

This week's (July 7, 2011) Ways of Knowing discussion will be on the topic "edge."

Exactly one month ago today I wandered very close to an edge called life/death. -- Having caught Legionnaire's Disease while on vacation in New York at the end of May, I ran a 103-degree fever for five days before the doctors figured out what was going on. A very powerful intravenous antibiotic took five additional days to pull me away from that edge -- a significantly changed person from the guy I was before. Fortunately, most of my edges throughout life have not been that perilous, though my encounters with some of them have profoundly changed my "focal settings" on things.

An "edge" can be every/any intersection where some decision is evoked from us -- "This menu item or that one?" "This life-partner or that one?" "This job or that one?" "Male or female avatar?"

My functional definition of "edge" assumes that we're aware of it when we're in/at an "edge" situation and also that we recognize a choice is required of us (although we undoubtedly make thousands of unconscious non-edgy choices daily.)

Are the little edges even worth noticing? -- Are some things so small that they don't matter?

(The Butterfly Effect?)

A few weeks ago in another Second Life group, a small gathering of friends discussed "edges." What follows are some of the things we shared and asked. I hope you'll read through this list and explore your thinking about edges a bit -- then join us on Thursday, July 7th - 2 p.m. slt at the Kira Cafe - to talk about what you discovered.

Edges can come unexpectedly -- and thereby catch our attention as threats, disturbances, or challenges to whoever it was we previously thought we were.

Edges can be places of growth -- where "self" meets "not-self" and "possible-self."

Does your practice take you to previously undiscovered or unknown edges? Beyond the perimeters of known maps?

Does your practice intentionally take you to (or toward) your most problematic and uncomfortable edges?

Is your practice intentionally designed to avoid the ambiguity and discomfort of edges?

Does your "focal setting" on reality change as a result of your edge experiences?

Do YOU change who/what you are as a result of how you deal with a major (or minor) edge?

Can you "fall off" an edge? What would it be like if you "fell off" while in meditation practice?

Can anything "save" you or "catch" you if you do fall off an edge?

What edges have you struggled with recently? What edges are you encountering right now?

How do you deal with an edge when it is fogged in and ambiguous?

How do you "know" that you've made the "right" or "wrong" choice? -- since "edge" (as I am defining it for the purposes of this discussion) does demand a choice. [Feel free to define 'edge' however you wish for the purposes of your own explorations.]

Does the manner in which you encounter edges make a difference in your "regular" life apart from the edge? Please say more, with I-statement examples, if you wish.

Does your "focal setting" (your style of perceiving and interpreting "reality") determine whether or not you "see" edges at all and what sorts of edges you see? Similarly, would changing your "focal settings" alter your experiences with edges? Are there some edges that are simply too "solid" and too "real" to be "thawed out" by changing your ways of perceiving them?

Do you want others to share their edges with you? Do you want to share yours with them?

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Hoping to see you Thursday, July 7th, 2 p.m. SLT at the Cafe.

--- Bruce