop, chop, picking away at the mountain. The Zen master says to the student, would you rather be the mountain or the lowly

stone cutter chipping away at the base of the mountain? chop, chop, chop. The student says, I'd rather be the lowly stone cutter chipping away at the base of the mountain because it is more powerful, it chops at the mountain. Very good said the master. Now there is a powerful sun in the sky which is parching all the plants and crops of the rich nobleman. Which would you rather be, the crops of the rich nobleman, or the sun in the sky. I would rather be the sun in the sky said the student, for it is more powerful and burns the crops. Very good said the master. Wispy, white feathery clouds come passing before the sun, and block its rays, which would you rather be, the sun or the wispy clouds? I'd rather be the wispy clouds said the student, for they are stronger, they control the sun and block its rays. Very good said the master. The clouds begin to move across the sky and hit a mountain, and the mountain divides the clouds into many fragments, which would you rather be, the clouds or the mountains? I'd rather be the mountain because the mountain is stronger than the clouds. Chop, chop, chop.

Thank you very much.