Habits of the Mind

June 21, 2014 By Matt Starr

Sometimes we feel stuck. The cause of that stuckness can come from many sources. A lot of people I coach are dealing with some things in their lives that feel out of control, worrisome, unknown, or fearful.

Have you ever felt that way? I know I have. The cause of that stuckness can come from many sources. Maybe it's health concerns, or financial ones. Maybe it's a relationship issue, or professional concerns, or aging. Maybe you can't even identify what is the cause of your feelings, yet the feelings are strong and difficult to manage.

Regardless of the cause, the feelings might seem familiar, and you may fall into a familiar way of dealing with them. In Sanscrit, the word for this repeating pattern is Samsara. These patterns, these habits of the mind, apply regardless of your spiritual path or leanings.

My yoga teacher, who I trained with for two years to become an instructor, compared this to a cart's wheel that goes down the same path repeatedly, carving ruts in the mud. Then, the next time we are on that same negative path, our cart's wheel goes into those same ruts, making them even deeper. And on it goes. We try to "fix" what's wrong, rather than take on the slow working practices that are unfamiliar, to take us out of the familiar ruts. This might make for a bumpier journey initially, but eventually the ride becomes more consistent and smooth.

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