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Natural Crazy Wisdom

Kidder Smith and Susan Burggraf, Ph.D.

Our craziness is our most powerful wisdom. No, I don't mean "Crazy, man," like "Far out, let's go," I mean the psychiatric disarray of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the dysfunctions we call psychopathology. These are precious not because they show us what most needs repair but because they are authentic manifestations of our native wisdom.

We can understand that most easily if we approach it through the crazy wisdom that Tibetan traditions speak of. Actually, a better translation would be "wise craziness"—craziness gone wise. This differs from William Blake's dictum that a fool who persists in his folly will become wise. It is more direct: a fool fully in his folly is wise already. But crazy wisdom does not mean celebrating only the symptoms, the shrieks and twitches. Those are end points of a cosmic shudder, the fast-stiffening corpses of something that is by nature mutable, energetic, and alive.

If this is wisdom, then why do we suffer? Not from wants and needs, our misplaced anger or delusions, nor even for our attachment to any of those. It is rather that so often we cannot bear our own experience. We hope fervently that we might possess another nearby substitute identity, more authentic than this painful self, perhaps as blessed innocent or good intention or Buddha-nature or even as a vast emptiness. We wonder whether a discipline of self-withdrawal might relieve us of our suffering, because then we could adopt the right perspective on ourselves.

But I'm not referring us to practice, means by which we might employ to nullify, purify, or transmute an undesirable state, but to how we might recognize ourselves now, even in our overwhelming distress; to the ways that wisdom arises in everything, just as music happens through whatever instrument, mouth, or talent is made available to it. Nor is music separate from those things. Can we accept that the bliss of wisdom mind, that which we seek, can be found *only* here, in our experience? Still more: that this bliss is already present in everything we do. It requires us to do nothing.

Anger

My emotions are always right. How could it be otherwise? They are no different in kind from my seeing, tasting, or feeling. To question their basic wisdom is to doubt the ground of my existence.

Yet emotions are always right in a particular way. They are infallible representatives of my momentary state of being, but they can be hijacked by an elaborate tale I tell about myself. Then my anger self-inflates and steps out to fill the world, advancing hideous verdicts about people and things far removed from me.

But what if I return to the immediate truth, to the emotion itself? What is here, before the stories begin to speak? What if I stop right now, in my body? What if, whenever a word shows up to name, describe, and then explain things, I just fall back into my belly?

Resting here, the struggle taking place without me. Within the torturous compression is something huge, something good, whatever else I might say about it, good past naming, vaster than aspiration or imagination, more powerful, yet more silent, than any of its manifested turbulence. It is joy, a joy from nowhere.

Resting here.

How did I accomplish this joy? Cannot. How do I reach it? No: rather, it reaches out to me. But only when I can entrust myself to doing nothing for it. Seeking it sets me stumping through a shallow pond to find one good spot of calm: my search precludes my finding. When I stop, or when I am stopped dead by impossibility or utter helplessness, or when I simply rest, I may notice, finally, a completion. It comes up from below, from under the pond's calm surface, licks my bowels, presses through my tender skin in all dimensions, out of nowhere, a silent joy that is of the nature of everything. It is more real than any suffering.

My anger arose from that. It's not just self-inflicted petulant rage, it's also a precise conviction that I'm being cut off from my joyful beginnings. This anger can happen only because I already know the bigger truth of love. My passionate attachments are all born of this same innocence.

But none of this belongs to me. Nothing of it lasts beyond an instant. Fits of fury, all volatile emotions, are solar flares of wisdom mind, briefly illuminating the spaces we inhabit. To imagine their sharp edges as messages that something's gone wrong would be like rushing my baby son to the hospital when he cried from hunger because his insistent need made me forget my own lactating breast.

When I simply admire their clangor, unmoving, I am queen and king. The stronger the emotion, the more powerful the truth. The more roiling, the more energy, the greater realization. At base it's only love.

And only in that knowledge am I alive in this world.

Depression

The wisdom of depression lies in its complete abandonment of all volition. Even this act is nonvolitional: I simply cannot do a single thing. I lie upon the bed (not *in* bed, that relationship is too intimate, but upon it). Even to consider the possibility of movement is painful. Everything has come to a halt.

This weight—in my blood, all through my viscous thought—is more than anything I can imagine. I have to pee, but I am forced back down by something bigger. A useful plan flickers, I launch my aspiration, and it dies.

Weighing as much as the earth, and this is my own weight. Its power is my power, unassailable. Its utter immovability overcomes any distraction, never pulls me away from or off my ground. It is incapable of wavering, blank to the fires, fears and freeze-outs of monkey mind. And anything is dwarfed by the power of this great nothing happening.

The perfection of such stillness is utter relaxation, the bliss of silence. I ride the earth in its diurnal rotation, and neither one of us can be apprehended. Here I am completely free.

Now I arise and act without ever leaving that space.

Boundaries

But after all, there *are* no boundaries. There is only room for play. Instantly I can touch anything in the universe. "There" is immediately here.

This outraged assault on boundaries is my horror at anything seeking to interrupt the perfect continuity of space, interject itself between itself and itself, as if a game of peekaboo had hardened into chess, constant objects following predetermined trajectories to a rep-utable, replicable conclusion.

I extend my hand as I extend my breath. I enter "your" space, your "body." I see your mind from its insides, I look out at your world. We don't exchange our thoughts, because there is no difference between us that could be bridged. Suddenly we are cry-laughing, unimpeded because we aren't two of us.

