

# On Understanding Sensation and Desire

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## Abstract

What is the role of sensation in our lives and what precisely is desire? Is there any link between the two? This paper tries to answer these fundamental questions through an examination of the works of Jiddu Krishnamurti. The main points he makes in this regard are that having sensations is an underlying feature of humanity and that it is the manipulation of sensation by thought that creates the seemingly compelling flame we call desire. In coming to some awareness of sensation, of what gives rise to it, of what it is, and in coming to see how absolutely central it is to our status as human beings, we open ourselves up to the beauty of an amazing mechanism. But as we watch more carefully, we see that the sensations can get played with, coaxed or worked on in some way, which is the very generation and process of desire. Understanding this process in practice, which means actually taking the time to look, allowing a space between sensation and the in-rushing thought can free one from the compulsion this combination may hitherto have brought with it. Such understanding can act as a release from the need to either pursue or suppress desire.

On being asked, most people would probably say that they are concerned with their health and general well being. And to a certain extent this seems incontrovertible. If we take simple instances, we notice that when people have headaches they usually do something about it : they take a pill or try and get some rest in order to get rid of it or ease it in some way. When they catch a cold or get influenza they consult a doctor or take some medicine to deal with the problem. The body at such times is not in a good condition, a fight of some kind is going on, an imbalance of some kind is taking place. People immediately recognize this and take steps to change it, to restore the original balance and bring

about the return of the former sense of well being or something as close to it as possible. In doing this, as simple and everyday as it is, three separate stages are gone through, although it is unlikely that most of us ever consider them or would even deem it necessary to do so on having them pointed out. In the first case we understand or see what the usual state of accepted equilibrium is — not having a headache, for example. We then identify the headache — or whatever — as being a problem, a threat or simply an undesirable state, and thirdly we move to do something about it. We do these very obvious and seemingly non-contentious things because we recognize the importance of maintaining well being, of keeping the body in a settled, relaxed and relatively pain-free state. All of this is for most of us, taken for granted. We don't think about it a great deal, and we hardly, if ever, talk about it with others. And, in one sense, there is nothing so unusual about that. We do what we feel is necessary with the minimum of fuss and fanfare. We quickly recognize a problem and we act to do something about it, to remove the problem and bring about our normal sense of well being.

However, there are other aspects of our life, aspects, which in a sense are more important than recognizing a cold or a headache, as important as these things are in themselves, which have a much more powerful and ongoing effect on our passage through life. I'm thinking in particular of all the thoughts and feelings that flow through us daily. The hopes, wishes, dreams, longings, regrets, recriminations, rationalizations, justifications, etc, that make up so much of our inner life. The pleasure we feel when we achieve something — as momentary as it may be — and the frustration, annoyance or sense of disappointment that pervades us when we fail to get what we want, are simple but common reactions to the humdrum and repetitive stock of thoughts that appear and reappear as if from nowhere as we go about the business of everyday life, which we seem incapable of living either simply or harmoniously. Something once recognized as an achievement or success quickly gives way to the next flurry of hopes, wishes,

dreams, etc, as the continuous cycle of thought and feeling grinds relentlessly on.

This aspect of our lives, like a permanently issuing loudspeaker to and from the brain, we seldom if ever examine and yet it is this side of things that is much more disruptive to general well being than a headache or cold which are genuinely temporary and reoccur only intermittently. In so far as we generally get what we want, we may not feel too disposed to examine that aspect which concerns our thoughts and feelings. But it is this side of things that deserves at least as much consideration as the cold or headache, because whether we recognize it or not, it is the thoughts and feelings which give rise to the problems and unhappiness in each of our lives.

Once we come to see the powerful and ever-present effect thought has on how we go about and how it extends to every other human being in the world, we might be moved to try and understand it better. It is a side of our understanding, a side of what should be basic education, that for the most part many of us have never considered or had brought to our attention. In coming to see the importance of it we become aware, too, that there are many key areas that we could focus on : fear, belief, sorrow, pleasure, pain, desire, etc., to name but a few.

In this paper I want to take a closer look at one such area - desire - and try, if possible, to come to a real understanding of what it is fundamentally. Our longing for certain things, our hopes and wants are all features of desire which has such a common and controlling influence on all that we engage in. Throughout the ages, different religions, each in their own way, have warned of the dangers of desire and have spoken of the need to control it. Most have considered it as an inevitable fact about us, not something to celebrate but something to be extremely wary of. Few, if any, have made much attempt to understand it, to look at it with an open mind and examine what it really is, which is surprising given its ubiquitous and pervasive nature.

