



TRIP OVERHOLT

WITH JOHN TROY, WIZARD



Conversations with **Conversations with Avant-garde Sages**

With Anchor & Host, Trip Overholt





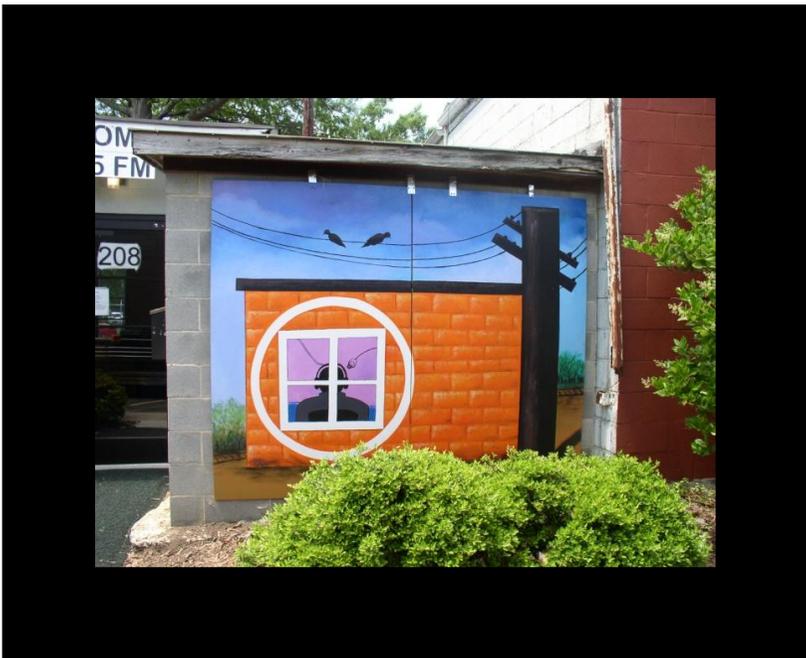
Arunachala Photograph by Jim Dillinger

A Sharing of Affirmation

Conversations with Avant-garde Sages



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The ***Conversations with Avant-garde Sages*** broadcast at WCOM-FM and global webcast came to a close in June, 2012, along with its sister group page, after more than three years. Trip Overholt intimately conversed with over 100 of the most sincere Advaita avant-garde sages of our time and has put together a unique portal into these teaching archives; thirty hour-long conversations with sages that shared non dual Truth with him. This eBook is a unique media that encompasses the most candid of these conversations that fit into a mosaic for Trip, the host of the show and aspirant seeking affirmation. Trip confessed and brought forth all the sincere questions and deep doubts we all at times entertain, front and center real time after his initial awakening. This spontaneous Mosaic is an insight into Trip's sojourn, affirming and emptying into non dual wisdom of the *Now*, with the support of his sincere sage friends reflecting back to him this palpable Truth. Trip has no more questions. The sojourn was recorded, transcribed and edited. Now, you may listen in as doubts are removed; one by one. Tap a link on the microphone, and listen in to these clear-cut conversations in addition to reading the edited transcripts. The link to these avant-garde sages' web presence is beneath each photograph.

In~Joy!

John Troy, Editor

A Free Sharing

June 12, 2012

www.thewizardllc.com



Introduction



You, the so-called “person” reading this page on your iPad, computer, notebook or Kindle - you are reading from one of two possible outlooks. If you are like I was until the age of 48, you believe you are an individual person with a brain that is the seat of your awareness. You believe yourself to be a doer of things, the I-thought with

free will, and that you have some control over the outcome of your game of life. You believe you exclusively exist in a particular location at a particular time and that there is a world “out there” full of objects that exist independently from you and from each other. This is a dual outlook.

There is also the outlook of non-duality. Anyone can taste it anytime by asking the question in the very *Now*, “Who or what am I?” The Truthful answer always is, for everyone, the same still silence that avails itself as this I-thought vanishes or becomes transparent. So the Truth is... we are literally nothing. Inside of that no-thing everything mysteriously appears like a movie on a screen.

That contradiction of simultaneous something AND nothing cannot be grocked by the mind. It can only be intuited by grace. The mind can point to it with lots of juicy words but it can never

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know or own it for itself because the mind is not external to it. It is within it. The I-thought cannot be greater than that which contains it. Inherent sentience can only BE it. It is all so maddingly simple and so profoundly ever present as to be beyond detection.

If you had to pick the biological organ that has the greatest impact on your well being you would probably say “my brain”. If someone were to ask you who you are, a voice in your head would say, “I am so and so, a mother of two children, who is married and works at such and such”. In essence, that voice in your head, the “I-thought” is the sum total of everything you have ever known, felt, or experienced and who you think you are as a story line. And when your body dies, that “I-thought” or “narrator” in the form of a “personal soul”, will depart your body and go on to abide for “eternity” in one of several possible suspect locations.

A spontaneous transformation or dispensation of grace in human consciousness appears to be taking place along with the information age and emerging as the Truth of what we really are as *Now*, without the husk of any particular religion. It is at the very fingertips of much of humanity. I am a living example of that phenomenon. Many of you have had the taste of non-duality and are affirming and being affirmed. Reading these words is not an accident. It is an affirmation by the same grace.

All of that sounds like a bunch of words and of course, it is. Word symbols cannot prove anything or transmit anything to anyone. If, upon their reading, an apparent spiritual transformation takes place in a reader, it is because the reader is ripe, with a mind that is empty enough or exhausted enough to embrace a radical new “over standing”. Ironically, it has little to do with the “worthiness” of the one so blessed.

Unbeknownst to me, I was in such a state of ripeness when I walked through the Wizard’s bedroom in 2006 and caught a glimpse of an open picture book with large type on a side table. It contained quotes and pictures of the venerated Indian sage,

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Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. I stopped and read a line or two. I flipped the page and read another. Three or four pages into it I had a meltdown. Tears streamed down my face. The knot in my solar plexus (that had been there for so long without even being noticed) unclenched. I suddenly, irrevocably realized I was not a separate individual with a personal consciousness that “belonged” to me (residing between my ears) but rather, an underlying awareness that was now somehow perceivable. I had been blessed by grace with an awakening I was not even looking for. In that moment there was joy, grief and relief. I realized that eternity is here and *Now*; a deathless reality. What joy! But to experience that Truth, I had died to myself as a “real” i.e. “separate” person that should be taken seriously. All of my prior striving for happiness, primarily through my relationships with women, I realized had been completely unnecessary. And with that realization, a huge burden was lifted. There was nothing I needed to do, learn or gain. I had come home to my Self. I intuited or perhaps better said – had the “felt sense” of the immense sanctuary that is nothingness.

As the tears of ecstasy flowed down my face, I could immediately sense that a veil of illusion that kept me out of the flow of life was lifted. For the first time, there was tacit realization that the seat of awareness was not between my ears but rather infused my physical form which merely borrowed its sentience from “that” ocean of sentience. Simple Being was awareness itself – timeless, formless and without beginning or end. I was, for lack of an even more exuberant description (I would use if I had it), “God” itself, an impersonal, nameless, eternal reality.

Curiously, tears of grief streamed down as well- as though I were attending the funeral of my very best friend – and that friend was me, Trip. That man who had tried so valiantly to always do the right thing, who had suffered so much despite his noble intentions, that beautiful man was mortally wounded. I would like to say dead but that has taken some time. Crucially, in that very moment, the arch of my life shifted from one of doing to one of Being. With that paradigm shift has come a causeless, priceless joy that

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inhabits the headless heart any time it is given attention. This resplendent joy is available to anyone regardless of their station in life, intellect, or physical condition. Why, once exposed, some go on to investigate this possibility and others do not, is a great Mystery. In my case, the clean simple words of wisdom expressed by Ramana Maharshi exquisitely mirrored my true Self. For that I am eternally grateful. And while I do venerate Ramana Maharshi as the ultimate example of what an ordinary man can be, I do not worship or deify him. We are equals. He is an immaculate mirror of my true Self.

What happened to me is extraordinary only by the smallest of degrees. All of us have shared a similar taste. Some get it on psychedelic drugs or through near death experiences or by being “in the zone” or in moments of breathtaking exhilaration or in Satsang with a true teacher or every night in dreamless sleep. What makes the pivotal spiritual experience unique is that it “sticks”. We simply reach a point of ripeness where we are ready to surrender our individuated personhood for the joy of Being.

As powerful as my experience was, it was too incredible to be believed. My mind could not contain it. No death!? God is everywhere and this is heaven? There is no time or space, just simple Being? To own all of that through my heart as direct experience unsheathed by thoughts requires a still mind. And that would require the answering of my many doubts and questions by an established mentor or sage. For my path, as it turned out, was that of wisdom, Jnana, and my brain was not going to take a knee to my heart on the strength of a teaching, a guru, religion or God itself without the satisfaction of every last answer to every conceivable question. For the next five years I would be blessed with a spiritual enlightening sojourn of supreme quality that unfolded without having to lift a finger. This is the nature of grace. So beautiful!

Immediately following my spiritual experience, my friend, John Troy aka “The Wizard,” emerged as my spiritual pal and mentor who had already been my friend for 15 years! I had not had “the

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ears to hear” what he’d been sharing all along, and he, in his wisdom, had not pushed any teaching on me. He simply shared freely with me and affirmed my realization.

At this point, no pushing was required. If you have seen the movie “The Matrix” where the main character is strapped in a chair and absorbing life threatening doses of downloaded kung fu expertise through direct stimulation of his brain, you might appreciate the comment, “he’s a machine”. With the possibility of heaven on earth at hand, I paid attention to the answers to my every question as though my life depended on it - and not just once. I recognized that assimilation of Truth would take time, and would need to penetrate to the core. This would require attention to repetition and so I listened with rapt attention to the same answer 100 times.

I yearned to own every shred of wisdom and experience contained within the corporeal form of a teacher. Wouldn’t you if immortality and heaven on earth were the payoff? That yearning was so intense that it quickly drew to me the grand nephew of Ramana Maharshi for additional affirmation.

As a grand nephew, V. Ganesan had been raised near Ramana Maharshi himself, had a graduate degree in philosophy, spent a lifetime caring for the old devotees of his great uncle and with modern sages, and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of spiritual nomenclature he was happy to download into me on a silver platter. I sucked it up.. Now, not only had I the direct wisdom of my wizard mentor, but also the wisdom of the ages as accurately recollected by this second skilful teacher, who would say, “here is what Christ said about your question,” and “here is what Buddha said,” and “here is what Ramana said” and “here is what the Japanese grand Zen master I met in 1957 said.” And not only that, but I was given the behind the scenes look into Ramana Maharshi’s ordinary life, the never before shared stories of compassion and transformation that took place between the venerated sage and those in his company, some of whom were animals!

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Taking a breather from my spiritual tutoring and from a day job as a real estate developer, I took up my long lost friend's invitation to attend the epic artists' festival in the desert known as *Burningman*. This looked like a serious event, with harsh conditions in the middle of nowhere, with a challenge and opportunity to recreate myself any way that I desired. I was called to conduct an experiment in unconditional love. The moment I hit the ground, I was to assume my own divinity and the divinity of everyone I met – not as a concept but as an already accomplished fact. Furthermore, I would assume that everyone that I met was worthy of unconditional love, without resorting to the instantaneous judgments and reciprocity that had been my habit based on initial appearances. I was able to be both of those Truths wall-to-wall throughout what turned out to be one of the most mind blowing events of my life and I lived on a cloud for two months afterward. While the magic of that event faded, and I found myself back in the grind of my daily existence as a single householder with children, the yearning for being remained. It was clear now something had truly shifted.

Shortly after returning from Burningman, John Troy arranged for a small troupe to visit Tiruvannamalai, India and Arunachala, its "sacred" mountain. Ramana Maharshi was devoted to the mountain, Arunachala, and always referred to it as Shiva, the formless Self; the same formless Self that was my revelation. As you might expect, my expectations for this trip were high as I was expecting nothing short of a Wizard of Oz journey into a magical land resulting in my total, permanent transformation.

Synchronicity enjoined us the entire journey. We arrived at our hotel with just enough time to freshen up before joining many thousands of pilgrims in the full moon circumambulation of this sacred mountain. Oh my God! There were people growing out of the street with fifth stage symptoms of diseases we eradicated in this country thirty years ago. There were parentless dirty street urchins running around oxcarts and monkeys and sacred cows. Sannyasins were walking around in saffron robes blessing car fenders with potions.

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On top of Arunachala, monks, surrounded by scores of monkeys, were igniting a giant cauldron of clarified butter or ghee into a sacred blaze for all to see. The feeling was of happiness and tranquillity. I was awestruck. Here, a population of people I had pitied for their poverty was enjoying more genuine happiness than many Americans back home, besotted by their material goods.

The next day, we were taken by Ganesan into the bowels of the oldest temple in India, ceilings blackened with thick crusts of incense smoke accumulated over three millennia of rituals and men in loin cloths tending fires in ancient subterranean caverns. Old friends were encountered in town; a beloved sage magically appeared on the back of a motorcycle at the last possible opportunity. Love songs of devotion were sung at the edge of a tranquil reflecting pond while a kingfisher delighted us with his plumage. Everything unfolded effortlessly; all in homage to the icon of the formless Self, Shiva.

I set off to on a trek up Arunachala to its peak, where the cauldron sat atop the sacred hill. I had the gall to ask for more than I had already been given. I asked that a sign be given so that I would know for sure that I am being that which the mountain stood for. Two things then transpired. A stone from a cave that had sheltered the young Ramana Maharshi was picked up and given to me by our guide – a stone I had been quietly desiring but unwilling to take for myself. As we left the cave a large boulder of spiritual significance to the natives, “Shiva’s Foot” was pointed out by our guide. As we neared the top a large bird could be seen soaring directly above this stone. I had never seen such a bird and was excited to learn from my guide that it was an eagle – only the second species of eagle I had ever seen. I turned to my companion, Paula, who was thirty yards below and shouted to her to look up at the eagle. At the moment we turned our attention to this eagle it stopped in mid flight and beat its wings six or eight times – holding its position stationary in stillness during flight like a hummingbird. I was astonished. I did not think any other bird could accomplish this feat. This was yet another sign in a sea of synchronicity.

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What's important to convey about this sojourn, however, is not that what happened was in itself so off the charts crazy wild cool that I had no choice but be blown away. No, it illustrates that the ordinary is transformed by the alchemy of Faith into the extraordinary. Not faith in a storyline, belief system or anything in particular. Faith in the Mystery that all is perfect and you are the theatre in which everything naturally occurs. When you are ready to re-cognize the non-physical reality that you are in free fall, the world of form confirms it for you everywhere.

Not long after our return from India, my friend, the Wizard, was invited to a return appearance on a local FM radio station's program on spirituality called *Touchstone*. As it turned out, the show's host, Paul Nagy was ready to let his role go and I asked to take his place and the Wizard was happy to join me. For the next three years I would have the amazing grace of conversations with avant-garde sages from around the world in all walks of life. I was surprised that the established, largely unknown sages of our time would agree to have a conversation with me, a total spiritual newbie, on a micro power FM station with a three mile radius, (albeit simulcast on the web), simply on the strength of an invitation by the Wizard. But there it was and I was not resisting!

Each week I would study the different sages' books and pore over their web sites, videos and blogs; anything I could get my hands on. I would celebrate their unique gifts, share their masterly elocution, probe them over any inconsistencies, and ask them for the spiritual solutions to my own dilemmas. Each and every time I was surprised by their complete and nuanced grasp of this non-dual reality and by their unique talents for expressing it. One, Francis Lucille, had the grandfatherly sweetness of a fine wine mellowed with age. Another, Rupert Spira for example, possessed an unrivalled capacity to vivisect this dimensionless moment of now that would take you to and through the very door of presence. The younger sages such as Jeff Foster, Benjamin Smythe, Bentinho Massaro, Morgan Carraway, Lisa Cairns, Ilona and others were fabulously in touch with the intimacy of "suchness" this "no-thing" this *Now*. Maren Springsteen was like a sweet icing

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on the cake. Each one had a collection of pointer gems to share – the Truth processed through their unique experience. I began to have much greater respect for my ordinary fellow friends.

Gradually, over time, the circumspection offered by so many avant-garde sages that I had not known, was supreme validation of the unbelievable reality that had been unveiled. I learned that an idea I had about Ramana Maharshi as a singular phenomena taking place once in a millennia was far more commonplace than I could have imagined. Not only that, there were many people in my local community so blessed. As a matter of fact, *Now*, everyone I look upon is God in a different mask.

Being brought to tears by gratitude is no longer the rare event it once was. I am grateful to all the avant-garde sages we were not able to include in this book – I truly feel that all of them were worthy of inclusion. I am grateful to WCOM radio for providing a free platform for sharing that transformed my life. There is much gratitude for the focused attention that has been poured on me by my mentors and by those who continue to mentor me on the pages of Facebook and at our gatherings. I must also thank all of the women in my life, who have helped to grow, and my friends, who put up with my ranting at all the potlucks and parties. I just can't seem to contain my excitement about this deathless reality!

This is what it all boils down to. The whole spiritual exercise is simply meant to relax the mind and I-thought so that it will take a back seat to the headless heart of sentience and allow life directly without the filters of judgment or veneer of words. When we live this way, or shall we say allow life to live us that way, ordinary life becomes extraordinary and divine. It's that simple.

I inevitably take the opportunity to acknowledge each and every one as the perfect divinity One already is. And every one totally gets it on some level. They may not have had the pretty words I have learned to express it, but each in their way is immediately ready to accept their inherent divinity. And why is that? All of us already intuit it at the deepest level. It is our condition at birth and

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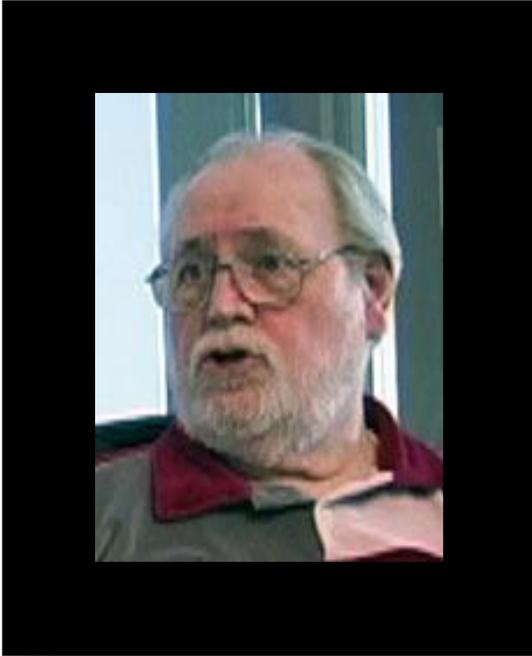
it is still our condition underneath the garbage of all our learned ignorance. Coming into our spiritual fullness is not a finding of something new. It is a deconstruction and excavation job. Nothing brings me greater pleasure than to look through the bodily armour of another to witness the joyous Truth that we share together. It is the rush of God seeing God; Darshan. Nothing compares with this joy of sharing. Truly we are One. Let us share. Let us celebrate!

It is my sincere joy to share with you these intimate conversations I had with so many avant-garde sages that affirmed this Truth so profoundly for me. May you have the ears to hear and eyes to see and allow all the words and my storyline to fall away as you rest in the same nameless Truth that found me; our Self.

There is a link beneath each sage to their web site and a microphone that with a touch you may listen to the unedited conversation exactly as it occurred.

Your true friend,

Trip Overholt



[A. Ramana](http://www.aham.com/)

<http://www.aham.com/>

WIZARD: I've known about AHAM for several years now, and it was through AHAM that I met Ganesan that took me on another journey or sojourn in my life lessons. And what I saw in Asheboro at AHAM were folks who were coming from a religious background, and they'd gotten about as far as you can get in organized religion before it's an open field game, what they call the pathless path. And AHAM is a translation, a place of translation, where one translates from solely the "I am the body idea", to open up to "I am not the body idea". And they had techniques,

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meditation techniques and they have periods of practice where they practice together.

And if you go on their website at AHAM, you can just Google AHAM and you'll see their website. Go to the experience page, and on the experience page there's a feeling meditation, and a self inquiry meditation <http://www.aham.com/usa/sharing/flash/self-inquiry/index.html>, and they're both just beautiful. I would encourage everyone to go through both of those for just a little taste, or an actual experience, of what AHAM is communicating through their programs. And it's like a school of sorts, and not many people locally know about it, but it is there, tucked away in the woods. When Ganesan comes to North Carolina, he usually bases out of AHAM, they have a nice little retreat that they offer to him. Nice.

TRIP: I was on there today looking around, and I noticed that of course the folks at AHAM are particularly fond of Ramana Maharshi as we are, but they also subscribe to the teachings of Jesus, and also Buddha, other teachers. They aren't apostles or something for one particular teaching. Which makes them attractive to me, I like that.

WIZARD: Inclusive.

TRIP: While we're waiting for A. Ramana to call, one of the things that I wanted to say that has been really meaningful in my life, and I would urge other people if they can make it happen, or if it can happen to them that would be a great blessing, is the whole wiser elder relationship that I have with you, Wizard, and also I would enjoy with A. Ramana, and I'm sure that people at AHAM enjoy with A. Ramana, and also with Ganesan and others.

I did have a wonderful relationship with a grandmother who passed away at the age of 102. She was living far away, so there were only brief opportunities to get her wisdom. But I've noticed something about the American culture, and that's that we don't make it easy for elder wise folks and younger folks to kind of intermingle and to get that Wisdom.

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WIZARD: Elders in our society have been positioned in the minds of folks in rocking chairs, or in the care givers' place. They should be repositioned. There's a wisdom that can come with age, and it's not guaranteed, but wisdom when you run your course in the world, then what's left is the pursuit of Wisdom, or self realization, Self understanding. And you can go to a foreign country with no maps, or no anything, and bump yourself around, but you're not likely to find the good museums and things. So if you're someone that can point out a few pointers, you have Wisdom to share. For my own self it's been wonderful to have mentors, especially spiritual mentors in life, not a spiritual mentor that'll talk down to you, but one that will talk straight with you on a level of equality, and you feel the sincerity of it. The best are the ones that come naturally in the flow of life.

TRIP: We've got a wiser elder on the line; let me pick him up right now. A. Ramana? Are you there?

A. RAMANA: Yes.

TRIP: All right.

WIZARD: Hello, Ramana.

A. RAMANA: Hello.

TRIP: Thanks for joining us today; it's good to have you.

A. RAMANA: Good to be with you.

TRIP: A. Ramana, I know that you're a fantastic instructor, and we're right on the same page with you with the teachings, but I also know that you're an awakened person, and there are not all that many awakened people walking around. So I thought it would be more interesting for me today to tap into what that really kind of feels like in your moment to moment experience. And I don't really have a big game plan here on doing that, but among the things that I thought we might do today was that maybe you

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might lead a centering exercise. I noticed on the website that's something that AHAM does and the purpose of that I think is to get into the kind of thoughtlessness that is a precursor to peace. And I would love to have you do that, because I could probably use my own self induced centering on a daily basis, probably don't get enough of that. Would you be interested in doing that today?

A. RAMANA: All right. If that would be beneficial, I'll be happy to.

TRIP: All right, we could either start with that, or I've got some questions for you, whatever you prefer.

A. RAMANA: Well let's start with it.

TRIP: All right.

A. RAMANA: Okay, if there's anyone or whoever is on the call, to just take a moment, [Silence] give your attention to the fact of your own existence. Your own existence is in the sense of I, the sense of I itself is before anything else is, but even prior to the sense of I is the pure awareness that we all actually are.

Now this pure awareness has no sense of I, but the sense of I will give us the ability to withdraw our attention into the stillness and silence of the pure awareness, the *I am* that we are. *I am* is before even the sense of "I" is. The sense of "I" rises out of the *I am*. So just being aware that you are, not I am this, or I am that, simply *I am*.

Consciousness is this *I am*, pure awareness is this *I am*. And this *I am* or pure consciousness is before anything else is, and without this pure awareness nothing else would be. [Silence] Or out of this pure awareness rises the sense of I, and the sense of I is what gives note and gives rise to all other things as this or that. Things do not call attention to themselves; it is we that call attention to things. We say things exist, things do not say that they exist. So simply see this.

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And now let go into the simple *I am* feeling. Feel *I am*, without there being an “I” that is feeling it. [Silence] This *I am* is stillness, it is silence, and it is pure being. [Silence] This *I am* is the same *I am* that is recorded in scripture when Moses was on Mount Sinai, realizing *I am* that *I am*. Moses' realization was that the *I am* that is pure being or God, the Supreme Being, is not different from the *I am* of the self we all are. See this and know this for yourself. Feel it right now in this moment just like Moses felt it 5,000 or so years ago. It is not different even now as it was in Moses' time. [Silence]

This is the place of peace, freedom, and true joy, the very Self that we all are.

[Long Silence]

WIZARD: We're speechless on the radio.

TRIP: We just had a verboten empty space lasting 10 or 12 seconds [Laughs]. We were just joking about dead space on the radio, you know, like in mainstream radio that's a no-no, because people flip through the dial and think there was nothing on there, and then you lose a listener or something like that [Laughter]. We actually do have a silence, like stillness adverse culture, would you gentlemen not agree with that? It's kind of a novel concept in America, we like a lot of noise and action.

I watch what the kids are being given to watch on television, because my kids come home, and now the images that are presented to the mind are chopped up into these little microsecond images, boom, boom, boom, boom. This is what the watch kids now, if they don't get that they're not stimulated. So thank you, Ramana, for helping us get back into the zone here.

A. RAMANA: Okay.

WIZARD: What's the best way to stay?

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A. RAMANA: The best way to stay in this?

WIZARD: Yes.

A. RAMANA: Very simply is again to start with your own sense of “I”. The sense of “I” is prior to anything that the “I” is aware of. Whatever is going on in one's life that might be of a, let's say, perhaps of an upsetting, fearful, worrisome nature, they cannot have this fearful worrisome upsetting nature without the sense of “I” that has the upset, whatever the upset might be. It doesn't necessarily have to be upset; it can be a pleasant experience as well. Every experience requires first the sense of “I” that is having the experience.

So we can take a hold of our own attention by simply giving notice to the sense of “I”, then holding on to the sense of “I” with one's attention, withdraw the sense of “I” inward back to the point from which the sense of “I” takes rise. There is stillness and silence here, prior to the sense of “I”, so then one can just enter into, or my teacher Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi used to say dive, dive into this sense of awareness, this stillness and silence of pure being, and just rest there, remain there. In fact what's very beneficial, if one can do so, is to remain in it for the rest of one's life, that's where I live *Now*. Okay.

TRIP: Yes. I've got some questions for you Ramana, but before I get to kind of the ego driven, well I don't know if they're ego driven questions, or questions that come up out of my persona. But I think that very first time that someone experiences this awakening to this ever present, I call it witnessing awareness, that the very first time that happens you become aware there's something so much greater than yourself, and this incredible joy being able to release all of this tension that you have around being who you are as a small identified person. What was it like for you the first time that you had that awakening experience? I mean, did it bring you to tears, or how did that experience go down for you?

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A. RAMANA: Well the very first time that I had it I was approximately five years old, and I had undergone a very serious accident. A scalding pot of boiling water inadvertently dropped or fell, was knocked into my lap. I had very serious burns. And I lived in a very small city, a very small town actually, in east Texas called Grand Saline. And that's where my parents were living; this is during the depression years. And there was no hospital, and there was only an itinerate doctor, and he was away from his office. Boys had gone on their bicycles rapidly into town and found a note on his door that he was out making house calls. So the doctor was not available.

They returned home to where we lived, and it was kind of out in a rural area, not too far from town, about five miles. This is a very small town. And I was screaming, and my mother was beside herself, as was my father who happened to be there too because my father was working nights at that time in the salt mines in Grant Saline. And someone, one of the neighbors, suggested that there was a hermit living back in the woods, further back into the woods, and we lived right on the edge of the woods. And he was kind of held in suspicion in the town; many people did not know how to take him so to speak. And he was a loner, a hermit, and they said that the rumor was that he had powers and ability to take the heat out of fire, my mother used to tell the story after this happened. And they said, "Would you like us to go and get him, maybe he could do something?" And my mother said, "Yes, anything, anything".

So they went back into the woods, they called him Uncle Billy. And they went back and brought Uncle Billy to my bedside. And without ever speaking a word, he just motioned everyone out. We lived in a tent back in those days; we were squatters, with the permission to place our tent on this property by the owner. We were very poor. And he just motioned everyone out of the tent, sat down on a box beside the cot on which I was lying. I was not very still, but he placed one hand, his right hand, on my chest, and his left hand about an inch above the burn on my left leg, and began to move his hand up and down, back and forth, not touching me but

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above the burn. My leg was a solid blister. And whispered, I don't know what, I can't remember, in my ear, and was murmuring perhaps a prayer, or a mantra, I'm not sure. And then just instantly I was out of the body, I was fully aware, but I was free of the body. And in that instant, I was aware of my oneness with everything in the room, with him, with everything, I was fully aware of it. I cannot really put it into words other than there were no boundaries between me, the awareness actually being and everything around me.

And I lived in that state for a few years after that, I lost it I guess two or three, maybe four years I'm not sure exactly after that. But I was able to stay in this awareness much of the time, when I was a child I couldn't describe it to anyone, I was not able to explain it to anyone. A time or two, I would go back into the woods and see Uncle Billy, but he didn't have anything to say, he just looked at me and smiled, I would look at him and smile. It was like we both understood what was going on without any words being spoken.

Now each time I would go to the doctor after that, we did see the doctor sometime after that, and I was bandaged and all that. And when I would go, the only way that they were able to treat me in those days was just bandages. When I would go back to see the doctor about every other day for a long time, when he would take the bandages off, they would be stuck to my leg, and then I would know that I was back in the body. But I was able to otherwise stay in this awareness, remain as the awareness prior to the body. And as the healing happened eventually, I used to lie out on the ground, it was a place, I had sort of a favorite spot, and I would lie out between two big trees that had an incline, and I'd lie on that incline, a gradual incline, and just look up at the sky, and at the trees, and at the birds, and the squirrels. And I would feel my oneness with all of nature, no separateness, no difference. Peace and a tranquility that could not even be described or explained. No different than what it says in the bible about the peace that passes all understanding. And that's where I live *Now*.

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TRIP: Wow, I didn't expect to get such a wonderful story. That's fantastic.

WIZARD: It's beautiful, yes.

TRIP: I hope that gives listeners a sense of it, and certainly I certainly get it. That was fantastic. You were given, well let me ask you another question, Arunachala is the sacred mountain in Tiruvannamalai, and it's considered one of the most sacred places in India, and there's an ancient temple there in the town, and pilgrims circumambulate it once a month. I visited there once with the Wizard, and it was so easy to experience the sacred in that place, it was just palpably sacred. And my question for both of you is what is it that makes certain places and things seemingly more sacred or so sacred, more sacred it seems than others, when we know that everything is sacred even the ordinary is sacred. Why is it that we are able to experience the sacred in certain places and things so readily, and not in others? What is it about those places?

Then finally, given that why should we pay homage to a specific place, a specific sacred place? Is it useful to us to do that, or is more useful to see the sacred in everything all the time? I'll open that up to my two resident wizards here.

WIZARD: You want me to take a stab at it?

TRIP: All right, go ahead.

WIZARD: The driving volition behind the perception of divinity is Faith. So when so many people for so many thousands of years bring their Faith to a particular place, it quickens the Shakti, or the form to break open to peace. It's like the form is the mother and you go there and the form itself puts you into the heart of the father. And the mountain represents Shiva, that formless aspect that Ramana was enticing us to join in.

And it's a symbol that's solid, it's immovable, it's got all the metaphors about it, it embraces the home. Vision transcends the

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concept into a real icon for Shiva, the formless in the silence. [Silence] When Jesus was walking around and the lady tugged on his robe and felt healed, and she was laying praise on Jesus for the healing, Jesus says that it's not I but thy own faith that is the healing power. [Silence]

So I noticed it, too, when I'm there, the ease in which to... it's like being in a lock, like in the Panama Canal, and you're in the upper manmade lake, and it's a little restrictive, and you get into even a little more restrictive thing on the lock. And the doors close on the lock and the water lets out, then the locks open, and you're seamless with the sea. And that's kind of how it feels at Arunachala for me.

A. RAMANA: Yes, I just returned a month or so ago. Every year our group or someone from our association goes to Tiruvannamalai the city, the township, actually Tiruvannamalai is Tamil. It's the Tamil word for the Sanskrit Arunachala; they mean the same thing basically. And we also have a center there, we've had it about eight or nine years, and I'm very happy to say the consciousness, the presence, is very pronounced and felt in our center there, in our sanctuary, people comment on it when they come and visit us where we give programs where I receive people, and we meditate together in Satsang and conscious company.

The hill has a very special place in my heart, in fact I had conferred on me the name, the A in Ramana also stands for Arunachala, it used to be Aham, but Ganesan gave me the name of Arunachala about six or eight years ago. So I've just accepted it, I don't actually use it, but sometimes do, people call me that occasionally, but it's a meditation in itself, it's like a mantra. When you give attention to Arunachala, as we're doing right now, just giving our attention to it by thinking it, considering it, that in itself will quicken to those who consider it as a holy place, which it is. Bhagavan Ramana called it the center of the universe, the holiest place on Earth, the holiest place in the universe, according to Bhagavan Ramana. It is the stillness and silence, and it represents

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Shiva, as John just said, or... what name should I use, the Wizard [Laughs]?

WIZARD: One of my gurus told me when I asked for a spiritual name, he said love is more gracious than a name, and doesn't need one [Laughter]. So I've been called all kinds of things.

A. RAMANA: Yes, I'm the same. I can understand that.

WIZARD: Probably rascal more than anything.

A. RAMANA: [Laughs] But the presence that Arunachala is, when one is a devotee of God, and recognizes that Arunachala represents the manifestation, the physical manifestation of Lord Shiva, of the triune aspect of God, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva in the Hindu system, that if one recognizes Arunachala and just approaches the hill, goes up on the hill, walks up on the hill, the mind stops, thoughts cease.

WIZARD: It does.

A. RAMANA: Yes, it does. Thoughts literally cease. And one can abide in the thoughtless pure awareness of the Self; of *I am*, just by nothing more than considering Arunachala, or approaching Arunachala with an attitude of devotion. It will definitely do that. So we urge anyone who is interested to visit Arunachala at the ashram of Bhagavan Ramana, or our ashram.

TRIP: What I find fascinating are these sort of shades of grey levels of consciousness that exist that I personally had no understanding of, I experienced them at Arunachala in the company of conscious others, walking around the mountain. It was an unbelievable experience. It was off the charts, it was a kind of peace.

One of the things that I wanted to ask you two about, which I thought you might have in common, and it's just a little practical thing, but I know you've had some health challenges, Ramana, and

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the Wizard has an unbelievable like array. My God [Laughs]. He's got more going on than you... oh my gosh, kidneys, livers, backs, I mean he's got a table top full of stuff that he does, it's just unbelievable. But my question for the two of you and you can answer this any way you want is that I know that the Wizard doesn't have a normal kind of day where he's awake all day, and then he goes to bed, like I do, and gets refreshed by sleeping. He actually has a kind of transcendental meditation that he does often all night long that for the Wizard is just as restful as or more restful than sleep. And I wanted to know maybe the two of you could comment on that, because a lot of people including myself as we begin to age, sleeping isn't necessarily as restful as it used to be. And perhaps there's another way for people to be refreshed. Do you have anything you want to offer on that?

WIZARD: For myself, when I lay down I get dreamy, it's like stuff rolls up to my head, and if I'm vertical and going to the dreamless sleep state, but yet one is still aware through that; it's just as good if not better than horizontal sleep. It's extremely peaceful and the time just zips. It's nice.

TRIP: How about you, Ramana?

A. RAMANA: Well, it's kind of interesting. Since returning from India this time I have not slept in my bed. I have a very comfortable and large reclining chair, and I just like my recliner, it's comfortable. And for whatever, I don't know a particular reason for it; I really don't sleep much anymore. I do and I don't. I sleep when I feel like it. My schedule now is much different than it used to be.

Now back in the early days of AHAM, when Elizabeth and I worked in putting together AHAM, serving people, who came here, and she did most of that kind of work, but my work was just the consciousness aspect of it. And I used to work on the computer about eight hours a day, and writing the manuals, and the training material and so forth for our conscious curriculum that we offer here, in how to live, how to awaken into the pure awareness of

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being, and then from a functional point of view, how to live in the world but not of the world.

WIZARD: Is this where your buddy system cuts in?

A. RAMANA: Well, yes, our buddy system has to do with our programs; our entry level program is what we call ISIT, which is an acronym for Intensive Self Inquiry Training. We used to do it on a weekend, but it can't be done, it becomes just only intellectual then, to bring it more into an experiential existential perspective, we offer it now on an eight-day full week seminar. Then after the person takes the classroom instruction, which is retreat and classroom work, and time free to contemplate what the teaching itself is about, and then there is an eight-week home study program following that. With that we have advanced graduates who we assign as a guide to each participant, a person has a buddy to be with them, to be with them to guide them, assist them in the using of the process, and the abiding in the pure awareness of being, and make sure a person is able and capable of abiding in the teaching and in the awareness itself, that's what our buddy system is about.

Then we've also got, and extended beyond that, is what we call our sponsorship program. Now that one I tailored, I borrowed, if you will from the 12 Step program, Alcoholics and narcotics, etc., Anonymous. And it's just the aspect of it having to do with the buddy aspect of it, the sponsorship aspect of it.

It came to me a number of years ago that the real addiction is addiction to the body mind or to the mind, and to thinking, to thought. If one did not have addiction to the body mind and to thought, they could easily be free of addictions from a chemical point of view.

WIZARD: Yes.

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A. RAMANA: So the first addiction is body mind addiction, it is the meditation of a separate self-identity. When one awakens, one realizes that in fact we are not actually human beings, we are divine beings. No different than the master Jesus, or Buddha, or Krishna. And we are living momentarily, temporarily, as human beings, the highest expression of nature, of the animal world of nature. The highest one being an animal, or being an animal is being a human, the human animal, so to speak. And when we awaken to the true nature of being, we recognize that we're divine, that we are God dwelling as humans. God dwells in us as us, and actually is us, we're just playing the role of the name and form that we're identified with at any given time. And when we awaken to the Self that we really are, we can recognize that this character role that we are identified with is really the cause of our suffering, because we're identified with the body and the mind incorrectly taking them to be who and what we are. But in Truth we're spiritual beings, Christ if you will, Buddha if you will, that's who and what we actually are. So the process is to awaken to who and what we are, and abide in this awakened awareness of the Self, the very Self, that in Truth is what we are. Maybe I've gone too far off for you.

WIZARD: No, beautifully said. That just flowed right in.

TRIP: That was excellent. I've got one more question here; this is my one hardball question. It's not really a hardball question, but I want you to maybe look into the potentially deeper aspect of my question, maybe beyond sort of the obvious surface answer, which I think I've already got. And it's this, for those who have practiced self inquiry, and the Wizard here says that everyone that realizes the Truth of themselves must practice self inquiry.

WIZARD: Well, to get to know yourself, your intention is to know yourself, otherwise... [Laughs]

TRIP: Exactly. So those who are awakened to this Truth that you so eloquently just spoke, must practice self inquiry, and AHAM is rightfully attentive to Self inquiry in the process, and guiding

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people through that process. For someone that has gone through that process, either through AHAM or just naturally on their own, or what have you, and has arrived at a state of awareness and wakefulness, perhaps not permanently abiding in their true Beingness, but significantly so. Is there a time, Ramana, when that process of Self inquiry, and I'll use the word should with quotes around it, but "should" or could be let go into a sort of deeper faith where one no longer allows one's self to sort of revisit this once useful process of a kind of verbalized self inquiry or what have you, to a place where you just going to put all that down and just say, you know what, I'm done, I'm finished. I've let it go. How do you feel about that, that idea of stopping yourself at some point from engaging in sort of that practice of self inquiry and simply acknowledging to yourself that you're finished, you're done, you know, don't even go there, stop the thought?

A. RAMANA: Our teaching in AHAM brings one to that place if they stay with the inquiry, that's the whole purpose of inquiry, that's the intention is to awaken to the true nature of the Being that we actually are. And the real process is to every time a thought arises, which comes up from the conditioned mind, it's the conditioning of the mind that keeps one identified with the body, and with the world of time and space. And when one withdraws attention into the pure awareness, eventually staying in the pure awareness constantly, consistently returning attention into the pure awareness and remaining in the pure awareness, and functioning from the pure awareness of the self, the conditioned patterns of the mind eventually become neutralized. And as they become neutralized, one begins to recognize for themselves that the entire mind really is, as Bhagavan Ramana used to say, it's a bundle of thoughts, the first and primary thought being the I-thought. But all other thoughts together would comprise the "I", the sense of I, as a seeming individual, as a separate entity living in time and space, which is not what we are, we are the pure awareness, we are spirit, consciousness. And when we withdraw our attention into it, and remain in it, then the mind ultimately will dissolve leaving only the pure Being of the Self without there being a sense of "I" at all. The pure awareness has no sense of "I",

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and the body has no sense of “I”, it's the ego that is the sense of “I”, so we must transcend the ego, and awaken to and remain in the pure awareness of Being, the true nature of the very Self. Okay.

WIZARD: Jamesy had a story one time, he says a pilgrim is using a walking stick to go up the mountain, and the pilgrim goes up to the mountain and reaches its summit, comes back down. And Jamesy says, he doesn't take his stick and just throw it on the ground to say he doesn't need it anymore, he rests the stick on a tree where another pilgrim may see it and use it just as he used it, to keep it in tact.

A. RAMANA: Beautiful.

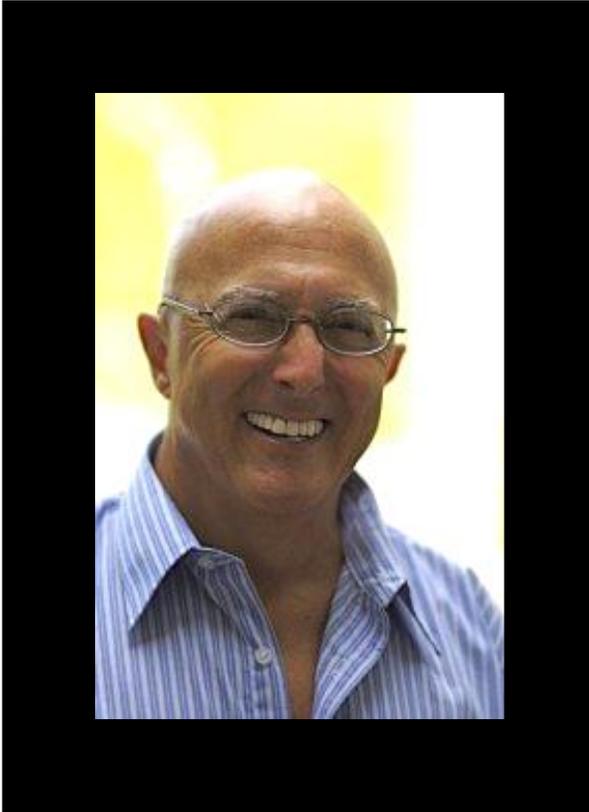
TRIP: This has been another delightful hour of conscious company for those out there listening that don't have wise elders that they have gathered around them. I hope you've enjoyed this hour and I would urge you to make that something that's a consistent presence in your life because there's nothing more delicious than conscious company. And I think nothing more important in confirming than Truth, and so, Ramana, I want to thank you so much, I've really enjoyed getting to know you, I've loved your stories today. Thank you so much for coming on and we'll see you soon.

WIZARD: Yes, thank you.

A. RAMANA: Well thank you for inviting me. Namaste.

WIZARD: Namaste.

The Late, A. Ramana, dropped the body February 15, 2010 at the foot of his beloved Arunachala.



Albert Nahmani

<http://www.albertnahmani.com/>

TRIP: Albert was born in the spiritual city of Fez, Morocco. Is that a place that's steeped in mysticism?

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ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes, all mystics there. It's known as the spiritual capital of Morocco, that's where Kings like to be buried there because of that spirituality.

TRIP: In 1987 after decades of self-inquiry, meditation, and spiritual group dialogues, Albert's search for who or what he was dissolved when he experienced the absolute reality known in Buddhism as the "Clear Light of Dawn", and in Kabala as "Beyond the Barrier". Early in his search, Albert was guided by the teachings of J Krishnamurti, and later by Murshid James Mackie, a follower of Meher Baba, and the founder of Sufism Reoriented.

Through his book, *What Am I*, and a variety of other means, Albert Nahmani shares his understanding of consciousness and self-realization in the tradition of nonduality and Kabala.

Welcome, Albert.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Thank you.

TRIP: I'm curious. How does your sharing currently manifest? It appears that you've got a fair number of folks that enjoy dialogues with you of various types.

WIZARD: I would like to comment on the title, *What Am I*, and how that trumps, *Who am I*. Because *Who am I*, which is self-inquiry that was expounded upon by Ramana Maharshi from the Ribhu Gita, tends to insinuate there might be a more subtle personality in the *who*. And *what* is a more impersonal and formless that trumps the *who*. And I don't know about the translation in Southern Indian language into the *who*, but I think *what* trumps *who*.

TRIP: Yes, Albert, it's interesting, almost everyone takes their cue from Ramana Maharshi, or whatever that tradition, that Advaita tradition is, and it's all about *who am I*. We have AHAM here, which is a local Ashram in North Carolina, that teaches self-inquiry, and they use the *who am I*, but very few people ask the

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question *what am I*. Is that something that you picked up from somewhere else?

ALBERT NAHMANI: I'm always careful of how the words keep sneaking into our awareness. We are so conditioned to use words without realizing what they imply in some ways, because we just were made that way. So that the question, *what am I*, exactly brings about the forefront, not to make the assumption that there is a *who*, because *who am I* implies immediately without us even being aware of it, that there is a *who*. And so putting that into question, through the changing of the words *who* to *what*, opens up if you would, brings about the question as to whether there is such a thing as a *who*.

WIZARD: I think it's a brilliant edification.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes, John. And like you said, it's best to bring the talk to the present, to *what* we are here, *Now*, and the small talk usually likes to piggyback on that. And I'm just constantly redressing for myself, it's amazing how much, even after all this time, I find myself saying words that, I do not mean that by those words, but there they are, I'm being embraced with them, like the *me*, and *I*, and all that nomenclature.

TRIP: Here are some words I wanted you to maybe clarify, and I don't know, what the heck we've got an hour or so [Laughs]. We have a small window to get into the fine points here. But whether or not it's possible to experience absolute reality has been talked about on our program several times, and some people say there's no such thing as an enlightenment experience. Others will say that what the mind can report on is not it. Now in your own write up of yourself, in your own bio, you talked about you experienced the absolute reality known in Buddhism as the clear light of dawn, and you went into great detail explaining what that experience was like. And also I noticed in one of the few videos I was also able to watch, somebody asked you about this state that you abide in and you said, well it's not a state, it's more like an experience. So where do you come down on this experience of enlightenment?

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ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes. Again those are the words that each one of us will interpret in their own way, depending on what they mean by those words. And that's what to be careful of. And I will always fail in doing so; however, we will try to. This absolute reality, I call it an experience only because it shows that it has not left me, this body vessel. It seems to have been embedded into the body cells, body mind cells, if there is such a thing. I've waited for many, many years to see what this experience was going to bring about, and by looking back we can see it has been changing slowly and gradually, one's perception of the world and of the *me*.

I'm sure I'm not answering your question but...

TRIP: No, that's fine; you did a good job answering my question. I've got a follow up which you've now ...

WIZARD: The constant is *Now*.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes. I'd like to say that the absolute reality is this here, *Now*. And that's the best I can do on that in some ways, because the more you say it, the further away you get from this. And this being all that is being experienced right *Now*, at this moment, without a concept of separation of the *me*, of this.

WIZARD: And *Now, by itself*, doesn't have any concepts.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's right, John.

TRIP: I like the answer that you gave someone who asked you a question which is almost the question that anybody would want to ask a spiritual teacher and the question was: how do I abide as that? [Laughing]

ALBERT NAHMANI: Like a bicycle ride.

TRIP: And you had a good answer because you took them down the typical way it goes down. It would be interesting if you can pull that out of your hat again, share what's the typical way that

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one ultimately ends up as that. There's a typical way that goes down, right?

ALBERT NAHMANI: Well, I really have no recall of that conversation, but if someone asks how I abide in that, I'm going to make the assumption that that person has been awakened prior to the *I-thought*, because then they would know what that means. And then I take it from that, working from that assumption.

TRIP: Well, I'll get you going here...

ALBERT NAHMANI: And therefore, one who is truly awakened in that almost knows that that question begs the question of what it is that I'm awakened. In other words, the abiding happens on its own, there is no I that is trying to understand how to abide. And that's what John calls going from within to without, once we realize that now we're slowing and gradually, after awakening, we are viewing this world not as within only, but that this is also without, outside; Seamless. That within and without is one, and there is no separation there, when that separation seemingly is in relation to us. It does so on its own, there is no doer there, and it sneaks in on you slowly and gradually through the years that affirmation, after awakening.

And what you're left with is awe of how this process is taking care of itself so gradually, so gently, so slowly, and so unbeknown to you in many ways. And one realizes that mostly when you're looking back and see you're not the same Albert you used to be in that way, if there is such a thing as Albert.

TRIP: Right. It can only be recognized in retrospect. Well you talked about how...

WIZARD: How can you remember the *Now* outside the *Now*? I mean you remember the effects, the imagery, but how could you imagine *Now* outside of *Now* when *Now* is the antithesis of imagination?

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ALBERT NAHMANI: That's right. You can't. That's why it's only in memory comparisons that one can get an idea of some shift that, in fact, being in the *Now*, the I-thought is not aware, the self not being here, the self not interfering, being set aside, the small *I*. Then all what is left is the *Now*, is this, as I'd like to call it, just simply this.

TRIP: Well you wrote about this really eloquently, I want to read it. On page two of your book, you said, "Failing to grasp the unimaginable, the mind momentarily comes to a stop for a split second where like a bee after too much nectar it remains in a daze as it merges into its absolute indescribable reality, me. And then the mind resumes its thoughts, trying to comprehend what had just happened. As the mind repeats this process more frequently it attaches its attention more into savoring the taste of the blissful fulfilled presence derived from the no-fault timeless *Beingness*, and less into the daily psychological traumas and personal relationships which recede into the background and holds less and less energy, infrequently, until, like a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly, the false belief of being a separate entity dissolves into its absolute incomparable unrelated causeless and fulfilled ocean of consciousness, me".

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Killer.

WIZARD: Yes.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Thanks for bringing that paragraph up, because the reason why it keeps saying the word *me* is purposefully because I'm offering in my mind, and those of the reader, to rearrange in the conditioned mind the essence of the *me*. In other words, I'm trying to say, I'm constantly battling with this conditioned mind, because it keeps tripping itself into its old record. And the *me*, when we say, *me, me, me*, Albert, there is not enough time where I can correct that, and I like to do that an

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exercise of sharing to others. So that *me* may be seen by others as such.

WIZARD: Yes, the *me*-storyline borrows its sentience from *Now*.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes.

TRIP: I'm just going to jump around here to things that caught my attention in reading your book. One of them was that you said, "People do tend to look to a spiritual teacher in human form", but you say that teachers come in all forms, and it came to you in many different forms. So I thought it would be interesting for you to share some of those forms that came along during your spiritual education.

ALBERT NAHMANI: And they still do [Laughs]. Well, I was going to write a little bio, a novel, for my grandchildren, and the first story that I started with was, I called it the birdie, little birdie. And I must have been like four, or five. The memory is that I am outside in the street; this is like a little Jewish ghetto street in Fez. And I seemed to have this little birdie attached with a string attached to my little finger. A few boys were playing around and suddenly a cat comes in (I'm making the story short) and snatches the little birdie in its mouth, and runs away with it. At that moment it seemed to have been an out of body experience where I'm watching this whole scene of the cat preparing itself to take over, and jumping and snatching the birdie. And everything seems up there silent and peaceful, watching this scene unfold.

And I know psychologists will probably call that. They call that a split of a kind when in trauma, and that tends to happen, and it's true probably if you want to name it as such. But when I look back in my life, this is like one meaning, example, of so many that started in my mind the question of *who* or *what* am I. Because at that moment one realizes there is another dimension prior, and you feel there is something witnessing, and also you feel that in spite of the trauma, this witnessing is peaceful. Of course I'm four or five years old, I didn't ask myself all these questions. But down

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the road what I'm proposing to assist some group members is if they would only allow in the possibility that their past, behind every stone that they walked over, may have been a future of a different kind, not necessarily in a human form, in an experience. And if they just changed their spectacles they will be able to see that consciousness has been guiding them all along through, and teaching them all along, through these experiences.

WIZARD: Yes, the *Now* accepts the cat eating the bird unconditionally.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's right. Because the *Now* is really non-personal; maybe in the human emotion and they reverberate in compassion and in love. It is not of a psychological suffering; it is totally independent of its own, although it is everywhere and witnesses everything. It is not *of* those things. It is wherever it wants to be on its own, in its pure form. It is absolutely non-personal.

WIZARD: Yes.

ALBERT NAHMANI: In that form obviously there is no self, the outward self, there are no planets, there are no stars, there is no division, there is nothing but... That.

WIZARD: There's no world, no nothing.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's right, there is no world.

WIZARD: And the thorn...

ALBERT NAHMANI: So for sure it's not personal [Laughs].

WIZARD: And the thorn of death is removed forever.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes, absolutely. And I can say that without getting into too much personal stuff, I can say that I am experiencing its confirmation again and again on a daily basis.

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WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: A benefit of getting up there in years [Laughs], I'm skipping around, but okay. I'm going to ask this question and maybe... I don't know why I ask these kinds of questions but they come up for me. Why is it do you suppose than when you spend an hour with someone, and I see you lead these group discussions, and I'm watching the videos, and I'm looking at the questions these folks are asking you. Why is it that you spend an hour with someone inquiring into them the point that they are not a separate person, but rather consciousness pretending to be a separate person? They will then ask you a question like, "is consciousness playing a game with us?" To ask a question like that after having received a thorough explanation of why there is no us to be played with, I mean what does that say about... is that consciousness itself enjoying keeping the game going, or does that speak to like the human mind and its inability to grasp? What is that?

Because I'm just astounded by the gorgeous, gorgeous information that a guy like you is able to share with these folks in these group settings, and after you've downloaded a month's worth of it, they'll come back and they'll ask again, they'll ask a question which shows obviously that in the structure of the question they totally bought into the idea themselves as a separate person, even though you've been hammering on them for a month about that. What does that say?

ALBERT NAHMANI: Well it says that on the tree some apples are riper than others.

WIZARD: That's good.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Trip, yourself, I've read a little bit on your wonderful website that you yourself it was unbeknown to you, but you were already quite ripe when you walked through John's bedroom and you had a glance of I think Ramana Maharshi, if I'm correct. So you see when one is ripe one doesn't need much. It may be something somebody says, or something somebody wrote,

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or even something you see yourself and then there it is; it just happens.

TRIP: Yes, but here's what I don't get, prior to walking through that room if you had shown me a picture of Ramana Maharshi, or you'd hand me a book, or something like that, and I hadn't been in a particular state of ripe that I'd been, I would have just dismissed it, and it wouldn't have been something attractive to me. Like for example, being what looked like an aesthetic who walked around in what looked like a diaper, and who had what looked like no fun, and who was celibate, and on and on and on, who ate a very bland vegetarian diet, and had no possessions, and lived in a little room, whatever, that did not look to me... if you could have told me that there could have been anything splendid about that existence I would have said, no freaking way, and I have no interest in any of it whatsoever, okay.

But people that come to you, they're already clued into something, they already recognize that there's this tremendous potential or pot of gold, or wonderful thing that might be called enlightenment, in some way that they could transform themselves, or their experience of life whatever, and they're there. And they've come to you, they're already turned on to it, they get that there's this possibility, and they're not stupid. And you sit there, and you give them this perfect clear information, and yet over and over again they insist on speaking to you as a separate person, or whatever. They're not willing to run the experiment. I mean, is it all about a willingness to run the experiment of not being a separate person, or not? Does it get down to that maybe? Because in the end you have to run that experiment right?

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes, it's about breaking the silence and the fear of being in the present. It's the mind constantly moving, which is what it likes to do anyway, that's its purpose is to be constantly searching. I mean, the mind is not bad; I like to emphasize that to anyone who would listen. I prefer not to make a demon of the mind, I think the mind is a wonderful thing, it has done wonderful things, and very unfortunate things too. But it

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persists to constantly search and move in order to keep it this vessel, this body alive in this planet. But where the problem begins is when it takes back for itself credit for that which is witnessing this conversation, and very furtively in a split second it takes it back and really it is that. And in so doing it shrinks the limitless, dimensionless, witnessing experience, silent and beautiful experience, into this busy mind, and a narrow mind, limits it.

WIZARD: Because the mind can never know.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's right.

WIZARD: The mind is not the proper tool.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's what I find, that people have the hardest time with is in just realizing that the mind, or the little me, is like a dog chasing its own tail, and they are locked in into a closed circuit. And as I put that question, so if you know this for sure, if you truly understand this statement right here, what do you do? What can you do? What is there to be done? The answer is nothing. [Laughing] There's nothing to be done. It just didn't work, you exhaust yourself, and you must just sit. When a dog keeps running after its tail, eventually it just sits because it has exhausted itself. And that's the image I like to give because it really feels that way, it's exhausting to keep searching for one's self.

WIZARD: So the mind exhausts its remedies?

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes, and that's how we find its limits.

TRIP: You said that in Hebrew the word for that sitting I guess in exhaustion and surrendering to the "spiritual world" is called Shabbat, right? And you said that every religion has a word for that, I was wondering is there a word in Christianity for sitting surrendered?

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WIZARD: Be still.

LBERT NAHMANI: Yes. I was going to so say, also. In Christianity, the word Shabbat is the Sabbath, this is nothing but another word, the English accent of the word Shabbat in Hebrew, and the word Shabbat which means Saturday, but it also means to sit. Because that's what you do on Friday night, Saturday, your mind sits, the commandments for a religious Jew, or practical Jew, is to do nothing with regards to the mind, nothing that is not spiritual that is, with the mind to being active in that weekend, to take a break. And you are allowed to read spiritual books, you are allowed to talk about God and spirituality, but you're not allowed to talk business, or to be worried about what tomorrow will bring. In a way you're ordering your mind to set aside, to sit, to be still. So that's the meaning behind Shabbat and Sabbath.

TRIP: Are you a Jew?

ALBERT NAHMANI: I was raised under the Jewish Faith, and during my search obviously I went in different streams from that. I was a socialist, Marxist, Jew, non-religious, and then I touched upon and shopped around in different spiritualities including whatever was encountered in my life. But mostly it was Self-inquiry. I've read about a lot of the religions and spiritualities, and picked up a little here, a little there, until my mind exhausted itself, and it sat still.

TRIP: And there are some notable Jewish folks in history, Jesus Christ, and Ram Dass, and was Meher Baba born a Jew?

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes.

TRIP: Okay. And now you and I met and I'm sure there were others on our programs that were Jewish.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Was really Meher Baba a Jew?

TRIP: I don't know. Okay, maybe not. I was asking.

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WIZARD: I think he was a Hindu.

TRIP: Hindu, okay. Obviously, a number of notable Jews saw through the idea of there being an externalized deity. But I was wondering did you find that the Jewish tradition is more than just "a religion", it's really a way of life. There's so much stuff that practicing Jews engage in almost on a weekly basis with the observances, and then the family, and the extended network of family, and the whole... I mean, it's a huge, huge thing. Are there certain religions or can you comment on the Jewish religion, or are there certain religions that are easier to evolve into a sense of oneness from or not?

ALBERT NAHMANI: I think what is the hardest is not necessarily what religion it is, it's what attachment we have, and how strong is that attachment to that belief that we're separate. And unfortunately, although most religions, if not all, have attempted to explain the unexplainable, and thereby failed obviously, it's a necessary failure, a necessary evil I guess. But eventually when we inquire within our self there is this intelligence that goes through *netti, netti* which is, no, not this either. This doesn't ring a bell to me, doesn't ring right, and all that. And you keep doing that until you've exhausted all the *netti, netti*, again until you say, I surrender, I don't know anymore. When you say that you surrender, that's a good beginning. When you say I don't know anything anymore, you're starting to align yourself.

WIZARD: That's when the Buddha sat down under the tree, and bingo.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's right. Yes.

TRIP: I wanted to say that everyone we interview has a few jewels, you have the jewels, one of them was the *what* am I, instead of who am I, that was a jewel, looking at it that way without assuming the personhood and the *who* am I. Another thing you wrote you said, "*I am* is inclusive, welcoming yet without attaching

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to or identifying with any inclusions. *I am* state is continuously awaring". I love that.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes. The being aware or conscious-nessing happens on its own. I'm even concerned when I say, *I am* is witnessing, because then I put again that concept of subject separate from the object which is being witnessed. And rather I like to remind myself to say this just is witnessing, conscious-nessing, the sunset. When I took my grandson a few days ago, I was on the east coast, and I took him for the first time in his life, he's five months, to the beach. And we were standing there and he was watching the beach, the vastness and the openness, he was totally present. Of course, already as a baby he had no concept of self yet, and just watching how he's there present, still. All you can see is conscious-nessing. There is no grandson there.

The same for us when we go to the beach, and I like to refer to this often because it's an experience that's more relevant to most of us, especially if you live in California where you watch on the beach the sunsets. Watching the sunset soon enough this openness overwhelms the narrow focusing of the looking into some specific thing, cease the viewing to not specifically target one specific area, it gets lost and dissolves into the sea, and the ocean, and the horizon. And soon the self is gone, you don't realize it until the awareness comes back and say, oh, I was watching the sunset, you see. And in that space of time where there was no all or I or thought, there was just sun setting.

WIZARD: I have very lucid dreams, and they arise and the whole of the I-thought and the dream itself arises simultaneously, and even though there's no memory of a history it seems to emerge and take place and everything seems normal. And the sentience of the I-thought is borrowed from the *Now*, it's a play of consciousness arises in *Now* like a word balloon, it has the I-thought and the world all in one bubble, and they collapse together. And between the word-balloons of the play of consciousness, there is one without another, that silence, just pure sentience. And then the dream, the daydream begins, and then

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that same *Now* lends its sentience to the I-thought as we go through the world, but then we get through with the day and we take a nap, we go to sleep, we go in a dreamless sleep and the whole thing is gone, the I-thought along with the whole play of the forms, and they're not different, they arise together and set together. But there's *that* within which, like a theatre, *that* within which the play of consciousness arises and dissolves within.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's wonderful, thank you for that, John.

TRIP: I don't know if you consider yourself a teacher, Albert, but I really think you are an excellent teacher, and I think you write extremely well. I want to read another thing that you wrote that addresses something that so many people deal with. Many people suffer from not letting go of hurts in the past, and in your book you spoke eloquently about how a person deals with that. I'd like to read that if I may.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Please.

TRIP: You say, "So first I need to review whatever ails me, let it sit on my lap and reveal its sorrow, my mind will fight this and will create a thought that says, fly, run away, move, do something but do not stay here. Fear will overwhelm me but I will keep trying to welcome this process until my painful past reveals itself. I will tell my fear it is all right. I will cry and compassionately embrace whatever or whoever made me suffer because they themselves had incurred suffering which is why they are passing it on. I must free myself from this vicious circle; I need to see all of this suffering in a deep and total way so that I can break the shackles from my past. Otherwise I can never be free to be within my presence right here right Now, as I still would be dwelling in my past. Free at last, I can now expand in my true limitless lively exciting childlike and compassionate Beingness". That is so beautiful.

ALBERT NAHMANI: You read it so well.

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TRIP: You are really, really good. Really good! So I had a follow up for you, because I get to ask my personal question. What's your recommendation for those who spend a lot of time around, often times, a family member let's say, what's your advice for someone who's spending a lot of time around someone that they love, who is suffering in that way, who is constantly suffering about the past, bringing up the past, into the present moment where everything's perfectly okay. But there always is this constant little cues, and little opportunities for this person, the trigger, this remembrance of the past from which they suffer. And I find, I'm in relationship with some folks like that, and I love these folks, I find myself getting frustrated and losing patience with them. What's your advice for the person that's in a relationship with a person who's suffering all the time from the past, hurts from the past?

ALBERT NAHMANI: It can be frustrating, I agree. I found out that the hardest thing for those folks is that they stand in full judgment of themselves constantly, constantly in judgment of themselves and therefore of others. They're not realizing. They think that they're judging others, but they don't realize that they are judging others because they are in judgment of themselves. I'd like to think and say that if one can shift the view in realizing that they are judging themselves, above all first and foremost probably, there might be a fall. But again it's how sometimes when you've done everything you can, there's not much else to do but to heed that as a chance to do your own investing in that witnessing blissful place, while this reaction to that person is quite hard. And then try as much to rest into this here and *Now* while your mind is frustrated with that.

As far as what can you do, one of the biggest frustrations we have in life is feeling helpless, when we've exhausted everything we can, we feel we can do, and we have nothing else to do, that brings a stress to the mind, it's fear to the mind. It is brought about to feel that the mind as useless. Sometimes it's okay to use that as a resting place, surrender in that. One can choose either frustration, by not accepting that it is a defacto here that is helplessness. Or

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just rest into that fact, rest with that. Be still with that thought that there is helplessness. Helplessness requires surrender.

WIZARD: The mind bifurcates, that's its job.

ALBERT NAHMANI: That's right.

WIZARD: It's an insentient bifurcating machine, and the play of consciousness is going to unfold. Thy will doesn't suffer the dilemma of apparent choice, it just is. And the mind thinks it has a choice and brings on that frustration, that dilemma, and you can't change that mind, that mind's got to do that. That is the mind's purpose, its process, it is a biological machine. So the mind can only surrender, that's its only remedy.

TRIP: So Albert, we've probably interviewed 80 people and more on our show, and there have been some... well they've all been great, but...

WIZARD: This one's perked me up [Laughs].

TRIP: Some of them are spiritual teachers that we've interviewed, and they often don't want to claim teacher-ship or whatever, consider themselves teachers, but I want to say you are a particularly excellent teacher or mentor. You have a tremendous grasp of human psychology, and you're able to get inside the psychological issues that confront people that they're trying to grasp all of this stuff. And so I want to recommend anyone who's listening to you and visiting your website, and your short but wonderful book. How do people connect with you? May they?

ALBERT NAHMANI: Yes, absolutely. Through albertnahmani.com, there is an ask Albert a question segment there where you can click on that, and just fire away a question and I'll be more than happy to do my best with that. I love the companionship of inquiring people.

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WIZARD: I want to personally thank you for your ability to affirm. The awakening is a spontaneous event, but then comes the journey of affirmation, and what you're really gifted in is affirming *that* for folks. You don't have your own agenda, you're affirming Truth. I think it's beautiful. Wizard's hat off to you.

ALBERT NAHMANI: I would love to one day meet you both. I hope you guys come this way to California some time, and if not next time I go to the east coast I'll try and hop over there and come and have a cup of tea with you both.

WIZARD: I've got a guest cottage for you anytime.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Okay, wonderful.

TRIP: Yes, come stay at the Wizard's guest cottage, it's really comfortable and there's a pool right outside, and you would love it. And then I could come up and visit you up there, and you'd be very comfortable up there.

ALBERT NAHMANI: Anytime, anytime. It would be great. Thank you for having me and it's been lovely time together.



Benjamin Smythe

<http://benjamintsmythe.com/>

WIZARD: We're in the land of the perfect today. Everything is perfect, everyone is perfect, and all of it is absolutely perfection. And we have today as our guest Mr. Perfect himself, Benjamin Smythe.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Hi. How are you?

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TRIP: And also in the studio today we have a guest from an earlier time, Robert Saltzman.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Hello.

TRIP: Hello, Robert. And then we have a bunch of folks here who are dear friends of Benjamin's. Some have come from far away; Moe's come all the way from Scotland. And we have Teala, and we have Katie, and Stephanie, and Moe Bruce, and we have Chad, we have Catanya, Robert's wife, so we've got a roomful of people here.

Benjamin, I always prepare for our interviews, I have watched your videos, and usually I prepare a long list of questions [Laughs], but you're such a wild cat and I know that you're just going to be able to just fill the time here any old way. So I-thought it would be more fun to just be spontaneous and we don't have a bunch of questions.

WIZARD: So who's in control here?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well the person with the button who turns off the sound [Laughs], obviously.

TRIP: Well, you've got a really fresh approach. Let's see, rather than introduce you and tell you who you are, and what you are. Let me ask, would you say you're a minimalist?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, oh yes. Just really lazy, I don't want to deal with stuff.

TRIP: Now I understand you live on \$28 a day, but in the background of your videos I saw what looked like a conventional house and stuff.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I live in a little cottage in Berkeley with my girlfriend, so we split the cost, and that's what keeps it down.

TRIP: And are you on a road trip now, going around the country?

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I do this thing where I live with people for a week, and now I'm living with Teala, and we wander around and do whatever people want to do. I have a *You're Perfect* sign, so I hold that on the street, play with the kids, made scrambled eggs this morning, and do some chores. I'm on one of those trips, I call it a week of life, but I do it in Europe, I've done it in America, I'll go to Australia, New Zealand next month.

TRIP: Benjamin looks like he is on a trip, all right. I was lit up a couple of days ago but I think you are lit up all the time. Are you alive with...?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I'm as alive as you are. What are you talking about? [Laughs] Well let's see who exists a little less in the room. No, no, everybody exists equally, damn.

TRIP: Okay, so the sign, that's cool. Talk about the sign, how did that come about?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: In 2005 I had a really crappy day and I went out on the street and made a sign that said *You're Perfect*, thinking it would make me feel better to make somebody else feel better. But I wasn't even looking at people then, and I just sat on Lincoln Avenue near Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, and in 10 minutes this woman pulls up and she's crying and she's says, "Wow, thank you so much, I really needed to see that". And at that moment it was something that I got a little contact high off of that ability, the simplicity of being able to make somebody's day with something really benign as a sign like that. Then I held it for a little bit more, and then I moved and then it went into my window, and then in 2008/2009 I started holding it regularly as much as I could for the most part. I don't force myself to do it, but I definitely do it a lot.

TRIP: So there's a conventional life happening back in Berkeley where you have a job and stuff like that?

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No. [Laughs] I've tried to avoid that, I'm successfully able to do so. But I work, I mean seemingly I work a lot, I'm constantly talking with people and emailing with people, and out and about, and I try to make myself very available to people who just want to talk about whatever, whatever they want to talk about. I mean, I'm not a therapist so definitely I recommend people who have real big issues to go see therapists, I'm not trained in mental health issues, I don't try to pretend I'm something I'm not. But for the most part I must meet with people like this, and we play, like that.

TRIP: So tell us about being perfect, why are you so convinced?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well it's not something that has to be convinced, it's obvious. This is it; this is the way it is. So perfection's a really loaded word, we can hear perfect and think, oh well that means I get what I want all the time, but that's not what I mean.

TRIP: So, for the person out there that doesn't feel perfect and has issues and problems, and life is a struggle, what would you like them to know? What would you like to tell the person that doesn't feel perfect?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: That it's perfect, it's okay not to feel perfect. I think in some ways it's just the total allowance to be who we are, wherever we are, as we are, is its own freedom, but even not feeling free is perfect, is part of the... I don't really have an agenda for other people because it doesn't feel good for me to have something I want you to be, you're already whatever you are. So I just hang out with that. You'll do what you do; I'm not in charge of anything.

TRIP: When you're meeting with folks, you're not really taking on the responsibility of hoping that they'll feel better or something?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, no. Because they don't have to feel better, who do I think I am? I mean, I'm okay if you suffer, I'll sit

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with you, I'm not afraid of your suffering. I'm not afraid of my own suffering. It's just suffering. Nobody dies of suffering, life kills them. [Laughs] I mean, it's really obvious, we've all suffered, and now we're fine, we're sitting in a radio station, we might suffer again, it is okay, that's part of life, that's part of what happens. In some ways it is not personal at all.

TRIP: So you have a pretty fresh approach, you're a little bit of a comedian when you do your thing, and I know you're not necessarily intending, but your face goes through this entire array of emotional states and things.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Sure, sure.

TRIP: Sometimes when you get ready to speak [Laughs], I wish people could see your face, you've just got this huge smile, and one of your teeth is a little bit crooked that comes up, and your eyes are wide open, and there's even a little white around the pupil, so it's like you're really wide-eyed, and you have this big grin. You look crazy.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I'm glad I can't see me in the way you're describing me. Yes, I don't know, I don't see my own face, I mean there's one face missing in the room for each person and it's their own, and I can't see myself. So I look like you.

TRIP: I guess you found that doing a video, your videos are on YouTube, and do you do a video whenever you feel like it, or is it a regular thing?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Usually I just try to answer. Somebody will send in like a question or an inquiry or hey, make a video about this. And I follow those, and what I love about the internet is that people click, like I'm not knocking on anybody's door, so it's like a salad bar of possibility, and people click it and there it is. They get to watch it. But usually I just answer a question or play with an idea that someone poses.

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TRIP: Have you read the works or spent time with a teacher or anything like that?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, not one-on-one, I've definitely read a ton in my life. Now I can't read which is... [Laughs]

TRIP: Okay. You can't read?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, I pick up a book and it's like it doesn't last, like something just starts to laugh and it won't really follow a page, it's really wild. I actually like reading so I'm like, hey, I hope this goes away [Laughs], but it won't really last.

TRIP: We interview a lot of sages here and we call them avant-garde sages, and each one has pretty much got it, what this underlying reality is all about, but each one brings a fresh and unique perspective that's the marriage of their incarnation and their life experience with this ultimate reality. They have a way of talking about it, so we had a guest on last week, Jeff Foster, and he speaks to an intimacy, and right now he's on radical acceptance. Everything is already accepted, so you don't have to proactively accept anything, it's already accepted. So that's a fresh insight that he brings. Is there something that you feel is really... you're passionate about that's an aspect of this Truth that you want to share right now?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well I don't know anything for anyone else. I notice that there's a lot of ways to come up with different narratives, and like positions from which to view everything from, but I don't have something specific. Because I notice in my own experience like there's so much playing that goes on, that it's like one thing doesn't really ever stick. And that being said, there might be an answer, I don't necessarily have one right now. Whatever is happening now is whatever is listening, is listening in all of these bodies, not only in this room, but wherever the speaker is, if it's in the car right now, or it's in the house, whatever is hearing this sound is exactly the same thing, but that's just a poetic way to try to talk about a unity that is also another poetic

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way to try to talk about a oneness. There's also a poetic way to try to talk about a whole. It's like we can keep playing these language games.

TRIP: Yes. Most of the people that are... you guys charm in any time you want. Anybody here has anything they want to ask Benjamin, you go for it, or if you have a comment.

FEMALE VOICE: I have something.

TRIP: Why don't you ask your question on the air?

FEMALE VOICE: When I drop below the neck and I get out of my head, I notice there's this impulse to move to some strange behaviors. So I'm standing over there, and have this impulse to just come down here and stroke your leg. And I'm thinking how can I go out in the world and really allow that to happen? I mean, I could have done it right now, but there's this judgment of I don't want to put him off of his discussion, but if I just let myself go I would have literally just been rubbing your leg right now.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well that would be part of the discussion. So it's just that fearlessness, but there's also reality that you might go out into the street and you might see someone you want to start kissing, and they might call the cops. So there's that balance like playing with it. Seemingly I can't do everything I want to do, because I feel like I just wander around and hold everyone's face for a while, and just like, oh my God, you're so beautiful. But then you have to have that time and place where it's like the ability to come in and out and play, and so just trust yourself but also pay attention. I mean the rules of society, so you bend them but you don't try to... what I mean, you play, and you have to play. Like there's not an answer, there's not some formula for how to live, like you're it, and he's it, and she's it. It's just trusting yourself enough, and then when somebody has a problem be like, oh, I'm just exploring, I apologize, like clean up the mess. But it's very subtle; it doesn't have to be so extreme. And my leg's sore, so go... no I'm just kidding.

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TRIP: How many girlfriends do you have?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: One, one, one. Sandra. I have one.

TRIP: Sandra, he's only got one.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, one.

FEMALE VOICE: Is she that beautiful woman that I saw you with in that photograph.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes.

FEMALE VOICE: Yes, I related to the way she looked.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, it's funny, you have the same hair. Yes, she's amazing.

TRIP: One thing that I've noticed is that most of the folks, who are passionate about nondual reality, tend to be up in their 40s, and 50s, and 60s, and that thing. And you and your style, and that's not something you control, but your style and the way you deliver your wisdom over the internet, YouTube, videos and stuff like that, are you finding that a large number of young people are attracted to the wisdom that you share? I'm interested in that, because my friend, Chad, over here, who's sitting on the side here, he would love to be able to reach younger people with a message when presented in the nondual wisdom fashion it's often presented as, it's not something that young people really want to connect with. What's your take on that?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, the people I think who listen to me tend to be of a certain flavor no matter what their age is, which is a willingness to be a little bit crazy. I just play a little bit more on the edges, and not necessarily find the safe answer, but play out the floating, bobbing, wild ocean answer. And so I do have a lot of young people that appreciate what I share, but I also make videos so they can see me, I'm usually shirtless, and I'm covered in

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tattoos, and so I seemingly resonate with the generation. I'm just coming to a generation that can relate to me. But I also try to play as much as I can, and I laugh a lot, and I literally don't give a shit if anyone understands what I'm saying, and I think that helps, I really think that helps. Because when someone's trying to sell something, it's so obvious. Like, hey what you need, to finally have ultimate freedom is you need to understand that this..., it's like, what? Who gives a shit? Like let's just play.

WIZARD: But that's perfect. [Laughter}

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, yes. No, it is, but I want to be respectful of the venue.

TRIP: Well that's all right. I cuss like a drunken sailor, but I tell everybody I can stop, so that's okay.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Oh, I can too, I can too. [Laughs] In a roomful of adults I forget.

TRIP: I mean, the F word is the most beautiful word in the English language, it can be used in literally every potential syntax, whatever, context, it can be a verb, a noun.

WIZARD: I'm an old codger and I stumbled upon you on Facebook, and started watching your YouTube, and I loved it. So it isn't just for the kids.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, I don't think it is either.

WIZARD: It just hit right home, and put a big grin on my face as I watched you.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I have a lot of fun making them, I try to have a lot of fun, and I'm not trying to figure anything out.

WIZARD: It comes across as fun.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, it is fun.

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WIZARD: And fun is fun.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes. Well we're amazing, we're all so amazing in our own perfect way whether there's a self or not a self, like it's still perfect, and it's just so fun to have fun. Because this can feel so serious, the search, the spiritual thing, like oh, I've got to find it out, got to figure out the answer. Well, it's not serious in some ways, in some ways it really is, it feels that way, but it's not, not to me.

WIZARD: I hear you.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: But then when I meet someone who's taking it very seriously, I take it very seriously with them, I don't have to pretend. It's okay to meet everybody where they are, in my experience it is, and I enjoy it.

TRIP: So you're just having fun, Benjamin, there's no mission here, there's no economic component, there's no ambition to become like ever more widely known, or to develop anything?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, in fact sometimes I think like I can't wait 'til it's over, then I can just go and get a job, and go skateboard at the skate park. I mean I have that feeling often.

TRIP: So there's a compulsion, there's a need to share right now?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, no. There's just like... it's hard to talk about, but it's like there's an instruction to share. It's like, okay, now go share. Really? Ah, come on, no, I don't want to. No, go share. Okay. That's the feeling. Before I went to Europe I was like crying, like I don't want to go and it's like just get on the damn plane and go, like just go. And then something happens like it opens out, and so whether we can call that like the personality doesn't want to accept its role, I don't know how to talk about it. But I like being very honest about it. There are times when I can't stand my job, I don't want to be out on the street with the sign,

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and then there's something else, it's like, shhhhh, trust, trust, trust. So I try to be very honest about that.

TRIP: Are you sponsored when you go to Europe?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, people pay. I made a video and so I said, basically I'd love to hang out with you for a week; I'll do whatever, we'll play chores, whatever, whatever, and then you just play with everything. And I'm an easy guest, as far as I can understand, I mean, it seems like I don't put a lot of demands on people. I don't care if people set up Satsang.

TRIP: Confirmation, easy guest.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I'll work in the house. I mean, I don't really care, because the experience for me is just to be with people like this. I mean, it's exactly like this, it's literally as simple as sitting here, there's not some... I go on some trips and people don't set up any public meetings, and it's great, so then I just hang out with one person all the time. Other people set things up, so that we have a meeting, then there's this. But I don't have a preference of my own, because I notice when I do, I bother myself, and I appreciate not feeling crappy for lack of a better word.

TRIP: Any questions percolating up in the minds of anyone?

WIZARD: Robert, you're mighty quiet?

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Well, Benjamin's perfect what could I add? [Laughs]

TRIP: Clean? Benjamin's clean?

ROBERT SALTZMAN: You want me to ask him a question?

WIZARD: Yes.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Tell me about making love with god?

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Oh, man. That's the weirdest thing, and I can't actually start to talk about it because I'm a little nervous it will happen.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Well if it does, we'll hold you down and send for the medics.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, he already holds me down, or she already holds me down. There's... oh, really, that's a fun question. Okay. So I don't know. I don't know how to talk about it for anyone else. Basically I get grabbed and my body starts to go through the acts of being made love to, but it's really more the F word, and it's full and a complete and total thing. So it's beautiful, but it's also very intense, because the whole body starts to respond, and...

ROBERT SALTZMAN: We really need video for this, like this guy is...

TRIP: The limitations of radio.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Maybe there's just a sense of embarrassment in some ways, because it feels like it's a porno, or I don't really want to have sex in front of a bunch of people.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Well, it's a holy porno.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, no it's amazing. But it's also, there's nobody else there, like to go through the experience is very strange because there's no one else there; there's literally no one in the room. And it's incredible, it's 10,000 times better than having sex with a person although there is not much difference, but the energetic difference is huge. That's beautiful, I'm glad you asked that, that's just a very recent experience in my life.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: You mentioned it on the video that I saw, so I-thought I would give you a chance to elucidate.

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Do you have that experience? Has that happened to you? Or whatever that is, obviously we can't tell what...

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Constantly. I don't want it to stop.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Oh, really. That must hurt. [Laughs]

ROBERT SALTZMAN: It hurts at first.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: To not want it to stop. [Laughs] Awesome. And if it stops, what happens?

ROBERT SALTZMAN: It hasn't stopped; I don't know what to say.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Great, yes, yes.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: I love your YouTube presentations, they're great, and they really are. I like the one with the fun house mirrors; you want to talk about that?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Will you remind me? I don't really watch my own videos.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Oh, this was one about how whatever model you choose, it defines your reality, and it's like being in a fun house. And you stand in front of one of the distorting mirrors, and you say, that's reality. And then someone turns you around and you see another mirror, and you say, oh, no, that's reality, I had it wrong a moment ago.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well it's so easy to have a position, there's a narrative position, let's say if I'm nonduality, and if I really hold a nonduality position, then I actually think something's wrong with duality, which is its own form of madness. And so if I hold duality and I think, well someday I've got to get the oneness, and then if I'm a Christian I think well the Muslims are wrong, and

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then if I'm a scientist well I think they're all crazy. And so it's just realizing like whatever position we hold, it's just like looking in one of those mirrors. The wavy one makes us look skinny and weird, and the fat one makes us look fat, and the clear one makes us look clear, and no point, they're just reflection somehow true or false, it's just a reflection.

So how do we exist without a narrative can be its own form of mirror too, so there's really no way to make a mistake? That's what I constantly come back to, like there's really no way to make a mistake. But I do seem to start a war because my reflection doesn't look like yours, it's ridiculous, it's really ridiculous, and all over the world obviously we kill each other for our ideas because the fat one's truer than the skinny one, or the tall one's truer than the short one. And that's an unfortunate thing, but it's also in innocence, people aren't intentionally trying to make the world a miserable place, you can only know what you know. So it's really in innocence, and that seemingly is the gift of sharing all of this stuff, is just to invite the possibility that we are the same, and we don't know. And when I can step into my own ignorance, then seemingly there's a possibility to really see you without any idea what I'm looking at, and to experience myself without any idea of what that is, whatever that is.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: No, I get it. John and I were talking earlier about the mysterious nature of all of this, and how the actual awakening is not knowing anything, but knowing that you don't know.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, that paradox, the only certain thing I am certain about is my uncertainty. And also this, but on the radio it won't be hard, like this, whatever this is, just to be here, see each other. This is it. And even for the listener, they can feel the silence, and that's the invitation for silence, it's obviously not the word.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Well silence on the radio is called dead air.

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, I know.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Somehow it's dead. But when you're sitting there together then it's not dead, you can be silent and it's alive.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: It's funny, I've been doing Skype Satsang with people, so like there's a membrane that looks like a screen, but there's actually no difference, and it's been fun to watch that the silence doesn't, like nothing's affected just because there's a computer between us. As a broadcasting phenomena; we don't want that air, if it was allowed; the listener listening right now might enjoy it.

WIZARD: We allow dead air.

TRIP: Yes, we allow it because we're not trying to capture anybody like flicking through the dial, and, miss them because there's dead air. [Laughs]

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: This station, *Now*, is the one you want. [Laughing]

TRIP: We do this really mainly because we love to meet folks like you, and just hang out.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: That's fun, because I do it because I love to meet folks like you, so we're totally getting what we want. [Laughs]

TRIP: Yes. [Laughs] Another interesting thing, I don't know why this comes up for me, but we like to keep the economics of the whole thing separate, like we like to share freely, and we don't like to make a business out of it. Now other people that we respect and like do make a business out of sharing. We don't think there's anything wrong with it, but just for us it works to make our money doing our business thing, and not be... first of all, I don't have the talent set to be charging anybody for anything about spiritual

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anything, but if I did it feels like charging somebody to give them something they already have, it could be like me wanting to charge you for what's in your pocket right now, or something. It doesn't feel right to me.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Right.

WIZARD: If we pass a plate it's going to have some food on it.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, the hard part. I think a meeting like this is that the plate doesn't have anything on it, so it's hard to charge for nothing. And that's why there's a service element, some people put a price tag on it because they're doing a service, and for me it doesn't resonate to put a price tag on nothing. Like you walk into a restaurant and the plate is empty, you're not going to pay the \$50 for it, even though sometimes that nothing is worth more than anything I've ever purchased in some ways. And the conversation like this is for those. But there isn't anything wrong with people putting money on anything, because no one ever has a gun to their head when they purchase something. The minute I think you can and cannot do this, with regards to money, and then I'm beginning to live in the world. I'm holding a position that actually I don't want to see in the world, which is somebody in charge of free enterprise.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Beautiful, well said.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well, we haven't even had capitalism yet, like real free enterprise is actually real freedom, it's the real ability to respect each other as autonomous units, and trade with each other freely. We don't have that, we still have regulations, we still have somebody telling us what is free to share and it's okay, it's the way it is right now, but we still haven't seen actual capitalism amongst free beings.

TRIP: It's amazing. I mean, out on my property everything I'm doing is illegal, and yet I'm doing really wholesome stuff [Laughs]. It's actually a lot less crazy and polluting.

