



# **POINTERS TO FREEDOM**

**A COLLECTION  
OF NON-DUAL-INSPIRED WRITING**

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# WELCOME

It is my great pleasure to present this collection of living pointers to freedom. But what are pointers? And what freedom are they pointing to?

Pointers, in the non-dual tradition, are *fingers pointing at the moon*. Because the reality that we are trying to point to (the moon) is beyond the thinking mind, it can't be expressed in our words or concepts. Any language is always from within the mind and will never be able to describe what is being pointed to beyond it. Therefore, we have to make do with signposts, with "fingers".

The moon that is being pointed to is the non-dual understanding that reality is undivided. It is one limitless and timeless Whole. Within that Totality, we apparent humans believe ourselves to be separate and limited inhabitants of an individual body-mind. It is this belief in selfhood and the accompanying separation that causes our psychological stress and suffering.

John Wheeler describes it as follows in his book *Full Stop!*:

"This is the simple truth of what we are, the essential and inescapable reality that shines behind the doubtless sense of being present and aware. No one can say 'I am not', as the very statement presupposes the existence of the one attempting to deny his or her own existence. This is why one's existence is the touchstone or 'gold standard' by which all other truths are evaluated."

"All pointers encourage us to probe the fundamental fact of our self-existent being, which not only is but knows. This is the heart of the matter, the constant and final theme of all of the great traditions that have come down to us under the banner of 'non-duality'.



Non-duality speaks to the non-separation of the seeker and the final reality being sought. As all of the traditions tell us, each in its own way: you are that."

With pointers, it's not the words that are important, but the living reality behind the words that makes the difference. Each author in this compilation has their own unique, human style of expression of the same universal truth. Due to our conditioning and experiences, we may resonate with one expression while being repelled by another. That is why a compendium of modern expressions makes so much sense. Some of these contributions may "do" nothing for you. And one of them may be exactly the pointer you need to hear for you to recognize the truth of our shared Being.

So browse through the titles and the texts. See if anything resonates and then follow that intuition. Read the article, perhaps multiple times. And then by all means, get in touch with the author because they can likely help you to a deeper understanding.

This collection is a celebration of the increasing number and variety of voices expressing non-dual understanding. We are very lucky to be living in a time where we have such free and easy access to these truths. You will see that this understanding is relevant to all types of individuals and to all aspects of our lives. It is the freedom we are looking for but often don't even realize we're missing.

As for "my expression" of this truth, that is currently all about making direct inquiry simpler and easier for more people to engage in. This is important because inquiry (the only tool I know of for direct recognition of the non-dual) seems to be the best of all options for us to see our true nature directly and "prove it to ourselves". And it is the seeing of it, the recognizing of it, that leads to an irreversible understanding and internal shift. Please follow me on LinkedIn to learn more about inquiry.

Katrijn van Oudheusden  
November, 2023.

LINDSAY PARKER

# ALLEGORY FOR OVERTHINKERS



Oneness: a lovely concept, isn't it? But how do you move beyond it as a concept? How do you really see you're not a separate self within a world that constantly reinforces separateness? Overthinkers, in particular, tend to get stuck on intellectual understanding. They believe oneness is 'out there' but their beautiful, overthinking minds crave an explanation of how to actually 'get to it'.

Do you remember those 3D posters that were all the rage in the 90s? Perhaps I am dating myself, so if you don't know what I'm talking about just Google "3D autostereogram". The short version: the posters appear to be just a pattern, but when looked at in a certain way, a 3D image would emerge and delight the observer!

For many, these posters were a source of frustration. They desperately wanted to see the image but couldn't. It's not like they questioned whether a 3D image was actually there. No, they believed it was there, perhaps they even knew what image they were supposed to be looking for, but try as they might, staring at the poster yielded nothing but sore eyes.



Some people around them were able to see it right away.

"Oh, there it is! I see it!"

The frustrated would ask the lucky few what they did to see it. They'd offer advice such as unfocusing your eyes and then focusing them quickly. Or keeping your vision blurred. Or placing your focus around the poster. Or perhaps the most perplexing advice of all: just don't look for anything at all. None of this felt concrete enough for the frustrated. Yet they believed if they put enough effort in, they'd eventually see it. They'd try and try again, practice all the tips they'd been given. Despite all the effort, the poster remained just a pattern.

Some would give up entirely. They'd tell themselves they just weren't the kind of person who could see 3D images. Their eyes didn't work that way. They'd move on with their lives and forget all about the posters.

But some would be so committed to getting it right that they'd leave the poster hanging. They'd keep trying. They'd occasionally hear about a new technique and they'd dutifully practice it. Even when nothing worked, they couldn't let it go. Their minds kept telling them they should be able to see it, that if they just discovered the 'right' way of looking at it the image would finally appear.

For days, months, maybe even years they would continue thinking about it, effort-ing, trying, practicing. Still, nothing would appear.

And then one day, they walk by the poster and there it is: a 3D image as clear as day, plainly visible without them even trying. How can it be? They have no idea what they did to make this happen. There's no logical explanation for it. They can simply see what was always there.



PEGGY O'NEAL

# THE FREEDOM TO BE WHO YOU TRULY ARE



There is one innocent, yet fundamental misunderstanding about who we truly are that almost every one of us has. It wastes time and energy and impacts performance in organizations. It causes conflict between people and nations. It's why we're unhappy, feeling a lack of meaning, struggling. And it leads to neglect of the planet.

This misunderstanding? **We believe we are separate.** From the Universe. From each other. From our True Selves. Yet, we are OneBeing (other names include Consciousness, Awareness, Source, Spirit, Infinite Intelligence, and Infinite Wisdom.)

Intuitively we know this. We talk about being "all connected." We're touched when we hear John Lennon's lyrics: "And the world will live as one." This recognition of the Awareness we all are is not spirituality, which by definition separates matter from spirit, but **reality**.

Scientists have verified that we are all intimately entangled. Each of us is made out of Awareness and is a unique expression of Awareness. We are each waves in the ocean of life.



Science, philosophy, and the great wisdom traditions are converging and provide us with a new understanding of the nature of reality.

When I discovered this through my studies of nonduality, my whole life changed; I experienced immediate relief. All of my seeking and self-improvement, with the idea of “getting there” someday, had actually taken me further away from what I truly wanted: peace, love, happiness (or deep contentment), meaning, fulfillment, freedom, security, wholeness, belonging, and direction.

Seeking is trying to do something to make ourselves feel better about ourselves or our situation. Of course, we want that. It is our natural human condition to want to experience peace, contentment, security, and so on. **That is inherently who we are!**

Usually, we look to relationships, activities, and objects (such as thoughts, feelings, substances – wine, food) to help us feel better. Yet that doesn't last long and the seeking resumes. Maybe that desire to “feel better” is our innate intelligence, the Awareness we are, inviting us to look where the source of the desire arises, which is within. Instead of looking outside of ourselves for peace and happiness, we can turn around and discover it is within us – always and already.

We overlook this because we focus on the content of our experience (feelings, thoughts, relationships, activities, sensations) and not on the reality out of which all experience arises, i.e., Awareness. The longing and seeking continue because we don't go directly to the Source of all experience.

**We are ALREADY Awareness and everything we seek; we don't need to find it.**

So far, I've been offering concepts about the nature of reality. To go beyond the concept of who we truly are, to live as this understanding, requires investigation, and exploration. We can discover the one shared being we are by looking – not outside of ourselves. But by turning our focus around and going within. Looking at our lived experience. We begin by being open and curious. We have to want to see.



Then we ask questions that are answered not by our minds, but by our experience. For example, think about another person. They could be someone you can see across the room or someone that comes to mind as you think of them. Ask yourself, "Is there any way for me to separate myself from them in my experience?" Actually notice your experience.

To see them you must have an experience of them. Therefore, there is no separation. Thoughts come to us: "They are across the room and there is space between us." Or "They aren't here right now; I'm just thinking of them."

I encourage you to ignore those thoughts and look directly at your experience. There can be no separation if you can see them either in your imagination or across the room. Allow this to "sink in."

We just had a *belief* that we are separate, but our *experience* reveals something else. It becomes more and more real to us that everyone and everything is the same being. That includes all possibilities and all content in our lives.

We continue inquiring until we grok the true nature of reality and ourselves. (The meaning of grok from Wikipedia, is to "understand it so thoroughly that you merge with it, and it merges with you.")

The insight can happen quickly, and it can take some time to fully integrate our being and doing, activities and ways of relating and working, but then we live aligned with Awareness.

What are the implications of this knowing?

### **We realize we are Infinite Wisdom.**

The Universe has guidance available to us. We *sense* what there is to do. We *sense* what is unfolding in the Universe that wants our participation. The operative word is "sense."

As we integrate this understanding, we begin to more naturally align with and access the infinite intelligence and wisdom of the Universe that is who we are. The universal forces are our true source of creativity, innovation, direction, freedom, and incredible possibilities not yet known.

## **We realize we are flow.**

We don't have to "get into" the flow. When we resist what is happening, doubt, worry, are fearful, or try to control what is happening, we experientially shut down the natural flow that we are.

We also impede the flow when we focus our attention on our habitual thinking and judgments about circumstances and other people as well as the thinking about ourselves that contains judgments about ourselves and our limitations. We can tell we are doing so if we feel contraction or tightness in our body. It is like putting concrete into a hose. The flow can't "get through." Ideas, people, and the experiences we desire are ready to flow to and through us if we just open to them.

## **We realize we are love.**

Not romantic love, but the love that arises when we connect with an infant or a dear friend or feel our hearts wide open when we are with another. It is the accepting, allowing, open nature that we recognize as our true nature.

What might it mean for ourselves, our families, our organizations, our communities, and our world, if we acknowledged and honored who we truly are - and love each other as ourself?

If we continue to align with a belief in separation, we will continue to feel, act, and relate consistently with separation. My challenge to myself and to others who recognize that we are OneBeing is to take the next step, which is to go beyond the *intellectual* knowing of it to the *lived* knowing of it.

And as we do so, *everything* evolves to align with that: our relationships, activities, thoughts, feelings, and conversations. Yes, we might fear the unknown as we let go of the old, outdated beliefs. At the same time, we experience aliveness. As we become free of the belief in separation, we are free to create the lives, families, organizations, and world that our hearts know is possible.



GAB CIMINELLI

# EDUCATION CONTINUES TO FAIL HUMANITY AS WARS PERSIST



A war continues, another one starts, another one looming. It seems even educated leaders persist in resolution via wars. With education available to much of the world, one can't help but question: what has education done in terms of peace if our world is continually producing wars and making it legal to murder our own species? Is education fundamentally flawed and to be held responsible? Are we teaching modern subjects, without the understanding of how to live in this world together, correctly?

What can we do to foster a learning environment for children that is not corrupting them? Because it seems modern education is more interested in driving the needs of an individual society whilst ignoring the needs of humanity as a whole.

## **What is Education For?**

When one asks the question, what is education for, one immediately thinks of the subjects they learned at school, such as math, language, geography, IT skills, etc. But has one “dodged” the question? “What is it for” perhaps can be viewed as what does education offer the child in terms of life. Is it a career? Does it help navigate a world that is full of confusion, conflict, violence, and even war? Or is education and school just a way to keep kids “busy” and out of the house whilst we adults carry on with our own way of living?

One of the most challenging things some of us come across, somewhere in what they call “mid-life”, is having realized the life they lived is not quite what they expected. The careers they chose might not be fulfilling. The partner they chose, also facing their own challenges, no longer satisfies one’s needs. They call this a crisis. The Italian word for this is crisi, which means a decisive point in the progress of a disease. So most of us realize we have lived in a diseased state. We serve the economy, society, the system, and our country for a majority of our linear life and then question if one has been part of a machine that has nothing to do with happiness, life, or the purpose of existence at all.

## **Is Education Stifling Happiness?**

Let’s look at what happens most of our life from the time we enter education:

We are measured on performance, by age, put in a group together with other children who are similar to us, and then taught the same things. A child may be great at art or music, but we basically steer them in a direction that has them focusing a majority of their energy on “more important” subjects such as math and language skills. After all, they would better serve what the country needs to sustain its business model which every taxpayer is contributing to. In doing so, we envelop the child into draining their energy learning what we want them to do, instead of giving them the freedom to let their energy nurture their innate talents. In other words, we quickly welcome them to the world of the “status quo”. And the energy of “status quo” can’t sustain itself without some form of suffering.



