



The Bliss Bunny and Grounded Gopher

By JP Sears, Holistic Coach

Where is your conscious attention focused? Are you living with your head in the clouds? Is your head burrowed into the ground? Do you know how to integrate these two extremes to realize a fully functional life? Living in one extreme or the other perhaps limits the spectrum of life that we can experience, as well as the parts of our own self that we can connect with. However, could it be that knowing how to step in and out of each extreme allows us to realize the elusive stillness and balance of the space in between?

The bliss bunny lives with its head in the clouds, with little connection to the earth. Meanwhile, the grounded gopher lives with its head tunneled into the soil, with little connection to the sky and its offering. Can the equally virtuous offerings of the spiritual sky above and the human ground below find a respectful partnership within you?

Through our life programming, many of us adopt an unconscious reactivity

Bliss Bunny: Sees the big picture. Delusionally optimistic.

Grounded Gopher: Sees the little picture. Delusionally pessimistic.

where we seek refuge in one of these polarities, the bliss bunny or the grounded gopher. The expense of this unconscious reactivity is not having the ability to say yes to the qualities of the other extreme. Maybe even more importantly, the

exponential offering of the two extremes integrated together as a functional whole goes by the wayside. The intention of these words is to invite you to increase your awareness of which extreme you reflexively seek comfort in, become conscious of the rationalizations used to justify escaping to your familiar extreme, as well as offering you strategies for saying “yes” to your lesser familiar territory.

Bliss Bunny

The vibe of California tends to farm the prototypical bliss bunny. “Its all good,” “Let go and let God,” “Everything’s perfect man,” “It is what it is,” can be the extent of the noble vocabulary for the archetypical bliss bunny. With flower pedal like poetic delicacy, the spiritually termed rationalizations



leveraged against life's worries and individual challenges dance through the bliss bunny's lips with a convincing softness.

The working mantra for this polarity is typically that there is little need for the un-evolved bummers like anger, fear, shame, uncertainty, and sadness. These downers are often swept under the rug with the justification that they're just ploys of the ego. The bliss bunny creates further emancipation from these human annoyances with a thorough spraying of spiritual rationalizations, such as "We're all one, so what's it matter?" As gratifying as the rush of bliss is from disconnecting with these ego created experiences of pain and suffering, is there a proverbial shadow side? If so, then perhaps the bliss bunny has more to worry about than just tofu poisoning and rug burn on their yoga mat!

If you live the sacred and despise the ordinary, you are still bobbing in the ocean of delusion.
~Zen Master Lin-Chi

- Light Side of the Bliss Bunny**
- Spiritual practice & belief system
 - Calm demeanor
 - Intentional relationship with a higher power
 - Acts selfless and kind
 - Can serve as a lighthouse for those in need

- Shadow Side of the Bliss Bunny**
- Disconnects from challenging emotions
 - Can be stuck in past while believing they're present
 - Optimism and spiritual lingo are methods of denial
 - Challenged being authentic
 - Emotional intimacy with others is limited

Could the petty human qualities, as they may be judged, be embedded with important keys to authentic self-growth and spiritual realizations? Would you be able to entertain the idea of imagining that painful emotions, sensations, feelings, and disempowering beliefs are cries for help from parts of our own self that are lost, suffocated, or abandoned unconsciously within? If that were true, and the painful cries for help from our lost parts of self were not seen or heard due to the limitations of vision from the exclusively bliss



bunny scope, then could the principle shadow side of the mystically dogmatic mindset be a loss of self?

To deny, through indifference or sophisticated philosophy, the plea for help from our lost or hurt parts, is to desert our lost and hurt parts. What is the expense of living a life with holes in your heart? Is it a life sentence of being less than whole?

Grounded Gopher

The grounded gopher dwells inside a claustrophobic prison of being consumed by its emotions and is a slave to its thoughts. The grounded gopher's sense of self has little to do with a higher consciousness and everything to do with job, status, money, comfort, and certainty. The grounded gopher forgoes the star atop its Christmas tree, yet prioritizes a harvest of material presents beneath. Often armed with a sophisticated intellect as its greatest gift, the grounded gopher's smarts can become its dual edged sword. The gift of cunning intelligence can at times be the gopher's utmost curse where growth and change is denied through justification that smells of genius, yet it's actually ensuring the consistency of the familiar underground environment.

