

Katie Hendricks Blog

How Do You Know What's True?

April 28, 2020

We created a short, powerful activity a couple of decades ago to explore this question. Who knew that 30 years later it would be a center pole of our current national dilemma.

Here's the activity:

STEP ONE:

Explorer identifies an item to explore

STEP TWO:

Witness asks: "What is true about this?"

Explorer responds (however they respond).

Witness asks: "Could that possibly be argued about?"

Explorer responds yes or no.

STEP THREE:

Witness asks: "What else is true about this?"

Explorer responds.

Witness asks: "Could that possibly be argued about?"

Explorer responds yes or no.

REPEAT STEP THREE FOR AT LEAST 5 MINUTES

To get the most from this Zen-like exploration, stick to the script. It's tempting for the Witness to comment, want to give feedback or argue with the Explorer's yes or no. Please don't. Give the explorer the respect to find their own internal map for discerning what is true.

What's So Important About Knowing What's True?

Many discoveries simmer under the deceptive simplicity of this activity.

- First, the explorer has to do something with their attention other than just thinking to discern and decide whether what they've just said is arguable. I notice when doing this activity that the Explorer's attention eventually travels to their body—sensations, feelings, tightness or space—which activates expanded whole-body wisdom and whole-body thinking rather than learned patterns. "All credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth come only from the sense." Friedrich Nietzsche

- Second, if you and I can't find from our own awareness what is true, we are much more susceptible to external pressures and propaganda. What is true is not a moral dilemma—it's about what is real--what is actually happening. Can you and I discern what is actually occurring and whether we are describing that inside and in our expression in a way that matches it. When we don't, we kink the energy hose that regulates our aliveness, and we get less and less vital and more and more confused about the ground of our being. We are much more likely to become suckers for the most seductive lie currently being served.

- Third, this activity expands your body map, your awareness of your inner landscape and all the characters and qualities that live within you. Giving attention and expression to your vastness expands your multi-dimensionality and your grounded presence. Knowing what's true helps to relocate you from exogenous (caused from without) to endogenous (caused from within) world. In exogenous world you're at the mercy of whatever the loudest, most fear-filled, fastest or adrenaline-charged input is aimed at you. That's a lot of what's been charging around nationally for the last four years. When you know what's true you create expanded freedom of choice. You know your inner yes and no, decisions become easier and inner resources are available for what needs to be done rather than sloshing around in giant exogenous washing machines.

Bottom line, if it's arguable, there is a deeper level of truth that lives in you. For example, you might say, "I felt judged." Could that be argued about? Hmm...yes. What else is true about that? "I felt sad.. and also angry." Could that be argued about?... no. When that landing occurs, an internal sense of trusting yourself, trusting your perceptions (in contrast to, for example, "no, you're not hungry, "no, you don't actually want that") and increasing your curiosity and discovery develops. I invite you to practice this process over the next month before evaluating your or other's progress. The payoff?—vitality, ease, choice.