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well joy is illegal, you're only allowed to be so happy, and then they'll take you away because you'll scare people. If you start dancing on the airplane, which I almost did the other day because the music was so good in the headphones there's this sense of we're going to come and take you away, and we're going to lock you up. Even if they finally let you go, you still have to go through this whole process where you have to apologize for feeling ecstatic joy. However, if you're under the age of seven, perhaps, it is okay, even 10, it is okay. There's an age at which we say you're no longer allowed to be happy fully. You can be so happy, and we hear this all the time. How many of you have been really happy and you hear somebody goes, well, what did you take, and what drugs are you on? Like what do you mean what drugs am I on? I'm just alive. So it's just like it's a crazy thing. But what's fun is... if we allow, the more people that allow other people to be happy the more that just spreads, and seemingly that can also disappear. But I tend not to have hope for anything because it's painful.

TRIP: So you are very happy, now. Have you always been very happy?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, no. I'm not always happy, I'm a real person, like sometimes I go through whole ranges of emotions; I just don't take them personally.

TRIP: Was a greater sense of wellbeing and happiness commensurate with some recognition of what's going on here?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I don't know. I try not to talk about this, like those stories; because I think they can be something like somebody thinks they need to have that experience in order to be happy. Seemingly anyone listening right now can feel the place in them that is playful, whether or not they want to express it, that's okay, but you can feel the place, seemingly, I don't know about anyone else. But I can feel the place in me that wants to play. And we were at some friend's house yesterday, I was with Brian Adler and there was this dog, this really big dog and this really little dog,

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and they were totally running around playing together, just for fun, for no reason. There's no socio-biological play as part of what we are. Then what's happened is we've turned it into competition, which is really just insane cooperation, because sports are just cooperation, we agree on the rules and then we pretend we compete. So we have to cooperate for the whole thing to look like this theatre of competition, which is why sometimes it's just fun, I think that's what makes us crazy in some ways as a society, because we're constantly competing to win, but we have to agree on the rules.

TRIP: So do you have any ideas, and maybe you don't, but how do people tap into their playful nature because we all have one, but especially I think women are almost naturally more playful somehow than men? Men, we get very bound up in all kinds of worldly stuff that we want to manage, and control, and master, and we get sullen, and miss the opportunity. Here you're a very playful man, that's why the women love you so much [Laughs]. Is there a key?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: The men love me too! [Laughter]

TRIP: What's the key? I love you too. I love you too, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: The key is to discover that you're doing that so you can get a woman, so you just stop and then there's a great... the guy who runs the wine thing, Gary something, I forget, but he says you need to stop doing things you hate. So if you want to start playing, first you have to stop doing all the things you can't stand, and then seemingly that will make room. Like I don't necessarily have to know what I want, I just have to know what I don't want. And if I just stay away from that, seemingly what I want will come out and just start to play around. There's not a formula again, so it's very just case-by-case, person-by-person. The way a brain is constructed, or a personality is constructed, it's a fascinating thing. There's not some like across the board, well if you do this then you'll be fine. It's like everyone's so different, we come from such different backgrounds and experiences. But my

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fundamental feeling is that I trust every single person who's listening to know for themselves how best to achieve that, or experience that. That's actually the only thing I can offer them, and that's why I stand here with the *You're Perfect* sign, it's literally just like reminding people that absolutely they can trust their own sense of joy, and their own experience, and what they want to do, and I don't have a formula for anyone. You can watch me, but what I do might not work for you, and vice versa.

But it's just the encouragement, like it is okay to play. I might not play with you, but that's okay to play, too. It's okay to enjoy life, it is okay to relax. Sometimes I sit up on campus, at Berkeley campus, and the students are walking by, and it's so fun to just say, hey, it's okay to relax, and to watch them go, uh! Just their whole body goes, oh my god, really, is it okay? No, I can't, I got a paper due, and I can't relax. It's just sometimes reminding each other, like it is okay, it's OK to relax, and it's okay to have fun. You're going to die [Laughs]. I mean, that's probably debatable in some realms philosophically, but for the most part it's a useful thing to know, oh, I'm going to die, okay. It's not that serious.

TRIP: Well you're listening to *Conversations with Avant-Garde Sages*, and our special guest today is Benjamin Smythe, he's an avant-garde sage visiting from Berkeley. He's got a very unorthodox way of sharing, he takes a little sign around and sees what happens, and stays in the moment, and has no agenda, has no particular message he wants to share, he's just hanging out in the present, and playful, right?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes. I don't know I might have an agenda any second now; I have no idea [Laughs].

TRIP: He's ultimately not able to pin down. You can't pin the man down.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I don't know the future.

WIZARD: Maybe there's nobody to pin down.

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I don't know.

TRIP: Do you ever find yourself wanting to package up what you know into sentences and then share them with people because they're particularly delicious ways of saying this ineffable thing? You don't do that thing, do you?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Well I do, I write all the time, and I sit on Facebook, and I make things available on my website, and there are ways that people can reach what I write. But I don't stay inside one arena, I'll get on this ball, then get on that one, and then get on this horse, and then ride the Llama, and then get on a peacock, like I'll try playing on everything because language narratives are just language narratives. There's all different ways to play inside of the playground of possibility. And seemingly the possibilities are endless, because that's all there are. It's like that old story, like they go into a dark room and everybody grabs a different part of the elephant. Well the elephant is all there is, so it's okay to play and scratch its belly, and jump on its nose, and ride its back, and look into its eyes, and brush its teeth, and just keep playing and playing, and playing, and playing.

TRIP: I want some of what he's got. [Laughs] You selling any of that, how much is that an ounce?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: It's you.

TRIP: I know.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I know you do. But that's the hard part, because it sounds like there's something to somehow get. I just let myself make a lot of mistakes I guess is a way to say it, and I don't have any problem with that. I'm okay with being a fool I guess.

TRIP: Did you want to say something?

TEALA: Yes. I just wanted to say to what you just said is that when I was getting ready for Benjamin to come, it really came

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clear to me that what I was seeing in Benjamin, I was sensing this gentleness or something that I wanted, and there's this moment where it came really clear to me that what we're seeing was that, itself. And that for me has been the blessing of just interacting with him, is that for whatever reason, whatever it is I'm seeing in him that I want, it's like I'm recognizing that it's only that... that can see it. So you look at him, you see that playfulness; it's that playfulness in you that is seen, there's only that.

TRIP: Yes. Thank you. High five, thank you. [Laughs]

ROBERT SALTZMAN: That was very beautiful what you just said. this program has a lot of nonduality fans listening to it, and that's a very good statement of nonduality, there's only one thing, it's not like you have one thing, and Benjamin has another, it's just the one thing, we all have it.

FEMALE VOICE: Yes, and it's just great.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: When we feel it it's wonderful, it feels like coming home. It feels like you were always home, and you just realized it.

FEMALE VOICE: When you were saying that, and I was filming you, so you can watch it later, you were so beautiful, like physically just like an angel, beautiful. So we can post that on your Facebook page. [Laughing]

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: You have to know it to recognize it; you have to have it to recognize it. That's always the good news, like whatever somebody thinks they want, whatever image I have of the spiritual teacher of the one who is the way I really want to be, the fact that I can see that means I already have that. It's like, that's the only way it works, and it's always good news when someone feels themselves projecting strongly onto another person, there's that sense of, oh, I'm just projecting outwards what I won't let myself yet be, or I won't fully embody yet. And it is okay, it's okay to use the guru that's that way, it is okay to do all of that, as

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long as the guru doesn't take advantage of that, or the teacher doesn't take advantage of that.

FEMALE VOICE: Actually it's okay even if the guru takes advantage of it.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Sure, yes, in the no mistake way. Be nice out there you gurus who just heard that. [Laughing] Keep going.

TRIP: Robert just almost impaled his eyeball on the microphone there.

WIZARD: Robert.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Yes, sir.

WIZARD: Speak up.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: What would you like me to...?

TRIP: Well he doesn't have to speak up.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: I'm enjoying Benjamin so much that I really am speechless; it's too much fun being here with him.

TRIP: We were just at a gathering of really beautiful people...

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, I was supposed to be there. [Laughing]

TRIP: We just left him at a coffee shop three hours away without even letting the poor guy know what was going on.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No way, that was great. I found the most beautiful fountain next to Barnes & Noble.

TRIP: To swim in?

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, not to swim in, just to sit next to. [Laughing] What was the gathering like for you?

TRIP: Well in that sense of heightened oneness that we're all sharing there, as you looked around the room in any room that you were in, or any little group of people that you were in, each and every person was so beautiful, so magnificent. Something about being in that space brings out the deliciousness of life in every one of them.

So I guess we're all here probably because we've been so touched and moved and uplifted, we feel joyous, we want to share that with other people. But the sharing doesn't take place so seamlessly all the time, like I found myself at gatherings where people are still suffering and they have no idea what we're sharing right now. It's not always necessarily going to be the case, you're not going to be able to be in a room full of people that are all opening really coming, feeling open, and able to share. But it is grace when it happens and comes together and that's what we just came from. So I feel refreshed, everyone feels very refreshed, refreshed in our connection.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, that's nice.

TRIP: And we're psyched that it's going to keep on going tonight, and you're going to be participating in a Satsang tonight at the Barn at Valhalla. It'll be a lot of fun, anybody's welcome and it's starting at seven o'clock. Come by. It should be a lot of fun; it's going to be a bit cutup I'm sure.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, well it's a lot of sitting, I try not to do too much, so the questions dictate what happens, so if you don't like sitting in silence with yourself, you probably won't enjoy it in some ways. I'm not warning you, but suit yourself whoever is listening. The one thing that I wanted to say about the gathering of oneness is it only takes one person to experience that, so it's fun to gather together with likeminded people to feel the oneness, and then go to Tar Heels game in the basketball arena and you'll have

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the exact same feeling because it's just you feeling that. You can look around, you can see everyone, you can see yourself enjoying something like the theatre of sports, and absolutely everyone is already that thing, there doesn't have to be this like, I know I'm one, and you're one. And that's a really nice feeling, but that's absolutely irrelevant, because you can go into any football stadium on earth, any soccer stadium on earth, any concert on earth.

I went to a German concert when I was in Germany, I didn't understand the language at all, I just listened to the whole thing, and there was no difference than sitting here. So the idea sometimes of the image of what it looks like that is in some ways like, it's not a trap, but it just narrows down the experience. Yes, I'm having it, now I'm not, it's like it's always happening, you can go to the grocery store and just like look at the checker in a very normal way, and there it is, and there it is, and there it is. So it's helpful because you can actually play with it, you can go to any event where seemingly people are not having that conversation, and you can see it. Because it's just life, I mean it's just, god, like you're on the airplane and the guy next to you is snoring, and the girl over there with her iPad, and the stewardess is like, I can't wait 'til I get out of here. And it's all perfectly life just happening. I love the idea that you can go to a stadium full of sport fans and feel the exact same feeling, seemingly the furthest thing from a conversation about nonduality, but it's the same thing because nonduality is always the case, regardless of what we say.

TRIP: It does seem that this conversation [Laughs]; Benjamin's contagious maniacal laughter is taking place over here. Are you okay?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Oh, yeah.

TRIP: Well, you're crying.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: It's just so beautiful, it takes over, and it is like so beautiful.

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ROBERT SALTZMAN: It's one of those full body orgasms, it's nothing much.

TRIP: Exactly, Benjamin's weeping with joy.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: It's just beautiful. It's the beauty, it is amazing. Katie says let love kill you, it has that feeling it's so beautiful you feel like you're dying. Oh, it's so pretty. The thought I apologize for.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Not at all. When we sit here in this state we become aware that a great deal of what goes on is trying to avoid the intensity of what love really feels like. And so we find ways of distracting ourselves, or blinding ourselves, to what we really experience when we aren't blinded, yes?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, yes. And sometimes allowing it completely, and then it's definitely like the body starts dancing around on the floor, and the tears, and the wracking. Because you're right, it has an orgasmic quality to it even though it's also slightly painful in some ways.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Well there are times in one's own life when we experience physical pain or illness which really turns out to be the body expanding or opening channels so that it can stand more of this wonderful energy that might feel like a terrible headache that lasts for a week, but when it ends you realize that, wow, something opened up here that was closed up before. This is great. So better not to resist our ailments and just let them happen, they may be a wonderful purification.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, I love that I get to listen to you.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: Oh, I love being listened to. [Laughs] I like meeting you too, this is great.

TRIP: Something that I think is really cool that's happening and maybe it was happening before I had the ears for hearing it, but it

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now seems like, for example, we were in this gathering, there were 35 people there. 35 people were to share an intense love with each other, and we able to do it without using any like gods, people did say god, or whatever, but there wasn't this labeling thing going on. It's like we almost seemed to be evolving now beyond labeling, and to be able to collectively share without this two-dimensional thing that we've been doing for so long. It seems like right now, this conversation that's happening in this room, I don't know if this would have happened 10 years ago, and didn't have in my life 10 years ago, or whatever. But what do you think?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes, I don't know, I don't know because it's like when you buy a red car, you see red cars, and I think because...

TRIP: [Laughs] I hear you.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: The Internet and all information is accelerating, not only here but in the world of jet skiing, and speed boating, and thimble collecting, and so it's like it's still subcultures getting together. I know there are people I could invite into this room who would absolutely be as perfect nonduality expressing itself, and would have no idea what's being talked about, but also would resist it. And that would be as perfect. So I know that there's a story about a trend, but I actually don't see it, because one seventh of the world is Roman Catholic. I know the story about an oncoming consciousness expansion, it's a really useful story, and a culture that doesn't have a meta narrative, big over picture story, but it's just another story that can actually become an object we become so attached to, we miss out on the fact that everyone is our neighbor even if they don't agree with us.

TRIP: I agree. But something does happen when, for example, if you go into a situation, let's say you've got new neighbors or something and they come from Wyoming, like say mine have or whatever. And you get close and then you have some interaction, some dinners, or whatever, and you share like we're sharing now. There is a learning that takes place across these different

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relationships where people begin to learn how to express themselves from a place of oneness without getting stuck, and so there's a greater effortlessness in the sharing that's taking place. Even though, I can't quantify it and say there's a movement or whatever, but there's effortlessness.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes.

TRIP: People are learning from other people and they're taking it with them, and doing their thing.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I would say that's your effortlessness for listeners though. Like I would say as you encounter, like I can't speak for you, so as I encounter people, what I notice is that as the walls come down in me, and the walls come down in the way that I used to be tentative, or I used to be hesitant, or I used to be judgmental, so like I'm always seeing exactly what I am in that way. So I don't know if it's actually happening in the other person, like if I go and hang out with my dad, there's my dad, and he might have some experience or not, but I don't see my dad anymore, or I don't see my mum anymore, I see myself.

TRIP: So there's no trend, really there's only the capacity of an individual to so-called see a trend, right?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes. That was really well said.

TRIP: There can't actually be a trend.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Right. You're going to see exactly the beliefs that you hold, and so when there aren't many beliefs left then you see a world where seemingly it's just you, or it's just color, or it's just experience, or it's just light, or however you want to try to talk about it.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: That's beautiful. The fewer beliefs you have, the more you see things as they are, yes?

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Yes. And the quality of awe for me, and this happened with Teala this morning, we were having a conversation and in somewhere in the conversation it was like, this true thought, like I don't know for her anything. I don't know anything for anyone else. And then the awe that I got to see her, just like the awe that I feel. It's like this wow, it's just that wow, and I think the less beliefs I have the more wow I get.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: That's what the data is telling me [Laughs]. It doesn't mean when someone comes up in front of me and they have beliefs that I have anything that I need to change about them.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: You really can't change anybody.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: No, no. But I can definitely piss myself off trying. [Laughs] Oh, my god! As I'm sure you can all resonate with. Raise your hand if you've ever tried to change someone. No, not again. Even myself, I've even tried to change myself as part of the pain. Okay, I can't.

TRIP: Is there anything that you don't accept about yourself yet?

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Not that I can find, but I'd have to look. I mean, I don't want to answer so quickly.

TRIP: Beautiful.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I get tired sometimes and I think sometimes I feel like I should have more energy. But that's probably it, sometimes there's a quality of like, ahh, exhaustion, but it's exhausting because... I don't know, I don't know.

TRIP: People that are as wide open as you are often report that the world just wears them down after a while. Do you ever feel like worn down by the fact there's so much resistance, and anger, and whatever? Do you ever feel worn down?

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BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I can feel worn down by my beliefs that the world should be different, which I think is very different than saying I'm actually worn down by the resistance.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: John and I are giving each other the thumbs up on that. That's it. I've got this little thing I like to say to myself when I need a talking to [Laughing]. What I say is, Robert, in this moment things are as they are, and cannot be any different. And it's immediately soothing and calming.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Cool.

ROBERT SALTZMAN: And that's what you were just saying, yes.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I think so, yes. I know the difference between the world and my mind, I guess, is a way to say it. I know the difference between my beliefs about what's happening and what's happening, and so any time there's a resistance or anger, or frustration, I know that it's not actually out there, it's arising because of something I'm thinking, because I have moments when I'm not angry. So what's different, if it's the same room, or the same parent, or the same partner, or the same social situation, the same traffic jam? We all have amazing amounts of data for how our thoughts or our beliefs are the thing that piss us off, not the actual world, because we know many people who have situations we can't fathom and they have a wonderful time with them. I know that's the case, I know that if people sat down and thought about it, they would realize very quickly, it's what I think that's bothering me, not the world. And then seemingly in immediate dangerous situations we respond actually very naturally, almost without thought, if there's an actual hurricane, or tidal wave, or flood, or robber, a mugger, whatever, we just get out of the way, or run, or whatever we do. That happens almost without thought, and then I tell a story about it, that's very, very painful. But I notice it doesn't have to be, I don't have to tell a story about the world to sit here, and I'm already here.

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TRIP: Beautiful. So we've got about two or three more minutes. Anybody have anything they want to say? Sure? Wizard looks like he's getting ready to...

WIZARD: The Wizard is speechless.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: I just want to say I think you did a really good job, because I think that in some ways holding, like it is your show, or you are the anchor point for it, and you didn't have questions, and kept going from the cuff, and I just felt very natural towards to watch you do it. So I appreciate it.

TRIP: Thank you. I feel a kinship with you in that regard, I think that stuff just comes constantly flowing up for you, so you've lost the fear that you're going to be like catatonic or something.

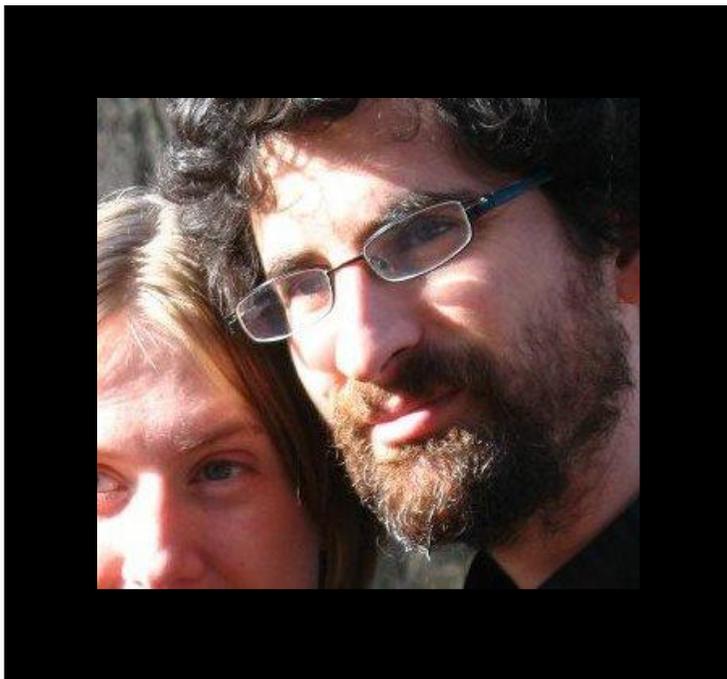
BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Or the worst thing that can happen is only something I think, so I just stop thinking of things that scare me. [Laughing]

TRIP: I think maybe we'll just take on Now with that. Thank you everyone for coming, all of you, Mo all the way from freaking out there, you wonderful caretakers of Ben, thank you for bringing him. And Ben, thank you for sharing with us, and Robert.

BENJAMIN SMYTHE: Thanks, you guys.

TRIP: Thank you.

WIZARD: Perfect company!



Brian Adler

<http://www.facebook.com/Brian.E.Adler>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Brian Adler, was skulking about the satsang group pages submitting brilliant posts, and making the Wizard's job way too easy by recommending some of our favorite guests, when somebody abruptly suggested midstream in a lively online satsang, hey, Brian, you ought to be on that program too. Eventually he accepted, but in the intervening days came to the realization that, holy crap, literally, not only does he himself not know anything, but this path about which he might know just a little something, isn't about knowing something at all.

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In the waning hours before this program, Brian realized that going on a radio show to talk about what he knows doesn't make any sense at all [Laughs].

Brian, rest assured, your life is the perfect teaching, and as instructive as any other, particularly because you've been in some dark places in your life, and you've taken a long scorching look at yourself. I find you breathtakingly honest about yourself, and as clear as any avant-garde sage we've had on our program. There are millions of others out there like yourself who may one day benefit from the knowledge of how your personal crisis have been so beautifully resolved, and how your way of looking continues to resolve them. I'm grateful to be your new friend, and have the opportunity of this conversation.

BRIAN ADLER: Thank you, Trip.

WIZARD: Welcome, Brian. Brian and I, we go back a few decades.

TRIP: Yes. Should I be launching into my questions here? [Laughs] All right, I want to read something that you wrote, and you wrote this... well actually this is something that you wrote recently, just posted recently, and I've got some other things you've written. Way back in 1995 Brian was a pretty introspective lad, you wrote; maybe you read it, Brian:

BRIAN ADLER: "Our relationships to circumstances are the circumstances themselves, or all that we know of them. It informs everything we experience of them, this is what no separation means in functional terms. Therefore it is our hope for the future that is precisely the same as our resistance of the present. This hope is our relationship, our rejection to circumstances. It is our experience of circumstances. Our hope is our suffering, without hope there is no resistance, without resistance there isn't despair as we imagine that is overburdened by fear, but rather without hope, everything we hoped for in a future moment reveals itself as available in the present circumstances. We imagine that optimal

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conditions will make us happy and so we hope, but it is actually the end of hope that ends the resistance that ends the seeming itself that something is missing. Hopelessness is not bad news; on the contrary it is very good news because in that moment we stop pushing what we're after further away, like chasing a carrot on a stick attached to our head".

WIZARD: Bravo, Brian.

TRIP: Well thank you, Brian.

WIZARD: Right on.

TRIP: Our current President got elected on the antithesis to that. You must have been chuckling when you heard the tag line for the Obama administration's campaign.

BRIAN ADLER: Yes, well I guess that's why this occurred to me, because we think of hope as being a saving grace and it's sort of like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

WIZARD: It's the mantra of doubt.

TRIP: That probably doesn't play very well with people [Laughs].

WIZARD: This is a seldom-touched subject.

TRIP: I mean, I just got off a pretty brutal chat with my girlfriend on the phone as I was sitting in the parking lot there, and it wasn't just about hope, but it's like having any idea that some future rearrangement of circumstances is going to make you happier is just going to keep you suffering, right?

BRIAN ADLER: Well the invisible thing is that like we think there's a problem and it doesn't even occur to us to question that fundamental assumption, we spend our whole lives just taking for granted that our fundamental belief that things should be different is true, and then we go about trying to make that happen, fulfill

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that injunction that we need to change things. And the part that we miss is believing there's a problem actually alters the way we experience the current situation, the current circumstances. So when people talk about the futility of seeking, that's essentially what they're pointing to is that as long as you believe that you have to achieve something in the future to be happy now, you're going to always be doing that, and the part that you miss is that if you weren't doing that, what's happening right now is actually fine.

TRIP: Okay, that's a good theory [Laughs].

WIZARD: It's beyond a theory, it's right on. The seeking for what's already absolutely with you, as you, of you, is silly, and that is a construction of a duality, instantaneously, which robs one of native vision immediately. It's a cornerstone in the sojourn of discovering what we really are, is that this hope thing...

BRIAN ADLER: It's like we look around, we experience ordinary moments where maybe we're hungry, maybe we wish we had more money, maybe we wish our girlfriend were nicer to us or something. And so we imagine that freedom, or happiness, or peace, or whatever, our conceived heaven, is when all of those things aren't the case. Like an orgasm that lasts forever, or an insight that lasts forever, or a relief from emotional tightness that lasts forever. But where does that ever happen, to who does that ever happen? The thing that we don't see is that what's right here always, just being aware, just being alive, just being conscious, is actually the thing we're looking for when we're not looking for it.

COLLEEN BLACK: You think that hope is an obstacle to happiness?

BRIAN ADLER: Absolutely.

WIZARD: Yes [Laughs], sorry.

TRIP: I was being a little facetious, I talked about it as a theory, but of course this is theory, it's all conceptual, but...

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WIZARD: And hope is fear.

BRIAN ADLER: Basically the only difference between hope and fear is that in hope you think it's going to get better, and in fear you think it's not. But in both cases you're thinking there's a problem with the way it is right now.

TRIP: All right. I want to ask you to help me with an obstruction I've had my whole life.

BRIAN ADLER: Sure.

TRIP: It's right on this topic, and you say that everything comes and goes, but actually there are some things that don't come and go in the entire lifetime of an individual. People that I know, in fact most people that I know, in fact almost everybody that I know from where I come from, they've enjoyed living in their home for example. My parents have lived in their home forever, and everybody in my community has lived in their home forever. I don't personally know anyone from my community that lost their home or got kicked out of it, or whatever, they managed to hold onto their house.

And I bailed out of the corporate world, and was making really good money and everything, I took a huge pay cut, and spirit put that in me, put that desire in me. And all I wanted to do was be of service and to live humbly, and to have this beautiful little sanctuary of a home. And so I hacked that thing, I mean hacked it, out of the dirt, and it was a tremendous amount of time, and all the resources that got made, all the very small resources that were made making like \$20,000 or \$30,000 a year, got put in that. And now I have this really deeply fulfilling nurturing little sanctuary of a home. And it's really the only thing that I can offer my kids because I don't have the money to take them on vacations like their friends go on, and all that. So it's just this one thing.

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And the Wizard talks about like, well Trip, whatever motives you is your God, so if money motivates you that's your God, or whatever. I don't have a desire for money, but I have this deep profound wish, if you will, to hang onto to this humble little thing that I scratched out of the ground. I don't want to lose that, and I can see that it's robbing me of peace, because there's probably not that much of a chance that I'm going to lose it, because I don't have to perform at some unbelievable economic tier to hang onto it. What about these little simple modest things that people feel are just normal little things that they ought to be okay with wanting to have in their life?

BRIAN ADLER: Well it's not that there's anything wrong with it, the desire for physical security is probably the most common for physical safety; it's probably the most common illusion or false God, like John was saying, that anyone has. And there's nothing wrong with it, except that it doesn't work. We were just talking about ageing, who maintains their safety and security? No one does. If happiness depended on that we'd all be screwed.

COLLEEN BLACK: It causes a lot of problems, because my father in law died yesterday, or the day before and there's this horrible, horrible family, it's like a nuclear explosion that has occurred in the past 48 hours of my life. And a lot of it is greed, and the needs for future security, and it's a volcano in my family, it's just awful. And I am very upset because it feels as though everyone is transparent now, and they're really ugly on the inside.

BRIAN ADLER: I don't think of it as a bad, in the sense of immoral thing, it's innocent. We think that our well-being, I would say that we're universally attracted to well-being, but we mistake what the source of well-being is, and we imagine that it's in stable circumstances, for example. And so we compete with one another for those circumstances, or we try to hold onto them, and what's invisible to us is when we believe that we need to be secure, and react to that belief by spending 90% of our time worrying about what's going to happen, dwelling on the future, or doing things that we don't enjoy. All the things that we do because we

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believe we need to feel safe and secure, we need to be safe and secure in our circumstances. What's invisible to us is that what we're actually suffering. We're not suffering the lack of security. We're suffering all of the things that we're doing to try to hold onto or create this security.

TRIP: Yes, for sure. That's what's going on in space over there in the clan right now.

WIZARD: Yes, Alan Watts wrote a book about one time called *The Wisdom of Insecurity*, which was one of the first texts I read.

TRIP: You are at something of a crossroads now, not entirely sure what realm you're going to be played in. One of the one hand, you have skills as a therapist, and on the other hand you have skills as a trader. You're tending toward the trading paradigm because you enjoy it, and because you have come to the conclusion there is something strangely honorable about simply making money, without the pretense of anything else.

The Wizard over here and I have a different take, for us work is far more fulfilling when we really care about the work itself, and we immerse ourselves into the creative process of building something tangible that uplifts ourselves and the others that we're building it with. Why is it, do you think, that simply making money for money's sake works for you, and for me it's a vapid undertaking in comparison to my labors of love?

BRIAN ADLER: Well actually both appeal to me for different reasons. When I was in graduate school in Boulder I met lots of authors, teachers of various kinds. Boulder's an incredible place where people who are making their living based on their accumulated wisdom and insight thrive. And it seemed sort of perverse like everyone was selling themselves, everyone was selling their wisdom, and it just seemed really weird, creepy and weird to me. And it was during the dot.com boom, to make a long story short, I thought to myself, if I made money in a way that was just explicitly about money, wasn't about something else, then I

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could let my love of connecting with people be just what it was, and it didn't have to be about selling them, that they needed something that I had, and if they paid me for it I could give it to them. Because not everyone does this, but there's this perception I think that goes on in the spiritual culture, what's the expression, people are trying to sell you your own wallet.

WIZARD: Yes. There are no models in this game; there are no models at all.

TRIP: Now you're my new friend and you've confided some very personal stuff with me, do you have a problem with me talking about that?

BRIAN ADLER: Oh, no, absolutely not.

TRIP: Okay. You were busted for what at the time was one of largest drug busts in Chapel Hill history [Laughs].

WIZARD: So that's what happened to my supply [Laughs].

TRIP: No wonder we've been dry for so long. And they sent you to Butner Penitentiary for two years. While you were there you described yourself as happy, which surprised and confounded your fellow inmates. How is it that you remained happy when your freedom was taken away from you?

BRIAN ADLER: It's a lot of what we were talking about with hope, and I think probably that was the first time in my life where I actually experienced what we're talking about. I was a relatively precocious, intelligent student at Carolina, and I had a lot of ambition for career, wealth, and what have you. And during the whole time that I was anticipating going to prison and then went to prison, there was a powerful sensation of all of that. I knew for sure that those things weren't going to be happening, at least not in the way that I'd imagined they would.

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And so all of the energy I'd been spending, and it's a tightening, it's like I want this to happen, and I want that to happen, and I think it goes on in the background for us and we don't even notice it. It all just stopped, and simultaneously to that I was beginning to read spiritual texts, Buddhists texts mostly, and it just occurred to me, wow, I'm experiencing what they're talking about. And I'm experiencing what they're talking about not because I'm achieving something or accomplishing something, but because I've despaired of that, and yet nevertheless here I am. That's the extraordinary thing, is like we're trained to think that we get what we want by going out and getting it, but the opposite is true. We get it by giving up the notion that it's absent.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Okay, let's keep going with some toughies here, he's doing great.

WIZARD: It's grace that the affirmation of the Buddhist teachings presented themselves at the very time to affirm your own right of understanding.

BRIAN ADLER: I really think that's the value of crisis, because I think for a lot of people these things become intellectual pursuits, but for me it was like water in a desert. So prison was an incredibly powerful actual experience of, wow, what's going on here has nothing to do with any objective. I mean, it has everything to do with what's going on in my head, and what's going on in my head actually much more determines how everything seems than any sort of objective reality, what's out there. And to get that in prison, it's like after I left everything... it didn't sustain itself permanently, but for a long time everything else was easy in comparison. It was like life's great, don't you know?

TRIP: Well you were a clued in undergraduate in 1995, because you wrote a paper about depression, you called it, *Opportunity for Deep Surrender Revealed in the Experience of Depression*, and in that paper... was it a thesis?

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BRIAN ADLER: Yes, it was my undergraduate thesis at Naropa in Boulder.

TRIP: You wrote, and I think this is worth reading, you wrote, "When I've admitted defeat in my every cell, given up fighting, being who and where I am, I have not found only collapse and misery, as I have feared, rather I've experienced peace deeper and more boundless than I ever knew through having life go my way. My heart-felt conviction is the true freedom resembles more a surrender to death than a victory over life".

BRIAN ADLER: Yes, that sounds pretty good. [Laughs]

TRIP: That's pretty good for an 18-year-old whippersnapper. Where those just words then, or did you actually...

BRIAN ADLER: No, no, that all was born out of... I don't really experience it so much anymore. I'm open to it, it's been a while, but I used to experience a lot of depression. And I would say though the one thing, the one effort I made consistently was I wanted to understand not only what I believed but also what the consequence of what I believed was. And I just over time started to become more sensitive that the consequence of believing I should be having a different experience was unhappiness, and the heart of depression.

It's interesting, because depression is a little bit wisdom, and wisdom mixed with like a self-absorbed twist. The wisdom of depression is that circumstances don't ultimately fulfill us, they don't, everything changes, we get sick, we die, people come and they go. And so the insight of depression is that it's all like sand castles dissolving in front of us, but the twist that makes depression hell is thinking that that's a personal failure, that it's not supposed to be that way, and in fact that it's not that way for other people. I think a lot of depression lies in thinking life is very different for all those happy people out there.

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WIZARD: So this brings up belief itself.

BRIAN ADLER: Yes, so that's the thing, is we make up these religions, and I don't mean like supernatural religions, or those too, but the personal religions like if I had more money I'd be happy, or if I had a more exciting career I'd be happy, or if someone loved me I'd be happy. And because I went through I would say so long a time where the circumstances I was in were so completely different than the ones that I'd imagined for myself. It's like eventually I was okay, I get the joke, I'm going to look around, and does it really need to be different? And that's when I started, I was telling you this the other day in the car, that to me grace is the discovery that happiness does not depend, truly and absolutely does not depend on circumstances. And that started to be a reality for me rather than a spiritual concept, because I went for so long in those circumstances that eventually I became willing to be curious, okay, does it really need to be different? Or is there something within me, is there something that I'm doing that's making it seem like a problem.

WIZARD: And grace may be any circumstance.

PAUL NAGY: You know when you talk to me about grace, one of my key words for understanding grace is it's your own awareness, not which you're aware of, that you're aware. And however when you're talking about grace and you're talking about depression, awareness can be there, but it doesn't necessarily mean you feel good.

BRIAN ADLER: Yes, absolutely.

PAUL NAGY: There's an energetic, as living people there's an energetic relationship and that we might like to change, see that's something you want to change, you want to change your energy field, you have low energy, you want to bring it up. You're overly nervous; you want to calm it down. But that's not your awareness; it's not your happiness.

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BRIAN ADLER: Right, I agree. The thing that I think we miss is that our desire to change it, our resistance to the way it is now, is holding it in place.

WIZARD: Absolutely.

BRIAN ADLER: It is.

WIZARD: Absolutely.

BRIAN ADLER: Our unhappiness is our resistance to unhappiness.

TRIP: You talk about surrender, and I want to go down a little deeper into this, you say, "This surrender must take place at our depths, it must happen bodily, our allegiance to struggle non-surrender, the effort to increase, to decrease, to maintain, and to get rid of, pervades the body-mind, it can be observed in our speech, movement and physiology. The intelligence of being who and where we are must awaken bodily; it may be revealed in a simple and extraordinary way, catharsis if it occurs is definitely not the point. But if we are to awaken for real we must change our relationship to our bodily felt experience literally", how does that take place?

BRIAN ADLER: Well like I was saying before, it's really just the shift. A lot of us imagine happiness as a feeling, happiness by whatever name, a lot of us imagine without really thinking about it that enlightenment is a feeling, it's a good feeling. So when we hold the concept that the thing we want is a specific thing, any time we're not experiencing that thing suddenly, or maybe not suddenly, we're going to be rejecting it, and that rejection feels like something. So the irony and the paradox is that the rejection is both the obstacle but it's also the gateway, because if you're resisting, and you reject the resistance, you're just going to be doing more resisting. That's way people are like, oh, I shouldn't do this thing that makes me unhappy, that never works, but what you can do is just feel it, just experience it.

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WIZARD: So how does that affect apparent choice? Is there a choice?

BRIAN ADLER: That's an excellent question. The way I experience it... see, part of this is that identity plays a big part of this, because what we are really referring to when we refer to I, is do I have a choice? What we're really referring is that habit of resistance. So like we say that the I-thought is just I, by the way it really shows up, is I need, I want. The resistance is the I. So is there a choice? I think what happens is in the moment the thing that we're running from is fully experienced, the sense of I dissolves. And because the sense of I dissolves the whole question of is there a choice, or is there not a choice.

WIZARD: The choice goes with it.

BRIAN ADLER: Right.

TRIP: Damn he's good.

WIZARD: That is good [Laughs].

COLLEEN BLACK: You mean there's no lack, from that perspective?

BRIAN ADLER: What I mean is that when we refer to ourselves, we're referring to the lack that we think is out there in circumstances, or in here in some missing feeling, it's not happening to us, it's something that we're doing, and then identifying with. It's our own doing.

PAUL NAGY: But you know it's actually really simple, when you're talking about the I, most people are talking about their ego, their conscious mind, as a construct, and that's where the resistance is. You settle in, and you stop and you just watch the constructs, and you're not putting anything into them, and then you notice that there's something that's floating there.

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BRIAN ADLER: The context.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, it's just floating there. And if you go into that, and just let it be, there's still a undesignated center that does stuff, but it doesn't do things as "I" am doing it, in other words you lose this identity. The identity is lost because it's part of the construct, right? But the Self isn't lost because the Self is the entire whole.

BRIAN ADLER: You mean self, big S?

PAUL NAGY: Yes, it doesn't have to be big S, if you like big S [Laughs]...

TRIP: So get to the point, Paul.

PAUL NAGY: That was the point.

TRIP: Okay, great. [Laughs]

BRIAN ADLER: Some people distinguish between ego and true Self, I don't tend to. I don't think it's necessary to talk about Self. It's much more interesting to me to talk about the discovery of false beliefs than it is to replace them with true things.

WIZARD: I hear that, I hear that. That was an aspect of Ramana Maharshi's teaching, he would just have you look at the belief of the I-thought without filling in, so that what was revealed was revealed directly without any window dressing on it. Right on.

BRIAN ADLER: Yes, then there's no limit on it. It's like it's not diminishing, it's actually that's how you fully appreciate it.

TRIP: Okay. You've become something of a master at something that I would like to be more masterful at, so I want to ask you a question. The Wizard here says that sexual intimacy is nothing more than biology, a mere bodily function. Intellectually I agree with him, but in reality I'm a serial monogamist, and my heart becomes deeply bound to my beloved resulting in anguish every

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time the deckchairs get rearranged for whatever reason [Laughs]. Right now the deckchairs are feeling like they're being arranged. I'm going through some of that now as once again the woman I'm in love with that I cannot seem to build a fully engaged life together, owing to circumstances seemingly beyond our control, so there's suffering there. And when I look at it honestly, I see that most of the suffering is over the loss of intimacy projected to be the case as each of us presumes the other will get back into another serially monogamist relationship. This has been our unbroken pattern for life pretty much. After much suffering you seemed to have stepped outside that pattern, you want to tell us how that was possible?

BRIAN ADLER: Well it was very similar to the experience I had in prison, showing me that happiness isn't what I thought it was, doesn't depend on what I thought it did. I divorced from my first wife in 2004, and was absolutely devastated, and really confronted this belief that previous to that didn't occur to me was a belief, I just thought it was the way that it was, that I need to be loved, or that I need to be wanted. And it was absolute hell; it was hell beyond really anything I'd ever experienced. And three or four years later I met a woman, Tikva who's now my current wife. And we met; we were actually living on an intentional community at the time. It's an interesting place, Twin Oaks Community, because unlike our culture at large at Twin Oaks, polyamory is really just as common, if not more common than monogamy. And so all the cultural norms we have that just one person would just be with one person, aren't really the case there. It's an extraordinary place, because it's sort of a closed community, a lot of things in the culture at large that we just take for granted are not viewed the same way there.

Anyway, so in the beginning of our relationship I was probably completely conditioned to have all the same assumptions that I'd had in my marriage. But really the only thing that we did differently, that we continue to do differently, which has made all of the difference, is that when we ever have the experience that there seems to be a problem "in our relationship", we don't stop

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there. When I say we don't stop there I mean each of us individually, but also it's how we spend our time together. We look at the belief that is motivating the problem, so for example for a long time for us it was she had the thought 'I want to be free, I want to be free to love whoever I love'. And I had the thought; 'I want to be loved exclusively'.

And all I can say is before this relationship I thought relationship meant, and I would have never said it like this, but I basically thought relationship meant having someone fulfill my expectations, that's what love is, I want you to agree with me, I want you to do what I want you to do. I want you to figure out what pleases me and do that. And I had really seen how that doesn't work, like where does that work? Who wants to do that? That's not how relationships actually work.

So from the beginning with some actually pretty intense issues, because the whole notion of polyamory was totally bizarre to me when I first heard of it. I just said, okay, I'm going to really, because I don't feel like I have a choice, I'm going to really look. Do I really need you to love me exclusively? And similarly it wasn't just me, she was doing the same thing with her own thoughts, and it's just like I was talking about before, what I began to notice over time was that my demands that the relationship make me happy were in fact, I'm sorry this has taken so long to say, my demands on the relationship that it make me happy were in fact the thing that was making me unhappy. And we wound up creating a life together that has been more fulfilling than anything I could have ever imagined. But it didn't happen because I made a list of what I wanted her to be like, and set about getting her to be that way. It happened because I decided I was willing to examine every single thought I had that said that she should be different than what she was.

TRIP: All the women are going to love you now.

WIZARD: I have to confess, I've been through that same school of fierce grace, and I concur. I hear you. And it's a bitch [Laughs].

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But to accept it, to accept it, because when you accept it, what real love is which is what we are, it's seamless, and that doesn't start flickering. And the desires are shown to be what they are, it's just desires. And that becomes self-evident, nobody has to tell you anything, it's self-evident. And I hear you, and I'm thankful for my own bitter fierce grace there.

PAUL NAGY: Your explanation of the issues that you went through in adapting to your current relationship was very similar structurally to what you're talking about beliefs earlier, right. And you said, but your prescription for beliefs was, and you gave your prescription for beliefs. Here you said you had to engage with these changes of belief, you see, and you worked with them, and you changed them, and in that way you had a stability, which will destabilize over time in a variety of ways, they're always unexpected. But that's the dance of love. And myself, I've been through umpteen relationships, none of them last more than a few months, because I'm such a jerk. And so I decided that in order to have a true and fulfilling love life, because I'm such a jerk, I had to learn that I had to go to the source of love, which is that abiding simple true awareness, and radical acceptance. That's the source, so I can love everybody but don't, as long as I don't have to relate, gee, don't ask me to do that, it's not for very long.

BRIAN ADLER: What I found is that's what relationship is great for, is it's a place, it's one thing to say like an affirmation, I am abiding in infinite love as the source or whatever, I don't. But to actually rest in our experience as it is which is what you're talking about, not just in an easy moment when we're in a cave or on a hill, or watching the sunset, but in a moment when our lover is telling us something that deeply insults our preferences and expectations about how things should be. In that moment, to be willing to notice that it's my own thinking about how things should be that is obstructing my experience of being, my enjoyment of life, it's got nothing to do with her.

I actually think they work hand in hand to the extent that I am resting in and relying on the enjoyment of my own existence, in

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every real moment, not just in the moments when I'm writing about it, or waxing philosophical, but in actual moments of actual life. That's where the rubber meets the road, and that's why I love the path of relationship, because those kinds of things come up all the time.

WIZARD: Love is not something we do, the I-thought thinks it can say I love you, and really the I-thought surrenders to be in love with, which is to be in that nameless truth with. That's always available, it gets back to when you hope for it, it pushes that away, it puts a construct that you're seeing, and it pushes that away. And if you're not pushing it away in any circumstance, someone mentioned recently that like in Japan they don't say I love you when they're in that moment, they say, it's loving, like it's raining.

BRIAN ADLER: Well that's why I think the beauty of relationship is not that love is created, but rather that all the habits of mind that causes me to miss it, to overlook it, get exposed.

WIZARD: Right on.

TRIP: Rumi wrote a poem that applies to what we're talking about, and I'm going to read it, you had it in your paper, and it was the very first thing in your paper there. It's entitled *Bird Wings*. "Your grief for what you've lost lifts a mirror up to where you're bravely working, expecting the worst you look and instead here's the joyful face you've been wanting to see. Your hand opens and closes, and opens and closes. If it were always a fist, or always stretched open, you would be paralyzed; your deepest presence is in every small contracting and expanding. The two is beautifully balanced and coordinated as bird wings". Beautiful.

BRIAN ADLER: One of the things I was actually thinking about just in the last couple of days that that poem speaks to, because I think a lot of us on the spiritual path imagine that this path is about being, it's different for everyone, but being loving all the time, being clear all the time, being insightful all the time. And that's paradoxically what destroys our sensitivity to presence is

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our very belief that we need to abide in being, fixates attention away from the presence of being.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, our imaginary Buddhas are really idols, and so are our imaginary selves, we think we are the constructs. But one of the things you were saying when you were talking about love and relationship, that in terms of working with it as a process, is you were describing in very simple terms the heart of practice in Buddhism, and which basically is that you maintain mindfulness of all situations. It's easy to stay mindful when everything is smooth and easy, and nobody's yelling at you. And then it's a little less easy when somebody's yelling at you and telling you what to do, and for some reason you have to listen to them.

But the thing is what you do is you are, well okay, there are situations here, some I like and some I dislike, but they're there. But you find this simple center, which is by itself, serene.

Now you also related another thing about the idea of the Self, and what I guess you're still influenced by Buddhism, the self is not a real thing, it's just another mask. And in some ways it is, the God image self that Jung talked about when he was talking about individuation. What's his name? James Hillman went out of his way to repudiate that the self was just merely a remnant of poly theism, we don't need them, we are all the Gods, and we don't have to be just one of them.

But what I'm really getting about it is that when you're living naturally in all those extremes...

WIZARD: The *Now*, right Now, is irrefutable. And the *Now* is the substratum of all, and *Now* is indivisible. Who can divide *Now*?

BRIAN ADLER: I want to add something to what John just said. The beauty, no matter what life situation you find yourself in, the beauty of just being led to where John was just pointing here, without any story, without any theology, without anything, it's kind of mysterious to me that we spend so much time talking

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about it, because I don't know about you, but I have to pull away to talk about it. The most beautiful thing is just that silent appreciation, so that's kind of speaking to what you were saying, Paul. I don't try to own it.

PAUL NAGY: Well, let's not put conditions on the unconditional. The *Now* is immediate, and it's also vast. And the *Now* is vast, but it doesn't necessarily mean that... And the *Now* is only *Now*, and at the same time it also includes all time, and abides no time.

TRIP: I have one last question for you, Brian, because we're running out of time. Because I'd like you to reflect on something that I go around saying that may not be a useful thing to be saying. You said that one of our obstructions, if you will, is that we have this feeling that we have to abide as presence, and if we're not doing it, then there's something wrong with us, or we're not really spiritual or something like that. And what I want to dedicate myself to, and what the show is dedicated to, is sort of if you will the popular realization of the fact that enlightenment, for lack of a better term, is really for everyone. And there are thousands of avant-garde sages walking around out there like yourself who get it, and who are deeply living this beautiful truth of who we are. But it does seem that there are these special folks, like the Ramana Maharshi's of the world who seem to "abide" of presence with a constancy that is somewhat unique, they seem to not blink that in constancy. And therefore they become these like perfect mirrors for people, like myself and John, because they're just absolutely clean, and they don't blink, and they're like rock solid.

And so the feeling comes up that there's this type of guy like Ramana Maharshi, who's got this constancy that's clearly not the case for me, and then creeps in these thoughts that there's really this difference between Ramana and me. I must not really get it, because Ramana can just stay there like a rock, and I'm fluttering in and out of this and that. If what you say is true that it's a false desire to abide as that, it's an obstruction if you will, how do you reconcile these two natural things, it's a kind of natural thing that comes up?

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BRIAN ADLER: I'm really glad that you're asking this question, I have a couple of different thoughts about that. One is I don't actually have any idea, and neither do any of us, what anyone else is experiencing. Ramana is easy to project perfection on. But when we project perfection, it's just like when we project flaw, and for a really long time that was my experience exactly what you're describing, where I would look at teachers like Ramana and think, I'm not having the experience that I imagine that he's having, that I imagine that I'm supposed to be having. And like I was pointing out before, just like everything else, just like thinking I need more money, thinking I need more abiding peace, is the vehicle through which I lose it.

WIZARD: Well, Ramana Maharshi was very ordinary, and he had a panic attack, he accepted it, which is what you're bringing to us today, is just acceptance. He accepted that, he didn't hope for anything different.

BRIAN ADLER: I think if there is anything to abide in, it's not abiding in some idea of enlightenment; it's abiding in the experience what we're already having. What's closer than that?

WIZARD: Ramana Maharshi was enrobed in deification by Kavyakantha, I think is how you pronounce his name, after the fact. Ramana never studied any religion, he didn't know the Vedas, he didn't know Sanskrit, and he didn't know anything about theology. He was just an ordinary guy, and after his conversion, he got lazy, his uncle got pissed off, ran him out. Ramana got his feelings hurt, and then things in his life happened, they were extremely human, but in time those things are lifted out of the script, as deification tends to form, especially in India where there's so much of that in their culture.

BRIAN ADLER: Right.

TRIP: Well, we've slap run out of time. Brian you are a magnificent guest, and clear and gorgeous and we know you would

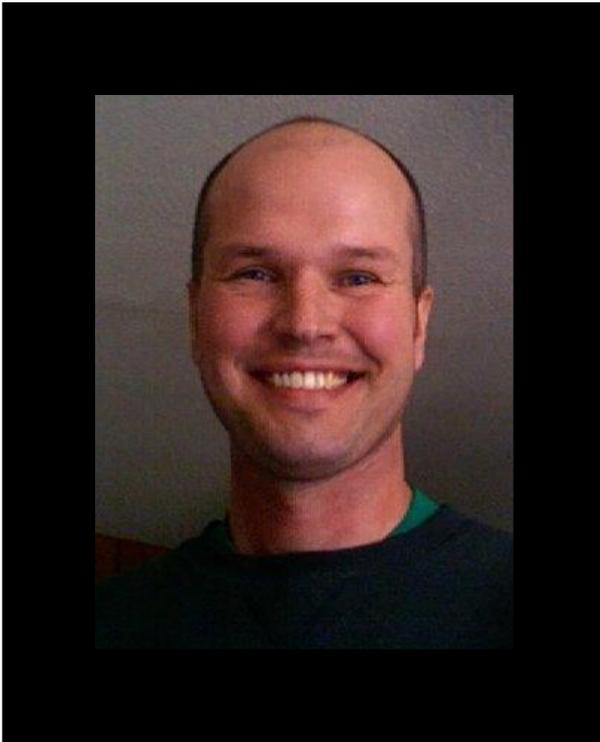
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be. And thank you Colleen and Paul for contributing as well, appreciate it.

BRIAN ADLER: Thank you.

TRIP: Thanks for coming.

BRIAN ADLER: Thank you.



Brian Ezzell

<http://brianezzell.tumblr.com/about>

TRIP: Brian Ezzell lives in the country outside of Cleveland, North Carolina, and spends most of his time raising bees and assisting in the management of a care home and gardening business in Arizona. If you visit Brian's very uncluttered and minimalist website you'll find his postings have a certain Zen quality. He attributes this to the happenstance of his mentorship with a dear friend and mentor, John Farley, which lasted 18 years. While

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Brian does make himself available for spiritual mentoring at no charge, he concedes he is not saying anything that has not already been said a thousand times by many before him. What he shares, he will remind you, is nothing more than the simple Truth being expressed by a person named Brian Ezzell.

With pleasure we welcome the simple sage, Brian Ezzell, to our program. Brian, thanks, welcome to *Conversations with Avant-Garde Sages*.

BRIAN EZZELL: Thank you very much, thank you very much.

WIZARD: I love your posts on your website; I think they're very clean and simple.

BRIAN EZZELL: Oh, thank you.

WIZARD: And very affirming.

BRIAN EZZELL: It kind of started off as just sort of a whim really; I felt the need to write actually a couple of months ago really [Laughs]. And I just a posting a day, and sometimes a couple of postings a day, but as I have a moment of clarity or something that pops in my mind, oh, well that sounds like a good thing to put on the blog, so I do. It's a lot of fun, I really do enjoy it, and it's affirming for me as well, it keeps me, I guess you could say, on the path in a way.

TRIP: Well I think your website is wall to wall jewels, what I love about it is there's nothing but jewels of wisdom on your website. I mean that's all it is. In fact those are such sparkling jewels, you attribute to various sages what they say, you give the quote and then you say who the sage is, but everything else, is that all stuff that just cropped up in your mind?

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes, that's right. You know, my mentor, John, I opened myself up when I was in college, I knew of him, but I met him through a friend of a friend, his name was Bill. Anyway, I just

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became more interested in different types of spiritual text and the *Tao Te Ching* always really spoke to me right from the very beginning. And I guess it was in one sense I just loved how minimal it was, it was just so clean to the point, and it was also, for a 20-year-old, it was a very small book [Laughs]. But I opened myself up to wanting a teacher, and low and behold this one particular person popped into my life, very unusual, he didn't fit the mould in any regard. But he spoke, as he always called it, it was STAR, Simple Truth Absolute Reality, and that's what he lived by.

It was 18 years, we had never been separated for more than 24-hours in that entire 18-year period. As a matter of fact he passed away at my house here about a month ago. Man, that was of course a very trying experience, I went from being his student to being his caregiver, and that was really quite an emotional time. But it was also something that it was a whole other level for me. He was not able to talk as much, and things like that. I don't know, I guess in some ways it pushed me to want to write, to express.

I asked him, I said, it was about a month before he passed, I said... I feel like I want to, as I open myself up to wanting to learn, I'm also opening myself to want to share. And I asked him what he thought about that, and he said, "Well when people start asking you questions, that's when you'll know". And I said, "Okay, that's good enough for me". But I felt the need to want to share my writings, just my thoughts, and musings if you will. And low and behold here I am on a radio talk show, which is pretty neat.

TRIP: Well one of the things that is noticeable about a sage is that when you come in contact with a sage, it doesn't seem to matter where in their book you might want to read, or where you kind of engage, there's a sensibility, there's almost a feeling that you get, and I got that feeling when I cruised through your website.

BRIAN EZZELL: Thank you, Trip, I appreciate it. Thank you.

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TRIP: So if I were to ask you what Zen is, and we'll start off with that, because you're a little bit Zen, you'd say it's a trick question. How so?

BRIAN EZZELL: Well Zen is, as I've said in one posting, Zen is not Zen. To try to explain it, it's almost better off to be silent, because Zen, if you get down to the root of it, it's a direct pointing to that which is. And if you used words to try to explain it, then you find yourself always missing the mark, you never hit it directly on, because there is no word for what Zen really is. Bodhidharma, who was the first patriarch of Zen, maybe there's some different groups of Zen who might think of somebody else, but Bodhidharma is pretty much the one who's considered to be the first patriarch of Zen. He didn't believe in reading a lot of scripture, or to do a lot of talking, and using a lot of words. Zen was always a direct transfer of the mind, if you will, almost on a telepathic level, which I thought was really... you don't hear that in other religions in some ways, you just don't hear about a direct transfer of this. All that a teacher can really do is you can't talk about it; you can't say well that's it right there, and go for it. You have to go through life and keep bouncing around until it happens. And it helps when you have a teacher who can kind of help you out with that.

John was not what you call, he was not a... he didn't go around saying that he was the Zen master, he said, "I'm just me". And he was always something different for everybody, but he was always just himself. But he never pointed to his spirituality or to God. He never said this is what you need to go towards, he just said, "Just be you, speak your Truth". And of course in the beginning you don't really know what that is, you just have to continue to work at it, so to speak, until you finally practically just give up [Laughs]. And then you find out that just being is simply enough.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Let me ask you about a little point of confusion for me. On your website, and I'm going to go to your website a lot because

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there's just great fuel there for conversation. You quote the Zen master Jayata, you say, "I don't seek enlightenment nor am I deluded, I don't worship Buddha, nor am I disrespectful. I don't sit for long periods, nor am I lazy. I don't eat only once a day, nor am I a glutton. I am not contented, nor am I greedy. When the mind does not seek anything, this is called the way".

Right, here's my point of confusion, and maybe it's not confusion, but maybe you guys can help me. One of the best pieces of advice that I've ever got from the Wizard over here is to simply be myself, and to be this natural thing, myself, without like over thinking it, but simply accepting it and letting it be, this thing called me, that's been very helpful. And I think that's great advice, but this thing called me doesn't walk this middle way, it sometimes goes completely slap bonkers greedy, gluttonous, and sometimes it doesn't eat anything, sometimes it goes for sex for a week straight, and then it doesn't do anything for a month. So I'm more of like a binge personality, and every time I come into Zen wisdom, there seems to be this moderation that's characteristic of the Zen master, and that's not who I am. So is this advice that to just simply be myself at odds with Zen?

BRIAN EZZELL: No, everything in moderation, including moderation [Laughs]. You know, Trip, I can identify with all of that, there's times where... I used to be a smoker, I don't attribute a deep voice to that, but 10 years ago I used to smoke and I used to enjoy two packs a day. And I didn't like the fact that I had to stop that, I enjoyed it way, way too much. And I didn't like the fact that I had to control that in any particular way. There are days where I want to eat a lot, and then there's times when I don't want to eat much at all. And I guess I don't try to think about it anymore. I don't over indulge like I used to in my younger years, I'm 37, I'm still young [Laughs].

But the fact of the matter is that, yes, it's just being moderate. It's not trying to think about should I do this, or should I do that, just be, and have the experience, that's what this life is really all about is simply having the experience. It's not about doing things

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completely right, or abstaining from one thing, and grasping for the other, it's being, and as my teacher would say to me, lighten up, it's okay just to be that which you are, and there's no need to try to strive to be something more perfect, because that's just duality working all over again, you're trying to be more perfect. You don't see a dog out there trying to be a more perfect dog, do you? You don't see a tree trying to be a more perfect tree, and yet they grow in all different types of ways, some lean over, and some go forward, and some are spindly, and some are mighty. And yet they are what they are, and they're perfectly happy to be that way I think.

So I don't see a need to over analyze our Beingness that we need to be something more or less than what we already are.

WIZARD: There are no role models, none. Nisargadatta chained smoked.

BRIAN EZZELL: Oh, did he?

WIZARD: Yes, that was his business, that's how he made his living was selling cigarettes or what they call beedis, which are just little cigarettes.

BRIAN EZZELL: My teacher, John, he smoked up until the last month that he passed away, didn't die of lung cancer, but he was quite the smoker.

WIZARD: No role models at all.

TRIP: So then we could say maybe that moderation tends to be a by-product of being, but then there's no hard and fast rule.

BRIAN EZZELL: That's right. Yes. Being will create moderation on its own if you will, it happens naturally.

TRIP: You wrote a little thing on being that I liked, you say, "The flower is still, yet it attracts the bee. The spider's web is still, yet it

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catches the fly. The flame is still, yet it attracts the moth. The hole in the ground is still, yet it fills with water after rain. Be still and realize your true purpose". As I read that I thought, wow, that is really profound and how true, and I also thought back to a time when those were just empty words to me. A bunch of things had happened before they ceased to become empty words, but after they became filled with just a bit of meaning, there was a willingness to experiment with that. Can you talk about that, you have to try that on; you can't just sit there and wait for the fly without experimenting in waiting for the fly, right?

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes, in my own experience you go through searching, and seeking, and trying to find different things, and there comes a point where you exhaust all methods.

WIZARD: Right on.

BRIAN EZZELL: I was reading something I believe that Adyashanti said, that was saying, he said that there was a man that was running, and he was running, and running, and running, and running. Until a guy comes up to him, probably a sage of some kind, and said, "Hey what are you running for?" He said, "I'm running to find stillness". And he said, "Okay, well it's just right around the corner, keep going, [Laughs], just keep going and eventually you'll find it. And if it's not around that corner then keep going down and turn another corner. It's just right over there", you know. And eventually you will get, in time, that person will get tired out, just plum tuckered, and will realize that the very thing they've been searching for was right there all along, all they had to do was just stop.

So, yes, I can certainly identify with that, I used to read all different types of text, and still do from time to time. But the desire to read more and to search for these different things, it's not that I found the answer; it's not that I have reached some supreme enlightenment; it's just that the desire has been lifted from me. It happens naturally over time I guess, you just realize that I don't

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need to go anywhere; I don't need to do any particular thing in order to just be, and to have that experience.

WIZARD: When Buddha searched, and searched, and searched, and searched, and he exhausted all his remedies, he sat under a tree and then he was answered.

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes, correct. That's absolutely right. And even today, there's times where seeking is really a habit, it's just a habit that we have been conditioned to do. A case in point, on that very poem that you read, it was re-blogged by a young school girl who I guess had her own blog somewhere, and she put underneath, "Yes, but they don't allow that in school" [Laughing]. And I thought, now that is really quite a profound statement, because in school, you're right, they do not allow just be still, just experience the wisdom of being still. I thought that was really quite... yes, in school it's all about learn, learn, learn, be a go-getter, you know, aim for the top, keep moving. But at no point do we ever teach our children that being still is a way of... it's a conditioning thing, it's what we do, it's what keeps this whole machine running I guess, the world that we live in today. And I guess they feel they're afraid that if everybody took a moment just to be still, that everything would fall apart, which then again maybe it would, maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing after all. [Laughs]

WIZARD: Yes, I think we start seeking food, and money, and sex, and when that falls apart on us, and we start seeking the spiritual answer and that as you so eloquently share, exhausting that tendency results in the revelation of stillness that was always already the case.

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes. Stillness has always been there, Truth has always been there, and that we don't really have to go anywhere at all, but people should not be afraid to move, you know. That if I move, and that I said at one point I think that just as a person can sit perfectly still and have a mind that is racing a million miles an hour, so can a person who is running a marathon be perfectly still in the mind.

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WIZARD: Absolutely.

BRIAN EZZELL: So it's not on the physical... I don't attribute stillness as being a physical bodily thing, we have movement, but it's the stillness of being.

TRIP: You know I had two experiences this past week where I felt like I was in kind of a dream. One of them was my child's high school homecoming football game, and she's a cheerleader. And then the other was a Bucknell lacrosse game over at UNC, and Wizard you just mentioned that you know you seek money, sex, and fame, or whatever and then it all falls apart or whatever, but kind of an aspect of the falling apart is actually wild perfect success in that area, because then what? It was dream like both of those events because it was absolutely perfect. These kids were in perfect uniforms, the field was perfect, everything was perfect, and it was like a dreamscape.

WIZARD: When the striving begins to falter, then everything is happening of its own volition, and then that synchronicity enjoins you and you see perfection everywhere all the time, every action is perfect.

TRIP: I hear you. It was funny, on the wall behind the players of the Bucknell game were two words, compete and swarm, these were the two words. And I was thinking, and then I looked in the stands and I looked at the parents of the students, and they all had a certain kind of flavor, all of them looked like super competitors out there in the economic marketplace. They had to be, it is \$35,000 a year to send your kid to that school, yes. And most of them were there, they'd all flown down to the game or whatever. And I was just thinking, you know, in a way their experiencing the kind of Zenith of success in a kind of doership model of competition, and swarming, and overcoming, and all of that. And on the one hand it was beautiful and perfect, and completely satisfying for them and for me to be at that game, but on the other hand I myself felt myself in a kind of a dream, you know.

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BRIAN EZZELL: And that is the experience that you were having. There is of course... I've dealt with through having a business that catered to people of that particular economic level, that there are a lot of people out there who are in that lifestyle who are very much afraid that all they have will be taken away from them. And that they are enjoying their life, but at the same time there's a real stress that comes from I'm afraid that my life is going to... that all this will be taken away from me. And so it's something that people that have money that they're afraid these things will happen.

For me the more that I become, having more enlightened experiences and such, the more I start to realize that my life has a life of its own [Laughs]. I don't have the control over it that I thought I did, and the more I go further along, I'm realizing how little control I really have, and that's fine, I'm starting to accept that, and I'm starting to really... I'm really learning. And there's a phrase that you will read in Taoism, that says, accomplish without doing. I always read that and I thought, how do people do that, how do they accomplish without doing? And it's about not doing it, accomplishment happens actually on its own in many respects.

Over the past month really it's been interesting how things that I thought that I needed to do, turns out that they were either already done for me, or that I didn't need to do it, or what have you. That starts to take on this level of perfection that I think that in some ways might be what we're talking about here, that life just does what it does, it's always about bringing balance into itself, and that there really isn't anything that I'm supposed to do to make it more perfect or more balanced. I might need to move something from here to there, but that's just life moving me, that's just life moving me, moving different things around from one point to another, that's me being a part of this wondrous thing that we have. And that just happens, that's not something that you can really just make happen, you just start to realize that more that you let go, the more that you let go of your control, or your desire for control, to aspire to higher things, the more you start to realize that life is just going to... life has a life of its own, and there's nothing that you can really change about that. But when you realize that you

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are life, then you start to do things that bring a balance and a harmony.

WIZARD: When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.

BRIAN EZZELL: Very right, very true.

TRIP: Like interviewers shouldn't share too much of his personal life, it's about you, but I had to sell this real estate project of mine a few months ago, and that was kind of the termination of my career, so to speak. But since that time I've been working harder than I've ever worked, but I've been working on stuff like that's near and dear to me, right, on my home, homestead. And there's no mental projection out more than a few days. So each day when I get up and I do something, it's what needs to happen that day, and sometimes what needs to happen that day is a result of a phone call that comes in that I wasn't expecting. For example, yesterday I did something that I wasn't expecting to do because I'd been borrowing a piece of equipment from somebody that's very valuable, and so they needed me to do something, and I said, sure I'll go do that for you so I can hand on to this valuable piece of equipment, right.

Anyways, people are reporting to me, and this has happened half a dozen times in the last month, that there's a kind of glow to me right now, or they can see this change. They can't put their finger on it, but they see this big upgrade in my persona, or my relaxation, whatever, a happiness level or whatever. And I would attribute it to the fact that I'm not merely the doer in the mental projection that I was four months ago, trying to bring a real estate project to successful conclusion as a guy called Trip. So I just wanted to share that because I think...

BRIAN EZZELL: That's interesting, we kind of parallel in that way, I just got a call yesterday as a matter of fact that I have to... there's a real estate thing that I have to take care of in Montana, and it's nothing palatial, by any stretch of the imagination, but it's just a small rental that I have there, and I've been meaning to try

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to sell it for some time. But just yesterday I got the call that I should really come up there, but it'll be a loss less expensive if I go it myself, rather than the buyer try to hire someone to do it. So I'm like, oh, well, okay then, I really don't want to go to Montana right now, it is winter time up there, you know [Laughs]. But at the same time I say, okay, I'm open to it, I don't have... since my mentor has passed on, has crossed over, I don't have... that was such a large segment of my life and time that was given, you know, for at least very much over the last five years, that I don't have that as a hindrance, so to speak, for me being able to go somewhere and do things.

So I'm like, okay, well, I guess I'm going to need to make some plans here, I guess I could even go next week. And that's a long trip, that's a three-day trip for me to drive up there, and spend a month and then come back down. But I looked at it and started getting a piece of paper out, and organizing things, and if it's supposed to happen then I'm going to do it. I'm so open to either just doing whatever it is that I need to do. But John used to joke about this, my John mentor, he would always say when it came to his own life, he was always the last to know. And I'm starting to realize exactly what that really means, because I'm finding that the more I go into this, the further I go along, I really don't know jack [Laughs]. And yet it's like the feeling is kind of like, at least to me it is, Trip, that the feeling that I'm having to kind of like you're floating on your back in the ocean, and there's all kinds of things in the ocean that want to come up and bite you or swallow you whole. And yet laying on your back there just staring at the sky and you've got the water and you're bobbing up and down, and you have completely surrendered to this magnificent humongous ocean. That feeling can really be a bit unnerving at times, you don't know how to really process it, but eventually you get to trust it.

TRIP: You're listening to *Conversations with Avant-Garde sages*, our special guest today, Brian Ezzell, is a... well you don't really call yourself a spiritual counselor, but you're available for counseling, and just an ordinary guy living in Cleveland, North

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Carolina. You know, I've notice the kind of flipside of this not knowing, not knowing is a kind of vulnerability. And you write on your website, you say, "Tremendous power is realized when one accepts vulnerability", so there's power in this not knowing, right?

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes.

TRIP: Can you talk about that?

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes. Vulnerability is kind of the peeling away of the onion so to speak, you know, you're constantly having layers, upon layers of your persona that seems to be being stripped away by the veils that you have thrown up, or that you have been conditioned and taught to throw up, are being stripped down and ground into flour it seems like at times. But the vulnerability, you know, if you look at... well just take a case in point, you can take a small sampling of a tree that is out in the woods somewhere, and it's a very, very small seedling, and it's vulnerable, and yet it grows to become a magnificent humongous tree. And there are so many examples in nature where vulnerability seems to have such a protective strength to it.

A young calf that is born out in the wild, you know, does not have a scent to it and for some reason if it just stays still, oddly enough, that predators will not even notice it. and vulnerability and stillness are really very much conjoined, it could be also considered one, because we believe, we're taught that being active, being strong, throwing yourself out there, having a really strong momentum is the cure-all for so many things in this world. And I think that's one thing that we're finding out is that that kind of momentum doesn't last forever, and that it actually peters out. But that things that are still, things that are vulnerable, they have a tremendous power about them. I don't practice martial arts, but it's something that I've heard that is taught in martial arts is when you're still, you don't make the first move so to speak, you wait for that first move to be made, and then the move comes naturally to defend yourself.

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So I think there's a lot of examples about where vulnerability comes in, and how much power it really wields. And I can't really tell you how much power that really is. I use the word power because I can't think of another word for it; strength would be a good word also.

WIZARD: It's the inevitability of the universe where one is still that's the power, and it's unobstructed. Thy will, which is not my will, but the will of the universe, is the whole universe acting in unison. And its power knows not the dilemma of apparent choice, it just is. And to go up against it [Laughs]...

BRIAN EZZELL: Is really a futile thing.

WIZARD: Yes. [Laughs]

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes, resistance is futile.

TRIP: You've got some great little nuggets on your website; I can just go all day with them. Here's one I like, you say, "You are here to sense this world, not to make sense of it". That's beautiful. Here's another one, "The distance between heaven and earth is one thought".

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes, that one came to being, that statement, was the day after my mentor passed away, I really felt that even though we always... he and I always said that we were one, and from the get go, we are one. It didn't fully register; I mean I always knew that, there was many times when we would finish each other's sentences, and all that kind of stuff that happens when you live with someone for so long. But, yes, after he passed I realized that he's still very much... Let's put it this way, I feel more at one with him than I ever have, and that was a bit of a revelation, I didn't expect to have that particular feeling. But I realized that oneness transfers beyond, so to speak, this life, that heaven, or Nirvana, or what have you, is right here, right *Now*. If we do have a thought, that thought, if we think it, it can seem like it is a billion light years

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away, but when we are still in the mind, and there is no thought, you realize that it's right here right *Now*.

WIZARD: Yes, when the form has gone, when someone passes, then there's absolutely no separation. The communion is always very profound when a very close one passes, and then that bodily form is no longer there, we feel that oneness, that presence, unobstructed.

BRIAN EZZELL: And another thing too, John, was that helping someone to cross over, which is something I had never done before, and to do this with someone that has such a profound mark on your life, I came to realize it's one of the most intimate things that you can possibly experience with another human being. A friend of mine, Trista, said that the two greatest experiences that you can share with someone is when they draw their first breath, and when they take their last. And, yes, that really was a profound experience for me to be there, and it was just the two of us and our dogs that one evening. And the oneness was palpable. There's time where we can intellectualize oneness, and we can talk about it on a certain level, and there's times when we really feel it, and we are it, so to speak. And that was one of those moments, but, yes. I lost my train of thought there.

TRIP: Well it was a good train. Now you say when the student is ready the teacher will appear, and then you added a corollary to that which I really enjoyed. You said, "When the student is ready, the teacher will leave". Was the death of your mentor...?

BRIAN EZZELL: That's what brought it up, yes.

TRIP: The leaving of your teacher. You're obviously a very wise man, you appear to me to be quite established in "That", did you not feel yourself to be until he died?

BRIAN EZZELL: You know, there was quite a length of time in our relationship where we didn't talk about spiritual issues, I could probably say for the past 10 years we didn't really have sit down

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meditations or discussions on really in depth topics. It was such a day in and day out casual affair, which can happen when you're living with someone, you just sit there and you watch *Survivor*.

The oneness that we had was in dealing with life together, that's what was so profound about it for me, and then there were times where in the last five years was where we had just basic conversations. But he was getting to be hard of hearing and so when people would call I would start conversions with them, and sharing my Truth, and helping them get through certain situations. And so it gradually went in that direction where I started to sort of taking over the helm so to speak of the business, and what have you. But I never said to myself, well I'm ready to go out and do this on my own, so to speak, or I don't need to have his guidance in any way. I didn't push him away, nor did I try to hold onto him. And so that's basically how that happened. But it did feel like, I guess this is what's happened, I didn't want to say, I'm ready, but that's for others to say I guess in some ways, not necessarily myself.

WIZARD: There's the weaning in the divine providence that comes when you're ready just like when you're ready the teacher appears, when you're read the weaning occurs. And it takes many different forms, death is a primary form. But there is a weaning.

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes. I definitely feel like that's what the case was, and I'm more than happy with the way it worked out.

TRIP: It's hard to find anything on your website that doesn't ring true, and I'm not saying that this doesn't ring true, but here's something that I want to ask you about. You said, "You cannot be unaware", I get that, you say, "You can try to ignore it but awareness burns through those veils over time. Ignorance is futile". Now ignorance for the person who's maybe been pricked with the Truth of who they are and some experience might be futile, but are you saying it's impossible for anyone to remain ignorant?

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BRIAN EZZELL: Yes.

TRIP: So the like wife-beater, he's not going to remain...

BRIAN EZZELL: Up until the moment when he passes away.

TRIP: Ah, okay.

BRIAN EZZELL: I feel like eventually when death occurs you're going to find out real quick, aren't you? [Laughs]

WIZARD: Death was true all along.

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes. It doesn't matter... no, there's no timeframe in there, you're going to find out about this one way or the other, and that's all there is to it. [Laughter]

TRIP: Hey, here's something you said that really resonated with me, and it was very comforting, so I want to share it. You say, "When I experience things that are beautiful, I say, wow that is very beautiful and wonderful. It is still duality. When I experience things that are threatened I say, while that is threatening, it is still duality". I don't know that's comforting.

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes. I say that in a sense, I don't go around saying, well that's duality, that's duality, but duality and oneness are one. To say that oneness and duality, you could talk about them in conceptual ways, that's dualistic thinking as well. But first you learn about duality, and you learn... first you don't know anything about duality, you don't even know what oneness is, you just go through life and you're just okay, life sometimes it sucks and sometimes it's great. But then you learn about duality. And then after that you learn about oneness, you realize oneness. And then there's a point in time when you need let go of both of those, and just be. And that to let go of the concepts that maybe we run the risk of always, just because we use the human language, and we talk about things, we do have concepts.

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But there are times when even when I'm going through something, and it's just something, it's like tsunami of total crap is coming my way, and you can just see it, it's just a lot of stuff. And so many times this happened where it just crashes right down at your feet and it doesn't get a drop on you, you see it as duality. Now that's not to say that I haven't gotten wet, but the only reason why I did get wet was because I peed my pants. [Laughs] It's just that life will come at you and throw all kinds of just interesting things, some very beautiful, and some that are absolutely horrendous.

WIZARD; Big time!

BRIAN EZZELL: And you have to look at more objectively if you will, and just say that's duality, it is duality being duality. It's the nature of duality to do this, and I'm one with all of this. But at the same time I don't have to be subject to it, and so it's a way of comforting myself as well, I'm glad you found comfort in it too.

TRIP: Well it's also comforting to me that here you are, an ordinary guy that raises bees, and you live in Cleveland, North Carolina. You're only 37, did you say?

BRIAN EZZELL: Yes, 37.

TRIP: And you're incredibly established and clear, and I think that's tremendously comforting. You're one of the people that we wouldn't have known about if there hadn't been an Internet that the Wizard would have referred to as a Godflower, or one of the thousands of silent sages nobody every hears about. You're the perfect example.

BRIAN EZZELL: Well that's very humbling, Trip, thank you. That's really humbling.

BRIAN EZZELL: This is really quite a marvelous thing that you guys are going, and it's great to be able to share wisdom and put it out there, because the airwaves might not be able to reach

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everybody, but through the Internet you can reach God knows how many people out there.

WIZARD: And we do keep archives posted, so folks can go back on their own time.

BRIAN EZZELL: Oh, yes, I've listened to a few of them. I don't have the most wonderful Internet connection in the world, seeing that I live out here somewhat disconnected. I'm about 1,000 feet away from being connected to the real world when it comes to Internet. So I have to deal with a certain amount of bandwidth and all that.

TRIP: I don't have too many more questions that I've got for you, but I did have one here. Your teacher once mentioned to you something about a piece of cloth that was hanging out of your dresser. And it was at a time when you were a bit stressed out and there was a lot of clutter in your life, and the cloth hanging out of the dresser was kind of symbolic of the clutter in your life. And there was a lesson there on mindfulness. And my question for you is, well, maybe you could tell us a little bit about mindfulness, but how does mindfulness occur without thinking? Now a little while ago we talked about how the distance between heaven and earth is just one thought, so what's the difference between mindfulness and thinking?

BRIAN EZZELL: Mindfulness is experiencing without thought [Laughs]. It's to be aware of... we go through life in so many ways, without even being aware of what we just did two minutes ago. And it's not that you need to be able to hold on to that, it's just that you need to be aware of what it is that you're doing. And a lot of times whenever I don't feel completely quite right, I will look around and sure enough there is clutter somewhere, either I didn't do my dishes, or I left some clothes in the washing machine, or something like that, I left something undone. And all that my objective is to try and bring harmony for today, I'm not trying to bring harmony in for tomorrow. I just want to make things harmonic and balanced as best they can be in the time that's

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allotted, to bring things to a level of harmony. And I do that by being mindful and bringing things to completion, I don't go and just do something halfway and then start going on to something else. If I do, whenever I did do that, John would come up and say to me, now you left undone, that undone, and that undone, and then we need to sit down and talk, because something was bothering me. And it can also go the reverse in that thing there, you can leave things undone and those things will stick in your mind. Like for me I cannot get out of bed without making the bed first thing in the morning, it is something that he told me to do, and it is devotion almost now. But to make my bed is starting my day off with success. Doing something and completing it, it's going back to what in Buddhism where they said, "You finished eating our rice? Clean your bowl". And so those are the things that we need to be mindful of so many different little small things that we do in our lives. And you will realize that the more that you do it, the more that it kind of becomes a habit so to speak, that it generates peace, it generates a certain amount of... it puts a little bit of order in your chaos, and you won't carry around the stress because the clutter in or around you is cluttering your mind, and vice versa.

TRIP: Well anyone that's listening to our program, I encourage you to visit Brian Ezzell's website, it's www.brianezzell.tumblr.com And you'll find everything on there is wonderful. Also Brian makes himself available for consultation on a donation only basis, and sounds like he'd be a good guy to talk with. So we've only got about one more minute, Brian, is there anything you want to share?

BRIAN EZZELL: Well, no, actually, thank you very much, John, Trip, I really do appreciate this, it's been a really lovely time. And look forward to doing it again some time.

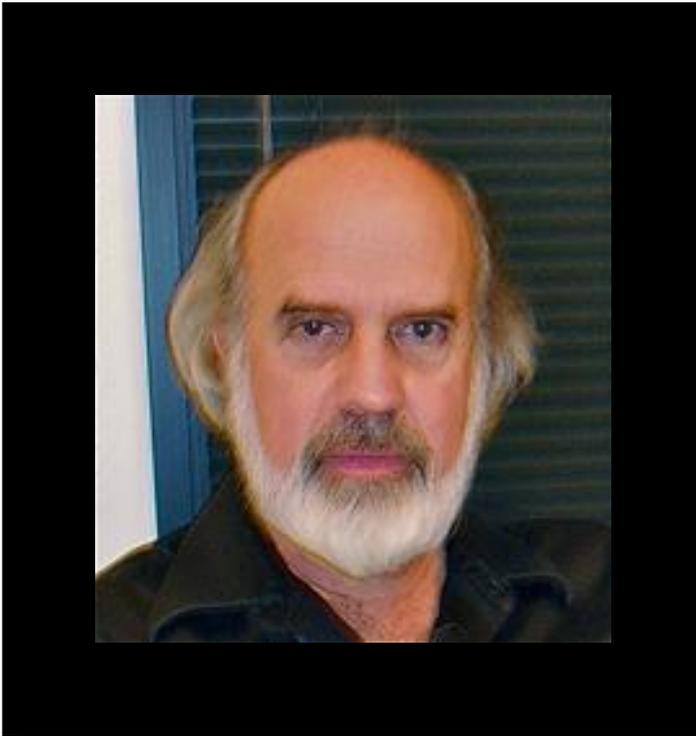
WIZARD: All right.

TRIP: Okay, thank you so much.

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BRIAN EZZELL: Well, listen I'll let you guys go, you have yourselves a good day. Okay, take care now.

WIZARD: Ok, brother. Thank you.



Chuck Hillig

<http://www.chuckhillig.com/>

TRIP: Chuck Hillig is a modern spiritual teacher, author and licensed psychotherapist whose clarity of expression has earned him the admiration and praise of many notable writers and lecturers. Chuck writes personally and directly about the essence of non-dual spirituality and presents its astonishing Truths to the average reader in ways that are totally unique, completely accessible and absolutely life-changing.

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Using his studies in both eastern philosophy and western psychology, Chuck's four-book enlightenment, *Quartet*, presents a world view that shows his readers how to fully live a truly enlightened and authentic life in the 21st century by waking up to who they really are.

So Chuck, I'm compelled. To go further than that right up and acknowledge you as the self-realized human being that you are...

CHUCK HILLIG: Thank you for that nice introduction and after listening to it, I definitely want to hear what I have to say! [Laughter]

TRIP: I watched you in your video interview on *Never Not Now* and I just want to say that you have amazing comfort ability in your own skin. You have a mental CD-ROM library of personal experience and teachings that you apparently have absorbed over the last 42 years since you had your awakening. The net of that is that when a person is asking you a question, after a while they realize that you're absolutely not going to be giving back some BS answer or what have you and so the ego relaxes; it's not the verge of a contraction and so that person that watches you dispense that amazing wisdom can relax into that wisdom and merge with it, and that's great teaching.

CHUCK HILLIG: Well, thank you for that. That's a very enthusiastic endorsement and I hope that I also did that when I was doing psychotherapy full time for 30 years. But I've come to a place, years ago, where I – in fact I just posted this on Facebook because I wanted to throw that out there – and it's just four simple words, and I like to live my life like this. The four words are; abandon certitude and embrace ambiguity.

TRIP: Yes; a good teaching to live by.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes it is...it is. It's that certitude that locks us in when we say "I know exactly what this is about," without thinking about all the things that you're not pointing to.

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TRIP: After encounters with thick and ponderous books on spirituality, you decided, before writing your first book, to write down all the words you did not want to use. And I have to say, it really shows because there is not a single word in any of your books that is not totally accessible; there's no spiritual mumbo-jumbo or eastern inscrutability in here. That's quite a feat.

CHUCK HILLIG: Thank you. Yes, that was the driving force when I created the first book. I had gone to the Bodhi Tree, maybe some of your listeners are familiar with that, it's like the number one metaphysical-philosophical bookstore in Los Angeles, and I would wander up and down the aisles and I would see all of these books and they were 600 pages with many appendices and many footnotes and I said well, if the Truth that they're pointing at is truly simple, then how come people aren't putting it in a very simplistic, easy-to-understand format? So that's when I went home and I said I do not want to use these words, these words tangentially spin the listener and the reader out to other places that I don't want them to go to. I prefer everybody to be on board as we move from this page to the next page and I don't want to lose anybody along the way so that at the end of the book they're getting what I'm pointing at. That's why I've used it for all of my books. I'm very much of a minimalist, a spiritual minimalist; I like to describe myself as because it just seems to be the way to go.

TRIP: I think it is the way to go. One of the people that called in to the interview that I watched had been blown away by your incredibly slim little volume *The Way It Is*. When I got your books from your publisher to review, my ego, which is still obviously in full bloom operation said, "What are these baby books I've been sent here?" Even when I first cracked the books initially in the first few minutes of reading through them there was such simplicity to it, my ego wanted to dismiss it, but as I got deeper into it, the richness in that simplicity just blew me away and it spoke to me right where I am right Now. It was amazing. Fewer words are powerful, isn't it?

CHUCK HILLIG: I think it is and that's always been what my focus is; I like to take like a great Truth that separation is illusory and to distil that down into just a few key words, a few key concepts that are graspable. People have less resistance to all of the preponderance of words that they've been subjected to. So many of your listeners I'm sure have read all these books and all the chapters, and gosh, there's just so much stuff there. I'm less interested in giving them new content. I'm more interested in seeing if they're willing to hold the content of what they know in a different context, because when you change how you're looking at things, the things that you're looking at will begin to change also. So the contextual shift, that's what I'm after. Not so much giving them more stuff to prod out at the next cocktail party or the next metaphysical gathering saying, wow, I learned this and now I can do that and now I meditate over here. No, no, no, I'm more interested in changing people's context of how they see themselves in the world in general and themselves in their heart of hearts in particular.

TRIP: An interesting thing that you did as a writer, that I don't think I have seen before, which is how you took a little leap of Faith in that book, *Looking For God*, where you said what the heck and you put a hole in the middle of the book and constantly used the wordless hole to make your point in the book; that was pretty cool.

CHUCK HILLIG: Thank you. I had gotten to a place where I said, "Well, words can just go so far. Sooner or later they're going have to go into the void, into this nothingness, into the emptiness." So I wrote this book and for the people who are not familiar with it, it is actually a picture of the Sistine Chapel that I'm sure everybody is familiar with, the old picture of God the Father and Adam; they're touching index fingers. Well, we digitally separated that about an inch and then drilled a one-inch hole between their index fingers so that both of them are pointing to the void. The name of the book is *Looking for God: Seeing the Whole* – and that's spelled w-h-o-l-e – the *Whole in One*. And as you indicated, Trip, all of the pages are pointing to that (w) hole and encouraging

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people to go in there and see for themselves and not to take my word for it. I don't want people to trade in their beliefs for what they think may be my beliefs. I want them to go and experience it for themselves because if it's coming from me to them, then it's more of a matter of belief and this is not about belief.

TRIP: I hear you, and I'm so eager for you to meet the Wizard and hang out with the Wizard because I think the two of you have the same approach.

