

The Transcendent Imperative

"But freedom from the self comes not through the dulling of consciousness but through its refinement, not through dissolving the ego but through moving beyond it. And for this, any activity, in theory at least, will do; any activity can occasion the providential disclosure that the egoic self is but a small part of who one is and that to live entirely within its familiar confines is to experience only a small part of the life one is given. Just as we need a strong sense of self to function well, so do we need freedom from the self to function freely."

Andrew Cooper

This article has many threads - from the idea of how we seem to need something more transcendent than scientific materialism and will look for it to flow, absorption and freedom from the self, which is what I will concentrate on.

Much of the literature I have read talks about getting rid of the self. Lately I have been thinking that that particular task is totally impossible. The egoic self can give us lots of problems because it becomes overdeveloped, but we still need it in order to be able to function and survive. So what we seem to need is a way of moving backwards and forwards from a deep awareness, or being, to our normal, absorbed in functions mode. The funny thing is that we seem to lose the sense of self more easily by being more aware of the self, rather than by trying to move beyond it. "To study the self is to forget the self" as Dogen said.