Looking at this, it seems education discourages all of us from doing or at least exploring what we love to do, whether at school, or college which by then is often too late, and even in the workplace, we continue to face this constant measurement in our performance reviews. Psychologically we seem to be caught in a cycle of constantly living in measurement - improving oneself, setting goals, and going after them, and when we don't achieve them we criticize, look for better strategies, and so on.

### **Can education nurture the freedom to question the whole of life and encourage us to find out how to create a life we love?**

Rather than just teaching children to learn from books and experience, how about giving children the freedom to question for themselves, what they might enjoy doing? Because it seems most of us spend a lifetime trying to find out what we really love to do - what makes our heart sing. It's one of the most challenging things to do in a world that prioritizes wealth, and power. If we are going to evolve psychologically as a species on this earth - not only technologically - this should be the most important thing about education.

Great educators will nurture the right environment for children to find out for themselves - to explore what they really love to do with all the curiosity of the heart they are naturally born with without corrupting their minds. Your parents may want you to grow up to be a successful engineer or pay for the best teacher in the country to help you get into a renowned college that will guarantee your "success" in life. NONE of them is important. If you find being a train driver is what you love to do, then so be it. If it's gardening, do it! Education, including parents, can foster the child's growth in a way that they can express action with heart and mind in flow and without the interruption of corrupted ideas.

To do so in a learning environment, the teacher and student must do away with their roles. Both become the learner and in essence, the teacher. If the teacher is willing to come to the student with a certain sense of freedom from their own role, their own mindset of being the "knower", then learning can take place in its real sense. Not the teacher imposing their authority, imposing rules, system, etc. Because if we approach our conversations, each and every one of us, in such a way that there is only learning, then there comes a sense of education and freedom.



Freedom being we are not interested, as educators, in shaping the child to be anything! Education is allowing the child the sense of curiosity and the freedom to question things so that they can see life as a whole, so that they are not caught up in analysis paralysis, preventing love from ever existing.

### **Start With “I don’t know”**

Children face a complicated world - overpopulation, climate changes, anxiety from an unstable future outlook, lack of understanding of freedom, increasing violence, competition, wars, corruption, poverty, and suicide. You might be thinking the writer is painting a grim picture but let’s not judge the picture, which is reality as “glim” or otherwise. Let’s look at what it actually is instead of judging it. The moment we judge anything is the moment we escape.

So, are we preparing children to navigate this world by educating them on how to be mindful, how to do meditation, and learn techniques on how to be calm? Doesn’t it seem adversely odd to you that we need to teach this to young children in order to help them handle the world? Odd in the sense that we are equipping them with tools that are nothing more than band-aids to “survive” in the world, and not educating them on real change which can only come when there is a freedom to question the world and to question life.

Children, who bring with them a sense of freedom, are being pushed into a society that is based on conformity. Freedom is gradually squeezed out of them. Parents, educators, and adults in the world need to question why children are being groomed to live in conflict, fear, violence, etc. We ourselves need to commit to understanding why the world is the way it is, and why we are living a life supporting this meaningless existence. Can we face this as a fact, or will we introduce yet another system, structure, theory of education, or belief system that will change the world (simply just another form of escape).

Start with “I don’t know”. Perhaps there we can see if our brain starts to free itself from its own conditioning by questioning why I adhere to certain traditions, habits, ways of thinking, and why I need to identify with a country or belief system. Then education becomes very special, very important, because it brings about a responsibility to nurture the whole planet, and no longer only one’s own “backyard”.



SUZANNE LÅNG

# THE ILLUSORY NATURE OF THOUGHT



Do you sometimes wake up with a slight feeling of anxiety, already a little overwhelmed about the day to come? You are not alone, but the question is: Are you willing to examine why?

Usually, people find their way to this kind of conversation when they are seeking change, when they are in some form of deep suffering, or simply open to seeing something different.

If there was one pointer I could give to someone who is willing to look in a different direction, who has perhaps tried various methods with brief, but no lasting results, it would be to look in the direction of Non-Duality. Non-duality can at first seem quite daunting, but it is where the seeking stops and true healing begins. I would specifically suggest getting really curious about the illusory Nature of Thought, as it is the very key to inner peace.

Thought affects every single aspect of our existence, from how we see ourselves and other people to how we perceive the world around us, and yet it is the most overlooked aspect of modern psychology. That might sound incorrect, seeing as social media is overflowing with positive psychology, mindfulness, and personal development, but thought is nevertheless the one aspect few are vigorously exploring.

Just as fish live their entire lives in water without realizing they are swimming in water; we humans live our entire lives without realizing we are swimming in a deep and infinite sea of conscious, unconscious, and subconscious thoughts and beliefs. And we suffer greatly because of it.

Just as fish suffer when they find themselves out of their element, we humans suffer invariably because we are unaware that it is our unrecognized thinking that is the cause of the suffering. For fish, being on land will result in death. For humans, believing our thoughts to be reality results in the death of creativity, productivity, and happiness.

There are three specific aspects to Non-Duality and understanding the Nature of Thought I find are foundational to maintaining inner peace:

1. Knowing that I am not my thoughts, but the space (consciousness) in which they appear.
2. Knowing that I cannot control which thoughts arise in my conscious mind.
3. Recognizing that the entire way any situation is held in my mind is through my own conditioned perception.

### **The Conscious Mind: On stage, in the spotlight.**

Notice the thoughts coming to you as you read this article – are you controlling which ones appear?

It is hard to see, but on close observation, you will find that thoughts simply appear in your mind. They are like clouds in the sky, ever-present, yet ever-changing and never lasting. They come to you (out of the blue) and you have no choice in the matter of which ones appear in your mind.

You can sense the truth in this by noticing how many unwelcome scenarios play out in your head daily, for example, thoughts of a beloved child dying, a business failing, or the atrocities of the ongoing wars.

The conscious mind is like a magnificent stage where whatever thought (cloud) that appears on it is the STAR of the show. Once they appear they take over the entire stage of your mind and the thoughts you are focusing on seem in that moment real and important, so much so that you fully trust that the information they bring is valid and true.



Until, of course, the next thought comes.

The next thought then makes a “has-been” of the previous thought and is now the new star of the show. Until the next thought comes. And so it continues for a lifetime, insidious and sneaky, creating continuous imaginary drama. Until we enter a conversation like this.



### **The Unconscious Mind: Backstage, pushing the buttons, driving the show.**

We come into this world with everything EXCEPT concepts and ideas of who we are. No concept of a “mom”, “dad”, or “body”; and no concept of a “me”. We are just pure awareness, peace, love, and intelligence, the universal organizing force. In other words, we are born whole. Babies begin life having no language or concepts and yet they learn every day. They communicate every day. They start crawling before they even understand they have a body to crawl with. Even after they start learning a language, children continue to learn without thinking with words.

They soak up the environment they are born into, the people in it, how we do things, how we don't do things, what's “right” and what's “wrong” and interpret that information, which eventually results in beliefs (i.e. thoughts) about who they are, who others are and what life is about. Those beliefs and concepts formed in early childhood become our identity, and who we think we are. It becomes a thought-created construct of “me” and “I”. This is the identity we refer to as the “separate self”.

We are not born with this identity, but it is through this construction of the separate self that we define ourselves and act in this world.

These definitions, however, can never be true. They can only ever be a representation of who we think we are. We then spend our lives trying to control this self-made image of who we think we are, trying in all manners to return to that peace we knew as a baby, not realizing that peace is the very essence of our being.

We believe controlling our thoughts is the secret to feeling good and finding happiness because that is what we have been taught/told. These thoughts end up controlling our lives, imprisoning us in beliefs of lack and limitation, and keeping us in the eternal search for happiness. Understanding the illusory Nature of Thought is fundamental to the realization of where fear comes from. It is fundamental to the realization that stress, anxiety, anger, depression and overwhelm are all consequences of fear.

Survival instincts are innate, as is fear of physical danger. Fear surrounding an imagined "self" is not innate, but it does feel like survival, as it is understandably taken for the truth of who we are. These fears are learned responses resulting from generational, cultural, and environmental conditioning. Our early conditioning, in combination with the faulty interpretation of our child's mind, has created deep-seated fears that we are somehow lacking and not whole.

This is why you wake up with slight anxiety. The separate "self" is in survival mode. Anxiety, overwhelm or any kind of mental unease is caused by the unrelenting attempt to find peace, freedom, and happiness within its own constructs.

Just as water is necessary for the continued existence of fish, thought is necessary for our everyday experience of life. In summary, thought is not a problem, as it is in thought that all possibility exists, where creation happens, and how we experience this amazing life. Unrecognized thought, however, is the cause of all deep mental suffering.

"What you think you are is a belief to be undone," says A Course in Miracles. Non-duality is the understanding that there is only awareness of that which appears in consciousness and all that appears is an illusion, "albeit a very persistent one," as Einstein said.



ANNETTE BURRELL

# WHAT IS IT THAT YOU TRULY WANT?



## **What is it that you truly want?**

If you dive into this question, what comes up?

**Maybe:** a house, car, boat, successful career, to be loved, to avoid conflict  
!!!!

But, what do you want that is deeper?

**Maybe:** Freedom? Peace? Joy? Happiness? Love? Clarity?

And what's even deeper, when you allow the answer to arise from within?

**I wonder:** Nothing? Emptiness? True freedom? A state of love?

When you realize what you truly want then here are some pointers on how to get it.

- **Consider how much you want it.** Be totally unconditional about it. No trades. No negotiation. No doubt.
- **Be committed to this.** Every moment.
- **Make this your focus.** Let this desire guide everything you say, everything you do, everything you think.
- **Be vigilant.** Effortlessly vigilant.

Be vigilant for when you leave this. "What? How can I leave when I have stated what I want, not what I have?" Because what you want at this deep level, is what's here. It's already here deep inside. It's constant and unchanging. Not like thoughts, emotions, and body sensations, which come and go. They are not stable. When you get to experience what you truly want, deep inside, this can guide your life. Then you can be free of taking anything personally.

**We are human beings.** We are conceived, we grow inside the mother's womb, we have a birth experience, and then a growing-up family experience. During this process, we take onboard the internal state of our mother, the trauma of birth, and the experience of growing and developing within the family. When we are little **our brains as well as our bodies are immature.** We sense we need to comply with what our parents want, in order to be attached to them so that we can survive. We are unable to live and meet our needs ourselves. So we need those adults.

The trouble is that **those adults also have their past experiences affecting them** which may make them emotionally or even physically, unavailable to us.

Then **things happen that we take personally.** How else can we take them when we are young? It's about personal survival. And in our immature way, we **create strategies to keep ourselves safe, avoid conflict, avoid painful emotions, to get love.** *And so our ego develops.*

These strategies stay in place as we grow up and grow older. But they may no longer be needed for survival. They no longer serve us. We have it worked out by then. Our brains have learned knowledge and techniques and we follow practices that support survival.



But the strategies themselves are still there and become limiting or restricting. We can investigate these patterns by using self-inquiry and by getting to the subconscious using compassionate hypnotherapy.

But there is still our ego!

Through self-inquiry, we can also discover that **we are not those ego patterns**. They are not who we are. And therefore, it becomes easier to accept the ego and notice it playing out.

We can choose to:

- notice the pattern and stop.
- not follow those thoughts.
- not believe those thoughts.
- feel emotions in our body and let them dissolve in their own time.
- be willing to experience whatever is inside us and outside us.
- listen to our body and support it.
- support our body to function by giving it nutrition, fresh air, sunshine, and exercise.

**And then, when we go deeper, there is no choosing.**

There is just this moment and what's here – there may be thoughts, there may be emotions, there may be body sensations – and they happen. But they don't have to mean anything about you. You do not need to take them personally.

**You can stay with what's here and enjoy the richness of life in true freedom.**

In the **Leela School of Awakening**, we use the Enneagram as a method for self-inquiry. The Enneagram is usually portrayed as personality types. But Eli Jaxon-Bear talks about the true Enneagram as beginning with Pythagoras back in Greek times. Eli's book "**From Fixation to Freedom**" describes the types as character fixations.