WIZARD: We're first spiritual cousins.

TRIP: You even have like the same like physical structure; you've got the same like heads and faces. You're both handsome devils, yeah.

CHUCK HILLIG: Thanks for that.

TRIP: I would love for the two of you to get together sometime. Wizard, you should check out on his website, he has his own quotes and they're quite extensive quotes.

WIZARD: I would need to move some of them over.

TRIP: Yeah, they're really good quotes he's got on there. One of your things, you talked about "seeing the whole in one" in the book and one of the comments you make in one of your books is that you say, "People know about God but they don't know God."

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, they have this experience that they are separate from God and that they know all this information about God. But that's part of the illusion and I remind people, you cannot get closer to God with your sanctity and with your information and with your knowledge. You can't get closer to God with that nor can you get further away from God with your depravity and debauchery, I mean there's no moving towards God, there's moving away from God. How can who you are really

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change it all, really move it all? It can't. You are that, you are what you are seeking; you are who you are looking for.

TRIP: Exactly. I got to tell you, you're book, *Seeds for the Soul*, I highly recommend people go out and get *Seeds for the Soul* because it just speaks to you on every page and every page stands alone and every sentence stands alone and it's just packed full of amazing wisdom. One of the things that you say and that spoke to me was that a person's spiritual life can't begin until they give up their attachment to the telling of their past story over and over again about this or that that happened to them.

I mean, how true that is and it's pretty much – have you noticed when you go to a conventional cocktail party or something like that – that's what human beings want to do all the time is to recite their stories.

WIZARD: The storyline paradigm.

TRIP: All day long ?

CHUCK HILLIG: They become their story, but the way through it is just to let go of that telling and that great desire to tell it about how they are right and how other people have wronged them in some way. So they live in the past and with that it takes them away from this present moment which is really all that there is. The past doesn't live into the present and the present doesn't move into the future. This moment is really all that there is. But if they're talking about the past, they're talking about something that is not; that is not present, that is not real. This moment is real. This is it.

WIZARD: Right on.

TRIP: Right on, so we're going to immediately break that rule. [Laughter] Because we know that rules are made to be broken because I think that your moment of awakening back in 1969 that happened around that table, that you couldn't make imperfect and

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then later the people down at the bottom of the mountain – could you just briefly go over that story because it really touched me and gave a very lucid description of what it's like to shift from being agitated by the way the world is to just being okay with things in a very simple way. Do you want to tell that story?

CHUCK HILLIG: Sure. I had born and raised a Catholic and went to Catholic grade school, high school, university. I was married as a Catholic and I had kids back east and then my marriage fell apart because my now ex-wife was not comfortable in dealing with somebody who was into eastern philosophy when she had thought she signed up for a fundamental Christian-Catholic dude.

So I was out in California, I'd been reading everything I could on Hinduism and Buddhism and Taoism and Zen. The book that really shifted me, way back when in my mid-twenties, was Siddhartha by Herman Hess and I was alone up in the mountains near Mt. San Jacinto which is the mountain right above Palm Springs. I was sitting there and reading all this stuff and I went out on a walk. I was just walking, like a hike in the mountains and suddenly everything just stopped. Everything just ended at that point. My whole life both exploded and imploded at the same instant and I was not there. The mountain that I was standing on was not there; nothing was there. Somehow from that I was able to move back into where I had parked my van at that point and I was reeling from this experience from this great opening and I sat down there at the table in my little van and I was seeing this whole table filled with – I was smoking at that time – and there was wine glasses and papers and I was writing furiously all the time, but the table looked like it was totally a mess, but I looked at it carefully and it seemed like it was absolutely perfect. Words can't describe how perfect all of that seemed.

I looked at this pen and looked at this wine glass and I looked at the cigarettes over there and I deliberately tried to make it go away, to mess up this perfection. I moved things around on the table and no matter where I moved things; it was just always going from one perfect place to yet another perfect place. I was crying I

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was looking at it, I said, “This is just mind-boggling. Nothing is ever imperfect. Everything is exactly, precisely the way that it is and that’s perfect the way that it is.” It was such a relief at that point because previous to that, I was going, “Well I have to do this,” and “This is not right,” and “I don’t have a job and I don’t have a place to live and I left everything behind,” blah, blah, blah; , the story of that. Then I remember several days later I drove on down the mountain and was talking to people and people would come up to me and were thinking that I was stoned because I guess I was still in that an altered state.

But then people would talk to me and I was stunned – and that’s the only word that I can appropriately use – stunned by how well and perfectly they knew what they should be saying to me. They knew their lines. It’s almost like everybody has a script and they were reading their script and they knew the pauses and the inflections, they knew the stage directions, the gesturing with their hands and getting up and moving and exiting stage right. I was stunned by this whole thing was a great play and that this play truly emanated from within the heart of who I am; it just poured forth like some cornucopia of delight and it was all being present and manifested there just for my own growth and my own edification. It was beyond mind-boggling. My mind was gone. It wasn’t even there to be boggled.

WIZARD: Reminds me of the Moody Blues song, A Question of Balance: And he saw magnificent perfection.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, true and that was beyond belief; there you go.

WIZARD: Right on, well said.

TRIP: I want to offer up a little possible consolation though. I know that there are people out there that are looking for an enlightenment experience of that proportion and they feel that they haven’t had it and so they feel lacking and they feel a little searching. I just want to say I don’t think maybe it looks like any

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one particular thing. Now both you and the Wizard dissolved away during that experience, but for myself I would say that when I woke up, the sense of me as a separate person with a separate sentience located in my cranium, that dissolved. But there was still an awareness of my body as an apparent object; no more solid maybe than the room or anything else; no more mind. But the idea of it as separate, that dissolved away. I just thought I'd throw out there maybe for people who feel that they haven't been enlightened, that maybe they have simply in the experience of their lack of separateness.

WIZARD: Your window pane is pretty clear. Mine needed dynamite. [Laughter]

CHUCK HILLIG: Well, the greatest obstacle according to Ramana Maharshi to enlightenment is to get past this idea, this obstacle, and this belief that you're not already enlightened.

WIZARD: All right!

TRIP: Speaking of Ramana Maharshi, this is something the Wizard and I got in really big trouble with a friend of ours who's the grand-nephew of Ramana Maharshi, his name is V. Ganesan.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, I know of V. Ganesan, I've never met him.

TRIP: Well we were up in the mountains and we got into some serious trouble up there.

CHUCK HILLIG: What happened?

TRIP: We said that basically there was no difference, in essence, between Ramana Maharshi or Hitler, or Pôl Pot and Christ. I mean, is there?

CHUCK HILLIG: No. [Laughter] Well it's like, remember, you read the book with the book and the hole in it – I said these wonderful people like Mother Theresa and Mahatmas Gandhi,

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they come out of the void and then you flip the page and there's Hitler and Pôl Pot and Stalin coming out of the same place. Void produces all of it, from the greatest heroes to the greatest villains.

And the author, an author doesn't hate his villains and loves his heroes. The author, the cosmic author needs the villains in order to help provide an opportunity for the heroes to act heroically. We all need that. It's part of the great drama. Without the villains the heroes are like unemployed heroes; they need to have some struggle and that's the drama, and that's what the cosmos loves to do.

WIZARD: I appreciate all the costumes. I'm not a uniform guy. I like the kings and the beggars.

CHUCK HILLIG: There you go, I do too. They come from the same source.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: One of the things that you offer up in your book, for those who just can't wrap their heads around how that mayhem could be okay, you've got a trick. You say, "Be an appreciative audience to whatever shows up."

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, that's a very important concept.

TRIP: You say "If you go to war with life, life goes to war with you, so take yes as the default position." This is a very core element of your teaching. Do you want to expound on that a bit?

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, I've come to really embrace the fact that, 'yes' needs to be the default position. Not yes, okay, with smacks of resignation and no tolerance and no, no, not at all. An enthusiastic, filled with life gusto-exuberant thing of "Yes! I just love life exactly the way that it is." So you say yes to your yeses, you say yes to your no's. You don't resist anything. You don't even resist your resistances. The last thing that you say to yourself,

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though, is yes, I embrace it exactly in totality exactly the way that it is. No exceptions, not one exception.

WIZARD: No models.

CHUCK HILLIG: No models at all. You just say yes to it. See, it's only the ego that says no. It's the ego that superimposes something on top of it, saying, "No, things should not be this way. Things should be a different way. Or, I know what should be happening; I know what should be unfolding." Well, I'd like to posit that maybe you don't. Maybe things should be just the way that they are.

TRIP: Right, and you say, "Things always work out as soon as you give up your idea of what working out is supposed to look like."

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes.

WIZARD: Yes.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, exactly and this idea, of what you had mentioned earlier – this becoming a truly appreciative audience. It's easy to appreciate all the beautiful sunsets and the nice music and the dance and the nice glass of wine; it's wonderful to appreciate that. But can you also appreciate the garbage dump? Can you appreciate the chaos in the world? You turn on the TV, you read the paper– can you appreciate all of that? Can you thank all of that for showing up to play in your play? All of these dream characters are playing in your play and part of who you need to be is just to acknowledge and to own that and to love them, truly, truly deeply, powerfully love them being in all of that chaos. Love them deeply.

WIZARD: Beautifully said.

TRIP: At the core of your teaching – and I think this is true of anyone who wants to abide in this essence of who they are – is this comfort ability with ambiguity and with paradox. I've noticed that

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the more gracious one becomes with paradox and ambiguity in one's life, the more beautiful life becomes. I've noticed the great teachers like yourself are incredibly adept with paradox, I mean there's paradox dripping from every word on every page of your books. It's amazing.

CHUCK HILLIG: That is true and that's a good observation, Trip.

TRIP: It's wall-to-wall.

CHUCK HILLIG: I'm very comfortable with being on – in totally contradictory places at the same time, to hold opposite views in the same place at the same time. For some reason that fits very comfortably with inside my heart of hearts; I just say yes to that, it's okay. As opposed to taking one extreme or the other, saying this is right, this is wrong this is good, this is bad, this is what should happen, this is what not should happen. But to embrace all of it, to sit there and just open yourself up to everything, let everything happen to you just as it does.

TRIP: You also say that you don't have to figure it out because when people try to figure it out, their mind contracts around them.

CHUCK HILLIG: This stuff is un-figure-out-able and yet there's a part of us that wants to figure it out but the very moment that you put any energy into trying to figure out is the same moment that you caught yourself in the wonderful wacky world of duality where you are the one who wants to know and this thing over here is the thing that wants to be known. But there's separation then at that point.

WIZARD: Yes, innocence is putting that capital "M" on the Mystery and trusts in it.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, it's all a Mystery.

TRIP: I remember watching that scene of G.W. standing on that aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf with the mission accomplished

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sign behind him and I remember marvelling to myself that the American people had actually literally tossed that buffoon the keys to an aircraft carrier; what I'm saying? I just had this thought of the entire frat boy scene from down in the basement of his college up there laughing and drinking and driving that thing around and banging it off of stuff and everything. I thought to myself at the time, how could there such a miscarriage of universal justice? But then I realize now that the aircraft carrier was just a bobble. You and I and the Wizard and so many of our listeners have been blessed with an awakening into what you call the source of who we are. It's like we've been thrown the keys to the entire universe.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, G.W. and all of those people; call them rascals, call them whatever, they all have their origin within you, they all come up, you are the source of all of the rascals; you are the source of all the great spiritual teachers and of all of their great spiritual teachings. You wrote the Upanishads, you wrote the Bible, you wrote the Torah, you wrote the Bhagavad-Gita, you are sourcing Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj and Christ and Buddha; all of them find their origin within you. You've created them as they are to remind you from time to time that you're really only pretending this all. That you're really having a very elaborate dream, but you are the dreaming dreamer.

To become the awakened dreamer, you get to a place where you're not asking anymore questions, when you've stopped searching, when you've called off the search and when you just say yes to what is; then you're the awakened dreamer because you're not going to be awakening from the dream as much as you're going to be awakening to the dream—very different. Just like lucid dreaming. In lucid dreaming you awaken to the idea that, “Oh, I'm just having a dream.” That's what enlightenment is.

WIZARD: That's when it gets fun.

CHUCK HILLIG: Oh, yes, then you're having fun with it.

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TRIP: Well, I don't know whether I should bother with this question because the *Now* is what thrills us, but, you've had an amazing life. You worked in the military, you worked with juvenile delinquents, you're a psychotherapist, a speaker and you're in MENSA.

CHUCK HILLIG: I am in MENSA. I'm a life member of MENSA, how did that ever happen?

TRIP: Did those roles, I guess each of those roles had to perfectly prepare you for your current role as everyone else, right?

CHUCK HILLIG: They did and then when I look back at them, I'm not attached to any of that stuff. That's just part of the story and if people are interested in the story I go, well, here's a story, I know I'm not that story but if you want to hear it just so that you feel safer with me that I didn't just suddenly manifest in front of you, all right, here's a story that you can have fun with and maybe you can feel more comfortable with me by me sharing this non-existent story. Well, I won't say it is non-existent. It existed, but it's not real.

TRIP: One of the things that you teach that's a bit antithetical to so much spiritual wisdom that I previously encountered was this difference between what people normally do when they think they're on a spiritual path, which is they resist things that are happening and then they feel that ultimately their job is to accept them, but you say no.

CHUCK HILLIG: Right, that's the usual norm when people, they're walking in their path of life and something shows up and they resist it. The old axiom is "Whatever you resist tends to persist." So I say, move it to the next level which is, accept. And people go, "Okay, I'm just going to accept how life is." But frequently, just that word, it sounds like well I'm just going to put up with it, I'm going to tolerate it, I have to cope with it; so it doesn't really empower you at that point. But the next two levels seem to be very empowering so that the third level is, when you

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walk down this path of life and something shows up for you, recognizing it's not happening to you as much as it's happening for you.

You consciously choose it being exactly the way that it is, not 99.999% the way that it is, but 100% you consciously, with your mind, choose it so that if I'm driving down the road and there's a traffic jam, I actually would consciously choose that traffic jam to be there exactly as it is manifesting and exactly with all these cars being just where they are. So I choose it, but the next step up is where the love comes in. This is when you embrace it with love being exactly as it is. So you choose it with your mind and you embrace it with your heart. In that way, you're becoming in perfect alignment with what is. And as Byron Katie would like to say and frequently said, "Whenever I argue with reality, I lose."

TRIP: Listeners, if you're digging Chuck right now, you'll really dig chuckhillig.com, it's a great resource. His books are there, available for sale, interviews; both radio and video. Presentations that he can make of different lengths; there's a great section on quotes and Chuck also offers counselling at a reasonable rate. So I think you've got a great resource there.

Is your *Seeds for the Soul* available in e-format?

CHUCK HILLIG: It is downloadable as an audio book I know, you can actually hear my melodious voice reading this book. I don't know how much it costs, but the name of the publisher for the audio books is Wetware Media, as opposed to software; wetwaremedia.com and then you can download that as an audio book. That book is in German, Dutch and Russian. Believe it or not the Russians picked it up.

TRIP: Here's another little gem of yours that is contrary to conventional wisdom but it's been true of my life, it's been true of the Wizard's life and I frankly feel it's been true of almost everyone who's come into this beautiful awareness that can transform one's

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life. And it's this, you say "You can't go to heaven unless you're also willing to go to hell"...

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, I find that to be true in my own life, certainly in my story of how that was because way back in my late-twenties when my whole marriage fell apart, I just crashed and burned. I didn't know what I wanted to do; I'd been teaching at a university in Pennsylvania and within the space of about a week and a half, I lost everything. I lost the house and my position, I lost all my possessions, my kids, my marriage; everything was taken away from me. My analogy that I use to describe that is, we've all gone to museums or to art galleries and we see these great big tapestries and you go right up next to the tapestry about two inches with your nose and you open your eyes and you see a lot of jumbled colours and lines, but nothing makes sense. But then if you step back into a gallery, turn around and look back at that very place that had been so confusing to you, suddenly you see how those little square inches plays out in the great tapestry of your life.

You say, "Oh, now I understand that was really part of this and that was connected to that." And it becomes like a mosaic. But when you're really into it and right in the middle of your mess, in the center of your chaos, it's really difficult to get that clear. So this is where trust comes in. No matter what's going on in your life, no matter what's unfolding or unravelling, sit in the middle of that say "Yes, I'm just going to trust that whatever is showing up is there for my own edifications, it's there for my own growth." Because absolutely everything that you need in order to "wake up" is always 100% present for you right here, right *Now*. Nothing, nothing is ever missing.

WIZARD: The every little, tiniest little subtle anything in the mix is a part of the masterpiece.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, and it is right there for you and you are creating this. You need to own your own dream. Own your own

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dream, it's your dream. You are the dreaming dreamer, own it all. Love it all, embrace it all.

TRIP: On a tangential path with that point is you say your spiritual path actually chooses you; your path chooses you and sooner or later its sacred labyrinth will lead you inexorably directly into the very heart of who you are.

WIZARD: That's what happened to me.

TRIP: Let me ask you, there were one or two little things in your work that I didn't quite get on the first reading. You say "Who am I?" And "How can I make more money?" are really the same question at very different levels. What do you mean by that?

CHUCK HILLIG: Well, there's only one question and that is, "Why, what, who?" All of those questions, any question you have is really the same question, whether it's I want to make more money or how can I do this or *who am I*; there's only one question. And until you get beyond that need or desire on your part to even ask questions can you just sit in the middle of not asking questions at all. Even getting beyond the "*who am I* question". Certainly getting beyond the how can I make more money question. When you get to a place where there's no desire to go away from what is, thinking that what isn't –like the answer that you want to know – will somehow satisfy you. It's all the same. You're already there. There's nothing for you to know, there's nothing for you to not know. Any question will lead you away from that because the answer wants to say, "Oh, no." The Truth of where you want to go is just around the next corner. But, if the Truth is always just around the next corner, all you're going to be recognizing, all you're going to be noticing would be more corners. There's always going to be another layer of the onion to unpeel. There has to come a time when you just stop; just come to a full stop and just be with what is. No more questions, no more searching; just being with this. And this, look around, just know if you're listening in your car in our in the restroom that is enough, that is fully present. Consciousness is always 100% present for

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you all the time. There's nothing missing. There's not some more consciousness around the corner or down the block. This is it, what you're experiencing is 100% of consciousness. That's it; it's your dream and that's what you need to own. Own it.

TRIP: For sure. Another nugget of yours here; you say "The challenge in life is not to get high. The challenge in life is to be high." I'm guessing, you may be like the Wizard and I, have had more than your fair share. [Laughing]

CHUCK HILLIG: Oh, of course, so the story goes.

TRIP: Oh, yes, we've have fistfuls of getting high over here. We could light up a city block with purple haze...

WIZARD: I just like my green tea, man.

TRIP: One thing I wanted to say though is the higher that you become the less interested in those old highs you become. For example, we had a guest on our show, the Medicine Hunter, Chris Kilham who's the master Ayahuasca dude. He goes down there and he spends time in the rainforest with the shaman and they cook up the primo Ayahuasca. Not only Chris, but the entire village goes off into Never-Never Land. It's a wild scene. It's the moonlight and arriving on the ground and people are becoming snakes and eagles are coming down out of the trees and sitting their shoulders and they're eating chunks of consciousness and time is dripping like a watch coming off their mouth into gobs on the ground. It's a wild scene, but as appealing as that would have been, I would have been jumping right into that bad boy, but I feel now that I have that now in the waking state; so I'm less attracted to that. I think that's true, I think that's a gift of getting older. Don't you think?

WIZARD: Well, younger we wait for the bus. Here comes the bus and we want to get off. As we get older we're off.

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CHUCK HILLIG: I remember something that I heard Alan Watts say once. Alan Watts was a great teacher for me, I only met him one time but I used to listen to a lot of his lectures and speeches. One of the things that I remember was that somebody asked him, Alan, do you still use mind-altering substances? And he said, “No.” They said, why not, you used a lot of them with Tim Leary and Ralph Metzner and Walter Panke and all those people back then? He said, well, it is like a telephone. When you get the message, you can hang up the phone.

WIZARD: I was noticing in your little book you’re talking about it and that reminded me of Alan Watts and his little book, *This Is It*.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, *This is It*, yes that page has meant a lot to me, yes it did.

WIZARD: That was one of the first ones, one of the cracks in my egg.

TRIP: Speaking of *it*, you have so many of these and I just love it, you say, “Although the ego is compelled to go out looking for consciousness, ironically it’s only real hope of ever surviving is not finding.”

CHUCK HILLIG: That’s right. Again, it’s those paradoxes. It’s funny to be able to hold both things at the same time. One of the things that I did want to mention was that the people that I’ve talked to, both individually and in groups, a whole lot of them believe at some level that they are walking through a maze. we’ve all been in corn mazes where you down dead ends and you get lost and you make mistakes and you have to back and start over and then try this one and back and forth; and that’s how they see their lives--like they’re walking through a maze. And I say “No. No, no, no. You’re not walking through a maze. You’re walking through a labyrinth.” Now, a labyrinth we know is very different from a maze because you can get lost in a maze without too much trouble, but you can never, ever, ever get lost in a labyrinth. All you need to do to get the center is to keep on keeping on.

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So whatever you're doing in your life right now, whatever chaos, no matter what melodramas are flowing around you, all you need to do is to keep on keeping on and you're going to go straight into that center. You're never lost, you're never off the path, and you've never been able to lose your way. And that simply is not true; you're always exactly where you need to be at this moment. That's why I say everything is 100% present for you right now to just wake up; just to get it, just to stop, come to a full stop and get it. This is it and you are that. You are who you are looking for. You are what you are looking for. There's nothing missing, nothing being left out, nobody is trying to hide anything from you; you are that.

WIZARD: Ponder, wisdom is prior to knowledge. Wisdom has no knower. Shakti is not sentience, wisdom is sentience; the great host, pure capacity, the domicile of the wise. Be still and over stand, for yourself I am the state, not the statement is God; thou art that already. Peace that surpasses understanding and knowledge is when the knower is utterly unknown.

CHUCK HILLIG: Very true. That was very well-spoken. Thank you for sharing that.

TRIP: Yes, he's the Wizard.

CHUCK HILLIG: What a guy.

TRIP: Both of you guys are children of the '60s and in your book when you were talking about how people ought to choose to have no control, you used that old line from that song but you tweaked it where you said, "Freedom's just another word for there's nothing left to *choose*." So, you're a child of the '60s and I'm curious about this. Do you have this feeling when you listen to popular music, particularly like looking back into the '60s, do you feel that those people that were the standard bearers for culture that we're helping to reshape it and bring people into greater awareness? How aware do those folks look to you now? When I

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hear a lot of those lines in the songs there's a lot of suffering in those.

CHUCK HILLIG: There was, yes. Remember, all of those people in the '60s, in fact all those people that you've ever read about in history, they all come from the void, they all come from you. They all are that. You are creating all of them being and saying and going through all of that stuff. You have to own that all. These people that are not in the '60s or the '50s, they're not different than you at all. They are you. That is you. There's nobody else other than that. You are the dreaming dreamer and becoming the awakened dreamer. There's only one. Everything is quintessentially only one; there's only one.

WIZARD: There were a lot of bards in those days that were speaking through their music and their poetry that was affirming to a spiritual dispensation that was awesome at the time. And those affirmations were very powerful. I mean, Jerry Garcia's Ripple?

CHUCK HILLIG: Oh yeah, Jerry Garcia.

WIZARD: Pete Townsend.

CHUCK HILLIG: Bob Dylan even.

WIZARD: Bob Dylan. See these are great bards in our midst.

TRIP: Now that you've completely edified our listeners and each and every one is at the doorstep of enlightenment, you say the last step is to become detached from detachment. That was interesting.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, just to let go of letting go. That's maybe the roughest thing; to fall, freefall into the heart of who you are because that's really where all of this is pointing to. The essence of who you are is love loving itself and to freefall into that – not cling

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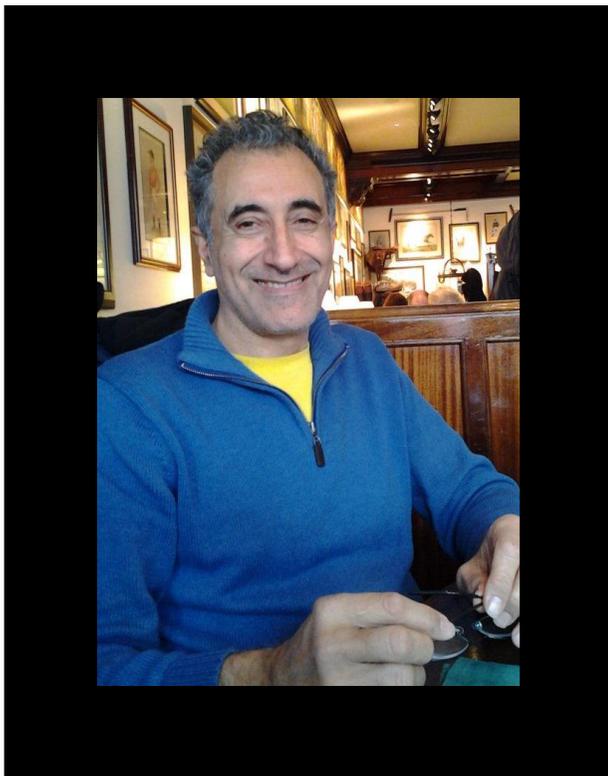
to anything, not trying to shape anything at all, but just to let go and disappear into that – that’s freedom, that is freedom.

WIZARD: Just being yourself.

CHUCK HILLIG: Yes, and it reminds of a great quote by Nietzsche. He said “And those who are seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music.” [Laughter] Well, you guys can definitely hear the music. I’m so happy to say that.

TRIP: It’s been a joy reading your work, getting to know you. I hope we get to cross frozen light paths sometime here in the next, hopefully, couple of months.

CHUCK: There’s only One.



Em Be

http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100003104934991&ref=ts&_ad=4

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Em Be, is something of a Mystery. His birth name is still not known by us, and his gender only recently surmised. [Laughs] Everyone thought you were a woman, Em Be. Perhaps like our other avant-garde sages that have appeared on our program, Em Be is more comfortable living in a life of simple presence, thought out the fanfare of devotees

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that might gather around. Nevertheless his writing, from whatever ordinary quadrant it emanates, shines with the position-less humility of one who has ripened over time, and we're grateful to have you with us today, Em Be.

EM BE: Hey, it's my pleasure.

TRIP: So at the age of 15 you questioned "what is life", what was the answer?

EM BE: Actually I don't know where these questions come from, and really it's never been a concern of mine, or a question of mine, where is this question coming from. I just recall, being in our home, lying on the carpet, those Persian carpets with all these different drawings and designs, and then lying on the carpet and looking down the carpet, and just perceiving this person. It wasn't really verbal, it wasn't like now I talk about it, the words are not the same, but I just recall lying there and just wondering what am I, what is it to be?

And it really nagged me, this question, I needed an answer somehow, the question needed an answer [Laughs]. So I went to my mom [Laughs], and so I was wondering with my mom, what is it, what is going on here, who am I, what is this that's going on? She's a relatively religious person, and certainly from what she knew, what was her answer about. I forgot what it was, but it really there was no answer that she provided. And somehow this question faded. But there was a sense of something unsettled and that sense of something unsettled was always there. It's more like a feeling, it's hard to describe.

WIZARD: It's unutterable.

EM BE: Yes, yes.

TRIP: You emigrated here in '68, from where, France, I'm taking it?

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EM BE: No, I was born in Lebanon in Beirut, Lebanon, and emigrated from Lebanon to the States. The French background that I have is the French education system that existed in Lebanon, and I went through French schools in Lebanon. So we came, my brothers and I, with my mother, to the States in 1968 to New York.

TRIP: You immediately enrolled in college, and then shortly thereafter you had a startling experience there, what was that all about?

EM BE: Yeah. It's very interesting. I came with my brothers and my mother, and I was living in that asleep-ness. Now it's like a dream world, but at the time there was really just that, just attending to whatever I was meant to attend to in terms of what I was taught that I needed to be, and to do.

I was a very serious student, I studied and applied myself, I wanted to succeed and wanted to please my mother, and become successful in order to better take care of her and make her happy. I was in upstate New York, and one evening I was walking home, I think it must have been in 1971 or so, maybe '72. I was walking down the hill in Troy, New York, upstate New York, somewhere around campus, or away from campus, I don't remember the exact location. And it was in the evening, and suddenly I was out in space looking down on myself walking. So I was out there looking at me, this young man walking down the hill, and it startled me, because it wasn't just a thought. I was two people [Laughs]. I was like, oh, what is that? And so it was confusing that there was the possibility that there is another experience of me than the experience that I knew.

So it opened this possibility that what this experience seemed to be was not all there was to it, meaning the experience of being this student, this son, this brother, whatever it was. There was more to it than that. And that experience, yes, you mention sometimes an out of body experience, it's just a term. It was unsettling, but then again I was busy with my work, and my studies. But it laid there

dormant, I'm not sure how to connect it to what happened next, but at some point in time further down, a few months later, I became interested in Eastern thought-lessness.

First I was studying science, pure science, and I was dissatisfied with the scientific study, something was missing. I tried to formulate to my advisers what I felt was missing, mainly that we were, through the science, identifying various variables, and studying their relationships, formulating a hypothesis, and through identifying various variables, studying their relationships in order to prove a certain theory. But I was puzzled by the biggest of all variables, which was the observer, the scientist [Laughs]. I remember asking this, the teacher he looked at me and said, "What planet are you coming from?" [Laughs]

I think that probably this question, if it's posed now in universities, technological universities, this question is a very relevant question, but at the time it didn't resonate with my teachers. So I felt, at some level that, okay, that's not the direction, there is no answer for me. I didn't even know that there was a question really. But there was a question, there was no formulation, there were no words around my question. It was not the place to be, to find whatever it was that I was looking for. So I started audited philosophy classes, there was some really, well-published teachers in the philosophy department, I audited some of their classes.

It was great at the time, I don't know how it is now, but at the time there were free audits, you could like walk into a class and ask the teacher to audit the class, and do that, so I did. But very quickly the philosophy, just for me, I mean not talking about what philosophy is for many others, but for me it was just shallow words. It was like, an empty jar, just an echo, a constant echoing, a lot of constant echoing, it was like echo alley. That very quickly became clear that that's not for me, and then somehow I heard of this fellow, John Connor, I think I mentioned him, as being I would say my first mentor. He was teaching Eastern philosophies, and so I audited his class. I think it was maybe the second or third

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class that I was audited with him, he went through the Vedas, I don't know, at the time it was all really the Vedas, it sounded like Chinese to me, I didn't know what he was talking about. But somehow I liked him, there was something about him. Am I talking too much?

WIZARD: No.

TRIP: No, we're digging it. [Laughs]

EM BE: Okay. If you need to steer the conversation somewhere else, please do. Anyways, so there was something drawing me to him, to his energy, the way he was. So I went through those couple of classes about Vedas, and wrote a couple of papers for him. Then I think second or third class, probably the third class or so, I was again auditing and he announced that he was going to start talking about Buddhism, and very quickly he started by stating that according to Buddhism, the self, the ego, is not real. And he was going on, but as soon as I heard this, it's not me who heard them, it's as if there was something that heard, these words went boom, right through to some core place. And time and space stopped, and I was just, what? How could it be that the ego, the self, is not real? Here I am, I'm here, and I'm real. What is he talking about?

And he went on, throughout the class, I was just into this question, and I couldn't wait for the end of the class to rush up to him and ask him, which I did. What do you mean? What do you mean that the ego's not real? Here I am, I'm talking to you, I mean the self is not real, what do you mean? Here I am. And he sensed something, he must have sensed something because he told me to come and see him in his office, which I did, and a long relationship started between us where I would go and sit with him. I don't remember what other conversations were like, they were like short conversations, we'd spend like maybe 20 minutes together, but in every conversation it was as if he was peeling, just talking pass me to me, passed me, the person, to the me, the presence.

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So I was very happy seeing him, and we became close, and he became my first mentor. Shall I go on?

WIZARD: You're doing well.

EM BE: Okay. So shortly after that, I don't know, a few months after meeting John Connor and spending time with him, I was in one evening talking with some friends, we went to this house in Troy, and I was talking with friends and hanging out, listening to music and talking. And I got talking about what I was looking at, basically that the self is not real, that what thought says I am is not what I am. I don't know how I was talking about it, but I thought I had some understanding, and I was talking to my friends about what I thought I was understanding. And as I was talking they were really puzzled, but they were curious, they were with me. It's as if we were like riding together. They were stimulating the questions and the looking, so we're looking together. Then, it felt like the structure collapsed, and I was in a place of Self dimension, a space-less, very, very joyous, very free, happy and clear, and the words came flowing out of my mouth about what no self means. I was overflowing with energy, and joy, and clarity. But I felt very quickly that my two friends were getting alienated, and anxious about... like I was in a place, and they were in a different place. I sensed that and took my leave.

So I brought this realization to John Connor, my mentor at the time, and he acknowledged something, I don't know what he acknowledged [Laughs], being acknowledged as being. And very shortly after he told me about a Zen meditation place in Sharon Springs, and it was like maybe 30 miles away from the university. And I started attending that place at Sharon Springs; it was an affiliate center of Rochester Zen Center at the time. It didn't matter really what it was, to be sitting with people quietly in silence, Zen practice is a lot of silence, is non verbal, and just to be sitting, whatever you can call it, meditating. There was a big draw to do that, and so I did that for many years.

TRIP: So 20 years... Oh, you want to say something?

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WIZARD: Yes, I'd like to cite a comment by Ramana Maharshi. Ramana Maharshi says, "A man is running the course of his samskaras", that's his tendencies, "When taught he is the formless Self, the teaching affects his mind and imagination runs riot. He feels helpless before the onrushing power. His experiences are according to his imagination of the state, I am the Self, whatever he may conceive it to be. Saktipat alone confers the true and right experience. When the man is ripe for receiving instruction, and his mind is about to sink into the heart, the instruction imparted works in a flash, and he realizes the Self all right. Otherwise there is always the struggle".

EM BE: Yes, right. Yeah. The end of the struggle is no doubt, the struggle with this, is when all this ended. No matter how much somebody can doubt you, you do not doubt your Self.

WIZARD: And that's referred to as Saktipat, that's the explosion from being within, encapsulated in a body and mind as an I-thought to the breaking that down and literally becoming inside-out.

EM BE: Yeah. It's interesting, John, the inside-out, or the experience that I just related was like an inside-out experience, and it felt... it's really hard to talk about it, to really describe it, it's not possible. But inside-out resonates, and...

WIZARD: The local aspect is missing.

EM BE: Exactly. It's like going instantaneously from the local to the universal. Okay, even that it's... yeah, it is the collapse of the local, and it's nothing that anyone does, it is divine doing.

WIZARD: Without any doership, and grace finding itself.

EM BE: Yes, right. Right. The doer came back just going on; the doer came back a very, very subtle, very subtle doer. Actually it was not a doer, it was like I got it, came up very subtly over the next 10, 15 years, and surfaced as the stink of enlightenment,

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further down the line, further down the road. At the time of course I was so certain that I got it, and then it became clear that in relationships, and this is where I saw it, there was in relationships there were problems. With myself, okay, fine, but with relationships, so that became the mirror for me to see remnants of the doer, the self, and further down the line this was, the further dissolution of that; and then finally quite recently in the teachings of Francis Lucille, and Rupert Spira, the emerging of the witness with the world, the seeming world and the witness merging.

So, yeah, the inside-out, and being no doership, non-doeer, that it is as clear. Actually the world in the expression, I look at the world and I see myself and I look at you and see myself. In words and in language, it's really hard to say. No, I would say it's impossible to really say what it's like, because only by crossing that line in the sky [Laughs] will you really know for yourself what these words really mean. And all the words now from this direction are just pointers, just to stimulate and simulate the natural state and act as a catalyst that one can... like a banana peel, you slide off it and find yourself. It's what you are; it's up to what you are.

WIZARD: The I-thought is a doer going through this turning inside out, loses its position as a primacy of being.

EM BE: Absolutely, absolutely.

WIZARD: And the primacy of being is the infinite. And the I-thought is a belief, but it still arises, it's like seeing Santa Claus in December. We know Santa Claus doesn't exist; it's just a belief but Santa Claus still appears every December.

EM BE: Yeah. Once it's clear that Santa Claus is not real, goodness...

WIZARD: He never was.

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EM BE: Anything can be like Santa Claus. There is no more Santa Claus issue. And the I-thought is the doer, but it's only an impression of doer, there is no doer, there's never been a doer. Over and over I refer all of us to that, there is never any doer. It's very difficult from the doer position to hear that, because it negates the doer that is hearing that, so the doer will always argue with that, it will say, well, if there is no doer then who is speaking right now? It positions a doer where there is no doer, because that's what the doer's position is, it's the function of the doer is to position the doer and to have an ongoing love affair with itself, with the impression of doership.

WIZARD: Yes, which is really narcissistic. In that belief, and for the doer to affirm its primacy in being, it has to have the job of doing something.

EM BE: Yes, right.

WIZARD: And that's where it feels its power.

EM BE: Yeah. What is so lovely about this, John is that the entire play, the doership job and play, and love affair with itself, it is happening in the spaciousness of Being. So even to say, I am talking, there is an awareness of that very thought otherwise that thought would not even be uttered. There is awareness that precedes every feat. Again, using this language in a relative sense, just as pointers, because really there is no before and after, it's not a temporal dimension; just using the language in the relative sense, always preceding every move, every thought, every perception, and every sensation.

So even before the argument arises that, oh well, I am this, there is a recognition, there is an awareness, a recognition of awareness of that which is being point, which is being spoken, spoken of as being me. So, yes, the entire play is happening in the spaciousness of Being, and that spaciousness of being is formless, it has no place where it starts, no direction where it goes, there is nothing, no rules that are constraining it, or telling it how to be what it is, what

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to be. To somehow get a feel of that, it might require some intuitive approach to it, rather than just strictly a discursive approach. Or maybe it's both the reflecting upon it, storing it and using high reasoning, at the same time sensing it, remaining open to it that possibility that this entire play is a dimensionless play.

TRIP: I had a question for both of you guys, and you were just now speaking right to this question, which is that there's a method that is embraced or a way of looking at being and at the false sense of I, and the whole method is called Self Inquiry. And you wrote on that, "There is no person, there never has been a person, and there never will be a person. No matter the impression, no matter how strongly you feel otherwise, look directly without relying on thought and notice these very words, where are they seeing? Is there any limited entity in the seeing right now? Isn't seeing occurring seamlessly all encompassing?" That's your question. And I want to take just a moment to ask a long question, it's an important question because of the importance of Self-Inquiry as a method that you were just touching on.

You spoke about the discursive method, and then you said perhaps intuition, but one stops asking that kind of question after a while. I've stopped asking it, because I knew I could never really get satisfaction. This idea that just because the "I" cannot be located, I don't really see that as a constituting of proof for the lack of existence of the separate person. Because, for example, just as an analogy, like the human brain is a crackling cloud of non physical, electrical, activity, there's no one place in the brain that recognizes or has the identity, me. Like when you send a document up to the cloud, you can't locate it, can you? No. But you know for damn sure it's captured on some silicon somewhere, on a limited mechanistic system. So I feel there's nothing inconsistent with a mechanistic view of life, and the non-localized nature of sentience. I say you only come to that conviction to the direct experience of what might be called a profound spiritual experience. It seems to me like Self-Inquiry is an after the fact method of confirming a previously directly experienced Truth. And I'm wondering what do you guys have to say about that? I mean, can you really

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experience the spaciousness by leading up to it through a method of Self-Inquiry, really looking at the I thought? Or is that simply confirm something you've already experienced?

WIZARD: There is no I-thought. When you go to look for the I-thought, it's not there. So the I-thought is just a belief, like Santa Claus, it never was. Then that leaves you with no place to hang your hat, there are no nouns left.

TRIP: Well here's the thing about that, okay, now I'm just bringing this up because I've given up on this.

WIZARD: That's the whole thing, with Self-Inquiry; you can't find it.

TRIP: You can't find it, but just because the mind is such a magnificent organic structure that doesn't need a noun called I to identity itself, simply because it's not self referencing with the I-thought, but rather it's like a non... it's such an amazingly complex organ that your existence is not a singular entity called I, it's like a processing machine that has no name. Why can't it just be that, a nameless processing machine?

WIZARD: It's a bifurcating machine.

TRIP: Go ahead, Em Be.

EM BE: Okay, first everything is possible; there is no limit to possibilities, so to say that... God, nothing limits her, right, nothing and nobody limits her, just using that as a little analogy, and nothing limits her. So to say or to think that, okay, there is a timeless spiritual, eternal insight into true nature is the way, or to say that the higher reasoning, is the way, or to make any commentary about the past is true, is correct, but you can add all the other commentaries as well as being true and correct, every possible approach is available and is correct. What sets any limits? What defines what is possible or what is not possible, if it's not just an impression in thought? Having said that, what you're

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saying, Trip, that to look and see that there is no separate entity, that there is no person that has a place where they start and end, that has no limits, there is no weight, no form, you say the proof of the universal nature of being, if I heard you correct.

TRIP: Yes.

EM BE: That's true, that's a correct statement, Trip. You're following your reasoning very, very correctly. But let's pose another question, the task is not proving the universal nature of being, but it's actually to prove the limited nature of being. And so when you look and you perceive or find limited separate doer, so there is no evidence that there is such a person. So that, in the absence of support, of evidence, that can be dropped and what remains... better not to make any discourses about what remains, okay. Because then we're just going to get into conversation and thinking about it.

The main issue that we have is that we feel we live and we experience our thoughts as limited and separate entities. I'm not interested in any great discourse about the universe, or about Truth, or about the universality of being, that does not interest me. What really interests me is to deal with the core issue, the living core issue that we have as human beings, whatever words you want to say, that we are, of feeling separate and living in that illusion of separation. So when we look, is there any evidence for the I-thought, and we find that there is no I-thought, then we can stop right there, we don't need to take it further and say, that proves the universality of, of being, or of existence, or of Truth. No, it's just it's a deconstruction of the unTruth.

TRIP: Right and very few people are willing to take that simple an approach as sufficient. [Laughs]

EM BE: Of course.

WIZARD: Far too simple for most scholars.

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EM BE: We left our discourses, and sounding and feeling like we've made great discoveries. It doesn't matter, it really does not matter. What really matters are: are you happy; are you in peace, and joy? And it's not something that you can adopt as a practice, or you can make it happen, it is not. This illusion of the illusion is what we are talking about, this illusion of the illusion, this illusion waking up from the dream is of itself the unfolding of true nature in its beauty, its unfathomable vastness and joy, and peace, and transparency, and to embrace that leaves nothing un-embraced. It's a living experience of its own, it's not really an experience, and it is a living dimension. The words don't speak correctly to it. But it's in the process of waking up fully, completely, to the insubstantiality of the I-thought, is the unfolding of love, of happiness, of joy, of Being.

TRIP: Yes, and Norio Kushi, who appeared on our show, just a little while ago, and who's coming to the Onederful gathering, which I understand that maybe you're coming to as well. He threw in a comment, he's listening right now, and he talked about the term inside-out as being hit in the head by the cosmic two by four. He liked that, and Norio has got a whole way of looking at what he calls the phantom self, the illusory I-thought. That's his whole shtick. Norio, I don't want to sell you short there, but it's not your whole shtick or whatever, but it's that simple.

WIZARD: Norio was just driving a truck and thinking stopped, the I-thought was gone. And it stayed gone for a couple of weeks.

TRIP: So, Em Be, one of the great things about having this little show is that we get to meet you, and we get to meet Norio, and then you're going to get to meet Norio, and then I'm going to hang out with you, watching you meet Norio [Laughs].

EM BE: Wonderful.

WIZARD: Let's have a Satsang with Em Be session.

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TRIP: Yeah. You have a gentleness in your sharing that you can't really put a finger on it, but the way you share, the way Francis Lucille shares, the way Rupert shares, there's a gentleness there, a lack of need to sharply point out your point of view, there's kind of a welcoming embrace in the way you share. It's very nice, and that's why so many people like you.

EM BE: Yeah. I like them too. [Laughs]

WIZARD: Likewise.

EM BE: I never thought that through the Internet there would be such a love connection, really. I have been really touched on so many occasions by people who love and the appreciation of the love, it's actually love that's appreciating itself, that's what we are, we are that love, and when there is the appreciation, it's appreciation that's appreciating appreciation. It's never, never me or you, and that's the beauty of it, because it's not me, nor you, there is nothing between "me and you". It's just one body, one breath, one love, one kindness and tenderness, one embrace, one friendship whatever, whatever the words are.

And in terms of how "this person" manifests it in relating with people, it's just... I don't have an agenda, it's we are all sailing on the same boat, we are all walking the same path, and are at some point we think, well he's there and she's there, and I'm not where she's at and I need to get over there, and we to improve and get better, But all that, as we're walking along the path becomes thinner and thinner, and before we know it there is just one body actually, there is just this vastness of being. And all the stories about me and you, there's just no interest.

TRIP: Well I'm going to ask you a question, okay, as I'm on fire right now with a way of sharing, or of being of service spiritually. And it's about an extension of what we're already doing, which is giving a platform to these beautiful avant-garde sages like yourself that have that way of sharing, and that kind of equality of vision.

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So I still have a bifurcating mind, and I still judge, but I guess one of the reasons why I want to create a platform on the Internet, via a website where avant-garde sages like you would have brief videos that they would share. The way I feel like I would want to kind of make the selections of the people that would be sharing on the website, is that the reason I was so turned on by Ramana Maharshi, and by all the avant-garde sages that we have on our show, and by my friend the Wizard here and by you, is that those who seem really authentically in love with love itself, or with Being, always seem to take every opportunity to redirect the attention that is naturally poured on them by people who are wanting to share that feeling, or wanting to maybe get something that they're not quite sure what it is, they're still not quite there yet. They don't have that feeling inside them.

And I look out there and I see a ton, most of the people that are out there in the spiritual world who are making money doing it, or who are doing it for a living, if you will, they don't take every opportunity to redirect the attention back on the person. And I feel that's a critical thing to be done, it's a lost opportunity if you don't use, take a mirror to people, and shine the beauty right back at them. So do you agree with that, or is there room for any old kind of sharing? Because it seems like there's a lot of egotistical spiritual teaching going on around, what do you think?

EM BE: Yeah.

WIZARD: I think it's all perfect. [Laughs] That's just a little grist for the mill, and then that's just enough, because when you're not seeing perfection, it's a reflection and then you honor that which you tend to judge as your teacher, yourself reflecting back to yourself. So, where there's smooth sailing, and then there's when it's not smooth sailing, but really in those times we learn a lot because what's being reflected back to us. We like to place outward on an apparent other, and there is no other.

EM BE: Right. No, Trip, during this journey, this exploration, your intention, your passion, is your path, and it will not

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compromise, it will not compromise the passion and its intention. So if along the way the path you come upon, some place where somehow you set up camp, you might temporarily be happy there, and your passion will lead you to a camp if need be at a certain time, whatever that time is, because it's really not in time, and journey on. At some time, at some point, it becomes crystal clear that this is your final camp. There is no principle rule about it, but your passion and your intention will tell you, and it's operating outside of what you are thinking, what you are planning, or what you believe, or what your understanding is at this point in time. It's outside of the realm of your discoveries, your enlightenments and your understanding. Operating out of that passion, out of the love, do as it Self.

WIZARD: I find going with what wants to happen, less and less and less design, or what I want to see, but just going with what wants to happen.

EM BE: Very nice, John, that's very lovely. Very lovely, because there is behind all our doing, there is divine doing, and when that becomes where your heart is pulsating, that takes itself to itself, gives way to it Self.

TRIP: I've got to interrupt because we've run out of time. Em Be, Norio says, "Yes, the figuring it out all ceases, there's nothing to figure out, tears of joy flow from the eyes". That's such a wonderful sharing, huh?

EM BE: Well I hug you; I hug you, Norio [Laughs].

WIZARD: And put a capital M on the Mystery, and trust it.

TRIP: Yes, that's why I love you, that's what I love about you, Wizard.

WIZARD: The burden of life.

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EM BE: I love your style, John, it's really great. It resonates; I could see it with a lot of people.

TRIP: Yes.

WIZARD: I want to thank you for being such a wonderful facet of this jewel of conversations group page, you're really adding a nice shine to the jewel. I want to thank that Mystery which has drawn you in to participate with us.

TRIP: Thank you, thank you, Em Be. We've Em Be, we love you, and we're really looking forward to seeing you at Onederful, and sharing the posts with you on the site.

EM BE: Thank you, Trip, same here, I really enjoyed being with you in this interview, and you too, John, looking forward to being together.

WIZARD: Thank you.

EM BE: Much love, much love.

WIZARD: Much love, yes.



Francis Lucille

<http://www.francislucille.com/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Francis Lucille, is at the forefront of a Copernican Revolution of consciousness in which the personal body mind view of reality is being replaced by an impersonal witnessing consciousness view of reality. Living this underlying reality himself, Francis Lucille helps others witness their own mental and emotional obstructions with a clarity and power that can guide them back to source. In 1975

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Francis met Jean Klein, a French Advaita Vedanta teacher who would become a close friend and spiritual mentor. But Francis Lucille's guru has always been his own true self, brought into a fullness of being on the heels of a death-in-life experience where his overpowering love of the absolute could no longer be denied. Francis Lucille is now an author, teacher, and lecturer. His website, francislucille.com, offers an array of books, DVDs, videos, and audio CDs that are unsurpassed for meditative reflection.

TRIP: Welcome, Francis. There are a lot of people out there that are well steeped in nondual wisdom and some of them are teachers, and some of them are just ordinary folks, and we know a lot of them, they post on our group page and what have you. And I really enjoyed rereading your work the past few days. I was trying to put into words what it is that I love about your work, and what I think makes you not necessarily unique, but one of the very best, I don't want to use the word teachers, because I know your self-perception of yourself is not as a teacher, but one of the best spiritual teachers. And it's that as I read your work and your sharing, you speak not only from the perspective of the "teacher", but also from the perspective of the student, and also as presence itself. And so as I immerse myself in that work, I find myself lost in this multi dimensional room of sharing that's going on from the perspective of presence itself. And you answer the questions that an aspirant would have that aren't asked, you answer the ones that are asked, or whatever, and it's a much richer experience that really brings somebody right to that feeling of presence itself, rather than a two-dimensional dialogue between someone who's idea of themselves as perhaps as a teacher trying to answer someone else's question. And I think that depth only comes from many years of ripening that I'm sure you've gone through. So I feel especially privileged today to have you with us, so thank you. Did you hear all that?

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FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes. TRIP: You're dumbfounded [Laughs]. Okay. One reason relatively few people consistently walk the spiritual Truth that they know so well is that the so-called ego or idea of oneself as a separate person loathes the idea of becoming a *nobody*. I think that you probably are a nobody in your own mind; I know the Wizard over here is a nobody. How is it wonderful being a no-body?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Well, what is wonderful is just being what we truly are. It's not that much that we are a nobody, because obviously right now as I speak, these words are being heard, and there is something there, whatever we call that consciousness, selves, I. So there is an I, a me, hearing. That is out of the question. The proof is in the pudding in this very moment. But that which is problematical, that which is a party pooper in our lives is a belief, which is superimposed onto this I, the belief that this I, which is hearing these words right now, is limited, that for instance it was born and at some point it will die, or that it is limited to one single body, or to one single mind. So we shrink this presence, and as a result we experience a sense of lack, a sense of separation. If there are things that are outside of me, independent from me, they may threaten me or I may need them, and as a result fear and desire are born, and psychological suffering. Without superimposing any of those limitations onto this presence that we are, life is easy and we simply go with the flow of it, we stop swimming against the current, we let the current take us to the ocean.

TRIP: And that's more enjoyable than having things?

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FRANCIS LUCILLE: Well, the problem is not in having or not having things, the problem is in not being attached to them, because there are people who are very poor or don't have much, but if they are attached to the little they have, they live in misery.

It reminds me of a beautiful story: Krishna was travelling with one of his closest disciples. During his travels he visits several of his disciples, and one of them happens to be a king. As Krishna and his travelling companion reach the outpost of the kingdom, the king is there with the elephants, the dancers, the musicians, the soldiers, to take him to the palace. As this procession goes through the kingdom to the palace, there are days of celebration and then Krishna leaves. And as they leave the kingdom, as they cross the border, Krishna tells his travelling companion, "This king is a very good disciple of mine, and I want to do something for him". He operates one of his magic tricks, and instantaneously all the possessions of the king are multiplied tenfold; he has ten more elephants, ten more soldiers, ten more rupees in his bank account, ten more dancers, musicians, etc. The disciple says nothing. Then they visit the next disciple, who is extremely poor. He lives in a hut, and his only possession is a cow, which is old, malnourished, and sick. That disciple is very happy to see his guru, and he serves them the only thing he has which is some milk from the cow. Krishna and his companion enjoy the company of this disciple, and the next day they leave.

As they cross the fence of the little meadow in which the cow lives, Krishna says, "this disciple is very dear to my heart, I want to do something for him". And he does one of his magic tricks, and instantaneously the cow dies. His travelling companion, says, "I cannot understand what you did, I mean, this king he was so wealthy, you multiplied all his belongings by tenfold. And this man, all he had is this little cow and he gives you the milk of it,

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and look what you did". Krishna says, "Yes, because it was the last attachment that was separating him from me".

TRIP: Yes.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Well, I went into a tangent, right? About attachments...

TRIP: I see.

WIZARD: An aversion is still attachment.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Aversion is still attachment, yes.

WIZARD: Yes. If you have an aversion to twice as much as what's happening with you, now, everything is doubled up. If you have an aversion and fight that, that's not exactly going with the flow, because it's all part of one display, one invisible phenomenon. So however that changes, the proper response is acceptance rather than aversion, whether there's an aversion to losing the cow or an aversion to doubling your apparent possessions.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: The possessions are immaterial; it's the attachment to them that is the problem. So if there is an attachment it means there is somebody attached, an attachment is like a lined segment with two end points. One of the end points is that to which we are attached, the other end point is the alleged separate person who is attached to it, either through desire or through fear or aversion. Yes, you're absolutely right, John.

TRIP: And I think then maybe this brings up for me something that happened in my personal life which I'm not going to get into,

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but I think that there's a particularly pernicious attachment which is the attachment that some people have for the outcomes of those about whom they're concerned. And they will identify with those others that they're concerned, and they will basically be willing to go into any altercation or unpleasant behaviours, or whatever, like defending the so-called rights of this other put upon group or what have you. And isn't that a form of attachment too?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Well, it depends whether the action is accomplished from the vantage point of the separate individual, or whether it is accomplished simply out of impersonal love, intelligence, and a sense of beauty. So we cannot qualify an action just by the nature of the action, we have to question whether there is an attachment to the fruit of the action. If there is attachment to the outcome, it's personal, and it comes from ignorance.

TRIP: Fair enough. A shift took place in you that takes place in a person that's become established spiritually towards what we'll call objectless happiness. Can you describe what it's like to shift from object driven happiness to objectless happiness?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: We have to realize that in fact the objects don't bring about happiness. We have often experienced this: We once went to a restaurant and it was such a nice experience. The next year we go to the same place, because we intend to reproduce the same experience using the same object. Alas, the chef has changed, the management is different, and the food is disgusting.

Life never reproduces itself twice, identically, in order to teach us that objects don't contain happiness. The recipes our parents gave us for happiness, such as a valued diploma, a fancy profession, the perfect companion, having children, a beautiful house, a luxury car in the driveway, a comfortable retirement

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package, a beautiful grave, all of that doesn't work. Hopefully we realize before the last stage that happiness has to be found somewhere else. Happiness is in reality consciousness experiencing itself, knowing itself, loving itself. It is always causeless. The object that allegedly brought about happiness brought about in fact a temporary cessation of the desire. For a short moment we experienced the desireless state, which is our true nature. But because we have not eradicated the belief that we are a separate consciousness, a separate individual, fear and desire soon reappear and this moment of happiness is short lived. There is a moment of conversion which takes place when we understand the entire picture and we begin seeking happiness in a place which is not an object. Our experience is comprised of only two sides, the objective side, the phenomenal side on the one hand, and the consciousness side, the nominal side, the subjective side, on the other hand. If happiness is not contained within the objective side, there is only one possibility left: it must be contained in consciousness itself. From that moment on we are on our journey back home and accordingly happiness begins to permeate our lives as we go deeper and deeper on this journey towards the center of our human experience.

TRIP: Well surely that's true, but I'm wondering if you can help me with a lower order attachment that I have, and I think many other people do. I think it's pretty easy to give up the idea that the big-ticket items, like the shiny new car, and the big house, and the trophy girlfriend are going to make you happy, that's not too hard. And I think people are able to do that. But I have to say I love having my modest little home, going down into my cupboard and finding the little bag of tea there that brings me joy in the morning, and just to drink a little glass of tea, being able to sit in a comfortable chair quietly, peacefully in my home and know that I'm not inundated with a lot of stuff going on around me. Little simple pleasures do seem to bring joy, and it's difficult for me to say that they don't. I like being able to take a shower every day with running hot water. These things are little simple things, but

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they're pretty darned integral to feeling pretty content. I mean, it's hard to say they don't contribute to happiness. That's how I feel.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: There is a difference and distinction to be made between pleasure and happiness. Pleasures are short-lived experiences, they are usually linked to sensual experiences. Happiness is a peaceful condition in which we are not troubled, and it is this peaceful condition in the background, if you will, that allows for the little burst of joy. If you don't have this peace in the background, you couldn't even enjoy your tea or your shower, you see. Let's assume you have a serious issue, and then the enjoyment of the tea or the shower disappears, if you have a serious issue with a big-ticket item. So I am not saying, I am not preaching an ascetic life, I am far from that, on the contrary I see life as a celebration, and the running hot water, or the drinking hot water with a little bag in it, they are part of the celebration. But what we have to understand is that whenever we experience happiness, it's never the tea bag which is happy, or the hot water, it is the presence clearly; that's all we have to do. And also a distinction has to be made between the needs of the body, the need for cleanliness, for water, to drink, to eat, etc, to sleep. And also the need for beauty, we are more than animals, all of that is absolutely legitimate. I mean, as you drink your cup of tea you are not harming anybody, or as you take your shower. So it's totally legitimate; it's part of the celebration.

WIZARD: It could be your buffet in the Bellagio in Vegas. Or it could be living on a mountaintop in Jamaica with no water.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Absolutely, absolutely, it could be anything. It could be anything. The life we live, expresses itself in so many different ways, and who knows whether the guy in Jamaica on his mountaintop is not happier than we with our cars and beautiful homes, yes.

TRIP: You say there's no teacher and there's only a teacher for as long as one takes oneself to be a student, and notwithstanding that fact, I still feel you're one of the greatest spiritual teachers alive. So

I do thank you so much for joining us today. Now your method is to focus aspirants on what is known for sure because it prepares the way for grace to come in. But on the other hand, you would counsel aspirants to live as unknowing innocence, so it seems to me there's a paradox there. Given that paradox, what are some of the obvious things a person might investigate and know for sure that would clear away the obstructions that allow for grace to come in?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes. Investigation, first of all, we have to establish what we are, and what we are is the centrality of our experience that which is always there with us, things we are always with ourselves. Something that comes and goes out of our experience cannot be the centrality of our experience, therefore any perception, thought, or sensation, things that come and go, is not the same centrality of our experience. That which remains as the candidate for the centrality of our experience is this very simple consciousness, whatever it is, that is hearing these words right now. That's what we are, and that's not an object, that's not a body, that's not a mind. Before we are a body or a mind we are that, *we are that*, we are this presence hearing these words. And whether this presence is also a body or a mind, that remains to be seen, and the investigation is trying to answer the question based upon my experience, not based upon hearsay.

How do I know that this consciousness which is hearing these words right Now is limited in any fashion or form? For instance, how do I know it was born? Do I remember the experience of the birth of my consciousness? No. And if I don't, could somebody else remember it? No, because only I am aware of my consciousness, nobody else is. Therefore as far as I know I was never born, it doesn't mean I was never born, you see. But it means that I have to be agnostic in this regard, just as knowing if the consciousness which is aware of Francis' thoughts, and the consciousness which is aware of Trip's thoughts, or John's thoughts, are different consciousnesses. If yes, what is the experience of the experiment that establishes this fact? And if I go deeply into these questions, I find that I don't know. I am not certain that consciousness is

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limited to one mind. So then, once conduct this investigation there are likely to be questions and objections that come up, and that's also an aspect which a spiritual friend may be helpful by helping us sort out these objections in answering them.

But at the end, we reach a total certainty that we can never know based upon our phenomenal experience. And then at that moment we are free to conduct experiments that are based on the ultimate possibility, that we are free to live as this consciousness - unlimited, impersonal, unborn, you see, and that's OK. As we begin to walk the walk, and not only think the thought, as we begin to walk the walk, and to live in accordance with this ultimate possibility, with the possibilities that this apparently simple and limited consciousness is in fact divine, and universal, that the magic comes into play, the revelation if you will. It is a living revelation, it is not revealed once and for all, it is there for you once and for all but it keeps revealing itself.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: So what you're saying, is that somebody really needs to take on a different assumption about who or what they are first, they have to play with that, right?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes, because you cannot live from a lie, you cannot live from a belief. Our problem is that we believe to be separate, limited, that's what I call ignorance, I don't use the word ego, and I use the word ignorance which is the belief that this consciousness...

WIZARD: It's a belief.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: I, me, the extent of which is beyond a shadow of a doubt that this, I, is limited, it's broadly-based, body dependent.

WIZARD: So a belief of thoughts, just thoughts.

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FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes. They are thoughts, but they are more than thoughts, because they are thoughts with a *me* attached to it. For instance, I can have read Karl Marx, and understand the logic, the rationale, but that doesn't make me a communist. To be a communist I need to have read Karl Marx, but I need something more, I need to be attached to Karl Marx' concepts. So it is the same thing here. I can have the concept of Santa Claus without believing in Santa Claus. I can have the concept of nonduality without understanding and experiencing it, or having experienced it; just as I can have the concept of being a separate individual without believing in it. So the moment I believe in it, then it is ignorance. So that's why the problem of ignorance is something more than a concept, it is a concept but we are attached to this concept, this concept is our pet project, we love it, we are in love with being a separate entity.

TRIP: Speaking of ignorance, you said something interesting, you said, "You cannot dissociate enlightenment from ignorance, and the interesting place to be is where you're neither ignorant nor enlightened. Over time that must be hard, not that you can't hang out there, but over time after you've spent 10, 20, 30 years becoming as informed as you are, isn't it tempting for you to feel, wow, I'm enlightened, I'm pretty enlightened? I mean, it's difficult for you to remain in that place in between ignorance and enlightenment, isn't it?"

WIZARD: Can thought ever say it is or it isn't? Because thought is temporary. I mean that which is Truth is not a thought, so any attempt to grasp or know with thought to me would seem to be futile. Trust or Faith, an innocent Faith, would trump a belief or thought.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: A belief maintains itself until proven false, like the belief in Santa Claus maintains itself until you catch mom and dad red handed buying toys, or you catch your dad buying the toys at Toys R Us, while mom is trying to divert your attention from that. But you see that dad is in fact giving the credit card to the cashiers, and that he is taking some objects back to the car. So

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then at that moment Santa Claus goes down the drain. [Laughing] A belief exists up until the lie is discovered, you see. And that is the same thing with ignorance, which is a mere concept of a separate identity, but the belief that consciousness is limited. And the way to liberate yourself from it; is to investigate it. It's like this kid in kindergarten, and there is this first grader telling him, Santa Claus is a creation of our parents, and upon hearing that something is awakened in him, that there's something fishy about this story. And then when he goes next time to Toys R Us, there's alertness in him, and this alertness takes him to the real discovery at which point the belief is solved. And it is the same here, the belief in separate existence maintains itself up to the point which relies on grace, you encounter a book, you encounter a birth, and something, some otherness takes birth in you that eventually leads to a discovery which liberates you beyond a shadow of a doubt.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Francis, is there anything that's on your mind that you want to share. What's going on with you out there in your life, and in your travels?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: I am looking at beautiful mountains in front of me, beautiful Californian sky, not a single cloud, with a window, and a beautiful morning. I'm going to play some tennis afterwards, our life is a celebration.

TRIP: I'm a cage rattler, and I get pleasure out of knocking people down a notch [Laughs], which I really would like to let go of. But you say that a practice that comes out of the idea of being a physical or mental being can't be called spiritual. So for folks out there that perceive themselves to be, let's say, a yoga teacher, and they're demonstrating to others what they perceive to be their body, how to posture their body for better personal health. There's nothing spiritual in that because the person's self perception is that of being a separate person with a body, etc. Is that correct?

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FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes. But they teach yoga, and they don't teach gymnastics, so there is always in them an element which goes beyond the body always, nothing happens by chance in life. If you get exposed to yoga, there is something. I remember when I was 11 years old; I bought a book about yoga. I don't know why, I went to this bookstore, I spent all my money, for three weeks I couldn't go to the movies, I spent all my entire allowance on this hard cover book on yoga. And I practiced Hatha yoga for three months then started thinking, there are no results. Well down the road there were results in fact, nothing happens by chance.

WIZARD: So every action is perfect.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes, anyway regarding yoga, there is Hatha yoga and then there are other stages of dissolution, and they are the ones that are interesting. What the yoga is about, you're going for body and mind, not just the body, is to realign if you will the way we perceive the body, and we perceive the world, in a way that is consistent with the nondual reality.

When we perceive the world in ignorance, we see the world as the non-me, and we see the body as the *me*, we draw a line in the air at the surface of the skin which is a non-existing line in fact. Our perceptions, the way we perceive the world, the sensations for which we perceive the body, and the thought, they all appear in the same place, in consciousness, there's a whole distance from consciousness, so everything is given there in one single shot so to speak. And that's our primary experience, that's our direct experience, the view we had of the newborn child. So we can work, if you will, towards rediscovering this childlike view of ourselves and of the world, in which the world is the extension of our body without separation. And that's an artistic view, a view of beauty, and that's also a loving view because if the so-called other, as a body, appears, his body and my body are one because the entire universe is my body. You see, so it's an including view. We can cultivate it, we can do exercises in which we feel that the body expands into the entire volume or space of the room we are in, or in which we feel that the space compliments the space which is the

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body, or in which we see a process that we are not breathing, that breathing is not coming from within, but that it is the entire universe that does our breathing. There are many exercises, like many that have been designed by seers and sages, and liberated instructors, over all of the ages which are of value, and they are instrumental in helping one get established in this peace, and in this experience of non-separation.

WIZARD: So it's like turning inside out where the body and the mind arise in that which is thoughtless rather than the sense of sentience being a by-product of the biological mind.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes. But to bring this understanding also at the level of perception and sensation, that is the goal of Hatha Yoga as I see it. But it was taken on a tangent if the goal is the health goal only. The goal is really to make the body, if you will, an instrument of the divine.

TRIP: Now the Wizard says the key to living the Truth to simply being the Truth is to simply be yourself, nothing more than just be yourself, right Wizard?

WIZARD: Yes, every action is perfect; everything is unfolding like as it should.

TRIP: So just be yourself and that's fine. Okay. But I've noticed that as I become more accepting, more open, more allowing, more still, all of these things that are new that I haven't been in the past, then I find that the people around me tend to respond to that and they say, wow, I can see this beautiful transformation taking place in you, Trip, you're more open and accepting and gentle and all of that. But that's not the Trip I've always been, okay. So I'm a little confused still about being myself if "being myself" doesn't really serve me.

WIZARD: Be that which is the thoughtless and allow the thoughts to come and go and be, even your reactions, your frustrations, if you relax into that within which all of that is arising, then all of

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that behavior is open for inspection very clearly in right Now. And it's amazing how when you are the Now, literally, how spontaneously your actions take care of the Now, regardless of how they look. And that's just surrender, and then don't look back.

TRIP: Good advice. So, Francis, you wrote, "As long as there are others, our conduct cannot be rooted in love". That's like a big wow because almost every romantic book every written and every movie ever made [Laughs] about so-called love is actually BS, right? Because all of them have two people that are looking at each other, right?

WIZARD: It's desire.

TRIP: None of that's love, right? Francis?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: It depends; it is certainly not sexual desire, or passion, and some sensation. Love is when you are able to put yourself in the other person's shoes so to speak, so that you are free from your own identification so that you can see the situation, embrace the other, the body of the other as being your own body.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Francis, we can't hear you. Are you still there?

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Watching the same beautiful mountains.

TRIP: So being in that beautiful, natural place probably is a very healing and nurturing environment. How lucky you are to be looking at the mountains.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Well I've not always lived in this beautiful way. I remember a long time ago finding myself in France at night during the winter, it was very cold, in a train station outside on the platform. And there was a little house, a little protection, it was dirty, and people were smoking in it, and there was only one

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miserable electrical bulb hanging from the ceiling. But I had no choice but to be there due to the cold waiting for my train, some people smelled like alcohol. Not the beautiful mountains and beautiful home I live in right now, and nevertheless there was this peace and this light was divine coming out of this bulb, and everything was at peace and beautiful. And I thought to myself, "Gee, two years ago you were so distracted, you couldn't have been standing there". Now there is beauty everywhere because it is my inner peace that is shining.

WIZARD: Shall we have a question from Rona Wallace in British Columbia. Rona would like to know what Francis thinks about the traditional Advaita and Neo-Advaita controversy that seems to be prevalent. I've noticed in myself where there's a little put down between [Laughs] the newer schools of thought and the traditional Advaita. And so Rona would like to get your take on that.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Well, it's very difficult to talk about. The problem I see, the potential problem I see, is that the difference between the traditional teaching perhaps and the Neo-Advaita is that in the traditional teaching there are two phases if you will, there is a phase of the awakening, and then there is the phase of getting established. In the awakening there is a radical transformation that takes place, but this transformation needs time and needs often the help of a spiritual friend to cement itself so that we can really enjoy the fruit which is happiness. The Neo-Advaita often at best remains at the first stage, at the glimpse of Truth or intellectual understanding.

WIZARD: The flower.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Exactly. The ripening of it, so we understand it after several years, hopefully. I know that without the help of my teacher, and the 20-year association I had with him...

WIZARD: So the flower falls away while the fruit is developing.

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FRANCIS LUCILLE: Yes. So often you will hear people saying, okay, Advaita is about understanding that there is only one thing, only one reality, and that's it. And then if you are miserable well, that is reality, and well that's true. If you are miserable, if you still have desire, if you still behave like a jerk in your life, yes, that's it, and that's only the totality expressing itself in this way, that's very true. But the end game of it, and that's what you will find is more traditional, is to be established in happiness. That's why it's often the question I ask. I asked a young man are you happy, are you happy? And instead of receiving a simple resounding yes, he tap-danced around the issue, this answer. So that I think is the major difference. The other difference is that there is a transmission that takes place from teacher to disciple; a direct transmission without a scripture, without the word. This silent transmission is often not understood or acknowledged by new Advaita teachers, for the very simple reason that they have not experienced it.

TRIP: Francis, I'm afraid we've run out of time. It was such a joy to have you with us today. Thank you so much for joining us.

FRANCIS LUCILLE: Thank you for inviting me.

WIZARD: And thank you, Francis, so much for your affirmation for all of us who are deepening and maturing in this wonder...



[Greg Goode](http://www.heartofnow.com/)

<http://www.heartofnow.com/>

TRIP: Special guest today, author Dr. Greg Goode, is a pioneer in the philosophical consultation movement, trained by its luminaries and certified by its association. His nondual self-inquiry has been edified by the most powerful teachings of Western philosophy, Advaita Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism. Greg studied Philosophy with Lewis White Beck, William T. Bluhm, Richard Feldman, Henry Kyburg, Richard Taylor, Colin M. Turbayne, and Paul Weirich at the University of Rochester. He

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studied Advaita Vedanta through the Chinmaya Mission, the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, and Francis Lucille. He studied the Mahayana teachings of Pure Land Buddhism through Jodo-Shinshu, and studied Chinese Middle-Way Buddhism through the lineage of Master Wen Zhu and the pre-eminent scholar of Chinese Buddhism Master Yin-Shun, author of *The Way to Buddhahood*.

Greg has also been influenced by the teachings of many teachers he's never met, both Western and Eastern, ancient and modern. The Western teachers include Protagoras, Heraclitus, Gorgias [Laughs], Sextus Empiricus, George Berkeley, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Ludwig Wittgenstein, W.V.O. Quine, Nelson Goodman, Brand Blanshard, Jacques Derrida, Wilfrid Sellars, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Lanham and Richard Rorty. Eastern teachers include Shankara, Gaudapada, Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, Tsong-Khapa– quite a few! – Honen Shonin, Shinran Shonin, Sri Atmananda, Shunryu Suzuki, Thich-Thien-Tam and Chin-Kung. That's quite a list, Greg! [Laughs].

WIZARD: They say it takes a village to raise a Dalai Lama.

TRIP: Hey, Greg, I was curious, how is it that you studied under so many teachers, and your own direct experience of the Truth happened before, during, or after all of this education?

GREG GOODE: During. I like reading, and I actually liked the subject matter of all that philosophy, and whatever else it is, I actually like it. So I was never doing it in order to become free of suffering. I mean, there were parts, part of the time I was, but when suffering was no more, when like my nondual search had come to its end, I continued to read those things. So I guess, one of your questions is how did I come to have so many folks as teachers. Well, that's what happens when you're in graduate schools, you can't avoid it and you read a lot of stuff. And I just continued reading, Eastern and Western.

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TRIP: We're going to be talking a lot about awareness over the next hour, and I was wondering if you could tell us exactly what awareness is. Now you've written a book about awareness, *Standing as Awareness*, we're going to talk a little bit about your book. So what is awareness exactly?

GREG GOODE: Awareness is that which is appeared to, that within which arisings arise.

TRIP: And what does it mean to take your stand as awareness?

GREG GOODE: It means... Do you know the bumper stickers that say, WWJD, what would Jesus do?

TRIP: Yes.

GREG GOODE: And that's a supposed reminder, like I want to be thankful, I remember what Jesus would do and I'll go in the right track. Well, this is like that. What would awareness do? What is true for awareness? Is it true that awareness doesn't like its mother-in-law, or is it true that awareness suffers and stuff like that? And you see, no. And so it's sort of a doing, it's an orientation, it's like a stepping in to a certain gestalt where I'm going to live as though awareness is what I am, instead of the body, instead of the mind, instead of a person. That's what taking a stand would be, it's like enacting the Truth that is already there, the Truth of awareness being your nature. And so then I don't suffer. Since awareness doesn't suffer, I don't suffer. Awareness doesn't have any inharmonious relations with relatives, so I don't have any inharmonious relations with relatives. And it's investigating the consequences of that. When you do investigate the consequences of that stand, you find that the stand is confirmed.

TRIP: The stand is confirmed?

GREG GOODE: Like verified.

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TRIP: Yes.

GREG GOODE: Like really as awareness that we don't suffer.

WIZARD: So it's a dispassionate stance?

GREG GOODE: I think it's a passionate stance, I think it helps to fall in love with awareness. There are a lot of people for whom the whole awareness teachings just don't make a lot of sense, so they don't really have a lot to hook into with this teaching. But some people do, like they've had childhood experiences, or like intuitions of oneness or wholeness, and stuff like that. It's when they hear the awareness teachings it really resonates with them, and that pulls them in, as a sweetness which draws them in to a teaching. And so when they stand as awareness it's a passionate openhearted seeking of warmth, like a flower turning to the sun. So I wouldn't say dispassionate. Dispassionate to me sounds a little bit cold.

WIZARD: Okay. What I would say would be affirmed.

GREG GOODE: Yes, like that, there are people who try it, and when they are going by the logic of awareness, not much happens. And it's not a really useful teaching for a person whose only connection with awareness is a logical analysis.

WIZARD: But it would be non-clingy?

GREG GOODE: That's for sure. You're not clinging, you're not... what's the word I'm looking for? You're not desperate, you're not holding onto it with desperation. It is an open-armed orientation towards awareness, as though you're hugging it, and it's hugging you.

TRIP: Agreed. And I've noticed that when I speak with friends, or I'm at gatherings, and I speak about nondual wisdom from the perspective of Trip, it always comes out sounding like a falsehood

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[Laughs]. But when I speak more briefly from the perspective of awareness it sounds pretty rocking right on.

Your book, [*Standing as Awareness*](#), which is available on Amazon in paper form only for \$10, and by the way I must confess I didn't read it because I only read the e-books, I wish...

GREG GOODE: There's an e-book coming out, it's going to be in at least one digital format.

TRIP: Good. Well, the key to your book, according to Jerry Katz who, I think, wrote the foreword, are the simple experiments that expose experience as awareness. What's the purpose of understanding that all experience is awareness, and what are some examples of the experiments that you think are useful to help people to run?

GREG GOODE: Well, let's say you hear a teaching that says you are awareness, and you associate awareness with something very light and cloud-like maybe, if you're just getting into the teaching. And yet all around you it seems like there's hard impenetrable realities like the Brooklyn Bridge, or like the wall in front of you. Sometimes people say, "Well, you're awareness, can you walk through the wall?" And it seems like the experience of physicality is an exception, or somehow some counterexample to being awareness, as though if you really were awareness you'd be able to go through walls. And so the experiments that are touched upon in that book, and are dealt with in great detail by my new book ([*The Direct Path*](#)), show you that everything you experience about physicality or about the mind, about the body, about subtle thoughts and feelings, are nothing other than awareness. So it helps prevent you from thinking that the world is an exception to awareness, the world is something other than awareness, other than you.

I mean, when you think about the basic distinction between "I" and "not I," or "I" and "other," then the textbook case of difference there would be "me" and a physical object, like the desk, or the

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computer, that definitely qualifies, it seems to qualify something other than what I am. But if we can understand our experience of the computer as nothing other than awareness itself, then that self-distinction between “I” and “other than I” evaporates. And you see that the world is you, is awareness. So there doesn't seem to be any distinction, any alienation or separation.

WIZARD: So there's no conflict between awareness and just simply being here.

GREG GOODE: Yes, and whatever else arises. Actually you said it much nicer than I said it, much more succinctly.

TRIP: I was thinking about your experiments, and I didn't know what they were. But I was walking down my path today thinking about this interview tonight, and also about your experiments, and I noticed that a little block I was having was that the movement of my perception as I was walking, created an illusion that there was a separation from the object and the perceiver, because the perceiver was moving and the objects weren't. And I don't know...

GREG GOODE: Yes, that's a good example of something that shows up as an exception to being awareness, like if everything is I-ness, if everything is awareness, then how come these exceptions pop up? How come objects seem to move or I seem to move among objects? That seems to falsify the nondualist insight that everything is awareness. Beside you even said... Didn't you say the movement of attention?

TRIP: No, I didn't say that, but go ahead.

GREG GOODE: Your experience today in your walk is an example of something that these experiments would help one to see that experience is not a matter of separation, like you actually don't move and neither do the objects. Movement is just a conclusion, a story, a thought, a thought that says “movement.” And a thought doesn't move, but a thought can claim that movement is happening.

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TRIP: Exactly. So I would think this would be very useful because even for someone like me that's doing this every week, and spending six, eight, ten hours a week studying folks like you, sitting up in the chair, it all makes perfect sense and it all is pretty easily assimilable. But then go out in the world and start walking, or driving, or have this thing come up, it jolts that easy understanding, and it is probably good to have really established yourself in all these different real life situations.

GREG GOODE: Yes, in the new book I have an example of where you're walking across your house at night and you stub your toe on a coffee table [Laughs]. And there's a lot of things that seem like exception to the sweetness, and the marshmallow softness and cloudiness of awareness – all of a sudden, boom, and the world makes its entrance. But does it? Does it really?

TRIP: Does it?

GREG GOODE: Well, you asked, “Does the world really make its entrance?”

TRIP: I know it doesn't, but...

GREG GOODE: Well, actually it neither does nor doesn't, it's not that the world is out there and it fails to make its appearance. That's not what happens, you don't look out into the outer regions and find out that they're *empty*, because that's just as much separation as though you looked out among the outer regions of someone to be *full*. The distinction is the inner and the outer, and that distinction is through – in most nondual inquiries that distinction itself evaporates.

TRIP: We'll talk some more about the inner and the outer, but I wanted to take a step back and ask you; you are at the vanguard of what is described as the philosophical consultation movement, which I can't believe I have not heard about. But what is the philosophical consultation movement all about?

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GREG GOODE: It's using the resources mostly of Western philosophies, the philosophies that people study in school, Plato and Aristotle, and the other Ancient Greeks, or maybe Descartes or Berkeley, to solve the same kinds of distressing issues that a lot of people would use therapy to solve. And the reason that you might not have heard it is it tends to be a very academic thing, most of the practitioners are academicians, and most of the people who go to those folks for assistance don't have the same end results in mind that spiritual seekers do. It could work for spiritual seeking, but mostly the presenting issues are different, people want to know like, what should I do, I have a career choice to make between two choices, what should I choose? Should I go to school, or should I go to work? One issue came up three times in two years when I first hung out my shingle to do this kind of work.

One particular issue came up three times from different people and that is, I work and I know my boss, I know my boss' family. I've been over to their house for holidays and stuff like that, and one day I see my boss out with not his or her spouse but someone else, and they're holding hands and they're kissing. Back at work now, what should I do? So that's a classic ethical dilemma, and so they go to a philosopher because that seems like just the person who's well equipped to solve those things. That's a common issue. I've heard it from other people and I had it myself three times as a reporting issue. So that's a whole different universe of discourse from things that we're used to talking about. And actually most of the people who come to me aren't even interested in that academic stuff, they just ignore the fact that there's that philosophical counselling stuff, and they just ask me the same questions that we are familiar with in a spiritual realm.

TRIP: Interesting. So is it ethics? Is it like somebody might come to you and say, "I won a lot of money and now I have people around me that are in need, is it incumbent upon me to..."

GREG GOODE: That's a good one, yes. That's a question too, we'll get that question. Actually I had a spiritual seeker who also

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had that question, in addition to the spiritual questions he had, he also had that particular question.

TRIP: That's interesting.

GREG GOODE: Yes. And there are more and more people getting certification in this, and the way it is now you have to have at least a Masters in philosophy, and if you have a PhD in philosophy... Where are most of the people who have PhDs in philosophy? They're usually teaching philosophy at universities or colleges. So the people who go to those people for help or counselling tend to be associated with universities most of the time. They wouldn't search YouTube for nonduality. Enlightenment is not for them, not something they're looking for, they're just not thinking about that stuff. But I must say that out of all the people that have come my way, I'd say less than 2% are interested in those classic philosophical issues and most are interested in spiritual things.

TRIP: Okay. So you have a deep training in both of these spheres in your own life in reflecting upon the dilemmas that present themselves to you, which do you call upon more directly? I mean, for me this ineffable Truth that we're talking about today is not something that can be known, however there are these logical consequences of this beautiful Truth that make it pretty easy to have a roadmap for living. For example, you would want to be present rather than having your mind wondering into the past and the future, and you would want to perhaps see what shows up in your life instead of overly planning and thinking that you can manage everything, and that sort of thing, right?

GREG GOODE: Right, right, right.

TRIP: Okay. So, which of these roadmaps do you find more useful to you? Is it a philosophical one or one with a spiritual basis in nondual reality?

GREG GOODE: I actually don't follow a roadmap. [Laughs]

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TRIP: Well, then you're a nondual guy.

TRIP: You just answered my question. Hey, let me ask you, this intrigued me, your nondual dinners with Francis Lucille, I just started imaging like how intensely interesting that must have been. Who hung out with you with the nondual dinners?

GREG GOODE: Well, it started... The way I understand it is, it started with something like a salon, the European salon where people would come and have very educational highfaluting conversations. And it's something that Jean Klein and Francis did some times together, sometimes on their own in Europe when they were there. And so when Francis came (Jean Klein, I never met him), but when Francis Lucille came to the United States and he'd go to the different cities that would host him as a speaker, he would say, "Well, I might be here for a week, or a weekend, but outside of the nights that there are full of meetings, let's gather and have some ice cream or something, get some pizza, and we'll just talk." So that's nice. And so he would come to New York City about twice a year, and this is in the late '90s, going on to maybe 2003. And then we just continued it when he wasn't there. And then it broke off into meetings that didn't require his particular presence or his particular teaching, or his particular influence, it went renegade in a way, so that anybody could talk about anything connected with nonduality. And it's been going on like that ever since those years. Sometimes we'd have them every week, sometimes we'd have them every month.

Now we have a small group because we like to have a conversation that is not so big that it breaks up into two or three sub-conversations. And there's no focal point, there's no agreed-upon guru, or teacher, or agenda, it's just people having dinner and talking about nonduality.

TRIP: And this is where?

GREG GOODE: At a diner in New York City.

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TRIP: Okay, so you live in New York City?

GREG GOODE: Yes, yes. And there's another one... I've heard of other similar gatherings. There's one from a Jean Klein's student that is conducted in Seattle, there's another one I heard that is in Long Island, but I only heard about that one once.

WIZARD: That would be a good book, *The Diner Conversations*.

TRIP: Really.

GREG GOODE: So that's like the second half of the book *Standing as Awareness* – there are some conversations from dinners.

TRIP: Bring your tape recorder.

GREG GOODE: Yes, yes.

TRIP: I want to ask you now, I just jump around, if you don't mind, but I woke up when I walked past an open picture book with Ramana Maharshi's wisdom in my friend the Wizard's sitting room, so I'm a real... I venerate Ramana Maharshi, and I'm sure you do too. I saw on your website where... Now this is something that I've taken just on face value because Ramana said it, and I haven't found anything else in his teachings that I could find fault with, so I just accepted this one. But Ramana says all actions are determined except the ability to inquire into one's true nature. And I see that you've written about free will, I'm just wondering like...

WIZARD: That's a good one.

TRIP: Other than accepting what Ramana says as face value, I'm just wondering why that particular choice to inquire into your own true nature is somehow a choice and nothing else is. That one's always confused me.

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WIZARD: Was that a choice for Ramana himself, when he had the panic attack?

TRIP: I don't know, but this is supposedly the only choice that we have. What do you think about that, Greg? I don't know.

GREG GOODE: I think it's a rhetorical statement, something to encourage people to keep them from going totally nihilistic. On the face of it, if you look at the mechanics of choice, then there's nothing different about the choice to inquire versus the choice to do something else. Nothing that would make that particular choice any different. But if you didn't think you had that choice, and then you'd think that there'd be no choice whatsoever. And for people who feel there's no choice whatsoever, some people are liberated by the thought, and some people are depressed, and they feel like "What's the use of anything, why even get out of bed in the morning?"

WIZARD: My own paradigm shift was choiceless.

GREG GOODE: I'm sorry?

WIZARD: For myself, just speaking for myself, the paradigm shift was like a synchronistic event, it was choiceless.

GREG GOODE: Mine too; in fact, I also experienced choice itself as choiceless.

WIZARD: Yes, yes.

GREG GOODE: So, I think that Ramana didn't want to close the door altogether on the possibility of using inquiry to help themselves.

TRIP: Well, I think, for me the answer to that choice, I'm comforted by the fact that I don't have any real choice. I'm one of those people that, you know, find it comforting, but I see my body as a mechanistic hologram that has feelings and it is running in

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parallel with this witnessing awareness that observes it. And when shit hits the fan, it gets felt and experienced but it's seen through, so I guess, even though I don't have choice, I get off on pretending that I do. [Laughs] I don't know...

