

Out of your head – a good place to be!

Everything about me seemed to be tense as I sat there waiting for the lights to change: my stomach restricting my breathing, my hands tightly holding the wheel making my shoulders tight, my legs holding my feet from twitching on the pedals, staring intently at that red light. It was as if I was “under starters orders”, ready for the off the instant the amber light appeared.

As soon as I became aware of the tension I then had the choice to release it or continue to waste my energy unnecessarily. Choosing to relax I arrived at my destination a much calmer person. I was surprised to note that the holding of tension felt quite normal and that I thought I was relaxed!

Thinking and feeling are quite different experiences.

The above experience happened to me in the early 1980's during my first year of studying Taiji.

Having related this story during a recent class, a student then asked about the dangers of dropping your awareness into the Dantien: “Does it make you less aware?”, “Doesn't this take you away from the thinking mind?”

From the Taiji perspective, being in the centre of yourself (the Lower Dantien), *does* take you away from the thinking mind, but into a more present and embodied space. You become more connected within yourself, and your surroundings; more aware, more alive. From here you can respond instantly without the delay filter of the thinking process. When thinking how to respond there is always the possibility of making the wrong choice, and it is often too late.

Perception allows for, and encourages, natural action. Natural action flows effortlessly.

Sitting at the traffic lights all those years ago, I now realise the tension was a misguided form of defense or self protection, a way of bracing myself against the world. Dropping into the Dantien was a liberating and safe way to be more alive. It can allow for a greater expression of the individual personality in relationship to everything else, without increasing the ego which separates the individual from the Tao.

Are you out of your head yet!?