As a human, we each have a core fixation, though we all fall into the others at times. Personality is a human condition that develops on top of the fixation. By investigating our core fixation and the others, in detail, we can discover that we are **not** these fixations. We can be reminded of our true nature. And experience it.

Each fixation has its dominant patterns. There are body types, mind types, and emotional types. Each one develops patterns and strategies to get what they need to survive – to avoid conflict and stay comfortable, to get love, or to avoid fear. By acknowledging and investigating the patterns in their detail, it opens us to seeing what is going on in this human form. It supports us to be aware at a deeper level. It allows us to drop deeper and experience truth.

**At the deepest level, we can experience oneness with everything. No self. True freedom.**

Eli and his wife Gangaji are both spiritual teachers who spent a lot of their lives searching. Eventually, they found their final teacher, H.W.L.Poonja (Papaji) in India. Papaji's spiritual teacher was Sri Ramana Maharshi, who experienced his ego dying when he was a teenager. Following that he spent years sitting in caves in the sacred mountain, Mt Arunachala, in southern India. After many, many years he came out of the caves. When people started following him, he often did not speak. Instead, there was a **transmission of stillness**. He also suggested we inquire with the question – "Who am I?". To keep on asking and see what arises.

Papaji would say "Stop". People would try to find out what that meant but meaning and words are limiting. But some people would stop, just like that, and experience the nothing and the state of love.

Sometimes, as we become more aware, we want to get rid of our ego. But trying to do this is a human ego trying to get rid of itself. Doesn't work. Instead: **Notice. Allow. Accept. Stop.** Be willing to inquire into whatever appears in consciousness.

My wish for you is that you stop. And drop into true freedom and love.  
May all beings be free and at peace.



CADU LEMOS

# THE RED PILL



In the symbolic universe of cinema, *The Matrix*\* presents a profound metaphor for awakening to the true nature of consciousness. The concept of taking the red pill in the movie can be compared to embarking on a journey toward understanding the non-dualistic nature of reality and perceiving pure and limitless consciousness.

In this analogy, we will explore how this awakening resembles the choice to take the red pill and delve into the depths of consciousness, offering a glimpse of awakened consciousness reality.

In *The Matrix*, the red pill signifies a choice between embracing a comfortable illusion or facing a challenging and uncomfortable truth. Neo, the protagonist, is offered this choice by Morpheus, a figure symbolizing wisdom and enlightenment.

\* *The Matrix* is a 1999 science fiction action film. It is the first installment in the *Matrix* film series, starring Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Hugo Weaving, and Joe Pantoliano, and depicts a dystopian future in which humanity is unknowingly trapped inside the Matrix, a simulated reality that intelligent machines have created to distract humans while using their bodies as an energy source.

Similarly, in the context of awakening to the true nature of consciousness, people are faced with a choice. They can choose to remain entangled in the illusions of the egoic mind or take the red pill, representing the willingness to explore the depths of their own consciousness and the fundamental nature of reality.

Imagine the mind as a vast matrix, a construct of beliefs, perceptions, and conditioned thought patterns that dictate how we perceive ourselves and the world around us. The blue pill, symbolizing the choice to remain in ignorance, allows one to stay within the confines of this matrix, unaware of its limitations. However, the red pill represents abandoning this limited perspective, urging us to question the illusions and seek a deeper understanding of reality.

In the same way, concerning awakening from autopilot mode, most people live their lives within the confinements of their egoic identity, or simply, the ego. This identity is constructed through the conditioning we undergo from birth, social influences, and personal experiences, creating a matrix of beliefs and perceptions that define who we think we are. The awakening process begins when someone becomes dissatisfied with this limited perspective and chooses to explore beyond its boundaries.

Taking the red pill in the context of consciousness means choosing to investigate the nature of the self and reality. This investigation involves diving into the depths of one's own consciousness to unravel the illusions and constructs that hide the truth. It is a courageous step towards understanding the fundamental essence of our being, beyond the ego and its fabricated narratives.

Just as Neo experiences a complete shift in references and paradigms when taking the red pill, people who embark on the path of awakening undergo a profound transformation. This transformation involves a shift in perception, a realization that the ego and its strategies are not the ultimate reality. The journey reveals that our true nature is beyond the limitations of the ego - an expanded and limitless consciousness that is interconnected with all of existence.



In the movie, Morpheus guides Neo through this transformation, helping him navigate the challenges of awakening to the reality of the matrix. Similarly, spiritual masters and guides assist those on the path of awakening. These guides offer teachings, practices, and insights to assist in the process of self-investigation and realization.

To peak into this awakened state of conscious reality, it is necessary to engage in practices that facilitate the dissolution of the egoic identity and provide a direct taste of non-dual consciousness. Meditation, for example, is a powerful tool to quieten the mind and allow people to access a state of pure consciousness beyond thoughts and concepts. However, please note, that the meditation in this case does not aim to focus attention on a specific point like a mantra, breath, or a candle flame. It is not intended to seek enlightenment or transform us into better human beings.

During this type of meditation, practitioners are encouraged to observe their thoughts without attachment or judgment, seeking the empty space between them. Imagine thoughts as white clouds (or dark storm clouds, as in negative thoughts). They pass. The sky remains unaffected. This practice cultivates an understanding that thoughts and the ego are not the core of our being.



Instead, there is a consciousness that transcends the fluctuations of the mind - an observing presence that remains unchanged amidst the ever-changing mental landscape.

The practice of self-inquiry is also a path towards awakened consciousness that involves a deep analysis and questioning of our own nature and identity.

In this process, we seek to transcend limited identifications with the ego and the illusions of the mind, exploring who or what we are beyond superficial appearances.

By turning our attention inward and examining our thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, we gradually begin to discern the underlying and timeless consciousness that forms the basis of our existence.

Similarly, moments of deep understanding or connection with nature can provide glimpses of this awakened reality. In these moments, the mind may be momentarily quiet, and a sense of unity and interconnectedness becomes palpable. These glimpses serve as reminders that awakened consciousness is not distant and unattainable; it is an intrinsic aspect of our being, obscured only by the veils of the egoic mind.

As one continues to delve into the depths of consciousness through consistent practice and introspection, glimpses of awakened consciousness transform into a sustained realization. This realization encompasses a shift in identity, from the egoic self-image to the expansive and non-dual consciousness that contains all of creation.

In conclusion, the analogy between taking the red pill in the movie and awakening to the true nature of consciousness is a powerful metaphor that emphasizes the choice to go beyond the illusions of the ego and separation and explore the depths of our own being.

Just as Neo's journey leads him to question the reality presented to him, the journey of awakening invites us to question our perceived reality and discover the eternal truth of our true nature - awakened consciousness. Through practices and experiences that offer glimpses of this reality, we can navigate the awakening process, ultimately embracing, in the end, the truth that frees us from the limitations of the ego and leads us to the limitless realm of non-dual, awakened, and full consciousness.

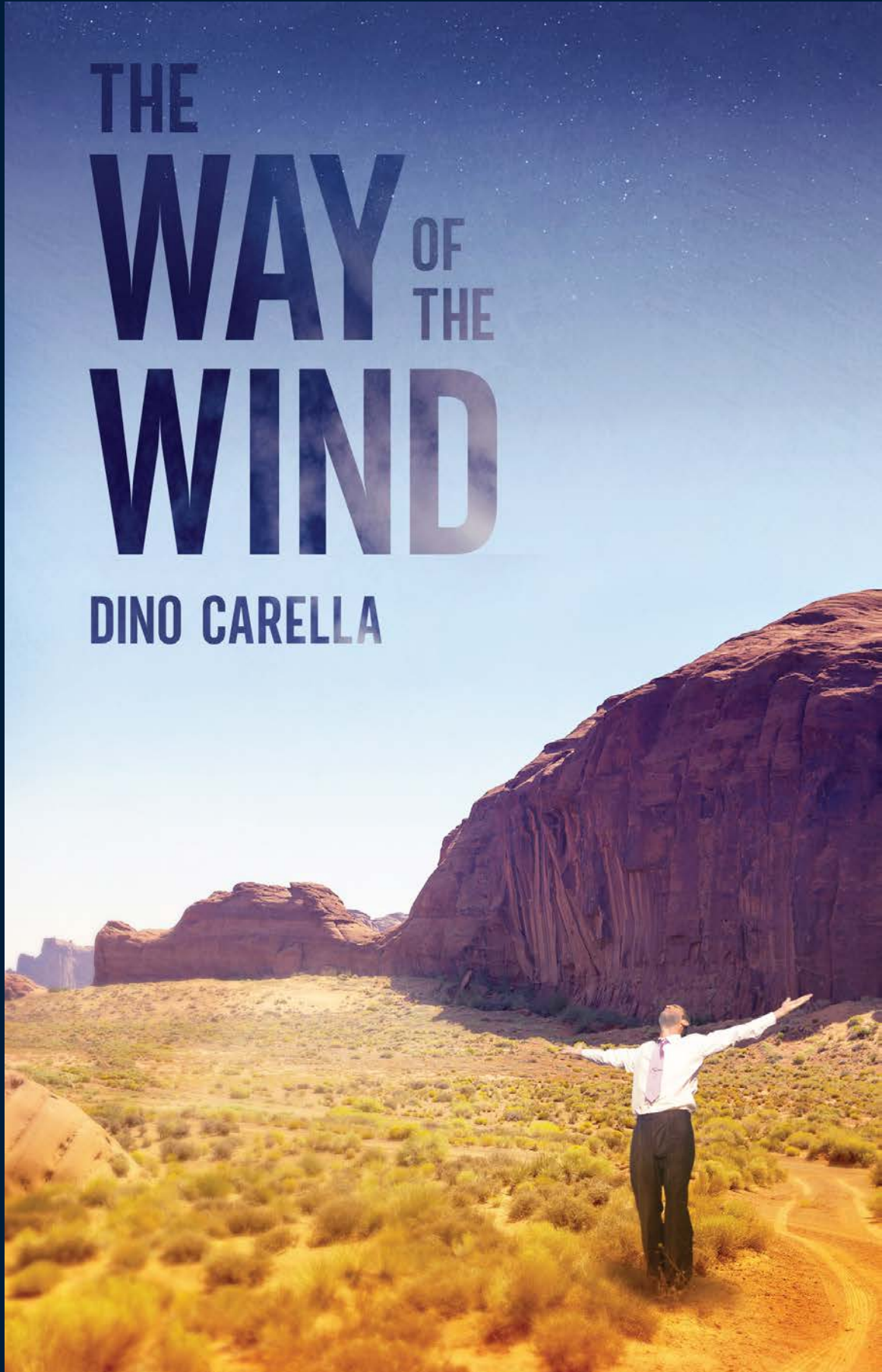


EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK

DINO CARELLA

# THE WAY OF THE WIND

DINO CARELLA



**These are excerpts of a novel inspired by a true story that tells the journey of awakening of a former corporate manager named Ostro who, on the verge of a nervous breakdown and fired, decides to take the trip he had always dreamed of; crossing the Indian Reservations of America. With the help of an Indian spiritual guide John, and a clairvoyant Virginia, he experiences the human dimension that transcends the visible and binds him to the universe.**

### **Excerpt 1: John speaks to Ostro on the nature of thinking**

“Our nature’s to think. There’s no non-thinking man. But there are two levels of thinking.

The first arises from awareness, it’s rational, independent of your preconceived idea of yourself; the second is a by-product of that idea.

A thought generated by another thought. A logical system of cause and effect that interprets the events of life according to a predetermined position.

According to this vision, you interpret life according to your own benefits, your emotional comebacks and you react to them.

When you think in terms of ‘I am Ostro’, everything is a comparison, a judgment, and you end up separating yourself from life, whether you feel like a victim or the exact opposite.

When you realize that you are - fullstop, you’re in a state of awareness from which you can think in total freedom.

Your thought no longer belongs to you but is the expression of a higher ‘being’ that manifests itself through you.”

### **Excerpt 2: John speaks to Ostro following the death of someone whom he tried to heal with his newly discovered “powers”...**

“I know you don’t realize it, but your frustration is a sign that you’re lookin’ for ‘knowledge’ and the power that comes with it.