To expand awareness of self outside of its own thoughts and emotions isn't a part of the gopher's value system. The self constructed tunnel creates a limited scope of vision to ward off the discomfort and challenges of growing beyond who the gopher thinks it is. The Buddhist insight of "don't believe everything you think" is at best kitty litter to the gopher's life management system. While the bliss bunny may be losing self by disconnecting from emotions, the grounded gopher loses self by becoming its emotions and thoughts.

Light Side of the Grounded Gopher

- Logical faculties are used
- Sensitive to emotions
- Can be a source of stability and reason to others
- Resourceful, well structured
- Belief system creates sense of certainty & comfort

Shadow Side of the Grounded Gopher

- Disconnected from higher power
- Identified with thoughts and emotions
- Absence of life purpose
- Distanced from the hearts of others
- The present is denied by living for the future



Could the principle shadow side for being stuck in the grounded gopher mentality be that life outside of the five senses is denied? The grace of intuition, genuine compassion, and contentment of connection are the life blood that does not circulate through the gopher. Perhaps as a result of this, the gopher is left reactively digging deeper and deeper into the ground, fruitlessly attempting to satisfy the insatiable thirst created by the inner void of the non-existent life blood. Because the grounded gopher speculates nothing but “airy fairy” about the virtues of the bliss bunny, it perpetuates a rejection of its own salvation.

Reactively Losing Self

Whether your reactivity trend is to lose yourself by sticking your head in the clouds or head in the sand, the question begs to be asked; why do we lose our self to either extreme?

Could it be that our reactive tendency seeks the comfort of an immediate sense of feeling safe and valued? It's perhaps our conscious self that would choose self realization, connection, and growth above all else while our reactive self doesn't even blink an eye at the thought of a kamikaze strike in the name of feeling safe and valued. If feeling protected and as though we matter is the shelter we reactively seek, we likely find that a part of us seeks our path of least resistance into the sky or ground because we associate a familiar sense of shelter with it.

Our familiar sense of shelter where we feel safe and valued is likely found by way of connecting with the values of our family of origin or a group we relate to present day. In other words, does belonging to something bigger than our self offer the socket to plug into so that the sensations of safety and valuing can flow through us?

For example if your mom and dad were accountants, then by living through the grounded gopher scope you're plugging into your family of origin in order to feel a sense of belonging each time you think or act on the gopher values. Another direction that can be taken, if your parents were hippies to the extent that you were conceived during a lucid LSD trip against the backdrop of a Jimi Hendrix concert, you may not need to plug into their bliss bunny atmosphere at all. You may have found present day grounded gopher groups to belong to by associating with a political party, networking group, or coworkers. The



common denominator is that our need to feel safe and valued causes us to seek a belonging somewhere. We then put on the persona of the bliss bunny or grounded gopher so that we may match the tone of the group. We're then left with an indirect denial of the opposite polarity.

What if we learned to find our safety and valuing from within self rather than by only finding groups in the past or present outside world to belong to? Would this mean we wouldn't have to deny half of our self in order to better fit the membership description? With an inner source of feeling safe and valued we are more consciously capable of embracing our authentic wholeness and the benefits of both the bliss bunny and grounded gopher.

Integrating Conclusion for Conscious Growth

Perhaps there is a reason why humans walk the surface of the Earth rather than wiggling underground or flying in the sky. Perhaps the symbolic meaning suggests that the space in between is where to focus our mindset so that we may grow, find purpose, become more content, and self realize. Please feel free to explore the following questions for the purpose of sighting in the integration of the bliss bunny and grounded gopher in your life.

1. Is your tendency to operate more like the bliss bunny or the grounded gopher?
2. What benefits can you imagine you would experience if you were able to also embrace the opposite extreme?
 - a. What would you imagine you would lose if you never integrated with the opposite extreme?
3. What judgments do you have about the opposite tendency? (If you're a grounded gopher, what are the judgments you have about the bliss bunny type? Or vice versa.)
 - a. Looking at your list of judgments, if you found out that they were actually traits you carry in yourself, yet deny, what words of compassion would you offer to yourself about your judgments?
4. How would you classify the values of each parent you have; bliss bunny or grounded gopher?
5. In any experience you have, would you be willing to imagine the two extremes..."What is the positive in this situation? What is the negative in this situation?"



6. With challenging experiences you've gone through, how would you guess your ego would tell the story? How would you guess your spirit self would tell the story?
7. What steps can you take to teach yourself from within that you are safe and valued?