One person who has sought to examine these questions in a very rational and

sensible manner is Jiddu Krishnamurti. In his talks and discussions over the years he stressed the importance and necessity of coming to some understanding of the role of desire in our lives.

Now we ought to talk over together what desire is because time, desire and thought are the major factors of fear. What is desire? What is the wandering nature of desire, desire which is never content, the desire that all religious leaders have said suppress? Why have religious leaders all over the world, and all the books, said we must suppress desire ; desire is all right for God, but to desire a woman, desire a house, desire the lovely things of the earth, the beauty of a painting, the beauty of a statue, a poem of Keats, that you must not desire? We have learnt through the ages the act of suppressing desire or yielding to desire (“3<sup>rd</sup> Public Talk, Madras 1983”, #10).

Why have human beings yielded to desire, to do everything that they wanted to do on one side ; and there are other human beings who say you must suppress desire? The monks, the sannyasis of India, and the Buddhist monks, all say you must control your desire, or transform your desire to God. ...Turn your desire to the worship of your saviour, turn this desire that is so strong, take vows against it — vows of celibacy, vows of silence, vows of one meal a day.....Never look at a woman. Never look at the sky, the beauty of the trees, the solitary tree in the field, never communicate what you are feeling to another...In the name of service, in the name of God, human beings have tortured themselves to find illumination, to find enlightenment, to find something or other, heaven. And that is a tremendously torturing affair. And desire is at the root of this. Human beings in India, in the West have done everything to suppress this flame (“1<sup>st</sup> Public Question and Answer meeting,

Brockwood Park 1983”, #13).

Desire for most of us is extraordinarily important. Desire for God, desire for a new house, desire for somebody with whom you can get on better, desire for more wealth, desire for greater peace — you know, desire that which is burning in all of us furiously. Desire is very prominent in our lives, like thought. And various religions have said, ‘Suppress desire’.... Man has always tried to suppress, control, shape, desire. You desire, when one is young for some silly little thing, then as you grow older you desire for position, power, money, status. As you grow much older, then you desire for some peace, then you desire for immortality — if there is such a thing — then you desire to escape from the fear, the darkness of death. From the beginning of life until the end of life one is tortured by desire, (with its pleasure’s too)...And we have done everything conceivable either to express fully our desires, which is called freedom, or gone to the other extreme, suppress desires. This has been the constant movement of man.... (“3<sup>rd</sup> Public Talk, Saanen, 1984”, #23).

Krishnamurti recognizes the importance of desire in all of our lives and recognizes, too, that this is something that has troubled people through the ages. And in troubling people, it has evoked a response from them, reactions of differing kinds depending on the person’s attitude towards desire. Those who have seen it as a dangerous thing have sought to hide from it by putting different kinds of barriers up against it, while others have tried to satisfy it in all of its manifestations with varying degrees of success or failure. Still others, perhaps the majority of us, haven’t thought about it much at all, despite the fact that it exerts considerable pressure on our movement through life. Unquestioning or unimaginative, we are simply pulled this way or that by feelings that seem to

appear as if from nowhere. But whatever our reaction to date has been, few of us would reject out of hand the suggestion that we take time to examine desire in more detail, to look at it with genuine curiosity and try to come to some non-judgmental understanding of it. Krishnamurti asks :

...So what is desire? How does it come? Go into it. Look at it. You have your own desires, unfortunately or fortunately. Desire to be good — you know. How does that desire arise in you? You see a beautiful woman or a beautiful man — see. Perception, the seeing, then the contact, then the sensation, then that sensation is taken over by thought, which becomes desire with its image. Right? Follow it yourself and you will see it. You see a beautiful vase, a beautiful sculpture — I don't mean the modern sculpture, sorry, somebody may like it but personally I don't like it—you see a beautiful statue, the ancient Egyptian or the Greek, and you look at it. As you look at it, if they allow you to touch it, you touch it. See the depth of that figure as he sits on a chair, or cross-legged. And then from that there is a sensation, isn't there? What a marvellous thing. And from that sensation the desire says, I wish I had that in my room. Right? I wish I could look at it every day, touch it every day. And the pride of possession, to have such a marvellous thing like that. You understand? That is desire isn't it? Seeing, contact, sensation ; then thought using that sensation to cultivate the desire to possess or not possess. Right? This is obvious. This is not my explanation. It is a factual explanation (“4<sup>th</sup> Public Talk, Saanen, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1977”, paragraph 28).