Don't blame yourself, you ain't the only one.

The evolution of the whole of humanity is nailed to the stake of knowledge”.

I listened to him without saying a word, continuing to stare straight in front of me.

“Think I confused you when I told ya’, you gotta gift. Truth is, you got no gift nor power. You’re the gift and the opportunities that this gift offers.

Just like the people who asked you to heal them. Not even the Great Mother can solve the problems of humanity, but she knows that so she don't even try. She simply loves all her children unconditionally.

The principle of creation is the love of life, not the fear of death”.

### **Excerpt 3: On beliefs, hope, and the fear of the unknown...**

“That obsession with having something to believe in, a hope to cultivate, was what animated me the most and at the same time detached me from all:

Always looking for meanings where they were already evident, if only I had the ability to stop and observe with the eyes of my soul, as my trip had finally taught me.

I imagined a void and with the same imagination tried to fill it. I had feared it, before I even knew it.

I had returned to the crossroads that I had encountered countless times, convinced that I knew how to choose the right path, but instead taking the path that I had always taken in repetitive circles, like Old Faithful.

Never as then did I see with such clarity the nature of the circle and the true choice: not that of deciding what to do, but whether to evolve beyond the fear of the unknown or to remain nailed to the stake of knowledge.”

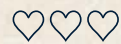
CÉLINE CLOUTIER~BO

# NUGGETS TO FREEDOM

Never choke on the deliciousness of this moment

It is complete

All else is falsified by past and future dreamful illusions.

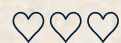


Realize you never have to take care of the  
sun shining  
rain falling  
heart beating.

The intelligence of rhythm of nature takes care of it.

Imagine...

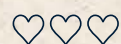
connecting to that same intelligence, and simply witnessing life, according to  
that perfection.



Are you aware that you are not aware, most of the time?

Remember to be, into **NOwhere, NOWhere.**

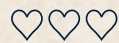
As you do, you get closer to the true Self you are.





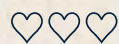
You are impermanent  
body  
ego-mind  
life.

You are permanently  
nothingness  
awareness  
silence.



You are not the world.  
The world seems to appear from the Self-awareness you are.

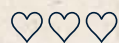
True Self radiates wisdom, abundance, love, and peace.  
Free from life.



Can you witness life simply as it happens?

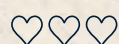
In choiceless awareness,  
the witness retires.

All that is left, is silent witnessing.



Silence is all there is.

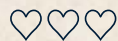
And within that silent spaciousness,  
as you remain inward, instead of outward  
silence may suddenly sweep you into bliss.



Can you look at  
the sun  
a cat  
a flower, or  
a person without offering any comments.

Mind is the story-maker.

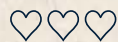
Let yourself taste truth, through silence.



Do you notice how mind constantly gravitates towards endless stories, worries,  
past, and future?

Seeing this mind game disarms its control.

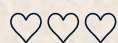
There is nobody to play anymore.



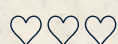
Do you consult yourself and wonder  
what are the insane unconscious things you perform to make this life difficult?

Consult means seeing without judgment.

No analyzing required.



Evidence in the world keeps you in dreamland.  
An unconscious never-ending story is on  
until you wake up to be left with life happening, untroubled and free.

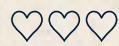




Awareness - silence meets you naked, from the world.

There is no "MY life".

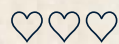
When there is the illusion of my life, one lives in constant fear of losing it.



Notice how uncontrolled thoughts take charge of your life.

Be the witness of what is going on.

Then, notice life as a happening without being involved.



What is the famous **NOW** everyone talks about?

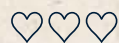
Why can't you catch it?

Stop trying.

You scare it away.

Stop labeling **IT**, as something unreachable.

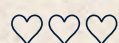
Maybe **IT** already holds you.



How do you know you are awareness – free, for sure?

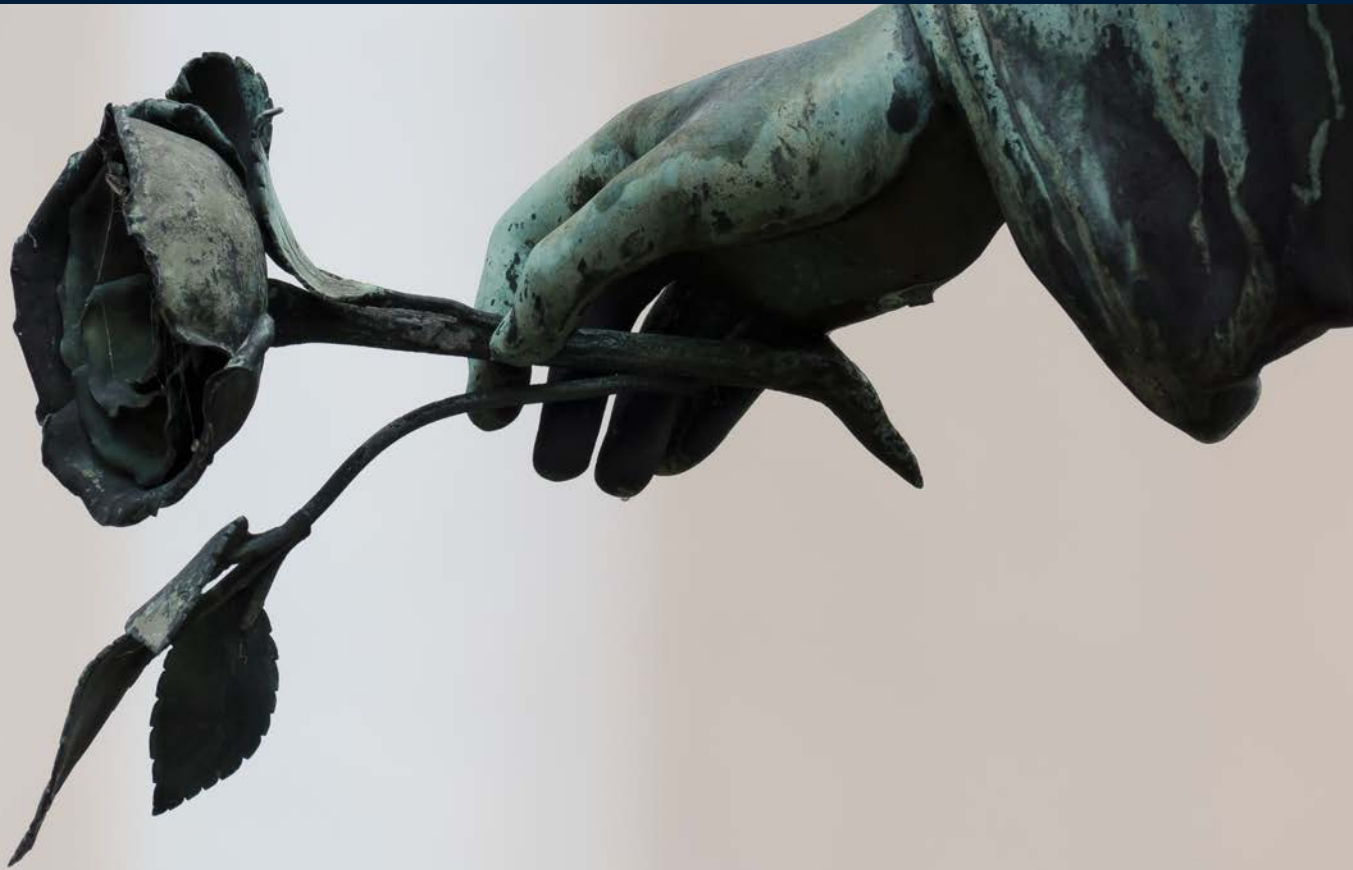
No doubt possible, as there is **NObody** left to ask the question:

**"Am I free?"**



JJ VEGA

# LEARN TO DIE AND BECOME FULLY ALIVE



## **The Avoidance of Death**

Death.

If you live in a modern Western culture, it's likely you don't spend much time thinking about death.

We live with a strange kind of cultural amnesia, a disassociation with the fundamental truth that all things die.

Now, when I talk about death, you're probably thinking about a physical death.



If you're lucky, you live a long and full life. If someone asked you for an age that would be good to die at, you might say somewhere in your 80s or 90s. Hey, people are even living to 100!

Billionaires are as we speak trying to "hack" death by seeking pathways to immortality beyond just leaving a legacy. They are literally trying to avoid a physical death.

However, if you go a few layers deeper, death is not just a physical end to our lifespan.

It is also a daily reality, a part of the fabric of life itself.

Death can come in many ways that we aren't even aware of.

For example, the death of a relationship. Perhaps you have a falling out with a friend and no longer speak to them. Or something fundamental about the friendship changes, and the relationship in the form you were used to has died.

Death.

You dreamed of getting a job as a software engineer at Google from an early age. You go to a great school, do all the right things, network your tail off, and get the gig. Then the pandemic hits. Technology companies boom and over-hire as more and more people lean on technology to fill in the gaps left by our inability to be together in person. Everyone assumes that the boom will hold after the pandemic. They were wrong.

Layoffs impact you. Your dream job is a thing of the past, and you can't even find work at a smaller technology company because the market is flooded with very skilled people in the same boat as you.

Death.

A tree sprouts beautiful leaves and flowers in the spring. They persist through the summer. Fall comes, and the blooms wilt. The leaves fall to the ground. Winter leaves the tree barren and dormant until the next Spring comes.

Death.

We avoid death. We do everything to prevent it in all of its forms. We cling to the summer and deny the winter. We have developed an entire culture dedicated to selling us every version of that denial we can possibly imagine. All manners of sedating, controlling, and manipulating our experience are available to us, all in the service of one thing:

The avoidance of death.

We get plastic surgery and layer all kinds of chemicals on our bodies to avoid the appearance of aging. We shut our elderly in specialized homes where they can't remind us of how we can't deal with the reality of their dying. We avoid and resist anything that makes us remotely uncomfortable as if the experience of that discomfort will lead to a death of some kind. We avoid the parts of our experience that make us uncomfortable and seek to magnify that which is pleasurable or affirming to our egos.

Of course, death comes no matter what, and it often shoves its way into our lives in ways we couldn't have predicted.

- The death of a close friend, gone too young, from cancer.
- The death of a marriage after only a few years because of irreconcilable differences.
- The death of a dream, having children, when you realize that you can't have children biologically.

No matter what, we can't avoid death. It comes no matter what.

## **The Cycle**

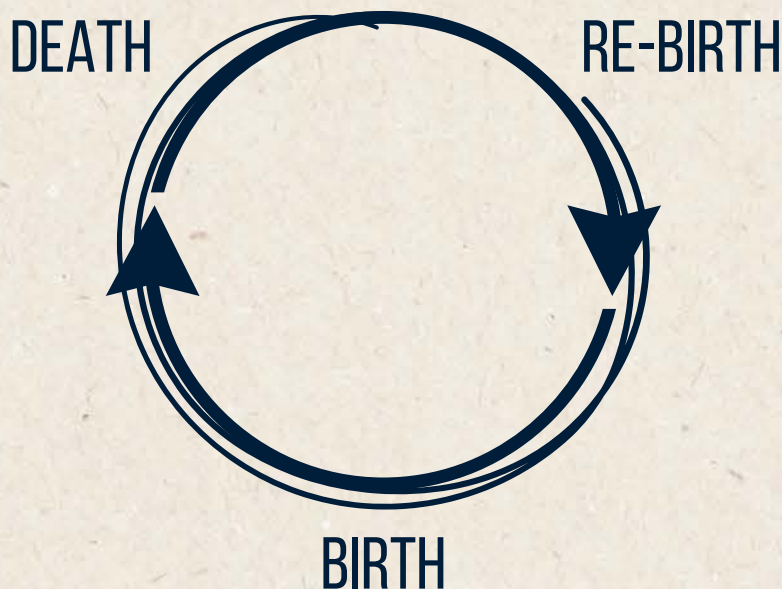
All of life is a dance, and that dance can be defined by a cycle that repeats through infinity and eternity.

Everything is born.  
Everything dies.  
From that death, rebirth.



Nothing truly dies, because no energy is wasted in the Universe.

