

Delusions

By Denis H. Stephens (transcribed from a taped lecture dated 16 August 1994)

Well, now I would like to take up the subject of delusions, which is a related subject to the subject of surprise, as you will discover. A delusion is a false impression, a false impression. That is a very, very good definition of a delusion: a false impression. One looks at something and believes it to be different than it actually is. That is a false impression. So that is a delusion.

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Now, as a matter of fact, there are basically only two types of delusion in this universe, and they match the two basic types of lies in this universe. Now, let's just reiterate the two basic lies in this universe. There are only two lies, there are only two basic lies in this universe. One of them is to say that a thing exists when you know that it doesn't exist. That's the first lie. And the second lie is to say that a thing doesn't exist when you know that it does exist. Now, no matter how complex a lie is, it can always be broken down into the one or the other, or both of those components. They are the two basic lies in this universe. And from those two basic lies we arrive at the two basic delusions in this universe. Now, the first basic delusion is to believe that a thing exists when in fact it doesn't exist; and the second basic delusion is to believe that a thing doesn't exist when in fact [it] does exist. Now you can see how the two basic delusions actually stem from the two basic lies in the universe.

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Now, there's nothing essentially wrong with having a delusion. I mean, we all have them, you know. You watch a child, when a child is learning about life and learning about the universe around him—he gets the wildest ideas about life. And you talk to a young child about things, and they will tell you the wildest things about why things happen, you know, and the reasons for this and the reasons for that. And you listen to this and you say, *"Oh my god!"* But it all makes sense to the child, and it all fits together in his mind, and it's quite okay with him. And most of it, of course, is non-factual. Well, this is quite okay; there's no reason why the child shouldn't be like this—as long as the child can correct his delusions. You see that? And the child, the rational, sane child does. He has an idea, he sees something and he has an idea about it, and then, later on, further evidence shows up and he says, *"So well, my ideas about this aren't right,"* and *"No, that's not quite right."* And then he changes his ideas to make his ideas fit the way things are in the universe, for he [is] now learning about the universe. And so on. You see that? So there's nothing wrong with being deluded. It happens to all of us. All of us went through childhood and a period of delusions, and so forth.

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No, the problem arises with a delusion is when you can't change it. When it becomes fixed—then that is the problem; the fixed delusion, you know. That's when the...you know, when your delusions become fixed, that's when the brawny men in the short white jackets turn up and cart you off to the local asylum. You see. That's when you're in trouble—is when you can't change your delusions in the face of evidence, which clearly indicates that these delusions are false. So the first thing we have to get over is this idea there's anything wrong with having a delusion. We all have them, you know. We all have delusions. So you just have to get off this idea there's anything wrong about having a delusion.

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As a matter of interest: the whole subject of humour and laughter, and so forth, is based upon the subject of delusions. If nobody had any delusions there would be no humour and no laughter in the universe. Now, how does this work out? Well, you listen to someone—someone's telling you a joke. And if you examine what is going on very carefully, it runs somewhat like this: he's setting up a situation for you, he's sort of painting a picture; he's setting up a scenario, as they say, of a situation for you. And as you listen to it you sort of build it up, you build it up in your own mind what's going on. What you don't know is that it's a delusion; that there's a delusion here. There's something there that you don't know. And he's not telling you; he's building up for you, he's building up for you. And you finally get the whole picture, and it all looks okay. And then suddenly he gives you the punch line. As soon as you get the punch line you realise that you were deluded—that it wasn't what you thought it was—and you laugh. And the laughter is the rejection of the delusion. You get it? You can define laughter as the explosive rejection of a delusion. And that's really all laughter is: it's the explosive rejection of a delusion. The person is saying to himself, "*Oh gee, I thought it was that way, and it wasn't! It was that way.*" And he realised that his conclusions that he had were deluded. In other words, he was deluded about the situation. What he thought was the situation wasn't the situation; it was different from what he thought. And the sudden rejection of the delusion and the acceptance of the facts is accompanied with laughter; and also with surprise, which is the factor that relates the subject of laughter and humour to the subject of surprise. There's always—when you hear the punch line in the joke, there's always an element of surprise in it too, isn't there? There's a surprise there, there's a surprise factor. So the phenomenon of laughter, the explosive rejection of a delusion, is related to the subject of surprise, so that they definitely go hand in hand, these two subjects.

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Now, we can learn quite a lot about this by following through on this idea. It tells us immediately that while a person can change their delusions—can change their mind, you might say, change their ideas in the face of further evidence—they can laugh. Right? See that? Because the laughter only occurs at the point where they reject the delusion. If they can't reject the delusion, i.e. they can't change the delusion that's in their mind, they can't laugh. And we see this phenomenon with people: that the person—you might say the uptonescale person, who's free to change his mind, can change his delusions very, very easily, very rapidly. And this person laughs rather easily. And we say this person has a quick and ready sense of humour. But we get another person who is *stuck*, we say, in his delusions, stuck in his ideas—we tell him jokes and he never laughs. You see, he can't ... Because he cannot reject the delusion—any delusion—he can't laugh! You see? And that's why he doesn't laugh! You see that?

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And this is why this test, of whether a person laughs very much and how easy it is to make them laugh, is a very good test of how serious a case—not how serious, but—well, how serious case-wise a person is. The worse off they are case-wise the more difficulty they will have on the subject of rejecting delusions. You might say that as they go downtonescale, or as they get worse and worse off case-wise, they become more and more *stuck* in these delusions. They become less and less able to change these delusions. And it shows itself most immediately in an inability to laugh. So, this subject of the delusion is really a very...is quite an important subject, when its offshoot—when we relate it to the subject of the ability to laugh and understanding just what laughter is. And let's not kid ourselves, this is it, you know. We've got it here. We know what laughter is. We know what this

subject of laughter and humour is.

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If you understood this (what I'm saying) very, very well on this tape on the subject of humour, you could become quite a comedian, assuming you had the ability to put it together. Because you've got the actual essence here of humour: it's the creation of a delusion; followed by the punch line, which shows the falsity of the delusion that was built up and is causing the other person to explosively reject the delusion with laughter and so call you a comedian, call you a funnyman. That's the way it goes, that's the way it's done. This is the inner secret of the inner secret of how to make people laugh, I can assure you. But before you could be absolutely certain that you could make the person laugh you better find out how able this person is to change their delusions. If this person can't change their delusions very quickly and very rapidly they won't laugh at anything you say. They won't laugh at anything anyone says. They're stuck.

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So that's what I wanted to tell you on the subject of delusions and tie it up with the subject of surprise for you, and tie it up with the subject of laughter and the subject of humour. And I hope this material is of value to you. Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT