



## Reluctance Shifting

By Amy Tyksinski

Recently at an excellent day-long Meditation Workshop led by Carmen Brocklehurst, I experienced a palpable shift in what I would call my own reluctance to be Here. What is Here? The way I would define *Here* is being fully in the body, fully in this life, neither avoiding, resisting, nor overly absorbing nor grasping. Not that *Here* is an “it” nor can it be defined...but there is a registering in the body that is trustworthy.

One of the meditation practices led beautifully to this conscious awareness. We sat in the Rinzai Zen way (Rinzai Zen is one side of Justin’s Lineage), and with eyes OPEN, gazed down at the T’an T’ien. What happened? Initially I desperately wanted to close my eyes. My own regular meditation practice is one done with eyes closed, so part of this was habit, but part was also a resistance to this new approach to meditation. I didn’t like the “Hereness” that the meditation was encouraging and wanted to go away. I recognized the underlying assumption that meditation can’t happen without withdrawal. I noticed, too, that my gaze wanted to drift forward out in front of me, instead of staying within the T’an T’ien. Ah! Such good fodder for contemplation!

Later in the day, we tried the “eyes-open” meditation practice again. I still felt an urge to close my eyes, but began to get curious about the relationship between keeping my eyes open and where my gaze was placed. I noticed that my eyes could stay open much better when my gaze stayed close in to the body, lightly focused on the T’an T’ien. “I” still didn’t like it, but something else in me was beginning to appreciate the rich presence being cultivated within the body, something akin to strong, simple, quiet aliveness.

The third time around, I settled in and my gaze steadied itself on the T’an T’ien. I felt a gentle eagerness to stay, to experience this new territory, joyous with no opposite, eyes open, awareness comfortably at ease in what is also called the Wisdom Center.

Carmen made the comment that our T’ai Chi Chih practice is also an “eyes-open” meditation where we focus in and flow from this Wisdom Center. We can “be in” meditation (conscious unification with Source energy) AND completely Here via our T’ai Chi Chih practice, regardless of whether we have a sitting practice or not (though Carmen also reminded us that

Justin often said Zen practice and T'ai Chi Chih practice are closely related). For me, I'm thrilled finally (after a measly 28 years) to notice and experience this inner eagerness to be Here and filled with gratitude to have such gentle practices which support that unfoldment. Wow.

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