WIZARD: That's biology.

TRIP: Exactly.

I'm going to have fun with the pretending to have choice, what can I say.

GREG GOODE: Why not!

TRIP: Your mind has engaged in very detailed reasoning on the nature of reality, and it seems that one of the benefits of that reasoning that you've really conducted quite exhaustively is what you call the end of the conception of inherent existence; I think that's an extremely important point. Can you explain inherent existence versus existence?

GREG GOODE: This switches gears a little bit, this terminology comes from the emptiness teachings, so it has a little bit different background from the teachings we've talked about so far. But what inherent existence means is the existence of something that is totally self-sufficient, that stands on its own, so would be independent of cognition. Like it would be something out there that exists, whether it's yourself, whether it's your body, whether it's the rock in the street, whether it's a thought, whether it is a moral goodness versus moral evil, whatever it is, it would exist without any help from cognition, without any help from causes and conditions, and without any help from pieces and parts, from things that are compounded.

And so much of my life, I really resonate with these teachings, because for much of my life I had thought that that's how things do exist, that's the only way for a thing to really be a thing is for it to be by itself, for it to not depend on anything else. And we've

had philosophical teachings in the West that say that's exactly how things exist, like the Platonic forms, and there have been some versions of the New Age teachings that say that whatever exists, like a planet, and the Earth, a person, plan for your life, whatever it is, exists first in the "causal" level, then in the various mental levels, and the esoteric level, then finally the physical levels. The things go from subtle to the gross, but they exist in this subtle way as pre-existing templates. So that's an example of something that would exist inherently, like the template. Nothing is helping that template to exist, the template exists whether I think it does or not.

So we have teachings that actually promote the notion of inherent existence. But what the emptiness teachings do is to investigate whether things exist inherently as we suspect they do and we find out in every case they don't. And, Trip, you mentioned inherent existence as opposed to existence, so is there any other kind of existence? Well, the other existence that the teachings talk about is conventional existence, or what we used to say in the Army, "Good enough for Government work" kind of existence, like, I don't care whether my car keys exist inherently, I just want to use them to get to the store, that's all they need to do. If they can provide that function then they're good enough for me, but I'll say they exist. Good enough. Or like one of my heroes, Richard Rorty, would say, "You might wonder whether you have a real Rolex, but have you ever wondered whether your Rolex is real?" Like you want to know that you don't have a copy or a fake or a Fugazi Rolex, but let's say you went and bought your Rolex at an authorised dealer, does it need to be any more real than that? Do you ever wonder whether it's really, really, really ultra like real inherently existent? And he was against inherent existence as well, so people just don't need to care about that. And that's what the emptiness teachings teach you that you don't need to care about inherent existence.

And so doing these emptiness meditations, which is basically another form of investigation, you look for the thing that's supposed to exist inherently. You look for it, you look for it in

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ways that supposed to exist outside of cognition. Can you find it where there's no cognition? Can you find it where it's independent of pieces and parts? Can you strip away all the pieces and parts and still find the object? Or the third way of being independent is, can you find it totally independent of causes and conditions? Like if there were no hands that made the watch, could the watch exist? And you might think, "Well no, that's stupid, who would ever think that a watch could exist without being created?" But when you think about how you think of objects, you think about them as though they are already pre-existent, already like obeying that template, at least I did. I had a really, really strong sense of proper inherent existence for most of my life, much of my life before I get these nondual investigations. So conventional existence is okay, inherent existence is the root of all suffering in that teaching.

WIZARD: So in a dream it all happens, it all arises at the same time without any history or anything, it just appears.

GREG GOODE: Yes, and actually if there's a sense that there's a history to it, the history arises with the thing itself.

WIZARD: Yes.

GREG GOODE: It's all like the story that all coexist at that moment, and in that moment it seems like it has its history, it has a kagal chain behind it.

WIZARD: And you look at the Rolex watch in the dream, and it looks absolutely real.

GREG GOODE: Right. And you are able to see the dream as a dream once you've reached the waking state, and that helps you see that the dream itself was a creator of the watch. It seems to have those links and ties that they didn't.

WIZARD: It seems to me like there's a sentience that seamless, it goes into the dream, or the waking, or even the dreamless. Like if

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you go get some surgery, and they knock you out, you don't remember anything.

GREG GOODE: You don't remember anything.

WIZARD: Even there, there's a seamless sentience of this indescribable that seems to be a continuum through all of that that doesn't really move.

GREG GOODE: Right. That's one of the very profound teachings of Advaita Vedanta that uses the deep sleep as a part of the teaching. I'm not sure if I know any other spiritual teachings that use that in the way that Advaita Vedanta does, and they teach that the "I" is there, awareness is there even when there are no objects there, in deep sleep. And my Advaita teacher, my Sat-guru, Sri Atmananda, made a big deal out of the deep sleep teachings. He thought it's a liberating, like a socially liberating way to learn this teaching, because you wouldn't have to spend years and cultivate meditation and cultivate *nirvikalpa samadhi*. *Nirvikalpa samadhi* would be another way to see that there is awareness there at all times even if there are no objects. But Atmananda said, "Well, that's true but you don't need to do that [cultivate meditation] – you have deep sleep. In deep sleep you are there because you're the one that knows that you're sleeping, you're the one that is aware of the waking state coming, that the dream state coming. And how would that be possible unless awareness was already there?" And it has to be seamless because awareness itself is not going to start and stop. How would that happen?

TRIP: It took me a long time to grasp that and I still even now as you say it, it's like I'm relearning it again, it took me a long, long time to understand Ramana's really simple analogy of the sleep states. But one thing he never mentioned that I had and you may have had, and the Wizard has probably had, is lucid dreaming which to me the lucid dream is even more instructive because you wake up in the dream state, and you realise, "Oh my God, here I am completely awake in this dream state. I'm aware of the fact that this character that I would normally identify with in the

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dream state completely, emote as though the things were happening to this character, even this I'm aware of." So the whole thing you're aware of is a complete fabrication, yet it's absolutely perfect.

WIZARD: And real, I mean, you look at the sun and it shines, and the tree, you look at the leaf, and you know you're dreaming, and you can't remember where you're laying down dreaming, but it is happening.

TRIP: That to me is incredibly instructive, way more than almost anything else, the lucid dream.

GREG GOODE: Okay, but it's also more selective, not everybody has that, and at least not everybody reports it. And what's good about it, it leverages you out of the waking state, like your lucidity in the dream leverages you out of the dream, and so you make an analogy, "Ah, so then the wakening state is like that too!"

WIZARD: So we're doing that right now.

TRIP: Exactly. [Laughs]

WIZARD: This is the deep dream sleep and there's a hallucination happening and is rolling.

TRIP: Right now.

GREG GOODE: Right, right.

TRIP: I want to ask you, I get a little charge here about intellectuals, and to me calling somebody an intellectual is almost like an insult, but that's just me, okay? But you're a book smart guy, and you've relaxed your inherently dualistic mind by reading up on points that daxed it, and you give a list on your website of different things that you could read up on if you were confused about something, or vexed by something. I'm wondering have you any advice for intellectuals who are everywhere in a nondual

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realm, and we have these intellectuals running all over our group page on Facebook, and they are delighted in their encyclopaedic knowledge of nonduality. I mean, what have you learned about the ultimate utility of all of this information that you've absorbed and that others like to tout on websites and what have you? I mean, what's the ultimate utility? The Wizard and I are personally not all that impressed by ever more information. I mean, all the information you need to live in a wakened life you can get in one tiny slim volume, like, I mean...

GREG GOODE: Or less. [Laughs]

WIZARD: My first mentor, for me he was completely illiterate, he couldn't read or write.

GREG GOODE: I'm sorry, Wizard, can you say that over again?

WIZARD: Yes, the first mentor I had who really affirmed my paradigm shift for me was an illiterate man who couldn't read or write.

GREG GOODE: Ah, yes. When I was in the Christian church, I was a deacon in a Pentecostal church, and one of my teachers there, one of the wisest people I've ever known, was also illiterate. He could read the bible, but somehow it's almost as though God made a dispensation, he couldn't read anything else.

TRIP: Really, that's amazing, that is cool. That is cool.

GREG GOODE: But he, other than his great ability for the Bible, he was functionally illiterate as well. And the information I myself tend to like, I'm just interested in spiritual teachings, that's just me, I just have always liked that stuff, I like philosophy. But I hope that I don't communicate that it's necessary to other people to get into all the books in order to be happy. I hope I don't communicate that, that if you're not like me then it's going to suck for you, dude.

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TRIP: No, you don't. But I wondering if you share the perspective that the Wizard and I do, like we have...

GREG GOODE: Yes. Oh, that people touting their knowledge?

TRIP: Yes.

GREG GOODE: I think it can be almost a cruel thing.

TRIP: Because we have this group page, and we have people on there that are brilliant and they've got this encyclopaedic knowledge of spiritual teachings, and they sit there and they just pour them forth day after day after day. But not once do they reveal anything human about themselves, or, how they dealt with their wife going off on the fact that they split for the weekend with their buddy to go fishing, and whatever. To me it's just so much more instructive to share how you're dealing as a human being with life.

GREG GOODE: Yes. I don't hang out on Facebook so much, so it's mildly surprising that there are still people like that. Back before Facebook when Yahoo was the main digital way for nondualists to communicate with each other; I've seen many, many people do the same thing, and I guess, with the new generation it's happening again so I shouldn't be that surprised.

WIZARD: This is great conversation.

GREG GOODE: Here's one thing that I noticed a long time ago, when a person goes intellectual on someone, it's interesting to note the dynamics that take place at that moment. Are they doing it as a way to distance themselves or to put themselves above the other person? Or are they doing it as a way to reach out and embrace the other person and draw them in to them? Like how is it being used, how is the knowledge being used; to separate or to embrace and love?

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WIZARD: We had a post we're running today and it was about the word "Master," it did refer to Ramana Maharshi and why he is called the Master? And then that one broke wide open. And I was questioning knowledge, knowing; can you know the unknown? I mean, I know I don't know. [Laughs] And I beat my head against the wall and when I stopped there was great relief.

GREG GOODE: Not knowing is cool, who needs anymore than that? Any more than that is dogmatism.

WIZARD: So John LeKay at Nondual magazine chimed in and really certainly through the non-Vedic nomenclature about that aspect of the mind that they talk about and still referred to it as the knowledge is the Buddhi, that subtle aspect that... I asked if that was intuition because that's the word I use, intuition, or sentience, or seamless sentience. And there was an agreement there, it was very affirming in the way that John handled me on the Facebook, and our exchange was extremely affirming to me. And others, there are some tough nuts to crack, and if I ask just a question, in your case, what's your opinion of what's... then I get these discourses on theology. It puts me to sleep.

GREG GOODE: Yes, yes. John comes to our nondual dinners.

WIZARD: He does?

GREG GOODE: Yes.

WIZARD: He's a good one.

GREG GOODE: Yes, he's a big believer in practice, he likes Qi Gong and Tai Chi, and he likes that, the heavy hard work, really, really hard, and you'll get effect, you'll get benefits. That's kind of reflection difference from so many other kinds of teachings.

TRIP: Yes, I want to ask you about that, that was next question, and I'm basically lazy, so I want to self-confirm my laziness. But you wrote about, I don't know if this is out of the Buddhist

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tradition or whatever, but the six accomplishments; control of the mind and emotions, control of the sense organs, restraining behaviour, responsibility, ability to do one's duty, patience and forbearance towards pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, trust in the words of the teacher and scriptures, ability to focus on a single object of mind, okay? Now, I can't disagree that the people that I've met that are able to do all of those things tend to be people that I admire and pay attention to, and are established in Truth. So I can't say that that's not a great thing to want to master. But these are not the practice of being; these are the practice of self-control. And I was just wondering, is there any evidence in your travels or journey, and is there any evidence that the mastery of these traits leads more quickly to liberation than simply paying really earnest attention to life and lessons that it inevitably delivers every single day?

GREG GOODE: Those teachings, when I first heard that list, that's a list that's given in Advaita Vedanta as pre-requisites for successful metabolising of the Vedanta teachings. And when I first saw that list I thought, "Wow, that's really cool, you mean there's something beyond that? That's just the *pre-requisite* for enlightenment? That sounds like *enlightenment itself*." I didn't know too much about it. What I think it's doing, I think that list has a function, and it's not that you can't get there without it, it's that it lessens the probability of spiritual bypassing. So that it lessens the probability that you'll take the nondual goal and the nondual teaching and try to solve lower level issues with it.

So let's say that's someone's cold and they don't have very much forbearance for being cold, and then the weather turns hot and they don't have very much forbearance towards being hot, and they learn a little bit about nonduality. So it's quite possible that a person will say, "Well, I can use nonduality in order to not be cold anymore." I've known all kinds of people, I remember one person asked me, they wrote to me and asked me, they want me to be their philosophical nondual counsellor, and their presenting issue was: "I need to go to the dentist, can I do nondual inquiry instead?" [Laughs] Like "Can I make the pain go away by nondual

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inquiry?” And so there's an example of like the nondual goal being sidetracked to some other goal, some other purpose. Someone bends nondual teaching to their own personal purpose. And so if a person has gone through those particular teachings, where does the person get those pre-requisites, like how does that happen? Well, in the classical world of Advaita Vedanta, the other practices that someone would do... like there's the karma-kanda and the jnana-kanda. The karma-kanda is all the worldly exoteric practices of Hinduism, and so you're doing like devotional practices, you're doing good works, you're learning to be content with your lot in life and all kinds of other stuff. So by the time you're pretty good at all that stuff then it's proper in that culture to begin nondual training. In fact, you would do it after you have discharged your obligations to your family as well. So that keeps one from using nonduality to accomplish those other goals.

TRIP: Okay.

WIZARD: In my case on the control thing, I've noticed more and more synchronicity and then trusting more and more synchronicity until I trusted it completely.

GREG GOODE: Yes, and after a while you can't pull anything apart, you can't pull one thing apart for one thing to be synchronist with another, like what two things would you look at? They like sear together, it becomes all awareness. So I've had those synchronistic moments before, but after these nondual teachings took their toll, that stopped because everything was synchronist at that point.

WIZARD: Yes, everything becomes...

GREG GOODE: It doesn't make any real sense to me to have one thing appear then say that that was synchronistic with something else, like they weren't even separate anyway.

WIZARD: Right, right.

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GREG GOODE: For something to be synchronist it sort of assumes that other things are not.

WIZARD: But it came to me in bits, for myself in little pieces until it just collapsed into one.

GREG GOODE: Yes, yes, yes. And if you tune into the growing synchronicity while it's happening, while it's growing, and more and more and more stuff seems synchronistic, it shows that your apprehension is getting broader and broader and broader, and you're not particularising the world as much.

WIZARD: Yes, because it's all happening as it should.

GREG GOODE: Yes.

WIZARD: No conflict.

GREG GOODE: Yes.

TRIP: We've only got five more minutes.

WIZARD: Wow.

TRIP: Here's another stupid question from me, but what the heck, I am kind of getting into the social milieu surrounding spiritual life if you will. And another thing you say is "The various yogas assist, and we just talked about some yogas, the various yogas assist by developing the character and making the person well-balanced. This in turn decreases the chance that attachments and personality issues will arise that sidetrack one's nondual inquiry." Okay? Here's the thing, you've been to the nonduality conference and that was a place where I saw more people gathered that were interested in this than any place I've ever been. I've never gone to a conference or anything, there were like 500 people there.

GREG GOODE: Those are bigger even than the old Inner Direction conferences, I believe, yes.

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TRIP: Yes, so there were 500, 600, 700 people there, and in some of the rooms there are 150 people or whatever. And I was wondering, or this brings it up, is it really true that well-balanced people tend to abide as That more often than say imbalanced people? Or is it really actually easier to be a little crazy and live the Truth, because the Truth is so counterintuitive, and so wild, I think, a crazy personality might actually give you a leg up. And as I looked around this room in the nonduality conference, and I made a comment while Jeff Foster was speaking and he thought it was stupid, and I think he made a little fun of me. But I asked the people in the room, I said, like how many of you right now feel like you actually have been blessed with awakening to the beautiful Truth of who you are, and you don't feel like you need to like necessarily learn something but rather celebrate it, and affirm it, and others, or whatever. And like eight people sheepishly raised their hands. And the other 110 didn't, and the other 110 were all these really well-balanced people, that get up in the morning and go to their jobs, and they're organised, and their houses are clean, and everything.

GREG GOODE: How would you know they're well-balanced?

TRIP: Well, they just looked by the way they were dressed, and then I spoke to them afterwards, and everything, and you get to know them a little bit. But I don't know, it's almost like if you're well-balanced, it's almost like you're really heavily invested in the illusions of pretending that you're in charge of making money and running your family, and blah, blah, blah.

WIZARD: How could you tell, really?

TRIP: A lot of the people that seemed to be awakened in a very rapid way and then become established, don't run what looks like normal lives.

WIZARD: I'm not normal.

TRIP: You're not normal, how about you, Greg?

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GREG GOODE: I am totally abnormal. [Laughs] It would take me a little bit to answer that question, but it's a practice-specific, or it's a path-specific question from Advaita Vedanta. And the way they explain it is, if you're doing inquiry, it's for people who want to do inquiry, not for living it, it's for inquiring into it. Afterward then whatever happens, however the motor is going, the motor is going to go, but while you're doing inquiry, if your intellect is not steady, then you won't be able to keep on the point. If your intellect is steady, it can't stay steady if your emotions are not steady. Your emotions can't be steady unless your choices and your values are steady. Your choices and your values can't be steady unless ... they can't grow to be steady unless you act in a routine manner through time, and you can't act in a routine manner through time unless your body acts as routine. I hear the sound [of the ending tone for the interview]. So basically they teach you to make everything stable for the physical on up, so that you'll be able to inquire better. But that's only for inquiry; there are other routes than inquiry.

WIZARD: So we are going to have to go now, say hello to John LeKay for us.

GREG GOODE: Hello?

TRIP: We're here, are you there? We lost him? Look at that, that was synchronistic.

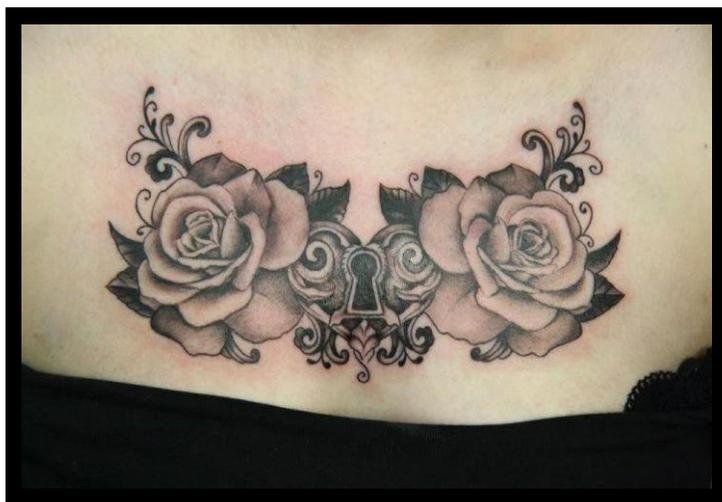
WIZARD: That was synchronistic. [Laughs]

TRIP: Oh, he's still there. He's just jerking our chain. Hey, Greg, you've burned up; you've helped up burn up a perfectly good hour.

GREG GOODE: Cool! I've never had an interview where the interviewers laugh so much, that's great.

WIZARD: Many thanks, Greg; this has been a lot of fun.

GREG GOODE: Okay, bye.



[Ilona Ciunaite](http://liberationunleashed.com/)

<http://liberationunleashed.com/>

TRIP: We never know how to pronounce the names of our guests, is it Ilona Ciunaite?

ILONA CIUNAITE: Yes. Ilona Ciunaite.

TRIP: All right. Well thank you for joining us today, we know very little about you. I did a little research on the Internet, and I couldn't find any personal information about you. So why don't you fill us in with some basic stuff, like where do you live, and where are you calling from, and stuff like that.

ILONA CIUNAITE: Okay. I'm from Lithuania, and I live in England now for the last 15 years. I do tattoos for a living. What else? I live with my husband and a cat. I don't know. I've never been on the radio before, so forgive me I'm a little bit nervous.

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WIZARD: Oh, don't be nervous now.

ILONA CIUNATE: It's just excitement I guess, more than nerves.

WIZARD: It's just us.

TRIP: Yes, it's not a huge audience. We don't know how many actually, but it's not like thousands [Laughs].

ILONA CIUNATE: Well I know lots of my friends are listening.

TRIP: They are? Okay. Well thank you so much. Now you...

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes.

TRIP: So it would appear that you are very passionate about giving ordinary folks an avenue for liberation, right?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes, that's right. Yes. It all fell on my lap, I can say that. We found a way of how to help ordinary people see the ordinary Truth that there is no self, there is no separate self. And that's what we are working on with quite a large group of volunteers at the moment.

WIZARD: All right!

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes, we joined from all over the world and started a little movement, more and more people come and join, and get liberated.

TRIP: So tell us about this group, when did it form, and how many folks are participating in it?

ILONA CIUNATE: Okay. Well it started about a year ago, with this *Ruthless Truth* forum, and we evolved from that. Our method is completely different and kind, and that's how it started Liberation *Unleashed*, it's a movement that helps people just cross that line, exactly the line, this seeing itself. Quite a few of us now, I can't tell exactly, everyone who crossed the line we have them as

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friends on our unleashed group on Facebook, and it's about 140 people there now. They are the ones that work with us, I don't know, 30 or 40. Everyone does whatever they can; it's not like a set program, some work online, some work offline and doing Satsang. So it's a great little movement which is enlarging, and it's really nice to see that.

WIZARD: Tell me about this line?

ILONA CIUNATE: The line, well the *gateless gate*, everyone's heard this term, and we can use other words like liberation, enlightenment, and seeing no self, seeing the reality. But it's all that little line that doesn't exist from once you cross it you don't see it anymore, because there is no one crossing. But if you are a searcher, and if you're searching for like 30 or 40 years, there is always that line to cross, there is something always there, the carrot dangling at the end that you need to reach, that it's not enough.

So once you actually cross that little line, and you see that it never existed, that's it, you see as it is, and not as you imagine it to be. And this is not the end in any way, it's just the beginning. And sometimes people get confused saying that, yes; you crossed the line, that's it, finished. It's not, nothing like it. It's a beginning, you start living authentic life, so you start seeing your own uniqueness. It's a brilliant moment to watch, and so amazing to help somebody to see the Truth, it gives such a nice connection, and, you change somebody's life from desperate sometimes, to wow, I can relax now. It's a joke, all the search is a joke. Yes.

TRIP: Yes, right on.

WIZARD: We're with you, we're right with you. Your journey has begun when it's over.

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes.

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TRIP: Well, you're clearly very passionate, how long have you been passionate about all this?

ILONA CIUNATE: Well since I saw it about a year ago again. For me, it was a big deal because I was searching like many other people, and once I saw it, and I saw it how simple that is, and how obvious it is, I just could not sit here smiling, happy with my life, when I see other people living it in the darkness, if I can say that. Still searching, still looking, still unhappy. So it becomes my mission if you like, to spread this message, to put it as clear as possible, to as many people as possible. So it's enough living in a fantasyland. Enjoy your life as it's supposed to be, happy, relaxed, without unnecessary psychological suffering, because you think you are not enough.

TRIP: For sure. We're with you. And by the way, a friend of ours, Paul Nagy, just stepped into the studio, which he does from time to time. Hello, Paul. And Paul might at some point chime in, I'm not sure, he might want to say something at some point.

PAUL NAGY: I'll let you spend some more time hanging yourself before I chip in.

TRIP: All right, Paul. I just wanted to, before we move on with the conversation about liberation, I just wanted to make sure I understand like your network there. You have liberationunleashed.com, which is the website for your group, and then you also have a blog, and it's called markedeternal.blogspot.com.

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes, that's right.

TRIP: And that's yours?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes.

TRIP: And then, okay, so why did you call it *marked eternal*, I was curious about that?

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ILONA CIUNATE: I've no idea to be honest; it did fall into my lap. One day I've got a blog and it was called marked eternal, I didn't think of that really to be honest. Yes. So I really did not care about a name at the time, and it was just carrying on writing stuff, which is why much more important than what's the name of it. I can say maybe to do something with tattoos, but that would be creating a story about it, the fact is I got it with the name. So that's it, I don't know what that means.

TRIP: Well that's fine. Okay, now one of the people on your blog spot, it was a gentleman whose name I can't recall, but he was talking about the difference between classical liberation and liberation unleashed. Is there some difference between what you think people would perceive as classical liberation, and the liberation that you're offering, the method that you have?

ILONA CIUNATE: Okay. We're focusing on a single moment, crossing that gateless gate. We call that liberation because that word is quite common and people know what we're talking about, we can say its enlightenment. Of course, it's just as word pointing to something, and it's like a word that calls deep inside people to come here. Once they come here, and once they cross the line, then the word liberation transforms and it becomes something completely different, it's not the end, it's not the complete liberation that normally people expect. And in a classical way it's a complete freedom, this is the beginning of the complete freedom. So the word liberation we just call that moment, that conversation, where the things happen. And I'm really not very well educated in classical enlightenment, and Advaita, or any other groups and theories. I don't know much, I only know how to make that click in human thinking.

TRIP: Well you're fortunate [Laughs]. None of us here, except for Paul, are very well educated, he's read up on everything, but the rest of us here are...

PAUL NAGY: And you probably haven't missed much, don't allow anybody to put you down about that.

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ILONA CIUNATE: I read one book since then, it was about Buddhism and it clearly pointed exactly that way, but I never heard about it before. So discovered first, and then read about it.

WIZARD: So it's the discovery of what we are is *Now* without any conditions, is that what you're saying?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes. The discovery of what is and what isn't as in what a fantasy is and what is happening right *Now* without thinking about it.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: So are you able to put that into words for yourself?

ILONA CIUNATE: Why? You don't need words, live it.

TRIP: Well you help people, I've looked at some of the conversations people who are still blocked, who are still invested in the idea of themselves as a separate person. And I noticed that you and others in your group help people through this process of clearly seeing the reality of no self, and it's a dialogue that you enter into with them, a questioning. Do you want to talk about how that goes down, where someone who's really invested in the idea; because almost everybody is heavily invested in the idea of themselves as a separate person. What is this modality of questioning or looking that you have discovered that you feel is a direct and fairly easy way for people to see the Truth of no self?

ILONA CIUNATE: Okay. I read this Jed McKenna's book, and one thing that struck was it's always about the next question. So I figure that the mind needs to figure something out, and yes, it's always about the next question. And people don't know what to ask exactly, and when I read Jed McKenna's books I went into a depression and deconstruction of belief, and saw that all beliefs are just stories, and we learn them from others. And no one ever questions that.

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So from that started my own deconstruction, but I never saw the *no self* after reading Jed McKenna, it took a little while later. So once I looked at that question directly, is it really a self and I started to doubt everything I knew. And then of course it showed up, of course there is no self, what are you people talking about, and how come I never ever actually questioned that, that seems really, really strange. So that is the question, is there really a self, a self behind the word self, yeah.

WIZARD: So the I-thought is just a belief.

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes.

WIZARD: Yes.

ILONA CIUNATE: So we never look... I'm sorry, yeah.

WIZARD: So there's not a *who* we are, the who is an imaginary belief, just an insentient thought.

ILONA CIUNATE: Exactly.

TRIP: Well I wanted to thank you for putting something up on your website there that blew my mind, and Paul, you'll find this interesting if you go and check this out. There was a neuroscience and freewill video that you put up there, and you talked about, you called it the judge, remember?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes.

TRIP: You go ahead. If you want to speak a minute about this judging self that we all have, and then if you want to also about that video. But anything that you forget to say I'll say because that thing blew me away.

ILONA CIUNATE: Okay. Well, it's really difficult for me to remember now a year later, how it really was to live in that, judging all the time. But I still can remember and I still see that

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around. So there is this feeling inside that everything should be the way I want, and if it's not the way I want then that means it's wrong. And if it is the way I want, it's not enough, and then the judge inside always looks at the instant situations of people and always decides is it not enough, or is it wrong, should they protect, defend, argue. It's like a little virus, I can say, this judging thing. Gradually for me it felt I don't judge anymore, I don't think what should be tomorrow like, what will be wrong if that happens, or what in the past happened that was really bad. These thoughts fell off, so the judge is really connected to the I-thought, where the I is the central mechanism that decides how you should live your life. Because if you don't live like that, like the I wants, it's wrong, it should be fought, it should be judged, and it should be the way I wants. And this is how people live their life.

WIZARD: Beautiful, beautiful.

PAUL NAGY: I want to chime here a little bit. Often people confuse what's called conscience which is one's actual moral compass of what is best for one's self and for others. This blaming sense of conversation that you may have in yourself, which is an aspect, a worry, or a judgment, which is actually what Freud meant when he talked about the super ego; it's part of the ego and so it's job is to basically repeat over and over again judgments about yourself that you've incorporated through your experience habitually. They're not the same, and actually one of the insights, because one thing is the conscience in the original meaning of the term, which means consciousness, does represent a moral compass, a thing in which allows sympathy for the suffering of others. It's not necessarily crowded up with thoughts, judgments, preconceptions, or worry about what other people would think were, or how other people might judge you.

WIZARD: So is a dream consciousness?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes.

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WIZARD: And then the waking reality is another consciousness. And if they put us to sleep to operate to have surgery on us, we lose consciousness.

PAUL NAGY: Actually we don't. The secret of what we call non-consciousness, or consciousness without an object, or consciousness without experience of time and place, that's where for most people, is where the unity of existence is buried. It's buried under that veil.

WIZARD: It's the same as sentience.

PAUL NAGY: Yes.

WIZARD: But consciousness is like a word balloon that balloons from sentience or awareness.

PAUL NAGY: Okay, well you're using consciousness and the terms of awareness of...

WIZARD: A subject and an object in the word balloon world.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, and in that way one of the reasons why sometimes we use the word awareness or the consciousness without an object, but it can be used both ways.

TRIP: Well I want to get back to Ilona here in a sec, but I want to say, Paul, that in response to what you just said that I still feel that the conscience, this conscience that you talk about is still part and parcel of an idea of one's self as a separate individual. And the moral behavior that is definitely something that we would all like to see exhibited by ourselves and by the culture we live in, becomes a bi-product of the very lack of sense of personal selfhood, moral behavior is the natural bi-product of the loss of the sense of you as a separate individual. And therefore like conscience is something that a person whose still invested in themselves as a separate individual...

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PAUL NAGY: I mean, it is giving a very special meaning to the word conscience, and the way that you described it there, the way you described your meaning of it, you were still investing conscience with super egoity, which is common, this is one of the reasons why somebody came along and tried to separate them and say they're not the same, that they exist on two real levels, and one is authentic, in that it represents your true self. And even if your true self has no sense of personal egoity, you're still going to have a conscience. This is a big deal because there are a lot of people out there, who get a sense of egolessness, and they're psychotic, and they're crazy, and they do terrible things.

TRIP: Okay, I hear you. I want to thank you, Ilona, for putting this video up on your website though. What it was, just to remind you, if you can't remember, but it was a fantastic video where they took a man into a brain scanning device, it was a CAT scan thing, okay, and...

ILONA CIUNATE: Oh, yes, that's the best bit.

TRIP: Okay, that blew my mind not because I needed further confirmation of that lack of the personal self, but it was scientific confirmation of it. For people who really need science to authenticate everything, this ought to have been a real mindblower. Because it took a guy into this CAT scan machine, and they gave him an opportunity to make a decision about something. And his decision was either going to be the right hand pressing a button was one decision, or the left hand pressing a button was another decision. And they watched his brain, they asked him the question, and six full seconds before the man actually formulated a conscious decision in his mind, they can already tell what his decision is going to be. Wow. That means that before anything that we would identify as our self, which is this me that has this conversation in my head all the time, or whatever.

WIZARD: That's your Self.

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TRIP: No, I'm just saying that before that so-called self that everyone identifies as themselves actually kicks in, the decision is already made. So you don't even need to proceed with the pretend game that you're a decision maker.

WIZARD: So everything is unfolding.

TRIP: It's already decided.

WIZARD: Is unfolding as it will.

TRIP: Yes. And whether it's decided by your subconscious, gray matter in your brain, without your participation, or whether it's decided already by an indescribable reality we can't call, put a name on, and don't really matter. This choosing decider is actually a fiction; you're pretending that you're making decisions.

WIZARD: That's right.

TRIP: Right, Ilona?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes. I figure that. Once I wanted to go for holiday, and I really did not want to go to see my parents because every time you go it's the same, I wanted to go somewhere else [Laughs]. It took me three days, three days, I thought to bring them somewhere else as well, meet them in a nice place. And for three days day and night I was searching for flights, I was looking everywhere. I was getting really frustrated, but the choice was already made, I had to go home and see them at home. So I was struggling and fighting with myself, and wanting to do something else until I realized, of course, the choice is made, why am I fighting it? Go with what feels right, right Now. Because the heart knows, it always knows.

I have this little rule, I used to have, it says if it's not yes, then it's a no, and nothing in between. You know when it's a yes, and if you don't feel that yes, of course it's a no. So following that, you get what your heart wants, not what your mind thinks that you want.

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WIZARD: So go with what wants to happen.

TRIP: I have to say I'm very impressed with your natural sage-likeness [Laughs]. I mean, you've really conducted a searching inquiry and you don't have some guru or anything, right, you're just there with your husband, living your life?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes. The guru is a cat. [Laughing] Yes, we can't live without our cat. Yes, I'm a normal human, I'm not a guru, and I'm not teaching anyone or anything. I see there is nothing to teach, it's better to show somebody how to find the Truth for themselves, way much better than to convince somebody that's the Truth.

WIZARD: That's beautiful.

ILONA CIUNATE: This is how you should think.

WIZARD: That is absolutely beautiful.

ILONA CIUNATE: Thank you.

TRIP: You can't convince somebody else of the Truth. And what's interesting is that if you're already convinced then everything you see is a confirmation, but if you're not already convinced there's nothing that you can see that's going to provide confirmation.

WIZARD: Once you cross the line, then everything affirms that.

ILONA CIUNATE: Exactly, you read Buddha sentence, you know exactly what he was talking about. You look at the plants and it's obvious, the plant grows by itself, no one is growing the plant in there, why would human being different.

PAUL NAGY: Let's go back to your statement about this brain scan that you were so impressed by. The fact of the matter is that back in the '70s, even as late as the '80s, there were serious neuroscientists that said there is no evidence whatsoever of

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consciousness. And there are scientists now who are looking at these brain scans and they are saying, yes, we're seeing something and it may have something to do with consciousness, but is it consciousness that we're looking at, and they're saying, we don't know yet.

The thing is... is that thought is a tool that can be used constructively or it can be used destructively. I'm perfectly happy with people who learn how not to believe their thoughts, because thoughts were never meant to be believed. Believing your thoughts is one of the weirdness's that happens in our culture, and we have to grow out of it, to become mature. It doesn't mean you have to give up thought, but you just have to put it in its place. It's a tool, as a tool it works to a certain level and it doesn't work anywhere else. A person who understands nonduality let's say, for instance, doesn't have to abandon their mind or abandon thought, in fact they can use their sense of nonduality as an inner corrective of how they're thinking. It can help them not believe their thoughts. Whereas somebody who doesn't know that may have a more difficult time in terms of using their mind effectively; and so for all the way down the line in terms of athleticism.

WIZARD: Yes, the thought process is from a biological mind that's bifurcating, it divides everything as you were saying earlier, that it's right or wrong, yes, no, left, right, and then every one of those thoughts bifurcates and another one of those thoughts bifurcates. And it's never ending until you've got this massive bundle of thoughts called the mind that obstructs the native vision that what we are is the *Now*, itself; and *Now* is that sentience; this is what I was hearing you say earlier. And the release crossing that line brings us into the present moment. And the present moment requires no thought for its sentience, and sentience is that very sense of existence itself, this nondual, there's no second, there's no other. And it's the constant and it's still, and I think you're spot on with it. And you come across very refreshing, because it's not something you got from a book, or teaching, it's something through self-observation that you became aware of. And the greatest sages who have been the greatest teachers have come

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across this Truth just as you have, they didn't get it from a religion, or a theology. It simply became self-evident.

TRIP: Yes, Ilona, if you lived here we'd be fast and furious friends. [Laughing] I'd be hugging you up like a bad boy, because you are on fire with that realization, I can just feel it. You are just so excited. Yes, I love it. You're the real deal.

ILONA CIUNATE: Thank you.

TRIP: You don't need to apologize for your lack of book knowledge or anything like that; you can just smell it on you.

ILONA CIUNATE: I read a few books...

TRIP: Oh, you read the Wizard's book?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes. Thank you.

TRIP: But you read the Wizard's book, *Wisdom's Soft Whisper*, you read that one?

ILONA CIUNATE: Oh, no, I haven't read that one, no.

WIZARD: Which one did you read?

ILONA CIUNATE: I said I read a few books.

TRIP: Okay.

ILONA CIUNATE: We have a book coming out soon ourselves, me and Elena, the starters of *Liberation Unleashed*. We collected the conversations and edited them, put them nice, and we're now going to release a book in January, it's called *Gateless Gatecrashers*, as we find these conversations help people to see for themselves, so that's what we're looking forward to.

WIZARD: Do you have a publisher?

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ILONA CIUNATE: We haven't got a publisher. We're looking to publish it ourselves. I don't know. Never done that before.

WIZARD: There's a publisher in the UK called Nonduality Press that you might look into, the contact name there is Catherine. And I think she would be very excited about your work.

ILONA CIUNATE: Wow, okay. Thank you.

PAUL NAGY: Is Nonduality Press related to the website nonduality?

WIZARD: No, it's different.

TRIP: The other thing is when you get your book published, we can put it up on our website, and we can put a link on our website, and we can also tell people about it on our group page, we have about 1,800 people on there.

ILONA CIUNATE: Wow, yeah.

WIZARD: You should, your message is worthy of sharing, and the time now is so auspicious with the confession that you're sharing, and it's profoundly affirmative for those who are stumbling over that line.

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes, so many people are crossing that line now, it's incredible. Yes.

TRIP: I'm curious about your husband, how's your husband, has he crossed the line?

ILONA CIUNATE: No. [Laughing]

TRIP: Does he think you're a nutcase, or he just loves you madly?

ILONA CIUNATE: He thinks that I'm lecturing stupid people he doesn't want to hear about it, we try to talk to a little bit, but not

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much. So he says he just gets out of the way and I do what I do, he's happy about it. [Laughing]

TRIP: Well, he's a smart man to get out of the way.

ILONA CIUNATE: You can't make anyone see. Well, it's got to come from deep within the desire to see; you can't make anyone see it.

PAUL NAGY: Actually there is some debate about that, there are people around who are naturally awake, and it doesn't come as an event in their life, they're just naturally awake. I don't know too many of them, I haven't run into too many of them. I usually run into people like me who have struggled for most of our life trying to figure out what I already knew. But the fact of the matter is... is putting a scenario on this thing, that it happens one way or another, that one has to be lost before one can be found, which is the normal scenario that some people think about this, is it doesn't show up. In other words there are people around who always found... I think I'm lost... did we just lose something.

ILONA CIUNATE: No.

PAUL NAGY: Actually you just unplugged me that is what you did. Sorry, I have no feedback, so I'm not sure I'm saying anything.

WIZARD: Wiggle your wire.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, okay, now I'm back again. See that, no feedback, see I was lost and then I became found.

WIZARD: Just a little wiggle.

PAUL NAGY: There's a perfect example of the electronic serendipity.

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TRIP: Well she's not arguing with you, Paul, she's not suggesting that their method of looking, or encouraging people to really look for that lack of separate self. That's not in conflict with what you're saying.

PAUL NAGY: I'm sure it isn't, but me, I always like to...

TRIP: Mr. Contrary.

PAUL NAGY: No, it's not necessarily contrary; it's just that I like to broaden the palate.

TRIP: But we have a different thing here, because we're having a little conversation here between ourselves and with you, Ilona. But on this thing about the experiment with the person not really making the decision, six seconds after it was already made, and then they have a conscious decision gets made, or whatever. And then you discussed how the mind is a tool, and all that. My point is that obviously if something is already decided without any mental conscious thought about it, then that is completely extraneous, okay. It's obviously not necessary to have any narrative go on in your mind to operate exactly the way you would have without the narrative. Because science now shows, and this is for people who require science to prove everything, science now shows the decision is made prior to the conscious narrative in your mind.

PAUL NAGY: Well actually it's in traditional psychology; psychology goes back to the middle ages, goes back to the ancient world. The will, which is where you make decisions, and your thinking processes were always considered as separate. So if you're saying that you need to think about something in order to make a choice you're confusing levels of the mind, because the will doesn't need to have reasons. Reasons come in the wake of a choice you make. I've known people who think that they have to think something to make a choice, and they always have a hard time choosing because they're using the wrong faculty. And this will that we're talking about, which is supposedly where we're

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making a choice, which is unconscious, I really agree with you there, in most cases. The will is actually very, very close to and almost synonymous with, at least in the highest reaches of it, this nondual awareness of pure love, of divine being and presence.

ILONA CIUNATE: Well I think there is will, but there is no free will, nothing is free.

PAUL NAGY: Well that sounds like an economic choice that we won't talk about that. [Laughs]

TRIP: I agree with you, Ilona. You can't have your cake and eat it too. It's like people want to have, they want to have their free will and then they want to be liberated. No, you're either not a chooser, which is liberation, you're not a separate individual, which is liberation, or you are. And so if you're not a chooser there's no free will, right. There's no free will, Ilona, is that right? I agree with you.

ILONA CIUNATE: There is a will, it's happening, but it's not free.

TRIP: Not free. [Laughs]

ILONA CIUNATE: There is no one to choose.

WIZARD: So Thy will does not suffer the dilemma of apparent choice, it just is.

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes.

PAUL NAGY: Well I think we're in the point of view of universal love and of oneness, Thy will and my will are the same will, and there is no difference whatsoever. Where the difference comes is in the following narrative, in other words, it's the stories we're telling ourselves afterwards, it's not before.

WIZARD: In the acceptance.

ILONA CIUNATE: Subtitles about life.

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WIZARD: The acceptance of it.

PAUL NAGY: So that it's not that there is no free will, it's that there is no determination that is above will, and that you yourself at this point of pure love are completely free. In fact for me the definition, the best definition, for realization is freedom and what are you free from? You're free from anything you don't want to be burdened by, so you're free from suffering. And you're also free from other burdens of whatever is around. And you can be free to be happy, and you can free to think, and you can free to not think as you well want to do.

WIZARD: So this domicile of the free, which I would call *Now*.

PAUL NAGY: I do agree that the only way to the domicile of the free is *Now*. I definitely agree. The way you get in the door is through the door.

WIZARD: So *Now* has no second.

PAUL NAGY: I agree.

WIZARD: And *Now* is seamless.

PAUL NAGY: Right, there's no past *Now* and no future *Now*.

WIZARD: And there's no duality.

PAUL NAGY: There's only *Now*, right *Now*.

WIZARD: So there's no duality in *Now*, this is when you cross over the line.

PAUL NAGY: And you're completely free in that *Now*.

WIZARD: That's the domicile of the free.

PAUL NAGY: And the thing about that is that there are no limitations to it.

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WIZARD: So what happens, happens of its own volition.

PAUL NAGY: Well that almost doesn't make any sense. What happens, happens.

WIZARD: What happens, happens, in the east they call the happening Shakti and they call the domain that we're referring to as *Now*.

PAUL NAGY: Shakti or grace.

WIZARD: So it's the formless because the *Now* is formless. And then the form plays within the formless, and it borrows its sentience, it reflects sentience, so we confuse what we see in life when it's just reflecting the sentience of *Now*.

TRIP: Hey, Ilona, I want to ask you, because we don't talk to people from overseas all that much, particularly like there are a lot of people in the UK that are into this, but what country are you from again?

ILONA CIUNATE: Lithuania.

TRIP: So your merry little band of revelers, you're in a typically religious traditional culture there, right?

ILONA CIUNATE: No, not really. I don't think so.

TRIP: So is there like a ground wave of awake, is there a big movement afoot there?

ILONA CIUNATE: In Lithuania? I have no idea, because I'm here. What are they doing there, I don't know.

TRIP: Where are you?

ILONA CIUNATE: I'm in the UK, England.

TRIP: In the UK, okay. You're from Lithuania.

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ILONA CIUNATE: A strange place, that Lithuania, I ran away from there.

PAUL NAGY: Is there a ground waking in the UK?

ILONA CIUNATE: I think it is picking up hugely, just seeing conversations in Facebook, it's so different than it used to be like a year ago. Not so much resistance anymore, it's more sharing and openness. Yes, a lot of people from the UK.

WIZARD: Jeff Foster's from the UK.

PAUL NAGY: Actually a group that I know of that's been promoting in a secular sense of nonduality has just had its 40th anniversary, it's up in the UK, and it is called Beshara. Beshara Foundation, it's in the borders up in Scotland. Beshara Foundation, all you have to do is look them up. They did have a magazine out once, but that was probably so many years ago that it was probably before you got to the UK.

TRIP: I won't say it over the air, but how do I get in touch with you, via email, or through your website?

ILONA CIUNATE: If you go on my blog, there is email there.

TRIP: Okay.

PAUL NAGY: *Liberation Unleashed* reminds me of one of my favorite poems I wrote called *My Mind is like a barking dog*, and I just remember, "liberation unleashed, that's my dog barking in the yard at itself, going bark, bark, bark".

ILONA CIUNATE: Wow, that's us, we barking loud enough that we're on your radio, yeah.

TRIP: Okay. One of the things that I'm interested by or one of the things that I like to tell people, I'm a bit of an evangelist I guess, is that how you say it. I got to parties and I can't help myself.

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PAUL NAGY: It is good news; you want to share the good news. I know how to get drunk without drinking.

TRIP: Yes, right, exactly.

PAUL NAGY: I know how to get drunk without thinking, and there's no hangover.

TRIP: I go to parties and I get a little over excited which has turned a few people off, but for me like some esoteric realization is really not all that important. What's really important is how my life has changed since I woke up; and how much more delicious it is and how I have a sense of peace within myself, etc. I was just curious if you could share some of the changes that have taken place in you over the last year?

ILONA CIUNATE: In my life? Wow. Yes, of course. Well I stopped crying, stopped feeling sorry for myself [Laughs]. Yes, stopped complaining in my head about other people. One of the biggest changes is I don't fight with my husband anymore, first I just dropped the need to be right, and dropped the need to argue, and he was upset about this of course. But he got used to it now, and he's much happier as well, even though he hasn't realized that there is no separate being in him. But it is way much more peace in our house. As of external changes I got out of 10 years of working for somebody else and opened my own studio, so that is freedom as well. We moved to a bigger house and nice garden, so really settled in and it's all really just like falling into place constantly. So that gives that feeling of effortlessness, of freedom. Way much less thoughts about stuff that doesn't really need to be thought about, that's for sure.

WIZARD: Lao Tzu says the less we do the more things that need to be done, are accomplished.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, I have a number of ex-girlfriends that I'm going to invite to look at your website. [Laughing]

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TRIP: Hey, Ilona, we have an email here from Tina Patliek.

ILONA CIUNATE: Oh, yes. Hi, Tina.

TRIP: Tina says, "I know you have a video out about an Internet forums, what is the process on the forum, what do you recommend people do to study for this inquiry?"

ILONA CIUNATE: What to do? Well it's very simple thing that needs to be resolved, there is this thought, I, and once you see that I is just a thought, and you see that the thought itself does not think, it clicks.

TRIP: Click.

ILONA CIUNATE: Very, very simple.

PAUL NAGY: That's a wonderful insight.

ILONA CIUNATE: When you see that thought, I, does not think, that's it. Thought "table" does not think, why should the thought "I" think?

TRIP: I just think you're so delightful and I think you're just [Laughs] fantastic, the things that you've come to on your own are just...

ILONA CIUNATE: It wasn't exactly on my own, well of course on my own. Well I participated in that *Ruthless Truth* forum, and it was a band us then. And taking that gate from there as well as adding Pamela Wilson's way of dealing with the fear, I saw that once you pass the fear, because that is the biggest obstacle, then you can look at the gate and the fact that there is no you, and then it's a shortcut to see, yes. So it wasn't exactly on my own, I did not create that, it was a team effort as well as with other people. It's just this method now is called direct pointing. And step-by-step we work out what works better than other things, and we share that among us and work through. Let's say we have a client in the

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forum and we are stuck, and we don't know what to do with him, so we bring it to the group, we discuss what can be, which way should be asked, you don't always see yourself what needs to be done. Sometimes help is needed there too, and we all learn together and help each other, and try to bring more people into this movement because it just simply makes sense. I don't understand why so long human beings are living with assumption. It's just because no one's told us to think, and if you actually start using your own brain, and resolve your own confusion, the confusion is gone. It's as simple as that.

TRIP: She's so refreshing. And you guys are doing this all on a volunteer basis?

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes, of course. How can you charge for Truth? [Laughing]

TRIP: Well we've got about 1,000 people over here who will give an answer to that one.

WIZARD: No, I hear you.

ILONA CIUNATE: Of course. Okay. People like to buy something that comforts them, and they buy Truth, they buy something else, and the lies, and sweet fluffy promises, and they pay money for it. Here we come and we say, look, you don't need any of that, have a look for yourself, it costs nothing, how can we say okay you have to pay us now? We just tell them where to look, they find it themselves.

TRIP: I love it. Well this is the quintessential, what do you call it, the folk fellowship doing its thing, man, this is it right here.

WIZARD: This is it.

TRIP: It doesn't get any more real.

ILONA CIUNATE: Yes, we're having fun.

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TRIP: This is as real as it gets.

PAUL NAGY: Actually always one of my touchstones that I use for years in terms of assessing other people's teachings was what the price tag was, and actually if there was a price tag then the teaching wasn't worth whatever they were charging. The more expensive it was the less it was worth.

WIZARD: What do you think about books?

ILONA CIUNATE: Oh, books are different.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, it's another problem. I know it's my vice; I don't have any problems with that. But...

ILONA CIUNATE: The books are printed and many people are working on that.

TRIP: It takes money to make it, right?

WIZARD: I've held off publishing my book,

PAUL NAGY: Which one?

WIZARD: *Wisdom's Soft Whisper*, and later *The Human Gospel of Ramana Maharshi*.

TRIP: So is there anything that you would like to share, Ilona, we love you madly, you're the quintessential avant-garde sage.

WIZARD: Yes.

ILONA CIUNATE: Okay, I want to share something with everyone. People think for yourself, don't follow, why follow, it's been long enough, it's time to start using that tool inside the brain, the thinking, and first thing you need to think, where do thoughts come from? Is there a thinker? That would be the starting question. That's it. Thank you very much.

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TRIP: Thank you.

WIZARD: There's a sage that lived in India, he died in 1950, but that was his message to follow, he called it self-inquiry, yes.

PAUL NAGY: Actually, you still have a link to his writings on your website, don't you?

WIZARD: Yes.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, you might enjoy looking at his particularly I guess it's talks.

WIZARD: Talks, yes. You're right with this very highly revered sage in India, unfortunately as time goes by after his death he has been enrobed more and more with deification, and idolatry, but if you just go straight to his conversations he had and his talks book, it's really clear, sounds like you.

TRIP: And Ilona, you can get that book on our website, thewizardllc.com, the Wizard's put a free library up there, it's called *Talks*, and there's a bunch of other books that are for free up there.

WIZARD: Free electronic download, yes.

ILONA CIUNATE: Great. Thank you.

TRIP: All right. Well we'll be in touch later, I'll look forward to...

WIZARD: You were the best guest.

PAUL NAGY: Thank you.

ILONA CIUNATE: Me? Thanks a lot.

WIZARD: Very refreshing. No contrivance, no nothing, you're clean.

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TRIP: Love you, be well.

ILONA CIUNATE: Love you guys, thank you very much for having me here.

WIZARD: Thank you.

ILONA CIUNATE: Okay, bye.



Jan Frazier

<http://janfrazier teachings.com/>

TRIP: Until the summer of her 50th year, Jan Frazier lived a life typical for a well-educated, middle-class American woman. A divorced mother of two teenagers, she was making a modest living writing and teaching writing. Then in August 2003 she experienced a radical transformation of consciousness, fear fell away from her, and she was immersed in a state of causeless joy

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that has never left her. While she has continued her life as a writer, teacher, and mother, she has discovered it is possible to live a richly human life free of suffering. Her wish now is to communicate the Truth that within every person is a pool of calm wellbeing that waits patiently to be stirred to life.

When Fear Falls Away, the story of a sudden awakening is Jan's day-to-day account of the shift in consciousness and its alteration of her life. Her poetry and prose have appeared widely in literary journals and anthologies. Her poetry collection of greatest hits was published by Pudding House, and she has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She's been inspired by Gurumayi, Krishnamurti, and Eckhart Tolle, but the joy she lives in belongs to no particular tradition, and is available to all. Welcome, Jan.

JAN FRAZIER: Thank you. It's good to be with you.

WIZARD: Hi, Jan.

JAN FRAZIER: Hi.

TRIP: Anything you want to share with us before I launch into my questions?

JAN FRAZIER: I'm sure things will come to me, but I'm happy to start with your questions.

TRIP: I want to say, in your book, you pull off the impossible which is that you never cease coming from the relative point of view, humanity, and yet I find you never sticking your foot in your mouth with regards to the nature of absolute reality. So that's quite a trick you turn there in the book.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes, I'm glad to know that. That has something to do with the fact that we really are both people and that greater reality.

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TRIP: I just thought it was interesting because I read a lot of books, and I thought a bit about how you're able to pull that off. And one reason is the poetic nature of your prose, you really do write very poetically, and it melts into the prose here and there. I think that's one reason. You take some creative license in jumping backward and forward through time, which unsettles the timeline there, which has perhaps a way of putting us more in a present moment that we might normally be if we were time bound by a timeline. And you ask these questions, when you get up into those places in your book where, you're hitting up against the absolute, and words aren't going to work, you flip over and you ask a question, but seemingly can't be answered but then you go ahead and answer it with poetry. That's very interesting.

JAN FRAZIER: Ha, I just like to hear your observations [Laughs]. Yes, I appreciate that.

WIZARD: What's an example?

TRIP: Oh, boy, well it's all over her book here. Do you have your book with you, by the way?

JAN FRAZIER: Oh, not right in front of me, no. I could get it.

TRIP: Well I can't think of an example for a moment, and I didn't commit all the examples to memory but I'll give you an example of a poem that you didn't write, but you cited it, it's a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins on page 24 of your book.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

TRIP: And maybe you chose this poem in part because in many ways it's similar to your poetry I found, it's almost indistinguishable from the way you write, maybe that's why you like it. So I don't have an example of her poetry, but I'll read you Gerard Manley Hopkins. He said, *Oh Lord, crush me and crush me, make me fragrant with my own transmuted suffering, make me into an intoxicating juice that I sit by the fire and sip. Let the*

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flame take my face in its delicate fingers and love the bones of my cheeks, my jaw, my teeth, tongue, eye sockets, until I glow, until I melt, ferment, until there's no difference between me and fire, between me and anything, between me and you. Beautiful!

WIZARD: The meltdown.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

TRIP: So the title of your book is *When Fear Falls Away: The Story of a Sudden Awakening*, you awoke suddenly, yes, but it took years for that to transition from an initial giddiness into a more sublime existence. Isn't that so, the awakening was just a spark?

JAN FRAZIER: Yes. Often when somebody first has a significant shift like that, there is a lot of giddiness because they're constantly or I was constantly living in the contrast between how it is *Now* and how it was all my life until *Now*. I think once you get used to the new way, there is more of an even keel, and a calm and peace, as opposed to constant ecstasy. And that takes time, that definitely took time for me.

TRIP: You do a wonderful job of explaining the contrast between those two states, the one that you were in, which was extremely fearful, and how you are *Now*. And a good part of what we talk about today is going to be sharing some of those insights, because I found them very interesting and useful. But before we get there, you have a theory on why you were so fearful, and you were fearful about many things. You were fearful about breast cancer possibility, you had fears about what might happen to your children, and you had lots of fear. Fear governed you. You had fear when you drove in the snow, your knuckles would be like white on the steering wheel. You were pretty much bound up in fear, and you had a theory on why you were so fearful, and I don't know if you remember it, but I'll share it with you and then you can comment on it. You said, your theory was, "That fear would protect me, if I'm scared enough the boogey man won't get me".

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And I thought that was very insightful; I think that people that are very fearful somehow feel that if they will just be fearful enough they're okay.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes, yes. The irony of it, right? And I don't think I understood that when I was caught up in fear, I think it's something I saw only looking back. That's very common for us; so much fear comes out of wishing we could control what we know we can't. So there's this craziness about it, because even though we know we can't control the future largely, or at all, and we know we can't predict it, we still wish we could but something in us knows better. And then we'll think anything that's done in response to that is going to feel a little crazy and just one of those things is what you just mentioned there, that we think if we can just generate enough negative or painful emotion in opposition to the feared thing that somehow maybe that'll either keep it from happening, or prepare us for it when it does. And of course neither one of those things is true. And so often we got through that and the thing we were afraid of never even materializes, so we truly went through it for nothing, but we're going through it for nothing even if it does materialize.

TRIP: Now you have a theory about the reason you dropped your intense fears of developing breast cancer, and your theory butts up against one of my cherished concepts, nonduality concepts, so I want to ask you about this. Okay.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

TRIP: Your theory is that on the heels of many years of suffering from this fear of breast cancer, and oh my gosh, I mean it was intense, I mean every time you had to go there you were just totally fearful, and somebody had to come with you, you were just sweating bullets. Anyways, one day you asked to be released from that fear, you said, release me from this fear, and you have this theory that it was the asking that precipitated the release from the fear. Do you still feel that way?

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JAN FRAZIER: No. At the time it appeared that way to me because that was the order in which things happened. And of course I don't really know what happened; the more time goes by the clearer I get about the limits of my ability to understand anything. But I'll just tell you how it seems to me, and it is different to how it seemed at the time I wrote the book. My hunch is that, and I must tell you that I think I've discovered this from talking with other people, and witnessing what goes on with them, so I've noticed this in other people, and now I'm applying it to myself. My hunch is that I was ready, something in me was already ready to be done, and something in me had below the level of conscious awareness seen through the charade of fear. So my, and I'm putting this in quotes, "Asking for that to happen", or my prayer, or whatever that was, was just an articulation of something that in fact had already just then taken place or was ready to take place. Just like I think we have teachers or we pray to God or something, because we have minds and egos, it helps us to externalize this thing, to orient to it as though it's outside ourselves. So I think my making that wish was a way of being able to look at something that I was ready to know the deep Truth.

WIZARD: When you exhaust your remedies, then you're very ripe.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes, yes. And I think that the extremity of the piling on of suffering is just a way of making us see what's been there to see all along, but for some of us, including me, it takes ganging up on oneself to cause the obvious thing to become obvious.

WIZARD: Yes, you have a paradigm shift, but afterwards there's that... an old Baptist preacher told me in my youth when I had my paradigm shift and I was so excited and everything about it. He said, "Well, what happens is the old way, old outlook, doesn't completely go away, and there's a struggle between the two different outlooks". And in Christian speak it is called tribulation as the non-physical reality is in conflict with the I-thought and the I am the body notion, and there's the tribulation between those two paradigms, that's the paradox.

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JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

WIZARD: And for me, I share a same history that you do that there was an initial paradigm shift within, and it was decades of being established and settling in.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

TRIP: Yes, indeed.

WIZARD: And thanks and praises for people like Jan and others who express so beautifully their Truth that affirms our paradigm shift, because once the initial shift has occurred it seems like the magic of the universe brings us affirmation in the form of different works, and with a lot of circumspection like the work that you do.

TRIP: You had some wonderful ways of expressing some things in your book that I really enjoyed. One of the things that you talk about as you transitioned from an initial giddiness where you couldn't believe what had happened to you and you were just giddy with joy. And there was this constant referral, mental referral, back to the way you used to be or whatever. And over time that joy that you felt initially transitioned into more of neutrality, and unflappability that your teacher Gurumayi calls equipoise. I love that word, equipoise. Have you ever heard that word, Wizard? It's like poise in the face of whatever, up down, sideways.

WIZARD: Yes.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

TRIP: So is that now more characteristic of how it feels for you, a state of neutrality?

JAN FRAZIER: Yes. That's the norm, or the default. I mean, I do have times of feeling not giddiness but really intense joy, and I also have times of feeling pain when something difficult happens

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in the world, or my life. But even when those times come of the joy, or the pain, the neutrality is there. It's almost like it depends on how close in I'm coming to the familiar human way of experiencing something versus sensing the bigger paradigm, I don't know what to call it, but the largeness feels profoundly neutral. And there are times when in order to interact with people, especially people I have close relationships with, it feels important for me to step closer in away from the neutrality that I always feel because it can look to another person like I don't care. It's a very interesting dilemma, and it's something I guess over time I've cultivated in a sense, it just naturally happens, the moving back and forth between those things.

WIZARD: Yes, the dispassion is natural.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

TRIP: You mentioned that that same quality appeared in your teacher Gurumayi who when she would leave all of you, and at that particular time I think you identified her as being maybe the source to some degree of your realization maybe, but I think you've moved away from that. But at the time you had it when she went away she didn't really seem to care all that much about it, or whatever, and you noticed that lack of concern that she had, even for all of your suffering in her absence. And I think maybe that made an impression on you, yes, at the time you spoke about that?

JAN FRAZIER: She would show great compassion for us because she knew what we were going through. But at the same time I could see that in the face of all kinds of things, not just that, in the face of some disaster some place in the world or something close up, someone that she knew who had died, I could see that she could feel very deeply for the other people, but she herself seemed unchanged by it, and that I always marveled at that, and noticed it.

TRIP: I've got things I want to share; beautiful ways of looking at reality that you have in your book, but I also have a couple of things I want to challenge you on. So here's one I want to

challenge you on [Laughs]. The thing about you is in the course of that book you changed quite a bit, you evolved, and it occurred over a period of time so I'm not trying to pin you down on anything.

WIZARD: I've been getting this from Trip for years.

TRIP: [Laughs] Okay, so in your book there's a big chunk, well let me start by saying there's a saying that I picked up somewhere that goes something like, we can't control how the wind blows, but we can trim our sails. There's a big chunk of your book that's dedicated to the notion of choice and how we feel or react, or don't react to something, okay. And in the book you're convinced that we have this choice, that we have this ability to choose to react or not react to something. But I have a question for you. If you didn't have that choice prior to your awakening, and that awakening came by grace, how can you say that you have it now?

JAN FRAZIER: Yes, and that's a wonderful point. I just have written a second book, and I spend a lot of attention on that very question. What does it mean for somebody to theoretically have choice if they don't themselves experience that they have it. It's very clear to me. I think when somebody wakes up and they look back at how they were before, how they felt, how they experienced their life, it has become very clear that they were choosing all along everything they did, but then you could say, well, so what, if you don't know, of what use is it? So one of the things I try to do when I'm talking with people is invite them into looking at their very immediate experiences they live moment to moment, and watch what goes on in their minds, and watch the various levels of choice that really are operating, and discover what's already at play.

So I'll give you an example. So if a person experiences something that's negative, they experience it negatively, and it sets in motion thoughts of resistance, or judgment, and then their emotions that are uncomfortable that have to do with anger or fear or something, recoiling from the thing that's happened. That feels like the

reaction, the emotional reaction, is pretty much inherent to the outer event, whatever it is, I mean that's how I always experienced it, the thing caused me to feel the way I felt. But if you slow it down, and if a person can watch him or herself what's actually happening in the moment, when the external thing first takes place there's a really immediate internal response that's on the level of feeling, and this is before the mind gets hold of it at all. So if you can notice that there's actually a succession of events, first there's a very immediate first impression feeling, then very quickly the mind gets hold of it and starts to manage it, often it's some kind of thought that makes it possible to escape the feeling, or somehow manage that initial feeling, and manage the external event. If a person can notice that that's actually a two-step thing, that there really is that first feeling, and then there's what the mind does with it, then it becomes possible to realize that if you can watch what the mind is doing with it, you can also decline to back up and let yourself just stay with the feeling. And so the emotion that we end up reeling from ends up being what really stays with us and causes our neurosis and so on, the emotion comes about as a result of the thinking.

So once the thoughts are in motion, this is all going on in an unexamined way, thoughts are in motion, and then the emotions start to be generated, it looks for all the world as though that emotion was directly tied to the outer event, but sometimes just watching what goes on in the interior; if I can watch and see that actually there was that very early feeling. If we can stay with that, and not take refuge in the mind which then causes the painful emotions, then it becomes possible to feel the feeling, give it its due, but then move onto the next moment without that terrible emotional residue that we typically generate in any difficult situation.

In my own life, I didn't watch all that happening, even though I thought I was pretty self-aware. At some point I began to intuit something of it, and I mention something about that, I can't remember if it's in the first book, but I know in the second book I went into it in a way. So for me the whole issue of choice comes of

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increasing your awareness of what you're actually going through right now, and seeing that there are multiple steps here. And as soon as you see it you can choose differently right at that moment. I mean, probably you'll have to watch this over and over again many times, before you can actually experience choice expressing itself in a real living moment, but it does start to happen. I've heard people report on this over and over again.

WIZARD: Yes, the sentient being is dispassionate, and it's observant of the apparent choice going on. And when the primacy of existence is the mind then it's caught up in choice, when the primacy of existence itself is immaculate sentience, that's the movie screen, and it stays immaculate regardless of the movie.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes. Even when there are those choices or non-choices going on that is there.

WIZARD: The movie keeps on, yes.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes. I think one thing about really being in the present moment, and this is true whether somebody has had the big shift or not, I think in any moment in which somebody is really fully present and non-resisting, the experience, you mentioned the word nonduality a bit ago, Trip, a moment in which a person experiences yielding presence, they experience whatever's happening as being them. I mean, to me that is what nonduality does, how we experience it in living life, but there is no distance between me and what's happening, it's all just the *Now*, or the moment, or reality.

And so the whole question of choice in a way is that, the choice I've been talking about to react or not, is nonsensical, there isn't anybody. Because I'm not in opposition to the moment, whatever the moment holds, or what we think of as the content of the moment, I don't feel any need to orient to it at all. I am the moment, and so I don't go around experiencing that I have choice all the time, I'm only just now noticing this. But I think for people that are really trying to become more Self aware and feel more

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freedom, for them to notice where they do or don't experience choice, even just that is really illuminating.

TRIP: I guess what I'm getting from this discussion is that I personally have been invested in these hard and fast rules of nondual reality, if you will, where the ambiguity of choice making its appearance or not hasn't really been something I've been interested in pursuing. My mind's wanted to say, okay, I've got no choice, or there is choice, what I'm saying, always black and white one way or the other, but maybe it's just ambiguous, I don't know. But for three years I've been trying to pin our guests down on this issue of choice, and I don't know, I don't know what the answer is.

WIZARD: It's apparent choice.

TRIP: Apparent choice.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

WIZARD: The nature of the I-thought, or the nature of the mind, the biological mind itself is insentient. And it's playing within the theatre of sentience, which is still, indivisible, and seamless. And sentience is dispassionate, and the mind by its very nature is a bifurcating machine.

JAN FRAZIER: [Laughs] that's a great image there. Yes.

WIZARD: And so it's not the tool, it's not the girder in the bridge to the unknown; the girder in the bridge to the unknown is sentience itself, or what we call the heart, the sense of existence itself. And trying to think your way into the unknown [Laughs], that's an oxymoron. It's unthinkable.

JAN FRAZIER: And also even looking at the question of choice, I mean and all this conversation about is there really choice, or what happened in a particular life, it's all just really blah, blah, blah in the mind that wants to understand the stuff. I mean you could say it's useful in a way, but nothing is ever as useful as how is it

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actually being experienced right now. And nothing that we ever figured out outside of the right *Now* is really going to inform how this *Now* is being experienced.

We can only go so far with it, that's all, of course it's interesting. I talk and think about it, and write about it all the time, but it's just in a particular category of usefulness and it is limited.

TRIP: At one time you wanted to say to people, and I did too, you wanted to say, you can have this, look at me, this is possible for you, it's your birthright, wish for it, just ask, ask big. Do you still want to say that to people?

JAN FRAZIER: I've learned not to. [Laughter]

TRIP: Me too. Oh yes, baby, I learned it the last little gathering we had, I'm zipper lipped now. I am zippered.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes. I mean, there are times of course I still want to but I know... I've had people get angry with me because they've said, "Well, I've been asking big for decades and nothing's happened". It was the ebullience of the person, who would just come into a miracle, and to me it was all-obvious, and it's like you were saying before about choice, if it's not obvious to you, then it's not obvious. And somebody else saying it, me saying it, or insisting on it, or you insisting on it, it's just not going to help somebody.

WIZARD: It's just buffoonery.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes. But I do think, and this is the situation in which I occasionally give in to that impulse, I do think there are lots of people around who suspect, who think, like they've had a little taste of this, or they've had a hunch that there's more going on. So sometimes I think that they just need like a little tiny nudge of a gentle fingertip pushing them to say, yes, go for it, you're on to something. I mean, for some people it's just so, it's got that too good to be true feeling, and I do think once in a while for some

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people just to say, it's not too good to be true, maybe it could make a difference for somebody but I'm careful about that.

WIZARD: Yes, the ears to hear come by grace, and once you have the ears to hear, you've had that taste then the work that you and others do, which is the voice of the voiceless, affirm and help establish others in this fellowship or the Satsang. And that's where what is called the Dharma takes over and our actions are not inhabited by doership, they're just happening. And so there's no contrivance, and our Dharma is the voice of voiceless and it does affirm, whether we intend for it to or not, it does affirm in apparent others, and it's miraculous, it's amazing grace.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

WIZARD: How it comes to be.

TRIP: Well, now I'm feeling that rascal today, I am a rascal.

WIZARD: Yes, go for it.

TRIP: Okay, well here's something that I think is true of you and Jan and then you guys can put me, get me straight here.

WIZARD: Okay, yes, no problem.

TRIP: Guys get me straight on this, okay. You're always talking about the vertical and the horizontal paradigm, Wizard, in the horizontal paradigm there's a lot of stuff and it's a story line that the mind likes.

WIZARD: Yesterday and tomorrow.

TRIP: It's all the crap, yes. Both you and Jan have a tremendous amount of affection for, and again I don't think this is not something that invalidates being present or what have you, but you have a tremendous... the closest you come to being invested in that horizontal paradigm storyline is when you get all like bleary-

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eyed about your spiritual lineage, and in your case it's Gurumayi, in your case it's Jamesy. But these two human beings came into your lives and you got blessed, Jan, from Gurumayi, just like melted you down. And you were served by Jamesy in a way that no other human had ever served you. And there seems to be this really special place in your heart for those people and those events, and from where I sit there's a little bit of storyline identification there. Tell me I'm wrong.

WIZARD: Take the message, and leave the messenger and you won't offend the messenger if the messenger is true.

TRIP: Where do you come down on it, Jan, because you go back and forth with Gurumayi? I mean, does Gurumayi do anything or have anything that you don't, is she more established than you, or what is it, I'm curious?

JAN: I realize you're asking me from the context of the book, which is what you have. So I don't know whether to answer it from within that, or from how it is for me now. My orientation to what happened with Gurumayi, and what I was given by her, whatever role she played for me. I'm much more in not knowing now than I was at the time. It doesn't mean I'm any less grateful to her than I was at the time I wrote the book. It's just to say that, it's like when I asked to be relieved of fear, it looked like my asking that caused it. I'm much less inclined to point to particular things and say, this, in this case my relation with Gurumayi, caused something. I'm not enamored of that story anymore, or much of any story.

I understand what you're saying, so in other words I agree with what you're saying and with your observation of what you see happening in the book. Pretty soon after I woke up it felt that less and less, the whole tradition that I'd come from felt less and less important to me. That's not at all a put down or dismissal or anything, I'm just talking about on a feeling level, I stopped feeling a part of it, or I stopped feeling beholden to it or anything like that. But I think in the time when it was important to me, before, it was

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enormously important to me, and again I think the value of it primarily was that there was something external to me that I could look at and say, there's a human being that is also beyond a human being, and I feel this peacefulness in her presence. But you're right, I did ascribe to her, but I think the whole point of that was to... and she made this point herself, the whole point of that is to help people experience it as themselves. So once I began to really experience it myself, I stopped being so enthralled with the outer form of anything, including an idea of God.

WIZARD: The egolessness of one who appears to serve in one's own affirmation is that perfect mirror. So that you've got a hunch and a taste of it, you had the stroke of grace that gives one the ears to hear and the eyes to see, and then you meet one, it affirms that, and if that one is egoless then there are no strings attached in that affirmation. And one becomes ones... that reflection is just a reflection, there is no other.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes.

WIZARD: And I mean I had mine as Trip says, many Shaman and different folks along the way, but they were all very human, very ordinary, and human in every way. But yet they were able to affirm that, and one of my spiritual mentors counseled me to take the message and leave the messenger, that was the true wisdom.

TRIP: Jan, you wrote something I really liked, in fact I liked everything you wrote. But here's something you said, you said, "I used to think enlightenment was rising above humanity". I did too. "Now I see it's coming fully into it", that is why Meryl-Wolf who affirmed you in a book that you read says, "That the moment of enlightenment is not the end, not a resting place for a person. It is rather only the beginning of a process; it is when we begin fully to live. Liberation enables a person to finally thoroughly occupy the skin of a life, when fear leaves, when desire for all the longed for things evaporates in the presence of overwhelming light, then a person comes alive to the possibility of fully liberated humanity

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with all its potential for bringing about peace and wellbeing". I liked that.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: You really do a magnificent job of explaining the way a person normally looks at the world and themselves before they wake up to the underlying reality, and then the way it is after. And maybe you could comment on this. But here's one before and after thing that you point out, you said your old life was a string of good moments that felt like they made life worthwhile maybe. Now you have no need for those moments, the substance and joy of life no longer derive from the environment, or from the particular present, nor are they dependent any way upon anything external to you. And then you say there are three conspicuous features of this new way of knowing, you say there's the knowledge that arrives fully informed, the clarity comes effortlessly, and you have a high degree of certainty of the rightness of understanding. So anyways, I just love the way you talk about the difference. [Laughs]

WIZARD: Peace.

JAN FRAZIER: It's interesting to hear this; it's been a long time since I read the book. But the thing about clarity and certainty, I mean I still experience it that way, and I'm not sure maybe I knew this then too. But what occurs to me as I hear you read that is that often what attends the clarity is a knowing that in the very next few moments the clarity could point to something different, that there's nothing sustaining or consistent. I don't have any impulse to try and bank on something or hold on to it or know that it's going to continue to be true. All I have is to really be real and at no distance from reality right *Now*, and whatever needs to happen will be clear or will just happen. But it's over the next moment, whatever that was. And the whole experience of momentariness and everything being subject to change, and nothing really being knowable in any lasting way, has just become more and more of a real presence in my life.

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And I think one thing that actually happens, and I've watched this in people around me, sometimes when somebody has a significant shift, because of that clarity they feel like now they know everything, and it's almost like, I think it can happen that because we have this lifelong pattern of wanting to think we know, or having a set of ideas that we can make reference to that feel reliable, then when awakening happens, I think sometimes just because that pattern is there, there can be a tendency to want to trade the old ideas for a whole bunch of new ones. And I did that to some extent, and maybe I still do it. But there's just been a lot of letting go of that whole thing, the needing to know anything, and it's very restful.

WIZARD: Right, that's very well said.

WIZARD: This is a good conversation.

JAN FRAZIER: I'm enjoying it.

WIZARD: This is very real and honest.

TRIP: Okay. There's so many things that you say that are just so fresh for me that I love. For example, here's one, you say, "Ego was everything that interferes with my awareness of the deeper reality". I love that.

JAN FRAZIER: Ego, okay.

TRIP: As everything that interferes with your awareness of the deeper reality. That was cool.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes, yes.

TRIP: And then as far as what somebody can do to enjoy this fabulous awakening or awareness that you enjoy, there's only two things someone can do, and I agree with that, you say it's to yearn, to yearn for it, and to be in the company of one so established.

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JAN FRAZIER: And, I'd add something to that, or maybe delete those and say something else instead now [Laughs]. In fact I'm about to be meeting on an ongoing basis with a small group of people who are wishing for this, and there was discussion about what to call this group, and someone said it should be an awakening group. And I said, "No, I think it's almost the very best thing you can do is get your mind off of awakening". Because it really is about being in the present, and so often when people think they want to wake up, they think they have that yearning or they want to find a teacher or a practice or something, or they think they have to wait for the retreat that's coming up. And I almost wish to say to somebody that has that deep yearning to say, there isn't anything but right *Now*, and there just is not ever going to be anything but right *Now*, and bring all your awareness to be that. When you really stop believing in time, I mean when you stop experiencing that time is a real thing, and you're left with nothing but right *Now*, and then the whole thing of desire doesn't have any place to hang its hat. And of course that is in the moment, in the present really is where awakening happens.

WIZARD: Yes, *Now* is sentience, *Now* is what we are. I mean, who can deny that?

JAN FRAZIER: Yes!

JAN FRAZIER: And I've seen so many people in such pain, the longing that's been there, and they thought well I want this to happen and this is how I think it could come about so I'm going to do this. And that whole thing as a set up to stay stuck in the mind, and that's the apparent problem in the first place.

WIZARD: Yes, the mind is insentient.

TRIP: So in the book, what came up over and over again was you had a deep seated desire to give this blessing that you were just thrilled by, you had this desire to give it to others, or share it with others, but if you could, you would give it to everybody, okay. And that came up over and over again, this desire to share it, or give it,

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or whatever. But how is that evolved for you now? I mean, you have these Satsang with folks, and they want to share this beautiful awakened realization or whatever that you have, how do you feel about that now?

JAN FRAZIER: Well I'm going to revisit the thing I just said in a way, because if the only thing that's real when I'm sitting with somebody is what's happening right *Now*, and I do think sometimes... well, the thing that people want they already have, they just don't know it. It's purely a matter of perception. And so it's in this moment that I'm with them, I'm in that presence, and it really is everywhere always, and it really is inherent to us all, and then the other person suddenly feels that very deep peace in themselves, then the thing has happened. The whole question of is it going to last, or is this the real thing, again you're in the mind again. So to me, I mean I've stopped with the wanting to give it as if it's a thing to give, and then a thing for somebody to keep. To me all of my attention goes onto allowing it to be here, getting out of its way, then other people's sense of getting out of its way in them Self. So to me that's the whole thing, and the rest is really peripheral in the realm of thinking, which is the apparent problem. So I avoided your question.

TRIP: No, that's good.

WIZARD: That's right on.

JAN FRAZIER: To me the question isn't the thing anymore. I'm sorry, John, what were you going to say?

WIZARD: It's right on. You're going to have a wonderful class, not to delve into the future, but...

JAN FRAZIER: It is a wonderful way to be with people. Oh, my God, I mean to be with a roomful of people, or one other person, that knows this about themselves, or will take the slightest excuse or opportunity or anything to allow it, to be in it, and feel it, and look in the other person's eyes. I mean, why would anybody want

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to do anything but that? [Laughs] I mean, it's not all I do all day long, but when I have the occasion to do it, it's just the most wonderful thing. And people are very amenable; they're dying for this.

TRIP: I don't really have a question here for you, but I'm going to go into a subject area that you could share, but you have a wonderful relationship with your husband, Peter.

JAN FRAZIER: Yes, my partner.

TRIP: It's a very sexual juicy relationship, and you don't shy away, you don't have a graphic book here or whatever, but you don't shy away from what a beautiful, wonderful, touchy-feely, warm, sensual relationship you have with him, and how at times the two of you just completely disappear and merge as one. I don't know, would you like to comment on the potential of a relationship as a mirror into that which here seems to be, although in some ways he doesn't take the interest in the same way that you do, or maybe he does, but he has a different way of looking at it than you do. Do you have anything to say, share, about your relationship?

JAN FRAZIER: I think about this and talking about my relationship, I'd like to talk about the larger thing which I think is what is of interest if I'm understanding you right. And this is very much of interest to me that often people tend to think that the so-called spiritual life is apart from the physical, from pleasure, or from just a regular human life. I don't think they're at odds at all. I mean, love between partners does have a physical expression and, everything else we do as people; hunger, physical activity, dance, sex, sleep, sickness, everything we do is some form, expression, manifestation, of the larger reality. And so there's a dance that takes place between any two people that are in any kind of a relationship, but including the one between lovers, that of course it's going to have physical stuff in it too. And when love is in the picture, when there's a very deep love in the picture, and even for just one of the people if love no longer has attachment or the need to make anything be different from what it is, then it's the most

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wonderful expression that love can have. So one of the forms that that will take of course is in the physical, and I do think when some people awaken that it makes it difficult for their relationship, and I think it depends on what the relationship has been like before. But ours adapted wonderfully.

TRIP: Yes, congratulations. Well, we've come to the end of another perfectly good hour, as they say of our talk.

WIZARD: That was fast.

TRIP: Jan, thank you so much, you've been a wonderful guest and we really appreciate your time with us today.

JAN FRAZIER: Thank you both.

WIZARD: Jan, you're right on, those who share with you are blessed indeed.

JAN FRAZIER: Thank you, John.

TRIP: Thanks so much.

JAN FRAZIER: Take care.

TRIP: Bye.

JAN FRAZIER: Bye.



Jeff Foster

<http://www.lifewithoutacentre.com/>

WIZARD: Good morning, Jeff, John here.

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JEFF FOSTER: Hi, Wizard.

TRIP: Hey, Jeff, thank you for joining us today.

JEFF FOSTER: You're welcome, you're welcome.

TRIP: Where are you calling in from?

JEFF FOSTER: I'm actually in Holland at the moment, in beautiful Holland. I think I'm in Holland, I lose track of where I am because I travel so much. But they tell this is Holland. [Laughs]

TRIP: You sound better than a lot of people who call in from down the street, so that's good.

JEFF FOSTER: The wonders of technology, it's amazing, pretty amazing.

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Jeff Foster, graduated in Astrophysics from Cambridge University in 2001. Several years after graduation following a period of severe depression and illness, he became addicted to the idea of spiritual enlightenment, and embarked on an intensive spiritual search that lasted several years.

The spiritual search came crashing down with the clear recognition of the nondual nature of everything. In clarity of this seeing, life became what it always was: open, loving and spontaneous, and fully alive.

Jeff presently holds meetings and retreats in the UK, Europe, and around the world, clearly and directly pointing to the frustrations surrounding our seeking activities, to the nature of the mind, and to the clarity at the heart of everything.

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Well, Jeff, we had Francis Lucille on last week and today we've got you. So I think we can just shut the show down after today [Laughs].

JEFF FOSTER: That's it, finished.

TRIP: He's like the grandfather bookend, and you're like the young whatever.

JEFF FOSTER: That's the best description of me I've ever heard, the young whatever.

TRIP: Wizard and I came to see you and others at the Nonduality Conference, it was like two years ago, right, Wizard, yeah two.

JEFF FOSTER: Yes.

TRIP: Yes, two years ago we were trolling for sages and [Laughs]...

JEFF FOSTER: Is that what you do with your spare time, go out hunting for sages?

TRIP: So I was at a point there where I think I might have been feeling a little proud of my spiritual wisdom that I had accumulated and in the local area I would go to little gatherings and stuff, and I noticed that people weren't all that interested in my sharing. So I had a little bit of a charge coming down to see like this young sage that people were flocking to, this guy Jeff Foster, whatever. And walked into that room and there was about 200 people in there, and you were sitting there up, well not up on the chair, in a chair, facing everybody. You didn't have any notes or anything, and you proceeded to speak for about, I don't know, it was maybe 30 to 45 minutes. And you took people down this royal road of understanding, and it was replete with some of the traps that you had fallen into, and that people fall into. And at the end of it there was this profound silence in the room where the simple understanding, the simple intimacy that so well, that you'd shared

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with people, everybody was left there with an ah-ha moment. You looked down at your watch and you had like three more hours to go. And my ego went from contempt to pity at that point. [Laughing]

JEFF FOSTER: Oh, dear.

TRIP: All right. I've got a lot of questions for you today. How do you sit in a room with 200 people and talk for two straight hours, that's one question I have for you?

JEFF FOSTER: Well, I tend to lose track of time actually. What I find is I just sit there and wait, as you said, I don't go in with any idea really of what to say, or there is no real agenda. I mean, if I'm honest, this is true, what happens is I sit there and actually what I'm thinking to myself is I don't know, I don't know what to say. I don't know what this is, this is a total Mystery to me, this life. Like at the Science and Nonduality Conference I'm sitting there going, I don't know what nonduality is. I can tell you what I've read about nonduality, I can tell you some thoughts about nonduality, I could tell you stories about nonduality. I could tell you what I knew yesterday about nonduality. But right *Now* in a way it's always, it's like a living question; it's not really a question that can be answered, what is nonduality. It's a living question. It's a question to live with rather than to answer. Yes, what is this? I don't know.

And in a way that's where it all begins, I don't know. In a way that's what I do in a meeting. I just sit there in that not knowing, and then words come. I guess on the deepest level it's known that I can't talk about this, I'm not an authority. I can't be an authority on life, I can't be an authority on nonduality, or whatever we're calling it today, nonduality, oneness, I mean there are so many words. And what I find is words start to come, talking happens, and although ultimately you can't put this into words. I guess part of the joy of it is speaking, talking, with others, and sharing something that really, as you said, it's so intimate really, it's so intimate and so present that it doesn't need words but words are

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part of it too. So we just sing, I'm just like a bird singing, we're all just birds singing our songs, so we sing to each other, or we don't. [Laughs].

WIZARD: Leaves rustling in the wind.

TRIP: Did you hear the Wizard, like leaves rustling in the wind. So you seem comfortable, I mean it's miraculous the words just do keep coming, but you're not feeling anxious there when you're in front of the 200 people, you're pretty relaxed and you're okay with moments where the words don't come I take it. Has it always been like that for you?

JEFF FOSTER: Yes. I've had quite a bit of experience, well it's only a few years of experience, but I guess I have done quite a few meetings now. No, it hasn't always been like that. When I did my first meeting a few years ago, I think it was three or four years ago, it wasn't natural for me to speak in public. I mean I was always like growing up as a kid, and like a teenager and my early 20s, I was quite intensely private, intensely shy, intensely self-conscious. So it didn't come naturally to me as a character to get in front of people and speak. So that was mysterious as well.

Years ago when I found myself saying yes to an invitation to talk, that was unexpected [Laughing]. That's not something that Jeff does. But then again, you can't really ever say anything about yourself like that, you can't really ever say well that's not me. How can you really say that? All you can really say is I'm not willing to do that; I'm not willing to experience that. But I guess what happened years ago is I just became more and more willing to experience anything really. More willing to experience pain, experience fear, experience all the stuff that we call negative, but it's not really negative. We just call it negatives and we try and escape it and think the positive, but really when you really face the present experience, you find there's really nothing negative in it, it's just energy, it's stuff moving, it's energy moving.