So we said desire is the movement of perception, seeing, contact, sensation, thought as desire with its image. Right? Now we are saying that see, touch, sensation, that is normal, healthy — end it there. Don't

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let thought come and say, yes, take it over and make it into desire. Get it? No, do understand this and then you will see that there will be no suppression of desire. That is you see a beautiful house, well proportioned, lovely windows, beautiful gardens, well kept, with a roof that melts into the sky, walls that are thick and part of the earth. You look at it, there is sensation. You touch it, you may not actually touch it, but you touch it with your eyes, you smell the air, the herbs, the newly cut grass. And can't you end it there? Why does sensation become desire?

..When there is perception, contact, sensation, it is natural, it is beautiful to see the lovely things and also ugly things. Then to end it there, say it is a beautiful house. Right. Then there is no registration as thought which says, I wish I had that house — which is desire — you understand? — and the continuation of desire. You can do this so easily. And I mean easily, if you understand the nature of desire (“4<sup>th</sup> Public Talk, Saanen, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1977”, #29).

As always when reading Krishnamurti we have to be ever alive to the possibility that we may be understanding what he says only intellectually without seeing the truth of what he says directly for ourselves by observation of our own case. In the foregoing passages, Krishnamurti makes a connection between desire and sensation. The connection may be obvious to some but less so to others, so before we look closer at that connection, it may prove useful to look at the tremendously important role that sensation plays in our lives. Sensation of course is the reaction of the senses, the activity of the senses : touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, seeing. Basic sensations include warmth, heat, pain, sounds, and smells and tastes of various kinds. Laughter, tears, sadness and joy come with their own sensations, as, too, do the thinking of different thoughts : intellectual, theoretical,

scientific, philosophical, etc. We cannot escape these sensations and in fact seem to live our lives devouring them in different ways. We get up and turn on the TV and visual and aural sensations pour in. We move from this to reading the newspaper ; as we read we have sensations of pleasure and pain sometimes associated with the very thoughts expressed and sometimes as reactions to those thoughts or to the printed words themselves.

Then we eat ; sometimes because it is time, often because we are hungry and sometimes for other reasons. The taste of cake, a cookie, another cup of coffee or tea, each in their own way occupies us, takes over, takes possession ; not in an oppressive or threatening way but in a reassuring manner, reminding us of our existence in a warm and comforting fashion rather like an extra blanket on a cold winter night.

When we get bored with reading a newspaper we might pick up a novel or watch a movie or engage in some other activity either through necessity or as a way of passing time, and in each of these endeavors we are a constant flux of sensation and reaction.

In most of our daily life we just have these sensations, whether we are pursuing them or not. We may read the newspaper for information and watch TV for a similar reason or maybe simply for distraction. We need to eat and the sensation of pizza in the mouth, releasing a variety of flavors as we chew it, is just part of the process of eating, which is not to say that the pursuit of such sensations could not become an end in itself as we are, perhaps, all too well aware. And eating does indeed provide a variety of sensations. I taste a piece of lemon. It is sharp and acidic. The mouth puckers and the eyes close in reaction to the tartness. A strong sensation perhaps, but not unpleasant. Next, a piece of chocolate, the dark kind : slightly bitter, giving way to a sweet undertone, dissolving in the mouth, transforming from a hard tasteless chunk to a liquid mush of sweetness.



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We recognize and identify the sounds and tastes and smells and the different feelings that we have. This recognition depends in part on a conceptual apparatus that we have learned and in part because of our physical make up. The ability to recognize and identify certain sensations is part of what makes us human beings. It is an interesting fact about us and enables us to categorize the world in the way that we do. We continually use the apparatus that we have to go about our daily lives and we employ it even for very simple tasks. We button up our coats in response to a biting wind and fish out our gloves for similar reasons. The wool as it brushes over our fingers produces a sense of coarseness or softness depending on the quality of the fabric. With the rush of summer heat comes the discarding of clothes designed to keep heat in, giving way to lighter and freer clothing aimed at keeping us as cool as possible while preserving, for the most part, a sense of modesty. The adjustments we make with regard to regulating our clothing are mirrored in hundreds of different ways in which we monitor and respond to the multitude of sensations that we experience at any given moment.