So we can more accurately say that death is a change in form, not an eradication of matter and energy. Even the leaves that fall from the trees decompose and become nutrients for other life to be born and thrive in the forest. From death, re-birth. Resurrection.



Because we avoid the death part of this cycle, we live half-alive. We associate our identity with the least real aspect of ourselves, the ego. The ego can be defined as a collection of self-referential thoughts that have the sole goal of avoiding their own death. The ego wants to survive. It keeps you so mesmerized with its tricks and illusions that you believe that it is what you are.

### **The Way**

Funny enough, and despite its perversion and distortion by the religious systems and oppressive structures that sprang from the original movement, Christianity has had the secret of ending this avoidance of death right in the heart of its most treasured teachings, the Gospels.

In the Gospels, a man named Jesus Christ is born and chooses consciously to die a painful death, being reborn after his crucifixion. In his decision to die, he shows a narrow path (often called "The Way" in the wisdom tradition of Christianity) that fully embraces the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

He also shows an interesting relationship to identity: His first name is Jesus, which is his earthly, mortal identity. His last name, "Christ", is also often written as "The Christ", as in "Jesus the Christ".

Many interpretations of the Christian tradition view "Christ" as a representation of universal consciousness, or awareness itself. By identifying as both a mortal, limited self AND a universal Self, Jesus Christ holds the paradox of existence and shows us how we can do the same.

This means that the ego remains, but it is not sovereign. This also means that death is fully embraced, in all of its forms, so that life can continually renew itself over and over again.

### **Living the Way, Today**

The invitation of The Way is to choose to consciously die, every day. We do this in a two-fold path:

- We accept and be unconditionally with all aspects of our experience, no matter how uncomfortable they are.
- We allow ourselves to be pulled into a deeper identification with who we really are, the awareness that experience happens within (Christ consciousness) rather than the experiences themselves or the ego.

This is truly a counter-cultural way of being. However, when we embrace this Way, we find ourselves in the center of our experience. There is no need to add additional doings or go somewhere else to become "spiritual" creatures.

We remember that we are already Home.

We start to fully live and embrace our part in the Dance of Life.

We walk others Home so they can experience the freedom to do the same.

We find something more precious than an enlightenment that awaits us (maybe) down the road.

We instead find intimacy with all that is.

Amen. (So be it)



MATTHEW SUTCLIFFE

# THE CAGE



Get up.  
Go to school.  
Learn some stuff.  
Do some other stuff.  
Follow someone's rules.  
Pass, or fail, the tests.  
Succeed.

Leave. Relax. Play. For one summer.

[Born into a cage, I forget my sense of awe and wonder, the all and oneness that was mine before I was trained to see the world differently and myself as separate from it.]

Get up.  
Go to work.  
Train in some stuff.  
Do some productive stuff.  
Follow a path.  
Get promoted, appointed, rewarded, and anointed.  
Success.

Retire. Reflect. Regret. The end.

[I followed that path inside my cage, I called it my life and filled it with stories and beliefs, seeing only what matched the bars and not looking at the door.]

The door waits.

I catch a glimpse.

A dangerous void... avoid it.

Until... trauma, loss, news

uncover a memory from long, long ago.

I turn slowly

[When change began for me, (about now, for you?), at first I saw the door as a route to something new to add to my 'stuff', something that would complete my life, the icing on the cake, the meaning of existence, making it all worthwhile.

For years, I studied and learned everything I could about the door and the doorway.

I knew, or at least believed, there was "something beyond" but with urgent intensity in my exploration of the threshold and my enthusiasm for crossing it, I quite missed the fact that the door was wide open, and there was sunshine outside.]

I begin

to notice

the retreats

the meditations

the videos, the gurus

the books and the groups

are losing their once glittering astonishingness.

One day, one hour, one moment  
stumbling through the open door  
before jumping backwards  
inside again.



Next day, next hour, next moment  
stumbling out and jumping backwards again.

One day,  
choosing to stumble  
in hesitating awareness  
staying outside for a few moments.  
An hour.  
A day.  
Now.

Noticing  
the sea strokes  
a waiting beach  
field touches forest  
infinite, open, welcoming space that just is.

Looking back to my cage  
that isn't there  
and  
never was.

I made it and  
I let it go.

Epilogue:

Right now, as I write now, the correct thing to do is to laugh at  
my earlier foolishness with great affection and go for a swim in the sea.  
Watching the waves. Salty crusting skin drying in the sun. Lighting a fire  
as dusk settles, battered coffee pot in the embers. Drinking it black and  
not remembering falling asleep as the understanding dawns ...

the question and the answer are the same thing.

ELINE SLUYS

# INSPIRATION BEYOND THE SMOKESCREEN



Every moment is fresh and new. Like an unwritten page. In each moment we can be open to inspiration, insight, and wisdom. Yet we often perceive the moment as already fixed. In those moments, we're not guided by inspiration, insight, and wisdom, but by fear.

## **Expansion and contraction**

The difference is very palpable. When you operate from inspiration you experience peace, clarity, trust, and connection. You zoom out. Your consciousness expands, and you act in a natural, effortless way from this broad perspective. New ideas, fresh perspectives, solutions to thorny issues, and experiences of meaning and connection — they present themselves naturally.

When you operate from fear, you experience restlessness, judgment, and doubt. In those moments, you perceive yourself as a separate self, separated from the whole of life. You become hemmed in by what you believe, hope, or fear about the moment. You feel threatened rather than carried by life. In the grip of your conditioned ideas and beliefs, you lapse into old, constrictive patterns.



## **The smokescreen of thought**

In other words, in those moments you allow yourself to be guided by what you think you know about the moment. By the interpretation of your personal intellect. On autopilot, your thinking colors the moment for you. It interprets the now, and predicts the future based on conclusions it has previously drawn. The images your thinking projects evoke strong emotions of fear and anxiety. Therefore, you accept them as true.

But no matter how much eloquence they have, those images have no solid ground in reality. They are illusions. Smokescreens that temporarily obscure the source of inspiration, insight, and wisdom.

In any moment, the smoke can lift. Then you no longer cling to what you think you know, but are once again open to an intelligence and wisdom that transcends your personal intellect.

## **Relying on the source**

Thinking is an autonomous process. You don't choose to get caught up in the limited images of your personal thinking. It just happens. Nor is it a problem you have to solve. You don't have to solve your human experiences of stress, uncertainty, and fear. Instead of identifying with your cramped emotions, you can begin to recognize them as helpful signposts. Signposts that lead you back to the essence. To the source of inspiration, insight, and wisdom that transcends your personal intelligence.

Your cramped emotions don't tell you what the reality of the now is like, but what you believe about reality. They let you know that you are under the spell of what you think you know. Of the limited interpretations of your thinking. With that recognition, the veil of what you believe about the moment falls away. The smoke clears, and the moment reappears as fresh and new; full of inspiration, meaning, and possibilities.

Go recognize it!

It will make your life so much lighter and joyful.

## **Recognizing resistance**

The human experience is like sailing on a rolling ocean. Sometimes you find yourself at the crest of a wave, and life smiles at you. Sometimes you find yourself in the valley of the wave, and your experience of life is oppressive.

When life is quietly rippling along, you roll with it. You enjoy the peaks and deal with the valleys that inevitably follow. You understand the peaks and valleys to be inextricably inseparable.

## **When life hits you in the face**

Sometimes you get hit by a violent wave you didn't see coming. You fall ill, your newborn turns out to be a crying baby, you get laid off, lose a loved one, go through menopause, and so on.

Then two things can happen:

- A) You surf along on the violent wave.
- B) You cramp up and try to fight the wave.

The situation is always what it is. Your reaction determines your experience of the situation. In case A., you accept reality. It is what it is now. Not taking what happens personally, you respond in a constructive, resilient way. Instead of fighting what you feel, you allow yourself to feel what you feel. You take the time to grieve, rest, recover, get used to, learn, or whatever the moment requires of you.

## **Clarity gets muddled**

In case B., you are so engulfed by what you feel that you rebel against it. What you experience is so overwhelming or frightening that you lose sight of the fact that no experience is permanent. That every valley is inevitably followed by another peak. You try to suppress, fight, redirect, transform, and interpret what you feel. You react not to what the moment demands of you, but to what you fear will happen. The harder you fight against what you feel and fear, the greater your turmoil, uncertainty, and anxiety. It no longer flows.



The natural wave motion gets disrupted. Your energy and attention get focused on the battle in your head, preventing you from taking clear, inspired actions in the actual here and now. You lapse into conditioned patterns and survival strategies. Your thinking becomes overheated. As a result, your stress level remains high, reinforcing the feeling that something is terribly wrong. Which in turn triggers even more restless thinking and conditioned behavior, and so on. It becomes a vicious cycle. In all innocence, you keep yourself trapped in the valley. You no longer move along, but become exhausted by your own thinking and conditioned behavior.

## **Becoming aware**

So what makes response A or B occur? Is it possible to choose a response? Is it possible to make the conscious choice for A?

To answer these questions, it is helpful to see that it is not change that causes your anxiety, but your brain's search for grip and control.

And looking for grip and control is what your brain does. Your brain's job is to make sense of and process everything you're experiencing. It tries to interpret the present and predict the future. That interpretation is always a limited interpretation of reality. It is an unconscious process, in which the brain draws on autopilot from conclusions it has previously drawn. In that sense, you cannot choose a response.

### **A. as a consequence of recognizing B.**

But you can notice which response is triggered. The negative emotions and stress you feel are not caused by anything fixed in your circumstances, personality, body, or past. It is your thinking in the moment that is bothering you. And you can begin to recognize that. You don't have to consciously choose A. A. is a consequence of recognizing B. Then the wave can still be intense. But the burden of fighting the wave falls off of you. You can continue to ride the wave with clarity, resilience, and wisdom. And that makes all the difference.



HASNAIN WARIS

# THE 'MODE CHOICE'



We have evolved to a level where our existence has become more psychological than physiological. Our well-being and efficiency heavily depend on our 'Being' (state) and not so much on 'Doing' (action). If we are balanced and joyful, we act very differently from when we are disturbed and agitated mentally, in two quite similar trigger situations. While all of our society/culture recommend we guard our actions, not much value is given to guarding our 'state' or 'being', although it's the latter that plays a primary role in shaping our day-to-day well-being and realization of the 'Human Potential' that we all possess.

What is the root cause of this problem?

Why aren't we able to see our best action choices on a regular basis?

What blocks us from seeing them?

If we are not able to see the Truth of the moment (the reality, things as they are), what is the basis of our action?

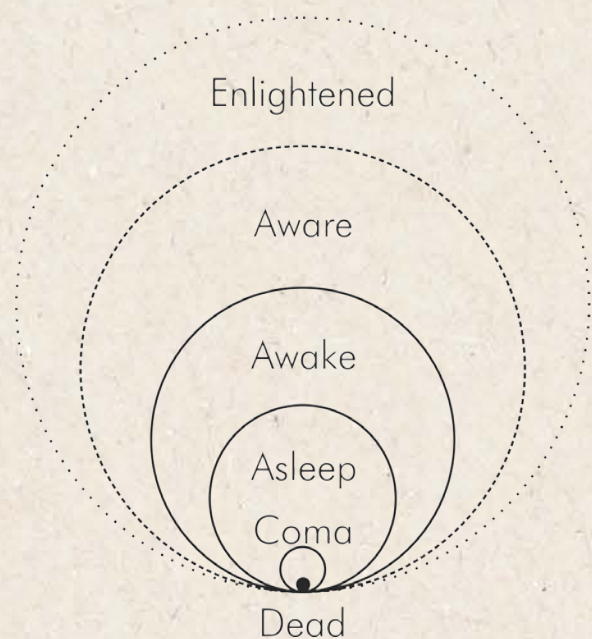


If we look at our behaviors closely, we will find that we are acting from our story (belief) about the moment and situation. This preference or bias blocks us from seeing and responding to the truth, the reality. Naturally, these actions (based on our story, belief from the past, or image formed about the future) are not going to be the most appropriate to the situation, as we fail to see things on their merit under the influence of our own distorted perceptions/beliefs/ideas/notions about the situation. Unfortunately, most of us are living like this almost all the time, at work, in relationships, and in our dealing with ourselves. This issue is so common and prevalent that we don't even find it odd or wrong.