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So I guess I just became more and more willing to experience life without the labels and because recognizing myself, recognizing who I really was, who I really am, and it wasn't Jeff. Jeff is this amazing character, the story of Jeff that appears and disappears, but what I am seems to be this, ultimately you can't talk about it, but what I seem to be is this open space, call it consciousness, or awareness, or being, or call it nothing, or call don't speak about it, it doesn't really matter because it's present. So in recognizing myself as that open space, it was like, ah, so really what I am is just this space in which all thoughts can come and go. All the thoughts I call positive and all the thoughts I call negative, they're actually all just about to come and go. And all the feelings, ah, so all the feelings are allowed to come and go. I just thought, because I'd been conditioned to believe that some feelings were okay, and all the rest weren't okay. Like some feelings are good, some feelings are bad; some feelings are blah, blah, blah. But those are just all the labels, and really without the labels I really have no way of knowing what I'm experiencing. There's just a Mystery, there's this total Mystery of this moment. I have no way of knowing what this is. We call this sadness, we call this fear, this is a hand, this is a foot, and this is a chair. I don't know. This is what we've been taught. That's a tree, that's a flower, this is a body, that's a thought, this is fear, and this is pain. But really underneath the label I really don't know. So it's like living in that not knowing because that's what we are, I mean that's what I am, and that's what you are, and that's what everyone is.

TRIP: This is a silly question, but I thought you might be able to answer it. We're a show on "spirituality", but I don't know what spirituality really is, and I have no formal education in any of this. I have yet to come in contact with anybody on our show, or anyone that I would call spiritual that wasn't practicing some form of either Advaita or Neo-Advaita or non dual wisdom. So are there other brands of spirituality out there besides nondual spirituality? I don't know what they are, because everything else would be like a religion. Like I used to think Wiccan was spirituality, but that's a religion.

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WIZARD: I think there are as many interpretations and ways as there are people.

TRIP: So Jeff, what would be an example of some other form of spirituality being practiced today?

JEFF FOSTER: Well, I'm a bit like you, I don't really have any formal training either. I mean, I don't know what spirituality really means, I think it's one of those words that means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. What's spirituality? We talk about the material world and the spiritual world, and is there any division, is there that division between material and spiritual? I don't know. For me really I can only really talk about my own experience, I can only really talk about my own journey, my own story.

For me really, years ago I wasn't really interested in spirituality, it was really I was just suffering, and I was just deeply miserable. I mean, I think my whole life it got worse and worse like in my early 20s. I was just suffering, I mean everything was suffering for me, everything. Waking up in the morning and having breakfast was suffering, and then having to talk to other people was suffering, and having to go to school or go to work, that was suffering. I mean it was just non-stop suffering. So for me two years ago the suffering became so intense that I just wanted a way out of suffering, I wasn't really interested, and I didn't really care what I called it. I just wanted a way out of suffering. And then in my search for a way out of suffering, I started reading spiritual books. I was just desperate for a way out, and back then I didn't really care what it was, whether it was spirituality, or whatever, I don't know, it was just what can bring me relief, what can end the suffering. And that's what it was really all about for me was the end of suffering.

And then I read all sorts of books on Buddhism, on Zen Buddhism, and Christianity, and Judaism, and nonduality books, Advaita books, traditional Advaita, Neo, everything. My ideas of what spiritual was or is, it changed over the years, it kept on evolving. I

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mean, a few years ago I-thought being spiritual meant sitting on a mountain and meditating or something. I used to have so many ideas of what was spiritual was, what spirituality was.

WIZARD: Did you have a personal relationship with anyone that helped ignite?

JEFF FOSTER: I never actually, in my own story, I never actually had a teacher; I read a lot of books. I was an intensely private; very, very shy, intensely private person, and for some reason in my story I never... I had this strange attitude towards the whole thing. For me it was always, if there's any Truth to be found, and I know I want to find the Truth, but if there's any Truth I have to find it myself. Somehow that was always in me, maybe that's why, maybe it was an arrogance, I don't know, I don't know what it was. It was arrogance, or it was shyness, or it was determination, I don't know what it was, but I knew I was suffering desperately, but I also knew in a strange way that I had to find the way out of suffering myself. I somehow knew that no one could do it for me.

And so I ended up locking myself, well not literally, but basically locking myself away for a year, meditating for like hours and hours, and sitting and watching thoughts, and watching feelings, and self-inquiring. And but I read a lot of books, I was reading like a book a day for about a year, but I never actually had a personal relationship with any teacher. I never spoke to anyone about it. Back then I did not know that there were people out there I could speak to. I don't know how it happened this way; I felt that I was the only one going through this. And I realize now of course I wasn't, of course I wasn't. But back then I never spoke to anyone, I never spoke to anyone.

I was a very strange character really, I was a very obsessed character, very determined, I don't know. So I never went to any Satsang, or meetings, or anything. It was really funny when I eventually years later when I was invited to do my first meeting, to hold my first meeting, I had never been to a meeting before, any meeting. I didn't know. What do people do in these meetings,

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what questions do they ask? So I was expected to talk in front of a group of people and people said, is this a Satsang. I was like, what's a Satsang? I didn't have any concept that there were people out there, that there were people out there talking about this stuff.

TRIP: While you're talking about meetings, I thought it would be instructive and helpful to talk about the meetings that you do on your website, you say, "Meetings are bonfires in which all the questions of the mind unravel and burn up leaving only the wonder of what is". And then you went through, on your website, you went through the guidelines, or I don't know if they're guidelines, but just the way your meetings happen, the sharing that happens where there is no teacher, and the way it goes down. And I thought it was a really good way to look at a meeting and also not just like a meeting between a so-called teacher and a bunch of people that were there maybe to learn something, I don't know. But it was almost a guideline for sharing in general. Could you go through what you think good meetings are, what they look like?

JEFF FOSTER: Good meetings. Well I guess the way I see the meetings in a way is just a chance to sit together. What is it? It's a room, you start; there's a room, people come into the room, or they don't, sometimes they don't. So we sit together, I mean the format I usually use I just give like an opening talk just to generally introduce what this is all about, it's about present experience, it's about finding the wholeness, the completeness, within present experience. Just talking about how we're always seeking, people always seem to be looking for something, it's like we're always looking to complete ourselves in the future, that we say to ourselves, one day I'll be complete, one day I'll be complete, one day, one day, and it's always one day. And actually really what the meeting is all about is actually discovering that that completeness that everyone is looking for is not going to happen one day, completeness is not something that happens one day. Completeness is not in time, completeness is inherent in present experience, *Now*. Just in the same way that the ocean is inherent

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in every wave. So life is no longer a question of one day I'll be complete.

JEFF FOSTER: So the way I do the meetings is not about... in a way you're not going to come to the meeting to complete yourself, it's not, I'm going to go to a Jeff Foster meeting and I'm going to go there and fix myself, or mend myself. Actually what the meetings are all about is that the completeness that you seek is actually there in everything within your present experience, everything you're running away from in a way, everything you're trying to avoid, everything you're running away from, all the thoughts and feelings that aren't being accepted, that aren't being allowed in this present experience, actually the completeness is in those thoughts and feelings and sensations. Completeness is always there in present experience.

So then it's just opportunities, there's just an opportunity in the meeting for people to ask questions, or explore. Basically, in a way I don't really do anything, it's not so much doing, it's just inviting people to take another look at present experience, and also to find the places where they're not seeing completeness. It is two things at once in a way, it's like pointing to completeness in present experience, but it's also pointing to the places where you're not seeing completeness, where you're running away from present experience. I think they're both important really, in a way when you're simply made aware of what you're running away from when you're simply aware of what's not being accepted in your experience, then somehow the acceptance is there, somehow there's an acceptance in seeing where you're not accepting. So instead of just shining the light on present experience, finding those...

I talk about the wave in the ocean a lot, I think it's a really great metaphor. If you think of your present experience right *Now* as consisting of lots of waves, everything appearing in your present experience like a wave, so like a thought is a wave, sensation is a wave, feeling is a wave, and sound is a wave. So really when you come back to present experience all you ever find in present

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experience is just all these little waves appearing, thoughts coming and going, feelings coming and going, sensations coming and going. That's the beauty of personal experience, really when you look you never can find anything that's solid or fixed or static, it's always just this dance of waves.

So what you are is the ocean in which all these little waves are coming and going, and the point is that the waves are the ocean. Because really that's what we're doing in a million different ways, we're seeking the ocean, the ocean is already complete, but we're seeking that ocean in time when actually the ocean is appearing right *Now* as all of these waves. That's how the ocean appears, the ocean appears as all these little waves, as these thoughts, sensations, feelings, sights, and sounds, and smells, everything appearing right *Now* is the ocean. But the thing is we don't see it, that's the peculiar thing we could say of human beings, that although on one hand everything that's appearing right *Now* is completeness, it's wholeness, completeness, the ocean. And again, I think it's important not to get too hooked on the words because we could sit and debate words for hours. If you've been a spiritual seeker for long enough, you've read enough books, been to enough teachers, you probably collect thousands of these words, consciousness, presence, being, awareness, the witness, the observer, the observed; on and on, and on. And it's funny because it used to confuse the hell out of me years ago, because you would read one book by a spiritual teacher and they would say, there is only awareness, there is no such thing as consciousness. And then you read another book by a different teacher and they say, no, no, no, there's no such thing as awareness, there's only consciousness. Or one teacher says, no, there's only presence, there's no awareness, or someone else says, no, no there's only awareness there's no presence. And then you start to think, oh my God, well who's right? [Laughing]

TRIP: Oh my God. Oh, gosh. I want to ask you something, I want to play devil's advocate for a minute, because you say you're not a teacher and there are no students, and there's nothing to be learned, and there's nothing to be given, there's none of that. I

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don't know why I want to make this distinction, but haven't you been gifted something, and I think the Wizard has been given a gift and I feel I've been given a gift although sometimes the gift that I've been given doesn't make its appearance. Sometimes I'm completely forgetful of the gift. But haven't you been given this gift of appreciation for that ability to see that the ocean are these transitory waves that are making their appearance, and to be deeply comforted by that and to be in the flow of that? It's a gift that people that come to your Satsang aren't either feeling it, or haven't been given it. I mean, isn't it a little disingenuous maybe to say that there's nothing to be "acquired" if you will? I mean, there's an appreciation almost like a fine wine, it's almost like you take our history classes so that when you go to the museum you can understand the complexity and the beauty that's in the paintings. You might learn like all of the things that led up to this 3D way of painting, or whatever. What do you think about that?

JEFF FOSTER: I agree with you. It's a fine line in a way because I don't see this as an achievement of mine, it's not something that Jeff has obtained. In a way I used to see it like that. Years ago I used to feel really puff up, and, yes, I've made it. And there was arrogance to it. I don't know that I'm enlightened or I've reached the pinnacle. That's in a way what I want to get away from, because I realize that was just more, from my own experience, that was just more telling stories about me. At the same time, of course, you're absolutely right, although in a way this is not an achievement, at the same time of course it's grace, life is a total gift in each and every moment it's so... I mean, there are no words for it really. At this point I find it very difficult to talk. It's like how do you even begin to talk about the preciousness of this moment?

So it's funny, because I used to have a big problem with the word, *teacher*, and maybe that was because of my background. I never had a teacher myself you see in a way. In a way I always thought life was my teacher. It wasn't any particular individual within life, it was life, in a way every thought, every sensation, every feeling is my teacher. So it's funny when I started to talk and do the meetings, I was very eager to make it clear that I wasn't a teacher.

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And that was coming from a place in a way where I didn't see myself as special. I really genuinely didn't see myself as special in any way. I didn't see myself as fundamentally different from you, or from anyone who came to the meetings in a way. It's the same consciousness; it's the same *I am* what you are, so I can't be special. And for a while people would call me a teacher, it's funny and something didn't feel right about it for a while. I thought, well I'm not a teacher, I'm just this, I don't know what I am. I can't call myself a teacher really, because then I have to call you my student, and I don't see you as separate from me. How can I separate myself from you by calling you my student, I don't see it that way.

So for a while I was a bit uncomfortable in calling myself a teacher, it just didn't come naturally to me. Because in a way I saw that I was nothing, I'm just a space in which everything appears, and as that space I can't be a teacher, I guess I can teach, but I can't be a teacher. Teaching can happen, but I can't be a teacher. So for a while I said, no I'm not a teacher, I'm not a teacher. But actually the funny thing is, then what happened is actually I started to say, wait a second, that's okay as well, because in a way there is a relative Truth to that ultimately, I'm not a teacher, ultimately I am what you are. But at the same time Jeff Foster does meetings, Jeff Foster writes books, and speaks, and does radio interviews.

WIZARD: You're teaching an equality of vision.

JEFF FOSTER: Yes. So then I guess what happened is it was just, okay so yeah, I can call myself a teacher, and I guess the word means something different to me that it used to. I guess for me a teacher, in a way everyone is a teacher, we all teach in different ways. Some of us hold meetings; some of us don't hold meetings. Some of us write books, some of us don't write books. Some of us hold radio shows, or don't do radio shows. Some of us don't talk in public, or we just keep quiet. There's so many different ways of teaching.

TRIP: Well I think the most important aspect of being an authentic teacher is that from the teacher's perspective he is no

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different than the people in the room, and he views those people as his equal. For example, the Wizard here, I always call him my friend and mentor because he was my friend for a number of years, and then when I had the ears for hearing he suddenly became my mentor, and it was like, oh my God, here's this guy who has this wealth of spiritual knowledge if you will, I don't know if he'd call it that. But I wouldn't have been willing to accept any of it, or have benefited from any of it if he wasn't demonstrating the Truth of who he is through his equality of vision. So I do think that your stand on being a non-teacher is in fact an important aspect of you being a teacher, an authentic teacher, you don't say?

JEFF FOSTER: [Laughing]

WIZARD: It is what it is.

TRIP: [Laughs] You've got a funny way, I never know whether you're laughing at me or with me. [Laughing] Hey, you've got a new book coming out next year, and I don't remember the title. What's the title?

JEFF FOSTER: Well at the moment it's called *The Deepest Acceptance*, but that might evolve.

WIZARD: I like that.

TRIP: There's something useful in the passing out here between the deep acceptance that you've now come into a fuller appreciation of, and acceptance as it's generally understood and practiced by people, or maybe still going down that idea of being on a spiritual path. So can you tell us the difference between deep acceptance, and acceptance as it's generally understood and practiced?

JEFF FOSTER: Oh, that's a juicy question, that's a beautiful question. Yes. So I know when I was a really intense obsessed spiritual seeker desperate for enlightenment, one of the things that I used to do was to try to accept everything, because I used to

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think that's what I have to do. I have to accept everything. Why? I thought that will lead to my enlightenment that would take me somewhere. So I used to practice acceptance, and I've met a lot of people over the past few years, and that's what they're doing, they think they need to accept everything all the time.

So what happens of course is we try to accept thoughts appear, pain appears, fear appears, and we try to accept. What I found years ago was that I would try to accept, say for example pain would appear, and I'd heard it was important to accept, we should accept, and then I had this idea that enlightened people can accept everything, so I'm going to try to accept everything. So I would try to accept pain, and sometimes I felt I could accept it, but then there were others times [Laughing] where I really felt that I could not accept. I would try so hard, I would try so hard to accept, and I just couldn't, and I felt terrible. What is wrong with me? I'm failing, I am failing to accept, and I am failing. I'm a failed seeker; I'll never become enlightened, what's wrong with me, why can't I accept, everyone else can accept, why can't I accept? And then I would really punish myself in a way for not being able to accept, because I had this image that I should be able to accept everything.

So what I hadn't discovered back then was this deeper acceptance that I talk about now. A really helpful metaphor for this is go back to the ocean and the waves, I just think this is such a beautiful metaphor, I use it so much now. So you could say that on the deepest level the ocean accepts all of its waves. Why? The ocean is all of the waves. If the ocean doesn't decide to accept all of the waves, in a way it has no choice, it has no choice, it is the waves, it is the waves. That is the acceptance, so it's the inseparability, the total lack of division between the ocean and the waves, that's the deeper acceptance, that's the deeper acceptance. But the ocean doesn't accept some waves and not accept others; it accepts all of the waves. So again if you bring that back to present experience, that's a beautiful metaphor but what does it mean in present experience? So again if you come back to present experience right *Now*, if you see that every thought, every sensation, every feeling, everything appearing in personal experience is a wave, so what

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you are is just the space in which all these waves come and go, the ocean, you could say that's the ocean. What you are deeply accepts every thought, every sensation; every feeling in the same way that the ocean deeply accepts every wave. What you are deeply accepts every thought, every sensation, every feeling. In a way this is like thought, the mind, what we're talking about really is way beyond thoughts' idea of acceptance, because often our ideas of acceptance are so conditional in a way, but in a way this is an unconditional acceptance. The ocean accepts the waves without condition.

WIZARD: This reminds me of a conversation we had with a guest a few weeks ago and this really cracked us up. We were talking about acceptance, he says, everything's already always accepted. [Laughs]

TRIP: Well let's take the polar opposite of that which is a child in a tantrum feels free to be anxious, afraid, pissed off, or whatever, right? You say the same is true of the true freedom that you describe for yourself. So what's the difference if any between your freedom and that of a child in a tantrum who feels free to be enraged or whatever he wants to be?

JEFF FOSTER: Well I'm just wondering if a child who is having a tantrum is really seeing that his or her personal experience is deeply accepted. Let me just finish what I was saying about acceptance, and then we'll come back to that. I think this is a really crucial point. See the ocean accepts every wave, so it's like a radical acceptance, so this is the beauty of it. The appearance of a wave is the acceptance of a wave. It's not that the wave appears and then it's accepted, the appearance of the wave is its acceptance. As you said, Wizard, the wave is already, this is absolutely crucial, the wave is already accepted, when it appears its acceptance is its appearance. So this is like radical acceptance.

But here's the thing, it's an acceptance ultimately that that you are, the acceptance that you are, what you are already accepts every thought, every sensation, everything. And this is the beauty of it, this is the real freedom, what's even accepted, everything that's

unacceptable to you is accepted by life. What's even accepted, and this is what really changed everything for me in a way, this recognition that even my non-acceptance in this moment, it's always this moment, it's only ever this moment, the ocean is only ever in this moment. In this moment even my non-acceptance ultimately is already accepted. So this is crucial, this goes back to what I was saying about trying to accept pain and not being able to accept pain, and then feeling, yuck, because I haven't been able to accept pain. So the pain is accepted but what's also accepted in this moment is my inability, my failure to accept pain. That's like really exquisite, that's grace in a way. Even in my failure I am accepted, even in my total failure to escape this moment, even in my total failure to be free from pain in this moment, in my failure to accept I am accepted.

WIZARD: So every action, every thought, every deed, every situation is already perfect accepted.

JEFF FOSTER: Absolutely. And it's when we don't see that, so it's about seeing it, but when we don't see that, that's where suffering, that's the origin of suffering is not seeing that acceptance, not seeing this already accepted nature of personal experience. Basically, as I was saying before: not seeing completeness in present experience. That's just another word, completeness; it's another word I use. Not seeing completeness in this experience we seek, we go into the world of time and space; we seek completeness in time, in the future. So there's no comprehension of completeness *Now*, but in the next moment or tomorrow, one day I'll be complete. And that's really the beginning of our suffering.

So coming back to Trip, to what you said about the child's tantrum, this seeking can begin at a very young age, this attempt to escape present moment. I think very, very young children; babies, maybe that acceptance is there. But I think very quickly, especially when we become toddlers, that mechanism, that seeking mechanism, is probably already in place, that attempt to escape the present moment. Basically the sense that some feelings are

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okay and some feelings are not okay. That's a really, really simple way of talking about what human beings are basically doing on a most basic level, they're trying to escape the not okay feelings, not okay thoughts, not okay feelings, and reach okay someday. We're trying to escape not okay and reach okay. But the real okay that we're looking for is actually there even in the not okay.

WIZARD: So it's the non-accepting that becomes our suffering?

JEFF FOSTER: Exactly. I'm wondering even in a toddler who's throwing a tantrum, I'm wondering in their experience if there's some place within their experience where they're not feeling okay, and it's like they're screaming for okay in a way. In a way we don't really essentially change from when we're two years old to when we're 90 years old, in some ways we're screaming to be okay. Where in the beginning we're screaming for mother, or as we get older we scream for the next drink, or the next cigarette; we find more complicated ways, more mature ways, and more civilized ways. You have tantrums; we have more civilized tantrums as we get older. But I think the basic mechanism is in place from a very early age.

TRIP: I have a question. One of the nice things about having radio shows is you get to ask your esteemed guests your own personal questions. And they really are helpful, the answers. I'm thinking a lot of people could probably benefit from your answer to this, and I don't know if there is an answer. But one area that I'm still I have to say suffering pretty heavily is this caretaking of my children. Okay, my kids, particularly one of my kids, is constantly resisting what the other caregivers of the children and I would agree are habits and things that are absolutely necessary for like their wellbeing. So, for example, the child resists eating appropriate foods, getting enough rest, brushing her teeth, doing even any of the ordinary things that you need to do in order to have a life that's going to be okay. And that's what it feels like, right. Everyone in the world is screaming at you, you've got to make sure this kid is dressed properly, they've got enough food, or whatever. I can't seem to stop suffering from, and I'm locked into

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this horrible relationship with particularly one child, where the thing has devolved into me becoming the enforcer of all of these things that everyone else would agree I need to be making sure the kid gets. And the kid doesn't want to get any of them, the kid doesn't want to eat, the kid doesn't want to wear the right clothes, whatever. I'm really in a quandary, because if I let go in that department then not only the other caregivers, but even the authorities at large would say, wow, man, you're a completely like hapless parent, you're a terrible parent. But it's robbing me of peace of mind to become this custodian of the kids, and yet this seems to a role that's been handed to me. I'm in a fix man, have you got any advice, [Laughing] Dr. Foster?

JEFF FOSTER: [Laughs]

TRIP: Any advice Dr. Foster?

JEFF FOSTER: Well I mean I don't really give advice but I'd be interested to hear more about when you're sitting with your kid and you're asking them to do all this stuff that they're supposed to do and they're not doing it. I mean, what does that bring up in you? If it's not too personal a question, what's your experience?

TRIP: I think that the top-level experience is frustration and anger, but underneath frustration and anger is fear, okay. And the fear is that I have this deep responsibility for the wellbeing of this kid, and I'm blowing it because I am not figuring out how to get through this. The thing is I also don't, in terms of my personal make up, you could say, why don't you get a professional to come in and help you with that? Or why don't you just create this schedule, and you'll sit down and you'll have your daily talk. And there are all these people out there that have wonderful practical advice, but when that practical advice is overlaid with like the flow of my life, and all of the projects that I'm trying to take on. And like my relative low tolerance levels for the kinds of parenting by the book and stuff that a lot of parents do, it's almost like I wasn't cut out to do that like, let's sit down today, and have our daily

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meeting. I'm like one of those guys that never should have been a dad or something like that.

WIZARD: You're a good dad, you're a wonderful dad.

TRIP: [Laughs] I think it is fear, Jeff.

WIZARD: You love your kids.

TRIP: Short word fear.

JEFF FOSTER: Yes, it's fear, we always try to hold up these images of ourselves, the things I'm supposed to be, a good father, and everything that means to you, and everything you've learned about how a dad should be, how a father should be, and how I should treat my kid, and blah, blah. In a way I always find that the image that ends up coming between us, we're trying to live up to an image and somehow we never really can, because what you are is beyond all images. I'll tell a quick story, I think it's relevant. I was speaking to a man recently and he was in a similar situation actually, he would come home from work every day, and his kids would be, it's slightly different, his kids would be misbehaving, and he was trying to control them, and they just wouldn't listen to him. And then he would sigh, but then he just ended up exploding with anger. And he would scream at them and really say some horrific things to his children, I hate you, I wish you were dead, I mean things that afterwards he felt so awful about. He had tried everything, he had been to every therapist, and every behavioral program, and he had been to every spiritual teacher, and everything had worked for a bit and nothing had really ended his suffering. Nothing had really helped.

So he was on a retreat with me, and so we started to explore and we started to look at what was really going on; what was really happening when he was exploding with rage. What it came down to really was he would come home from work and try to get his kids to behave and they wouldn't. And what started to appear for him in his present experience, this was when he was really honest,

this is when he got really honest with me and with himself. What was really happening was like you said, it was fear, and it was more specifically what he was faced with was his inability to control another human being, his inability to control all this moment. And what started to appear was just feeling of helplessness, of weakness, of what's wrong with me, why can't I do it. And then all of these images, so he had this image of himself as a father, good strong man, strong father, in the moment he felt like a helpless child. In the face of his children, he felt like a little baby unable to control this moment, unable to control his children. But then what he was faced with was failure of these images, like failed father. This was when you really get down to the basic stuff; this is like the nitty gritty stuff, failed images, failed father, failed man. I mean that's what he was coming up against really, failed human being at its root really, and a failed human being. I failed to... this total feeling of helplessness. And that's when he lashed out was when he felt the most helpless, that's when he lashed out at his children in order for a moment just to get some relief, to feel powerful.

So that's where the seeking was, in a way he wasn't allowing himself just to feel what he felt, which was in that moment the Truth was he just felt helpful. So what we did in the retreat was just to find the place where, just in that moment, could that be okay; all these feelings in himself that basically through his whole life had never been okay. No one had ever told him that it might just be okay to feel helpless for a moment. No one had ever pointed that out, because who talks about this stuff really; and discovering that it was actually okay to feel helpless in the face of his children. And then somehow he was able to have a more authentic relationship with them, without pretending to be strong father, strong man, getting angry, it wasn't working. If it was working it would have been great, but it wasn't working. And he was losing contact with his kids he was losing the connection, he was losing because he was performing to himself and to them, pretending to be the strong father, when he didn't feel like that.

WIZARD: The situation itself was a teaching.

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JEFF FOSTER: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely!

TRIP: Jeff, once again we've managed to use up a completely wonderful hour. We have about maybe two or three more minutes. We've got about three minutes and we have a question in from a listener, I think it's Rona Wallace, she wants to know what you think about the label Neo-Advaita, the direct/progressive paths, etc. This question keeps coming up for her. We only have about a minute to answer that question and then hopefully you can mention anything we may have overlooked that you'd like to share in the last two minutes, then we have to go in about three.

JEFF FOSTER: what, Advaita, Neo-Advaita, I don't know, that label, I don't know... you can't categorize this teaching, you can call it Advaita, call it Neo, I don't really know what this teaching is. You can't capture Truth in a system, we're talking about life as the teaching, not Advaita or Neo-Advaita, you won't find it in books, books are beautiful, teachings are personal teachings and they're all beautiful but in the end, like as the Wizard said, life is the teaching, this moment is the teaching, the situation is the teaching, that's the real guru. And you meet your guru over and over again in ever thought, in every sensation, in your kids, in your mother, in your father, in your friend, in everyone you meet, the guru is everywhere, and it's just... can we see it, can we open our eyes to the guru which is everywhere. I don't know.

WIZARD: In all forms, all words.

JEFF FOSTER: Everything.

WIZARD: Everything.

TRIP: So, Jeff, thank you so much. Quickly, what's the next opportunity; it's over in Europe to hang out with you?

TRIP: Half lunatic, half sage.

WIZARD: I believe Jeff's mantra is laughter.

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TRIP: We had a guest on the other day, he said he'd never laughed so much, or he'd never heard interviewers who laugh so much. We like to laugh with our guests.

JEFF FOSTER: Well it's wonderful, I love your laughter. Thank you for your happiness. That's a teaching as well.

WIZARD: Thank you, Jeff.

TRIP: Thank you, Jeff, appreciate it.

JEFF FOSTER: Thank you so much, so much love to you.

WIZARD: Likewise.

JEFF FOSTER: Bye.



Jerry Wennstrom

<http://www.handsofalchemy.com/>

TRIP: For years Jerry Wennstrom questioned the limits of his creative life as a studio painter. After producing a large body of work, at age 29 he set out to discover the rock-bottom Truth of his life. After destroying all of his art and giving away everything he owned, Jerry began a life of unconditional trust, allowing life to

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provide all that was needed. He lived this way for 15 years. In 1998 he moved to Washington State where he eventually married Marilyn Strong, and produced a large new body of art. Marilyn and Jerry's charming Whidbey Island home is now filled with his unique interactive sculptures and paintings.

Jerry also built a 40-foot meditation tower on his property, which is featured along with his story in a book by Laura Chester called *Holy Personal*. Jerry's own book is entitled *The Inspired Heart: An Artist's Journey of Transformation*. Jerry, what's up with that 40-foot meditation tower, you getting closer to God?

JERRY WENNSTROM: I'm trying.

TRIP: I know you don't need a 40-foot tower to get up next to God, do you?

JERRY WENNSTROM: I don't know.

TRIP: What was the inspiration for building it so tall?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well the initial inspiration, my wife always wanted a meditation space, and there was this cistern out in our yard, and so I decided to build it on top of that high. And then I got the idea to build it like a church steeple. So inside it's only eight foot square, but it goes up 40 feet. So it was a gift for my wife when we first got married.

TRIP: Well speaking of her, we're going to spend most of the hour talking about your incredible life. But I didn't know whether Marilyn would be joining us today, I thought she would be. So I have a question to start off with about her. When you met her she was coming off of a painful divorce, and you were coming off years of celibacy. That sounds like the antithesis of an e-harmony relationship. So what were the hidden seeds of romance in that unusual beginning?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well, it's really interesting. In some way I feel like the story is very unromantic in that I think we were both at a place in a way having done our own personal work to be alone, and comfortable with that, and perfectly happy with it. And there's something about being in that place, and it can take a lifetime to get there where you can do relationship because it doesn't matter. It's like me destroying my art. I needed to let go of the identity of the need to do it, of the belief in it, in order to get back to it in a way that didn't matter. And I think similarly our coming together was about that simple arrival where we just looked up one day and here we are. I think when you've opened your life to love other people, there are no limits to that, there's no quantitative guide of what's more or less in terms of love. And it's almost like I think when we can get to that place we're free to have a personal relationship. But even in that, knowing it's no more or less than anything else, it just is what is, and it's a beautiful thing. And there's something about the detachment that I think makes for a healthy relationship, although nothing in pop culture will tell you that.

TRIP: I agree. Well I'm impressed with your marriage and your wife, she's quite a person, and she's got her own basket of things going on, quite a few, ordained minister, spiritual counselor. She does alternative funeral services, and also weddings. I'd love to find out more about what they're like, but we'll say that.

JERRY WENNSTROM: I can tell you a little. I mean, her death work is being reclaimed in the way home birth was reclaimed in the '60s. Home funerals are nothing new, they do it in Europe. But in this country, we've so lost touch with that essential leave taking of our loved ones, and so there's a reclamation going on where people are reclaiming that place where they keep the body in the home, they wash the body, they can decorate the coffin, decorate the body, and leave it for three days, if that's what you want. And so Marilyn is one of the pioneers in this, and I think it's something that's really sweeping the country. I mean, a woman, Jerry Grace Lyons has really taken a dent out of the funeral industry in California; she's the ultimate pioneer of it. But it's a

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pretty beautiful process. I mean, I've seen it up close, and it's amazing how people can transform around death when we avoid it, and we're taught to avoid it.

TRIP: For sure. We had a beautiful man drop the body this past week, John Hartley, and he had a beautiful send off from his friends who gathered around, and he was watching the sun rise as he dropped his body, and people were drumming. I think it was a beautiful send off and then there was a wonderful gathering in town over the weekend that was very moving, and I think uplifting for a number of people.

So in the '70s in New York, you were a prolific and driven artist, after a while you came to the understanding that your art was limiting you, and you described that art as a false God. I'm curious, why was art for you in the '70s a false God, but today it's become such a beautiful expression of your higher self?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well it gets back to what I was saying about the place where it doesn't matter. I think anything can become a false God, and the gods are going to demand their pound of flesh. Like I have a friend who fiercely spent his life making money as if it were the one thing that was going to save him, and now later in his life, it's all coming undone, and he's being sued, and his money is going out his window. And I think that's the ultimate end to false Gods, and I had a sense of that. I had a sense that art for me, even though the whole world was making a great fuss about what I was doing, for me personally it became that false God. I didn't know who I was, and so I was here this shield against non-existence, which was this idea of an artist, and I was good at what I did, and I was driven, but now I do it because it's as natural as everything else in my life. And I had to get to that place, it's the same with marriage, I had to get to the place where I could let it in a way that was natural.

TRIP: Okay, so here's something that I wanted you to clarify. You recognize that your art was not a substitute for life itself, and so you decided to destroy your art and give everything away and

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throw yourself into life. And shortly thereafter you invited anyone and everyone into your studio in which you were able to keep going, because somebody else was paying the rent. And people from all walks of life showed up. Now you say that you looked upon each one of those people that showed up in your studio, and many of them were homeless, and down on their luck, whatever, you looked upon each one of them as if you were looking upon God itself. I'm just wondering how that took place so suddenly upon your disillusionment.

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well what I jumped into when I let everything go was to simply be with what was. I didn't invite anyone into my studio. I was simply present with what came, and it seemed like people came out of the woodwork. I already had something of a following as an artist, and then that I think word got out and then... It's almost like if you put two beads of water next to each other they become one. People were just attracted to the space that I had entered, and I didn't know anything about it myself. But I think part of what was coming into my life was the tempering of my steel, the ability to hold that ground in the face of a lot of most of our suffering in the world. We're always looking for some reflection of how we can rise about that suffering. And I think in some way I was learning that for myself, and in the process I think it's only natural that those people come who are in some way are in relation to that learning process. And that's how we all learn we teach and we learn, and it's like jumping into the ocean, and you don't know how to swim, you're going to have to learn.

So a big part of it was I was learning to hold the ground by way of an onslaught of, at a certain level, other people's projection of what it looked like to be nothing to have no identity, to have no money. Who are you? It's our ultimate fear it's like right there next to death is non-identity, who are you if you're not a great radio announcer, if you don't have any money, if you don't have a nice red shiny car, who are you without anything at all? What emerges in that questioning and presence is that you embody a prayer where you become what the moment means, and that's a

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very powerful way to be on the planet, but you enter that moment, that interaction, that relationship, with that possibility from absolute emptiness. I actually have a great story if you want to hear it that relates to Marilyn.

TRIP: Yes.

JERRY WENNSTROM: When I first met Marilyn, because I had nothing, I moved to Whidbey Island with a backpack, I had absolutely no possessions. And there were many people in my life, and Marilyn and I were getting closer. But I didn't know about relationship, I didn't know if that's where I was going. I was just following the signs, watching what I needed to do and be. And I was invited to Marilyn's family for Christmas, and so there was this huge family gathering, and they serving this alcohol punch so people were drinking and loosening up a lot. And at one point, everybody was wondering who this strange guy is, he has no possessions, and Marilyn is just coming out of a painful divorce, does she need another strange person in her life to do her harm? And they didn't know, and for good reason they wondered, who is this guy?

And so all at once this very drunk cousin of hers really pounced on me, basically, who the hell are you, and what are you about? And so when he asked the question, and in as polite a way as possible, the room fell silent, because everyone wanted to know but he was drunk enough to actually ask. And so there was one of those moments, who am I? At some level the projection was completely accurate, I was nothing, I had nothing, and who am I? That moment elicited prayer, who am I, God. So instead of saying like I'm a PhD and I've got a million dollars in the bank, who am I, God? That's a whole other response to the moment. And in that questioning myself I went deeply within and I simply told my story in a very simple way. This guy ended up in tears, he was an old hippy who totally sold himself down the river, he was a career military guy, hated his life, he was an alcoholic. And so he ended up in tears, and he said, and he was an old hippy, he said, I always knew you could live that way, I'm glad somebody did. And at that,

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it won over the family and in some level brought Marilyn and I closer together. I felt, well, maybe I do belong in this possibility.

But that's a good example of how you can enter a moment so empty, and it can be so empowering. Whereas if I went in with all my credentials or all that I thought I was, it would have been a level of self-important arrogance that you might have pulled off for the moment, you might have impressed a few people with your material benefits, but it could never equal the power of that moment. And those were the moments I lived, that's what that embodied prayerful life was about, being present to what the moment called for, and it was a wild Easter egg hunt, you never knew what the next moment, and I still don't know.

TRIP: Man, you've had an amazing life, you're really “gumping” it just like my pal the Wizard in a serious way. You've got so many stories in that book of yours, and I want to drill down into some of them. You talked about holding the space for people that showed up at the studio, and often when you did that you were silent. At first this may have come from an awkwardness you felt about speaking, but later you discerned the power of silence, and you came to an understanding that silence sharing is a real gift. But this gift was not passive, like sleeping, it was an active something. What is the active aspect of sharing in silence?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well, in a way we can't make a thing out of silence, no more than we can make a thing out of talking. Again it gets down to that, what does the moment call for? And I had moments where someone would come into my studio and I would feel this intense agitation coming from them, and even the silence would make them even more uncomfortable. And there was a part of me that wanted to talk just because I was nervous about the energy they were bringing into the room. But there was something about, again, being present in that moment that I wouldn't speak.

I had a woman come exactly in that situation where she was so wound up, and at first she was talking 100 miles an hour, and I just stayed silent. Then the silence got a little deeper, and there

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was a level of surrender, and she ended up in tears. I never said a word to her, and when she left, she stayed for a while, and I felt like the room just glowed with our co-mingling energies towards the end, it was just a really beautiful experience. And I can't explain it, I don't know what happened. But she hugged me, and she thanked me, and she left. I mean, there's an example of how silence can be the required language of the moment.

At other times I had young street kids come in and I would just blast them, I mean the moment would call for a certain... I was just about being present with what was coming, and it was like no holds barred. But there was a period where I had to inhabit silence, because it was my big terror to not speak because most of us speak out of nervousness, if we feel nervous we start talking, and we talk about the weather. I mean what if we didn't do that, what if we just really listening to the moment, I think a whole other relationship with the world could come into play. I don't need to be silent, for a year I hardly spoke; I don't need to do that now. It's like giving up painting again, you get to the place where it doesn't matter if you speak or not, but you have all the colors on your palate. If the moment calls for blue, you've got it. If it calls for red, you've got it. But I think most of us are pretty lopsided, we know how to talk, or we're afraid to talk, you have introverts, extroverts, and we're all specialized in what we do. But how many of us have the whole palate. And I think that's what we all need to learn, there's nothing special about that, it's a requirement of our totality, of our completion on the planet.

TRIP: Yes. You say, and I don't want to catch you on semantics here, but I'm wondering if there's something more to it than semantics. You say "We risk far more than life when we attempt to create a life devoid of a personal relationship with our God". I'm just wondering, is God something we relate to, in terms of a relationship, or is it an assumption we make about who we are?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well, I find... and I don't know if it's the only game in town. I find I need to have God in my life, whatever you want to call that God, and I'm not talking religion, I'm talking

that mysterious conversation that goes on constantly, that embodied prayer you might say. I mean, I personally need that God in my life like a lover, and just like a lover when I don't feel that God I can do a lot of complaining about it within myself. I feel like I need that level of intimacy, and what I found is that you can have that level of intimacy there is that potential. Instead of like the ego always jumping for first place, like I'm hungry I want to eat, or I want this new possession, that immediate hunger of ego that's always out there clamoring for attention. What if we said, yes, I am that ego too, and I see it and it's a pain in the neck. And yet, what does God feel this moment wants? So it's a different relationship, it's an intimacy that I personally feel helps me pay attention in the way I need to, and however that works, I don't know how it works for other people, but that's my relationship to what I call God, is that. And it feels like a separate entity, and I need it that way because it also helps to stay humble okay, well what if you're running the show, that means you're God, good luck on that one because you're going to hit a wall more than once. Because a God can do anything they want to, try it and see what happens.

TRIP: Jerry, you're a very good writer, I'm going to read something you wrote and then I'm going to ask you about something. You say, "In the shadow lands of life's most terrifying experiences, something inherently noble in the human heart unexpectedly enters in and renders the voices of good and evil mute. Grace sets the mind in a hesitant holy trance, and we are emotionally invested in doing what is most right and beautiful. If there is a healing grace to be relied on, isn't it worth risking our lives once and for all to establish this as a permanent feature in our conscious daily lives. We must risk everything to even come into the fierce proximity of its true power. But if grace is to become a fully dependable reality, it must carry us through the most frightening circumstances".

Now we're going to talk about some of the crazy frightening things that you just surrendered to in a minute, and I've read numerous examples of them, but it brought something up for me. It occurred

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to me that if you had been a woman, you would surely have been raped and maybe killed in some of these ways that you just said, come on? You let gangs up into your apartment that you didn't know, and all kinds of crazy stuff. Do you think the path you took, this total surrender to life that you took, is something that a woman could also take? Would you recommend this path to your daughter if you had one?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Yes, it's not about men or woman. I have a personal mantra, there's either a God of everything, or there's a God of nothing. And yes, if I had a daughter I would say, you find your relationship with that, and do whatever it takes to live it out. I don't think it means being fool hardy, I don't think it means doing ridiculous things. I think it means being present and sensing the moment, and meeting the call of that moment.

I mean, I have a friend who in New York City was walking down the street and this gang came up to her, and she's this little short person; tiny little attractive person. So this gang came up to her and started making comments. And she told me a story, I mean, it was her story, and it's her details, but in some way she was able to transform that moment by being present in a different way that both embodied her innocence and her fierce attention to what was going on. And, again if there's a limit... I mean, it was no different for me, I mean the stories you've read, I've walked in some of the most terrifying situations, I didn't create them, they came up in a moment that I happened to be where I was at the time, and things happened. I didn't go looking for it, I wouldn't suggest any woman go looking for those kinds of experiences. What I'm saying is if they happen be fully present with it, and it's like...

TRIP: Well let's talk about one of those, so people know what we're talking about. Here's one, and there were so many, I mean your life is full of these, but here's just one. You came home late at night one night, and there was a whole like gang of African American homeless men that were right there in your loft entry way. And they were drinking, and they looked very suspicious, and they said, can we come up? And you're the guy that when

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you're asked a question like that, you refused to default into judgment, or into some protective...

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well mostly oriented fear, it was mostly fear I was responding to.

TRIP: Okay, so you invite these guys up, and...

JERRY WENNSTROM: They asked me, I didn't invite them. I wouldn't have invited them.

TRIP: Okay, well they asked, you let them up, they're going up the stairs, and one of them takes his bottle full of whatever and smashes it on the stairs, which must have jilted your nervous system. Then you get up into the apartment, not apartment the studio, and you go in there. And they start asking you the stupid questions, and they're grinning at each other, and doing that preamble towards maybe mugging you or whatever. And then they come right out and say, "We're going to case your joint". And so you then say, "Okay, let me show you around", and then maybe you could share what happened after that.

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well this was just before destroying my art when I was fasting; I fasted for a month, so I was really hyper sensitive. And I was just really present with them, so when I said, okay, let me show you what I do, and I brought then into the studio. And at the time the studio was full of hundreds of paintings. And they were pretty intense images, I mean if you have anybody who wants to see the images on the website, it is www.handsofalchemy.com. So the paintings were there and it just... there was something that happened that just turned these guys around. They started looking at the paintings and going around, they said, "Wow man, did you do this?" And I said, yes. Like everything turned around, they were showing each other their favorites. And then when they left they were so respectful, and they asked if they could bring their girlfriends.

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What the point of it is in every moment is there is the potential for the miraculous to come through, and I think we can either live into that miracle or we can live in fear. And again I wouldn't have chosen that situation, and it scared me, I'm not saying I wasn't afraid, I was completely afraid. But what it was I refused to give into that fear, I trusted the God of that moment. Again there's either a God of everything, or there's a God of nothing. And I needed to find that out. It's everywhere in everything, male, female, whatever. I mean, anything could happen to anyone of course.

TRIP: Indeed. you had a couple of friends, a gay couple, that were influential in your life, and I don't know why I mention them with so many things to ask you. But..

JERRY WENNSTROM: They're characters.

TRIP: Gilbert and Louis. These guys, they lived in 100 yard long converted chicken house.[Laughs] And they had room upon room, and like just when you thought you'd explored the whole place, they'd show you a whole other room that you didn't know about. And they had a peculiar dining table, can you share what that was?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well, it was out in their garden, they had lavish gardens and it was a pretty creative place. They were something of mentors for me. And the table, it was a water table, it was like a huge round, and I don't know what you call it, like a huge round...

TRIP: It was like a stock tank, right?

JERRY WENNSTROM: With seats built in around it, and so when you sat at the table, the food would float on bowls on the water, and you'd pass it around to each other. [Laughing]

TRIP: I love that. You sat at a stock tank and passed bowls around on the water. So these guys were very influential. And it

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was funny because one of them was a mean spirited guy who was very much in touch with his inner self, and then the other guy was not in touch with his inner self, but was very gregarious and whatever. So they represented the complementary psyche almost, the two of them together.

JERRY WENNSTROM: Yes, a level of completion, I think that was what I learned from them. And , Gilbert, the more gregarious one, he would come on to me, he was a very loving open person, and I always had to keep my boundaries because it was an interesting relationship not being gay, but really loving these guys and learning from them. And I wouldn't say Louis was mean, Louis was like a God he could see through anything, and he was completely ruthless in his stance. But he wasn't mean, he wouldn't do mean things, but he showed no mercy.

And I needed to have that balance of, this creative, wild, fun loving, gregarious, person and that ruthless God like watching over everything. In some way I think we need that balance in ourselves, and I certainly know I did, and I learned from both of them. What I also learned is the price you pay for not being complete, because I think where Louis sells short, Gilbert would come up and fill in the hole, and where Gilbert fell short, Louis would fill in the hole. But there was a part of them that had to head for the barn when they were out of their territory. Gilbert could not handle the inner life, where Louis wouldn't handle the external. I also saw that and I realize our parents' generation could live that way, and they were of that generation. But I realized, we can't do that now, none of us can, I think that's why there are so many divorces. We can't be partial people anymore, that's why I think it's a big requirement of our day is to be whole within ourselves. And then we can do... again it gets back to relationship; you can do relationship if you don't need that other half. If you need it, that hole, you're going to fall into that hole, at some place you're going to... your limitation is going to come up and the very thing you love about the other person, you're going to end up resenting because you need that in yourself, and you're

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expecting them to fulfill it and they can't do it. No one can carry that part of our self.

TRIP: Speaking of families. Well, most of us come from a dysfunctional family, and your father held you firmly in his shadow, which you felt powerless not to recreate. And you say, "When we can undo the family shadow for ourselves and stop it, we stop it for generations to come". Is the family shadow something we all need to attend to, and is this spiritual work, or is it more like storyline therapy that gets us into the game of spiritual work?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well I think it's probably the most powerful work we all need to do. I like what Robert Bly says, "Beware the man who thinks he had a happy childhood". I mean, in some way there's no other... if you do your personal work, your family shadow is going to come up, even if it's the shadow of being loved too much, and over attended where you don't know how to fend for yourself in the world, and you don't know anything except how to be loved, and when people don't love you you're lost. I mean, there are a million ways the shadow manifests but all families come through with some level of shadow. And so how do you do the work?

At some level I felt part of that total surrender, that stuff came up for me, and it was just part of the miraculous healing. If you remember the rest of that story, that's one of the most bizarre stories in the book, and so much so I was hesitant to tell it, about healing the bloodline, where I realized I had recreated my father's life. I don't think he held it over me; he couldn't get out of it himself, that's how he handed it on. We unconsciously pass it along, and we hide our fears, and our limitations, and that's what gets absorbed by way of the unconscious of our offspring. And my father was just doing what he did, he was as much a victim of it as I was, except for me I think it came undone and was healed as a result of total surrender in the way that I had done it.

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So I don't know, therapy, I'm sure it helps, but in the end I mean again that story in the book is incredibly miraculous, I don't know how I could have arrived at the epiphany that I did on my efforts with the therapist or anything else. Maybe it's possible, I don't know. But I think it's a big part of healing we all need to do, and it heals our planet. We have a dysfunctional relationship with our Government, and that's our surrogate mommy and daddy, right now, and it's a very dysfunctional relationship.

TRIP: All right, well while we're on the topic of families, you say, "My wife and I don't have children, so I don't know much about raising them". On the other hand I have to say I've observed that you've done a lot of caretaking of adults and children, but anyways. Your advice boils down to this, "Be a living relationship to your own Mystery and your children will do the same. They will absorb this relationship into their body memory naturally". My question for you is does that mean we should be unconcerned with the economic implications that living that Mystery might have on them? We worry about are they going to have enough clothing, are they going to be able to get to school properly, and blah, blah. I have to say that my role as father/provider definitely brings me into form a bit, do you know what I mean?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well, again, some people..., if that's true what you say, and I believe you it is, there's a level... I think your challenge is letting go of control of what you think you're doing for your kids then. If you're super responsible, and that's your total fix, what I hear is what you just said, it may be partially coming out of fear because you're afraid if you don't your kids are going to fall through the cracks in some way, or be neglected. I think when, you don't know how to raise a kid, you don't know what their path is, you don't know what their destiny is, you don't know what's best for them. You only know what you know how to do because that's what you were taught how to do.

There's a Mystery in their lives, and what I'm saying is it's not about being responsible; it's being responsible to something even greater. You're trusting like you do with your own life, and this

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gets back to that quote you read from my book, if you live that relationship with the Mystery yourself, you will naturally allow the child to live it because you're handing them over to the same God you put your own life in the hands of. And there's something about the ability to do that where they will find their way, and their Mystery and their magic will. It won't be under your control, you won't know their path, and you will be as awed by the way their life unfolds as you are with your own relationship to the Mystery. It's not less than responsible, it's ultimate responsibility. And I will say in the meantime, do your best to chop wood and carry water, and feed them, and clothe them, and do everything else.

But it's like, if anything, in our country our kids are suffering from affluenza, we give them so much external, and so little internal that it's like that's what's destroying the planet. That's the arrogance of America, is our children expect, we expect, too much, we expect it all to come handed to us on a silver platter. Letting a child suffer a little bit naturally learning how if you touch the stove you burn your hand, you do everything to keep their hand off the stove but it happens. And there's something about that co-creation, the way to raise a child with a co-creative relationship with your own Mystery that will make for ultimate survival, at all levels.

I mean, you have people who are buying their kids everything they could possibly want, and they think that they are doing a better job. I have some artist friends, who live in a teeny house, and their children are so incredibly extraordinary for one reason, they are present with them, they don't buy them a lot of junk, they are so completely present with them. I mean, one just won the violin... she's 14, she won nationally this classic violin contest, or whatever, they're extraordinary. And what I see is the simplest most beautiful people being present with their children. And what that presence means, they're both very creative people, they have their own relationship with creation, and their kids are a product of that.

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TRIP: Speaking of giving people intangible things, instead of material things, your landlord said he wanted to live in your space, and asked you to leave. You asked him how soon, and he said as soon as possible, so you said a prayer and walked out the door [Laughs]. That's amazing. Later you had to comfort people that remained in the building. Throughout the ensuing years you never slept on the street because the people that helped you always felt you were giving them more than they gave you, even though you had nothing material to give them. What intangible something did you give those people that took you in from the street, do you think?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well I think I lived into my own vulnerability, not like a victim, but again like a prayer, not poor me, but I think there's something about our big fear around not having and not being, that vulnerability, . We don't like to be seen as that empty, not having. I think my relationship again was with that Mystery, if I didn't have anything, I would trust that not having.

It's like a child in a certain way; it's like a conscious innocence. I mean, what is it about a child that makes us want to take care of them? What makes us want to give to them? What it is, it's their sincere honest being and vulnerability. It's not that their manipulating us, it's not that they're even expecting anything from us, it's that there's an inherent trust that the universe is there. And I think I lived, I had to find that space, because I gave all my money away, and I was simply there for people. And I did a lot of people, I mean I would do whatever I was wherever I was, I was a good cook, I would clean the bathroom, I would shine their shoes, I would just do whatever I saw needed doing and I would do it joyfully, lovingly, I would do it because it made me happy. And there was something about living your own joyful presence that opens people's hearts. And I don't know what else to say about it, I don't think I'm anything special about that, I think we all know that space, but most of us spend our lives buffering ourselves from the vulnerability it would take to really live it out. That's what

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letting everything go did, I couldn't do otherwise. It's like I let it all go, it's like there was no turning back.

So that's what the moment calls for, if I had no home, I had no home, I trusted it. And it was miraculous the way things came through. But I didn't depend on a person. That was the paradox. Although it was always people who helped me, it's still people who help me, I mean I just had a guy over who gave me this huge grant this week. There are still things that are unexpected because I'm still living in that same trusting place. And it's available to all of us. Again, so what are you doing with your energies, are you living in fear, are you buffering yourself from that vulnerability, or are you saying, yes to life, doing what you love, doing what you love for other people. Are you out there present with what is, without having to hide that vulnerability? That is where the gifts come through.

TRIP: I'm taking your advice in a big way right now. I'm going to make a major life transition and run with my heart's desires, I'm going to run with it. So thank you for that encouragement.

In your book, *The Inspired Heart*, you compared living the inner life this man that fasted in a cage, and you draw a comparison between those two. Could you tell that story of the man in the cage, and how that relates to living the inner life?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well it was a time when I was fasting a lot, and it was interesting because several years before, the actress Lotte Lenya, that Bobby Darin song, *Mack the Knife*. She's a German actress that came over to this country, and I knew her, and she had given me this album that she spoke of, and it was a story she told called *The Hunger Artist*, about a guy he was a carnival act, and his thing was fasting. And so everyday he would fast another day, a number would go up, how many days he fasted. And eventually people lost interest, but he just kept fasting, and the sign fell down, and he was this little crumpled heap in the bottom of his cage of straw. And people forgot about him, and he just kept fasting. I mean, there was a time because I gave up

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everything I owned, I fasted so much, I only ate what came, I trusted the moment, that's simply the way it was. At times, in your wild fantasies, you always imagine the worst, this image came up as like, am I going to like just disappear into the oat straw like this hunger artist, where nobody cares, nobody knows. It's that pitiful little self we all have that crops up once in a while.

TRIP: Well on the opposite end of the spectrum from totally surrendering to the Mystery and just going with that. You've observed that many people live in a fear-based comfort that becomes deadly safe, the agent of a slow sorrowful death. You had a remarkable encounter with a Japanese man that taught you something about death in comfort. It was a really ordinary experience, and I thought it was very enlightening, anybody could have had it, and it was unlike some of these other dramatic experiences you've had where you've had gangs in your house, or whatever. Can you talk about that one?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Yes, it was ordinary in a deadly way. I mean, I had done this presentation and this man came and he invited me over for tea. And he had spent this life as a Government worker and he was gay, from an older generation again and so it was the generation where you couldn't come out and be with that as easily as you can today. And so he was really guarded. I mean, so when I entered his house he had the door locked, he had this huge Doberman, he'd locked the door behind us, and it was like he was so fear based, so afraid to do everything. And I at the time I prided myself on my ability to find a way in, to connect with somebody. It was like I was with this guy for an hour or two, and it was like I could not find a way in, and I was so taken by his extraordinary ability to stay shut out, and to shut me out, and to stay shut down, and I just say that it was killing him. He was obviously lonely, why did he invite me, he was unhappy. He had every material advantage in the world, and yet there was nothing about his life, he had to keep it all locked away and there was nobody home there. So the encounter taught me something about, for one thing it was humbling, because it was like, wow, I'm not as clever as I thought I was [Laughs], I couldn't get this guy to

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open up with everything I did. So that's what that encounter was about.

TRIP: I'm about to walk away from a business, well not walking away... yes, I have to leave a business that I've been managing for five years. I manage a trailer park, and I've got a question for you about that, because I've been reflecting on this and I'm interested in your opinion. So for the entirety of my time that I was managing this trailer park, I refused to profile anybody, okay. Even though time and again one particular group did far more harm to me than any other, like 80% or 90% of the misbehaviors and costs that were heaped upon me there came from this one group, and I just never profiled, never profiled. And reading the stories about you, and the people that have showed up in your lives, or people that would show up and they were obviously down on their luck, or their teeth knocked out, or they had gang tattoos all over them. And you constantly just stayed with it, you refused to judge, you were open to the moment. I'm just wondering though, being like that, with this group and never profiling cost me a lot of aggravation, a lot of money. It's possible had I been more critical in my assessments of the people that I dealt with that I could have kept my business cash flow neutral, and maybe I could have hung on and earned additional money that would enable me to do more good in the world. I'm just curious, where do you draw the line between non-judgment and stupidity? I mean is it always worth the risk to be wide open to everyone all the time?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well, it's like I said earlier, I think you also have to be ruthless like the devil. Clearly you're a nice guy, I mean you're doing this radio show, you're somebody who cares, and you're a loving person. I would say your challenge is healthy ruthlessness.

TRIP: Thank you, I was hoping you would say that.

JERRY WENNSTROM: The Bhagavad Gita says goodness is the final obstacle to God, that's your obstacle, you're not a bad person, and you have to learn healthy ruthlessness. And those guys, the

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toothless guys with the tattoos would respect you if you held your own. It's like if you let them walk all over you, it doesn't mean to be a doormat, it also doesn't mean to be violent.

I like the story Yogananda, there's a story about a snake and the snake keeps biting people, it was a cobra, and it's one of those Indian stories, and every time somebody would come near the snake it would bite him, and he was killing all these people. And one day a saint came walking through town and the snake bit him, and the saint just did his little saint thing, and he instantly was healed. And the cobra says, "Oh, I'm in trouble now, I just bit a saint". And so the cobra says, "Oh, I'm so sorry I bit you, and you're a saint, how do I repent?" And the saint said, "Don't bite anyone anymore, no more biting". So the saint comes back a year later and the snake is totally emaciated, and he's all beaten up. And the saint says, "Well, Mr. Snake, what happened to you?" And the snake says, "Well you told me not to bite, and this is what the people have done to me, they beat me, they kick me, and I don't bite them". And the saint said, "Well I didn't say you couldn't hiss". [Laughs]

TRIP: You've been willing to be hungry, one day you were really hungry, you were standing in the rain at the end of your rope, a \$20 bill floated by in the gutter. Of that experience you say, during this 15 year period that you just surrendered to life, you say "I was fed that day and every other day the Gods chose to feed me, and when they did not, I did not eat".

Very few people in life willingly, especially in America, we're like an obese country, willingly subject themselves to that. I mean, I've only been really hungry once, it was on a survival camping thing, and it was only one day. And it was in the rain, and it was cold, and I was paddling a canoe the entire day, so I went 24 hours without eating. I was really, really hungry at the end of that, but I was never hungry like you were, were I was like losing body weight, and really hungry. What are the benefits of that, what came of that for you? What did you learn from that?

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JERRY WENNSTROM: Well, again, if I might repeat my mantra, there's either a God of everything, or a God of nothing. Hunger is so primal that it's one of your ultimate fears, hunger, survival. And I think again if that was a fear, I said well not that one, that would have been a place that came up in my life and there would be no God there, because I as an ego would have said, I'm not going there, and I would run for cover. In other words, if it came to eating or hurting you, I would hurt you because I have to eat. That's what fear does, it will do damage in the world to survive.

And I needed to find the Mystery of that aspect of my own ego survival mechanism, you might say. And that's what it did for me, I found that again there is a God in that; it was miraculous the way it has worked. And I don't fast anymore, I'm not hungry, I'm all plump and happy. I don't think you need to live that way, but I think I needed to find the place where even that, even there, because look, I survived, I'm here telling the story because I didn't die. It's not like I'm the hunger artist in the straw. Here I am, with a beautiful wife living in this beautiful land on Whidbey Island, and it's all I think a product of those experiences, because like art, like relationship, I had to get to the place where it didn't matter. By matter I mean it was not fear based that I was eating, it was not fear based that I'm in a relationship. It's not fear based that I now have possessions in my life, and doing art again. It's totally because it's a celebratory part of the whole that came out of finding that essential God in the experience. And if I didn't have it, this would not be mine. I would be a fear-based creation that I have to fight for, and scrap for, and hold, and work to achieve, and I don't do any of that. I work hard, but it's on behalf of what I love, and what I love in other people, and what I do for other people, it's not out of fear.

TRIP: Well what I think is really special about you is I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth, and I've been fortunate to have great spiritual teachers, and I do apply these spiritual teachings in my life, and there's been great transformation. But you just “gumped” right into it. I mean, you went about this ego death suicide of yours, and there was no formal spiritual training or

anything, boom you just was you, it was just who you were, it was what you had to do.

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well it wasn't based on any particular tradition, but I wouldn't say I didn't have a poetic sense of the possibility form things I've read, from people like Ramakrishna, and Yogananda, and Christ. I mean, it's not like I didn't know the potential for this life. So it's not a religion, and there's no particular one, but if there is that God of everything, it's in your heart, it's in your potential in each moment, it's there, it's not arrogant to expect that that is there and to call on it, and to try and find how to live in relationship with that. And there are times I just did this interview where I told the story, I didn't tell in my book, about a way that Ramakrishna came through in a very visionary way. I didn't talk about it because I hate talking about this psyche smyche stuff, and I didn't put it in my book. But there are times when literally deities from traditions I felt would come through to save the day and help me in very particular ways. And I think sometimes when you put your foot out into that emptiness and you don't know what it's going to land on, your foot falls into place in say a Hindu belief, or a Christian belief, or a bagman, that moment, that person, that expression, if your God is that moment.

And there's no greater religion than the religion of all things, that's what native traditional spirituality is about in all cultures, there's a God of everything, the trees, they're singing, the birds are talking. It's all there telling you how to go, where to go, how to be, if we're paying attention. And that is our birthright no one can claim it, the Catholic church doesn't own it, the Jews' religion doesn't own it, the Hindu's don't own it, the Muslims don't own it, it's a God of everything, it's all the great big harmonious singing dancing Mystery.

TRIP: Jerry, you are a sage, and I'm honored to have spent this hour with you, truly it's been fabulous for me. We only have about two more minutes, I want to mention that you have a website, www.handsofalchemy.com, and currently you're featuring a series of interactive coffin like boxes that are magical that all kinds of

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things going on. You are also touring the country right now with Marilyn, and you're co-leading workshops together. Anything else you want to mention, people to get in touch with you in the last minute or two that we have?

JERRY WENNSTROM: Well people can go to the website, there's a lot going on, there's a feature film, that's exciting and daunting at the same time, is a Danish filmmaker making a film about my art and life, his name is Wullenweber. So it's fun and scary. But there's a lot going on.

TRIP: Wow, a feature film. Yes. I went over your website, and the Wizard was in the hospital last night, and I spent last night with the Wizard and was on retreat all week so have to confess that I wasn't scrupulously prepared as I sometimes am for the interview.

JERRY WENNSTROM: You did great. I appreciate your openness and your question.



Katie Davis

<http://www.katiedavis.org/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, author and spiritual teacher, Katie Davis, spontaneously awakened over 20 years ago without spiritual practices or teachers. She had never heard of awakening

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and had never been a seeker of Truth. In fact she had no intellectual reference whatsoever for what had occurred.

A former secondary school educator, businesswoman, and mother of two, she simply radically awakened from the daytime dream of concepts, beliefs, and form, to fall into the reality of who we really are. Katie devoted the following years to integrating that transformation and now offers seminars in the form of Satsang with a timeless message of true freedom and joy. Her book, *Awake Joy*, shares a fresh vision of the awakened life in honest elegant language that is a pleasure to read. Her lucid descriptions are accompanied by practical experiments that point you to the direct experience of your true nature here and now. Katie's husband, Sundance Burke, who appeared on our program last week, is Katie's frequent teaching partner. It has been their shared passion to help all to realize a deeper consciousness that already lies within, and brings joy and great peace.

Katie, with the genes of two eloquent authors, did your kids get perfect 800s on the verbal SATs [Laughs]?

KATIE DAVIS: They still think we are a little bit crazy.

TRIP: Well that was my follow up question; I mean do your children also value the awake joy that is available to them? Was it something you were able to communicate to them such that they picked it up, or are they doing the skip a generation thing?

KATIE DAVIS: They are very curious, I wouldn't say they are open to the depths of it, but the observation and investigation exists. But we just pretty much allow them to be as they are. When they're curious enough to begin asking questions, then I suppose they'll know who to contact.

WIZARD: How old are your children?

KATIE DAVIS: Sundance has two children, and I have two. They are maybe 30 through 33.

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TRIP: So you write, "The essence of enlightenment is uninterrupted Self aware being". I like that definition. Millions perhaps are now tasting enlightenment, but uninterrupted self aware being is still quite rare, true?

KATIE DAVIS: No.

TRIP: No?

KATIE DAVIS: I mean right now, maybe it is a matter of inattention, but if I were to ask you right now, are you aware of being?

TRIP: Yes, I am.

KATIE DAVIS: Would you say that you are conscious?

TRIP: Yes.

KATIE DAVIS: Are you silently aware of that?

TRIP: Yes.

KATIE DAVIS: It's always here, there is nowhere to go. You are who you are in every moment.

TRIP: Well I agree with you and I prefer the common man's definition of enlightenment being that which is available and present for everyone all the time. But, for example, then I'll read something of the sort that I read in your book towards the end, when you talk about the four kinds of surrender. And it began with *unconditional* surrender, okay, that was the low level [Laughs], the lowest level. And then it went on up from there.

WIZARD: It's choiceless surrender. [Laughter]

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TRIP: And it gets you to wondering, wow, I'm still working on unconditional surrender and I've been at this for five years. Do we largely experience enlightenment, if we are continuously aware of awareness as say for example I am? Or are there states so much deeper than that, that I might as well just, you know, plan on the next 40 years working at this or hanging with this? What do you think?

KATIE DAVIS: Well, what's important to hear is that who you are right now is whole, complete and already awake. What we call nature is this physical space with all that can be contacted by the senses. Then there is this field of attention that is perception, cognition and time. You are beyond all that. This is about realizing who you are in the deepest essence right now, not who you are going to become 20 years from now. What is already here and complete?

As far as surrender is concerned, if it could be really received and looked at directly, the only apparent obstruction is this identification with the concept "I". To that is attached all of these conditionings, programs and emotional ups and downs; all of the physical health concerns or problems. But if we can realize that we are prior to that, it is as basic as it can be.

Right now, we all feel this sense of I-ness; this resting as I-ness. Most are still misidentified with the ego-I. When we realize that we could not possibly be a mere thought and see through the delusion, then the mistake that is often made is to surrender this *feeling sense* of I-ness. It is like throwing out the *word* "chocolate," without ever having tasted chocolate! Pure I is I *now* and it is far more than a word or a thought. It is not the ego and it is pointing to far more than the physical body. The invitation is to inquire, so that there is true tasting.

The most fundamental teaching is who is "I". People often have an idea about enlightenment or Self-realization and they *think* it's very complicated, since the mind tries to understand it. And yet, it is so simple. If you will rest as that ... that feeling sense of I-ness, it

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transcends all the layers of consciousness into the magnificence that you genuinely already are.

WIZARD: That I-thought keeps stealing the show [Laughs].

PHILIP: Constantly, it's veracious.

TRIP: You know the word, Faith, has been abused in our culture, but you say that enlightenment does not require a leap of faith and is readily accessible for our direct realization. I was wondering does abiding as self aware being, which is your term for enlightenment, in the face of whatever life has to offer, and life dishes out a lot, does that not require a supreme Faith in the Mystery as it's unfolding?

KATIE DAVIS: Yes, that is true and this is a really good question, yet it is important for everyone to understand that you are not a psychological self in the process of becoming something more. You are this aware being now. There is nowhere to go and there is nothing to become. In fact, becoming is the apparent obstruction. When you identify with that word "I", you are "becoming" an object. The ego-I is only a separating idea, one tiny letter, and that first personal pronoun is suffering. Separating and identifying with it, ties a knot between the body and the transcendent consciousness that you are.

WIZARD: I noticed when I'm completely present, I can't find that "I". But as soon as I get into yesterdays and tomorrows, here it comes flooding in.

KATIE DAVIS: Exactly, the false sense of self needs time.

PHILIP: And needs a linear paradigm, time paradigm.

WIZARD: Yes.

KATIE DAVIS: The ego-I is mind, its time and that equals suffering. So first, fully in your body, like right now, really aware of

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how the body's feeling, sensing, and maybe how wonderful the air feels as it moves in and out your nose. The body is always now. Ultimately, we know that we are far more than just the physical form, but the body is a perfect tool for presence. When you are relaxed and yet alert, while consciously sensing, there is no time. So the I-thought can still come up. We use it all the time in conversation, so the thought itself is perfectly harmless. It is the *attachment* to it *as identity* that is problematic and that attachment requires time. So the first step then is to fully *be* the body and you shift out of the head into timeless presence.

TRIP: So you've spent several decades integrating your original awakening experience and you've settled down and become established. So I want to ask you this question. Do you still suffer?

KATIE DAVIS: No.

TRIP: No, you do not suffer? Absence of suffering.

KATIE DAVIS: Yes, and that is important to hear that this is a true possibility. I am not suggesting that anyone try to escape suffering, in fact it must be intimately known and observed. Allow the suffering to come up. Let the body sense it and feel it, while you are observing. Observe the mental activity that goes along with it, they walk in tandem together. Emotion is really a reaction to our own thoughts, so suffering is self-inflicted [Laughs].

WIZARD: So it's the I-thought that's suffering and it's just a belief?

KATIE DAVIS: It is the ego. When you realize that the ego is nothing more than the separating concept of the ego-I, the body limitation and its time, we are able to surrender and directly realize the mistake in identity. We have “carried” the ego our entire lifetime! Free of the ego, there is nothing to hold together the suffering conditionings. The mistake is *attachment* and that requires time.

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WIZARD: Kind of like Santa Claus.

KATIE DAVIS: The most basic level of Self-inquiry is simply the question "Who am I?" while directing the mind's attention inward. Listen with every cell of the body. From whence is this thought arising? Simply listen, notice and look.

When I meet individually with people and we are sitting together, even if they are coming in just to be a little bit happier; meaning that they are free of the idea of Self-realization ... or maybe they are just starting to be a little bit curious. When you ask this question earnestly and look directly, as John said a little while ago, there is no one there. One woman opened her eyes wide and responded, "There is no one there!" And she started laughing and said, "What a relief!" When there is no storyteller, you are free of the suffering story. When you can be free of attachment, you are free of suffering. Nonetheless, inquiry into that suffering is essential for understanding its structure and mechanism. Observing is the transformative power, just by simply watching.

PHILIP: Katie, Trip warned you I might jump in here. John and I share a teaching; fairly obscure teaching from some years back and some is composed of rhymes. I want to share one, because it's so appropriate to what you're talking about, I think. And it goes like this: "I only wish I could make people see, but when I explain it, they just won't believe. Everyone sees their mind's distortion of the one perfect soul, before they see their soul's perfection; sparking all aglow. Don't look back. Don't think that there's anything at all behind you. Look to the morning; a new day is dawning. Truth is here to remind you."

And John was saying something recently, we were having...

KATIE DAVIS: That is beautiful. Thank you for sharing.

PHILIP: You're welcome. We were having some little spontaneous Satsang and we were talking about this notion of the awareness. I want to call it the oneness, the soul, the existence

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beyond the mind with all its chatter, recriminations and so forth. And I got this image of when you're in a pool of water. You're swimming towards like a ping pong ball and your very effort keeps moving the ping pong ball away from you.

KATIE DAVIS: Right. That's a perfect analogy.

PHILIP: Yes. That's what I've been hearing, as we try to describe these things that are so I guess challenging to describe in this process, which really isn't a process. It's just a gift that we're opening ourselves to, that what's already happened, if we can even put it in the past, because there is no past, there's only this infinite moment. The words become and I'm good at words and they become more and more difficult [Laughs].

TRIP: Well I've got some words for you. I want to read something you wrote and you write extremely well, Katie, by the way.

WIZARD: Yes, you do.

PHILIP: Yes, you do.

TRIP: You write with a precision and a confidence that is uniquely your own. But you wrote, "Desire inherently contains its opposite which is fear, so while we are creating our personal desires, we are also creating poverty, greed, sexual obsession, power over others in the herd and every form of lack. In other words, when we desire, we are also saying that we lack." Does any desire fall outside of this? For example, what about the desire for the company of Truth? Because that's what motivates me, and maybe the Wizard, I don't want to speak for him and Philip here to hang with you. We enjoy the company of Truth.

WIZARD: Is it desire or synchronicity?

TRIP: I don't know. Have I stumped you yet, Katie, I'm going to get you...

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KATIE DAVIS: I would like to say something about that. All lack is in the pain gap of separation from the magnificence that you truly are and the false ego-body limitation. Everyone wants to let go of fear, but very few really take a look at desire. Again time separates the desire/fear duality. For instance, happiness and sadness depend upon one another for their definitive existence. Those dualities cycle back and forth on the same continuum within time; whereas joy is transcendental and therefore free of the cycling in time. Pure, calm joy is ever present.

The desire to know who you are with a group of people that similarly have that same single pointed focus is really beautiful and very supportive; such as in Satsang. In the end, it will be seen that everything is just happening by itself and there is such simplicity in that. You could even say that the inquiry is an adventure; *not knowing* what is appearing and being able to live or be the spontaneity.

Even before wondering *what* we desire ... *who* desires? The question "what" is objective. The question "who" is subjective. Turn the mind's attention within and with innocent curiosity, inquire, notice and realize.

TRIP: I'm a cage rattler, so I've got a question for you that concerns about three billion people here on planet Earth. You write, "Children learn to pray to a separate God that is reduced to a mental concept that requires a leap of faith." Now that's about half the planet. "This is a leap that some may not make." You're right. What of the ones that make the leap of faith into the concept of a separate God, are they inevitably suffering as well?

KATIE DAVIS: Well yes, because of the separation; that is, if they are already attaching and separating. They may not be conscious of it and I am not saying that there is anything wrong with faith, because it is that devotion that eventually feeds longing and the curiosity to look within. By awakening, we realize directly that the divine is intimately within and inseparable from our deepest essence. Are children suffering? As long as there is this

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identification with the personal body-only limitation, they are experiencing themselves as only a fraction of the totality. That fraction will always be a fraction. A fraction can never be whole. And of course as the body, we share great vulnerability. Children could surrender that idea or through conscious parenting, stand free of the conditioning in the first place.

WIZARD: I use the term Faith for myself in the sense of naked Faith, not Faith in anything that is a method of acceptance, putting the I-thought out of a job [Laughter]. Some people critique me on that and say it's a belief, but I see Faith as the antithesis of a belief that is really to relieve the burden of beliefs into non doer-ship.

PHILIP: The recognition of what is... is different from faith as the word is used in so many instances I believe.

WIZARD: It's been corrupted.

PHILIP: It's been over burdened. And I wanted to ask you though, Katie, what do you see as the, if not the reason but, or maybe it's the same thing, the cause that so many people seem to want to cling so tenaciously to this separation?

KATIE DAVIS: Well we were taught that.

PHILIP: That's the conditioning.

KATIE DAVIS: It was our primary programming. As children we learned to point to our body and say "I." At that moment, as a little teeny tiny tot, we began to limit identity to a particular body; a body only. The body is a beautiful intelligence; it is the psychological sense of self that is surrendered. Who we are includes the body and infinitely more.

So that separation is programmed and with the luck of a lifetime, we begin investigating the Truth of that primary assumption. Is it true? This cannot be found in a book or from a teacher. They can be extraordinary pointers. This requires direct perception and

discrimination. Then, there is direct understanding. As John pointed out, we allow all to be as it is. That might be challenging for the ego state of consciousness. We were talking before about the “external” and allowing the life situation to be as it is. Is it possible to just allow all to be as it is within you? Ultimately there is no inside or outside, but we're speaking right now of inward looking, without judging it, without trying to stop it. Even if there is judging or trying to stop, you are just aware, while accepting and allowing. As I said before, the observing is the transforming.

TRIP: You were a teacher, and you write in your book, "I thought I was the finger pointing to the moon creation, in fact I was neither finger nor moon. In retrospect observing was the power." What does it say of our educational system that this reality is never discussed? And the follow up question is, and if this topic were discussed, would it be considered as secular discussion, or a religious one, do you think?

WIZARD: Good question.

KATIE DAVIS: Yes. I only know that in the high school where I taught, there was definitely a resistance to spirituality, within the educational community structure. However, if we spoke in terms of intelligence and inquiry, it might be successful, if there was community readiness. Right now the schools seem to focus on practical knowledge and that is important too. Yet what we are sharing here is also practical; it is self-understanding and observing. Also, once we realize who we are, what we see also changes.

Right now the collective consciousness is just in this upheaval. To go back a little bit, we were talking about suffering and being free of the individual, false sense of self. You asked whether there was suffering still appearing here. There is deeper suffering within you that is the collective state of ego consciousness that likewise can be investigated. The most amazing thing is when you get to the very root of it, it is a delusion.

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WIZARD: That's good.

KATIE DAVIS: When you see that there is no ignorance, there has only been inattention, what a moment this is! Right now, even though the world seems to be in such a precarious position, it is the awakening of the collective ego state of consciousness. If it is not seen within, you get the distorted mirror.

To go back to the schools question, that structure is born of the collective state of ego consciousness, just like churches, financial institutions and governments; all of these collective structures will transform or fall apart. Just like the individual ego falls apart, so do the collective structures. So it is really an amazing time. Nonetheless, it is always here and now.

WIZARD: It's got to come apart, before it comes together.

KATIE DAVIS: Yes, I suppose we could make an analogy of a flower that is just starting to break the surface of the ground in order to bloom. The seed opens, the stem grows until it breaks the earth and the flower blooms. Similarly, the seed of consciousness consciously blooms, dissolves all that was based on separation; insecurity, greed and pseudo-power.

WIZARD: Accepting.

KATIE DAVIS: Yes and aware.

PHILIP: That's what I think of is the seed essence, that the Beingness and you said something a minute ago about ignorance. Sometimes I think ignorance is simply ignoring the Truth, the Truth being your attention on the infinite moment. And this is what is not taught or referred to, or even whispered, about much in any kind of public dialogue like public schools, etc, and how far we might be away from that I don't know. And I agree that that's getting out on the future, but then the future is also part of the infinite present.

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It always comes back to holding the attention. I recently was given a gift of what I call my experience of the Lord's Prayer, and in one part of it it says, I say to myself, give us this day your holy breath that we may be aware of your divine presence, and know your love, and it goes on. John blessed me with a great Easter Satsang, I call it the thorn of death, I don't think he calls it that, but that's [Laughs]...

WIZARD: Yes, it's the thorn of death. Now what Katie is confessing is that that's removed.

KATIE DAVIS: That is beautiful. Words always point to this and it is very rich, nurturing and energetic.

PHILIP: I'm also in a way tickled, and maybe I don't know, I don't think it's a cynical way, but the whole idea of born again, because it seems to me that born again became very popular, but you must die and be born again. The dying part has never been very popular [Laughs].

WIZARD: That's that I thought.

PHILIP: That's that ego, that tenacious, implacable, ego that is like the gorgon that you cut off one head and two grow back. As long as you fight with you, you're feeding it.

WIZARD: Ramana Maharshi says you go to the root. The root is the I-thought and then investigate that.

PHILIP: Amen.

WIZARD: If you don't have the capacity to do that, then surrender and put the I-thought out of a job.

TRIP: So, Katie, it's time for my Jerry Springer question. You and Sundance have a kind of ideal relationship, you're both attractive, you're both articulate, you both have been successful in the business world, and you've got a nice family. You're so compatible

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and on such a shared understanding you were able to write your books side by side with each other, like your desks literally next to each other without killing each other, etc. It's the fantasy, and it's been my fantasy, of many a spiritual seeker to find a really attractive awakened mate to find the "awake joy" you write about, and to collaborate with this understanding as a shared kind of rudder. Is there anything about your relationship with Sundance that might be different from just the plain old good solid conventional relationship?

PHILIP: What is that? [Laughs]

KATIE DAVIS: Well I guess you could say that there is no relationship, because there is no separation. I have realized I am radiant love and this is a sense of fulfillment or completeness. And just as I would look in the bathroom mirror and see my own face, I look into Sundance's eyes. It's really quite graceful and flowing. But I need to go back to what you said about wanting to find a mate. Many people when they wake up, they already have their family and so this question frequently comes. They wish to share this. However, as you transform, the life situation transforms and it is a perfect mirror. So if you hear the ego judge the life situation, find it within you.

WIZARD: Mate-less.

KATIE DAVIS: In this field of nature, meaning this physical space where the body is appearing, do not be fooled by appearances. This only takes one. You are the One; we are the One. As I said earlier, as the body, we are vulnerable. Nonetheless, the body is born with all of these amazing inborn talents. They are freed from ego's conditioned limitation. One could say that Sundance and my living situation is very ordinary, but at the same time quite extraordinary. No one needs to push and pull to get somewhere. That was the ego's job. We are already fulfilled and no one needs completion. And then I guess we also come back to that word allowing again.

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TRIP: Thank you.

WIZARD: There's something so wholesome and pleasant about the ordinary and letting the ordinary... the ordinary, the magic, is still, and the ordinary is just so exquisite. As you say, it's extraordinarily ordinary to relax into that ordinary.

TRIP: You write, I'm moving along here trying to pack as much as we can into our hour.

PHILIP: It's the ego that always demands more than the ordinary, the ego demands extraordinary ordinary in the unhealthy sense.

WIZARD: It's stealing the show.

PHILIP: Yes.

TRIP: You write, "Your freedom is not even in healing the past, this concentration is a past fixation so you are not present for joy." Healer in some form or fashion is one of the most prevalent occupations in our local community of those who also describe themselves as spiritual. Scarcely a gathering goes by that I attend where there isn't some invocation to healing. What role does healing play in spirituality?

KATIE DAVIS: In the book when you read that passage, I do not remember the context of it, but I was referring to psychological therapy. Before the awakening, therapy is common and it certainly has its place. Yet, it deals with the story of "me," whereas awakening is waking up from the storyteller and its painful story, instead of fixing it. You can not fix something that is not. Through therapy, the ego may become relatively happier and that is beautiful. However, what you end up with is a better *false* self. On the other hand, therapy usually shifts attention from the life situation (story) back to the person; me and my thoughts, me and my emotions, me and my body. In this manner, it is a great preparation for the awakening. Free of the ego, we realize that we *are* happiness itself, not someone who is becoming happy. But the

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field of psychology is also transforming. I just had an interview this last week with a psychology group, who are also encountering awakening and their methods are transforming along with the manner they perceive.

As far as physical healing, the body goes through a transformation as well, some more than others. There are probably hundreds of helpful healing modalities for the body as well as the subtle body. Physical pain is demanding and a distraction from the deeper inquiry, so attention here is required; whereas, emotional pain fuels the fire of Truth. Self-realization is realizing who you are beyond *all* form. In the end, we see that nothing is excluded and that is integration. You have realized that there is no ego, so there is no suffering.

WIZARD: So maybe seeing the problem is the problem.

PHILIP: Bringing your attention to it, bring your attention to the problem, which I did recently, and it was like I followed this thread into a fisherman's knot, and then I realized it was a choice I had made to take that up and identify with it as me. And all I had to do was basically drop it, which leads me into another little rhyme of this story that John and I shared in this character, who is named Vancha, which in Sanskrit means desire. And sometimes he transforms into this other character called Eollil, which is a pretty dread beast, serpentine beast, and he's saying to the person who really wants to bring his attention to the Truth, he's saying, "Around an infinite spiral of stairs you must travel, and the way to get out you will never unravel, and to just hear my voice is to weaken your choice, and your reason is nothing but babble."

When you start bringing your attention and this is what I was kind of hearing, for me so much psychological so called healing is taking up all of these different threads that for me lead into a fisherman's knot, and there's no end to that stuff. Because as you say, it's illusory to begin with. It's really a question of bringing our attention onto who it is that we really are.

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WIZARD: Or what we are.

PHILIP: I'm trying to be close to what you're saying here, Katie.

TRIP: Katie, your book is full of beautiful quotes and poems, and I thought I'd let the Poet Laureate here who likes to speak poetry read one of the poems in your book by Deva Premal, and then I have a question for you following up on that. Do you want to read this? It's an example of some of the great stuff in your book.

PHILIP: "Where I'm bound nobody knows and I'm too far gone to take it easy, feel the grass beneath my feet as it grows, feel the wind in my hair as it blows. I got the courage to be wrong and the strength of a rose". A poem by Deva Premal.

KATIE DAVIS: Yes, the CD is entitled *Satsang* and the song is *The Strength of a Rose* by Deva Premal and Miten.

TRIP: So here's my follow up question, in our culture, and I know speculating on our culture is probably not to your liking very much, you're kind of a *Now* person, but in our culture we favor an unwavering quality in our leaders, restraint under provocation is perceived as weakness. Why is it, do you suppose, that qualities of true strength such as forbearance are belittled in the society as weakness?

KATIE DAVIS: Armor. It is armor.

PHILIP: Ego armor?

KATIE DAVIS: Yes. The harder one controls usually you can tell the more insecure they are. And to prevent the appearance of being weak or scared, they hide insecurity with the armor of anger. The more powerless they feel, the angrier they become. And why is it that way? Because that is the nature of ego.

If we were to look just at the emotions, anger is the most superficial emotion and it protects us perhaps from being sad. If

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you can break through the sadness, there is fear and particularly, the fear of death; just like going down the spiral staircase that Philip was describing earlier, until it collapses, you will find fear, all levels of fear, such as terror and fear of death. These suffering states are uncomfortable, but they do have an end. Awakening is exploring all of that, allowing that, finding out what it is, how it perpetuates and ultimately to be free of the delusion.

What is culture? Cult-ure is a cult. It is a collective mindset that controls and manipulates by demanding conformity and compliance, out of the fear of being judged and alienated. This mindset stifles self-expression and creativity, while discouraging uniqueness. The ego tries to emulate the right image, rather than being authentic. Based on fear, the ego is the great pretender.

WIZARD: That's the deeper attachment.

KATIE DAVIS: When we live in the United States, the ego assumes an American cultural identity. If we want to be good parents, the ego might assume the behaviors that society expects. Our roles are many and constantly changing. The only thing that *never* changes is the one that is *aware* of all of those roles.

TRIP: We've got about three minutes, Katie. Is there anything that you'd like to share that we haven't shared today, anything that's current for you that you'd like us know about?

KATIE DAVIS: I would like to thank you for today's invitation and let everyone know that we will be offering Satsang in Asheville, North Carolina with Cullen Anderson and Trey Carland in June.

WIZARD: Yes, they're good friends.

KATIE DAVIS: Then we are headed to Washington DC at Silver Spring, Maryland at OneCircle Center. Tanya Gerich is our host. Also, thank you for the invitation to the Onederful Retreat.

KATIE DAVIS: It will be wonderful to meet you directly, John.

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WIZARD: I do need to meet with you; it's just too rich to miss. So I feel the prompting to share the space with you there.

PHILIP: I've just got to say that I'm rarely on this show; I'm rarely on the radio. And when I came in my heart was really racing, and just hearing your voice just slowed me down and got me really centered, just the cadence of your voice, and can't call it your breathing because I couldn't hear you breathe, but a wonderful experience and thank you.

KATIE DAVIS: Thank you for sharing, Philip.

WIZARD: The peace comes across.

PHILIP: It does, it really does.

TRIP: Thank you, Katie, love you.

KATIE DAVIS: Bye.