For the most part, we recognize and identify all of these sensations in a passive way, without necessarily being conscious of what we are doing. We so enjoy the taste of chocolate for example that we concentrate on that — this is delicious — rather than on the fact that we are identifying it as chocolate. As such we focus on the response. We watch the news on TV and our response is one of pleasure or shock or indifference. It is these emotions that come to the fore and these that form the meaningful aspects of many people's lives. It is the response that occupies us. The identification, the recognition of something as a sensation, is, in a sense, too trivial, too basic to notice unless we are say, wine-tasters or controllers of some sort, concerned with a particular taste or quality.

But in thinking through these questions we increase our awareness of what sensation is and the role it plays in our lives ; we become aware not only of the huge traffic of sensation through us, so to speak, but also of the fact that we may

be actively pursuing these things. This is in itself a very important avenue to go into — our insatiable thirst for sensation. However, it is the first of these, the fact of the impingement of sensation upon us, that needs to be stressed for the moment. Only by spending time here watching this ongoing movement of sensation do we have any chance, I feel, of understanding Krishnamurti in any other than in an intellectual way. By watching ourselves very closely, for the passage of one hour or even less, we come to see the amazing impact that sensation has on us. Indeed, for most of us, perhaps, our life is sensation. Krishnamurti has this to say :

We live by sensation. Biologically it's necessary. Otherwise we are paralysed. Sex plays a tremendous part in our life, not only sexually, but wanting, having more and more sensation. Sensation is the result of seeing—will you kindly follow this for a little. Seeing, contact, sensation.

Right? Seeing those hills, and saying, how beautiful, getting a sensation from it. I read a beautiful poem and there is sensation, or see a marvellous painting ; that's another sensation. And so on. That's a natural thing sensation, isn't it? You look at the trees and the leaves and the sky, and say how beautiful it is.....We live by sensation, the whole nervous organism is sensation. What is the relationship of sensation to desire? You understand my question? Because we are inquiring into desire. What is the relationship between sensation and desire? Why are they always instantly related? (“2<sup>nd</sup> Public Talk, Ojai, 1985”, #38).

There is sensation in seeing a beautiful garden, well-kept, a lawn that has been mowed and rolled for the last five hundred years. There are such lawns. And you see it and say how marvellous it is, what depth, what beauty in that grass! And you wish you could have it in your back yard.

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So watch it, please just watch it closely. ....seeing that grass, rich, heavy deep-rooted grass, then the sensation, then wanting it in your garden. So that is how desire is born. That is seeing that lawn protected behind a wall, and on seeing it, the sensation, and thought saying “I wish I had that”. At that second desire is there (“2<sup>nd</sup> Public Talk, Ojai, 1985”, #40, 41).

We live by sensation, don't we? — better food, better house, better wife. Sensation is a part of life, so is sex — it's a sensation, a pleasure, and we have a great many pleasures, pleasure of possession, and so on.

Sensation is an extraordinarily important part of our existence. If you have no sensation, you are dead, right? All your nerves go, your brain withers. We live by sensation, sensation being touch, feeling, like running a nail suddenly into your finger, that's sensation ; you call it pain. Tears, laughter, humor, are all part of sensation. You want more power, more money, and 'the more' is part of sensation. Every second, every response — intellectual, theoretical, philosophical — is part of sensation. We live by sensation — be clear on that — that is by the senses responding : good taste, bad taste ; it's bitter, it's sweet. Sensation is natural, it is inevitable, it's part of life (“2<sup>nd</sup> Public talk, Varanasi, November 1985”, #12).

Sensation, then, is in some sense a reaction to, or the result of, seeing or perceiving something. We feel the warmth or heat of a bath, the chill of a draught, the shock of very cold water, the sweetness of a bird at song, the gruff correspondence of the crow, the aroma of freshly baked bread, the pleasure of a certain thought or image and we recoil in horror at images of war on the TV screen. Sensation is, or can be, a simple sensitive response to a movement of some

kind. And we can heighten or kill off our awareness to this flow of movement — of which we are all a part — in a variety of ways depending on our style of life.