Now, if most of the time, our observations of the situation and hence actions are misfits, our life becomes a sum total of the mess created from these faulty choices/actions, invariably causing us, a sense of loss, guilt, irritation, anger, mental pain, and often physical diseases too. Not only this, we also suffer because of the faulty orientations and harmless-looking inhuman values inculcated into us via social and cultural conditioning. Concepts like, 'life is a war', 'more is always better', and 'you have to compete and beat others to survive' etc.

These ideas, if taken seriously become our values which define the meaning and purpose of life, leaving us with a distorted sense of self and the goal of human existence. Consequently, we end up behaving in an unnatural manner and start chasing goals that are not ours. Such goals, even if chased successfully, by investing precious energy and time, soon leave us with a feeling of unfulfillment and dissatisfaction, much like a dog who excitedly chases a plastic bone, only to realize the futility of the effort in the end.

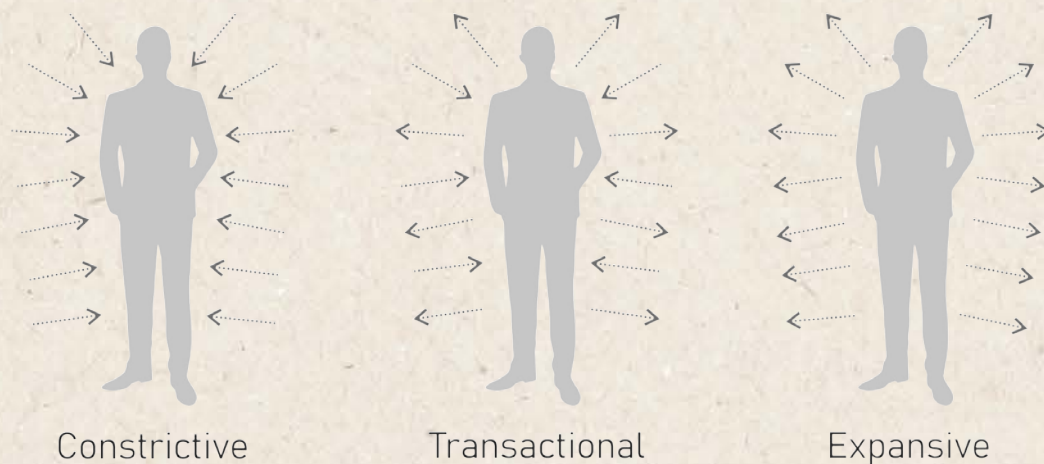
## CONSCIOUSNESS



Friends, when you're asleep and dreaming, can you see the reality around you? Obviously not. In the same way, when you are 'Awake' (and not 'Aware'), you miss the finer dimensions of the reality (Truth) around you and continue to live in the world of your waking dreams (read conditionings). Consequently, we end up living like the train traveler who prefers to carry his baggage on his head while sitting on the train seat, ignoring the natural option of keeping it on the floor. Most of the stress that we're causing to ourselves, is coming from our faulty orientations and belief patterns, which, once detected, will never rule our lives. Unfortunately, we are so much on the run all the time that we seldom get the opportunity to detect these patterns and keep on living the same life day after day, calling it natural or fate. As very beautifully remarked by a realized man, 'Do what you want to do, and you may never do what you can'.

Following is my observation about the modes of life we humans are living. It can be broadly classified into 3 categories: 1. Constrictive, 2. Transactional, 3. Expansive.

### 3 MODES OF LIVING



#### **Constrictive Mode:**

This mode of life is dominated by fear, a scarcity mindset, and ego-centric behaviour. On close observation, we will find that fear (often expressed as greed, defensiveness, jealousy) and rigid beliefs dominate the action choices of the individuals living in this mode. They are not only defensive about what they have and appear seemingly protective in their approach, but they can go on to justify their exploitative actions too, if it serves them. A sense of lack rules the lives of these individuals.



## **Transactional Mode:**

The people with a transactional mindset are the ones who believe in fair play but deem giving more as some sort of loss. They are, therefore, living more business-like lives even in places not needed. If they give, they anticipate a return in the same proportion. It's like buying bread by giving X amount to the baker. Ego-centricity is there but appears at an acceptable level in these individuals. Fairness and justice are the hallmarks of the people living in this mode.

## **Expansive Mode:**

People with this orientation are the ones who can be termed 'Lovers' in a traditional spiritual sense. They are, for all practical purposes, 'Givers'. They are the people who are harmonized on a 'High-Frequency State' which I prefer to call 'Love State'. They give not because they're super rich but because a feeling of fulfillment and superfluosity dominates their lives. If they give, they don't expect anything in return. Whether they get any return or not, doesn't upset their attitude. You may call them 'Unconditional Givers'. Ego-centricity, fear, or insecurity appears only nominal in these individuals. Love, empathy, giving, and sharing dominate the behavior of the people living in this mode.

It's interesting to note that the above three modes of living also correspond to our levels of 'Consciousness' (clarity to see the Truth). Needless to mention, the 'Lovers', the Expansive mode ones, are closest to the 'Truth', while the Constrictive mode ones are by far the farthest from it. As we transcend our Ego-Centricity (I-consciousness), our life starts improving because of our informed choices and situation-appropriate actions. We will also notice that these action choices not only become more aligned with our core/heart but also more holistic in nature and, therefore, found to be more beneficial not only to us but also to the world at large. Obviously, in the 3rd mode, our actions are bound to leave us more satisfied and happy with ourselves, in both the short and long run, causing us to live a more fulfilled and enriched life.



CARLO MAHFOUZ

# WE HAVE NEVER BEEN BUT MULTI-DIMENSIONAL



The joke on us believing at some point that life is commanded by a linear world, driven by causality, consumed by a single feed and input. While the truth is richer and delicious in its bearing, we witness our being unraveled in the beauty of the cacophony of a chord played at once and not a single note.

From language to logic and the teachings of the mind, all fall through when we let it go to simple be. To listen as the whole we are. To escape the mind and the language we use to master it. For in language, we manifest and are confined, but in it, too, we have the means to glimpse the freedom that lies beyond it.



This collection of writings and visuals aims to accomplish that — using musings of multiple sorts to escape the confines of the limiting words and present a multi-dimensional escape to absorb dichotomies, realities, and imagery all at once.

## Let the wind carry you

A rebel without soles on your feet  
Untethered and connect to all you meet  
With no mind to bare  
Or soul to care

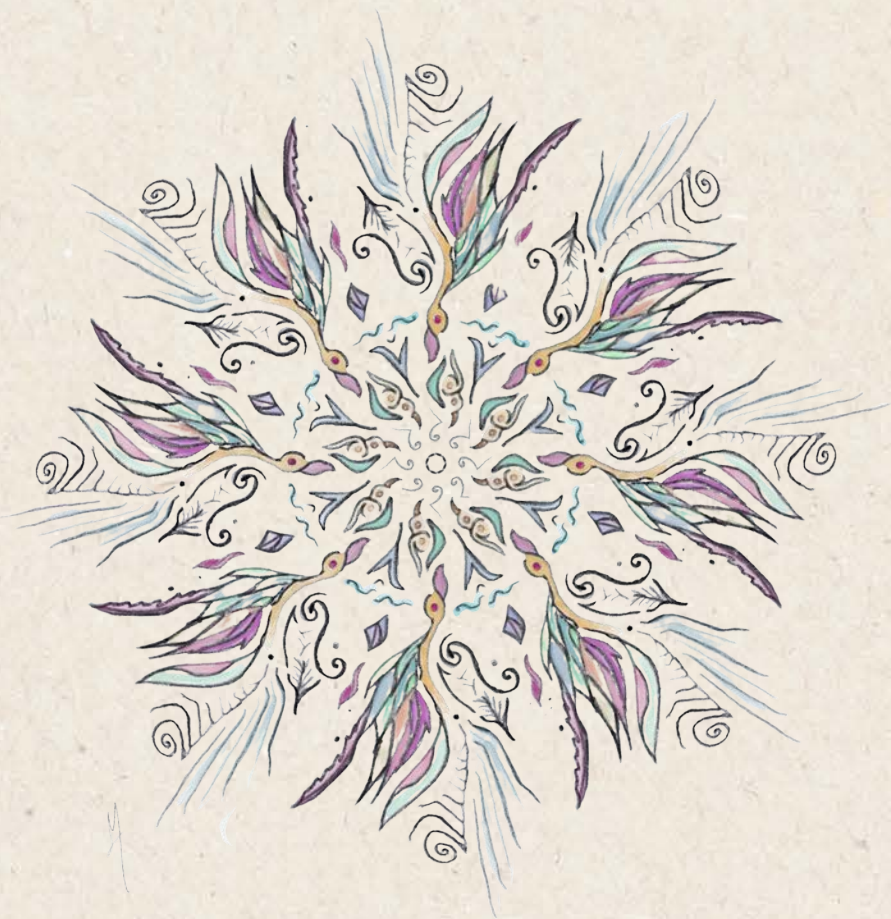
Free if freedom knew  
Awake if awakening had a clue  
In awareness of you and all  
In surrender to silence and awe

Let the wind carry you  
From shore to shore  
Being sure and unsure  
Of destination and goal

Remembered for an instant  
And lost forever more  
Running up the hill  
And sliding down the mill

Let the wind carry you  
So in running or sliding too  
No difference breaks through  
As the wind within you

Roar and breeze  
in harmony and ease  
For in you, now a you disappear  
And for an eternity of living, you appear





## The ship is coming

The ship is coming  
Into the harbor, it's closing

You might see it come through  
Or waiting for it to board and go to

A destination that awaits  
You and the history that predates

The fates of many and all  
On the cruise of the ship coming tall

In the mist of the profound uncertainty  
One travels to a destiny that's unraveling faintly

Like the ship on the horizon sailing  
The ship is coming

And who awaits long for the journey  
Whether they are ready for it or just holding

The ship is coming  
Whether you board or watch with these & those

It is coming





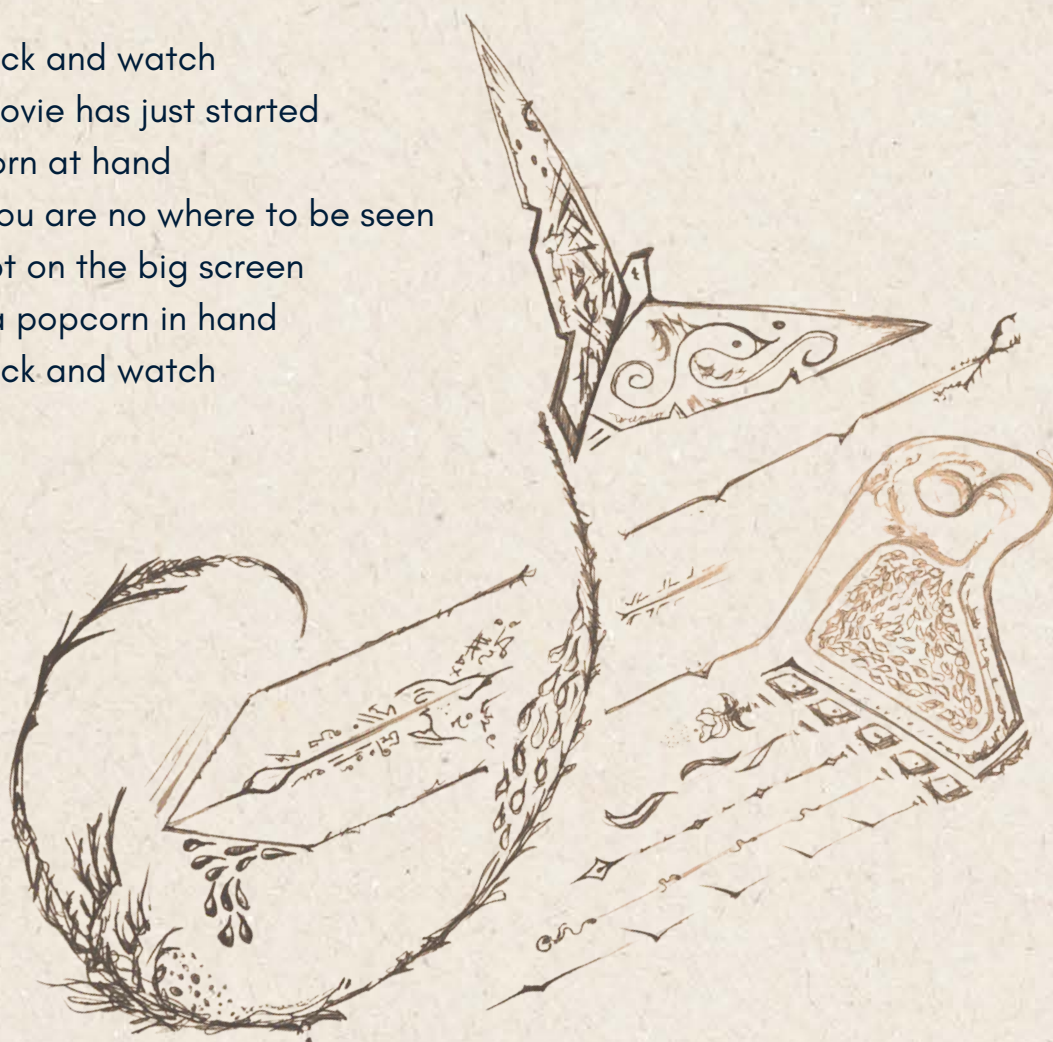
## Sit back and watch

Slow your breathe  
However you know how  
Breathe in or breathe out  
It doesn't really matter how

