

Quotations

William Segal (1904-2000)

A Voice at the Borders of Silence

Both the advantage and the privilege of an artist is that he is forced to look. To see. People rarely see the beauty and the greatness around them. They live their lives in half sleep.

The factor of attention is never given enough weight in painting or in other aspects of human activity. With attention the artist is able to go deeper into the potentialities of the subject. Attention, well developed, equips him with the capacity to be open to what would ordinarily escape him. The technique of painting, complicated and difficult as it is, can be learned by man. But the average attention span is too short, and attention is easily diverted; the ability to 'see' is rarely deep enough.

With sustained attention, one grasps relationships which usually are overlooked. So how to nurture an attention which penetrates into the heart of things? It's an interesting subject... Whole new worlds reveal themselves. The Chinese and Japanese artists have understood for a long time the

importance of being 'still', of gathering their energies for a few moments before beginning.

Instead of a headlong rush, which is fine for a while, one has to step back. This stepping back is difficult, especially when one is on a roll. In painting, as in other pursuits, when all is going well one wants to keep going... that's fine, but sometimes a pause, stop, stepping back and looking brings the unexpected.

Moments of stillness align one's forces. When man's energies are together in balance, more is possible than when they are random, dis-equilibrated. Heart and feeling are needed as well as the intellect. Concentrated attention is the key in any endeavor, whether building a brick wall, working with a computer program or painting a picture.

Diagram

Four Principles of Work

- . **Attend to the working surface**
- . **Trust the instrument to do the job**
- . **The work is more important than our ideas about it**
- . **Work until it is time to stop**

Practice

Use the four principles of work (refer to diagram).

Practise the Awareness Exercise.

Use the question,

How would a wise man or woman increase happiness now?