If we view the world through a prism of a very strong ideology we will naturally filter or block out that which we do not wish to see. And, of course, just recognizing the existence of this prism need not diminish its effect.

Just stopping to try and identify the sensations we feel from moment to moment is an interesting challenge in itself. The hardness of the pen held tightly between thumb and fingers. The pressure on the page, the firmness of the table below in determined response. The warmth of the room. The light on the page. The mosaic of colors. The rub of wool around the neck from the sweater worn in winter months. The soft background jazz and the movement of the mind. The tracing of words on the page and the surprise of unconnected thoughts of other things that wander in like new customers into an already busy shop. A trivial and only very incomplete account of a passing moment. The small of the back and the tops of the thighs pressing against the chair ; the push of feet on floor. The movement of air in and out of the body. A howl of wind and the shouts of children at play. None of this so very unusual but all of it special and so much of it going on from moment to moment. A quick check of the email (Where did that thought parachute in from?) The ping of announcement of a new post and the flash into view. From a friend. A flutter of expectation. And so on. The response, the activity of the senses. At this level not really so very troubling, no great concern for conflict. But going on all the time and with so much more detail and variation than I can even begin to express. I write in fading ink but the reality is an infinity of color kaleidoscopes. To be alive is to feel all these things.

When we are very sure that we see the role of sensation in our lives, when we see that to be human is to be ever engulfed in a streaming flow of different sensations, a permanent shower arriving from all directions, only then I feel should we examine what Krishnamurti has to say about desire. Not because what he has

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to say is so very difficult to understand at one level. Most of us could now, if pushed, detail the points that Krishnamurti has thus far been quoted on in this paper. The problem is not understanding what a third party says or even being able to remember it, the problem is seeing it in action in our own lives. Seeing it actually taking place, stopping to look at what actually is going on inside and outside of us. We want to drive the car to town but we are being asked to fully understand the working of the engine and all the other parts. We have so much to do and cannot spare the time to examine what we may think we already understand.

If we are not careful we become like TV experts on baseball or some other sport. We've seen all the shots, know all the plays and maybe even practiced on computer games. But we've never picked up a bat or tried to pitch a ball. We don't really know what it's like in action. To look at what Krishnamurti is talking about we have to turn off the TV and get out into open field. We know in theory, but it really means nothing at all and, my goodness, how we are going to puff and pant if we ever try to take part. We have to begin with the very basics, not as a first step of many in progression along a linear scale, not as a fore-runner to a more difficult class, but because it's the basics that almost none of us understands and because the basics are absolutely crucial.

So let's go very slowly indeed. Ponder sensation ; see what it is. Smile in wonder at the simplicity and power of it. The amazingly sentient being : in perfect harmony even as the waves crash against the rocks and thunder bellows from the skies, as sunlight dances out from behind a cloud and the coffee pot sizzles on the stove. It all works so beautifully. Understand sensation, see the primacy of it and then move on to see how it can get manipulated.

What happens when you have a sensation? When you see something very beautiful — a car, a woman, a man, or a lovely house — what

happens? You have seen that lovely house, seen the gardens, seen the beauty of the landscape, and how the house is built, with styled grace and a sense of dignity. Then thought comes along, makes an image of that sensation, and then says, 'I wish I had that house.' At that moment desire is born. When sensation is given a shape, a form, then at that second, desire is born. When I see something I don't have, like a house or a car, then sensation becomes dominant. When thought gives it an image, when thought comes along and says, 'I wish I had it', at that moment desire is born. Right? You understand the subtlety of it, the depth of it? When thought gives a form, a structure, to sensation, at that second desire is born. Now the question is, can sensation not be caught by thought, which is also another sensation? You understand, sir? After sensation, take time before thought gives it a shape — have an interval between sensation and thought giving it a shape. Do it, and you'll learn a lot from that. So I'm saying, when there is time in between sensation and thought — an interval, long or short — you'll understand the nature of desire. In that there is no suppression, no transcending. Sir, if you drive a car, not knowing the mechanism of it, you are always a little nervous that something might go wrong. But, if you have dismantled that car and put it together very carefully, known all the parts, then you're master of the machinery, then you're not afraid, for you can put it together again. So if you understand the nature of desire, the way desire begins, then you are not afraid of it, then you know what to do with it ("2<sup>nd</sup> Public talk, Varanasi, November 1985", #13, 14).