Slow your thinking  
By not thinking at all  
If you're a master but truly you're not  
So just be amused by the thoughts  
Running through or slowing down

Slow your walk  
Take a step back in every step forward  
Without moving backward  
Let there be a lag in your move  
So that you move while standing still

Sit back and watch  
The movie has just started  
Popcorn at hand  
And you are no where to be seen  
Except on the big screen  
With a popcorn in hand  
Sit back and watch



## To the rhythm

That runs the world without a notice  
The composer of every song and hum

The shy squeeze that contracts to release  
Life and flowery red in the cheeks

To the rhythm in the endless wheel  
That turns with every silent breathe

A glory on its own a bliss for every soul  
A true story that doesn't need to be told

The sound that beats without missing a beat  
To echo in the chambers without a seat

For it doesn't need an audience  
Or a witness to it's kingly moments

To shine in the wake of the dawn  
Connecting all in a tapestry in every instance redrawn.

To the rhythm  
That runs the world without a notice





## **To the silent dormant genius in you, I have a message**

I have long hair and it doesn't bother me a bit.  
You don't care and that's true but hey it's lit.

I have dreamed to fly and flying I have with wings I have yet to see.  
You're not sure what I m smoking but a mist is already forming, rising from  
within the depth of the sea.

I have changed without changing. And you have no clue how that could be.  
In you there is a silent dormant genius that doesn't know how to wake up. And  
yet awakened it needs to be.

It yawns every now and then and a glimmer pierces through.  
You are astounded by its radiance yet quickly it fades too.

Don't you look great, long hair or not the glamour shines true.  
Beyond the thick mist hides a genius dormant in you and so far you had no  
clue.

Stretch far, stretch wide, pull yourself apart to release you.  
The dormant shall no longer be silent and in you a new you shall be born out of  
the silent genius that lies within the depths of you.

To the silent dormant genius in you I have a message

It's about you and yet it has nothing to do with you.  
Once the genius is awakened, no you will remember you.

*All artwork in this section by Carlo Mahfouz.*

FREYJA THEAKAR

# DEALING WITH THE BEGUILINGLY PLEASURABLE FEELING OF BEING LOCATED AND SEPARATE

The problem is that identification with thoughts and sensations that give the feeling of being a separate self is not unpleasant in the first instance. It's even comforting. As consciousness, we love thinking and sensing. The problem is that we become so used to these experiences that we identify ourselves as them, forgetting the experience of our true nature. Then the trouble starts.

When the natural defense mechanisms of the mind and body get triggered, our whole sense of self is disrupted along with them, as we now believe ourselves to be a material body and mind. The effects of this are a vicious spiral of self-limiting thoughts that trigger an explosion of unpleasant feelings. As children, our natural openness, vulnerability, and oneness are often met with disappointment and hurt. Unable to draw back into an observing state, this psychological hurt defines us, and we seek the loving Oneness we have lost in ways that betray ourselves. We learn how to try and attract love by being attractive whilst masking our open-hearted vulnerability. We teach ourselves to win love, compete for it, measure it, demand it, deserve it, charm for it, and gain status for it. All these strategies of trying to get love are highly addictive because they seem to work for a short time but only leave us craving more. We build a whole life on this betrayal of what we are.



Whatever initial comfort we found in the experiences of thoughts and sensations is thus overshadowed by the cumulative negative effects of such self-betrayal. Nevertheless, the memory of the initial pleasure remains deeply buried as the embodied belief to be a separate self located in time and space. It shows up in the negative thoughts that arise, not as their content says, because there is something wrong with us, but because we have fallen into this deeply hidden belief in separateness. As we hopefully rediscover the experience of the consciousness we essentially are and that we cannot know is materially generated, we can discern this underlying story of all these thoughts of self-betrayal.

Such thoughts constitute the rational aspect of the deeply held belief be a separate material object. We learn we do not need to argue with thoughts of self-betrayal. We simply need to confront them with the true experience that, despite what they say, we cannot know the premise upon which they arise is true, thus collapsing in one-go the whole inverted pyramid of self-deprecation in the mind.

This leaves possibly the harder and more subtle issue: That the sensations of the body, in some irrational way, say something about us and cause us to locate our sense of self in them. We refer to our body as "me" without even considering it. Without evidence, we impose the limited characteristics of mind and body experiences onto consciousness. Reframing our physical experience of being a located "me" is a further aspect of decommissioning the belief in separateness for good. This reframing of bodily sensations can take ongoing investigations. It's vital not to see this as a practice.

We (Awareness) are already free once we recognize we are this awareness that cannot be defined objectively, and we cannot lose this freedom. We approach this task of dissolving the ancient residues of "me" in the sensations of the body based on this freedom, not to attain it. Then we recognize we are not trying to eliminate the sensations (impossible and undesirable); just reframe them in the light of the experience of being Awareness so we can avoid mistaking them for ourselves.

It can help to share the experiences of dissolving separateness with other minds! This is something I do in my meditations and study sessions. Please feel free to be in touch.

## Every Day

Every day, my body wakes up in me.

Sometimes, for a brief moment, she calls out plaintively in some unspoken irrational voice.

"You wake up in me!"

I smile, for I am crystal clear,

And lovingly whisper from my heart to her,

"No, honey. You wake up in me. Rest in me, please. You are safe here and welcome."

She relaxes and smiles back.

Releasing her contractions and letting go of her irrational call

Realizing it had no power and was just a faint echo of an old habit, that was all.

Every day, my mind wakes up in me.

Occasionally, for a brief moment, she pours out rather intense thoughts as if I somehow am in trouble.

Of course, she still tries this game a little; bless her, she is only trying her best to protect me,

These thoughts, though not plainly saying it openly, are saying, in effect,

"You wake up in me!"

I smile, for I am crystal clear,

And lovingly whisper from my heart to her,

"No, honey. You wake up in me. Rest in me, please. You are safe here and welcome."

She relaxes and smiles back.

Happily, releasing her contractions and letting go of her thoughts of personalization,

Realizing they had no power and were just a faint echo of her old habit, that was all.

Every day, the world wakes up in me.

Occasionally, for a brief moment, its noise and cacophony of sensations may indicate it is over there, and I am over here as if to say,

"You wake up in me!"

I smile, for I am crystal clear,

And lovingly whisper from my heart to her,

"No, honey. You wake up in me. Rest in me, please. You are safe here and welcome."

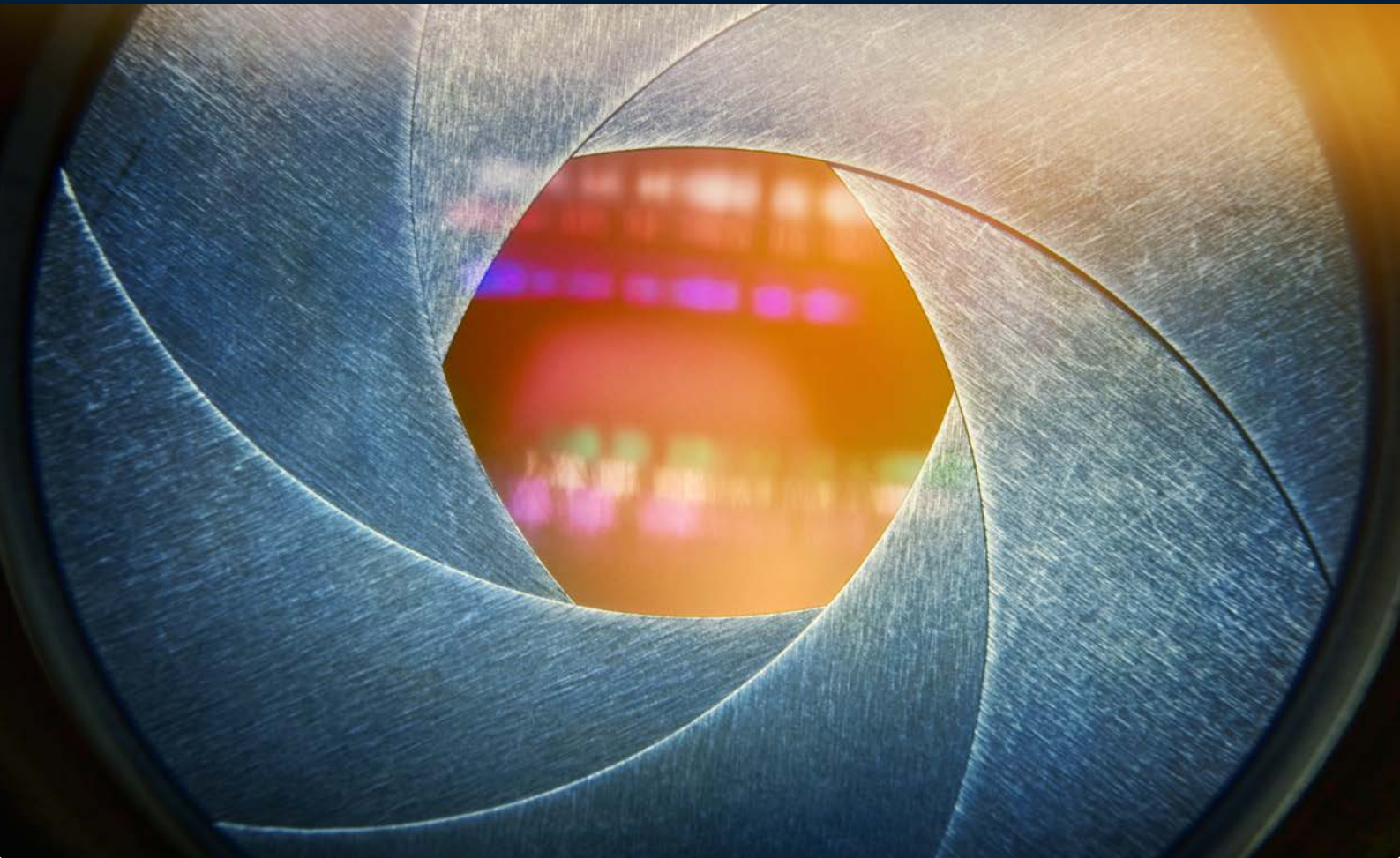
She relaxes and smiles back and shows her true beauty to me.

In this way, every day wakes up in me.



PIERS THURSTON

# HAVE YOU NOTICED.....



## **A MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL DOOR TO THE WORLD OF NON-DUALITY**

It doesn't take much reflection for most of us to notice that how we feel about our everyday life, even what we perceive and what meaning we make - varies. Maybe that variation is a clue to something more foundational about the nature of what we are.

Try this metaphor on for size:

In any moment we are experiencing the world in an **'aperture'**.



