

Molayo (pronounced Mol lie yo) Korean for *I Don't Know*

To not know, and to know you don't know, to accept and be OK with this, is in my experience, a very large step in freeing oneself.

In most societies, educational systems and cultures, “not knowing” is looked upon as a negative. Heaven forbid if you are functioning as a teacher, guide or leader, and you don't know!

I can remember times when I was in the role of teacher and was asked questions I didn't know how to answer. It was not possible for me to respond with “I don't know.” So I would make up an answer and hope for the best while inside I was thinking, “*Oh my God am I an idiot or what?*”

“If you don't know where your going you can't get lost.” An old Zen saying,

Over the years, the more I practiced my art and teaching I began to realized just how much I didn't, and still don't know. At some point along the way I got inspired to say to students “*I don't know...what do you think?*” and sat back to see what would happen. The first time I tried it the student was taken aback for a moment. After stammering a bit they actually found (within themselves) a clear and concise answer. It was a beautiful surprise. I went home and thought about that for a long time.

A big door opened up for me that day. It was like a Zen awakening...a metaphorical slap to my face that woke me up and allowed me to see how important it is to have an “*I don't know*” mind versus trying to have all the answers all the time.

*In the pursuit of learning,
everyday something is acquired.
In the pursuit of Tao,
everyday something is dropped.*
Tao Te Ching

When the time seemed right i began to practice telling students “I don't know...what do you think?” Slowly I got more comfortable with saying this in class. It became an important tool in empowering the student to find their own answers. The answers were often quite informative—not only for themselves, but for others in the class, including me. This gave me opportunities to see things in new and different ways.

The *Molayo* door swung open...

What is dance?...*Molayo!* You tell me.

Why are we doing this?...*Molayo!* You tell me.

Should I do this every day?...*Molayo!* What does your BodyMind tell you?

What is Somatics?...*Molayo!* What do you think it is?

Where should I feel this?...*Molayo!* Where do you feel it?

I love the word and love saying “*molayo*” to encourage students not to be dependent on always looking outside themselves for answers.

In 1969 in a retreat center in upstate New York I took my first tentative steps in teaching. It was quite by accident. The Yoga teacher left the center and I was asked to teach the morning class. All I could say was “really, me?” My feet hit the ground that day and I was off and running.

Over the years, both as a human being and as a movement teacher, I have been blessed with a wealth of experiences taking me up and down and round and round. Experience can be a potent and powerful teacher. It gives us bits and pieces of wisdom. I am very clear the more I experience the more there is to experience. The more i know the less I know. So as much as I like to think I know...”I Really Don’t Know!”

An influential teaching for me around this subject is from the Heart Sutra. In Buddhism, Sutras are like the Bible in Christianity or the Koran in Islam. The Heart Sutra is one of the most popular and quoted of the Sutras. The below quote is from the article: *Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form...Why the Heart Sutra will change your life forever* in the Buddhadharma Magazine Fall 2012,

“What the Heart Sutra does is to cut through, deconstruct, and demolish all our usual conceptual frameworks, all our rigid ideas, all our belief systems, all our reference points, including any with regard to our spiritual path.”

The Sutra is saying **no** to everything we think. This is called “Crazy Wisdom.” When one chooses to hold onto one’s identity and hold on to ideas of what reality is, then it will make no sense at all, no wisdom...just crazy with a capital C.

In Buddhism there is the idea of relative truth and there is the idea of absolute truth. Our experiences and our reality are relative; “relative truths” are to be understood and practiced...for example, it is not a good idea to shoot your neighbor...(do you hear that America?) While “absolute reality” simply says...”**what is, is!**” So when we say “I don’t know” we are actually practicing a bit of ancient wisdom, Crazy Wisdom! And I imagine many will think it is just crazy without the wisdom and that is OK.

In the end this puts us back where we started. So now i practice saying to myself... Well Mr. Soto, *“You think you know, but you just don’t know.”*