Sensations in a sense just happen; they are simple basic reactions or responses. Of course we can and do pursue them. This is perhaps obvious as we reach for another chocolate or pick up that novel we are in the middle of. And

desire may indeed have played a part in each of those actions. In the quotes we have given so far Krishnamurti has endeavored to lay bare the mechanism of desire. Up to sensation, things can run fairly smoothly : perception of the item, contact of some sentential kind giving way almost coincidentally to a sensation of some sort or other ; a response of a fundamental type, appreciating, recognizing an essence. But on occasion the mind and thought respond in turn to the very sensation ; the sensation triggers a very fast reaction and a whole series of imaginings take place centred around the idea of possession. And this can be any object whatsoever from something physical and purchasable to ideas of the mind or a way of behaving or going about in the world. Krishnamurti focuses on very simple and obvious cases : a car, a shirt, a house, a garden. We see a hundred of each every day and for nigh on all of them our reaction is muted ; we might never have seen them at all, they have simply passed in front of our eyes. Even though here too, as we look deeper, a cunning evaluation exercise is often going on deciding, almost, that ‘there is nothing in all that for me.’ But, more pertinently for the point in hand, at other times and with different examples our eyes light up- we have become interested. More than being simply ‘a marvellous thing’, we begin to get caught in it, engaged in some way. The mind is now hard at work deciding that it must have or pursue the thing in question, calculating, justifying, imagining, ownership. This kind of deliberation seems to rush in and take over. Not part of a conscious decision, it seems to have a mind of its own, there seems to be little we can do about it. But how can that be? Why now? Why with this particular object? We step back and take a look. We consider Krishnamurti’s words, “When thought gives a form, a structure, to sensation, at that second desire is born.” We begin to watch carefully now and see that there is something in what he says. It is precisely when imagination entwines itself around the sensation that the urge to possess, to fulfill, to achieve — in short, it is at just such times that desire is conceived. But by now we are interested in the process, in the

mechanism of what is going on, because we see the interference at first hand. We are taking part in the ball game and strangely enough, instead of speeding up things have started to slow down. We watch more carefully, see more and come to realize that by looking in this way responses, reactions become less automatic, more restrained — distinguishable. There is so much more going on than we noticed before but less compulsion. We see the object, have the sensation and watch, perhaps with a wry smile, as thought with its campaign team comes in to exhort and argue its case. There is a pause. “When there is time between sensation and thought — an interval, long or short — you’ll understand the nature of desire. In that there is no suppression, no transcending.” We still feel the pull, like that of the dog on the lead, but now it no longer controls us. Which is not to say that we must always deny it.

The instant that thought creates the image, that is the beginning of desire.....This is so rapid, so quick but if you slowed it down and watched it, watched the movement.....The question is not of control, but watching the process slow down. .... When you so watch it, then you find there can be a gap between sensation and when thought takes over.... an interval. To extend that gap...requires very careful attention, watching all your reactions, so that there is an interval between sensation and the activity of thought with its image. Extend that gap, then you will see that desire has very little potency....It is the inattentive that are a slave to desire....Desire is not only for the object outside, but also from the psychological projection of an image — that is also from the inside but is projected outside. So if we can observe this whole process totally, that requires your attention, your care, your watching...you can look at a car and you will have no reaction, *unless you want it* -you understand? (“3<sup>rd</sup> Public Question and Answer meeting, Saanen, 1983”, # 15).



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Krishnamurti is not suggesting for a moment that we should be totally free of desire. This is not his purpose at all. His main concern is that we all understand the process of desire, which he maintains is remarkably simple if we take the trouble to examine it. So simple and so close to home, in fact, that we are in danger of missing it. First we have to entertain the question : What is desire? Then we have to see the important role that sensation plays in our lives, and finally we have to watch as sensation gets manipulated by thought in a clever and elaborate game of imagining. None of this is very difficult to understand at one level but actually taking the time to watch it in practice is quite a different thing. We seem to be so busy ; we have so much to do, so much going on. In our everyday jobs and specialisms we examine in specific detail and argue and speculate about many fine distinctions. We put a lot of energy into our task. Can we do the same with ourselves as the subject? Can we watch our reactions and the workings of the mind with equal energy? If we do we will find that there can be a space between the sensation and the reaction of thought. This can bring about not only a great sense of disbelief about the way we have up to now reacted, it can also free us from having to continue to react in the same way again.

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