

The Tao of Pooh

What the heck is Tao, what does it have to do with Pooh, why do we care and why is Reverend Joy saying it wrong? One question at a time. First, let's see if Pooh and Piglet can explain what Tao is?

Begin the Day reading

Doesn't that explain what Tao is? Well, Pooh lives according to Tao without even knowing what Tao is. So even tho Pooh can't explain what Tao is, if we study Pooh we begin to see what Taoist life might look like. Which at least explains what Tao has to do with Pooh. But back to what Tao is. In the book by Benjamin Hoff, Hoff describes three philosophies or "tastes" coming from China. Confucius focuses on traditions and ancestors because he believes that the present is out of alignment with the past and that is the source of our trouble. Buddha focuses on attachments as the source of all suffering and seeks to transcend this world of dust to find nirvana or the place of "no wind". Unfortunately usually a breeze is blowing. Lao-tse wrote "The Tao Te Ching" and describes a natural harmony between heaven and earth that cannot be described or forced. Taoism in Hoff's book is "simply a particular way of appreciating, learning from, and working with whatever happens in everyday life. From the Taoist point of view, the natural result of this harmonious way of living is happiness. Happy serenity and a subtle sense of humor." Well now, that sounds interesting.

Some of you have little word bubbles appearing over your heads. "Why does she keep saying it wrong? It begins with a T not a D." I know, but it is pronounced D-a-o. And here we have our first opportunity to let go of what we THINK should happen and be with what is. It is pronounced Dao. Just breathe with that for a moment. It's not what I thought it was. Oh dear.

I see new word bubbles. "OK so you're saying Taoism correctly. We are not a Taoist church! We are a Unity church. Shouldn't we be learning Unity principles?" Well, Unity embraces the idea that there are many paths to oneness. What could it hurt to explore a different path and see what we might be able to use from that path?

"Harmony, happy serenity and subtle sense of humor" doesn't sound all that bad. I'm not saying that Charles Fillmore writes like a stick in the mud but

with April Fool's Day tomorrow, maybe we could lighten up our wisdom for one Sunday.

In Taoism there is a principle known as Wu Wei. Hoffman says Wu Wei literally means "without doing, causing or making". Really, he says, it is without meddling or letting ego run the show. Oddly, we might also call it the Pooh way. It is effortless. Which might be counter to our human impulse to logic, reason and force a way. It is working with our own Inner Nature and the natural order of things without so much judging of nature and forcing of order. Let's look at the Pooh Way and see if Pooh, Piglet and Eyeore might be able to help us understand the principle of Wu Wei.

Birthday Party Reading

How many of us were **surprised** when things worked out? How many of us, **in our own lives**, might have begun judging? I mean is it proper to remind others of your birthday like Eyeore did? And I *know* it is the nature of a bear to eat honey but you really shouldn't **eat** the gift you were going to give! Piglet is easily excited and haste makes waste. Little Piglet was in such a rush to be first he ruined the balloon gift! Not only can we judge one another, we begin to judge ourselves. We judge our inner nature, condemning some of the traits that make us who we are! Bears who eat honey, donkeys who long for inclusion and little piglets who get excited. We forget we have other qualities too. Pooh is also a bear who is kind and generous. Eyeore is also a patient friend and Piglet is also eager to be of service to others. There, at the end of the story, we find Pooh has given a gift that allows Piglet to contribute just the right addition and Eyeore is celebrated by his friends.

Perhaps a part of the Pooh Way might be described as spending less time allowing ego to direct our thoughts to the flaws in our humanity and spending more time allowing our higher self to guide us through what is present for us right now. Brené Brown talks a lot about shame. Guilt is feeling bad about something we've done but shame is feeling like our essence is broken—**we** are bad, not just our actions were bad. How easy is it to feel shame if we notice we are seeking the attention of our friends? Or to feel shame if we have allowed our impulsiveness to appear to ruin something that involved others or makes them unhappy? Most of us hate to disappoint others. Ego could have directed everyone into a big shame fest with Pooh, Piglet and Eyeore feeling bad about themselves, then being defensively angry with one another and the party in shambles.

Think for a moment about which character in the story you identify with. Now reflect on what qualities in your Inner Nature you tend to criticize or condemn? What triggers you to be angry with yourself most often? Now reflect on other characteristics that are also true about you. Positive ways you interact with and contribute to the world around you. Could life be easier if you worked more gently with the parts of yourself you feel are flaws and allowed your positive parts to shine more brightly? Can you see a balance that naturally seeks to express through nature and through you?

The story doesn't end in sadness. The Pooh Way abandons judgment and shame and focuses on our innate goodness, our Inner Nature, our Christ self. Pooh and Piglet each found something to give and Eeyore was delighted to receive the gifts of friendship from true hearts. Instead of giving up on the party, they allowed a new plan for the party to emerge. Following inner guidance, the new plan flowed effortlessly.

So how do we listen for inner guidance that is a part of the Pooh Way? How do we become aware of our Inner Nature and give it space to shine forth without needing to mold it or make ourselves in some image we see in the outer world?

Maybe Pooh and Christopher Robin have a plan.

Doing Nothing Reading.

Our Daily Word today is about the Sabbath. Organized religion has made the Sabbath be the day of the week you go to church. Many religions would have you believe that going to church was the most important aspect of the Sabbath. At the risk of shooting myself in the foot, as is often the case as we explore beyond a superficial level of understanding, going to church can become **one more** item of **doing**. The Sabbath is about **being**. I appreciate the relationship laboratory of spiritual community where I get to be love and experience love. I welcome the opportunities to be of service in spiritual community. I immerse myself in the sense of being a part of a greater whole that includes me and is beyond me. All of those are wonderful reasons to come to church. And in the right consciousness they can be a part of your Sabbath. Every Sabbath should also include a time apart from thinking and figuring and planning and implementing. Tell me when you create space for doing nothing and there is your Sabbath. No matter what day of the week or moment or hour is set aside, that space is your Sabbath. And in the space of nothing you will hear the guidance that directs you in the Pooh way.