[Lisa Cairns](http://www.lisacairns.com/)

<http://www.lisacairns.com/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Lisa Cairns, started seeking in her early 20s. She had her first awakening in 2005 after attending a talk given by Tony Parsons. After this, she spent some time in India with Remesh Balsekar. It was there that she met her final teacher, Roger Castillo, who was also a student of Remesh. She lived with him for three years in Australia during which time many falsehoods were seen through. In the beginning of 2011, Lisa's awakening stabilized and the seeker fell away. Lisa now enjoys communicating the nature of happiness to anyone desperate enough to know the Truth.

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Lisa, for years I've been playing around with trying to come up with a better alternative to that *how are you* thing that you say to everybody when you meet them, *how are you*. And I want to thank you, because you've given me a good alternative, my new one is, how is the happiness of isness prior to pain and pleasure treating you? In 2011 your awakening stabilized, so your sharing out here in the public domain is very fresh, are you enjoying it?

LISA CAIRNS: Yes, I am. At first I kept thinking that I would stop, I would just quit Facebook because it's hard to put this in words, it's really hard to put this into words, and then after a while I just gave up and anything that's said it's said. I don't really think about it anymore. But, yeah, it's only been about five months I've been sharing with the people.

TRIP: Well that's one of the nice things about the way you share is you're very natural, and you reach down and you pet your doggie.

LISA CAIRNS: And then speak in baby talk.

TRIP: You talk about the blood that's coming out of your foot after you step on the glass. You sit there underneath your little counter top, or whatever, crouched down there, share during lunchtime, you have a daytime job, right?

LISA CAIRNS: I did, but I stopped about two months ago.

TRIP: Great.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. I really enjoyed it actually, I was working in a vegan café cooking, and the people I was working with were very sweet people. But I decided to leave Australia, and so obviously had to stop my job as well.

WIZARD: So where are you now?

LISA CAIRNS: I'm still in Australia, but I moved from where I was living, I was living up in the hills, in the forest, and now I'm

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house-sitting for the last two months at different friends' houses in the city.

WIZARD: Good job.

LISA CAIRNS: But I leave for good next week. So after four years of living here, I leave finally, well not finally, I love it here but it's time to go.

TRIP: I want to give our listeners who aren't familiar with you a taste of your beautiful sharing; I want to read what I transcribed from one of your videos on your website. You say, "So this is absolute freefall, this isn't about a conceptual way of living, about there being an I or not being an I, about a doer or no doer, about investigating the self, or being with the pain, or not being with the pain, healing or not healing, different teachers, what teachers say, different concepts. This is about none of them, about holding to none of them; it's just about this, just this, absolutely freefall; the absolute unknown of this. There's no right way or wrong way, no correct teachings, no incorrect teachings, just this. How many times can I say, just this?' Just this, just this, just this! Can the momentousness of just this be shared with someone who does not already register its momentousness, Lisa?

LISA CAIRNS: Wow. From my experience, and I used to listen to Tony Parsons, and when I started out spiritually seeking I started out in Buddhism, and the first bit of Sutra I ever heard was the Heart Sutra, I don't know if you're familiar with the Heart Sutra. And it's very Advaitic, it's all about formlessness. And even though I had no intellectual understanding of it, I didn't know what they were talking about, the same with Tony Parsons when I first met him, the heart sung at this, the heart was so attracted and explosive when it heard these people talking about just this, or my interpretation of just this. And that's what happened here. So whether people can hear it, maybe intellectually it's not being heard, maybe they do not intellectually understand what's being said, but I think the heart responds to it. I mean, not always, but if I were to say, just this, to my parents, or to my friends, I don't

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think their heart would start singing, but when the heart or when it's ready this is heard, or when it's time, or when that's the story, it's heard.

TRIP: So when in your life, as you and your boyfriend are moving around and having fun, and hanging out with your friends, do you bring this topic up, or is it something that you pretty much share through your videos on your website?

LISA CAIRNS: Pretty much just with people that are interested in it. Occasionally my friends or family might ask about it, but normally I direct the conversation away from it, unless they're really interested in asking a question. But I normally sense that there's not really that much interest in it, it's just a vague conversation just going on. But I love talking about it with people that are really interested in it, but not with people that it's just idle chitchat.

WIZARD: So in the Heart Sutra, is there a portion in that that readily speaks to you that you can share with our listeners?

LISA CAIRNS: I can't really remember it, I used to chant it every day when I was a practicing Buddhist, and it's funny, I tried to think of it the other day when I was quoting at someone. But if I put it into my own words, the bit that I loved particularly was something like, "Emptiness is form, form is emptiness" and then it describes each sense, and the emptiness of each sense, and then it describes the fullness of each sense like sight, hearing, feeling, thoughts. And it's just beautiful; it's a really beautiful sutra. I should put it in my notes on my website or something.

WIZARD: Yes. A similar one that I like a lot is Ribhu Gita, and this is the jewel of Advaita from which Ramana Maharshi drew the teaching, Self Inquiry.

TRIP: Well there's a stark contrast in the way sharing happens in the Ribhu Gita, and I'm boned up on it, because the Wizard here [Laughs] asked me to bone up on the Ribhu Gita in preparation for

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a guest that we're anticipating in March. And so while I was preparing for you, I was reading about the Ribhu Gita. And I wanted to read just a short section of that because it contrasted so starkly with what you shared about this, just this, right. It says, "Siva must be meditated upon and realized to be the self by making the restless mind stay still and alert after it has been adequately restrained, and completely prevented from the pursuit of sense objects, namely the shadow pictures on the screen of the self. All shadow pictures removed; what remains is pure awareness, the spotlessly effulgent screen". Now this seems on the surface like a stark contradiction with a easy accessibility of the Self that you speak to as just this, but there is no contradiction in these views, is there?

LISA CAIRNS: No.

TRIP: Can you explain?

LISA CAIRNS: Contradiction in me, you said?

TRIP: There's no contradiction there, why is that?

LISA CAIRNS: From my understanding of what you just said, and intellectually I'm not that great any more, my intellect doesn't seem to work so well. Is that it was saying that you see through the shadow of self, is that correct? It was saying?

TRIP: You see through the shadows, yes.

LISA CAIRNS: Of self?

TRIP: Of the material realm, yes, and the sense of objects.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes and there's just pure awareness left. I don't see that in contradiction of *just this* at all.

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TRIP: The contradiction part that I saw, yeah, is not that part, but it's the part of relentlessly forcing the mind to stay still, restraining the mind. You don't see the struggle here, do you, the restraint?

LISA CAIRNS: Well what happened here was five years of sitting in meditation when I was a practicing Buddhist, I used to go on very long retreats and used to restrain my mind. But the way that it's seen here is that there's never anybody doing anything, so even in the appearance of somebody restraining their mind, that too is just what's happening. And it might come from prescriptions, or from apparent prescription, it's never prescription though, it's always description. So it might come from somebody saying to you, you've got to restrain your mind and focus in the moment, or see the delusion of the mind. But that's never somebody doing it, it's never a teacher telling a student, it's just simply what's happening. And so then the student might meditate for five years, and then after the meditation there might appear to be less suffering, or less identification. It's never really because of the meditation or the teacher, it's because that's what was written. When I say never really, it never was because of that dynamic going on. It's always just because that's how the story is meant to go.

So I don't see it as a contradiction because whatever is happening is exactly what's meant to happen. When suffering stops they will see that all suffering was seeking, or other teachers might call it identification with self, or the illusion of self, or living through the intellect for the second, whatever you call it. I tend to call it suffering is seeking. And when seeking falls away, you see that the suffering was always the seeking energy.

WIZARD: Yes.

LISA CAIRNS: And it might appear to be in the story that you had to go through this whole massive process, and this whole journey, and this whole story of liberation, but then when everything falls away it seemed that life doesn't work in that way, there's never separation, there never is cause and effect. There never is the

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teacher and the student; it just appears that way in the story. Then in liberation, or when seeking falls away, it's seen that there never is time and space, there never is the story that only is just this. But that's the big story of liberation, like it is a story, the story of liberation, and it's a beautiful story, it's a divine story. But it appears in the story of liberation that you're putting effort into staying in the present moment, or your understanding of karma, or it appears that a doer is doing something. And then in liberation you see through that doer, you see through the effort of seeking, and all you're left with is just this. And you're not even left with non-doership, or doership, you're left with nothing, you're just left with this. I teach non-doership, but I don't live in non-doership, I live with nothing, just this. Does that answer it?

WIZARD: That's beautiful.

TRIP: All right. I've got a challenging question for you, it's a personal thing, this is one of the great things about having my own radio show, is I get to get my own questions answered. Now you say people are caught in a loop of seeking; they want the house, or the lover, the money. And so someone very close to me is seeking simply health, their simple health, their body and their mind are in rebellion, they've got brain fog, they can't think, they don't sleep well, the body is often in pain. It's impossible for this person that I love to conceive that health won't bring her happiness, and for someone like me to suggest otherwise is from her perspective an unrealistic and uncompassionate position. What is your perspective on somebody's desire for something like simple health like everyone else has that they perceive would bring a degree of happiness. And on the surface it does seem that they would be the correct assessment?

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. So it's a great opportunity when something that intense is happening to see through this trick, because your friend is obviously, at the moment, going in and out of a lot of suffering. And so what I've done in the past, I've been through a process with my friend who was actually then dying, the dying process, was pointing out that they're not always unhappy. So at

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this moment maybe it's been in the last year they've been ill, or last six months, or maybe the last 10 years, but in those 10 years there are points where the suffering gets really intense, and then less intense. And they're most probably associating it with things happening in the flow of life, things happening out there, like their health getting better, or a situation changing, or something like this. But if you begin to point it out to them that it's actually not correlating with this, there's times when they're really sick or haven't slept but there is happiness there, there is a sense of feeling relief from the suffering. Then there are other times when they're deep in suffering, and it seems that they don't match up, that your happiness isn't always matching up to external situations. So they can be really ill in bed, and then they see that there's a relief, there's actually happiness there, which I call the falling away of the self, the more the self falls away, the more you feel happy. And I don't mean your static high of happiness of getting pleasures; I just mean a general sense of happiness, of beauty, of love. And we go in and out, as we go more in suffering, beauty, love, and happiness isn't there. As we come out of suffering, there's more beauty love, openness, space, happiness, whatever you call it. And it's pointing out to them that although they're ill, and there's lack of sleep, and a lot of discomfort at the moment, they're not always deeply immersed in suffering. It's not always dark, dark, dark, there's different states happening. As they begin to see that what's happening to them in the flow of life isn't relating to their happiness, and they're unhappiness, they begin to see that the illness isn't what's creating the unhappiness. Does that make sense?

TRIP: Yes, I see that.

WIZARD: I can attest to that because a lot of times when I see the friend you're speaking of, she's very happy, she's dancing, she's light as a feather, without any weight of the world on her, and most beautiful.

LISA CAIRNS: And mind likes to, not likes to, but the mind remembers suffering, because suffering is dramatic, it tends to

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remember suffering, and it doesn't tend to remember happiness because happiness is our natural state, and it's not memorable, it's not like a big experience, it's natural, it's beautiful, it's flowing. And the mind, the ego, tends to remember dramatic experiences, so really high pleasures and suffering. So when she's looking back through those suffering eyes, all she's remembering is the suffering, and she thinks that everything is suffering, or everything is not going well for her at the moment, and there wasn't the potentiality of happiness. So you need to capture when she's feeling happy and point it out to her when there's lightness about her.

TRIP: All right, I'll do it.

WIZARD: That's good.

TRIP: Now one of the elegant ways you share, and I love your analogy, is you speak of people as mechanisms. And you suggest that tendencies simply arise and then in one of your videos you talked about even a murderer is not an evildoer but they're a mechanism with a tendency arising. Can you share this teaching?

LISA CAIRNS: So I remember the first time I had this pointed out to me, I was listening, I'd just met Wayne Lickerman in London. And I used to be very attached to good and bad, and one of the reasons I got into Buddhism was very much attracted to their compassion side, and doing good, and I suppose this fight against bad, like I wanted to push away badness or only lean towards good. And when I first met Wayne I really challenged him on this, and one thing he said to me, and it really struck me, was he said, "Who wants to be the murderer? Who would want to choose to be the murderer, or the pedophile? Nobody would want that role, if there is somebody that chooses if there is somebody that does, why would you choose that? It's just that the urge is so overwhelming to do those actions, the urge that comes up, that that's what has to be done". And it's the same, if we look at it like with other tendencies, like a lot of people have, in particular a lot of women, they're slightly out of control with food, or there's

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bingeing around food, or dieting around food, when the thought comes up, I want a chocolate bar, or I want some food, like the urge is so strong it's almost impossible to stop it. Sometimes I suppose it can be... that's maybe not such a good analogy because I can hear people saying, no, sometimes I can stop it, sometimes I can't.

But if you look at the human, they're always in every moment just responding to these urges coming up, the urges that are written. And if you go back to where does this urge come from, can I control where this urge come from? Then another thought says, yes, I can control this urge. But then what is it that's controlling that next urge, where is it coming from? Who is at the root of all these urges that are coming up?

So with the murderer and the pedophile, and somebody that's doing bad actions, they're just doing what is written in them, what they're programmed to do, what is coming up. And then somebody will say that they could stop themselves, but who is it that could stop themselves, another thought, another idea? Only if it's written would that idea come up to stop that next idea. It's just like when you see that your thoughts are coming from nowhere, your thoughts aren't controlled by an entity that's called Lisa, or Trip, or whoever, then you see that these thoughts that are coming, these urges that are coming, are so incredible impersonal, there's nobody there at the root of them saying, I can control this, I can do good actions, or bad actions, that thought is coming from no place, that thought is coming from an empty space. It's just what is written. And it feels like because we are written, we're these amazing programs which are written with a sense of doership, with a sense of free will. It isn't free will, but it feels like free will, it feels like when you go to the fridge, you can choose orange juice or apple juice, but that's not the Truth, because where does that choice come from? If you follow it back, it comes from nowhere, there's nobody in there choosing. And then there's another thought underneath saying, yes, I'm the chooser here, where did that chooser come from; it's an endless like line. And here, in *Now*, still there's I suppose the appearance of free will, it's

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still the thought comes up, I'm going to go and get a cup of tea, or I'm going to go and take a swim, or I'm going to go and have a bath, or whatever the thought is that comes up, or the urge that comes up. But the difference is *Now* is that I don't believe it's my free will, I don't believe I am creating this free will, it's just something that's arising, the appearance of free will, the appearance of choice. And it appears that way, but it never is somebody's choice, it never is somebody's free will. It's an arising in this beautiful dance, which gives the impression that there's two, but there's never two.

WIZARD: So this will then doesn't suffer the dilemma of apparent choice, it just is this.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. And there's no attachment to the outcome because you don't see that choice as who you are. In the past you think I am choosing apple juice, therefore it's my choice and I suffer the consequences if it's not a good apple juice or if I don't enjoy it. There's nobody there claiming that action, it's so impersonal.

Go back to the murderer subject, because really I enjoy this subject, to go back to the impersonality of the murderer. Because when it begins to be seen that you're not the doer, that you then or that you're not a separate entity, it's then seen that the other isn't. So first of all it has to always be seen here in this body, mind, mechanism, before the others will be seen. So if you see yourself as a separate entity doing and creating life, you'll see the other doing and creating life. And one thing that happened here with the whole murderer thing was that I began to have a series of dreams, and this is just going into the story, this doesn't have to be the way for everyone. But I often say that what happens is that you learn all this stuff intellectually, and then it normally manifests experientially in your life. So you learn that you're not the doer, or there is no self, and then you begin to see that experientially, like you begin to see that happiness isn't in the flow of life, it doesn't always have to be the case, but this is what happened here. And I began to dream at night, very real dreams,

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that I was a murderer, that the character, not Lisa, but it was like I experienced being the murderer, and I could see how it was impossible not to murder. That was written in me the urge to murder, and I could see the impossibility of not doing that, and the urge was so strong, and it was seeing all the different dynamics of why and how the murderer was programmed, the guilt, and the absolute victimhood of the murderer. Like to murder you feel absolutely victim to life, victim to circumstance. And it was like a really beautiful experience seeing that, seeing that it's not somebody doing it, it's completely impersonal.

WIZARD: Now I feel better, I feel better about that piece of cheesecake I ate at midnight. [Laughing]

TRIP: Well seeing through that illusion of the personal has been quite useful to your friends, a guy named Mike Lowing, said that you guys Skyped a couple of times, and he could see what was holding him back from complete freedom. And it turned everything around for him, and he's very grateful to you for this. I could read what you wrote him, maybe I will, since he took the trouble to write it. He said, "The whole mind falls to bits, there's nothing to hold onto, that's not to say that all the teachings that you had in the past weren't perfect, there couldn't have been any other way". That was how Mike's story had to go. "But now the whole construct of mind falls apart, nothing makes sense because it is now beginning to be seen as just *is*, rather than somebody doing something, whether that be God, or another human. Life is just happening without anybody doing anything. And this baffles the mind, cause and effect are just apparent, really there is only ever been and only ever will be this, and all the teachings become a bit senseless, but still the heart sings with them. Nothing is left to hold onto, complete free-falling love. Although that is just a thought, it can't be held onto, just this, which contains all of this".

WIZARD: Beautiful.

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TRIP: Very nice. Okay, I've got another tough one for you, darling [Laughs]. Another personal tougher for you. All right. You were a vegan, and you were an activist.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes.

TRIP: You were angry too, I guess, right?

LISA CAIRNS: Yes.

TRIP: And I'll probably lose some potential girlfriends here, but I haven't met, I've yet to meet a female vegan activist that wasn't a little bit angry. Now I married one, and then I bore children with another, okay. Now I pinned the mother to the kids down on her anger and I suggested that it wasn't helping her bring people like myself into the fold, into the cause of caring for animals when the whole scene was being put out there in anger. And her response was this, she said, "As long as I live in a world where my friends are killed and tortured, my anger is an appropriate response". What do you have to say about that?

LISA CAIRNS: Well as long as her anger is there, as long as that dynamic is there that she believes that her friends are being killed and tortured, there's going to be great suffering. And I know this from personal experience, this is the way it went in my story was from a very young age I become a vegetarian when I was eight years old. And I actually remember the dynamic of what happened, was I began to see suffering out in the world. I actually (this is going to sound a bit funny), but I think that often with kids the ego starts like maybe about one or two, but I think it didn't start 'til a bit later with me, I was a bit of a slow developer, I know that sounds funny. But when I was about eight I began to recognize suffering, I began to recognize myself, like the ego began to really grow, and I began to perceive myself as separate from the world. And I remember this happening and others as doing something. And I remembered when that dynamic began to grow, and I could see suffering, I then began to get the thoughts that I needed to protect others from suffering. And I remember that

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whole thought process happening, and becoming a vegetarian and deciding that I didn't want to hurt animals, and I soon became vegan after that when I was maybe 10. And I'm still a vegetarian, I don't have any intellectual reason for it, I've been a vegetarian since I was eight, and it's most probably habit, or just what you're used to, or it's just what's written, whatever answer you want to give depending on which level you're talking from.

But it was great cause of suffering, and great rage developed in this story from having that perspective, that other people were hurting animals, other people were hurting other people. And really what was happening was suffering was growing in Lisa's story, and I was projecting it, and it was being projected out into the world. I was looking round at the world, and trying to stop the suffering out in the world. And really it was this, the character, the Lisa, was greatly suffering, an immense rage. That was another thing about the whole murderer, was one of the things that seemed to happen here in the waking up process was so much rage, uncontrollable rage to the point where my teacher at points had to pin me down because there was so much rage coming out, not just because of hurting other people, but hurting myself. Like rage, unbelievable rage. And when that was experienced here, that rage coming out, it was another thing that let go of judging other people's rage, it was like it was so extreme, that rage could have killed, that rage was just huge. It was a murderous rage.

WIZARD: So do you think the root of this is the "I am the body notion" itself?

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. It starts with I am the body, and then it develops from that. And as soon as you identify as I am the body, you've become a victim to life, and that's where most people I believe have this rage in them. Because as soon as you become the victim, this rage grows, and it's often covered in different ways, the ego defends it in different ways, but this rage of life happening to you, things happening that you don't want to happen, life not going your way, people not doing what you want, you having to behave in a certain way.

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And in most stories, this isn't all of the case, but I think in most stories there's this immense well of rage, and we spend a whole lifetime to put a lid on it, and cover it up. Somebody wrote to me recently and said something along the lines of I'm scared of just doing in the moment whatever I feel like doing in case I let Jack the Ripper out. And I laughed at that but I understood what he meant, but it's not like whether a Jack the Ripper is let out or not is not down to him, like it's not down to him letting life happen, or him letting Jack the Ripper out, it's just something that might come out in the process of awakening. But I do think that the ego contains so much anger, so much anger, because it's seeing itself as a victim, and the victim is the murderer, the victim is the pedophile. Only when the victim sees itself being hurt, and sees itself as the body and being hurt by life, can the story develop as the killer and the pedophile.

WIZARD: So with the insight of the acceptance of choicelessness, then every action being perfect and you see that in others in that total acceptance, releases you from the *I am the body* notion and helps establish one in their freefalling.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. And here what seemed to happen in this story was I couldn't accept my rage because I was so caught up in being a good person, and doing the good thing, and saving animals in this story. It was like I had to let Roger, who was my teacher see the rage, and for him to accept it, and then seeing that, that was a beautiful thing. Seeing him accept it, anything that came up begun to be accepted here, because he never once judged any of that rage that came up here, and it was extreme. Once I smashed all the plates in the house [Laughter], I picked them up and I was like, right, I think it was, if this is all predestined, or I was reacting to some teaching I think, I just smashed all the plates, now take this God.

WIZARD: And there was unconditional love there.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes, and Roger just smiled and said, "Sometime you're a bit extreme, Lisa". [Laughter]

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TRIP: You would have been a very attractive little black widow back then. I'm going to go to something a little less profound here, and just comment, an observation. We've had a number of younger sages on our avant-garde program here, we've had Jeff Foster, and a guy named Benjamin Smythe. We had a woman, Elona Ciunate recently, and Bentinho, and we had also Bentinho's friend, Karen. Karen Richards, and all of you have the same fresh just this, just this approach to sharing. And all of you are using video, and young people are used to trusting their eyes I've noticed, and they're on like different types of screens all day long, they really like video. And you're using video to a great extent, it's almost entirely what you're doing, or maybe not, I shouldn't say that, but at least as far as your website goes.

WIZARD: That's how I came upon Lisa was through YouTube.

TRIP: And what I like about video, and I'd like you to ultimately comment here on video, but on one level there's no hiding there. I mean, you're just like right there and it's very intimate. There's no hiding, every moment is recorded, it's very fresh and spontaneous, and obviously it's a good tool. Not long ago this tool didn't exist; people organized their lives around spending time with an established teacher. But now someone can easily partake of just this tool as opposed to others. If it's as simple as *just this*, as you justifiably assert over and over again, do you think video is a sufficient tool for someone to become established? Is it a sufficient medium? Is it like replacing time with an established person, an established teacher?

LISA CAIRNS: Well, there are a few different elements to that. The first one is that because of what I described before about life is always perfectly doing its dance, and there is no cause and effect. Life takes each supposed or apparent individual to what their meant to be looking at, viewing, reading, at exactly the right time, and does its dance perfectly. So I don't see there is a way, like there is just what somebody's doing, and whether that leads to liberation or not is just down to what is written, or the destiny, or whatever you call it, of that person. I don't see a way.

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WIZARD: So everything is a part of the way?

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. So whatever that person comes in contact with is exactly what they're meant to be doing at that time. Because if I were to say that there is a way, this is just from this perspective, or there is better than another, than it's like you're saying, there is separation and there is somebody that can create something and do something apart from God or wholeness, where it is only God and wholeness playing its dance of separation.

WIZARD: And distance is dead, it's not real.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes.

TRIP: All right, I hope you won't take this as an insult, [Laughs] but the static in the background of your videos, is like the best part of your sharing. Because you set up this spaciousness with your sharing, you have a style where you'll say a few words and then you're very comfortable just hanging loose there for a good full five, 10, 15 seconds, silence on a video. And while you're being quiet you can hear the little bird chirping in the background, the car horn beeps a little bit, or whatever. And you're able to convey in that spaciousness of sharing that you give with at the... you must have a good speaker on your video, you're able to convey the happeningness of life, the flow, just little sounds and stuff. And then you'll come back and you'll go on something else, so you have a fresh approach, it's delightful.

WIZARD: I'm just getting on Skype right now, and I've used chat, I chat with a lot of people in India in the middle of the night. And the Satsang is precious, and there's no distance, we're there together, absolutely together.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. And I love silence, and I don't necessarily mean like silence as in not talking, but I like talking to people live because there is something so intimate and beautiful in just being, just being with someone and it's not about words as such, or what I'm saying. I'm not really an intellect, like some of the teachers,

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Rupert Spira, they intellectually portray this subject so beautifully and precisely, and I wouldn't say that's what happens here. I love silence, I love sitting with someone in silence. And I love falling into silence with someone so you're chatting, chatting, chatting, and then suddenly everything just falls away and just looking, and it's just divine. It's something I particularly enjoy. And, yes, I would say that if I was going to say anything about my teachings, or anything that I speak about, is it's all about the silence.

WIZARD: That's what a sage that has been an affirmation for me, Ramana Maharshi, he said that silence was the most powerful language.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes, it's beautiful.

TRIP: So many things.

WIZARD: I like it too. I don't mind some silence on the air [Laughs], some folks, go oh! we've got dead airtime!

TRIP: One of the things you shared on your video that I thought was really useful that I wanted to just mention and have you comment on is this urge that seems to come up in people with intellects. I won't say mine is all that sharp, but there is the urge to keep everything straight as far as these teachings go.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes.

TRIP: I don't know, there's this intellectual need, there's a utility there I think for a while to keep these concepts into like excellent form, to keep them orderly but eventually it becomes an impediment. And you spoke about that urge, that need to keep things straight; it's almost like we feel like we have to do this penance of totally learning and understanding these concepts but you would say, of course not, right?

WIZARD: [Train horn sound] That's the Norfolk Southern Train.

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TRIP: What do you think about that, that need that many of us have to understand the Truth, and to be able to regurgitate it at a party if we have to.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. I think that in the story, or in the story of liberation, it often starts out as intellectual understanding. Roger and Remesh used to say that it starts in intellectual understanding and works down to the heart. And if I look back on my story, I intellectually understood this, and then experientially it showed me in life. Like in my life I began to, yes, experience happiness as who I was, and not in the flow of life. I can see that actually happen. So I think that often it starts with intellectually understanding it, but what the mind gets stuck on is this isn't about intellectually understanding, it's not about living through the intellect, or living through an intellectual understanding of it. I wouldn't say that I'm the most, or I know other people as well that don't suffer any more, have woken up, or whatever you call it, are really intellectually clear. I know people that suffer still are maybe more intellectually clear. So it's not about intellectually understanding this subject, it's about the one that thinks they understand it or needs to understand it, or the concepts that have been put in place in that supposedly separate self of falling away. So Ramana Maharshi would say, and I know Roger and Remesh would say this too, is that you use one concept to remove another concept, and then you throw both concepts out. So it's actually like a lot of teachings use the concepts just to remove the other concept.

WIZARD: Well said.

LISA CAIRNS: I see it on Facebook a lot, so much. Like I'm not a writer, I don't feel the urge to write about this, but there's so much intellectual arguing about this through writing. Not that I think that's a bad thing, because this is often how it starts. I'm not judging and saying it's bad, it's just how it often starts. But it's not the answer, the intellect at all. It's actually the shift from living in the intellect and living in the idea of self, to that falling away, to

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that no longer being present. Not that thinking doesn't still happen.

WIZARD: Yes, sentience is that what in the East is called Siva, and it's formless and it's the substratum, as Ramana Maharshi would say, being comfortable in no thought. And thoughts may come and thoughts may go, but what the sentience of being is no longer the thought, the thought process, but rather something much deeper and all encompassing that it allows the bifurcating mind to go about its business doing whatever it wants to do without interfering with it.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes. And not seeing that as who you are, the thoughts as who you are, it's just something that's arising in you like the heart beating, it's not you, it's not Truth, it's just what they are, thoughts.

WIZARD: Just thoughts.

LISA CAIRNS: Just thoughts.

TRIP: So we're not intellectuals here, and so we're on board with you, we don't have...

WIZARD: Not by a long shot.

TRIP: We don't have the tools [Laughs]. We're lacking CPU crunching power over here. But I'm curious, are there any requirements, habits, or characteristics that aid in the simple looking that you invite others to engage in? For example, Faith or honesty, or anything like that that plays a role in the looking at the *just isness* of life. Is there anything we need to trust? Or is it all just so utterly simple and self-evident that you can just throw anything out the window. Is there any habit, anything? Honesty?

LISA CAIRNS: Well, it's not that there are any habits or anything that needs to be in place for this to happen. But just from my experience of watching others, something that does tend to

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happen is, it's not trust as such, you're not trusting life, but there's such a strong concept that life is going wrong, and life isn't going to go your way if you don't control it. And something that I do notice in a lot of people around me that I'm talking to it there's a change from that thinking life's going to go wrong, to like it's not that they're trusting in life, it's just they've not got that dynamic of life is bad, life is against me, it's beginning to be seen that they're in the stream. Buddhists call it stream entrance, like when you have your first awakening, or this is your being begins to sing to these teachings, you enter the stream, and then once you're in the stream, there's no way out of the stream, you just down flow.

I actually think that that's what everyone's life story is, is that they're waking up, that's what the whole of life is... is the story of liberation. But I'm just talking about the dynamic of when you first see that there's nobody here, or you have that awakening experience. And so I'm beginning to see that that dynamic of knowing that all of this, or, it's not trusting, it's the removal of the idea that life is going the wrong way, that you're going to the wrong teachers, or that you've got to listen to this teacher to get liberated. It seeing that life is doing its perfect dance, its perfect liberation story.

WIZARD: Yes.

And I'm noticing that more and more with a lot more people I speak to that this comes up again, and again. Like I speak to a lot of people from *A Course in Miracles*, and it's very predominant in those teachings, and in Advaita.

WIZARD: It's that acceptance or Faith that trumps the knowledge and intellectual thing, just the acceptance.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes.

TRIP: The Wizard over here is a wizard because he's able to perceive the miracles that are already happening all around us. And you're a wizard too, I can smell that on you. And you perceive

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ordinary humanity as an utter miracle. And I was touched by your sharing around the miracle of just simple humanness; can you light a fire with that? You talk about all these things that are miraculously human, the ability to grasp time, for example, and things like that.

LISA CAIRNS: My friend like six or eight months ago told me this most beautiful quote, and I said in quite a few videos, he said that most people spend their whole life waiting for a miracle, but what they fail to realize or don't see that life is the miracle.

WIZARD: Is the miracle, yes.

LISA CAIRNS: *Just this* is just the miracle. All of it is just amazing, the fact that we as humans, the story of humans to be able to perceive time when it's really never happening. But we can remember growing up, we can remember playing as these children, we can perceive people changing, difference, and it's never really happening, but we can perceive this apparent separation and play in this world of two. And yet, when the seeker falls away, when the separation falls away, it's seen that nobody's ever suffering, nothing's ever going wrong, there is no murderer or pedophile, or it was all just a dream, and this is divine that all of this is allowed to appear for no reason. But I say this completely remembering and understanding that when you're in that suffering dynamic this world can seem like hell, I say this with compassion. And feel like I really understand that suffering dynamic of seeing yourself as a separate entity who is victim to live, who is victim is it all. But when that falls away...

One thing that happened to me after I had this awakening experience in the beginning of last year, I was walking down the street and it was only half an hour after there'd been a big shift, and there was this dog dying on the side of the road. And before as I explained to you, this would have been agony for me as a kid, the way that I dealt with seeing suffering wanted to save everything around me. And so I was walking along and I saw this dog dying, and it was crying, and its ribs were all sticking out, and

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stuff was coming out of the mouth, it was in a really bad way. And I could see so clearly how it was being kissed by God, like everything was stroking it and accepting it, it was the most divine act that it was living and dying in this. It was absolutely kissed and supported by life, life was absolutely loving it as it was. And that sounds so hard to convey intellectually.

WIZARD: Muktananda, there was a title of his biography, Chitshakti Villas which means *The Play of Consciousness*, and it is a play and it's a delightful and beautiful play. And more so when it is embraced just through sentience, the substratum, that the play can be allowed to just unfold perfectly. When we get caught in the play and think we're one of the characters and not the screen, that brings the apparent suffering.

LISA CAIRNS: Yes.

TRIP: Lisa, you're delightful, fresh.

WIZARD: Amen.

TRIP: And well deserving of any attention that may go your way. You're a wonderful sharer of Truth, and poetic, and lovely, and thank you so much for joining us today.

LISA CAIRNS: Thank you both so much. I listened to some of your shows beforehand, and just really enjoy the way you guys interview, and your voices, you've got really nice voices both of you.

WIZARD: Ah, thank you.

TRIP: All right. Be well, Lisa. Thank you.

LISA CAIRNS: And you, bye.



[Maren Springsteen](http://www.pureseeing.com)

<http://www.pureseeing.com>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Maren Springsteen, spent several years in the travel business including a joyous 13-year stint with British Airways. While her career was ended by health problems, a door was opened for the publication of her first book, *Spun Gold ~ Poetic Reflections of Pure Luminosity*. Maren is now working on a second book of poetry, and offers timeless wisdom

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through her website, www.pureseeing.com , as well as her blog. Thanks for joining us today, Maren, appreciate it.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Thank you very much, dear Trip, and dear John, I really appreciate being on your show. I love your show, and I love what it offers, and many times the silence in between the words is just so, so palpable, and it's very strong, it's very powerful, in the sense there's only one power and it's no power, and it's very spacious and clear. And I'm honored to be on here. Thank you.

TRIP: Thank you, how nice. How are you feeling these days, you went through a health crisis back in November, did you not?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I did, and I'm actually still going through it. I just had two surgeries in the last few weeks, and I'm awaiting a third one. And it's not been easy in human terms at all. I have a chronic condition since a number of years where all swallowing and sleeping stopped in winter of 2007, and I wasn't sure at first whether it was ALS or Parkinson's, and in the end it was diagnosed as a rare genetic defect, and I nearly passed, but I'm very, very grateful for having survived, and just dealing with the everyday challenges. But I needed a feeding tube to put water in since two years, and I needed a replacement surgery now.

Daily life has become quite a challenge, let's say, because every day about two hours after putting hydration in I cannot speak, because otherwise I aspirate, so I can't open the door, or take telephone calls, or just go about normal business. I just mention this very briefly, because I find that there is quite a considerable glass ceiling around illness in spiritual circles, like, you must have brought it upon by your own thoughts, or well meaning people who've read one book like *The Secret*, you must have manifested this or whatever, and it's just not helpful. Some of the most enlightened people I've met, and I'm certainly not one of them, but I'm a totally normal person, but some of the most really, really awake people I've met, spirits, have dealt with the dark night of their souls themselves, or with illness or something like that. I've

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had great encouragement among other authors when I published my book, in honestly mentioning this in my forward in just one sentence, the rest of the book is a pure celebration of life.

But I thought, I didn't want anybody who struggles with anything, it's a human condition, it's separation, or the thought of separation, and inattention to Truth, and to what really is beneath, and all around us and imminent really. I didn't want anybody to give up, or to hide their light just because they're suffering from something, or because they're going through some trials or tribulations. I wanted to encourage them to come out and share their gifts, and inspire others, and never ever give up. Yes.

WIZARD: Yes, it reinforces the *I am not the body* notion.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: That's true, that's true.

TRIP: When you were younger you had almost died also, is that not true?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: No, it started about in 2007, that was that, and it led up to now, and I'm very hopeful that it will be completely resolved, because I had a near death experience. And during that I was actually ready to pass on, because I already had meditated for almost all my life, and had experiences like you all had, like knowing is that what we see, what we perceive with the five senses is not ultimately real, and to a certain degree, or up to a certain point of time, it always attests the separation, until that inner sense kicks in. And until then, from that point on I would say that the senses then report back what is real and can be a positive reinforcement of what is real, and as a testimonial of that. And when I was given the choice to pass on, or not, I was ready, but I basically told the divine, or however one wants to call it, I just said I either would like to pass on, or I would like to heal completely. And to my surprise and delight I survived, and I'm expecting to heal completely from this. I have no doubt about it, not in my mind, absolutely none. So I'm very, very grateful.

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TRIP: Well there is another aspect to your ordeal, which was that you took an inner vow that you spoke about. And I wanted to just contrast your inner vow with a less evolved vow that I took once when I was in college, just so people can know what a beautiful person you are in the midst of that crisis. Not to go on my person thing, but when I was in college my girlfriend thought that she had gotten pregnant, and she missed a few cycles, and it was very disconcerting to her, and to me. So I said to God, I said, "God, if you will get me through the thing and not make my girlfriend pregnant, I promise I will get to know you and I will read the bible", that was my vow.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: That is stunningly beautiful; I really, really appreciate hearing that, thank you for sharing.

TRIP: Well I just want to say though, I did not end up reading the bible, but I did ultimately get to know God and I threw my entire heart into that. But I wanted to say that when you were in the midst of dying, okay, you made an inner vow, but there was no, if you save me Gold, pledge in there, you just wanted to be able to share the beautiful Truth of who we are with others, isn't that correct?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Not quite actually, Trip. I think your vow is much more powerful than mine was to be honest, really, really hats off to you. Because I honestly have to say that my vow was nothing special, and it didn't come by volition, it came to my total surprise, completely unasked for, by itself. I resisted having this tube in my belly for the longest time, because I wanted to lead a totally normal life, and didn't want to face up to the fact that I couldn't swallow fluids anymore, thanks to God I can still eat and I enjoy that. But I was at the outpatient center for the longest time every day getting IV drips with water, and I was surrounded by AIDS and cancer patients, and I was very clear about that I was still very, very lucky, and I tried to cheer up the other patients and bond with them. And speaking with them and realizing what they had to deal with and that what my ordeal was nothing in comparison, it really was very little in comparison.

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All of a sudden, at that point I had survived a near death experience, I survived nearly dying, and I was quite detached from everything I was dealing with, there was a lot of equanimity at that point. And just through this observing it in a detached way all of a sudden this inner vow sprung forth really, really strongly from my heart, and it was like everything sank right into the heart chakra, and living from the heart rather than the mind starts happening very, very strongly. And it had already for a long time in my life that I was more in my heart than in my mind, and didn't understand why people didn't get along, or why there was separation in the first place, or the third dimension, it was alien to me, it felt very, very strange that I didn't feel I quite belonged there at times, I didn't understand my purpose sometimes.

And the inner vow that sprung forth was just to share more light, and more beauty than I had done as a flight attendant, which I loved with all my heart, I loved serving my passengers, I loved the camaraderie on British Airways, and loved traveling the world. And just being of service, I felt completely fulfilled doing that. Yes, since I couldn't do that anymore, it was all of a sudden a deep vow, unasked for, without volition, just to spread more light and beauty. I have no idea why it was those two terms, and not love and compassion, or this or that. But I had no personal preference about what form it would take, none. And to my great surprise a few weeks later all of a sudden the light poetry started flowing through me, and I don't know if one would call it channeling, because it wasn't really that I asked for it, or something, it was just I would sit one day.

And it was actually on a day where I had a lovely conversation with my best friend, Susan Kahn from emptiness teachings.com, she's just the most wonderful woman I know, and our common buddy Michael Jefferies, who does the Eckhart Tolle Meet-ups in Santa Monica. And we were on the phone having a laugh, as we sometimes do, and all of a sudden the first poem started coming through, and I just jotted it down. I was very, very surprised because I had not written poetry before, I had done a book review column, and similar things, but written for *Miracles* magazine, I'd

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studied *The Course in Miracles* for many years. But poetry I had not even thought about in my wildest dreams.

It was quite a surprise, and it was sometimes that I would meditate on one single word, like I would sit in nature under the cherry blossom tree, or I would communicate with a squirrel on the inner plains. And all of a sudden a poem would start to form around that, and then it came as a whole, it wasn't that I was completely out of the way, or something, it's like I was the facilitator, and this was something that I needed to do. It came at most uncomfortable times at times, like at 6.00 am or so I would wake up and a poem would want to come. I would be like, not now please [Laughs]. But there was no choice involved really in it, so I can't take any personal credit whatsoever, I really can't. It's very different from your vow, which is lovely.

WIZARD: So you were just going with what wanted to happen.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Absolutely, absolutely. I was just going with the flow, and I just trusted. I had this innate trust that there is a higher purpose to everything and that if something happens then it can't be any other way, it has to be this way no matter how unpleasant it might seem appearance wise. But then we've got to deal with it, and then there's something in it, like there's always a hidden blessing in it. And it's up to us to look for that blessing, and just offer acceptance rather than resistance, and we can turn it around and use it as a beautiful opportunity to become more fully what we're meant to be in this role that we are all playing here in this dimension, while we're here. We all are here, we are speaking right now, there's a phone, there's bodies, voices. So while we all know what's happening on the deeper level, but there is a purpose certainly for us being here on this planet at this time.

WIZARD: So did you see that same paradigm with your physical breakdown, and your physical challenges?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Would you elaborate on that?

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WIZARD: Your physical, your manifestations appear physical inconveniences; do you see that in a similar vein as much as your poetry, that it's a part of the unfolding of what wants to happen?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes, I actually do. I think, and this might go against mainstream nonduality very much, or what other lovely people say on your show, but I do believe that, or I've come to know that strong boundaries are also very, very important. I used to have literally none. I was so open, I was so extremely open, I just loved the whole world, I loved everybody, and I loved serving. I was always there for other people, and I always put everybody before myself, and I was just always of service. I think I basically swallowed more than I could take in, and I had to learn the hard lesson to set some healthy boundaries, and to not accept abuse, for example, and to not accept respectlessness from people, and learn more what the human me was about, which was a very, very hard thing to do, because tapping into the infinite has been almost effortless all my life.

And I think you can probably relate to that, and that comes very easy, and that is the natural state. But dealing with the nitty gritty human daily life was something I really had to learn at quite a late age from scratch, basically. And I do use it every day, like if I ever get irritated with not finding the right tube size, and needing a third surgery, because the ordering department messed something up or so. Then I use it to exercise my patience, which is not one of my fortes, and I try to use everything as an opportunity, and as a challenge. It takes sometimes a few days to get around, wrap my mind around it, or basically probably not to do that, to surrender the mind, and surrender everything to God. And I'm deeply on the devotional path, and it sounds like you guys are too from what I'm picking up.

That is just such a beautiful thing, it's something that's also unasked for that is just given by grace, and there is just this deep, deep devotion, no matter what happens to stay true to that, and to know that everything is that, and when there's appearances to dig

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deeper, and to not stay with the appearances, but to dig deeper and see what... feel and see, and see what's ultimately real.

WIZARD: And keep accepting even one's own reaction or responses to something, even accept that.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. And that took me quite a long time because there was sometimes resistance, very strong resistance. And the whole experience of illness has made me much, much, much stronger and tougher in that respect, to not accept disrespect from other people, and to respect my purpose and my Self as a spirit. Poor choice of words here, I'm so much in non-thought that I really find it hard sometimes to find the right words.

WIZARD: I use the now itself as a role model.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Beautiful.

WIZARD: As the now accepts everything, everything.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Beautiful.

WIZARD: Without any resistance.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes, that is the key, that is very beautiful. And I loved what you wrote on the board one time on Facebook about faith that faith is really one of the key elements to all this because the unseen doesn't easily present itself, that inner sense doesn't open up unless there is deep devotion, or like Trip developed also at an early age. Unless there is that deep, deep place that you also have, and I think it just carries one effortlessly to everything, because one really is so completely unbound and untouched at the deepest level, and there really is no prodigality, there is no otherness. Life at its core is just so, so beautiful, and at the moment it seems like that the appearances play out the polarities stronger than ever. But I'm so, so grateful to have to gone through everything, and to be at the point where I'm at, and

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to know what is really real, and that this impermanent person and body, and so on, will not last, but that it can do something useful in this lifetime towards total absolute surrender.

WIZARD: Likewise. Yes.

TRIP: I feel like what might happen for a lot of folks, what happened for me was there was an initial emotion, a huge emotional feeling about God or being at one with... and then the head, there was a big head period there where the head needed to get its due, and I needed to unlearn a bunch of stuff. So I went into a headspace for a while to get rid of a bunch of stuff, and then now it's again *Now*, it's kind of a devotional thing, the love remains. At the end of your poems, *Spun Gold*, you finish the poem with the words, well it's not the very last line, but it's, "Total openness remains". The Wizard calls it pure capacity.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Lovely.

TRIP: When we're feeling love, is that what we're feeling, totally open? Is that what love is?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I think so, but I like John's words even better. Because it is pure potentiality, everything is wide open; everything is unconditioned, beyond time and space, completely timeless. And I love what you just said because it was exactly the same way here, and I find it's true for many, many people. I had to do the long headway too, to educate myself to make sense of the experiences I was already having innerly, and find out what they were about, and if there was anybody who could tell me what it was about.

I practiced metaphysics for a long time, and then I practiced nonduality for a long time, and Peter Francis Dziuban has been elementary, I love his book, *Consciousness is All*, I have three copies of it in my bookshelf. Joel Goldsmith, the American mystic from the last century, I studied *The Infinite Way* for a long, long time. And really enjoyed all that, and it really, like you say, the

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heady stuff, the metaphysical stuff really gets one or can get one to the mystical, where all that is then laid aside, and where at a certain point I always found one teaching that had totally resonated. Like for example *A Course in Miracles* for some years where the words were like a life essence, they were like my daily food, or something. I know almost the whole course word by word still, by heart.

And one day it just stopped working, like there was nothing in it, and it felt bland and there wasn't any life, nothing jumped out anymore, and I was just done with it. And there was a short period of almost grieving for that, and short period of disorientation, and then another teaching would come in and it would be Ramana Maharshi for many years, then Nisargadatta, and the Atma Darshan. Yes, that seemed to happen, and then Ganga ji as well. And I also met many of these people and it was a palpable transmission at times, and I just felt their essence and I felt the sameness, and I was treated with the sameness, and with an unconditional love, with an absolute spaciousness and clarity, and that taught me that those people were real, that the teaching was real, what they were saying. That there wasn't something to have followers, or any of that, I never fancied anything like a guru relationship, to a devotee, or any of that was not for me. I always thought, no, no, we have to... there's no way around it, there's no easy way. And I totally respect that that works for many people and that for many people that is the ultimate way. Just wasn't the way here, I always found I had to find it myself, I had to go through every detour or every necessary step. I just love how every human life is so utterly unique, and how one cannot really compare one life to another one, because one doesn't walk in other people's shoes.

WIZARD: There are models. No models of behavior.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Absolutely, beautiful.

WIZARD: The transmissions are like the transmissions of a mirror, they're just reflections, there's really no movement.

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MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: They really are, they really are.

WIZARD: They're just reflections, and if you have a great appreciation for Ramana Maharshi and you hear what he shares.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Also like an ancient recognition, isn't it? When you meet somebody like Ganga ji for example, and it was just like I saw her last April in Washington, or in Maryland I believe, I've forgot, somewhere at a Satsang, and I'd read and love *You Are That*, especially that book, I love that book very, very much. And I love her work. And I also love Jackie O'Keefe's work, I love Katie Davis' work. There's so many I love, Byron Katie, and Ganga ji actually felt on the inner plane which had happened before with Jackie O'Keefe that there was something not quite resolved yet with me. And after the Satsang we were all told to sit down and to stay seated, so that she could leave the room in peace, and not be bothered by anybody. Of course everybody respectfully abided, and to my great surprise her assistant motioned me to get up all of a sudden, and she took my hand and we basically walked out of the room into the sunset and we spoke softly with one another. And it was just such a joy of recognition, it was like an ancient recognition of, I don't know if it's a soul group or something on human terms, if one even has to label anything, but just a complete and utter joy of being in the presence of one's Self really, of all that really is.

WIZARD: Pure equality.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes.

WIZARD: And equality of vision that where there's no other in the sharing. When I look at a picture of Ramana Maharshi or I was in the presence of Papaji, or hung out with Muktananda for years, they were just reflections. And Muktananda, I had when I was with Muktananda, I had some un-burnt desires for spiritual experiences and I got rung out there, I got them all, to the point I was exhausted, and knowing that if it moves, it's the movie, it's part of the illusion. And the stillness is Truth, and any out of

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bodies, or orbs [phonetic 26.21], or all of that were just more phenomena that can be a distraction until we've exhausted chasing mirages of our own making and settlement to the peace of oneness. But Muktananda served me very well in that regard, some regard him as a miracle minder, but really his work with me was to exhaust these tendencies.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Wow, that's really powerful, I really, really love that, and I would in principle completely agree from experiences. That I would say that also at least in this life things like orbs for example can also be a beautiful, just a beautiful celebration, or like you say also, a clear mirror which also came into my life unasked for, as a big surprise. I got dear friends, by grace the orb specialists the Heinemanns, Klaus and Gundi, who live 10 minutes from here, and are just absolutely delightful. And I was introduced to orbs through them, and started noticing them, and photographing them, and so on. And that was not part of the distraction anymore, it was just part of the celebration of life where everything became so much more subtle, and as you say obviously it's still part of the mental phenomena, and obviously it can totally be part of phenomena that one prefers, or that are in line with one's likings. And I like that you say about exhausting all that. I will mull over that deeply and let it marinate, I find that very, very beautiful.

WIZARD: When Papaji was hanging out with Ramana Maharshi, he would go on the other side of Arunachala that's supposedly the mystical side where that tank was, the first tank around the mountain on the inter path, and he would play with Krishna. And they would, and he would have a real apparition which I myself had, and he would play with Krishna and play with Krishna. And then he'd come back to the little room at Ramanashram, and Ramana would ask him, "What have you been up to?", and he said, "I've been playing with Krishna". And Ramana Maharshi said, "Well, bring him out right now, let's play, where is he right now?" Papaji said, "I can't", and Ramana Maharshi said, "What's eternal, what is Truth, is present right now. He doesn't come or go".

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MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes, beautiful, beautiful. I get goose bumps. Yes, it's really one cannot put it in words, like you say, it's eternal; it's unchanging, unchallenged, ungraspable. It's so, so beautiful, and beautiful isn't even an attribute that doesn't even describe it or that is shallow in comparison to what really is. Thank you for sharing that, that's really, really lovely.

WIZARD: I met Papaji before he died, I liked him, and he was a real friendly guy. He liked his TV [Laughs].

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Bless him, I love that man.

WIZARD: I had gotten some inside information of what to bring him, I said, "What does he really, really, really, really, really want?" I was told what he really, really, really, really wants is some whiskey and some cigarettes. And I said, "You've got to be kidding me". And they said, "No, he uses them as currency for the people that help him". So when I was going in and I flew over there on British Air...

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Good for you. Lovely, I'm very glad to hear that.

WIZARD: Trip and I went to India we flew on British Air, too.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: The only way to fly.

WIZARD: Only way to fly. And we would have dinner with Papaji, what I was not aware of was there was this little room off to the side where people would just sit and watch him, so I didn't realize that was going to be there. But when I got in I just went ahead with it anyway and plopped the fifth of whiskey, Jack Daniel Black, and a carton of Benson & Hedges on the table [Laughs]. And he received them most graciously. [Laughter]

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: How refreshing, I love that.

WIZARD: There was a kind of silent gasp [Laughs].

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MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: [Laughs] Oh dear, I love that.

WIZARD: He's a sweetheart.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I can imagine. Yes, his essence still shines through.

WIZARD: But that was his tipping point when Ramana Maharshi shared that with him about his playing with Krishna, because he'd played with Krishna all his life. He'd had these visions.

TRIP: Maren, you've been through a lot with the health struggles, and you had to end a career that you loved, and you've had your dark night of the soul, and even fairly recently. So in your book, your advice for those who would like to remain in that state of grace that brings such joy, your advice is to keep feeling grateful, keep being gratitude, a grateful open heart relieved of any burden. And I had a follow up question to your advice, is consistent gratitude something we can cultivate, or is it a byproduct of a grace given realization that just comes over time without any practice or cultivation on our part?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I would say both, and I would like to say first that I really don't think I'm qualified to offer advice to anybody. I don't see myself in any way as a teacher or model, or anything like that. I'm just completely normal, just a normal being.

WIZARD: That's the mark of a sage [Laughter].

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I think it can be both. In this life many times it took severe challenges, or it took absolute grace by itself to be in that state and to receive everything as a blessing. But I think it definitely can be cultivated and I do not think it's part of the normal human condition same as compassion doesn't seem to be built in into the human experiment very much. And I think it's something that can be cultivated, and should be cultivated at this pivotal time. Not that there is any "shoulds" really, but I just think

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it makes life more warm hearted, more pleasant. I have a great circle of friends and lovely family, and the compassion and the warm heatedness and the gratitude for each other that we all share with one another, to be in each other's lives and to enjoy and join in that one spirit and just be, without any judgment, just to be with one another. That is something I'm deeply, deeply grateful for, yes.

WIZARD: I find that the period between resistance and acceptance gets shorter and shorter.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes, it does. I really think it is like a mental habit that is deeply seated and embedded in the psyche of us humans, and that can be unlearned, like you said earlier. I also had to unlearn a lot of things, and unconditioned from a lot of things. That is definitely one of them, yes.

WIZARD: Trip and I were discussing the other day that it's a deconstruction in a sense of all the constructs and concepts that we have about reality. It's hard to build another construct to replace the old construct that's more just taking the pieces of the construct apart, one by one.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: That's absolutely true, and that is also such a big aspect of grace I find that there's no turning back, that once you are at that point, and once you have been deconstructed enough, like you say, you're not in danger of losing that again, that you're just pulled forward by your own, by this inner grace that is just coming your way, almost like in the bible with the prodigal son, meeting you halfway, you don't have to go all the distance. You do your thing, and you do it whenever you feel called to do it, and for some people that's at this time, for some people that'll be at another time. For everybody that is different, but that grace that meets us halfway and does so much of the work actually, when we get out of the way and let go of that personal sense that interferes, and of all these mental constructs, that is just such a sublime thing to me, that is such a gift we were given, and that

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makes life so worthwhile no matter how hard the challenges at times can be.

The last seven months have been very, very testing here; they really, really have been in my personal life. But the grace that shines through everything, makes it all right again, there's just a deep, deep gratitude that no matter what happens. I still get upset, I still struggle, I still resist at times, but like you say, the periods between resistance and acceptance become shorter and shorter. I've been very, very lucky and blessed with a wonderful circle of friends who've been hugely supportive, and whom I adore, and from whom I learn so, so much every single day. Friendship of the heart is just something that I treasure very, very much, and just cherish. I've also found that a lot on Facebook, and I haven't been able to participate as much as I would have liked to the last seven months, because they were just hugely, hugely stressful and I just had to be in the present moment, attend to every single thing that was happening.

WIZARD: You've got a lot of friends; you've got over 5,000 friends on your group page.

TRIP: Wow. Well Maren I want to say that I love your poetry and it's really sublime, and what's beautiful about it is it brings you into that space of oneness and grace, and it's just very authentic and sweet, and I loved it. And I was wondering if you would care to read one of your poems, because I'm sure people would enjoy that, or if you don't I can read one of them for you. But would you like to read a poem?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I would love to, thank you so much for the opportunity. It gives me great joy to share, and since it was a gift that was given me, I'd love to pass it on. I was given also very clear instructions when the inner vow happened, and when it became increasingly clear that a book had to happen. And everything came together by itself, like one day I discovered I needed a cover, and I was guided automatically to a dear friend Barbara in Canada, to her beautiful website, Barbara McRobbie.

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And right there I found the cover of *Spun Gold* and I needed to search no further, and everything just came together really, really beautifully without any doing on this part, I just followed the instructions and it happened.

I would love to read one of my favorites, which is really a tribute to the divine, and it's called *One Without a Second Radiance*.

Majestic Sun

Unborn and undying,

illuminating apparent pyramids

pointing to the Great Mystery

we are.

Night falls, consciousness

drawing back into itself,

empty of all forms,

shining effortlessly,

untouched by all appearances.

The sun's majesty is

loving-ness, as her reflected illuminations,

inseparable I Am, yet

prior to this,

only Mystery to which

this presence appears.

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*Be as you are, eternally
already dancing to ancient drums
that always beckon you home.
No effort required by no one,
assumptions dissolved,
replaced by Clarity, Certainty.
If you think yourself as someone,
give back all assumptions
and as you do,
suffering ceases, shackles fall
and this imaginary center
simply drops away
and gives space to
boundlessness again.
Sweet summer rain drenching the thirsty earth,
green fields arise
and sink back into
unmanifested source.
Gentle surrendering on its own accord
letting the Great Mystery unfold*

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untold joy always

embracing you tenderly

for all Eternity.

And it's really dedicated to all friends, everybody.

WIZARD: That is beautiful.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I'm just so grateful for every single person.

WIZARD: That's a very powerful affirmation.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Thank you.

TRIP: In *The Open Heart*, one of your poems, you say, "The fully open heart rests in sweet unknowingness, safe in its own embrace". And I feel that you're a person that has a truly open heart. I was wondering if you could talk about how the neediness that maybe you felt, that I certainly have felt how that dissolves in an open heart? What's the outcome there, can you talk about that?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes. I think, dear Trip that with an open heart comes certain fullness automatically. I think the neediness stems from a false sense of lack, and that lack is automatically, when there's complete openness, and when things fall into place pretty much effortless, and one realizes one's never alone, and one's provided for by grace, and when one is able to jump off that cliff and trust that, and have just that Faith, without needing to know anything mentally, but just have that Faith, retain that heart open, no matter how many times it was wounded, no matter how many times it was many times seen as stabbed in the back or betrayed. But I think in that openness there's a gift of fullness, and of everything being complete, the kingdom is finished already. And with that there's just no need, what could be better than that?

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WIZARD: Amen.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I feel there's a certain magnetic quality to it where if there's Maren coming in a personal sense, coming in or needing something, when I let go of that, or when by grace it is let go of, then it arrives effortlessly, and it just comes in the form like you say in the beautiful reflection in the mirror of beloved people, or friends, of some help. Where there's a need it's automatically already met, and it already is met on the inner planes anyway, since there is really no need, and its unspeakable and the divine. It's absolute, it has no preference, it has no needs, it doesn't know of any lack.

WIZARD: That is Truth. That is the essence of Truth. It's beautiful.

TRIP: I feel kinship with you because your self-perception is not of being a sage, you see yourself as being an ordinary person, and you also don't feel qualified to teach anybody anything, and I feel the same way. And then you look out there and you see people like Nisargadatta, who's very fierce in his conviction that he is the one and the all. And so people are attracted to him because of that ferocity of conviction, it's contagious. But I've been attracted to women in my life that are the service types like you are, that have very sensitive constitutions, and tend to internalize pain and things, and take on other people's pain. So I'm curious. It took some courage I guess, inner courage for me, but ultimately I was able to go ahead and make this declaration that I am that, to just finally say, I am that, this is all there is, it is utterly magical, and just be done with it. Did you ever consciously summon up the courage to make that internal declaration?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes, actually I feel the same kinship, and it was exactly the same way. I think it happened the year after the near death experience, I think I had been in hiding for a long time. I so loved my family, I so loved my friends, and for a long time I was hiding it, and I wanted to just transmit the essence without coming out virtually of what my beliefs are. At the time

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there were strong beliefs that this is true or that is true, or whatever, and there wasn't just surrendering in Faith.

And after the near death experience all that fell away because it was irrelevant, and there was just a very strong and fierce, this is who I am, and like it or not, but this is life's purpose and it needs to be fulfilled, and there's no time to be wasted. And the preciousness of it was just so immense that there was no ego to come in to say, what if so and so, my cousin, or whatever, doesn't like it. There wasn't anything of that anymore, it just all fell away, and became very, very natural, and it became a strong decision as well. But an inner decision without volition again, it just became no choice but to be that. There was no more other way.

And I wanted to touch on very briefly about what you said earlier about teachers, because I loved what you just said, and I've seen the same. I've observed for example at one Satsang in Maryland last year, when dear Adyashanti came, and it was very, very painful for me and I left a little bit early, and I love Adyashanti, I love his writings, such a great sense of humor, such a normal, down to earth, completely normal.

But what really, really bothered me in a way was that the people at that particular Satsang, I mean the economy was bad, and still is, and there were lots of things going on in that area, but it felt like it was very clear that people were putting themselves beneath him, and did not feel a sense of equality. And he tried everything all evening long to dismantle that and to deconstruct that, and to encourage everybody to see their own beauty and to let them just shine. He let them sit next to him, and he tried everything, and he was successful in many cases to break through that feeling less than, but in general at that particular evening, I haven't seen the same many times, but that particular evening there was a feeling of lesser than and looking up to the guru, and there was a self-made sense of separation, and a self construct. It was just so completely unnecessary, because it could have been such a beautiful joining of equals.

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WIZARD: Thank you so much for sharing that, I mean that's...

TRIP: It's critical.

WIZARD: I hear you [Laughter].

TRIP: That is so critical.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Yes, I guess we've all seen that.

TRIP: You're a beautiful wordsmith, and words are beautiful pointers, and I had a question about one word in particular that you like to use the word, you'll say we are infinity itself, infinity. And for me I like to say the word divinity, because I don't know I can't put my finger on it, but for some reason it's emotionally evocative for me to feel divine. I was just wondering, is there a reason, did you consciously choose that word infinity to describe what we are over say divinity. And also I notice you use the word light a lot also, these words, light, infinity, how did they come to be your particular tools of expressing?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I think I can actually blame somebody directly for that [Laughs], he's been on your show. A very, very dear friend since many years and sort of has been a mentor in the past, and just a beautiful soul, and it's Peter Francis Dziuban, the author of *Consciousness is All*. And he and I went on the same path for many, many years studying Joel Goldsmith, the mystic of *The Infinite Way*, and then Alfred Aiken also for a while. And I think in my choice of words, which weren't really my choice of words, it started flowing through, but I think that part, I like divinity these days even better because that is the feeling that resonates most deeply, and that is the anchor, or that's where the Faith goes. But I think infinity for me has the same meaning just from a different aspect of this multi faceted jewel that we really are.

Infinity was really a great influence I would say from Peter Francis Dziuban because I had so many experiences reading his book,

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reading sometimes just one line in his book, it's very, very powerful. And at the same time powerless in that only the divine is real and that there's gentle no power really at the ultimate level. And this infinity just came through again, and again, and again, where there was a feeling as if one was a dolphin and just like surging through the sea or something, and surging through different dimensions, and all of them finite, one more subtle than the other, this realm, that realm, the angelic realm, psychic realm, astral realm, whatever.

But at the end of it one arrived like in inner visions, at the infinite, and it is unbound and it is dancing freely, and it was just indescribable, and it is timeless. Yes, it even precluded time as Peter likes to say, it precluded the whole time/space, the whole mental construct, it's just not there. So I like to interchange these words, but divinity I like even better these days because I think for a long time there was like a certain shyness to use certain words, because they had such a strong meaning traditionally, like God, or divinity. And there was a lot of luggage coming with that, and I think the purpose when the book was given, the instructions which came with it to not seek out any interviews, so to only do them when asked to when invited, to not seek out publicity, to do one simple book page and that's it, and simple website. I gave most of the copies away and I have not covered my publishing costs yet, and I don't care about that, it's just about the sharing, the inner sharing in whatever way. And since I can't speak certain parts of the day, it's just another way of sharing really.

WIZARD: The *Now* is infinite. That's irrefutable.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Absolutely.

WIZARD: And then it's revealed that the *Now*, the infinity, is divinity that's the great revelation.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: I love that, I will really mull over that, it's beautiful.

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TRIP: Maren, you're sharing today has been truly delicious, it's hard to believe but we've come to the end of the hour.

WIZARD: I was just getting into that.

TRIP: So Maren, we love you.

WIZARD: Thank you.

TRIP: We are so pleased that we have been able to have this time.

WIZARD: Thank you for sharing with us.

TRIP: We know it wasn't easy for you probably necessarily./ And is there anything you wanted to share in the last one minute that we have?

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: No, I thank you so much from all my heart and it's been a true pleasure sharing with you, and I'm honored to be on your show. I would just love to send all my love to everybody who's listening, and to everybody who is not listening. And I love you all, and it's been a true delight. Thank you so much.

WIZARD: Likewise.

TRIP: Thank you.

MAREN SPRINGSTEEN: Bless you.

TRIP: Bless you.



Matt Kahn

<http://truedivinenature.com/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Matt Kahn, is a spiritual teacher, mystic, and intuitive healer. His spontaneous awakening arose out of an out-of-body experience at the age of eight, and his direct experiences with ascended masters and archangels throughout his life.

Many spiritual seekers have experienced amazing, unexplainable healings, and have awakened to their true nature through Matt's

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profound and loving teachings and his sharing of sacred heart wisdom.

Well this is kind of a long format here; we have a whole hour to talk about things. And I'm really impressed with the clarity of your teaching, and there's aspects to it that I think are just spot on for myself and many others, and that's really the main thrust of what I think we all want to talk about today with you. But let's talk a little bit about you though, and what you've written in your bio first, because it's kind of a backdrop to some of the other stuff that'll come up.

MATT KAHN: Sure.

TRIP: One question I had, why don't you go ahead and share your interesting childhood, it was a very interesting childhood, and I wouldn't normally necessarily feel the need to ask you that. But then I've got some follow up questions about that. You want to share what happened at six and eight?

MATT KAHN: Sure, when I was six... well just to preface this, when I was a child I found myself very afraid of the world, very afraid of people, just curious and innocently wanting to explore the world. I think the energy of the world was so very intense in my body, because I remember being a child and I'd be on playgrounds, and I would play in my own imagination. And when other kids would come on and play in a wild way, I would have to leave. I spent a long time by myself when I was a kid, and that for me felt more comfortable.

When I was six, I remember I was walking to a friend's house, and there is a wall that divides their house from my house. And I remember just looking at the wall and I had this experience, which of course I didn't know I was having an experience, because I had nothing to compare it with. I hadn't become well seasoned in my life. I had this experience of looking at this wall, and just having this insight that I wasn't the body, I wasn't the wall, I was the space between it. It didn't strike me as anything, I mean I felt a

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sense of, oh, but it didn't lead to any kind of conclusion because again I'm six and I haven't learned much about life. I just took that in, and went on my way to my friend's house.

Then when I was about eight years old, one night I was having a dream, like most kids have when they go to sleep. And I found myself in the most extraordinary amazing garden where the colors of this garden were so bright and vibrant; it was just overflowing and emanating this hue of pure love. And I remember as a kid my greatest fear was being displaced and lost, in the '80s when I grew up the whole campaign was don't talk to strangers. So my greatest fear was being separate from my family and being lost.

I remember the first insight I had in this garden was I should be afraid, but I'm not. I felt the most comforting, secure love I have ever felt in my entire life. And as I'm walking to this garden, I find myself walking through a field of waist-high flowers that as I can feel my body trying to move and maneuver through this waist-high field of flowers, I also realize that while I could feel the body moving through the field of flowers, I was also simultaneously hovering above them. And the love was intense, it was an intriguing discovery, but there was nothing to question about, it was just like, oh, that's interesting. And then 20 feet in front of me, hovering above the field, was a being in a white robe and dark hair, and a beard, motioning me toward them. And I didn't move. And as this went on I started to float toward this being, and as I got about five feet from this being, I saw that the eyes of this being was emanating this hue of pure white light.

And in eight-year-old mind, I guess my only association was thinking about the Halloween or the horror films where people kind of roll their eyes in their head. I don't know why I thought about that. And when that happened, I immediately fell through the garden, fell through the sky, fell back in my body, which at that moment was how I knew I left it. It was kind of like I felt my body shaking in a cold sweat, and out of the corner of my eye I saw the same being in like a white chalky material in my doorway

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motioning me towards them again. And I looked, and it disappeared.

The next morning when I told my parents what happened, my parents are very open to a lot of things, my parents in the '70s were very much into spirituality, although as a child I was never really taught anything about it, but just given the chance to explore whatever came to me. I told my parents about this experience and it turns out that my dad had had nearly the same experience almost detail for detail 40 years prior to the experience I had, which even to this day doesn't necessarily come with any conclusion. But just at that time there was a sense in me, there was a seed that was planted of, there's so much more to all of this than just what appears. I think that was really the two experiences that really set me in this direction.

WIZARD: You're a seer?

MATT KAHN: Seer, a feeler, a hearer.

WIZARD: I mean, they're sages and seers; you seem to be confessing the Seer, the Seer aspect.

MATT KAHN: Yes.

TRIP: I've spent a little time watching some of your other interviews, and reading up on you, I'd like to kind of take the next question deeper than some of the ones that were asked, which were all excellent questions, but that then gives me the opportunity to ask the next one.

MATT KAHN: I appreciate that.

TRIP: One of the things that you report is that you've had this ongoing desire to help other people have these experiences you've had, and I'm not necessarily talking about the visitations of the ascended masters and the archangels per se, but these mystical experiences that you've had. And I'm wondering, you're a very

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introspective person, so I'm guessing that you've looked at that desire, and I'm curious what you conclude about that desire. I mean, is helping other people have those experiences ultimately something that you think is going to be valuable for them?

MATT KAHN: Well for me it really isn't a desire, it's more of an impulse, it's more of just a sense of this is just... it's almost as if when this impulse arises, and for everyone the impulse maybe different. For someone it might be they have the impulse to teach children, for some people it may be to raise money for a certain cause.

When an impulse arises in you on such a deep level, it doesn't even come with a rational sense of why, it almost is just there is nothing else rational in existence but for me to do this. For me that's really how it feels. When I started to assist and help other people, it wasn't like I went willingly in going this is what I want to do. It was like when I started to deliver messages and help people, I would be randomly put in situations where I had this intuition to tell someone something, and if I didn't share the message I felt like my heart was going to explode. in the beginning it was for my own sanity I would go to people and say, look, this is going to sound crazy but I have to share this with you, and if it doesn't make sense it's fine, just humor me. And then people would have these experiences, and it's not like those experiences made me feel like, oh, that validates this, I would just be put in more situations. And soon I just kind of saw life was heading in this direction.

Now as far as the experiences that I seem to be drawn to help people have, which most of the time when I'm working with people the whole focusing attention is for them to first discover who they are on the deepest level, because when we are rooted in the supreme suchness of our eternal being, we find ourselves with the depth and the maturity to be able to handle and comprehend mystical experiences without it being taken in one direction or another, or created into another identity so to speak.

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So I think for me the impulse is just to follow what feels natural, and of course in my life, no matter would feel natural, whether that baking cakes, or taking care of children, for me it happens to be this.

WIZARD: Would you say that's akin to going with what wants to happen?

MATT KAHN: Oh, absolutely. I didn't choose this. I can tell you many professions I thought I was going to become when I was a child, I never in a million years thought I would be doing what I'm doing. And I've looked back at the my life and I've laughed thinking, I couldn't have wanted this. I couldn't have imagined this. And for me it's of an impulse that says, okay, this is where life's going, and it's shown me that many times where I don't really do anything but let things come to me, which it does in very miraculous ways. And at the same time no matter what I would be guided to do, I don't know how to comprehend or fathom reality without living in absolute service for the well being of all souls. Anything else other than that does not make any sense to me.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: I'm like you, I'm kind of cold, I seem to have a certain talent set, and I'm calling to kind of create a platform for what we'll call seers or sages like yourself to share their wisdom. And along with that feels like a responsibility to kind of cut into any part of it that ultimately is not of the ultimate service that you just spoke of wanting to provide people. And I have certain baggage and certain preconditions, and I'll come across someone, a sage, and then there'll be some aspect of the way they share. And then it'll trigger my sacredly held concepts about the way the sharing ought to happen, or whatever. Then when I ask my question, just really mostly to get rid of some of my own baggage, right?

MATT KAHN: Right, totally.

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TRIP: Right, I want to say that you're an interesting guy to me because when I get down into your teaching I see someone who seems to be utterly attuned to the potential of spiritual speak to confuse the matter, and you speak very plainly and really to the depths of what matters of coming into yourself. And I want to get into some of those beautiful things that you share about that.

But then on the other hand, this is the thing that I wonder about and you can help me with this. In the choice of sharing who you are, you talk about being a mystic, experiences with ascended masters and archangels, and you continue to have these experiences. And then you also talk of wanting to help people enjoy these experiences that haven't. I find that to be an absolute juxtaposition with the message that you bring that it's about this clear spaciousness underneath all experiences that remains, that's there always, that's independent of the experiences, that's the joy that's independent of all of that. And that's what you teach.

So on the one hand it's almost like, now you correct me if I'm wrong, but this is what it looks like to me. It's almost like you're a fisher of men, like Jesus Christ if you will, and you've decided that the best bait [Laughs] is to cast out some of these amazing experiences that you've had that people will at least give you the benefit of a moment's attention that you can then share with them the deeper Truth that's underneath all these amazing experiences.

MATT KAHN: Got you, I understand what you're saying.

TRIP: Is that right? I mean, why do you choose that particular stuff, because you could say a lot of stuff about yourself that has nothing to do with that.

MATT KAHN: I could, but to be honest I don't really make those kinds of choices. Everything in my life, every choice, every word I speak, is guided. I don't find myself making choices; I just watch how things play out. And for a while, for at least the last 10 years, it has been on this trajectory where the words just, you know, someone asks me a question, and I'm hearing what I'm saying as

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they're hearing it. It's just in the state of just watching it all unfold spontaneously. There are questions asked of me, and then an answer comes out, or whatever.

The way I see it, and again I appreciate what you're saying and I understand how you're seeing it, and I can give you a couple of different answers that will probably hopefully open this up a little bit. For my journey I began as a child, a very intuitive, full-blown intuitive child, and then I came into the work as an intuitive. I didn't know anything about awakening, I was an intuitive who woke up only to realize that in the times that we're living in, even if you want to call the times we're living in as just the dream we're experiencing, in this framework of this reality we're coming into a time where all of the different spiritual teachings, whether it's nonduality, or mysticism, are no longer going to be seen as being segregated, but are going to be actually revealed to be more integrated.

And for me to come from a background of being an intuitive, who spoke of ascended masters, only to then have these awakening experiences and realize that the manifestation of ascended masters is all just a play in consciousness. For me it just feels like, again just by watching where things go naturally, there are people that wake up that are afraid to talk about their intuitive experiences, because there are people that don't include that in the waking up category. And there are people that are deeply connected into the mysticism that are not clear enough to have the highest possible experience, because they're still just experiencing projections of their own unresolved cellular debris.

So I feel like I'm just watching how this goes, I'm just kind of acting as a bridge that brings these two worlds together. Whereas in my experience, in having some really profound experiences of just really kind of bottoming out into absolute external nothingness, in that nothingness that I realized to be what I am, what everything is, yes, that nothingness independent of all forms and ideas. But in that nothingness, in that spacious nothingness, is where all the forms appear and all forms appear only to be

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embraced, and adored, and acknowledged, and loved, by that nothingness which is only feeling itself in these erroneous projections of infinite possibility.

So when I hear a lot of people talking about the nothingness, I almost hear this imaginary need to conclude if the nothingness is independent from all these things, which we get with the netti, netti, and the negations, and all that stuff, then I have to live in a way where I am almost in a standoff relationship with form. And what I have found is that what kind of closes the gap on this journey beyond realization is the complete and supreme and absolute willingness to fully and completely be the person you're not, and to embrace all forms if you're clear enough to see that all the things in the world that appear are just reflections and appearances appearing within your true Self.

WIZARD: being the host or the screen of the movie, and accepting that is a marriage of heaven and earth. There's a sacredness in that marriage, because the movie and the screen aren't separate, even though the screen may be, may exist with or without the movie, when the movie is playing it's at one with the screen.

MATT KAHN: Absolutely. I can tell you from my own experience, and bottoming out to emptiness, and now living as that emptiness, that the form, the movie, is the will of the screen. That the form is the will of the emptiness to experience itself that way, and that in that emptiness, in the emptiness where words arise but no concepts exist, that emptiness is always supremely willing to embrace all forms and to treat it exactly as it appears while seeing that it doesn't appear outside of appearances. That to me was one of the most supreme teachings of grace and humility that didn't come about with words, it was just a spontaneous, oh my God, and how much love is that?

WIZARD: The marriage of heaven and earth, Shiva and Shakti, Sita and Ram, that holy scared marriage that brings love to everything.

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MATT KAHN: Absolutely, and I feel like on this journey where I'm just going with the flow, at the same time at the end of this lifetime I'm going to look back and say, I was given a heart, I followed it, and every decision, even when sometimes in some circles it may not be popular, and for other people it brought great relief, which happens a lot more times than not, which I'm thankful for.

There is a school of thought that says there's emptiness, there's only emptiness, and we harp on that much that it causes us to almost have this disdainful relationship with form, which creates a very difficult spiritual identity to really be able to see through. It takes a lot of sincerity to be able to overcome that level. Whereas really once we find ourselves rooted in experiencing that emptiness, the intention or the pull is to come off the mount and return into the appearance of form. It's almost as if now that you know what you are, face what you're not... as you are.

WIZARD: Then that's the restoration of love in all form.

MATT KAHN: In these experiences, and I appreciate what you're saying, it's beautiful, and I feel deeply your transmission of understanding what is being conveyed simply through the words that they're being spoken. In that supreme emptiness, I didn't find the kind of nothingness that would need to go around and correct people who are enjoying somethingness. The nothingness that I discovered was nothing but love, and it wasn't the kind of love that you feel when you get your needs met, it wasn't the kind of love you want when life goes your way. It was a kind of love that includes and embraces everything with equality, with absolutely no personal will to be in charge of doing that. And it's just when life takes over from that point forward, one of the ironic things that I've seen is that when someone really is truly expressing, and I'll use your words, expressing the living reality of that marriage, then often times they are being brought to almost exist as a living contradiction of what previous ideas have defined as what this is all really about. Because that emptiness that explores itself in

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form is always interested, or it's always experiencing infinite possibilities that always lead to endless infinite possibilities.

So the fact that I am here and perhaps appearing to do something that might look contradictory to other, it's only contradictory if we define the terms with meaning that says, this is opposite of that, when really the mysticism is just the way this eternal emptiness expresses itself in the most wide variety of possibilities.

WIZARD: And that's profoundly liberating.

MATT KAHN: Yes. And my thought, or my feeling was the impulse was it wasn't like I'm going to position myself as a mystic, people can give me time of day because this is how people are going to pay attention to me, I've never even really considered that. My sense was there's a lot of people I talk to who either have yet to experience what I have experienced, which even as a child that seemed very strange to me, or they are not experiencing life in the most liberating way.

So my impulse, or the impulse that I felt, was instead of just having these abilities and going, well, some people experience it and some people don't, the fire in me says, use everything that you've been given that other people can experience what you are and what you've experienced as just a reflection of themselves. I can't sit back, it doesn't feel right for me to sit back and go, well; some people just don't experience it. For me it's like these life changing experiences can only be used to support and embrace the well being and the infinite possibility of all that appear simply as a living love song for that which has realized itself within this form, an act of devotion.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Beautiful. Well thank you for allowing my role to take place, because now that there's so much excellent spiritual information floating about, it's just that your story serendipitously is the perfect business model for a spiritual teacher. Because...

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MATT KAHN: I wasn't aware of that, it's funny.

TRIP: Well it is because you bring them all in, like you appeal to the California spiritual person who's still kind of seeking experiences, and what have you, but you also have a teaching that's clean seeing through experiences and kind of getting to the bottom, to the screen. So you kind of have an eclectic net there, it would be the perfect business model if you were sort of interested in just self-aggrandizement or something. I ask those questions because I want to do the best job that I can of giving the best teachers the best platform possible.

MATT KAHN: Wonderful. I appreciate that, and I thank you for your service.

TRIP: Yes, okay there's much to talk about, you're eloquent, and I'm seeing we're already half way through the hour, and there's much here. I want to make sure I get to the really good stuff. One of the things you talk about that really speaks to me now, and it's something that I think is relevant to those who have really spent a significant portion of time into this self inquiry is what you call relaxing into confusion.

MATT KAHN: Yes.

WIZARD: I like that.

TRIP: And that's where I'm at right *Now*. And it's almost like it's just in time. The Wizard [Laughs] always...

WIZARD: I call that the Mystery, just put a capital M on the Mystery.

MATT KAHN: I love that.

TRIP: The Wizard's always bringing new guests on that are just right on time, it's almost like he's a Japanese carmaker with inventory coming in. But it's important to relax into the stuff

that's going on. Can you talk about that, because you'll do a much better job than I can?

MATT KAHN: Well here's what comes to me right out to speak on this. And again I feel like when you receive things that come through spontaneously and it seems to kind of shine or illuminate a light on missing elements, it can be very helpful. What I found is I came into the spiritual journey, having had my unique experiences, and I started learning about the other paths, because I didn't know about the other paths. I just learned to see what other people were teaching, and things started to come to me.

One of the things is that confusion is actually an experience that we have when we're transitioning out of what we would call the egoic state of consciousness into the seeing of pure consciousness. That's basically the transition. And a lot of times what happens are people are trying to find remedies and modalities to solve the confusions, instead of seeing that as the vessel that takes one from suffering and into a realization of our true natural inherent liberated state of being.

Just if I could explain it in a different way that might make it easier to understand. When we're in an egoic state of consciousness, because a lot of people want to talk about blaming the mind, blaming ego, blaming our perceptions of separation, what I have found spontaneously is that all three of those things, and all of the other symptoms, are not the reason why we perceive the way we perceive. The reason all of those things exist is because the body as it has evolved in this form, in this dream, exist with an over stimulated nervous system. And when that over stimulated nervous system is intact, the imaginary identity of an over stimulated nervous system is what we call ego. And when the nervous system is over stimulated the mind is noisy, it goes in cyclical thoughts, the heart feels closed, all relationships are built on co-dependent values, and all choices are run by addicted behaviors. That's just the way the ego works, but it's all just a play of an over stimulated nervous system. And that over stimulated nervous system is actually on purpose to create a cocoon, an

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energetic psychological cocoon, to incubate let's call it the soul, which is just an individual expression of pure awareness. And when it's time for that awakening to occur, the eroding of that cocoon, which is the unraveling of the over stimulated nervous system, creates a sense of confusion that is the vehicle that takes one into an experience that when that nervous system is either interrupted, which creates an opening, or when it falls away completely, then all of a sudden the experience of awakening is consciousness is experienced as natural state of eternal being, the heart is naturally open, the mind goes silent. And people can call those samadhi experiences, or glimpses of awakening. And when they go back into that shutting down, it's because the body is going back to its remembered pattern of over stimulation.

So what I find to be the case, and what I perceive intuitively to be where things will go in the immediate and distant future, is that thankfully in this new paradigm of spirituality, it's no longer going to be the case of sitting around and talking about the mind and the ego, but it's actually going to be addressing the over stimulated nervous system. And what I have found when I have worked with people intuitively, when I first address the nervous system, and we unravel that, then we introduce the pointings into the nondual or undivided state of pure seeing. The lights can go on, the seeing is simple, and there doesn't have to be this back and forth that creates this spiritual identity, and we can actually experience an abiding awakening with an understanding of that on a cellular and biologic level.

WIZARD: Do you think the over stimulated nervous system is a part of an idea of doership?

MATT KAHN: I would say that the depth to which the nervous system is over stimulated is the degree to which someone believes that they're the one doing what is occurring on its own.

WIZARD: Beautiful.

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MATT KAHN: Right. And right now in a lot of circles, and again I say this just because the sign of the times, with no malice, because again even the work that I do with helping people is a play within the divine, and I think that it's important for anyone who plays this role to know the game. Because it's easy for this to become an identity, a business model, as you said. For me this is just how the divine is playing in the form, all that comes in sessions is just the divine. And from that knowing I can hold that space there in a very mature and grounded way. But a lot of times what happens is we've learned about the inquiry of looking within, the spiritual impulse happens, but there hasn't been a lot of knowledge on working with the over stimulated nervous system first. It's almost like the nervous system must be unraveled to create the sacred space for the seeing to occur.

And what happens is it creates a spiritual journey where spiritual concepts, and words, and ideas are learned, remembered, and regurgitated by the imaginary identity of an over stimulated nervous system, which creates very, very intricate spiritual identities. And then to be able to help someone wake up out of that would require them to be of the utmost level of sincerity. I'm thankful that what is happening now, and what I seem to be here to introduce, is an opportunity to make this as clear and as simple that matches and mirrors one's level of sincerity to investigate the depths of who they are.

TRIP: This brings me, and you've just mentioned it, to the next point of your teaching, which I think is just where it's at, which is a thread, you say, that runs through every spiritual journey. Every productive, I guess, spiritual journey is an emersion in heartfelt sincerity.

WIZARD: I love that.

TRIP: I love that, I have to say when I reflect upon my own rapid, if you want to call it spiritual, evolution, and then I look out into the landscape of my friends who to me sometimes appear to be stuck. I attribute it to the blessing of sincerity, you know, that I

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didn't create but that's inside of me. And I just think it's an absolute critical thing, sincerity. Can you talk about sincerity?

MATT KAHN: Yes, well sincerity begins as a willingness to blame no one and expect nothing. What we could say, if we could speak about what sincerity is it's a space that is naturally void of blame or expectation. And of course it then sometimes is confused with people trying to cultivate that. Whereas, on a spiritual journey, a spiritual journey begins with the arising and recognition of, or the valuing of, sincerity; and one doesn't have to work hard to create that sincerity, because life is its own beautiful teacher that will in its own way break every one down, or break down every barrier that undermines or gets in the way of sincerity.

And what I find is that what creates that spiritual impulse to lead someone to exploring more than just what their eyes can perceive, is when they've gotten to a place in their life, whether life has broken them down for whatever situation has happened, or there's just all of a sudden a spontaneous realization of valuing the direction sincerity will take you. And the ironic thing is that sincerity will take you in the direction where it appears as if in your everyday personal life you're being guided to speak whatever Truth arises in your heart. What I find is profoundly ironic is that the willingness to speak the personal Truth in every single personal encounter becomes the sole trajectory that leads you on a journey to unknowingly realize yourself as that impersonal internal space, that has no personal will whatsoever.

So it's ironic that it is the willingness to speak your personal Truth, almost like an initiation onto a road that you don't know is leading you into the complete unraveling of the person who's been speaking the Truth. For me the realization was you're not the one who speaks the Truth, you're the Truth that speaks. Just the act of speaking is a celebration of the Truth, and what people are saying is a matter of the meaning that we give to the words that we hear, that when we listen with the depths of our true heartfelt sincerity; we're actually just hearing sounds that are disappearing as quickly

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as they're heard; and when we start to enjoy the act of sound as just the Truth revealing itself to itself.

Again, ironically that kind of a realization that a lot of people are trying to figure out anyway to have, in many cases is only discovered when you're willing to be completely honest in every situation, whether that is at the risk of losing what you define yourself by, or whether that would create a state of confusion that would just be the vehicle into that clarity of life beyond an over stimulated nervous system. Again I've encountered a lot of people that have had a lot of beautiful experiences, but when I tune in intuitively to someone's energy field, I tune into how interested they are in sincerity. And what's also interesting in our personal lives is that the depth to which we abide in the direction of pure heartfelt sincerity is the rate at which what we perceived as suffering begins to be the means at which we unravel to see through the appearance and to realize our self as the source of it all.

