

Questions for Reflection

Talk 7 Series 14

Here is something to think about during the week and perhaps write about in your notebook:

This idea--*If you leave a trace of your thinking on your activity, you will be attached to the trace*—has been poignantly written about in a famous short story by Anton Chekov called “Enemies.” Basically the story is this: A doctor and his wife are kneeling by the bed of their only son who is six years old and has just died. The doorbell rings and the doctor answers it. It is someone he has met before who begs him to come to his home this minute because his wife is very sick and may be dying. The doctor is vacant and cannot think clearly and finally tells the man that he cannot come with him because his son just died and he is useless. He can barely stand up. But the man continues to plead saying that it’s not for him but for the sake of a dying person and finally he promises the doctor that he will have him back in one hour. The doctor relents but doesn’t tell his wife that he is leaving. On the way he wants to turn back to take care of her in some way but they are almost there and it is too late.

Next thing we know the man discovers that his wife has left him. She faked being violently ill so that he’d leave to get a doctor and while he was away she ran off with some man her husband doesn’t think very highly of. So now he is so furious he can hardly contain himself. He screams and yells till the doctor interrupts and says, “What is this? Where is the sick person? You brought me here for her and now you are shouting absurdities and so forth and they go back and forth accusing each

other of wronging them in loud violent language. Eventually the doctor gets driven home. Chekov concludes the story by saying that over time both of the men calmed down and were more open to understanding each other but that during the night of that main event, both of them formed strong opinions of the other person and those opinions will last forever. They will not change.

This is precisely what Dogen is saying about if *you leave a trace of your thinking on your activity, you will be attached to the trace*. Please reflect on this truth and relate one or two events from your own life experience that shows either its validity or non-validity.