

The Noise of Silence

I was talking in class today about meditation and thought. I told them thoughts or even chatter are good to have in your meditation. They asked why. I explained, your mind is a thought machine, its job is to create thoughts and stories. Sometimes your mind attaches emotion and feeling to thoughts and stories to give them a life like feel.

So one student spoke up and said, “what about all this stuff about silence you talked about in your latest posts on your blog?” My answer is this: chatter and thought are superficial noise. They are like sitting in meditation class and listening to a jack hammer that’s across the street working on the new gas station. If you observe the noise, soon the noise blends in with the silence. Silence can be loud, it is your body making noise, it is passing cars, it is the jack hammer next door, it is chatter in your mind.

However, true silence is not having an attachment to the chatter, the jackhammer, and the cars passing by. It is witnessing the noise but not saying “oh there goes that jack hammer again”, it is not creating a story about how fast the cars are going by, it is not getting attached to how you feel about what you hear. Attachment is the real noise in meditation. I tell people in class that the chatter of the mind is like a passing train; you only get dragged down the track when you grab on to the handle of the passing cars.

We have noise around us all the time. Silence is not about being in a noiseless environment. Silence is about understanding that noise is silence and only when you attach to it, that when you give it power and the break the silence.