

From Being to Becoming

By Mel Schwartz

Our adventure as humans and how we choose to experience our lives is very much informed by how we see reality operating. The prevailing mindset of most, still believe in a fixed, static and material universe. From that vantage, we construct images of objects and see ourselves as things as well, albeit human things. As such we are beings. Human beings, perhaps somewhat stuck in our identity of being. This mindscape sees change as the exception and at times as undesirable; something to be controlled if not warded off. This has been the predominating worldview since Newton introduced the mechanistic paradigm in the 17th century.

Yet, some of us have begun to see reality operating quite differently. The emerging worldview pictures a universe in which flow is the norm and all parts of the universe are evolving dynamically and inseparably. This description evokes a spirit of perpetual movement, uncertain yet full of potential and inspiration. States of being are but temporary as the primary process is the phenomenon of becoming. Becoming what you might ask. But that very question is seeking a “thing” type answer. What are the waves in the ocean becoming? They just are.

For all conscious entities the process of becoming puts us squarely in this new paradigm of personal evolution and participatory change. Much of my work is devoted to catalyzing and enabling people to change. Some people seek change and can't wait to transform. Others often ask why I have to change. This difference in outlook depicts their worldview: being or becoming. The fear of movement or change is rooted in a very fixed attachment to one's identity. If I'm not who I think I am, who am I? This view sees our identity as static, and hence sees us as a being. A more evolving consideration identifies core features and characteristics of our personality, yet sees them as a work of art, always adapting and evolving to new and higher levels.

The process of becoming is forgiving. In the flow of becoming we are no longer rooted in the hardship of fear, insecurity or the notions of mistakes. The fuller participation in our unfolding life assists us in the art of living well. Becoming is open and unlimited, being is structured and limiting. As the artist crafts their art, so might we look at our life. Learning to live artfully has us see our lives as a process open to inquiry and learning, always receptive to new meaning. Thus, we are always becoming. I recently attended a lecture by a self-proclaimed guru. He spoke of himself as being enlightened. It would have been far more sagacious if he referred to his commitment to the process of enlightenment, for enlightened speaks of a permanent state.

It would also be helpful if we looked at our relationships from this flow of becoming. Our tendency is to see one another as fixed and hence our relationship is stuck as well. As two individuals, each devoted to their becoming, engage one another, we have a relationship that is indeed evolving. Contrast that with two beings, locked in a relationship burdened by their states of being.

The paradigm of simply being burdens and constrains our lives as it deprives us of a fuller and richer participation with life. It is absent the deeper meaning to be found in the evolving worldview of becoming. All of nature and the universe are apparently evolving into higher levels of complexity and order. Isn't it a shame to leave ourselves out of that scenario?

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