The oak-tree growing in my yard is my own mind. We are hundreds of years old, we are older than this universe.

Only in that knowledge can I put temporary shifting obstacles in the way of those who would harm my child, can I keep safely to the right of the yellow lines on Main Street, can I use our English language to write exquisite grocery lists with "peanut butter" and "fresh spinach" inscribed in them.

Self-hatred

I hate. I hate myself. I hate each particle of air I'm forced to breathe. Wherever driven, I meet only pain.

I lift my eyes looking for a sky and find it only five inches above my forehead, like an expanse of grey foam, tactile egg-crate, it compresses as I push it back, but still it hovers there, presses back into its place.

I find a desiccated memory of joy. I follow it as if it were a tatty scrap of red yarn lying on the ground, but it disappears into the dirt.

I see other people smile, I can't penetrate their lips and teeth, can't get past their distorting faces, their deliberate dissimulations.

Resting here in full-hatched hell, longing for auto-immolation, the finish of everything, and all the world's pain pokes discriminantly into any feeling place that still survives. How is it that I'm alive at all, that there's any tenderness that hasn't been cauterized and charred and blown off into the Gobi? What's left to feel it with?

All this is my wisdom mind. This intensity of pain is the same capacity that can manifest with equal ease as overpowering bliss, or casual indifference. Letting go into its vastness, this is its power, immediate, devastating, all-consuming. Everything falls before it.

It doesn't matter how such pain first came to me. Did something once break me open, crack the whole, hear my shriek, teach me that the human sense of a personal self is lies, a monstrous fiction that is too small, deforming, violent, reductive, a thing that only brings me hatred and must be obliterated? Or did the earth itself open, and I leapt in and seized its sundering power?

This ruination of the self is my wisdom mind, ris-

ing from a premature interment. I rest here as flames engulf its upper structure, I am the fire and its eye of silent purity, burning out illusion and impediments to illuminate the universe.

For all of this is love, mind refusing falsehood, unable to deny the goodness of my origin, of the root of all existence, rapturously intolerant of lies, resting in the true heart beauty of our world. Knowing this, I can move through my full range and depth in fierceness, nakedness, unprotected, kindly, relentless in my nonaccommodation of deceit.

Attention Deficit Disorder

I'm all over the place. I wish I could fit into the lovely shoe boxes they have for good children. My mind never goes anywhere I want. Everyone else is solid and I'm gaseous. The depressed person feels like a solid citizen, and you're not, you're a gaseous citizen, and nobody wants those. I wish I could be deep! My roads dry up too easily, they end, they just go into grassy meadows. I get on a road, it's like a super highway for one hundred yards, and then it deteriorates into this grassy, wooded field, and everybody's sitting around having a picnic. That's why I like to drive on real roads, because those roads go somewhere. My mind is like the sky. The bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteshvara, has A.D.D. I know this because Robert has a photograph of his son and the boy's arms were moving and it looked like he had one thousand arms. But it was just movement, the way Avalokiteshvara has A.D.D., like he's always into everything, he's all over the place, his parents are saying this kid's too much, he notices everything. Kids with A.D.D. are the first to notice things because they're very external-locus-of-control. I can't keep the stuff in the cabinets at home, it just spills out. Everything flies around, it just becomes fluid. The people at the credit union just gave me a new checkbook. Money just isn't meant to have a fluid quality, you have to save it in a pile. If you have money, and it's not in a pile, you are wrong, you are totally wrong, right? That's probably the worst thing you could have that's not in a pile. I have never since I have been an adult folded my underwear or made my bed on a day that I know no one is coming. Julie makes her bed every day. She's not rigid. "I like it that way, then I can use the bed for other things." She thinks I'm a nightmare, but the thing that I never do is keep something sloppy if someone has to share with someone. This is because my motives for things are really driven by

other people. It's like being really weak and lazy. I think my motives for doing absolutely everything are other people. I can't believe how incredibly wise A.D.D. is. It's thought of as being maladaptive, but that's only from the point of view of samsara, of ignorance. Finding dzogchen or Buddhamind is like finding the place where A.D.D. is exactly right. You walk into a meditation retreat where everyone is trying to do the thing that you do naturally, and that is hilarious. I love the fact that there's no shortage. Avalokiteshvara is the fruition of A.D.D. Here's how I say his mantra, in the shower with the water coming into my mouth:

*om amoga shila
sam badda sam badda
badda badda
mahashuda sattva
pema bee boo shita bunsu
dada dada
samanta avalokita
hung pay so ha*

When I first heard this, I couldn't get through it without laughing. That's the secret part of the mantra. Write it on plastic, take it into the shower, do it fast, and you'll love me for it. This is my dream come true, I am my nine-year-old A.D.D. self, for the benefit of all beings. WHO KNEW!

Crazy Wisdom

Our wisdom mind is like the sun. Even indoors we see by it, radiation transformed now into electron movement and fired into incandescence. It's the only source of, the only way we come to be the world's shape and color. Without this wisdom mind there would be no experience at all.

Crazy wisdom is this wisdom's purest form of love. It manifests inseparably from us, in total indifference to reactions that we may have to it. Whatever we are, it never turns away from its own sometimes horrifying face, in full enjoyment. It couldn't care less for us, nor less than perfectly. And while we may regard it as outrageous, that's only for its refusal to engage the dramas we seek to embroil it in. From the perspective of crazy wisdom, nothing happens. Nothing ever happens. It is already completely good.

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