

This is an older article of mine from my previous blog:

A few months ago I was reading a free online book that contained a lot of short Zen stories. Wish I could remember where that link was as I would point you to it. There was one Zen story that caught my eye, not so much for the story itself but the peoples commentary on it. Just to clarify in this book, there was a Zen tale followed by peoples impressions and interpretations of the tale.

The gist of this story goes something like this.

One day there was a enlightened teacher who when asked where enlightenment could be found would point with his finger into thin air. A student of his saw his teachers behaviour and began to mimic it to the towns folk. This went on for many months, and each time the student was asked where enlightenment could be found he would point his finger into thin air in a mimic of his master.

The enlightened teacher saw this. He went up to his student and asked him where enlightenment could be found. The student pointed his finger into thin air to which the enlightened teacher responded by pulling out his sword and chopping the students finger off in one clean cut.

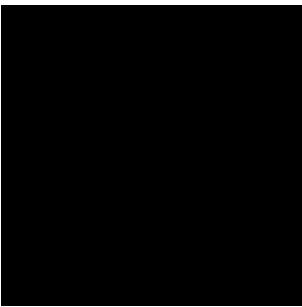
As the students finger lay on the ground and blood oozing from where his finger once was, the enlightened teacher asked once again, where can enlightenment be found?

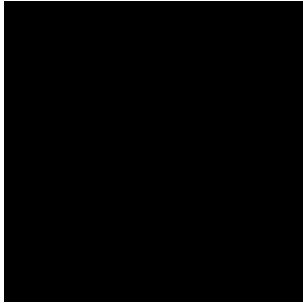
In that moment the student was enlightened.

Peoples reactions to this story were interesting to read and was certainly the one tale that seemed to spark the most controversy. In general most did not understand the point of the tale and were comfortable in just stating so. That is good; it s a measure of honesty. Others were remarking on the cruelty of the teacher. Others still were focused on the potential loss of a finger. Granted losing a finger is not an ideal by any stretch of the imagination, but to lose a finger for enlightenment? I would venture to guess that if the prize was 100 million dollars at the expense of losing a finger, there would be quite a few people taking up that offer?

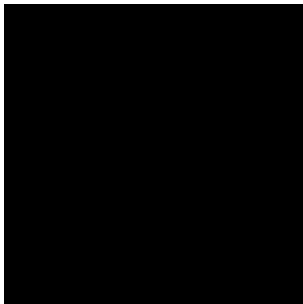
There are a couple of points to be made about the Koan which may be good to consider.

To my way of thinking there are a couple of salient points contained in the Zen tale. The obvious one to me was that the student was pointing to the finger pointing at the moon. His mimicking behaviour was borne from ego s need to impress the town s folk. Further he

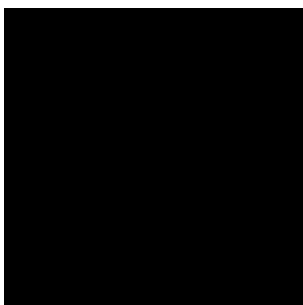




Uncovering Dream Layers:
A Visceral Dream
Interpretation Technique



Learning to take Actions
from our Dreams



A Few Words on Surrender