### ***What is the metaphor pointing to?***

*Here are three descriptions ranging from colloquial, to more descriptively technical:*

- *How stuck in our heads we are*
- *The degree to which in any moment we are self-identified with our reality as opposed to being the moment and in flow*
- *The aperture contracting and expanding between a) impersonal 'isness' of pure consciousness unshackled by personal conditioning and narratives, and b) the appearance of us as a separate self with personal conditioning and programming – the self-identified mind*

### **What does this aperture determine?**

Two very significant aspects of the human experience:

- It determines how the world looks to us in any moment – this is not your take on the world, not your photo-shopped view of an objective reality but literally what the mind renders and turns up in 'your' perceptions, thoughts, and feelings
- It determines the level of resourcefulness (peace, performance potential) available to us in any moment

To get even more technical for a moment: What determines how the world looks to us in any moment (i.e. our 'IsNess' – raw perceptions, sensations, and thoughts)? At a theoretical level, you could break it down into 3 aspects, (although really it's all one field):

- A. The species-specific perceptual hardware (e.g. humans are different to bats)
- B. The general programming that the individuated mind has identified (conditioning)
- C. 'Your' aperture in the moment.

It's interesting to notice that 'C' the aperture, can supersede 'B', and maybe even 'A' (take plant medicine or narcotics, etc). So we start to see that the aperture at any moment is crucial!

### **How can we notice what aperture we are in?**

By how life feels in any moment, by noticing the 'sensation indicators'. Sensations are our indicators, not thoughts. Thoughts tend to emanate from the aperture in the moment, i.e. how many times have you said to yourself or heard someone say they are really open-minded but aren't? Our thoughts are not an accurate representation of where we are at.



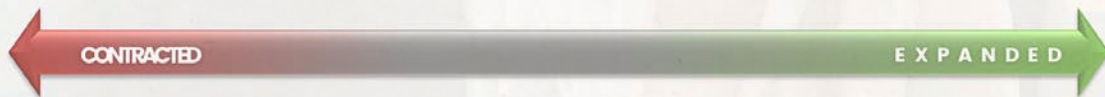
## Signposts: Sensation Indicators of Aperture



- Tension or tightness
- Sense of overwhelm
- Urgency
- Self-consciousness
- Withdrawn
- Strong emotions
- Urges
- Breath: Shallow & high in chest



- Lightness and ease
- Energising & in-flow
- Sense of openness, & mental 'space'
- Connected with other or nature
- Clarity & Obviousness
- In this moment, present
- Breath: Deep, 'natural' rhythm



Notice the sensations that are appearing right now: the chart above gives some pointers to the type of sensations and what they mean about the aperture (of course it is not about the words just an indicator, find whatever words work for you)



### Common misunderstandings:

To start with, it might be usual to think that:

- Aperture is determined or caused by the world and circumstances e.g. *'my boss's email put me in a low aperture'*. Or *'I have a contracted aperture because I have no confidence'*,
- Aperture is the same as mood or mindset,
- Aperture is just about how singularly focused or wide perspective I am in a given moment.

This would be to take the aperture at a psychological level, but we want to explore a different direction. What does it mean in terms of our essential nature?

**If we can take a more non-dual lens for a moment, what is the aperture telling us...\* \*\***

## CONTRACTED:

- You believe the appearance of being separate
- You believe the appearance of being limited
- The world looks casual - and can affect you directly
- You believe your well-being is conditional
- You come from lack, and scarcity, seeking and protecting. Therefore likely to operate and behave in the world accordingly. Seeking and protecting.
- Tethering well-being and validity to psychology or objects



## EXPANDED:

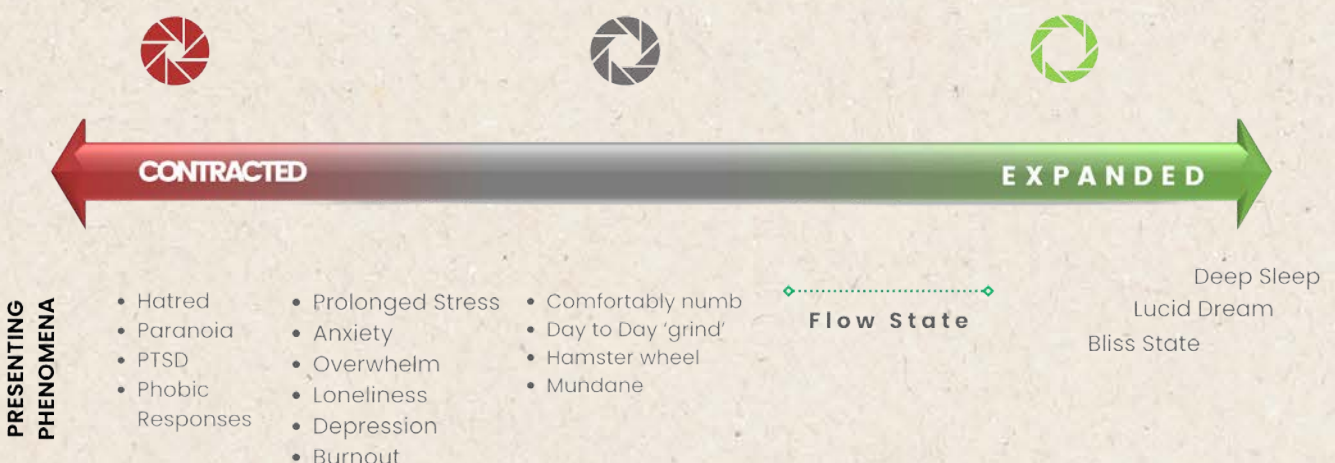
- There is no separate self doing life, no 'me' as a 'chooser' or 'doer'
- Flow state; things just emerge
- A sense of oneness and feeling part of something greater than 'me'
- Potential, resilience, and resourcefulness feel abundant
- The external world doesn't look like it has a direct causal power to you
- You recognise you are more than your thoughts and narratives
- You know any appearing limitations are temporary
- Your desires and actions in the world are an expression of consciousness not self seeking or protecting
- You know nothing can permanently affect your essential nature of peace potential and love



\*Please note, the lists above are a way of describing 'in theory' what the system is up to depending on the aperture, not implying this will be in your cognitive thinking

\*\* The 'you' here is a concession to the appearance of doer separate mind

To add some more psychological descriptions to the aperture, the chart below plots a few illustrative 'states' / conditions or presenting phenomena. We can see that Deep Sleep is when there is no appearance of a self-identified mind, individuation, or any psychological activity of time, space, and matter.





## Better Day-to-Day Functioning and Wellbeing - Flow State

What is relevant for our day-to-day functioning and enjoyment is that we might invisibly be spending too much time in the middle or to the left, as most people recognise the potential, peace, and performance of the flow state.

### How is any of this relevant to exploring the nature of Non-Duality?

Because the aperture in the moment obscures our true nature and represents the very fact that at the same time, we are both individuated selves in a human form and impersonal, infinite consciousness manifesting (which are really the same thing, just appearing differently). And the extent to which the system recognises that in any moment determines the human experience.



- **Step One:** Start to just notice, notice the sensations that are appearing at any moment - and that they are never ever "coming from life, or from you" - they are actually helpful indicators as to where the aperture is at any moment.
- This means that feelings like stress or anxiety are actually helpful - as they give us a clue as to what the mind is up to, the level of aperture, and therefore the accuracy and sanity of the presenting reality.



- **Step Two:** Seeing through the illusion: The presenting world of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings is always an illusion (all 'real but never true') that is just what is, but in a contracted aperture there is an ignorance of that illusion

### So What Can I Do About It?

Maybe you have had a glimpse of what the essence of Non-Duality is or 'awaking' is pointing, just a sniff, and then it disappears. Or if none of that language makes sense you might know and recognize what it's like to be really present and in flow. But then a question like this pops up: *"How come I find it hard to stay in that place?"* or *"I find it difficult not to get absorbed in my thinking mind again."* That is just aperture.

We have been so conditioned to believe we are the conceptual separate self-identified mind, that the aperture for most of us is invisibly more contracted than we recognized – and we are numb to that, some of us comfortably numb, some of us uncomfortably ignorant to that. We assume “life” feels like that.

No ‘life’ (the raw ‘isness’) doesn't feel like that, the aperture in the moment feels like that. It is just aperture, always.

So this idea of aperture assists us in seeing, that we are both, the infinite potential of impersonal consciousness and we are also the activity of that, which presents itself as an individuated form of limited perceiving, thinking, and feeling. And we can see this everywhere.

It is just aperture, always.

### How it might turn up behaviourally - for example in the workplace



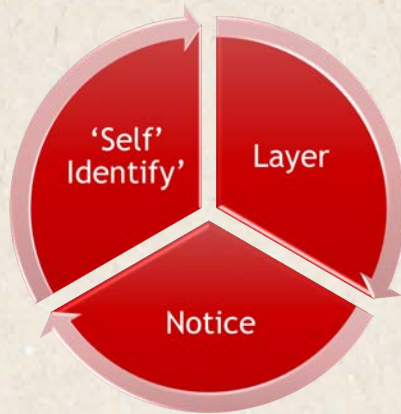
### So What Can I do About It?

And the suggestion here is to JUST NOTICE, we are so conditioned to want to fix it, manage it, that even having awareness of it, leads to attention, driven by an overt or covert need to ‘fix it’.



You can see how innocently invisibly we head the wrong way rather than going back to our essential nature we head further into psychology and the form, and that perpetuates the low aperture.

## How **not** to 'notice'...



1. Notice sensation
2. Decide what it is (label)
3. Self identify (Assume/guess/justify where it came from and why)
4. Question if need to act or fix it?
5. Get annoyed if it doesn't go away
6. Justify why it won't go away
7. Repeat 1-6...©



## What is the alternative?

In this inquiring and exploring stage a different opportunity can arise, more neutral and in recognition of what we are. So we can start to observe – a kind of NEUTRAL NOTICING.

## Noticing: **Instead...**



1. Sensation arises



2. Realise sensations come & go

Sensations come and go within awareness. With no self identification they are neutral. We can *lean into* any persistence feelings



3. Be Open to obviousness

Be open to insight/action if it is obvious (i.e., feels like coming from expanded aperture)

## So what is my best advice?

- Notice the aperture
- Notice what it is telling us about what we are, and what we aren't
- Notice neutrally...just with inquiry and curiosity, not judgment and hope
- It is *always* aperture
- The world doesn't happen out there, to a 'you' in here
- It is always mind, always 'just' the aperture
- Notice that simplicity
- Therein lies peace, performance, and potential.





HELEN AMERY

# KEEP LOOKING



**For a reader interested in nonduality and freedom, what is your best current “advice” or message?**

This is the question Katrijn van Oudheusden posed to the people who have contributed to this book. She's created this unique curation to support more people in re-discovering their already-awake nature. While illustrating the variety and unity around this timeless message. Co-creating a gift to be shared with others.

I wasn't sure there was anything I was going to write, and then it occurred to me. The timeless advice or message I would offer is to keep looking.

There have been various times during my journey, and which I see happening for others too, when I thought “I’ve got it”, “I know this!”

And then...  
there was always more.

The thing that supported me to see 'the more', was to keep looking. Noticing when things started to feel constricted, limited, or with a righteousness of "I know, I've got it, I'm right". That was the time to let go of what I thought I'd "got" and to look again.

When I thought all experience was created from the inside of Helen, into the outside world, I thought I'd got it.

When I had my big awakening experience in the shower, I thought I'd got it.

When I had the experience that all limiting patterns could just be dropped, as though dropping a stone in a pond, I thought I'd got it.

When, in a flash, I truly saw that Helen was a conceptual construct, I thought I'd got it.

When I inquired more intently into the separate self and saw the illusion, and 'no do-er!', I thought I'd got it.

When I noticed the absence of the experience of the body, I thought I'd got it.

When I then received energy transmissions, to get to the heart of the matter, I got it. Not intellectually. Not emotionally. Just oh! So obvious.

Oh! It really is all one thing appearing as all this. How could it ever not have been?

So simple. So obvious. So right here.  
Awakening.

And now ... the enlightenment process continues. Lightning conditioned patterns. Seemingly deepening the recognition of reality. In truth, just revealing how it already was.

And so who knows what next?  
All I know is...  
I keep looking.



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