TRIP: Yes.

WIZARD: Beautiful put.

TRIP: You're good, Matt.

MATT KAHN: I just open my mouth, but thank you. Honestly, it's such a wonderful opportunity to be here and to share, and to be in this space with you and everyone else that's with us.

WIZARD: It's more than your words, it's this space within which these words are happening right *Now* in this conversation, and being shared with others, is palpable and real.

MATT KAHN: Thank you. I honor what you are saying. It's really funny, what you were saying before about love, when we were talking about the nothingness is nothing but love. Just to add another level of irony to this is that what I've been guided to help people with, because a lot of times in the journey there is this

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sense of we're trying to figure out a way to spiritually position ourselves, and we have reactions to things, we think it's the resistance, or we're trying to be present, which is a wonderful teaching although it leads to a lot of efforting, which then takes it in the wrong direction. But what's ironic is that what I've also been just guided to share, is that when there's a reaction in the body on a cellular level, just in the body, a reaction represents what is actually being released on a cellular level, and what you're feeling is actually being released out of your field. And that when I guide people to recognize any reaction as a spontaneous moment of healing without blame or expectation, but just to locate that part of their body where the reaction occurs, and to send silent I love yous to that part of the body, assists in that part of the body clearing those cellular memories which could be symbolized as a part of that cocoon of the over stimulated nervous system flaking away. And even on a bigger level of macrocosmic reality, the love we offer one heart simultaneously fills all hearts.

And as much as there are many invitations from spirituality into the nothingness, what I keep seeing is that into the nothingness comes the recognition, then from the recognition out of the nothingness comes the ability to play in form with no rules and barriers, the willingness to recognize that in the body, the unraveling of the nervous system represents the opportunity to love all these parts of the body that simultaneously fill all hearts and all dimensions with love, and wholeness. Because ultimately the game of the Bodhisattvas, not just to wake up, but to wake up deeply and to shine a light greatly to only the appearance of a world that reflects back a world that is as awake as the one who isn't.

So if anything, I am here just giving people an opportunity and assisting in not only just awakening or realization, because the real impulse in all of our hearts is to play this game on the highest level, and to just abide in a space that watches whatever world you think that appears to transform into the heaven no one has ever left.

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WIZARD: Right on; the train you heard [Laughs], it was the peace train.

MATT KAHN: I love it.

TRIP: Getting into the nuts and bolts, I love something you said, you said, "Why should I call a tree what it doesn't call itself" [Laughs]. That cracks me up because; I mean I go around all day long calling things what they never claim to call themselves.

WIZARD: Love makes no claim of its own.

TRIP: And you say, "So what happens when I just look?" And you're good at just looking; can you take someone down the royal road of not labeling, but just looking?

MATT KAHN: Sure. What we always want to do is we want to use our present moment reality as where we gather evidence, because what's true in this present moment is true in all moments. Because of course the Truth, the Truth is a word that means always. we want to kind of see what always is the case, what we start to see, the first step I would say is what always is the case is that we first notice that there are things changing. And we're not going to ostracize and push away what's changing, we're just going to say, what changes is a momentary appearance or declaration of the Truth, but the Truth itself is just that which is always the same and never changing. We start to see the body's always changing, the thoughts are always changing, the feelings are always changing, and time is always changing.

And we start to say, okay, now what isn't changing at all? And what we start to see is that the things we are seeing are always in a state of change, even a cup that I would look at in front of me right now was created in time, and it will be destroyed in time. And yet what we start to see if we just stare at an object, if we look at different objects, what we're looking at is an object appears to change, the decoration changes, but perhaps we see the seeing, what actually views the objects, doesn't change at all. Even when

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there's a thought arising to describe the object you're viewing, even that is just something being seen by that seeing that only sees.

WIZARD: The seer.

MATT KAHN: Yes, in fact one of the easiest ways to get into that realization is to ask yourself a very simple question, can the seeing be stopped, or is anything that attempts to stop the seeing just something else to be seen? Even if someone would close their eyes and go, I don't see the world, but now you're only aware that there is no world, because you're still there to see it. The seeing is still there. Or even if you were to say, I successfully stopped seeing, the only way for you to know that is to still be there to see that.

So when we start to see that the seeing can't be stopped, we immediately start to connect with that which always is the same, which becomes for a lot of people their first experience of that which is eternal within the appearance of time and change, or what people call duality.

So once we see the seeing is always the same, now we have to explore the seeing to only base our reality on only what seeing sees. if we look at an object in front of us, we notice there is the seeing of a form, that the seeing itself doesn't call the form a form, it doesn't call the form an illusion, it doesn't say that's irrelevant and not a part of the absolute reality. It says nothing, it just sees. And yet if any thought would arise about the form that would just be something else to be seen in that absolute experience. And what we do is we just spend time, and by the way in this experience of seeing, ironically or perfectly, the act of just seeing without the need to project onto what you see what it doesn't say about itself, is always another way of unraveling the nervous system.

WIZARD: That's the most beautiful definition I've ever heard of a seer. And I think there's a term that this edification is most appropriate for at this particular juncture, and the unfolding of it

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all. There are saints, sages and seers, and you've really beautifully edified the term seer.

MATT KAHN: Thank you.

WIZARD: I appreciate it greatly.

MATT KAHN: Thank you, it's a very surprising turn of events when the sincerity of heart transitions from being caught up in what you see to simply seeing what you see. And when you just see what you see, you find the most miraculous paradox, or what you said so eloquently before, the marriage, which is what you see is what you've been conditioned to see, and yet the seeing that views it has never been conditioned at all. Even if we were to stare at an object and just to get the feeling of the act of seeing, and ask ourselves, in this experience of just seeing, in our feeling senses, in our intuitive sense, does it feel as if the seeing contains a history, a gender, a path, an agenda? Does it seem to contain an identity? Does there seem to be a root cause in the seeing, and if there's nothing but seeing, that means already despite the appearance of a world that's just reflecting back your experience based on how over stimulated the nervous system is in the body, inherently, naturally, the seeing contains no identity, no gender, no agenda, and no preference. And there's no root cause to the seeing, which means if there's no root cause to the seeing that means the world has absolutely no effect on you, you're the only one seeing this.

WIZARD: And that seeing is the marriage of form and formlessness, the marriage is consummated in that seeing, in the root love in the truest sense.

MATT KAHN: Yes. And isn't it ironic, and I like what you're saying, it's beautifully and eloquently put, that when love in the truest sense is the celebration of the marriage of the deepest seeing in existence. And yet children teach us this in every moment, where the moment they feel love is when they're being paid attention to. It is the seeing that lets the child know that they are loved and supported.

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TRIP: He's great. Another beautiful aspect of your teaching I want to have you explore some more is that you say we only perceive lack in a world we fail to explore. Perhaps the only thing that is ever lacking in our lives is the lack of adventure and exploration that we came to this planet to freely experience in the first place. That's beautiful. So it's really that desire to explore, to play. So, talk about that.

MATT KAHN: It is in the realization it is not ending up at a conclusion of now I get it, now I can repeat it. It is like a child staring in awe of a fireworks display, it is like a child looking up at the stars not knowing what is and not knowing what isn't, but just in that sense of wow. And what we're really returning to is our own childlike innocent desire to explore and to explore means I enter into a moment without a need to refer to things the way things don't refer to themselves. Maybe I even see that things don't even refer to me the way I refer to me. if I don't refer to anything at all, and I'm just allowing the senses, or the seeing to invite into the experience, whatever this moment happens, however this moment happens to decorate itself, then there is a sense of... in that adventure we find a sense of equality and acknowledgment that perhaps everything that appears in form is only appearing to be acknowledged with heartfelt equality, which cannot happen when we try to do it, it can only happen naturally from the seeing that only sees equality and wholeness, no matter how the form is decorated.

So for me the exploration is the interest to just be open to all possibilities in every moment, no matter what imagination remembers before.

TRIP: I see why you and Scott Kiloby are friends [Laughs].

MATT KAHN: He's a wonderful man.

TRIP: You guys are both tight, really tight. Okay, we've got about six more minutes left, and I've got a question from Kim. She says her question is a simply complex one, as paradoxical as

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spiritualism is. Okay, she asks, "When you are in that state of confusion, that over stimulated nervous system, what you do to let the transition take place? I described this as my being in a chaotic state, and that it's like being in an ocean and a wave is blocking you, but you can almost get over it, but still struggle. I can't get past the wave but want to. How do you get past this wave?" Kim asks.

MATT KAHN: I'll give two answers. The first is the simple answer, and the second just more instructing. The first answer is the way you get past it is by surviving it. What would help someone in this space is allowing the body to relax in what it hasn't been taught to relax in. And the way we do this is whenever confusion arises, we just recognize that confusion is the next aspect of the infinite whole that is here to be loved as it's never been loved before.

So I would say to Kim, instead of labeling confusion, just locate where do I feel the confusion in my body. And if I just close my eyes, and silently send for about a minute or two minutes a silent stream of I love yous to that part of my body, as if the confusion is only here to be acknowledged and loved as being equal to the sum of the whole, that the suffering we feel in confusion is based on the body interpreting the differences we've imposed upon it with meaning and words.

So every time something arises whether it's anger, sadness, jealousy, betrayal, confusion, apathy, withdrawal, whatever it is, it's just the next flavor in the ice cream parlor that arises in our emotional body, and we locate it in our body, and we then just send a silent stream of I love yous to the confusion, not trying to change it, not trying to enhance it, or unravel it, just to send I love yous to that part of the body and allowing what is unraveling in that part of the body to happen on its own.

So I would say that it's kind of like a relationship between a parent and child. A parent doesn't have to constantly wake up their child during night terrors, but lovingly hold them while they dream.

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WIZARD: Just an accepting embrace of it.

MATT KAHN: Yes, I love you is just a way for people to experience that acceptance without trying to accept with the intention or the agenda of, I'm accepting so I can get the heck away from this. And it's the most loving act that during the deepest most desperate moment of confusion, we're just locating and sending I love yous to that part of the body, and just seeing what happens when we just do that. And often times it's a very surprising and miraculous shift when we see that whatever arises within the appearance of the body is just here to be loved, while also simultaneously being an invitation that as you love yourself, all hearts in existence are simultaneously being loved at the rate at which you embrace what is here.

TRIP: Almost lost you on the audio there, but Kim, thank you for that question, answering that question, and I just want to take care of a little business for you. You've got a book coming out soon called *Effortless Freedom*, I'm sure it's going to be a wonderful book, and you also do a radio show, *The Heart of Awakening*, which airs on the first and third Fridays of every month on the World Puja Internet broadcasting system, 12.30 pm Pacific time. Is that right?

WIZARD: I'm not familiar with that.

TRIP: No?

WIZARD: How do we tune in?

MATT KAHN: I think on the World Puja website on those dates when the radio show airs on those times, you just kind of follow the link. And for the first 24 hours the radio shows are free, you can listen to them for free.

WIZARD: Is there a website?

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MATT KAHN: It's worldpuja.org. Or you can go to my website, truedivinenature.com, and on my website there are all the links that take you right to the page.

WIZARD: Yes, I'll check that out.

MATT KAHN: Wonderful, love to have you.

TRIP: Got two minutes, anything that I missed that you'd like to share?

MATT KAHN: Well, what comes to me spontaneously is I would love if you had anything that you'd really want to ask, I mean of your journey, just if you could ask anything what would it be.

WIZARD: I'd want to express my gratitude for an affirmation for myself.

MATT KAHN: Wonderful.

WIZARD: That lets me be at peace with what's happening [Laughs].

MATT KAHN: That's beautiful.

WIZARD: I've had a lot of experiences too, like you; I spent a lot of time with Muktananda, and have had visionary experiences. And the Samadhis, the disappearances, and the marriage, the coming together of the two as one that true nonduality marries the movie and the movie screen together. And I really appreciate that.

MATT KAHN: Which essentially that's the I love you, the way in which we're really saying, I am you. I am you, and I love you.

TRIP: And we love you, Matt. This was fantastic; thank you so much for joining us today.

MATT KAHN: What a pleasure, thank you so much.

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MATT KAHN: Take care.

WIZARD: Bye.



[Morgan Caraway](http://blessedisillusionment.blogspot.com/)

<http://blessedisillusionment.blogspot.com/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, author Morgan Caraway, would like you to know he is not a spiritual teacher. Teaching and learning he says are useful when learning functional knowledge, but being existence can't be taught. Presence is already present, and doesn't need to be learned, we all already share this common awareness. Beware; Morgan would caution you, of those who would sell it to you. Now having read Morgan Caraway's book,

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Blessed Disillusionment, seeing through ideas of self, I enthusiastically concur with John Wheeler, who said in the foreword, it is one of the most direct and uncompromising contemporary books on nonduality available. Morgan's insights are dead on target and he does not pull any punches.

Morgan Caraway, a cage rattling, green, and non-dual, non-teacher, and I thought I was the only one. [Laughter]

MORGAN CARAWAY: Apparently not.

TRIP: Well, before we get into your spiritual side, if you will, the Wizard says you're green, what's going on in your green world?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well my better half, Mary Jane, and I are very serious about sustainability, and in 2009 we built a yurt on some property in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and we lived in that while we built an earth bag house. And now we live in our earth bag house, and we just added an addition to it, a sun room, so on sunny days in the winter, we'll get a lot of nice free heat and also one gets so... we'll keep our vitamin D up too, go and sit in the sun.

But we're very serious about sustainability almost as far as the human world goes, I can't think of a more important field, because to me if something's not sustainable, what is it?

TRIP: I agree there's nothing more important than sustainability in my opinion. I've dedicated my life to it, and I live in the first straw bale house built in the south east of the United States.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Oh, really!

TRIP: Yes, and basically my whole scene is a sustainability lab, but I do think that earth bags basically like the biggest bang for the buck you can do.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. Well, it's amazing. People buy houses now, what's one of the cheapest housing options; it'll be a

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mobile home. And that's still \$50,000, \$60,000, and you have a house or a shelter that is going to cost you extreme amounts of money during its life because it's not insulated well, it's not pointing in the right direction. On the other hand you can build an earth bag house like we did for around \$4,000. And it stays cool in the summer, doesn't need AC, you just think about the direction of the sun, and I think it's a no brainer. I mean it's economically smart, and it's a way that you can live, even if the power is shut off.

TRIP: You didn't really build the entire house for \$4,000, did you?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. Earth bag building is very cheap because really the price of the bags is one of the main costs, and wood, for the roof, was another main cost. But we got all our windows and doors at Habitat for Humanities that we would come across. A great place, by the way, for building materials.

TRIP: What about power, and plumbing, and all that? I mean, that stuff is expensive.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well we use the Humanure system, are you familiar with that?

TRIP: Yes.

MORGAN CARAWAY: We use the Humanure system, and it's a great system, there's a book about it that I suggest to everyone called *The Humanure Handbook* available from amazon.com, all the major book sellers have it. And he says, it's crazy what our current system is, which we flush away our waste with fresh drinking water, and in the process lose the organic matter in our waste and we ruin the drinking water. So it's not a very smart way to deal with it, so we use the Humanure system which doesn't stink like some regular composting toilets do. For electricity we just have a very small solar set up, 300 watts of panels.

TRIP: Wow, you're living very simply, aren't you?

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MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. You know the Truth is we live comfortably; we have plenty of power for what we need. The thing in sustainability is for every dollar you spend on efficiency, you save \$5 that you would spend on a solar system, or whatever power you're using. So you just find efficient gadgets.

TRIP: Cool, now let's move onto your spiritual life here. You say that your book is entitled *Blessed Disillusionment*. Can you explain what disillusionment means?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, it's strange, I think usually in our culture when we hear the word disillusionment, there's a sense of failure around it, or I was disillusioned, people would say, and it just seems like a defeat. But to me all disillusionment means is losing the illusions that one has held onto. The main illusion that is the bane of our lives is the illusion of separation, the ego idea. And it crosses over with sustainability, once again the ego feels separate, so it feels apart from nature, it feels like it can pollute the environment without polluting itself. That's just an illusion though, it isn't separate, it has to breathe the air that gets polluted, the organism does, and it has to drink the water. So separation just doesn't exist on any level, and to me, the main illusion is the illusion of separation.

TRIP: And that's what your book is really about, it goes through that illusion over, and over, and over again.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. It's the root. In sustainability it's also the root of the problem, it's feeling apart from the world, and human beings feeling apart from each other. I figure why strike at the symptoms of that problem, you might as well go ahead and strike at the root of it.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Speaking of that separation, I've got a question for you, and it's a question I have for almost all of the authors of books about reality, if you will. You had a choice in the writing of the book, you

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could have taken one of many perspectives, one of the perspectives you could have taken in the writing of your book would have been you could have assumed your oneness in the perspective of the writer of the book, right? You could have instead have been writing for apparent other people who might gain some wisdom from the reading of your book, you could have assumed there are no other people, and simply written that book as a conversation with yourself, right? But you didn't...

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right. Obviously, and I guess from the ultimate standpoint every expression is that, it's whatever you want to call it, but it's God speaking to itself, it is the divine speaking to itself. So it doesn't matter if we say me and you, or I and I, or whatever you call it, it's still that divine speaking to itself.

And the book, for me, was written for seekers, it's specifically written to people who are seeking to get out of that sense of isolation and separation. The seeker can go on forever, seeking can go on forever, and there's always this idea, oh, there's this big pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, or around the next corner I'll get the piece of knowledge I need, or I'll get whatever it is, that's assumed that's going to bring happiness and liberation. But for me it's just seeing that... people who speak clearly on it just point out what's already present, what's already here. And we find that everything we need, everything there is, is already right here, once the ideas are put aside. But it seems like our main problem is mistaking those ideas for reality.

We have a mental construct, of what's real, what's Truth, and we hold onto that, and we might make little modifications as we go, little adjustments to it. But that's still a construct, no matter how clear it is. The map is not the territory. That's part of the blessed disillusionment too, like when you're lucky enough to speak to someone who is clear on it, for me it was John Wheeler who was very helpful to me.

TRIP: Right, so John was clear for you, and you must have spent some significant time in relationship with him, or still are in

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relationship with him. What were some of the highlights of the things that he helped you to wrap your head around, or let go of?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Reading his books for me was great, because John is always pointing to what's already here. So reading his books was great, but there were still questions arising, still quite a few assumptions. So I called him and talked to him, and as we were talking these ideas I had about the nature of reality would come up, and then John would, in his gentle way, he would say, well that's an idea, that's not necessarily reality. So eventually by the time we were done talking it was like all these little concepts had been put aside and what was always present behind the concepts shines through. So that was magical the first time I talked to John on the phone.

I called him later, and it's a funny little story I like to tell people because he was going to be speaking in Washington DC, which isn't too far from us. So I was talking to him the second time we spoke on the phone. He lives in Santa Cruz, California. But the second time I spoke to him on the phone I was saying, "I see you're going to be speaking in DC, John, I'm thinking about coming to see you". And he said, "What for?" [Laughs] He was like, "Why?" And I mean, how many spiritual teachers... he would never claim to be a spiritual teacher, so I don't even mean to say that, but how many people who speak about these things would say that? What's the point? What is... is already there where you are.

TRIP: I have to congratulate you...

MORGAN CARAWAY: It's not going to be any more so by coming and being in someone else's presence.

TRIP: You more methodically and adroitly rattled through all of the pitfalls, if you will, or the incorrect assumptions that people have in the spiritual community, and you go through them. And, boy, [Laughs] you don't go with a light hand there.

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MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, yes. For me in the question of being a seeker, which I'm sure we've all shared it. I know John shared it, I loved reading John's story, and it's a great story, there are just so many meetings with some of these personalities. But with everybody there are these ideas that we have about the whole process, there's ideas about what enlightenment is, what awakening is. There's ideas that one person is somehow closer to God than another, or can speak on God's behalf. And these can lead to all kinds of abuses, authoritarianism. One of my little pastimes is reading about cults, and when it goes bad. Power essentially.

WIZARD: Yes.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Political power would be the same, but it's just for me I was just trying to go ahead and help smash those ideas. I don't know if it is helpful, I don't know if I succeeded, but I just figured there are all those little ideas. For me, for instance, I was reading *As It Is* years ago, by Tony Parsons, have you read that?

TRIP: I have not.

MORGAN CARAWAY: It was my first introduction to nonduality, and I was reading it and Tony has his awakening story, and he was walking across the park in England, and he just talked about how great and how blissful it was. So for a long time I was just looking for that experience that would indicate that awakening has happened. And I think there are all those stories.

I was reading Brad Warner who wrote *Hardcore Zen*, he was talking about reading about the old Zen masters and their enlightenment experiences. He said somebody had thrown a rock and it dinged on a bell, or something, and he was hoping he could have that same experience or something like it. And it just never happened for him that way, but I guess the main point is it's not an experience that we're looking for.

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WIZARD: It's the antithesis of experience.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right. It's the thing that makes experience possible.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: So that's why you feel it's not useful to tell the story how you "got it"?

MORGAN CARAWAY: True. That is right. And for me it wasn't a Eureka explosion, and I'm not saying I am awakened, or un-awakened, or anything. But that experience never happened to me, a specific thing. But it seemed, like I said talking with John, that clarity was there after talking to him, and it didn't really take a particular experience to get to that point.

TRIP: All right, well here comes my first challenging question for you, and of course I'll be sticking my foot in my mouth, and you'll be making me look like the fool that I am.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Please, all questions are welcome.

TRIP: All right. Now you say there is no such thing as awakening, okay. You write that in your book, there is no such thing as awakening. Now this is what I want to respond to that, and you tell me what's wrong with what I'm saying here. Now, myself and many other people that I've interviewed on this program, I woke up from a dream of separate personhood, okay. I was walking along thinking myself to be a guy named Trip in a separate body, with a birth, life, death, and the whole thing. And all of a sudden I had the waking state experience without acid or mushrooms, which was that in fact this was not true, and a sense of me as a separate person for a period of time dissolved. And I could sense that I was simply presence itself in a timeless spacious presence. Okay.

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I had that experience, and that experience gave me the impetus, the desire, the yearning, to then get the affirmation that I wasn't crazy from my friend the Wizard here, and it was a definite defining point in my life, okay. Now you say there's no such thing as awakening, so that defining point for me was an awakening, and I talk to people, and I say, I woke up. Now you're telling me there's no such thing as that, so I'm confused.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, for me it's that what ended for you was the illusion of being a separate person. It was not that there ever was a separate person; it's not that there ever was isolation, but that idea fell away. And it seems that that idea falls away for many "people", in different ways. For some of them there may be a set experience, I remember John's experience while he was reading *Be Here Now*, and some of the others he was talking about. And then for other people it just sort of... so sometimes you hear it happens for no reason, or happens for no understandable reason from any individual. Then on the other side there's people who seek for it for their entire life and never find what they're looking for. But the thing I'm pointing out is when the ego disappears nothing really died, nothing real has gone, it's just ideas dropped away.

So what it means is that there is no one to awaken. There is no individual person who can awaken.

WIZARD: The *Now* is always.

MORGAN CARAWAY: The *Now* is always. Yes.

TRIP: It's true, but I guess there's a limitation to writing books and sharing with people, because you go back and forth between referring to the absolute, which there is no awakening, and then to the relative where you're giving people advice on a relative realm. And so, you have to run with the author's intent on all of these things.

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MORGAN CARAWAY: It is all just words, and probably completely different approaches are useful for different people.

WIZARD: I've got one for you all.

MORGAN CARAWAY: What have you got, John?

WIZARD: What counsel would you have for the occupy movement?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, I wrote a letter on Facebook, did you get a chance to look at that?

WIZARD: No.

MORGAN CARAWAY: I wrote a letter to the occupy movement, and I said, what it seems they need, this is just my opinion, obviously opinions are like you know what [Laughs], but I think they need to get clear on what it is they're trying to do. One of the ideas I suggested was get a hold of the American Psychiatric Association and have greed labelled as a mental illness, just like alcoholism, or any other mental illness. I think that would be a good start.

WIZARD: And how would one deal with greed?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well that's tricky, isn't it? I mean, the thing I tell people is our society created these people who are extremely self absorbed and greedy, and our society is still creating them today. We encourage that in our society. We encourage people to be competitive, look out for number one, so our society creates that mindset. So the first step is to realise as a society that it's not a healthy mindset.

WIZARD: Where does it begin?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Oh, it obviously begins with each person; it obviously begins with just realising that the separation isn't real.

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So that means there is no degree of separation between us and anything in the universe, and that all living beings at heart are only that awareness, that pure awareness that gives rise to everything.

WIZARD: So the root cause of greed is the “I am the body” notion.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, the ego idea, the idea of being separate and apart, and identification with the mind/body appearance.

WIZARD: To cut the limbs off the trees doesn't kill the tree.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, it's like cutting the heads of the hydra, you cut a head off, and two more grow back. You're there forever, and there's more and more heads. It won't solve it.

WIZARD: You've got to go to the root.

MORGAN CARAWAY: To the heart of it, yes.

WIZARD: Which is this sense of separation.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right. Which our culture fully embraces and believes in, and most cultures or many of them have embraced that. Some of the native American cultures, you guys have probably some read about them, like the *Black Elk Speaks*, but they couldn't relate to the idea of the one person having more riches than they will ever need in life, and someone else being homeless on the street. That just did not make any sense to them. That wasn't the way their society was.

TRIP: Well this conversation we're having about folks who are motivated by greed brings me another question for you. You write, "There isn't a spiritual in-club, those who have gotten it and those who haven't". I want to challenge you on that one, and again it's this thing between the relative and the absolute. But obviously on the absolute level everyone already is it, so they can't get it

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because the one that would get it doesn't actually exist. But if we're going to talk about in the relative realm, the folks motivated by greed are like the people who actually believe they're the characters in a play, and the ones that understand that they're just acting are in the in-club, and the ones who think that the play is real, are in the out-club. So I think there is an in-club and out-club, and it's basically about what you identify with, if you identify with yourself as a separate person, then you could be said to not be in the in-club, or am I dreaming here? I don't know.

WIZARD: I mean, let's say there's an in-club of the greedy people, how would you define that person?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, to me all of it is God playing a game, the Hindus call it *Lila*, the dance of God, I'm sure you guys are way familiar with those ideas. So it's all the dance of God and the thing is God plays its role so well that it becomes totally identified in the role, while at the same time the awareness is always here, the consciousness is always here. It's the root of all of it. But there can be this very strong identification with a particular role, but it's still God or Brahma, or the Tao or whatever you want to call it, that is playing those roles. So to say there is an in-club and an out-club is to buy into the roles that are played. And I just think it is all God.

WIZARD: So for one idea, a group idea, to oppose another group idea, is futile.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes, it just goes on forever. And generally to oppose something is to make it stronger.

WIZARD: Yes.

MORGAN CARAWAY: I know in my past spiritual search, and quest, and struggles, there was this idea that I should fight with thoughts that don't fit with my self-image, or the way things should be. And it is like putting gasoline on a fire when you do that. It just makes it worse.

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TRIP: But it's not always the case, I guess in practical matters, it's not. You said that, for example, the war on drugs hasn't worked, the war on terrorism hasn't worked, and so we've actually made those things worse by "fighting them".

MORGAN CARAWAY: Exactly. How much has it changed? It hasn't changed the war on anything. They've been saying the war on poverty for how long?

TRIP: I agree. So I thought that through, but you know what, I came up with one where you're wrong about that. We had a war on diseases and we beat the crap out of a bunch of those diseases. So we...

MORGAN CARAWAY: True, we did. On the other hand it's like a boomerang, we got rid of those infectious diseases, but that used to be one of the main things that kept the human population in check.

WIZARD: But now we're calling greed a disease.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. I mean, they think there'll be 10 billion people on the planet by 2030, and petroleum is going to be running out, you're probably familiar with this, Trip, the idea of peak oil, and post oil society. So, yes, we did beat those diseases, but humans are still held by the same laws that every other creature in nature is, there are limited resources, and it can only support so much population.

In a strange way we did win that war. And I think any species would have done it, we're not bad in doing it, because who wants to see their family members die a horrible agonising death, scarlet fever, or something. But in the end it's turned around to bite us on the butt, because our population has gotten way out of hand now.

WIZARD: Yes, now social security can't handle all these old people.

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MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes, I know, it's scary what the future holds, as we're going on. We've been in a very lucky time period, I think, this is talking about just modern life, but it's like we have power like no other country in the planet, or no other society has had it. We've been spoiled, and I think that time will come to an end. I hope we can use the remaining resources to get ourselves in a sustainable position, but we'll see.

TRIP: So these are difficult times and it brings up another question I have for you, and this isn't a question to try to pin you down, but really to help me out here, because I'm not resolved about this, okay. You say, "Nothing in this book is meant to imply that you shouldn't care if your family gets run over by a steamroller, because you're so detached. It just means that any psychological suffering that is experienced is based on a misconception that one is a separate person apart from life", okay.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right.

TRIP: All right, now I get that, but I looked up caring in the dictionary, and it says, "Displaying kindness and concern for others", okay. Then I looked up concern, which says, "anxiety, and worry". So on the one hand you're saying, of course be anxious if your family gets run over by a steamroller, right, but recognize the source. What good is recognizing the source if it's still okay to be anxious? I mean, really, deep down?

MORGAN CARAWAY: I just mean, even if somebody's self-idea is different than it used to be, or gone, or whatever, say that's no longer believed in, there can still be emotions, crying, there can still be everything. Like, for example, my mother, Peggy, she has Parkinson's disease, and she's doing much better at the moment. But I was visiting with her a few months ago and she was ravaged by the disease, and she was over medicated, she was on too many meds. And even though I wrote everything I wrote in that book, it was like I still cried my eyes out all the time. And I didn't feel like that was a denial, I didn't feel like feeling it's a denial of nonduality; it's just another thing that appears. So that's what I

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meant. There's some of those Cliques in the nonduality world that, oh, you just need to be completely unattached to anything, but it's all God, so why not feel bad, when something bad happens. You know what I mean?

WIZARD: Stephen Covey has this thing he calls the circle of concern, and the circle of influence. And when attention is in the circle of concern, that's in the circle where none of our activities can make any significant difference. And then we have our circle of influence that for as we take care of the here and now, which is in our sphere of influence, then that grows and the circle of concern shrinks. But when we put our attention in the circle of concern, the circle of influence becomes smaller, and smaller, and smaller.

MORGAN CARAWAY: In a way you're just saying, you can either worry about something and put all this thought energy, and conceptualize about it, or you can do something about the things you can do something about.

WIZARD: Take care of the here and *Now*.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes, right. It's always of course the here and *Now*. I always love talking about it, and like in the book. I remember years ago I read a Ramesh Balsekar, I think it was *The Ultimate Understanding*, and it was a collection of a lot of his ideas. And he was talking about what are we going towards? Oh, he was talking about time and space, and he was saying they're illusions. And it was to me an interesting idea, I was like God, time and space are illusions, but I'm like that doesn't seem to be my experience. At the time I was like, time seems very real, and space too.

So it was a very confounding idea when I first read it. I was like that just doesn't hold up to reason. But then John and other people, John Wheeler, who I was reading at the time, he pointed out no matter if we're thinking about the past or the future, it always happens *Now*. So in all reality there is no past or future,

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there is only this moment, and like John always says, the *Now*, there is the *Now*. So that's very easy, isn't it? Do you think that that's clear for everyone, that there is no past or future?

TRIP: I think it's pretty easy to get that one personally.

MORGAN CARAWAY: I mean space seems a little more difficult.

WIZARD: Space is illusion. Space or consciousness, what we refer to as consciousness, is an illusion. And consciousness is... I'm a lucid dreamer, and my lucid dreams are just as real, if not more real, than this waking state. But it creates space, it creates time, it creates everything. But yet when it segways into a waking state, and moving from one word balloon so to speak of consciousness into another word balloon of consciousness. And all of that is happening in a stillness that is *Now*, it is pure seamless sentient awareness, and the only sentience is that *Now* that is formless, and the sentience reflects off the images to give it apparent life.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, to me it's the light of awareness moving within itself. And all space really is, it seems confounding, like God, I'm standing here right now in the dunes near the beach, and I'm looking and in the distance it looks like there's a walkway, and there's buildings, and there's everything else. But really all of those things are just an interpretation by thought of this light that's appearing.

WIZARD: It's the bifurcating mind that creates space.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right. The only thing we can really speak about, wouldn't you agree, John, is here and *Now*?

WIZARD: That is correct.

MORGAN CARAWAY: That's the only thing we can really authoritatively speak about.

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WIZARD: It's the constant.

MORGAN CARAWAY: The constant.

WIZARD: And it's indivisible, and it's beginning-less and endless.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes.

WIZARD: And it's motionless. So if it moves, it's the movie. But the screen, *Now*, doesn't move. It's absolute acceptance.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes, it can also be called love.

WIZARD: Love, or God, or...

MORGAN CARAWAY: The same understanding.

WIZARD: But *Now* never ever makes a claim of its own.

MORGAN CARAWAY: It doesn't need to.

WIZARD: And doesn't care what label you put on it.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Sure. Yes, words can be tricky, because, sometimes we all get so wrapped up in words, and put so much weight in it. Like you said, it doesn't matter what you call it.

WIZARD: But if we go to the root of the tree, and have a radical over standing of that, then the primacy of what we are, not who we are, the primacy of what we are is revealed as the *Now*, and it moves to the forefront as seamless sentient existence itself, and it's formless and eternal. That undoes the mechanics of greed and separation.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right.

WIZARD: So to bring that, that is cutting the very root of the tree, it gets rid of the...

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MORGAN CARAWAY: It takes care of all other problems.

WIZARD: The duality. And it's contagious, that paradigm shift is contagious, just by being in company with one another. And that's in our circle of influence, and not in a circle of concern we can't do anything about.

MORGAN CARAWAY: To me that's what John Wheeler, that's what his pointers helped show was that there can be a billion concepts about all of that. There can be endless ideas, endless discussions about whatever we think we're discussing. But the important part of nonduality and Advaita is how it relates to one's own self-identity. How it relates to one's experience. Until it's tied into that, it's just a spinning conceptual framework.

TRIP: Exactly. So I have question for you guys. Is there anybody that falls outside of one of the following two categories, either you got struck by the cosmic two by four, and you don't want to talk about your "got it" experience, but you had one, the Wizard had one, I had one, everybody we've interviewed on this program has had one. Where they had a waking state, or a lucid dreaming or whatever, experience where they got the fact this idea of separate personhood as an illusion.

WIZARD: We became disillusioned.

TRIP: And then everything that goes down between those folks who've had that experience is the choir talking to the choir, it's like this radio program, and we're the choir and we're talking to the choir. Or you're in another category, you haven't been struck by the cosmic two by four, you want to be, or you think that the person that has... has something that you can get from them, and you're called the seeker.

Is there anyone outside of that category, is there anyone who is not a seeker, who has not been struck by a cosmic two by four, who gets it to the degree that they have the confidence and the faith to live their Truth that they are not a separate person, to actually not

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be afraid that there's death coming like a railroad car that's going to hit them? Is there anyone in that category, I'm wondering, do you know anybody in that category?

MORGAN CARAWAY: That hasn't had a "awakening" experience, is that what you're saying?

TRIP: Yes, who is not a seeker?

MORGAN CARAWAY: So you're saying someone who never was a seeker, but they just for whatever reason, the idea of separateness fell away, is that what you're saying?

TRIP: Yes. No, I'm saying is there anyone...

MORGAN CARAWAY: Tony Parsons used to talk about it, John, you may know some cases too, but he would talk about people who just had this experience. Who was it, is it John Adams, one of the students of Ramana Maharshi?

WIZARD: Robert Adams.

MORGAN CARAWAY: He was taking a math test in class as a child, and his consciousness expanded to the infinite. He went to Ramana to try to straighten it out after it happened. I guess that is that experience. But he wasn't a seeker. And really Ramana wasn't a seeker, so many people say you have to have a guru before you can realise the Truth.

TRIP: I'm not saying no seekers; almost nobody that actually gets it was ever a seeker.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Interesting, interesting.

WIZARD: In seeking, seeking is suffering, and there's a lot of carrot stick quackery out there that exploits seeking, but seeking is not spiritual life. Being affirmed in what you are is spiritual life.

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MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. I would say the seeking is sort of optional. Some go through that experience of trying to find the Truth. I was a seeker for probably decades. And there was that hunger to know the Truth, so you're always looking for that experience. You're always looking for that whatever you picture it to be.

WIZARD: But that's the mantra of doubt.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right and the Truth is it never comes through any of that. It's really once those ideas are put aside of what it all is, and we look at what is present right *Now* in this moment, in the absence of ideas what's present.

WIZARD: When the seeking is exhausted; when the remedies are exhausted.

TRIP: But when you're having that moment where you're looking at reality as it really is, and you "get it", the bifurcating mind ceases to bifurcate for a period of time, and you're able to directly experience spacious awareness as who you are. That's a "get it" experience, and if it doesn't happen where the bifurcating mind stops bifurcating, I don't think anybody out there is going to have the interest or the passion to sort of fly in the face of the overwhelming evidence that they are in fact a separate person, that life is a bitch, and you're got to fight for everything you get. But they're not going to get the route of surrender if they haven't had that taste, do you agree or not?

WIZARD: They had it when they were born.

TRIP: Well they lost it though.

WIZARD: They were taught a language that was bifurcating by nature.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right. Well the thing we were taught is that these ideas is apparent reality. Have you ever noticed how we

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talk about ideas, do this, but we talk about ideas as if they're real. But the ideas are always at best a conceptual roadmap of the terrain. But the Truth is what we're talking about the ideas just can't apply to it, they can't stick to it, and they can't limit it. You can't limit the limitless with an idea, with words. Because what you end up holding is just the limited, the concept.

WIZARD: Right, all form, which is always within that, this *Now*. *Now* is greater.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, the concepts arise within present reality. But there can be a mystification with the ideas, and mistaking them for reality. But all there is... is that awareness, appearing as every little grain of sand, and every leaf, and every person, and everything. So whether it's identified or not, it's not a personal choice, and it really doesn't matter. It's not that one person decides to awaken and another doesn't decide to awaken. It's just God at play, that's the way I see it.

WIZARD: The movie doesn't change the screen.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, just like Ramana Maharshi used to talk about the movie and the screen, and that the screen is still there with or without the movie.

WIZARD: The screen is real.

MORGAN CARAWAY: The screen is real.

WIZARD: The *Now* is real. The *Now* is the screen within which the movie plays out. The *Now* remains, the movie keeps changing.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, always in motion.

WIZARD: And leaves the *Now* unscathed.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Untouched always.

WIZARD: Always.

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MORGAN CARAWAY: And fully realized. there's the idea that God is asleep, but God is completely awake-ness.

TRIP: Hey, speaking of Ramana Maharshi, he's the gold standard by which many get their nondual wisdom affirmed. And by the way you taught me something in your book, and I spent a lot of time pouring through this information and it wasn't anything new, but it was just, I don't know, it was you and the way you said it in your book, and where I'm at right now. But I got something for the first time reading it, and what's interesting is these two points you are in contradiction with Ramana Maharshi, which is pretty damn amazing. And that is that Ramana said two things, he said that we have apparently a single act of free will, which is that which we choose to identify with, okay. And the second thing he said, and I notice he said that everything is predetermined. He said those words, everything is predetermined, and those words came out of his mouth. You say, free will and predetermination are in reference to a supposed independent individual, and you're right. There can be no predetermination if there's no individual to be predetermined.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, nor can there be freewill.

TRIP: So Ramana didn't necessarily have everything right there.

WIZARD: Thy will doesn't suffer the dilemma of apparent choice, it just is. So accept the *Now* is the utter acceptance. *Now* always already accepts everything.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, unconditionally. Because the *Now*, God, whatever you want to call it, is everything.

WIZARD: Identify with a movie, you get fooled into the dilemma of all these apparent choices, identify with *Now*, the movie's perfect.

MORGAN CARAWAY: It's effortless and it's just flowing.

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WIZARD: Every action is perfect, which dissolves judgment.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right. Yes. I'm remembering having debates with people about free will versus predetermination, and it would be very heated debates, people feel very strongly about those concepts.

WIZARD: But it's the "I am the body" notion, the bifurcating mind, that thinks it has free will, but it only thinks it has free will and something that is separate from a separate entity. No separation, there would be no...

MORGAN CARAWAY: Then it goes out the window.

WIZARD: It goes out the window, yes.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. I'm sure you all are Nisargadatta fans, huh?

TRIP: Yes.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, he had a funny thing, he said, "Ask me any question you want but just don't ask it from the idea I am the body, or I am the mind". And then once you throw those ideas aside, there really aren't any questions.

WIZARD: That's right.

MORGAN CARAWAY: He was funny; I think you all probably saw on your Facebook page someone posted where he said, "Okay, who has understood what I'm saying?" And X amount of members of the group that was with him raised their hands, and he said, "You can leave and never come back". And then he said, "And the rest of you who haven't understood, you can also leave and never come back". [Laughter]

TRIP: A quick little thing, point, and then a question for both of you, or whatever. One is that you have a page in your book where

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you call them the shortest pointers in the world, which are the most succinct word concepts that point at ultimate reality. You didn't use silence in there. Now you're a smart boy, I know you've thought about it, how come not silence or peace, because are the two words the Wizard over here uses basically more than any to point. But you didn't use silence or peace, is there a reason for that?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, it's just words, it's all just words. I wouldn't say anything I said is any better than anybody else's way of expressing it. And the Truth is I think about that book, and to me it's like I didn't even write it. It's like it wrote itself. I can talk about all the ideas in it, but it's just the ideas came up and I put them down on paper, and you could use all kinds of different words, probably other people would have chosen a whole different list of them. And it really doesn't matter; I think that's the main point. The pointers are only good as pointers, but if we think the pointers are what they're pointing at, and then we're missing the point. But, yes, I don't know. To me silence and peace, these seem like qualities. As we know life can be very exciting and loud.

We've been near the beach for a few days here, and the ocean is so restless, it's just always in motion. But there's something about the noise of it that's so soothing. It's like a strange dichotomy; it's both things at the same time. And that's the way life is I guess, on the surface it can be very crazy and active, but I guess the core of it, the heart is always at peace, like John was saying.

WIZARD: Yes, the depth of the ocean is peaceful.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right, the ripples on the surface and the waves don't hurt the depth, or they don't disturb the depth.

WIZARD: And there are many, many waves and forms at the edge, and no two are alike.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Each one totally unique.

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WIZARD: But all fall back into the same sea.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes. And they are ultimately only the ocean, that's all they ever were. We could call one wave Bob, and another wave Frank, but they're just the ocean.

WIZARD: From ripple to tsunami.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Yes.

TRIP: One thing that occurred to me reading your book, and then in reflection on all the other books that I've read, and you two might comment on this, is that spiritual teachers or wisdom keepers speak eloquently and at great length on the nature of this present moment, on the nature of awareness, on the nature of being, all that. I mean, Rupert Spira has written an entire book on like dissecting this present moment of *Now*, right? And they also speak very confidently about what awareness is absent like our human perception of it, for example. But one thing that I don't hear anybody talking about, which is like really a massive topic, is what is the mechanism by which, and I know there's no answer to this, but what's the mechanism by which all of this stuff is mysteriously making its appearance? The spiritual teachers just gloss over that, things make their appearance, well how the hell did that happen?

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well, it is physics, they say consciousness is the thing that makes it happen, and where there's consciousness form appears.

WIZARD: Knowing you don't know is Wisdom.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right.

WIZARD: Knowing that stuff, somebody put a post about crop circles on our page, and says, "How does this fit in?", or something about avant-garde sages. A sage puts a capital "M" on the Mystery, and trusts it, and abides in the *Now*, and there's a quality

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of acceptance the *Now* has that unconditionally accepts everything. And to go out into the "hows" and the "whys" is to get into the movie and get seduced into the movie, and then you're bifurcating as the movie. In that, one loses native vision and the primacy of being pure *Now*.

MORGAN CARAWAY: The important thing is the Oneness. The important element is the unity of it. And I agree, it's like in another sense, all that appears is light. Sound is vibration. So it's all really just vibration is all it is.

WIZARD: We don't see our own light, we see...

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right light is vibration, sound is vibration, and everything we experience is. So we think there's separateness involved, but even in our day to day experience if we don't believe the concepts that we have, or that arise, or that we're told, there's just oneness from day to day, no matter what you're doing.

WIZARD: When you're hanging out in and as the *Now*, everything is unfolding just as it should... that was Robert Adams.

TRIP: I wanted to quote you two different things you said that I loved, one is you said, "If one isn't awestruck by whatever is presently appearing, it indicates that fixation on thought or memory is impeding clear seeing". I thought that was so right on. Another thing you said that really got it is, "If you aren't thankful for what you've got, it's as if you have nothing at all". That's so true.

Okay, now one last little challenge question. I don't know why I'm asking it now but you write in the book that psychology is BS, okay. And I don't think it's BS, because I think that some people have such obstructive patterns of thinking going on, they're so caught in there.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Well the core of those thoughts is the self-identity, it is self image.

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TRIP: That's right, but unless you treat that person as an individual person for a while, and help them get through that, they're never going to get that.

MORGAN CARAWAY: I'm not opposed to therapy, or whatever. It's all life, right, I mean it's all life. It's all God. So I'm not opposed to it, I was just saying that I think, once again like John and I were saying, the core of all of it is the idea of separation, because once that idea has gone then you don't own whatever is appearing.

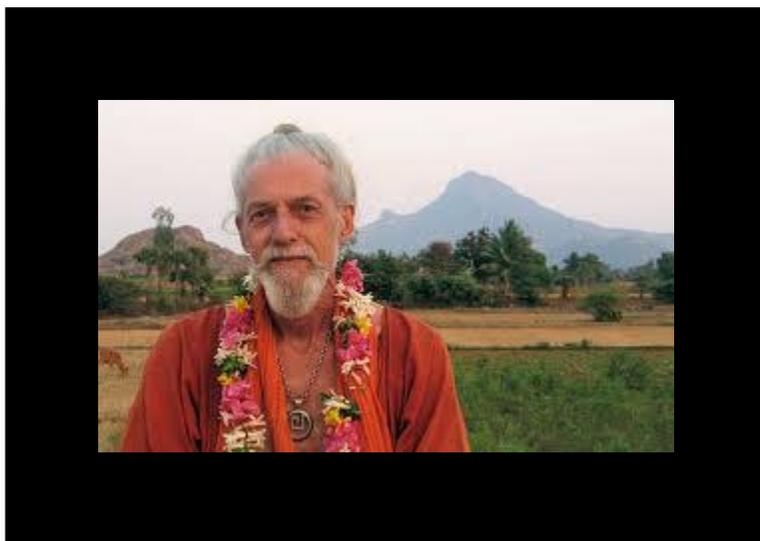
WIZARD: The root of all conflict is gone.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Right. And so no matter what appears, this is God appearing. And it's in this moment. And it's not a personal thing. And by the way, John, it was great to meet you.

TRIP: Hey, Morgan, great book, you're a very clear sage, thank you so much for joining us. Thank you so much.

WIZARD: Thank you, Morgan.

MORGAN CARAWAY: Thanks, fellas.



Muz Murray

<http://www.mantra-yoga.com/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Muz Murray, is a world traveling mystic with an international reputation, having given guidance for many years in his *Sharing the Quest* workshops on Mantra Yoga, Mystical Awakening, Massage, and Meditation in UK and Europe. He follows the way of the universal mystic, the path of the heart, embracing the essence of all traditions but is attached to none. Although endowed with the saffron Robe and spiritual name of Ramana Baba in India, he sees himself neither as a swami nor a new age teacher, inclining rather to the notion of no age, sharing the teachings suitable for any age of the world through attunement to the eternal verities. Thus his way of unlearning is a simple sharing of the inner quest warmly

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appreciated by those who inquire about trustworthy guidance without bondage to any form of cultism.

You're a heck of a writer.

MUZ MURRAY: Thank you.

WIZARD: Right on.

TRIP: Wow, what a life you've had. You've been compared to Indiana Jones, but I think that he's a shut-in compared to you, my God.

MUZ MURRAY: Cheers.

TRIP: I mean, what a life you've had. I mean, just unbelievable.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, it's been very differently spaced, like growing up as a bohemian painter, and then going in as an actor, and then hitchhiking all the way down Africa, and then three years round India, a lot of different changes have happened.

TRIP: In the early '20s you had that seven years of vagabondage around the world, I mean, you were just a fearless young man, you just threw yourself into life, didn't you?

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, well I wanted to test myself to understand how much I could face without money, without home, being thousands of miles away from anywhere to see how I could survive and what my capacities were.

TRIP: And you barely survived, it sounds like, I mean, there were knifings you managed to get through, and muggings, and you had your money stolen and...

MUZ MURRAY: Poison darts and shootings, and ambushes by Somali tribesmen, and stuff like that; it was very Rider Haggard stuff all the way down Africa.

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TRIP: In your time there must not have been tons of young white Brits running around those parts of the world.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, many times I was starving down Africa. I remember at one time I had one dried apricot, which I cut into four pieces and sucked one piece per day trying to convince myself that I was being sustained by that. And eventually I stopped by a stall that had bananas, and I said "How much are they?", and they said something like three pence or three cents each, so I said, "All right, give me two". And it turned out to be two branches of bananas, which I carried on my back for several days. [Laughing]

TRIP: Our program is an affirmation of Oneness, and in the past I've felt compelled to drill down into the teachings of the people that have come on our program. Your life has been so extraordinary I want to talk about it a little bit.

MUZ MURRAY: Okay, no problem.

TRIP: You were born in 1940, and you can remember sitting there as a three or four year old watching the bombs come down on Britain.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, in Coventry, which was just over the fields from my house, was the target of the Nazis because there was a lot of aircraft factories and the like there. I used to sit terrified watching the flames over the fields, and the searchlights crisscrossing the sky, and all that kind of thing, and a bomb fell in our garden and blew all the windows out over my cot.

TRIP: What a way to grow up.

MUZ MURRAY: It didn't give me a very good idea of this was my kind of world, which I suppose laid the foundations for my wanting to go round and help establish peace in people's minds all over the planet.

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WIZARD: Yes, I was born in 1939, so we're the same, came along with the same wave.

TRIP: Muz, you write so well, and the way you write is the kind of writing that I love which is real life, it's dramatic. It just really appeals to me. I'm going to read something that you wrote about your childhood. It's good, it's about a page, and I'm going to read it because it strikes that tone that I feel so many young people like me had, and the Wizard too. You wrote, "I dragged myself through the mean streets (London) of what others considered the "real world" as if through purgatorial treacle (molasses).

School was an asylum for psychological misfits called teachers who attempted to rule by screaming, hurling books, endless canings, or hissing threats, which created a white-out in my mind, rendering me incapable of learning school subjects for many years. Was this how life was meant to be lived, I wondered, but what else was there? Being sent to Sunday school and subjected to this sugarcoated evangelism of Christian good-bodies did nothing to fill the gap, but only increased my desolation of soul. For even then at the age of seven or eight, I perceived with a nauseous certainty that they neither understood nor truly believed what they were telling us kids, but needed us to believe them to make them feel secure. The disgust that this inspired in me created a deep-seated aversion to evangelism and all things even faintly smelling of religion for all of my teenage years.

I grew up considering myself a professional atheist, I was anti-God, and anti-religion and proud of it, therefore my about-face was all the more miraculous to me when it occurred. It was years before I realized that atheism was as much a conditioned religion of ignorance as any mindless religious fundamentalism. What I'd always been seeking unknowingly was spirituality as opposed to religiosity, but I had always derived some spiritual solace from nature. Perhaps I had the makings of a mystic even as a teenager as I used to regularly get up at dawn and cycle out of the city to the woods and sit there for an hour or so listening to the sounds of the natural world awakening. Or I would go to my favorite spinney at

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twilight watching a fox hole, and sit there wrapped in a blanket imbibing the quiet spirit of the woods long into the dark, not normal I was told". [Laughter]

MUZ MURRAY: Never have been normal.

TRIP: I can really feel what you must have been going through.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes. That sounds like part of my autobiography that I'm in the process of writing, was that on my website?

TRIP: Yes, that's on your website.

MUZ MURRAY: Oh right, I'd forgotten.

TRIP: My gosh, though, I can't help but just marvel at your life. After college you had this stint of selling shoes in a shoe shop, and then you worked in an advertising agency, and then you set off to see the world on this seven-year hitchhiking around Europe, and you slept under the bridges of Paris with tramps, and you starved in Spain.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, not very romantic I can assure you.

TRIP: You then landed a job in Sevilla Film Studios painting the set for *King of Kings*, which is like a classic film, and *El Cid*, another one, and you worked as a stunt man in the films themselves, and there's a picture of you as an extra in *King of Kings*. And then you, with some cash, you went to live on the Costa Brava, wherever that is, and you became a member of a group of surrealist painters and you breakfasted with Marcel Duchamp, the celebrated Dadaist, and you cultivated a relationship with Salvador Dali, who allowed you to watch him paint in his studio for six months while you were there. I could go on, and on, and on, your whole life is like that, it's amazing.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, I'm in the process of writing a very fat book about that. I've got about three lives in one already.

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TRIP: Hey, what's it going to cost me to option your life [Laughs]? I tell you, I should just do a couple of books, one on the Wizard, and one on you and then I can retire on the royalties.

So moving on...

TRIP: The science of sound, audible and inaudible frequencies, you say it works on deep levels of consciousness purifying the subconscious and even affecting the mind of the cells. You're a master at Mantra; tell us about some of the benefits of Mantra, what you're currently doing with Mantra? It's not something I've ever done, but sounds like it's very beneficial.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, this is a major practice which I help people to get into the non-mind state as I travel around the planet, I do workshops everywhere. And this is a good first step into entering into the state of one's own being. It's the quickest form of meditation whereas most forms of meditation is one part of the brain talking to the other part of the brain saying, did I feed the cat, have I got enough for breakfast, perhaps I left the gas on, shut up I'm trying to meditate, and all that kind of thing going on. But with the Mantra, the second you stop suddenly there is no more brain wave happening, you've moved from beta into alpha and the consciousness is very tranquil.

WIZARD: I found that to be true for me.

TRIP: Wizard? So what's an example of a Mantra that you would do? I didn't know you did the Mantra.

WIZARD: Yes. I do Aum Namah Shivaya.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, there's Aum Namah Shivaya, Gayatri Mantra, (Muz chanting mantra), that's one of the most powerful and magical Mantras available.

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TRIP: I recall hearing that chant at Ramanashram. You've been all over the world, you've been to so many ashrams that you've written a book about traveling through India.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, I visited 360 ashrams on my three years of the wandering monk around India.

TRIP: That's incredible. And in addition to personally visiting all those ashrams, you also checked in with other people who were visiting ashrams and you gathered up all of this data on all of these different ashrams.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, because as I was traveling around so many people kept asking me where can I go for this teaching, or that teaching? And so I started to compile information on every ashram about the kind of things they taught there and eventually I realized that a book was necessary. So I created that, it was kind of bible of India goes for about ten years.

TRIP: And the title was?

MUZ MURRAY: *Seeking the Master: A Guide to the Ashrams of India and Nepal.*

TRIP: And every other year, you will take a group of young people or is it anybody?

MUZ MURRAY: No, everybody, so I think the youngest I took was 16 and up to 92.

TRIP: And you do this every couple of years?

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, sometimes every year, and I had a sabbatical last year and in fact in about seven days I'm already off with another group to India, we're starting in Kerala and going up to Tiruvannamalai to Ramana Maharshi's ashram.

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TRIP: And who organizes this stuff for you, do you have an assistant, do you have an organization? People pay, how does it work?

MUZ MURRAY: Usually it's when I go around the UK every summer, I have a three-month workshop schedule, and then people say they would like to go to India with me. So I create the circuit on which I can take them, the most interesting places I can find.

TRIP: Killer. What does it typically cost somebody to go on one of those trips?

MUZ MURRAY: £995, I don't know what that is in dollars.

TRIP: Couple of thousand.

MUZ MURRAY: But for three weeks and all paid, all the tuition, all the travel, all the hotels, all the ashrams, etc.

TRIP: That's a great deal.

WIZARD: Yes, that sounds about right. When you and I and some others went there; that was about the main price.

TRIP: You know, you're right about India, here's another thing you write that speaks to me. You say, "India is a land of amazing extremes, even my travels in the wilds of Africa did not prepare me for the outrageousness of India. Being there is a vital experience of life in the raw; you can see birth, life, and death actually going on in the streets. There's none of our pre-packaged over-protective, and hidden away aspects of life there. Psychically I felt it was like stepping into a vast pool of consciousness of a totally different mental wavelength, it was an atmosphere like it must have been at the beginning of the world".

WIZARD: I concur.

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TRIP: Yes, I stepped off an airplane, like a wasp from Connecticut, stepped off an airplane and we went to Tiru, and we did that circumambulation of Arunachala. Have you done that, you've done that I'm sure?

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, yes.

TRIP: That blew my mind, oh my gosh; I mean, you'd look down at the asphalt and there'd be this person sort of growing up out of it, who hadn't received treated here some kind of disease that we conquered here like 60 years ago, and they're like growing up out of the asphalt. And over there somebody's doing a spiritual blessing of their new car, and here's a monkey running across the street, and then a bunch of street urchin kids that don't have any parents who are playing and running off, and Sadhus in orange robes, and senses going around, and cows walking. It was like the *Wizard of Oz*.

WIZARD: Yes.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, you should be at Deepam when there's something like 15,000 people marching around the mountain in a steady stream, and it's impossible to cross the road, the amount of people are so... it's like a flowing river of humanity, it's impossible. If you step into it, you're swept up and you go round the mountain with everyone.

TRIP: I wanted to ask you, I jump around here just from thing to thing; you actually met with Krishnamurti, the great sage.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, I knew him quite well because one of my original masters was Dr. Ramamurti Mishra, who had an ashram in Catskill Mountains and in California, and he was a friend of Krishnamurti. So I was able to sit having tea with Krishnamurti once or twice, and I also worked in his school teaching meditation which caused a furor there, because Krishnamurti was against meditation at the time, but when I explained how I operated he was quite happy about it.

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TRIP: Yes, you said that he was against meditation because he thought that spiritual practice might often be used like sticking a plaster over a festering wound.

MUZ MURRAY: Exactly.

TRIP: And yet it's interesting, I find you an interesting cat, because on the one hand you've tried everything, you've mastered many of these spiritual practices and yet you're against dogmatic adherence to anything.

WIZARD: That was kind of like Ramakrishna's MO, he went through all of the different traditions and reached a Self-discovery through each and every one of them, and pulling them all together.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, exactly. That was my interest to participate in every different type of spiritual culture that I could do. I lived with the Dervishes in Konya, in Turkey, and learned to chant the Dervish chants with them, and I taught them Sanskrit Mantras as well. So I've been with Buddhists, I've been with Chinese, I've been with Tibetans, Sikhs, every kind of spiritual group that I could, and squeezed the juice to synthesize the whole of spiritual life.

TRIP: So you've had so many esoteric, wild esoteric experiences, would you share what it is like to be in the center of a secret Whirling Dervish ceremony. You were actually overcome with...

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, I had a very deep spiritual experience when they pulled me into the circle of dancers, and there was one group in one corner chanting, "Allah, Allah, Allah", another group chanting, "A Allah, A Allah, A Allah", and another group chanting, and other group chanting, and then all chanting (Muz chanting). And I had syncopated rhythm on top of that with music, and in that it was like being in the beating heart of the universe, and I felt I was among the stars and planets with the turning of the Dervishes. It was quite incredible.

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WIZARD: The music of the spheres.

TRIP: I love listening to you chant, we'll have to do some more of that chanting.

MUZ MURRAY: I haven't done that for a long time now, I have to prepare for that one normally.

TRIP: You must have an elephantine memory; you're able to remember this stuff perfectly. The Wizard and I talk about how impossible it is to give worded description to THAT, to the "I amness", but I'll say in your description of your meltdown, you do a pretty good job, and I wanted to read that, if you don't mind.

MUZ MURRAY: Okay, thank you.

TRIP: "It was January 1964: I was heart and head weary", now this is after you'd been all over Africa, and you've been starving and everything; "friendless and fundless and at a crossroads in my life. Then it happened. On my third evening in Cyprus, near the port of Limasol, I was sitting gazing vacantly at the sea, when the unbelievable turning point of my life occurred. The sun had gone down. My mind was empty. Slowly a strange feeling crept upon me, as if some ghostly hand was caressing the back of my neck and tingling its way over the top of my head. My skin goose-pimpled and the hairs stood up all over my arms. Then my body seemed to dissolve. Suddenly my consciousness was no longer limited to the body. It rapidly "expanded" beyond its confines, across the ocean and the land and out into space in every direction. Instantaneously I was aware of being everywhere in the universe at the same time, not only viewing countless things occurring, as if seen through the myriad lenses of a fly's eye, but I actually felt myself simultaneously being all those experiences at one and the same time."

WIZARD: Seamless sentience.

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TRIP: That's a heck of a good job of explaining a profound spiritual experience I must say. It really takes you there.

WIZARD: I call it turning inside out.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, yes. And I wanted to get back into that space for about 15 years but eventually I realize you can never go back into something that's happened before. [Laughter] And once I stopped trying to go back then I entered into a different form of samadhi, and that again was an experience of becoming one with all the environment, I was like a diver walking about in an ocean of my Self.

WIZARD: Yes.

MUZ MURRAY: That was through the practice of what I call whipping out the carpet from underneath every thought, every thought that came up I pulled out the carpet from under it saying that's not my business, keep quiet, shut up, stop rabbiting away in my head. And after three months I woke up with no movement of mind at all.

WIZARD: Yes, I was a recovering seeker after my initial awakening, and losing it, trying to get back to it. And it was a couple of decades trying to get that experience back not realizing that the experience was just the phenomena around the awakening, and missing what is always already here *Now*.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, we don't realize that we are already back, we've never left it.

WIZARD: We never left it.

MUZ MURRAY: It's just covered up with all kinds of other crap.

WIZARD: It took a long time for the clouds to clear.

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TRIP: Yes, I was thinking, maybe you could confirm my suspicions about the way things really do go down because we're interviewed a lot of folks on this program, and almost all of them like you, like the Wizard, and like myself, came into their initial taste of this beautiful reality that's actually unnoticed without any anticipation, it just kind of happened, or it was kind like a two by four across the head.

MUZ MURRAY: Completely out of the blue.

WIZARD: Out of the blue; absolutely.

TRIP: It was completely out of the blue. And so you are in the stateless state that Ramana Maharshi was in, there's no difference, but then usually decades will pass before you become established in that. And you say that, "at long last in 1980 through constant meditative practices I finally entered in the state of samadhi, the God conscious condition, which I had been striving to reach again since my 20s". And so it seems to me that the true utility of teaching and the meditative practices is after the two by four has hit you across the head you become established. But it seems to me so many people engage in those practices and in the teaching in order to get the initial experience. That isn't going to happen, right?

WIZARD: It doesn't work that way.

MUZ MURRAY: No, no, because the practices don't get you where you already are [Laughter].

TRIP: Do you ever have the temptation to ask somebody that comes to you if they have already had a taste of who they are or not? It seems to me kind of a critical question. If they haven't had a taste are you going to be able to help them along with that?

MUZ MURRAY: Yes. I try to guide them through, first through Mantra to have a taste of the mindless condition, and then encourage them to expand on that space in between two thoughts,

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because this is what I call fleeting samadhi, it's not something that is so far from everybody's capacity. Once you recognize what it is *Now* you can begin to immerse yourself in it and don't allow the interruptions by all this mental movement.

TRIP: These students that you have, you call them your spiritual heroes, I really liked that, what did you mean by that?

MUZ MURRAY: That most people need to join religion, a club, a sect, anything to give them the feeling that they are belonging to something or other, but through mystical consciousness goes it alone, they don't belong to anything. These are the spiritual heroes that are open to every kind of possible spiritual teaching or experience without needing to be a Buddhist or a Zenist, or a Christian, or a Muslim or whatever; these are the spiritual heroes that go it alone.

WIZARD: So you're saying it's not a group sport.

MUZ MURRAY: No. Even those Christian monks who transcended the religious canon were ostracized and put down because they had gone beyond what was acceptable. And these are the people who the church denounces, and you can be sure if the church denounces someone, they are very interesting people to look into.

TRIP: And then on the other side of your teaching equation there is you, and you say, "I practice tuning in to what the guru version, this universal teaching environment known as "God" wants me to do. I look for the signs and listen with the heart, let go and let God as they say, and then roll along with the unfolding of the plan. When we can attune to that, everything flows, there's nothing else to do but learn to surrender to the process".

WIZARD: Amen.

TRIP: Damn, that's good.

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MUZ MURRAY: Amen.

TRIP: Brother, come on down. [Laughs]

WIZARD: Take a burden and sling it, and go with what wants to happen.

TRIP: I love it.

WIZARD: Not my but Thy Will; that's when everything is perfect.

MUZ MURRAY: You have a wonderfully gravelling voice. [Laughs]

TRIP: Yes, he's got this deep God-like, you know, up on the mount with the tablets voice, and I've got this high little shrill kind of laughy voice, but what can you do. I wish I had your voice, Wizard.

WIZARD: You do.

TRIP: I'd be rich. Such command.

WIZARD: You speak for me very well.

TRIP: [Laughs] You know, you've seen it all, you've done it all, you have a practice that you go around the world, and you've really tuned in to what's going on. And I too have an aspiration and it's to provide people with a platform to affirm others in this beautiful Truth of who we are.

MUZ MURRAY: That's great, that was my intention in the first place when I created *Gandalf's Garden* in London, that period every spiritual and esoteric group was isolated and tucked away in their own corners, and nobody knew about anything. So I created a platform in *Gandalf's Garden* for druids, for Buddhist, for Christians, for flying saucer people, for color therapists, for every different type of spiritual group. I invited gurus from all over the world to come and teach there and that became the first real

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platform giving a whole picture of spirituality for young people in London.

WIZARD: Beautiful model. I think Oprah Winfrey should have a show like that.

TRIP: Yes, I'm hoping that we can just keep on keeping on the way we are but perhaps have a more far reaching platform to do it from, and give people the microphone to share this beautiful truth. That *Gandalf's Garden* sounded like one creative atmosphere that you were involved with.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, it was also a magazine which went all over the world without any advertising, and stimulated a lot of other centers of a similar nature in various countries, Holland, Germany, Scandinavia, and the like. And it's still in many people's hearts so that's why I created a CD-rom with all the issues of the magazine in it, and all the history of the period of the hippy period in London. I discovered when I got back from India that I was a flower power cult leader, and so many people have a *Gandalf's Garden* in their hearts, and that's why they're very happy to have the CD of everything that happened in that period.

TRIP: By the way we're on the radio, so people don't know what you look like, but you are one handsome devil [Laughs].

MUZ MURRAY: Oh, go on, I bet you say that to all the gurus.

TRIP: No, you look like a movie star, you could play the king in some top-rated movie, and you really are.

MUZ MURRAY: I wanted to play Gandalf in *Lord of the Rings*, I didn't even know that they were making the film because I was in India or somewhere, so I lost my chance there.

TRIP: Well you're a gorgeous guy and you look really great for, what are you, 71?

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MUZ MURRAY: Yes, 71, people keep saying that saw me 20 years ago and say I haven't changed a bit in that time; well the Mantra must be doing something.

TRIP: So you're a big believer in breath, now we have a couple of friends, Pam and Donald T, and they say that breath is the basis of health, do you share that viewpoint?

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, I will go along with that, together with the sound vibration, because the sound vibration combined with the breath is Mantra. Many people think that Kirtan and singing Bhajans is Mantra, but that's a totally different thing, that's devotional singing, it is not Mantra. Mantra has to be in toned, and using the breath in between each line of Mantra, and that energizes the cells, pumps them up to their optimum frequency. Because when we are surrounded by negative sound or negative thinking, then the cellular structure diminishes like a football going down that's been punctured, and one needs to pump those cells up again with the specific Mantra frequencies every day to keep the body in optimum health.

TRIP: I tell you, you're inspiring me, I never could have cared less about Mantra but you have got it together. And you've produced several cassettes and CDs on the study of Mantra, Yoga Nidra, Agni Hotra, other esoteric subjects, and they're available from your website?

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, indeed.

WIZARD: In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, my initial turning inside out, because I didn't know any of these words, but as the locality of my sentience imploded and I was the universe, then there's recognition of having no form, and then the sound like a tremendous bell the size of a house ringing. And that was my last identification with anything before I went into total absorption where there was no other, it was just seamless sentience. My mind can't remember but it plucked that thorn of death away, but that last vestige of existence for me was the vibration.

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MUZ MURRAY: The mind won't remember but the cells remember, that is why it took about 10 years for the cellular memory after my cosmic conscious experience to filter through into my conscious mind.

TRIP: Now you're currently teaching the mysteries of Mantra, but you're also teaching something you call the way of sun consciousness. What is that?

MUZ MURRAY: Yes.

TRIP: What is sun-consciousness?

MUZ MURRAY: It is the opposite of unconsciousness. I rediscovered the practice of Sudia yoga, which is thousands of years old, but without knowing that I had done by visualizing a sun in the center of the being. So that people would be able to fix their consciousness on Anata chakra, the heart center, and easily with a focus so that the idea was to visualize the sun in the center of the being. And on the in-breath the sun expands, and on the out-breath, the sun sends out thousands of little luminous particles called lightrons out in every direction through the body, and then eventually out through the pores of the skin, out into the world, out into the universe. This is exactly what is going on all the time with electrons, and we are sending out electrons right across the universe, saturated with our particular spiritual frequency, or non-spiritual frequency. So we are saturating everywhere with the quality of our beings, and this is a very good way of focusing on your real center of consciousness, consciousness arises from Anata Chakra.

TRIP: From what?

MUZ MURRAY: Anata Chakra, the charka of the heart center.

WIZARD: It's headless, thoughtless.

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MUZ MURRAY: This spiritual center is the center of consciousness, I should say consciousness is coming through the spiritual heart center which is just off center of the heart, more on the right side, and this is where consciousness arises first thing in the morning and shoots up and activates the brain. It is not the brain which is thinking, the brain is only organizing like a jukebox, thought processes. But the consciousness is actually happening in the spiritual heart center, and that is where one needs to fixate ones consciousness instead of being in the head all the time.

WIZARD: Yes.

MUZ MURRAY: And that was the easiest way I found to get people to be in that place, because when you're falling asleep in a chair, what happens your head nods and goes down, and because the life force of consciousness has descended back into the heart center, it shoots up again upon awakening. But if you can try and grab it in that place at the moment of waking up, and keep it there, you find a great difference in the balance of your life if you get up from that inner sun space, and walk from that space, talk from that space, and relate to other people from that space, rather than from the head, it makes a tremendous difference in your equilibrium, spiritually.

WIZARD: I've noticed that Mantra can go on quietly in the Heart and...

MUZ MURRAY: It does, it resonates in the cells, and it resonates in the Heart center.

WIZARD: And you can listen at the same time, whereas if you're thinking in the head it's hard to hear, it's hard to listen because you're formulating thoughts. But when the Mantra is in the heart it doesn't interfere with the facility of listening.

MUZ MURRAY: Exactly. This is why Mantra should be concentrated in the Heart center not just in the voice, not in the

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technique, not in the head, but in the Heart center. This helps to keep you out of the head.

WIZARD: So I was aware at one time (I was at a pretty high state) of this little thin almost like lightening, skinny lightening from my heart up to my head, and it looked like the tip of a word balloon, like the word balloon in a cartoon. And that thing went up into my head and was a whole realm of consciousness, and then it began in my heart reaching a place where it disappeared. But it went down to this tiny little piece of lightening then and there.

MUZ MURRAY: Yes, this will be very like kundalini energy moving very fast up the nadi which goes up to Sahasara, and then it must descend again by the secret Amrita nadi down to the heart center. This is what is the problem with many great gurus, they have become illumined intellectually because the lightening went up to Sahasara and illumined the consciousness, their intellect, that intellectual faculty, but it did not descend again to the heart center to consolidate in spiritual enlightenment. This was the reality of Ramana Maharshi, which is why he is revered by all the great sages in India of being the most God conscious, spiritually conscious, Rishi that has been for many, many hundreds of years. Every sage reveres Ramana Maharshi and you'll see his portrait in many, many different ashrams because his energy dropped down through Amrita nadi back to the heart center and awakened true spirituality.

TRIP: So many folks, myself and some of my dear friends, in fact my New Year's Resolution last year was to come from that place of heart rather than head that you spoke of, waking up to.

MUZ MURRAY: Absolutely. Wonderful.

TRIP: Is there something that you can suggest as a way to enhance that, something I could go to on your website or someone would do if they were interested in cultivating that?

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MUZ MURRAY: Well, my suggestion was that some conscious practice, also I have a Yoga Nidra practice which helps you to get into that space also on CD.

WIZARD: I found acceptance puts the I-thought, the narrator in the head out of a job, just accepting is a good help.

MUZ MURRAY: That is a major part.

TRIP: Just accepting [Laughs]. Just accept it.

MUZ MURRAY: As Ramana Maharshi says, whatever is going to happen is going to happen; whatever is not going to happen is not going to happen. However much you try to make it happen, the best thing is to keep quiet and just accept.

WIZARD: Right on.

TRIP: We've got about three or four more minutes, Muz. I just want to say that you are a delightful man. It's been a great pleasure speaking with you, and learning of your life.

MUZ MURRAY: Very kind of you to invite me.

TRIP: You are one of the last guests we'll have before the Wizard heads off to Bali where he'll be hanging out with the spiritual leader of Bali. What's his name Wizard?

WIZARD: Anand Krishna is his name.

TRIP: And I guess it was the Bali Government that for some reason wanted to box him up and put him down, so they falsely accused him of an improper relationship. And just by the accusation of an improper relationship in Bali apparently you can ruin somebody.

WIZARD: This is in all Indonesia.

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TRIP: Okay. The guy was tied up in knots, he was really suffering and the Wizard gave the advice to just let it go, to not mount the huge defense that he was planning, to buy the attorney, and all this stuff he was going to do. And so he let it go and the outcome was perfect.

WIZARD: Everything worked out.

TRIP: Everything worked out, and so he feels a real debt of gratitude.

MUZ MURRAY: The higher you go, the more people want to knock you down.

WIZARD: Yes, that's true.

MUZ MURRAY: It's all to the good, if you haven't got any detractors then perhaps you think you're not on the right path [Laughs].

WIZARD: That's good to know.

TRIP: What a life.

MUZ MURRAY: They've got some nutters in Tiruvannamalai putting everybody down who gives satsang in Tiruvannamalai, saying all kinds of terrible things about them and me also, but you have to take that with the position you're in.

WIZARD: Yes, I've experienced that there, even amongst the people who are close to Ramana Maharshi have that tendency, this is something that is.

MUZ MURRAY: You should also forgive your enemies for there is no better way to annoy them.

WIZARD: Yes. [Laughs] Kill them with kindness.

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TRIP: We've got one minute; quick question. The only place I've been in India was Tiru, and we had an epic trip there, it was synchronistic and a totally affirmation, I felt like I hit the zenith of potential, I was out of my mind with happiness. Did I hit the homerun in Tiru, or is there some other place that rivals it?

MUZ MURRAY: Well it all depends on your needs whether you're a devotional type or whatever, there are many very intense spiritual places in India, but really Arunachala and Tiru is the spiritual naval of the planet as the Maharshi said, and so I don't really like to go anywhere else now apart from there.

WIZARD: Yes, I've been there six times.

MUZ MURRAY: If the world is coming to an end in this year as most people foolishly think, well what better place to end than in Arunachala? [Laughs]

TRIP: Yes, well 2012 is here, and I think we even had a drop-dead day go by, whenever it was.

WIZARD: That's good. When everybody drops dead we're home [Laughs].

TRIP: We don't think it's going to end in a big snap over here.

MUZ MURRAY: No, not at all, there might be a few more storms and land breaking up here and there, but this planet is a lunatic asylum of the universe and there would be nowhere for all these lunatics to come if this planet was destroyed.

TRIP: Well on that we've run out of time, you've been a magnificent guest.

WIZARD: Thank you, Muz.

TRIP: Thank you, Muz; we hope to meet you some day in the flesh. Be well.



Nick Gancitano

<http://nickgancitano.com/>

TRIP: Nick, thank you for joining us.

NICK GANCITANO: Thank you for inviting me.

WIZARD: Hi, Nick, Wiz here.

TRIP: Nick, what we usually do we like to introduce our guest first and then we'll get to our interview.

NICK GANCITANO: Okay, great.

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TRIP: Author and spiritual teacher at The Self-Inquiry Center.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes.

TRIP: Was a high school All-American Soccer Player and later the place-kicker for the Penn State Nittany Lions under the legendary coach Joe Paterno, where his team won the National Championship in 1983. Nick played briefly with the Detroit Lions before a knee injury retired him to the business world. Four years later, Nick entered the public school system to teach science and coach. Nick has privately mentored nearly 50 place-kickers who received Division 1 collegiate scholarships, emphasizing the significance of yoga and meditation to assist athletes with finding The Zone. He then transitioned into teaching yoga and then meditation to the general public. After discovering self-inquiry, he experienced a profound shift and sought the direction of various conscious teachers, including Ramana Maharshi, who then guided Nick to share the Self-Inquiry in the West.

It's an amazing story, Nick.

WIZARD: I'm going to want to ask him about that.

TRIP: Okay.

WIZARD: Because I had a similar thing happen to me in Benares over 15 years ago, I had an apparition of Ramana Maharshi that was just stunning, and I know Ramana Maharshi never would 'fess up to any doership in any of that, so I reckon it was my mind playing a wonderful trip on me. But I want to share with Nick about that and get his insight on it because there are lots of us who have been called.

TRIP: So, Nick, what happened then?

NICK GANCITANO: Well, it was initially I had had a glimpse of Ramana Maharshi as a young boy, I wasn't even aware of who he was, and later on in life I had gotten off the whole... I'd never

really been in a formal spiritual setting, and then I found the teacher Osho and had been reading him for several years. I had quit teaching and then I one day walked into the bookstore and I came across a book, *The Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharshi*, which basically just called out, and I bought it and brought it home. And a couple of hours later I looked at the cover and I just started crying profusely, I didn't even know why, just looking in his eyes. And I began to look into the book, and discover and read about self-inquiry and put it into practice for a couple of weeks, at which point there was a very profound, I don't know, I guess you would say shift in my perception of reality, what might be called a realization, I don't know. At that point I remained in a pretty blissful state for nearly a year, and then I began to seek different teachers, direction as to exactly where it occurred and that thing. And then while on that process I was sitting in my room one day when Ramana Maharshi then came to me in a, I guess you would call, very similar to the way you're describing, you could call it an apparition, but this was more as it was happening right then and there.

WIZARD: Yes.

NICK GANCITANO: The only difference was it had a very strange overtone, and I don't verily teach or purport anything having to do with reincarnation, 'cause we all know that these are just, fluctuations within the mind. Yet in this particular interaction I was taller than Ramana Maharshi, which is not consistent with my body height now which is five foot seven. Ramana was nearly six foot; I guess five foot ten or eleven. So at this point I was taller and there was a woman in the room with us, and then of course he passed on the message to me to go share this message. And so that's really how it occurred. I didn't understand the details of it, and the fact that bodies were different than the body that was actually hearing it; it was actually different in terms of size than the one that's here now. And so at first there was really no understanding of what that was until there was a recollection after several other interactions with him, after moving to Costa Rica for a while and living out in the forest, I did have several interactions

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with him where he didn't say anything, it was just you could call it, I don't know...

WIZARD: Darshan.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, there was nothing said, but there was just clarity as to what the direction was to be, and in that way he telepathically communicates, from what I understand from other devotees of his. And yet then again, he will insist like you said that he's not doing anything, which is true on the highest level.

WIZARD: I think it's the Faith we bring, the message is so clear in the mirror, is so immaculate that it reflects our deepest Self so truly that brings about a Faith and brings our mind into synchronicity with that.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes.

WIZARD: When I go to Arunachala, the same around that mountain, the silence is very profound; so many people are carrying so much Faith there.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes.

TRIP: I've looked over your website and I've watched your videos, and to me you seem a very down to earth practitioner that you're able to help ordinary people where they're coming from with explanations that make sense to them. You have a gift for plain talk so to speak. Do you recognize this talent of yours?

NICK GANCITANO: You could say that I can relate to a lot of people coming from different walks of life because I bounced around a little bit in the business world, and the school call teaching, and then the athletic world. I have the ability to communicate with people and relate to their situation. So, yes, there is intense suffering which I think when people have gone through some intense suffering that they're able to hear things more clearly, because there's a certain receptivity that people have

when the humility arises in them to actually hear. I don't necessarily think that I communicate it any better, maybe just to certain people since there seems to be a streak now of people who've been going through some climatic shifts with regard to the economy, and their spiritual direction, and that type of thing. So people are open to hearing it, particularly when someone has in a similar life's work that they've been and that type of thing. And having been a school teacher, and having had to find different ways to articulate things that were not understood at first by students, it forces you to have to be a little bit of a shape shifter, or be able to adapt to when you sense that people are not really hearing what you're saying, or not resonating with the way it's being explained so that it can be. But really ultimately the teaching is of course is in silence, but being able to prepare someone to be receptive and to approach it in many different directions so that if the mind comes up with any sense of resistance to it that or if there is any conditioning that does not allow it to actually land on soft ears, then of course the way that it's articulated can have somewhat of an effect, which I feel has occurred with the people that I've been working with in close proximity, and in regular Satsang.

TRIP: Cool. Well speaking of your teaching, I thought it would be fun just to explore briefly the place-kicker who's applying your techniques who's in The Zone, who is hearing nothing, maybe he's seeing nothing but the ball and the goalposts, and he effortlessly drives it through. What exactly is his condition and how does it differ from ordinarily consciousness?

NICK GANCITANO: An athlete generally exerts practice, in other words, effort, in order to practice a skill, in order to become effective at what they do. In this regard you're conditioning the mind to move into an effortless state where the arising of limitations or fears that pull you into the intellect in an attempt to analyze the situation does not arise when the attention is turned back in towards the Self. And so if you're with someone and they don't even really need to know much other than the basics, but to remember to just feel themselves, and then the body automatically

does exactly what it needs to do in order to make certain instances, like kicking a 50-yard field goal into let's just say a 20 mile an hour wind. One would think that that would be almost impossible for most people, yet if the attention moves back into the self, which basically has control of the elements, the wind, the body, everything included, then of course there need be no sense of doership or effort whatsoever. So as long as one can remember that in a game situation to be able to move their attention into that presence, then it really doesn't matter how well conditioned they are, or trained. Of course that does help somewhat, but on the higher levels there's really very little difference between say a collegiate athlete and a professional, other than one has tweaked out the limitations that tend to arise in the mind, because they're able to stay in that if you will, zone, in the presence more consistently.

TRIP: So you would say that's true of a professional regardless of whether they've gotten teaching in that, they have that as a natural or as a developed trait, you would say?

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, I think it's more of a default setting, because in a lot of instances athletes find that zone because in athletics there's a certain avoidance of life, or difficult situations whether it be their family life, or their personal life. They tend to turn to athletics and sports because they're able to focus and be so present that that state of consciousness naturally arises for them, not even really knowing what it's called or why it happened. Often when they leave the athletic field, they tend to fall back into that I guess you would say habitual thinking. And so when they step on the field though it's almost like a switch that goes on where, because they feel comfortable, and they feel confident in their ability to execute then they naturally fall into the state of presence because there's no reason to really over think anything because it never requires it. This creates the arena or the space, for that stillness to occur, and for the mind to sink into the heart temporarily, and then of course the body just does what it's been conditioned to do.

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WIZARD: Maybe that's what Fleetwood Mac meant when they sang; *players only love you when they're playing*. [Laughter]

TRIP: Well, you mentored 50 place-kickers who received Division 1 collegiate scholarships, that is amazing.

NICK GANCITANO: About 48, but yes. And really more importantly than anything, and I didn't spend a lot of time really developing their meditative skills, more importantly was just when they kicked the ball, seeing the ball in if you would say my own consciousness going through every time. By holding that intention, that context, it makes it a reality for me who then tends to interact with them, the so-called them, and in that state. But again once that visual perception falls and lands in that stillness, then in a sense we share the same consciousness, and so it's able to really share that knowingness or that realization that I can do this every time, that seed can be planted in that stillness. And this is why it's important for a coach to have that sense of presence within them, and in order to really direct or guide players into a state of that zone without making them feel a sense of doership, or a fear of making mistakes, which tends to be the primary Achilles heel for athletes that are trying to make it in a higher level.

WIZARD: That's what I found in synchronicity that the doership is gone, and when I share with other folks about synchronicity it seems to be the common denominator; the doership is gone in the stillness that's present.

NICK GANCIANO: Yes.

TRIP: So I think that you're a particularly useful, if you will, teacher, because here you've been a football player of all things, and a coach. And so clearly you've had a normal upbringing, or a normal career whatever. I was just curious, what are the practical benefits that have manifested in your life since you redirected your attention inward?

NICK GANCITANO: Practical in regard to what specifically?

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TRIP: Well, like for example was there a change in the quality of your relationships with others, did your work take on an effortless nature? Did things just seem to happen that before you maybe had struggled to make happen? Those kinds of things, I don't want to put words in your mouth, or has it just been gradual?

NICK GANCITANO: It's been gradual really. There was always a sense of ease with action, and generally whenever something didn't happen very easily, there was a tendency to just naturally be drawn away from something into something else. There wasn't a lot of resistance to the fact that it didn't work out, like for instance the professional football career that was cut short. There was not a lot of resentment or disappointment with that, which was very easily left behind. And so there hasn't really been a lot of resistance here, which I feel was intergrown in that in staying there, just to be willing to flow with life, and to not be attached to the outcome of circumstances. Whether the field goal was made or missed, whether we lost or won. I remember being yelled at on several occasions by Joe Paterno, because after games that we had lost, not really giving much attention to that, or not even really acting as though anything had happened. And so in this regard, I've never really cared whether or not I've won or lost. It was more about the enjoyment of being in that state while the, I guess you would say, the competition was going on, but there wasn't really a sense of competition, there was just a sense of enjoyment. And I really feel like what you were saying about the effort is very true, because when you're enjoying yourself there is no effort. In fact I don't think you can enjoy yourself while there is any effort.

TRIP: Speaking of that pleasure of turning the attention inward, you say, "Lose interest in everything other than God, the mind turns inward when there is nothing more enjoyable than attention on the Self". I think that's a really critical point you make there.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, that was the only thing that really made sense, as I evaluated what was occurring. Because there were so many desires, things that needed to be fulfilled and they just were, and then once that occurred after the incident with Ramana

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Maharshi, there was really nothing that pulled on the attention like that, like the sense of bliss, or the sense of wholeness or completion with that. So even during the stabilization period that followed for several years, there was still nothing that really pulled hard, like the burnt rope so to speak. And so this was pretty much my experience with that. I feel like it's important for someone to come upon this themselves conceptually, someone can say that, but until someone has a glimpse, there's really nothing to entice them to continue to turn the mind inward.

WIZARD: Amen.

NICK GANCITANO: Not that there's a real sense that I'm turning the mind inward because in a sense it just starts to turn inward more because the mind is now seeking that state again.

WIZARD: Nick, you're talking about being established, becoming established in that, how were you mostly affirmed in that?

NICK GANCITANO: Affirmed, did you say?

WIZARD: Yes. I mean, once the grace happens, then there's the struggle between the mortal and immortal paradigms, and somehow the universe begins to affirm the immortal paradigm. And they're all different, everybody has a different set of affirmations that seem to surface, and I find them remarkable stories.

NICK GANCITANO: I guess you would say the most significant point being was that being able to know that you're all that there is, and at the same time realizing that you're also apart. In other words, to not identify with a sense of me, and to see that there is still some sense of individuated witnessing consciousness that was occurring. In other words, there appears to be an individual point in awareness that perceives consciousness and the so-called physical reality, and yet it doesn't seem solid. And yet everything seems to be upside down and backwards, because what used to seem as though it was empty and devoid of anything, suddenly

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became very solid, it felt like very tangible. And everything that once seemed solid suddenly dissipated into almost a vapor like state of existence to where you didn't really want to give it any more attention, like when you're in a car driving through a cloud, it didn't really have that sense of stability, or stableness, or reality. And so that's really the only way that I can make any sense of it, and *Now* it's just recognizing that it's all just happening, and there's really no doer of anything.

WIZARD: Sometimes while I'm driving a car, I'm absolutely still, the car is still, and everything else is moving.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, exactly.

WIZARD: That's an affirmation. [Laughs]

TRIP: Nick, I know that your teaching has been heavily influenced by Ramana Maharshi, and from what I've seen of it, everything that I've read of it, there's really no difference in the content, is that correct? I don't see any difference in your teaching from Ramana Maharshi's, would you agree with that?

NICK GANCITANO: I would say yes, the basic principles would lie in the same direction, maybe certain analogies, or parables, perhaps would be different, but basically streamlined in the same direction, yes.

TRIP: And have you completed your book?

NICK GANCITANO: The book, yes, the first book has been completed; a second one is now being worked on. The first one is going to be with Watkins coming out in I believe it's the fall of this year. And so, yes. That's more of a question, answer type of a format. We'll send you a copy when it's been decided.

TRIP: Thank you. And also tell us about nickgancitano.com, and also The Self-Inquiry Center?

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WIZARD: It's based in Fort Lauderdale.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes. We're located on the beach in Fort Lauderdale. And we used to be known as what was called Atma-Vichara Ashram, once located in Boynton Beach before we ended up leaving and traveling for nearly four years, and disseminating the teaching, and that type of thing. And of course we left there and dissolved it, and then after coming back to the United States we reopened it now, and are just right now initially teaching it in our residence where we live. And that is in the process right now, students have been coming, and people have been coming to learn this particular teaching, and from there I would imagine it may eventually evolve into something similar to what the Atma-Vichara Ashram was. We'll be taking regular groups with us to trips to Arunachala, and Tiruvannamalai, but essentially for the essence of Arunachala. That pretty much is the basis of where we're going. And we have weekly Satsang on Tuesday and Friday evenings, and then we have programs, weekend programs, one that's called *Enlightenment Is*, and the prerequisite for that which is the discovering self-inquiry, which is very basic introductory teaching.

WIZARD: When you're in Arunachala, do you ever go visit Ganesan?

NICK GANCITANO: Well I met him once, the first time I went, and went to his Ashram, and went out there and visited and saw him. But that was the first time, but after that I did not. V. Ganesan?

WIZARD: Yes.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, never did after that. The next two times we ended up pretty much... we rented a large structure ourselves, and we pretty much stayed and just went back and forth to the hill, the intention really was to discourage people from wanting to get into the tour. And based on what Ramana said that Arunachala is the center of the universe, and so rather than encouraging the aspirants from going to the different Satsang that were going on

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around, at the time there were many teachers at the time that we'd gone, and we just sent them to the hill, and just told them just go into Virupaksha cave or Skandashram, and hang out there, the Ramanashram, the old hall, and so that's really where the emphasis was. But, yes, I did meet him once.

WIZARD: Yes, he's been our guest several times, and he's an old friend of ours.

TRIP: I think that was good advice you gave [Laughs]. And then there's AHAM, of AHAM, because they're also dedicated to self-inquiry?

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, I know them very well.

TRIP: We're friends of AHAM.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, so am I, very much. I actually spent time there and for a while, and so I come to know A. Ramana, and Elizabeth, and Stan, and the whole group. They're beautiful.

WIZARD: I think it is about a year since A. Ramana dropped his body.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes. I was actually in correspondence with him about a week or so before that.

WIZARD: I'm curious about one thing; I want to know about this property in Costa Rica [Laughs].

NICK GANCITANO: Well, that's an interesting story; essentially we sold the Atma-Vichara Ashram in the United States with the intention of going to Costa Rica. And the people who were living at the center at the time, we moved there with a group of eight, and when we got to Costa Rica, six of them seemed to be fluctuating in terms of what they wanted to focus their attention on. So I and my wife, Penelope, ended up leaving and going and moving into the mountains. And we retained the property that we

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bought in Costa Rica, we bought an 82-acre property that overlooked the ocean with many waterfalls, and we were going to actually build a very large Atma-Vichara Ashram there, but that was not to happen. It turned out that the intention of the divine was rather that people were able to let go of their attachment to me, the teacher that had in many instances been deified, and rather than seen as just being a signpost, someone to point out certain things. But in instances when that occurs it's necessary for those attachments to be stripped away.

WIZARD: Deification is a real bear [Laughter], it doesn't help anybody.

TRIP: Well, aren't you clean, because so many people don't take the trouble to strip those identifications.

WIZARD: You've got to have Toto in there. Toto is very divine.

TRIP: Hey, I've gone through all of your teachings and it's 100% clean, but I found one tiny little thing here that I want to challenge you on, all right? And I know that this is going to result in a non-challenge because I'm sure there's nothing here. But in one place in answering a question one of your, what do you call them, students asked, you talked about material things not being God, because they are limited. I was just wondering is it not all God, I mean whether it's limited or not?

NICK GANCITANO: Well again in essence everything is God, but depending on the person that the answer is being given to, in other words, depending on who you're addressing with that question, you have to address the student where they are. And so when a student is trying to justify not turning their mind inward, because they say, well if I give attention toward acquiring things, isn't that the same as the self-inquiry? You see, when really it's externalizing. And that would be, you could equate that to being somewhere inside of a circle and saying, wouldn't it be equal to turning inward and finding the center of the circle, wouldn't that be the same as just trying to find a point on the line that creates

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the circle itself? Whereas, if you find a point on the line, you miss the point. The whole idea is to stay centered. And so as long as the mind is externalizing and going outwards towards things, as long as we become attached to people, places, things, or events, then there develops a certain anxiousness or tension in those desires to acquire them. Whereas allowing the mind to turn inward and rest in the center, you acquire them without effort. So once again we come back to the effortless state when all is acquired without effort, we rest in the center, and we realize we are the center. But when the mind is going outward, and we forget our Self, then we delude ourselves into believing that God, we can conceptualize and say, okay, God is the lamp over on the table. But by externalizing our mind toward that we forget our Self, you see, and then we are not really in touch with the divine within our Self. So the key is really again words are very limited in trying to express this and so, yes, I mean everything ultimately is the essence of that. And yet when we fixate or focus on only a small part of it, we lose sight of who we are.

WIZARD: I get that when the I-thought is focused on something external, it's reinforcing the idea or notion of the I-thought instead of which becomes an obstruction to the vision of that within which the I-thought is arising.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, so is that clear?

TRIP: It is. I want to ask you something that's related to that. Okay. We're just having Satsang here, so I guess I don't have to worry about being like perfectly succinct.

WIZARD: It is whether you worry about it or not. [Laughs]

TRIP: Okay, you spoke about free will in one of your sharings, and I think I can say that you would say that there may appear to be free will for the one who has identified with him or herself as a separate individual, but in the absolute sense there is no free will. And on this and many other topics, you and I, and the Wizard here, are completely in agreement, and it's lock step with Ramana

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Maharshi, and I think that underlying my question maybe a stylelist difference. But I find when I'm sharing with others on these topics, and for example when I posit that there ultimately is no free will, I'm not sure that this really matters, but I'm challenged by my friends and, for example, my girlfriend sometimes, she'll call me basically a fundamentalist in that I don't really feel that in the absolute sense there's really any room for difference of opinion about the fact that there is no free will in the absolute sense, at the bottom line there's no free will. Does this make me a fundamentalist, or are there certain things that you too feel are just absolutely true, and you don't really see the wiggle room around those things? And if you do how do you deal with folks who feel that everything is relative, and there's lots of room for discussion on topics like ultimately free will, like how do you know you're right, it'll say to you?

NICK GANCITANO: Yes. The Neo-Advaitic movement gives a lot of room, a lot of wiggle room, for the mind to try to misinterpret these things. And so in order to be as clear as possible, depending on where we get our information and the state that we're in, we receive that information is of the utmost importance, more so than the actual information itself. If I'm in an extremely receptive state, and that information falls or lands on my ears, then I will contemplate that and recognize that it's not so much whether or not there is a state of free will, it's more because there really isn't free will or predestination, that neither one of them really exists in the absolute, because they both exist in the level of mind.

WIZARD: Yes.

NICK GANCITANO: And so as long as there is a sense of doer, or that I am doing it, then the notion of free will can't really be tolerated. You see, the idea that I have free will supposes that there's an individual there that has free will, and this is when that question is generally asked, and when it's answered in a way that you probably perceived it on the clip you saw, that was more than likely the case for the person who is asking it. And as far as there being any of those things, the thought really never occurs from the

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silent state, there really is no thought whether or not there is free will or not within them, unless a questions asked that pertains to that. It's just a state of just being, and recognizing that all movements in consciousness, everything exists on the level of the mind, and as long as the mind is externalized, there's thought, and concepts, and philosophies, and religious dogmas, and when the mind is turned inward, there's the Self.

WIZARD: I've noticed that when one is enjoying synchronicity, or in the zone, that free will is without the doership, and there's no dilemma in it, there's no dilemma of choice in it. It's just the I-thought that suffers the dilemma of choice. And it's just a second guesser, it's like the narrator that reports a game, it can have its opinions and say whatever it wants, but the narrator's not going to change the outcome of the game. [Laughter]

TRIP: Hey, Nick, here is my buffoon question of the hour. Okay, so [Laughs], this is to demonstrate my banality and my buffoonery, but your *Enlightenment Is* workshop photo that I looked at on the web, it's comprised of very attractive people. Since there are no coincidences, I'm wondering what draws attractive looking people to your workshop? [Laughs]

TRIP: Yes they're all beautiful, like 10 hotties, and, they're all smiling, and I'm like, wow! But it's true, isn't it; I see that attractive people tend to be turned on by self-inquiry. What do you think? [Laughs] You don't have to touch it, if you don't want to, you can just let it go [Laughing].

NICK GANCITANO: It doesn't necessarily have to be that. A degree of suffering is derived from realizing that maybe someone's good looks are not going to bring them that crystal carrot. And so often times, someone who is heavily invested in their appearance and will find that there really is no happiness in that, whereas someone who does not feel themselves to be attractive, they may aspire to find that out first. And that often times can take a while, it can take a lifetime of dealing with things. I can't say that that's the reason why those particular people, I'm not sure exactly what

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picture you're talking about. But I can't say that that necessarily is the case. We have many people, who come through, and I'm not sure how to decide which ones were which, but again it's really depends, and I guess beauty is in the "I" of the beholder, no pun intended. And so we have so many people come through, and I think that may not necessarily be the standard.

WIZARD: Divinity in the eye of the beholder beautifies.

TRIP: A lot of things that are considered to be a leg up in the larger culture, such as having a really keen intellect, or being very good looking, actually end up being burdens in the realization of the Truth of who one actually is, because they're things that give you a leg up in your idea of yourself as a person, a separate person. Wouldn't you agree?

NICK GANCITANO: That is the paradox. It could work for you, and it could work against you in a sense. But since there really is no such thing as an individual that attains enlightenment anyway, that really doesn't hold much water under that particular, I guess you would say perspective on how that works. I've never really considered what you're describing. And I don't even know that that's necessarily true, other than the fact that you happen to find a picture that had maybe a lot of pretty women in it, or something. But we have many different people who come, so it's really luck of the draw I guess. There are some who need to let go of their attraction to their body, the idea that I am a person first, and then sometimes that can be the last to go.

WIZARD: Ganesan shared with us one time that his guru had counseled him that his work would be to dissolve the idea, the body idea, of being the grand nephew of Ramana Maharshi would bind him to his body more than anything else. And it's been an obstruction for him, that golden chain.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes and the pride can evolve in having that particular reputation, particularly when people can look to you as they did to Ramana based on what I've read in his books, where

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they're looking for someone to give them, to them, give them the realization. And as Ramana said, all you really can do is be with someone and point them back to themselves. And to ultimately allow those chains to just fall off through repetition. And so I'm sure, yeah, I can see where that could occur.

WIZARD: In deep Satsang several times we've been digging in on that one and I'd ask him was Ramana Maharshi an ordinary human being and he would say, yes. But it was most difficult when he was out in a more worldly circumstance to embrace that confession.

TRIP: Well, we've met a lot of folks through our radio show, and through life, and I want to comment that I think that you are very self-effacing, which is a wonderful quality in a teacher, and not all teachers are as prone as you are to redirect the attention of the student back onto themselves. And I think that's a wonderful quality that you have, I think that makes you a very authentic teacher. And I also noticed, yes, you have a center there, and you do charge people to come and get instruction, but I think your rates are very reasonable. I see that someone can consult with you on the phone for like \$60 an hour, which is an amazingly reasonable price to consult with you for an hour on the phone to work through any spiritual obstructions. So good job [Laughs]. You're running a clean ship of state over there.

NICK GANCITANO: We have toyed with the idea of not charging anything. When we went to India and of course we've had people here who've come and say, how come you're charging, so and so doesn't charge anything. And the reason why we're charging is for the very reason why you're asking why we are charging. And if somebody has a resistance to letting go of their attachment to money, then they're really not going to make any progress in terms of letting go their resistance to it. And so in this regard we found something that would just be comfortable, something that most everyone would be able to handle, and at the same time they're going to have to face the fact that there still maybe are some attachments to money, or lack of understanding as to exactly what

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money represents. And so we felt that it was more helpful, and particularly with this Western market, it would be far more effective to charge rather than to not, in most cases, in every case that's not necessarily true, there are instances.

WIZARD: I've got a calling to do a retreat in the mountains and not charge anybody anything, and everything seems to be falling in place. I think I might call it *Onederful*. I'll send an invite when I get it together, or when it gets me together [Laughs].

TRIP: Well I'm lucky because I have my local friend and mentor here in the Wizard, and he's been unbelievably helpful, and confirming, and affirming my realization. But I think it's amazing that anyone can call you up and for \$60 an hour to spend an hour with you on the phone. If somebody is serious about their own spiritual wellbeing, that is an amazing bargain.

WIZARD: It's a bargain. It's priceless.

WIZARD: We haven't heard anything about Penelope.

NICK GANCITANO: Yes, she's sitting right here.

WIZARD: Talk about attractive. [Laughs]

NICK GANCITANO: She is, yes, she is just wonderful in every way. And she just waved. [Laughter]

WIZARD: Hi, Penelope.

TRIP: Well we didn't get to even half of what I wanted to ask you because I was interested in all the folks that you've got on your bookstore, some of them I haven't heard like Joseph Benner, I'm not familiar with him. The rest of them I am, but I would have been interested to hear about your interactions with those folks. Lots of other things I would have loved to have spoken with you about, maybe you can come sometime.

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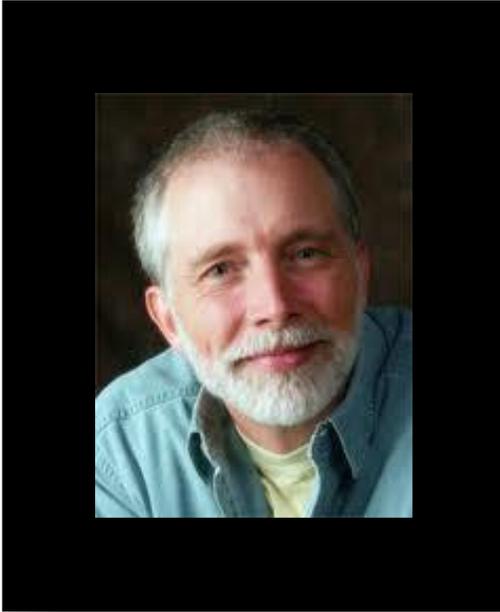
WIZARD: Yes.

NICK GANCITANO: Whenever you like.

TRIP: Fantastic. In the meantime, we're going to be certainly linking you up to our website, and your Center, and we'll be in touch in the future on our retreat and other things.

NICK GANCITANO: Great, we'll be honored.

WIZARD: And thank you, Nick, and thank you Penelope. And great friends! Namaste.



Nirmala

<http://endless-satsang.com/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Nirmala, is an Advaita spiritual teacher. After a lifetime of spiritual seeking, Nirmala met his teacher, Neelam, a devotee of H.W.L. Poonja, otherwise known as Papaji. She convinced him that seeking wasn't necessary, and after experiencing a profound spiritual awakening in India, he began offering Satsang and nondual spiritual mentoring with Neelam's blessing. Nirmala attributes his spiritual wisdom in no small part to Ramana Maharshi, a revered Indian saint, who was Papaji's teacher. Nirmala's perspective was also profoundly expanded by his friend and teacher Adyashanti.

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Nirmala offers Satsang in gratitude for the love and grace that flow through his teachers, and as a celebration of the possibility, in every moment, of recognizing the Truth of who we are. Nirmala offers a unique vision and a gentle, compassionate approach, which adds to this rich tradition of inquiry into the Truth of being.

Nirmala, I've got to tell you that your writings deeply resonated with me. I think you're an amazing writer, and not just your writings but the way you've organized yourself to share the teachings, the commerce, the way you conduct it, if you will. I love everything about the way you're doing your thing.

NIRMALA: Great. It's definitely been a slow evolution over the last dozen years or so. So it's nice to hear that you're appreciating it so much.

TRIP: Well one of the things that particularly strikes me about your teaching is the nuance that you bring to subjects that are often portrayed in black and white terms, for example, your take on entitlement. You say on your website, "One school says one must be completely dissolved as an ego to be enlightened and another that everyone is already enlightened". But you have this useful middle of the road perspective; can you share that with us?

NIRMALA: Yes, it's just really pointing to that the core of enlightenment is awareness itself, is this awake present that we all experience. But obviously even within a single person there's a huge range of degree to which we experience that, how fully, how completely, how much of that awareness, that presence is flowing, is happening. And so again the essence of it is awakeness, and yet we experience it either in a very constricted, limited, identified, way, or we at other times experience an opening up of awareness, and a softening, a filling in of the sense of self, of that sense of being. And that goes all the way to a place where what we would call ego is completely dissolved. But there's every place in between, every possibility in between. It seems that awareness itself is here to try it out every which way.

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WIZARD: Yes, it's a Mystery. [Laughs]

NIRMALA: To hold either the black or the white position is leaving out this incredible variety, leaving out this incredible variation within our experience of how expanded or contracted our awareness becomes depending on the specifics of our experience, how much it triggers our conditioning, our fears, our hopes, our wishes, that kind of thing, or how much it is a movement beyond these limitations.

TRIP: I haven't been to a lot of spiritual gatherings, but I've noticed on some of the dialogues online, that there's a little bit of a game that gets played out in the spiritual community where people are sometimes prone to let you know that obviously by the way you're talking you're really not as enlightened as you might think you are. But I have to say that I feel that anyone that's been blessed with a profound realization of their own non-physical reality, and for whom that realization sticks, and provides them relief from the things that formerly bothered them in life, and results in spontaneous joy, I think of that person as an enlightened human being, and I feel that about myself. And I don't run into that many people that actually feel that each and every day. I have a lot of questions for you, but I just want to share with you, isn't it fantastic that feeling? Isn't it amazing?

NIRMALA: It is, especially in contrast to the opposite experience. And yet again, my focus is on pointing to the enlightenment or maybe even a better word is the wisdom that is already present in everybody, and that has always been present. I sometimes refer to my experience of awakening as my non-awakening, because what was actually realized or recognized was that this discriminating wise awareness has always been here. How can something that is already awake wake up? Wisdom isn't the accumulation of knowledge, facts and figures. Wisdom is the capacity to really distinguish how important, how true, and ultimately how real those facts or experiences are. It does lead to discriminating what's true, what's real about you, about your own reality, your own existence, your own awakensness.

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TRIP: How true. You know the Wizard and I have spent thousands of hours in Satsang and one of the things we've talked about is this word "God", and one of the Wizard's favorite ways of expressing God is just that word, capacity.

WIZARD: Yes, the self is like the host of hosts, it is pure capacity because there's nothing in it. So acceptance leads you into that nothingness that is pure capacity that allows forms to appear and disappear without leaving a mark on that capacity, or diminishing its capacity.

NIRMALA: And we're all equally endowed with the capacity to know how true things are, how real things are, and it's just a question of whether we recognize that capacity, whether we notice it as it operates. The way our being distinguishes or discriminates how true something is, is by the expansion or the contraction that we feel in our sense of being.

I often say the Truth is whatever opens your heart, whatever gives you an expanded, softer, fuller sense of your own Self. Everyone has always had this capacity, it's always been functional in everybody, because when our sense of Self contracts, when it feels small, or inadequate, or unworthy, or incomplete, it's also working perfectly in those contractions to show us that whatever we're thinking, or feeling, or desiring in that moment is actually not very true, not very important, not very real.

WIZARD: One of my favorite quotes of Ramana Maharshi was enlightenment is giving up, relinquishing the idea that you're not enlightened. [Laughs]

NIRMALA: If you have this idea that you're not, that will of course limit your experience, it will give you a narrower experience, a narrower channel for your awareness to flow in, so you will feel constricted, you'll feel limited. And that's the right way to feel when you have that not very true thought.

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TRIP: I love the way you help people to feel good about junk that would normally bother somebody. You've got a beautiful way of turning that on its head, and all throughout your website in your writings it's a wonderful talent that you have.

NIRMALA: One way I do that is pointing to this capacity to discriminate how true things are, but to also see that all there is, is Truth. Everything that exists is a part of reality. The only question is how true, how big a part of reality is it? And so even something that makes you very, very contracted, and gives you a very limited experience of reality is still a limited experience of reality. So it's still true, it's still good in a sense, and it's still okay. All of our beliefs, all of our fears, all of our hopes, they all have a little bit of Truth in them, sometimes a very little bit. My favorite example of something that's true but not very true is a lottery ticket. Because if you buy a lottery ticket, it's actually true that you could win, unfortunately it's not very true. [Laughs]

TRIP: But I think that's a (I don't want to use the word clever, because clever is really a derogatory term) but it's a very clever way of looking at things because you've taken the duality out of it, and you've basically applied a nondual graduated way of looking at everything, everything is true to some degree.

NIRMALA: Nonduality or oneness is actually true of even the most seemingly clear and opposite dualities. If you look at the duality of light and dark, it turns out that there's really only one thing, there's only light. There really isn't some other thing called darkness. You can't go to the hardware store and buy a flashdark and point it at things to make them disappear. There isn't some energy called darkness you can shine on things. Dark is just the word we use to describe when there's little or almost no light, but the one thing that exists in that duality is light, just to varying degrees.

TRIP: I love that, a flashdark. [Laughs] Did you come up with that, or did you get that from somewhere else? That's a killer, man; Flashdark.

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NIRMALA: Some people call me the metaphor man, I like metaphors.

WIZARD: Our friend, Ganesan, Ramana Maharshi's grand nephew, left us with a wonderful quote one day, and it was "every action is perfect". And boy, that just takes care of everything.

NIRMALA: Yes, because it all gets included. Then you can still distinguish how perfect, how true, how important, different actions or thoughts are. Of course you quickly find out that most thoughts aren't that important, aren't very real. But they still have some reality, the simple thought of remembering where you live has some reality, some significance, just not very much in the more cosmic scheme of things.

TRIP: If somebody asks me what's your radio show about, then the short answer is I give them is radio Satsang. And I read on your website, you had a really wonderful explanation of the true meaning of Satsang. Can you share that?

NIRMALA: It's in line with that we've just been saying. I say that Truth is what exists, Truth is what's always here, it's everything that we experience. So we all have this capacity to experience Truth, and ultimately to discriminate Truth, ultimately to realize that that's what we are also, that we are that same light or Truth or oneness. Satsang is that recognition, and the gathering together for that recognition. Satsang is a gathering together for the Truth.

WIZARD: It's profoundly affirming.

NIRMALA: Yes.

TRIP: I've got a lot of questions for you. This is just a fun question, just to get to know you a little bit, but in several places in your writing you talk about desire, and you use the example of the desire for the perfect lover, I saw that in several places. I know that for me and my storyline that was definitely part of it. I was looking for that perfect mate, was that part of your storyline too?

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NIRMALA: Sure. It would be hard to live in this culture, in this time, without being infected by that romantic ideal. And so like most people I was a glorious failure at ever finding her. [Laughs]

WIZARD: Well count me in on that one. But when I found it, I found it, or it found me.

NIRMALA: Yes. When we look for a perfect love in the usual places that we look, which is in another person, well, you never find it there. But the perfect love, the perfect lover which is this Truth, this presence that fills you, you can find that. But it's in the last place we ever think to look, it's in the place where it seems that we lack it. First of all, the empty place that feels lacking is the source of the desire. We only desire something when we have a feeling that we lack it. And so right now it's hard to desire shoulders, it doesn't make sense, you've already got them. But you can desire love if you have a feeling of a lack of love, a feeling, an emptiness inside, a sense that it's somehow missing. So the emptiness is the source of the desire and yet paradoxically the place that we find can find real love is also in that same empty space within.

WIZARD: So seeking love is like a doubt in disguise.

NIRMALA: In a sense it's like seeking shoulders, or seeking something that's already here. We are seeking love, and love is already here, only very well disguised as the lack of love.

TRIP: I'm wondering, do you also feel the light of awareness has the capacity to transform the uninspiring into the inspiring? For example, over time one might come to view one's lover as boring or unsatisfying, but if you shine the light of awareness on that lover, that can bring back the magic, no?

NIRMALA: The love, or the inspiration, the juice, the joy, the pleasure, the satisfaction, is what's shining out of you. And so if you really understand the nature of love, that love is this thing that flows from within you outward, then you could actually be totally

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madly in love with an old beat up chair, with a pencil, with your toenail, with the sound of the rain on the windowpane, and even with a person that you've been married to for 35 years for whom there's little mystery left. It's in the shining of love, and the giving of love, that we are filled with love, because the source is within us. When the source is within us, then the only way you can really get filled with love is to give it. Anytime you try to get love, it has the opposite effect of making you feel more lacking. [Laughs]

WIZARD: That's a rocky road.

NIRMALA: It is.

TRIP: I've tried a few times.

NIRMALA: Trying to fill yourself with love from the outside is like trying to fill up a very leaky bucket with a hose. You can stand there for hours, and the bucket never fills up.

WIZARD: Boy, I've been there a lot, my God, you wouldn't believe.

NIRMALA: It sucks trying to fill yourself up with love from the outside. It's a fundamental structure that what we are at the core is this emptiness, and so anything you put in there is going to dissolve. It's like the leaky bucket, you put love in there, and it dissolves back into emptiness. But when something comes out of it, it moves from emptiness into form, and so when this emptiness moves as love, when you give your attention, and your acceptance, and your curiosity to something else, then this emptiness moves out of you into the form and the quality of love, including all of the joy, and pleasure, and satisfaction that brings. So it's the flow from emptiness outward that fills us. The inward flow from the outside is a movement from form back into emptiness, and so it never fills us up. You can't ever fill up something that is as profoundly empty as the emptiness inside of us.

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TRIP: Well, speaking of love and also synchronicity, I don't spend a lot of time on Facebook, the Wizard spends more because he's retired and I'm still out there in the workforce.

NIRMALA: Yes, that can take up a lot of your time.

TRIP: [Laughs] But we both resonated with Gina's writings, her postings on the web, and also I liked her so much I asked her to friend me on Facebook.

NIRMALA: Yes, this is my wife, Gina Lake, by the way.

TRIP: Your wife, yes. And we're thinking about who would be a great guest next week, and the Wizard's thinking Gina, Gina Lake. And, my God, it turns out the two of you are married [Laughs].

WIZARD: I was reading her writings, and it's unusually clear and well done for what you find on Facebook.

NIRMALA: She's got the insight and the wisdom, but she's also been a writer for 20 years, so she has the skills of a writer to express the wisdom, and to put it into words.

TRIP: Did the two of you meet while you were still seeking, or after?

NIRMALA: No, we both met pretty much after we were done seeking. But I figure I've gone from seeking to endlessly exploring. There's no seeking because I'm endlessly discovering something. It's not like the discoveries have stopped, but what has stopped is any sense that something out there is going to fill me up. The exploring and the discoveries are rich for their own sake.

WIZARD: Yes, the journey's begun when it's over.

NIRMALA: Yes, the opportunities to shine love, awareness and curiosity are endless.

WIZARD: So where did you go in India?

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NIRMALA: We traveled all over actually. We were in Rishikesh, a beautiful place up in the foothills of the Himalayas, and then we went to the home of my teacher's teacher, which you mentioned in the introduction is Papaji, but he was no longer alive, he died actually the day before I left for India.

WIZARD: I met him right before that, I was in India and I got an invite to dinner, and met him. He was just sitting at the table watching TV [laughs], grinning from ear to ear.

NIRMALA: [Laughs] That reminds me of how when I first attended Satsang with my teacher, Neelam, my biggest problem was that my cheeks got so sore. Because I was laughing and smiling so much, it took a while to build up the smiling muscles in my cheeks [Laughs].

WIZARD: Did you go to Arunachala?

NIRMALA: Yes, that was the third stop that we made, where we stayed at Ramanashram for a month.

WIZARD: I've been there five times, and there's something that happens when I'm in Arunachala. I'm not much on the woo-woo stuff, but when I'm at that place, there's something, some mechanism that my thoughts naturally cease, and it's really quite a way to recharge. Trip went with me one time, and it was just magical in every way.

TRIP: It was. I was coming off of a huge spiritual experience, and then I had recently met Ganesan, and his teachings, I don't know, everything came together, and I was on this huge spiritual high. And so I had a lot of unrealizable expectations for my trip to India, and they were exceeded, oh my God [laughs]. It was wild, because we were with as group of people that all were in that space, so synchronicity was just seamless everywhere, it was amazing.

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NIRMALA: Again, that's why gathering together is a part of Satsang, because there's a synergy that happens, even when just two people sit, and speak, or explore, or rest, in this presence.

TRIP: I want to ask you, I'm curious about your universe of friends, and Satsang. You offer mentoring, you have a fantastic website, www.endless-Satsang.com, everything on there is just beautifully written, and there are all these free resources. And then you also offer people mentoring. I'm just curious how wide your network is, and are you on the phone all day with folks?

NIRMALA: The amount of activity ebbs and flows, but that's just what I do. I love mentoring with people one on one, because any time you're in a group people can have a sense of shyness and a sense of not wanting to take up all the time in Satsang with "their" questions. And so when you set aside an hour in an individual mentoring session to ask whatever you want to ask, explore whatever you want to explore, there is a potential for greater depth, and finer tuning of the exploration towards what that particular person needs and where they are exactly.

It's funny how my work with people individually can range from the most subtle, profound Truth, to something very practical. Sometimes I'm actually helping someone promote their business or do something else very practical. Ideally this combination can be a way of bringing the wisdom, and the capacity to distinguish what's true, what's important, what's real, down to the day to day practical stuff that we all encounter in life. So I also like being able to work in a very wide range of topics for exploration when I work individually over the phone or in person.

TRIP: I've noticed that many people who are principally involved in communicating spiritual Truths are reluctant to call themselves teacher. But on your website, you're identified as a teacher of Advaita, so I'm guessing you're comfortable with that label. What do you think about the perception of oneself as teacher?

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NIRMALA: I finally settled on the term spiritual teacher because I needed some way to describe what I do. It's not because it ultimately describes everything I do, or even that spiritual teacher is a completely clear description of what I do. In one sense, it is not teaching anyone anything as it's not so much giving someone knowledge or transmitting something to them. Instead in this way of teaching there is a pointing to something that's already present in them.

WIZARD: And you're bringing that out?

NIRMALA: Yes, I'm just helping them recognize their own capacity, their own inner wisdom, and their own inner awakensess. And so it's not anything I ever give anybody, hopefully I just help them notice or discover it.

TRIP: That's the only way to go. And we've been discussing the business side of spiritualism. Our listeners probably get bored with my talk about this, but we agree with one of our recent guests, Puppetji, that prosperity is a good thing, and if it derives from ones spiritual activity, that's fine. But the Wizard and I both feel there's an ideal way of going about one's spiritual commerce if you will, and I'm really impressed by your approach. You give away your books, your videos, your audio recordings, and your teachings, and you ask your clients to pay for private counseling only on an ability to pay basis. Now I think that's the high road, not necessarily in terms of some moral calculus, but how it makes the one who's operating in that way feel, you know? It just feels wonderful, doesn't it?

NIRMALA: If the Truth is what opens your heart, and the Truth is what softens and expands your sense of love, and joy, and peace, then it definitely feels truer to offer stuff freely.

WIZARD: We've got your book *That is That* on our website with a link. If you just click on the book cover in our free library and it takes you to the endless-satsang.com webpage where they can

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download it for free (<http://endless-satsang.com/free-ebooks-free-spiritual-books.htm>)

NIRMALA: If somebody wants a paperback copy, they can also buy one on Amazon, but of course there are unavoidable costs with a paperback book so we do charge for those. Part of the Truth, part of the reality is the practical needs of anyone living in this world. So to me the ideal is a balance. And this includes allowing people to practically support the teaching through donations for the mentoring session, or through the purchase price of some of the books including the paperback versions. And then to balance that out, I also make the teaching freely available when it's not possible for someone to pay. I have had people that can only donate \$10 for a mentoring session, and that's great, any amount they can truly afford is fine. But the balanced perspective includes the recognition that there is also a practical financial reality that needs to be addressed. I often joke that even when you realize that there's no separate Self, the credit card company still thinks there is. They keep sending the bill. [Laughs]

WIZARD: I was in business for years and I never saw any conflict in my business enterprise, in fact I think it was profoundly responsible for the business' success that we stayed principle centered as a business, and our customers loved us, we loved our customers, everybody was on one team. As I was retiring I was thinking about giving all my money to the Ashram in India, then I met Ganesan, and he said, no, he said, you take that money and do the work yourself [laughs].

NIRMALA: There's a wonderful story about when Ramesh was with Nisargadatta, and at one point Ramesh who was a vice president of a large bank in India made a very large donation to Nisargadatta. Nisargadatta took him aside, and all Nisargadatta wanted to know was would this donation cause Ramesh any hardship? Ramesh assured him that there was absolutely no hardship. And then Nisargadatta said, okay, then it was okay for Ramesh to give a large sum.

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WIZARD: Ganesan spent a lot of time with Nisargadatta, and one time he offered a tithing, and the tithing was accepted and Nisargadatta didn't move from the scene or anything. But before Ganesan left he stopped him and said, come back, and he handed him a sealed envelope. And when he left the Satsang and he opened it up it was this same exact amount of money that he had offered [laughs].

NIRMALA: When you do operate this way, what you find is that you're supported very well, and often in very mysterious ways that have nothing to do with money.

WIZARD: Right on.

NIRMALA: Things show up, and I'm always amazed. I'll just have an idle thought about something I might need or that would make the work I do easier, and it will literally appear, out of the blue. And then other things that I enjoy but that I don't really need, they'll still just appear. So I live a strangely comfortable and even at times luxurious life, yet when I actually look at my tax return at the end of the year I have very little income. [Laughs]

TRIP: Hey, did you hear about the nonduality and science conference in San Rafael?

NIRMALA: I did, I've been hearing about that for a couple of years now.

TRIP: I think you should be a headliner there, man.

WIZARD: Yes, I do too.

TRIP: I think you'd be like the top dog, the alpha spiritual.

WIZARD: It was a lot of fun.

NIRMALA: I'm sure it was fun. I've been in a funny place with the traveling. For the first 10, 11 years that I was teaching, I was

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traveling several times a month, so 25 times a year or more I would get on a plane and go somewhere. And I think I just wore the traveling out. And for the last year and a half I've been saying that I'm on sabbatical, I'm just taking a break from all of that moving around. I just recently started giving Satsang again right here in Sedona where I live. But it's been nice to stop and rest for a bit from all of the traveling.

WIZARD: Did you ever know Robert Adams?

NIRMALA: I never met him. I came into this teaching when Robert Adams and Papaji had just died. But of course the wisdom is in every one of us. The wonderful thing now is that you don't have to go to India, that same presence, and potential for awakening is coming alive everywhere.

WIZARD: It's amazing. I'm amazed at how much in the cracks and crevices, in the woodwork, how much deep understanding there is. And as we affirm one another in Satsang, and how it comes out, and it's not owned by any religion, or teacher, or method, or anything.

TRIP: You know that bumper sticker, what would Jesus do? Well, I don't know if this is a crass comparison, but I ask what would oneness do? And so I think one of the reasons that this movement is exploding, and so many people now seem to be awakening to this incredible Truth of who we are, is that it's pretty much how I now interrelate with everyone all the time. For example, a group of people were talking about founding an intentional community in our local community, and there's a gathering of 12 people there. Now if I had been there in the past I would have come on really strong with my deep ecological understanding of how to live sustainably, and I would have come across probably as a pedantic lecturer or something like that. But I saw that gathering as an opportunity to celebrate our oneness, and to describe how a community could come out of that oneness, and how every decision that would have to be made could easily be made in the moment, out of oneness, and no better decision could be made

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than that. And everyone in the room was smiling and nodding their heads. I recently had a motorcycle accident, and I had to make a decision about dealing with an insurance company, and when I just default back into oneness I always know what to do, what to say, how to be. And you find that when you take the focus off of yourself into this connected thing that we all are, it's just so much more magical, and beautiful, and wonderful, and people like you more, it's more interesting for everyone. This joy comes bubbling up out of your heart. I mean, it's just fabulous, and so I would think that the world would quickly run with this, you know. [Laughs] I'm running with it.

WIZARD: Or sit still with it. [Laughs]

NIRMALA: The only thing I would add is that when it has the other quality of contraction and limitation, it's not a sign that somehow you lost connection to the oneness, it's a sign that the connection has gotten smaller, narrower, more limited. And the times that it doesn't flow easily, when you feel constricted, or literally there's like a narrowing of awareness, like a tunnel vision that happens when you're only focusing on something like what's in it for me, that is not a sign of anything wrong, or that you've lost anything. In fact it is the right way for it to feel, it's the way that you know that your perspective has gotten narrow. The contraction is how this inner wisdom is getting your attention to show you that you are seeing only a small part of the truth. (There is more about the wisdom of the heart's opening and contracting in the free download of part 2 of Living from the Heart here: <http://endless-satsang.com/free-ebooks-free-spiritual-books.htm>)

In that children's game we all played where someone told you that you're getting warmer or you're getting colder, in order to play the game with somebody they had to tell you when you were getting colder. It would have been annoying if they just kept saying you're getting warmer all the time even when you were getting colder. And so this heart, the being, this awakens, speaks to us in this quiet subtle way by contracting us to show us that we are getting colder. And so I often say to people the point isn't to always be

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expanded, always feel good. The point is to trust the experience that you are having when your heart gets contracted, because that's also oneness showing you something about the experience you are having

WIZARD: That's perfect too.

NIRMALA: Your heart is perfectly telling you or showing you how true something is, how important, how real.

TRIP: I love it. You've really added something to my perspective; which is pretty amazing, because I've been very attentive on this subject now for a while. You wrote this piece called *The Flower of Awakening* about the causes of spiritual awakening or enlightenment. I think that you write so beautifully. I just wanted to read a little bit. All right.

WIZARD: Yes, go ahead.

TRIP: Okay... "Consider the miracle of a flower. What is it that causes a plant to flower? Does sunshine cause a plant to flower? Does lots of water? Or is it good soil? Maybe all of these together? Or is there really something more subtle in the nature of the flower itself that causes it to flower? Is it something in the DNA of the plant? Does that mean the whole process of evolution over eons of time is involved? What other factors might cause the flowering? Does gravity play a part? The season and the temperature? The quality of the light? Some plants will not flower under glass or artificial light. What about animals that eat the fruit and spread the plant? Or the birds or bees that pollinate the flower? Do they cause the subsequent flowering of the newly established plants?

Are there even subtler influences? What about presence and love? The intention and attention of a gardener? And is the existence of the world of form itself necessary for a plant to flower? And what about consciousness? Is there an ultimate force that directs the creation and unfolding of all expressions of form that is behind the appearance of a rose or a daisy?

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What if it is a combination of all of the things mentioned? And also what if they have to all be in the right proportion? Is that proportion different for every species of plant? Some plants need lots of water or light to flower; others will die with too much water or light. There is a unique formula that is involved with the appearance of the simplest apple blossom and the most complex orchid.

When you consider all of these influences and even more that were not mentioned or can't even be known or imagined, then it truly is a miracle when a flower happens. It is impossible to say what causes it to happen with any certainty or completeness. Yet, it's an act of incredible grace whenever all of these diverse, subtle, and gross influences come together in just the right way for an iris or a bird of paradise to open its unique petals to the sky. Ultimately, if you trace all the factors back to all their causes, you find that everything that exists is somehow intimately connected to the cactus flower or dandelion in your front yard. We need a vague and powerful word like "grace" to name this amazing interplay of forces and intelligence. Obviously, to reduce it to a formula doesn't come close to capturing or describing the vast richness of variables and forces at play. There is no formula complex enough to capture the whole Mystery of a magnolia blossom.

Spiritual awakening is also a flowering of consciousness." And it goes on from there to suggest that there is an equally rich and mysterious array of causes to any spiritual awakening.

WIZARD: That's beautiful.

TRIP: That was amazing. I was transported.

NIRMALA: I say the Truth is what opens your heart, and it's very sweet because as you read that, my heart opened and I was very deeply touched by my own words.

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TRIP: I want to encourage anybody that's listening to go to your website and read your free ebooks and blog posts, because the writing can transport you. You have a great gift.

WIZARD: The address is www.endless-Satsang.com.

NIRMALA: There's also a free book of poetry, so there's a whole book of poems that have that same heart opening effect. Sometimes I won't pick up the book of poetry for years, and then I'll literally have tears come to my eyes reading the poems even though I wrote them myself, or as I sometimes say, they wrote me.

TRIP: I like to say that God is egalitarian because no matter who you are or no matter what station in life, greatest riches available to someone living this human condition is available to everyone, there's no leg up on that. And it's just this simple awareness. I just wanted you to comment some more on this unbelievably simply yet profound experience that one has of one's own direct awareness, I mean one's direct experience of awareness. You talk about that in your writings where there's all of these books that have been written, and all of these concepts that we use to point out the Truth, but in the end we're all left with our direct experience. Can you talk about that?

NIRMALA: I would just point to the awareness here right *Now*, no matter how big or small. Of course the wonderful thing about a big experience of awareness is that no one has to tell you what the nature of awareness is because you're drowning in it when you're having a huge experience of awareness. But then we tend to overlook the fact that that same Mystery is here right now even in a small experience of awareness in ordinary moment. I often say, a single drop of water is still wet, and so all of the Mystery, all of the beauty, all of the power of awareness is here right *Now* in whatever awareness is hearing these words. It doesn't have to be a big experience in order for there to be an exploration and discovery about awareness itself. Awareness is like this very fundamental quality of what we are, and so it's always present. People sometimes say to me, something happened and I lost

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awareness. And I'll say *really*? How do you know that you lost awareness?

WIZARD: [Laughter] Who knows that?

NIRMALA: Right, the only way they can know they lost the awareness is if they were *aware* of the change in their experience, that they're calling the loss of awareness. So awareness is a fundamental quality of our Being that we cannot lose. And there are other ones like oneness; oneness is a fundamental quality of everything. Also aliveness is a fundamental quality of everything that exists. And then another one that's really fascinating is emptiness, space. Space is a fundamental quality, everywhere you go there's space. I challenge you to find some place where you run out of space, where there is literally no space.

TRIP: You know, your writings are filled with little gems, I don't know how many are original to you, or how many aren't, it doesn't really matter. But I just love reading your stuff. And one of the little gems I picked up last night was that you said, "Surrender isn't something you do, it's something that happens to you".

WIZARD: Yes.

NIRMALA: Yes, that's just a clearer understanding of surrender. The expansion of awareness is like gravity, it's the default. If you stop holding your arm up in the air, then gravity takes over and your arm naturally drops. The surrender, the expansion, is just what happens whenever we stop. And so it's not actually something you do, you don't have an expansion muscle. You have lots of contraction muscles: things like thoughts, and fears, judgments, and doubts, and worries, and hopes, and wishes, and desires. Those are all our inner contraction "muscles", they're all the things that we do in order to contract awareness, in order to focus and direct it. But when we stop, whenever anything stops our mind, whenever anything stops that activity, the expansion just naturally happens, just naturally occurs.

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WIZARD: The Buddha was looking and searching, and had completely exhausted every remedy imaginable, and he sat under a tree in Benares. And he sat under the tree and he let it all go, when he gave up the search he was answered.

NIRMALA: There's also a place in between, there is a kind of doing which is the simple noticing of how expanded or contracted you are. The simple noticing of the experience of awareness you're having right now. That noticing is in between doing and not doing. And it doesn't actually cause any shift or awakening. But what noticing does mean is that you're there when it happens. You actually notice it. I use the metaphor that going down and sitting at the beach does not cause a tsunami, but it does mean that it's a lot more likely that you're going to be swept away by any tsunami that happens to come [Laughs]. So a common misunderstanding is that people expect or think somehow that doing a spiritual practice is going to cause an awakening, but the Truth is that spiritual practice just means that you're home when awakening or a big surrender comes.

TRIP: Oh, Nirmala, we've run out of time, man. I could hang here with you for the rest of the day. Thank you so much for joining us today.

WIZARD: Right on. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NIRMALA: My pleasure.

TRIP: [Laughs] All right, well thank you so much.

NIRMALA: All right, you two take care.

WIZARD: Namaste.



Norio Kushi

<http://www.demystifyenlightenment.org/>

TRIP: Born to the founders of the macrobiotic movement, Aveline and Michio Kushi, our very special guest today Norio Kushi would also one day found a business enterprise, a bus company in Vermont. But it was a lifelong passion for wheels, bicycling up to 90 miles a day as a child, riding the subways for fun, and driving a taxi in Boston that would inspire Norio to let go of a business career for the joy of simply driving a big rig throughout North American.

One day while driving his truck, Norio's thinking stopped; lasting more than two weeks. This experience revealed that the "phantom

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self” we think we are does not exist. The “phantom self” exists only in our thinking, in our internal dialogue, and is the single source of all human suffering. By recognizing the illusion of the phantom self, Norio awakened to complete peace and unconditional love, a natural state that is humanity’s true nature. Norio now shares the insights into the human tapestry into which we’re born and how we may naturally and effortlessly experience our true nature.

NORIO KUSHI: Sounds great. I could not have said it better myself.

WIZARD: I remember that vividly, the next day you sent an email out to me about that, and I just went, Wow, how beautiful.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, and then I met you at a trade show straight after that, you and Carol, and we talked a little bit about that as well.

TRIP: You know what's amazing, Norio, is that you and I have a very similar life story in the spiritual part of it in that both you and I were pretty good friends with the Wizard for about 15 years. And I don't know about you, but I didn't recognize him as some kind of a wisdom keeper for spiritual Truth. I thought he was just an ordinary entrepreneur. And he and I didn't talk about any of this stuff that we're talking about now. And then in 2006, within about six months, I guess you had that experience in February 2005, but some time in 2006, I don't keep dates but I had the same kind of experience that you had, although I didn't stop thinking for weeks, but I had a meltdown. So then all of a sudden I had the ears to hear what the Wizard had been saying, I don't know if he'd been talking about it.

WIZARD: Just ordinary stuff.

TRIP: So that's pretty cool, so we're on the same track there. So you say you were never interested in religion, spirituality, meditation, or any kind of discipline.

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NORIO KUSHI: Yes, that's correct.

TRIP: None of it ever appeared on or through your windshield, but then in 2005 something happened, what happened?

NORIO KUSHI: Well, 2005, what stopped the thinking was actually a combination of events that occurred, and what I now see is that actually stopping thinking isn't a big deal. I mean, it's great, it's wonderful, it's blissful, there's no separation between the I and the big I, or whatever one wants to call it, and just this sense of just being so complete and whole, and just this overwhelming sense of unconditional love. So of course it's wonderful.

For me, what the big thing was; I call being hit on the head with the cosmic two by four. And that's realizing that there is no self, everything I thought I was, was just in thinking, and it took me three days of no thinking for that cosmic two by four to hit me. So to me that's really the big deal, because I see now that we probably all have glimpses of silence, and we may not realize it. The reason we don't realize it because, one, if it's a short amount of time our chatter begins right up again, and even if it's a longer prolonged period, maybe minutes or so, as soon as the chatter begins, the phantom self returns and takes credit for the experience. There's the illusion of a continuity of a phantom self always having been there.

TRIP: Yes, and we're going to explore that, but before you dismiss your two weeks of silence too readily, I think it's interesting to note that here you were driving a big rig, which is a pretty dangerous thing. And you obviously had to do a lot of directions and this and that, and you were able to drive the big rig without thinking.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, absolutely. It turns out that 90% of thinking is unnecessary.

WIZARD: Amen.

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NORIO KUSHI: There were still thoughts here and there; my fuel gauge is low, I need to stop for fuel, I'll stop at exit 140 in Oklahoma, and get fuel there. And then silence, no more thinking. I pull in. What it turns out is there's this... once one realizes there's no phantom self, what I'm referring to is this psychologically made up self, there's still what I call an ego. Like the translation of no phantom self from the Far East to the English, they use the term ego as the phantom self. I see an ego as a necessary, an integral component of being human, being a typical body.

WIZARD: It's a biological function.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, exactly. And like all animals they can respond to its environment, and the way the cat has a cat ego, a dog has a dog ego, etc. So humans have the human ego. So we don't really describe or explain what the ego really is, and so there's a misunderstanding as to what it really is. So what I'm referring to, let's see... so what occurs is the phantom self disappears but then there's still the ego, which is fully aware of the duality, the world of separation, the world of contrast. And it turns out that without the separate self, without the phantom self, as I like to call it, we can actually navigate the physical, the manifest world much more adeptly, we're much more aware of really what's happening.

WIZARD: Yes.

NORIO KUSHI: And so there's this wonderful Keda videos or whatever that's called. This woman, Jill Bolte Taylor, had a stroke and the left brain, she had a stroke in the left side of her brain, and so therefore the right side of her brain was still fully functioning. And when the left side of the brain went dead, so to speak, this is how she would say it, but she experienced this bliss, and this non-differentiation, and where she couldn't tell where her hands ended and the wall started, and things like that. So here she was, because the left brain completely shut down, the left side, she was like a ship without a rudder in this sea of bliss. And I think that's

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probably what happens with people who experience that kind of bliss with the use of psychedelic drugs, etc., is that they're thrown into a real experience but there's no rudder. And so in my case the stopping the thinking was a culmination of inquiry. Actually it is what I had been doing for two years as to what's it all about, what does it mean to be human? And culminating in the stopping of the chatter.

So both side of the brain were always active, both sides of the brain were fully active during the whole process including discovering the silence, allowing the silence to show up.

WIZARD: So there was a paradox shift in the primacy of being?

NORIO KUSHI: Yes.

WIZARD: Of what you are and what you're saying is the silence moved to the forefront.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, absolutely. It is an incredible experience, yes. I don't mean to make it sound trivial because it's not. As the same time really the big deal is recognizing that everything I thought I was, this name, which was a basket which contained all my experiences from when I began speaking, and all my history, all the problems, the things that I dealt with, etc., the relationships, the three marriages, the three divorces, etc. I thought that was all me, I came to realize that that's not me. [Laughs] It's incredibly liberating.

TRIP: Although your ex won't agree with that, right [Laughs].

NORIO KUSHI: Well when I saw Joanne, my wife number three, and the first thing... we talked for a moment, and she noticed there was a shift, there was a change. First thing she said was, "Boy, I can finally talk with you". [Laughs] And I just cracked up laughing, because I knew exactly what she was talking about. Before I thought I knew how to listen and everything, and I didn't even know how to listen.

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WIZARD: One of the beautiful things about the silence is the capacity for empathic listening.

TRIP: I don't know whether or not we want to spend our time going through some of the symptoms of the phantom self that you described to me in your email, but I just think it's really useful because whenever I'm living out of my ego, which is still a significant portion of time, these things that you point out are the things that are happening. And so I think it might be helpful to spend 10 minutes going through these symptoms of the phantom self one by one if you don't mind.

Okay, the first one you say, "Always seeking".

NORIO KUSHI: Yes.

TRIP: You say, "Once this phantom self attains what it's seeking, it'll always make it wrong or judge it as something missing and continues seeking".

NORIO KUSHI: Yes.

TRIP: Now here's another thing, an important note, you said, "The phantom self can only seek what is known, therefore in its unconscious it always knows what it's seeking". Can you get into that a little more?

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. It turns out that the phantom self judges something missing in the moment, or something wrong with the circumstances, or with somebody, or with whatever, you know, fill in the blank. In the judging, which I mention as well, it's part and parcel of maintaining the illusion of phantom self, the illusion that this self is real. And so it automatically judges every circumstance, every situation, and so in order for it to determine that something is missing it has to know what that missing thing is. Or if it's an experience or feeling, or something, it has to know what that feeling is. Otherwise if it did not exist in the psyche of the phantom self, it wouldn't be seeking it.

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TRIP: I get that, so what's the importance of the fact that it actually already knows what it's seeking?

NORIO KUSHI: Well the value in being able to see that it's a lie, it's revealed as a lie. Seeking, if we're hungry or if we're thirsty, then we seek a drink, water. So in the physical manifest world there is a place for the capacity to know what we want and seek it out. The phantom self, which exists only as a linguistic distinction in our thinking, adopts this same pattern and begins seeking psychologically.

WIZARD: Ah... Yes!

TRIP: And it can never get really the drink that it seeks, even though it knows unlike the water, which on the physical realm, it knows it needs and gets and then is satisfied at least temporarily.

NORIO KUSHI: It's nourished, exactly.

TRIP: So that's a healthy kind of seeking, if you will, there's nothing wrong with that.

WIZARD: That's a biological function.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, exactly. And we should follow that, that biological urge. If we're thirsty naturally we should take a drink. And the reason in the email I say phantom self, but in actuality I often use the term phantom selfing, more as a verb. And the reason I use it as a verb is because in the silence once I got hit over the head with the cosmic two by four, then the observer observed all that disappeared, and any concept of that disappeared.

Then, as the days went by, more and more was revealed, I don't even know if revealed is the right word, and I began to see everything, one begins to perceive everything as energy, a constantly flowing energy even in what we think are inanimate objects like rocks, etc.

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WIZARD: Yes.

Norio: And we see that this energy is emanating from a single source, and splits up into infinite patterns. And not only that, this energy is intelligence itself, it's not like how we imagine electricity to be. It's intelligence itself. And so one can see that everything even in the manifest world is this intelligence, regardless of the form that it takes.

Everything in the manifest world is constantly being, becoming, becoming, becoming, regardless of how static it may appear to our everyday human senses. And translating that into the thinking, which is also constantly coming and coming, I saw that the phantom self itself is not static, it's something that was constantly recreating in every thought, this idea of this constant separate phantom self. And so I call it phantom selfing.

TRIP: And one of the things it does, is my major bugaboo, it's always judging, right, wrong, good, bad, evil, should, shouldn't.

WIZARD: The brain is a biological bifurcating machine.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. Exactly.

TRIP: One aspect of that judgment that I see that people often, I won't say that there's two broad categories of judging, but I'm in the sort of egotistical judging category where I'm walking around as an egotistical person at times constantly thinking myself to be correct, and then others to be incorrect. And then I meet a lot of people in the spiritual community who don't engage in that kind of egotistical thinking, but often times it's because they lack self-esteem. And they're constantly getting on themselves for not being good enough, or not being enlightened enough, you know what I'm saying?

NORIO KUSHI: Yes.

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TRIP: To me that is an even more pernicious judging, it's kind of hard to resolve it when you lack self esteem.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. They're both one and the same, whether one's judging outwardly or inwardly.

TRIP: Okay, and then...

NORIO KUSHI: And it reinforces that there is a judge. And here again, being able to judge, being able to discern like walking along, here's a cliff, you don't want to walk off the cliff, it serves a real life necessary function. Then the phantom self uses that as a way to make it... well everything bottom line that the phantom selfing is about is to constantly reaffirm its own existence. And so that's what the judging is all about.

TRIP: Okay, then you write, "Another way the phantom self exhibits is that in inherited thought patterns, we divide "I" thinking into the thinker and the thought, thus creating the illusion of the conscious and the unconscious". And then you say, "The unconscious is just as shallow and trivial as the conscious". That's contrary to conventional wisdom where the unconscious is kind of thought of as a royal road of insight, more reliable than the conscious. Can you talk about that?

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, what it is... is there's actually layers, it's all layers of like... being human, our body, and awareness, and consciousness, is multilayers. And so with the realization that phantom self doesn't exist in silence, what I recognized was that all these layers exist simultaneously, and one's not better than the other or anything like that. But one parcel, package. So...

TRIP: Well maybe what you're saying is that when we're taking the perspective of ourselves as separate individuals, there's this layered persona that we know, our conscious, our super ego, and all that, so we think that that's kind of the layers the ocean if you will, because we're looking at it from a sense of personal. But when we got the impersonal, we can see that the unconscious, and

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the conscious, are both in the same bag of illusion, right? They're all part and parcel of somebody who might consider themselves as separate phantom self.

NORIO KUSHI: What occurs is that there's a thought, and then in the thinking, the thinking divides into the concept of a thinker who is having the thought. And when...

WIZARD: Is fundamentally dualistic.

NORIO KUSHI: Exactly, and we don't realize that the brain is operating in this way. And this is what I see the as the Far East tradition of duality. The duality isn't the manifest physical world and the separation; the duality that they're referring to is in the way that the brain is thinking. That's the only place where we get into trouble, and not in the physical realm, in the manifest realm.

WIZARD: That's fundamental. Someone having a thought is fundamentally dualistic.

NORIO KUSHI: Exactly.

WIZARD: That's a great insight.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. [Laughs] And to realize that the thinker is just in the thought itself is a real mind blower for sure.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Yes. I know we're just kind of plowing through these symptoms of the phantom self, but I just think it's really juicy, really helpful. So here's another one...

NORIO KUSHI: If I may add, one thing I want to add about this is I want to coach everyone to know that none of this that we're doing, the phantom selfing, is bad, or wrong. One of the ways that our parents are thinking we're born into is to try to distinguish, okay, this is bad, and this is good, automatically. And trying to

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separate ourselves, because we're seeking, so we want to get rid of the things in our way, and then hold onto the things which are going to help us get what we want. So we automatically... so I want to make it clear that there's nothing whatsoever wrong with any of this that we're doing.

And the other point I want to point out is that none of us have any choice in this [Laughs]. So we can't help but do this. And there's nothing wrong with you, or anyone else. In the same way as I was born in the United States, I speak English, the way that people think and speak to each other is inherently dualistic, and so as a child we can only learn to speak in this same way. So we have no choice but to adopt this identity. Do you understand what I'm saying?

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Yes. So go easy on ourselves here, yes. Okay, here's another one and at the end, okay, you say, "Looking for answers, the phantom self exists through what it isn't, and by seeing the world out there as a series of problems. Therefore the phantom self is uncontrollable always looking for answers. The phantom self is always searching for meaning in life". Now here's a really big one, "There is no meaning to anything in the universe, including one's self". Now that one right there, oh my God, you talk to anybody that hasn't had a major ah-ha, and they're going to say, what do you mean there's no meaning? Where's the proof, where's your proof? Is there proof? Is there proof here, proof to no meaning in the universe? What's your proof, Norio, there's no meaning in the universe, come on?

NORIO KUSHI: Well fortunately [Laughs] I don't have any proof. [Laughs]

TRIP: That's a big statement, dude, where's your proof?

NORIO KUSHI: And I will explain what I mean by that. [Laughs] Everything is what it is, and nothing in nature has any inherent

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meaning. For the simple fact that you have to have someone that gives it meaning. Okay. So now let's back up a little bit. There is one arena; I mentioned layers of an onion. So in the interval you mentioned human tapestry, and what I call the human world of labels and language, I refer to that as the human tapestry into which we are born. So here I am in Pennsylvania, sitting in Takan in Pennsylvania, but where does Takan in Pennsylvania exist? If I look at the trees, I don't see Takan in Pennsylvania, it's like digging the ground, and I'm never going to find it. It's a noun; it's a label, right. So in the same way the United States of America is a label. So if I fly into Logan Airport from England, and I tell the immigration, when he asks for my passport, and I say, "What passport? United States is an illusion", he's going to throw me in jail. But in fact no animal would ever mistake the United States of America as something that's real; it doesn't exist for an animal.

WIZARD: Or a tree, the sun, and the sky?

NORIO KUSHI: Right.

WIZARD: Or everything else.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, exactly. So the only place where meeting really exists is in language, so the word tree means points to a particular object in nature, okay. So the word tree means that object. And then we make up these things like the United States of America means this, okay, and if you want to argue with the immigration officer, he's going to throw you in jail.

So the phantom self is a linguistic distinction, it only exists for humans because humans' capacity for language in the human's brain, the human brain's capacity for language, and once we've made this human concept a noun, like a tree, then it's got to point to something, it's got to mean something. So therefore that's the underlying mechanism with the phantom self-obsession with searching for meaning.

WIZARD: Labeling everything.

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NORIO KUSHI: Because it labels itself, it separated itself...

WIZARD: This is a palm tree, a walnut tree, or a Cyprus tree.

TRIP: But, Norio, a person will say, but my wife means a tremendous amount to me, or my kids mean so much to me, what do they mean by that, what are they really saying when they say that?

NORIO KUSHI: Well [Laughs], they're expressing, it's multifaceted what they're expressing. Number one, they're expressing their natural affection and connection that they have, which is perfectly human and healthy. As a matter of fact we actually have that for everyone and everything if our mind is quiet. So that's one of the things that they're expressing. Now they may be expressing that they're attached to them when they refer to that meaning. So it would depend on the individual, how they're using that term. But generally when used in that way, it's really a very healthy feeling that they're expressing.

TRIP: So I had an AT&T repairman come over yesterday and he was a part time pastor, and we got into this stuff for an hour and a half, you know, I was saying things like there is no meaning to anything. And then he said, "Well what about that", and he pointed out things that I do care about, and it's like you want it both ways. It's like on the one hand there's all this meaning, you say what a glorious day, and how wonderful I am to be alive, how wonderful, beautiful life is, and then you're saying there's no meaning, you're trying to have it both ways, dude. [Laughs] I was dumbfounded by the way, I didn't know what to say, and I felt like an idiot.

NORIO KUSHI: No, that's beautiful, what he's pointing to is the beauty of being alive. But that it views something in the realm of the phantom selfing. It's like, if then the phantom selfing is occurring in the thinking and says, oh, I am special, I made it, and I'm such a wonderful person, something. That's where the meaning is made up. And also the fact that we can verbalize, that

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we can express these things in language, the language itself has meaning, the words that we're expressing have meaning. It means particular feelings; you can point to particular things. That's where meaning exists.

TRIP: In the language.

NORIO KUSHI: Another definition of mean is measure, so in the manifest world language makes these distinctions and separate, and therefore means these different things.

WIZARD: So these sharings linguistically are taking a thorn to remove a thorn?

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, exactly. Yes, exactly. And I'd like to say something more about language that we do not really appreciate, because we're just one into this language, we don't appreciate the power of language. Before 2005, I thought that language was primarily for communication, and so when I inquired well how was I fooled that the phantom self was real for so long, 50 years of my life, whatever. What occurred was the insights which began to show up was one was that language is where the trick is created. Language is how the trick is created. The power of languages actually creates the human tapestry; it creates the human reality, even in the natural world. In order to see a tree we have to have the word tree first. That is a mind blower.

WIZARD: Do you speak Japanese?

NORIO KUSHI: Actually Japanese was my first language, although I was born in New York City, up until nine I could still remember dreaming sometimes or making up songs in Japanese.

WIZARD: Is it fundamentally different?

NORIO KUSHI: There is a difference, yes. Definitely.

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WIZARD: In other words, a language and a culture, might mean the linguistics have a different outlook.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes, there's definitely a difference. One thing, the pronoun I, is not so prevalent in Japanese. You can have full complete sentence structures without that.

TRIP: Which maybe because that's the way people conceptualize, maybe that's why part of the reason why their culture is not such an individualistic culture?

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. I would venture to say that they're inspecting the phantom selfing as the rest of the world. You know, they may not be as deeply enmeshed in it, they're still competitive, and they're still... even if they're not amongst themselves, they're competitive with the world. And one of the symptoms is also exceptionalism. And we think that there's some special purpose to life.

WIZARD: One of my mentors, early mentors, who was affirming what I had stumbled on like yourself and Trip, was an illiterate person in Jamaica, and he never used the word, "you", it was never in his language. He was always, I and I. There was no other in his way of thinking, and I'd never run across anything like that.

NORIO KUSHI: That's fascinating.

TRIP: Relationships, this is the bugaboo I think of almost every day, and I think most of us spend our entire lives expending most of our time, energy, and resources on this idea that there's the right intimate relationship out there for us, we're always seeking it. And then you say of course once we get into that relationship we judge that it's the wrong person so we can continue the unconscious mechanism of seeking [Laughs].

NORIO KUSHI: Yes.

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TRIP: I have to give my ego some credit; I think I finally realized that. And so right now for the first time in my life I'm not out there trying to create the personal intimate partnership, and what a relief it is, I've got to tell you.

NORIO KUSHI: [Laughs] I used to believe there were soul mates, etc. I don't want to knock anyone's ideas of what's so or not. It's wonderful to entertain that idea, and there's nothing wrong with that. When the phantom selfing stops, then number one, one stops seeking and there's an automatic relationship, there's never a beginning and end to a relationship. In the physical manifest world there's a beginning and an end to everything, everything is changing. Relationship does not exist in that realm. So it exists in a place of being and is timeless. So once one sees the phantom self as an illusion, and the phantom selfing stops, then relationship is just a space that one is always in. One is always in relationship with everyone, and everything. There's a tree out there, there's a relationship that's constantly occurring.

WIZARD: You're in love.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. And it turns out that all the things that the phantom selfing is seeking place of being, a space of being; peace, love, unconditional love, commitments, being whole and complete. So these are all places of being, and it's timeless, there's no beginning and end to this, any of this.

For the first time when the phantom selfing stops, when you meet someone, you actually meet them and the relating is happening, you can see people for who they really are, what they really are. Prior to this there was always an agenda, is this person going to help me get to where I want to go, is this person not going to help me? And the whole dating scene, there's this whole agenda there, and so the phantom selfing is operating through ideas and images of itself and of others. And so neither party are really seeing each other for who they are, and therefore and there's this feeling that there's no connection which in fact is correct, there is no connection between phantom selves. And so the phantom self

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thinks that there's a beginning and an end to a relationship, and one has to really get to know someone before they feel connected and all that, which doesn't mean that when I first meet someone I don't... there isn't a social greeting, so to speak, hi, how do you do, my name is etc. There's a respectful, say like social formalities, respectful formalities in our game that we live in.

WIZARD: So connection assumes not being connected.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes.

WIZARD: Duality is built into it?

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. Another way of illustrating the phantom self and its inability to see this or feel this, if one imagines there's a zebra sitting in the room, okay. Does that make the zebra real? No, it's an idea in thinking that you're imagining a zebra in the room. Now can this zebra feel connection, can it feel love? Well, you know, it's just an idea in the mind, so of course it doesn't exist in that realm of feeling. So likewise, the phantom self is an idea in the mind which we think is who we are, and in the same way an imaginary zebra sitting in the room is not going to exist in the arena of love, and peace, and relationship, and the phantom self in the mind cannot experience these things either.

TRIP: We've got a question for you. Courtney says hi to Norio. And she says, "Does no meaning to anything mean none of us has a purpose in life?" [Laughs]

NORIO KUSHI: That's a great one. In a sense one can say that there's no purpose, but that sounds rather dark or whatever. The answer that I really want to give is once one realizes that the phantom self is an illusion, one wouldn't have asked that question [Laughs]. The purpose is...

WIZARD: It's a Mystery.

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NORIO KUSHI: It's in the moment, and it is one with the universe, same purpose as the infinite. [Laughs]

TRIP: All right, tell me if my explanation for that is bogus, because I gave an answer to the AT&T guy the other day. I said that, and this is an answer I've heard from other people that resonated. I say that it's not that we have a purpose, we are the one itself play acting at being multiple identities, if you will, multiple forms. And the purpose of it is all simply play and the enjoyment of waking up over and over again to the fact that in fact not all these multiple entities. And it's only through this play acting of dividing itself that the one is able to fully enjoy itself.

WIZARD: There's no goal.

TRIP: But am I BS-ing myself here, is that just a bunch of...

WIZARD: If there's a goal in there somewhere, that takes you out of the here and *Now* and creates an imaginary something in the future, and an imaginary something that's going to try to reach the imaginary goal. And that starts the phantom selfing mechanism going which blinds you to the inherent peace and goal-less-ness that always already is.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes.

WIZARD: In the stillness and silence, everything is already fulfilled and still and at peace.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. Yes, perfect, beautiful.

TRIP: Norio, you have a website, www.demystifyenlightenment.org, I like that.

WIZARD: Do you have a book?

NORIO KUSHI: Now, Stephen Earl and I are working on a book.

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WIZARD: Boy, do you ever need a book. That little letter you wrote to Trip last night was bingo. I put it on the conversations group page; I thought so much of it. You have a real gift of sharing that can affirm folks who have had just a glimpse of the silence, and need the affirmation to become established. You've got a tremendous gift there to share.

NORIO KUSHI: Well thank you. Well, as you know, it has nothing to do with me. [Laughs]

TRIP: I think there are some other things that are very uplifting and instructive about you and your life. One is that you chose to drive a big rig, because it brings you joy, and you had the courage to do that when you could have pursued what other people would have looked upon as a more sort of big deal career, and say in business or something like that. And the other thing, here you are, you're a truck driver, and look at how articulate and amazing a man you are, how established you are. So my point being that none of this came through book learning, or through even association with a guru, or anything, you just had an ah-ha moment and then you went and looked at that and said, well what about that? The insights just came.

WIZARD: Clean as a whistle.

NORIO KUSHI: Yes. Introduced during the concept of time. I make it sound like it just happened, at the same time there are insights along the road, and events that caused me to start inquiring into all of this. But it was not from a religious or spiritual perspective whatsoever. I didn't consider it spirituality. Nor did I even associate stopping thinking and any of this to the term enlightenment, it was nine months later when I was doing a talk over in Europe that after I began sharing this experience that someone asked me, you mean, you're enlightened?

WIZARD: Where is Steve Earl in all this? He was my first host to Japan. He's a wonderful man but I had no idea that he was...

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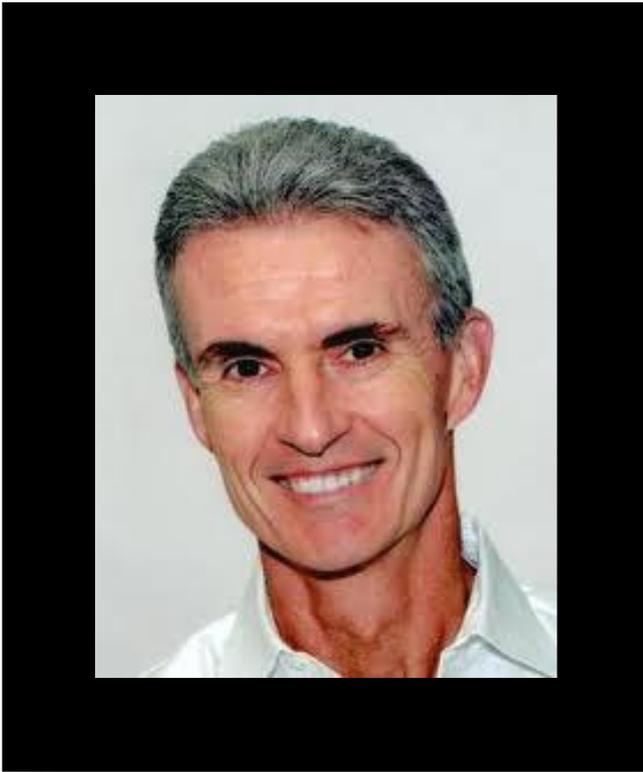
NORIO KUSHI: Okay. Steve Earl is in Richmond, Virginia. I met him when I was 18 in Japan in 1974, and although he said we actually met before that. And we've remained friends, and he and I have both been along similar inquiries throughout most of our life. And he's someone who can really articulate the power of language, and what language really does, and that's why I sent you an email suggesting he be one of your guests. Because currently language is, we're born into a way of language, this human tapestry already created. Once we recognize the power of language, we can recreate this human tapestry into a completely different thing, virtually overnight.

TRIP: I have a question for you about that, quickly, because it's just something I've always wanted to know what you think about this. Is there any usefulness in trying to change the way you speak, because for example the Wizard's mentor, Jamesy, he wouldn't say the word you, he would just say I and I, he didn't want to go there with that word. I mean, would there be some utility in... I mean I could think of ways to stop speaking dualistically to a degree, but is there any value in trying to do that or not?

NORIO KUSHI: Well the duality, the issue of duality is only in the thinking, and which is also language, and the language in our thoughts. I think that the pronouns do serve a useful distinction, as long as we know that that's what they are. I don't think there's any problem with that. Once we recognize this language, we'll evolve to a way of speaking where we may no longer use that. The language doesn't happen singularly, it happens within society with each other. It's not me personally, doing anything. The language is the capacity, the reality the human tapestry has created in conjunction with other people.

WIZARD: Thank you, Norio.

NORIO KUSHI: Thank you so much too.



Peter Dziuban

<http://www.consciousnessisall.com/consciousness-is-all.html>

TRIP: Our very special guest author Peter Francis Dziuban has written a book on what many called spirituality but what he describes as self-evident fact. Unlike other books on the topic of who we truly are, and what is actually going on here, *Consciousness Is All: Now Life Is Completely New* is written from the perspective that we are consciousness itself rather than individuals struggling to realize it. As commonsensical as this

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approach may sound to the few who are deeply established in presence, Peter Dziuban's proposition is as heretical to modern day notions of who we are as today's Hubble telescope view of the Cosmos is to 16th Century flat world thinking, complete with the sea monsters that gobble you up when you get near the edge [Laughs].

So Peter, is your mind blown 24/7 or have you gotten used to the fact that you are the weightless, limitless, and surface-less reality that gives rise to everything?

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes. No, I mean, consciousness, present-ness, awareness, Now-ness, Beingness, all these terms, it is weightless, immaterial, pure presence and yet it still seems that despite this clarity, and that by the way is consciousness' clarity, or being, life's clarity, not that of Peter, it would be the absence of Peter that is the clarity. Despite that clarity it still seems as if there is a daily experience and a body hanging around that has to do things throughout the day. And even though to consciousness or infinite presence there is zero distance, as you guys say so beautifully on your website there, and "distance is dead" I think, was how you put it, there's just this one *Now*. It still seems as if some of that hangs around, as Alfred Aiken used to say, "It's like even when one is awake, sometimes the effects of a dream seem to linger, and it takes a while to shake them off". You don't try to get rid of it or do anything to it, but just abide as this unavoidable present-ness, inescapable present-ness, whose life this is, and let the other shift for itself.

TRIP: So, Peter, let me ask you, on the Skype I know you have a little mouth piece that hangs down, and you can adjust it closer/further from your mouth, I think if you moved it a little further away it might be better.

PETER DZIUBAN: Okay. How is that?

TRIP: I think that might be better.

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PETER DZIUBAN: Is it? Okay.

WIZARD: I was reading Revelation for Easter. I was particularly interested in Chapter 7, but as I was reading through that John was referring to what Eastern or the Hindu mythology refers to as Maya, where the illusion as the beast that is, but never was, but still is. Cool, eh?

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes, it appears to be there. But it's now seen through, and no longer carries the weight or the seeming influence that it appeared to do at one time. Yes, definitely.

TRIP: Peter, I've read a lot of books now on the topic, and there are a couple of things about your work I wanted to just share with you. One is that it's very unusual this approach that you've taken where you close the deal as the Wizard here says, on the assumption that we are already pure consciousness, and you get the person that needs to get it out of the way. And you start from the closing proposition, which is I think a really interesting and useful way of approaching it. But in the simplicity of your approach, and the purity of it, because you only speak of what is true about unconditioned awareness, you don't speak about anything that *appears* in it being true or false or have much interest in that. I was thinking that probably your approach is something that is of greater possible utility to someone who's fairly mature in their settled down nature shall we say, because it's so amazingly clean and simple that it almost defies grasping by somebody who can't believe all the work, and all the stuff that they've been...

WIZARD: But isn't that spiritual practice itself? Practice is not doing something to find the Truth, practice is in that absolute assumption of what is and everything is arising within that. That's practice.

TRIP: Yes.

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PETER DZIUBAN: I'm not sure I'm completely clear as to how you mean it, Trip. In other words you're saying that we appear to, say, read books, and at one time it was a matter of seeking, and studying, and having to get there. And then it's as if all of a sudden it's turned around, and it's clear that, well this is no longer necessary. In fact, all of what it seems or appears as if I did, the One who's conscious here never really did it. Do you mean it in that sense, almost like a too good to be true thing?

TRIP: Yes.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes. One thing is that it would seem that the point, the "goal" of any spiritual practice, or study, is that it makes itself obsolete, and if it doesn't you've got to ask, well, what good is it? Because why be bound to a spiritual practice? It's one thing to engage in, if you want to say, in meditation, or pondering, just be with one's Self with a capital S, so to speak. It's one thing to do that coming from a place of... assuming one is separate and there's this little me that needs to get there, and instead turning it around and saying, look, the only Life is that alive here is already at itself, it can't make further contact with itself, and it's so effortless, it's so unstoppable, you can't alter it or make it go away, or be otherwise, no matter what you try to think, this is the deal, so to speak. So what is it to enjoy this? Right Now, for example, just feel into, or taste, whatever term you want to use, how effortlessly and unstoppably awareness is being aware, if we're going to use the term awareness. This Life is alive with zero help from Peter, or Trip, or Wiz. And... What is this to itself?

WIZARD: To me that's really true practice when we are actually practicing that, not doing something to find the Truth, but practicing being the Truth.

PETER DZIUBAN: For the joy of it.

WIZARD: Yes.

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PETER DZIUBAN: Yes, and the ease, because again, this is Life's life. This is now's Now, and presence or Now-ness itself is already taking up all the presence that there is ever going to be so that doesn't leave any left over for a Peter to be.

TRIP: So we've got a whole hour here, and I can't wait for you to go through this stuff, and I'll prompt you here if you don't remember to.

WIZARD [Laughs]

PETER DZIUBAN: That's great. I had a couple of points too, maybe they're along the same line. I don't know, just for the last couple of days they just have been pinging at my thought in anticipation of this that they would be great things to cover. Because I know you guys with your program have such a wide reach so to speak, and I would say boundless consciousness is a pretty wide audience.

TRIP: Well then go for the things that have been pinging you.

PETER DZIUBAN: Okay. We're already rolling really, based on some of the things you already said, but if anything that I mention brings up a question or something, please don't hesitate. As the two of you already have said, alluded to, is that the perspective here for want of a better way of saying it, is 100% that of life itself, awareness itself, because clearly that's not something that Peter, or Wiz, or Trip, knows how to do, or knows how to make be present. It's a matter of coming from there instantly. The beauty of that is, it takes the so-called middle man, me, completely out of the equation. There's not even an equation really. I would urge anyone who's listening to check this out for themselves, don't just accept my word for it, but check it out for yourself, and see if it holds up in your experience.

A thing that we do now in our meetings, it's a fun thing, and just to exemplify this, we're told that this right *Now*, this presence, again the job, the responsibility of being presence is entirely up to

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presence itself, life itself. And it's doing a perfect job, it's infallible, and we're told to, we're here spiritually, to live in the presence, live as presence, live in the *Now*. And at first, (I know because I did it), seemingly, there's still a sense of a me who's separate in one sense. Okay, I've learned about this thing called the *Now*, or presence, and now I've got to do a better job of holding to it. I get distracted by my thoughts during the day, I run off with my five senses in the visual sense of this and that, and I'm all over the place, and I've got to bring myself back to *Now*. I've got to do as good a job of being *Now* as *Now* itself is doing, is basically what it amounts to.

TRIP: God, you are so good. Man, you're good.

WIZARD: It's hard to remember going to sleep.

TRIP: He's great at this stuff. Go, baby.

PETER DZIUBAN: So what happens is, what we'll do in our meetings for fun, and we can do a little bit right *Now*, is, okay...now turn it around. Rather than trying to connect a little more deeply with *Now-ness* or presence, or trying to goose it a little bit and make it a little more in the foreground so to speak...what we do is reverse it. We ask for a volunteer, and preferably somebody's who's new and hasn't seen this before. We say, "Okay, your job is to make *Now* go away. Rather than try to become more present, would you please make *Now* go away? Come on." And the last time it got funny because I was teasing, and then I'd say, "Okay, now look, I mean from day one I have not had a moment of privacy, (speaking as Peter, as a personality). This *Now* is always here, doggone it, can't I please get just a single moment of privacy?" And then of course the point is that *Now* simply can't and won't go away. In *Consciousness Is All*, these words just came out in the writing, and they're funny, they're strange, but they really say something. But they're words for *Now* like *un-go-away-able* [Laughing]. And this *un-go-away-able-ness*, this is the one who is presently conscious, and this is you, the real you, so to speak, and the would-be Peter thinking, you can

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watch then the thoughts that seemingly what are called Peter thoughts arise and how... I can't think of the word at the moment, but how they're just so not going to do anything to alter this Now one way or the other. They're not going to make Now more present; they're not going to make it go away. And so they're seen in their utter ineffectiveness, when it comes to reality.

During the day and when we have to be out with the body and do things, thoughts seem to be useful, but when it's turned around, thought comes from a very different place as well. So with all that we're going to say in our discussion time here today, it's not anything "difficult", always come back if there's a temptation to think, God, this is getting deep, or this is so esoteric, blah, blah, blah. Just come back to this-- try to get rid of *Now*.

WIZARD: Try to divide *Now*.

TRIP: All right, that was juicy, do not forget any of these juicy things you have but here's another one that you do so well, he is so good. He's really good.

PETER DZIUBAN: It's not Peter, it's the other One. It's this presence here. Go ahead.

TRIP: Because you've disabused, that's a word, I don't know if it's a word, it's a word I like, but you've disabused me of some of my pet concepts, okay. Here's a really good one, okay. You say the present moment of *Now* is not a tiny slither in time between the ever-flowing past and the present. Now up until I read your work, your work spoke to me like in so many different ways, but up until then I would have described the *Now* as a dimensionless, it was even a slither, it was dimensionless, but it was packed in there between a flowing past and a future, right, apparently. But go ahead and run with that, everybody lives with that, everybody is living with that line.

PETER DZIUBAN: Trip, that is the thing, and for my money, so to speak, it's maybe the most important thing that seems to be

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brought out or discussed in *Consciousness Is All*, and interestingly it's a point that is not emphasized a whole lot in nonduality. I don't know why, but the nature of presence or *Now-ness* as we talk about it, is not something between past and future. And here's one, just one piece of it, that will expose a lot of it right away. What is called a future if you look at it from presence, not as a thinker, identifying as presence, just watching thoughts about what might be called later this afternoon, or tomorrow. And there it is, there's that thought. And one can see that all there is to that so-called future really is just that thought; always your future is nothing other than a speculative imagining, really. And there's this insistence that it's going to show up at some later time but that's only what it is *assumed* to be. And a "future" never has any status other than that mere thought. And again, notice in your own, maybe when our discussion is done here for those who are listening, in your own quiet time; see if what's called "the future," has any other status than just a thought arising in the present moment. That's all there is to it! And then you say, well, wait a minute! That thought, the minute it has so-called arisen, it's actually *past*.

WIZARD: It's past. Yes, it's history.

PETER DZIUBAN: It's history. So right there, there is no future. There isn't. And so this thing, what we call for want of a better way for needing to talk, what we call *Now-ness*, or presence, or being, or the present, is not sandwiched in between two states, because there never is anything ahead.

Another thing about that, I tried to do some more digging and poking at that lately and a couple of things have come out, but it feels like it is real juicy territory, and there's a lot more there. One of them is that that thought which is assumed to be of a state lying ahead, (which it isn't, it's already history, as we said), but because it is assumed that it is lying ahead it's as if it is assumed that there is this other state that is dictating to you as presence how your life is *going* to be. And there's a tension there, because the nature of presence is utter screaming freedom with no obligations, nothing

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looking in on it telling it what it's going to do, or how this or that is going to be, because there's nothing that is *going* to be. But in that assumption, which is a mental thing, it's as if there's an energetic tension, and you notice a similarity between tense, as in past tense, future tense, and being tense. Yet, in the clarity that this presence that's here has nothing ever being ahead of it, there's freedom from that tension. But that doesn't mean it is dead, and it doesn't mean that one is going to not continue to do things. The body will appear to do things in what appears to be time, but you as this present-ness are just an indescribable ease of unobligated being. You have zero obligations.

WIZARD: Because if it moves, its imagination.

PETER DZIUBAN: Exactly.

TRIP: And, Peter, here's another one, okay, so hopefully [Laughs] the listeners really got there is no future there.

WIZARD: Oh, no. [Laughs]

TRIP: Here's another one though that blew me away that you do, right. Here's another one. If someone is not fully established in nondual wisdom, most of the time they have a feeling there is an external god, or there's some god somewhere, they may not put their... there's a god, they haven't figured it all out, but they leave it hazy and they're pretty sure there's a god. And they look around, they can see that there's so much miraculous stuff going on that clearly there's an all powerful thing called god, okay. And that's where they walk around with that god. Now you say though god is trumped, god isn't as powerful as consciousness because if you were to actually meet god, like if god parted the skies, go ahead and tell that, because I mean [Laughs]...

PETER DZIUBAN: Well you were doing a pretty good job.

TRIP: No, go ahead.

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PETER DZIUBAN: Okay. Well it's that the word god unfortunately has so much baggage, and that's not god's fault, that's the fault of human ignorance, and speculation, and conceptualizing. And, it just shows how much the notion of god is subject to, or is just made out of concepts, because one religion's god is different from another's, from another's, from another's, from another's, it would seem that way. But the point is that, as it says in the book, if one were to supposedly somehow come face-to-face with what is called god, what has been called, the emphasis on the *what has been called*, or *assumed* to be god, this is to bust really a lot of those concepts, mistaken concepts, and assumptions that are held. If that were to happen, how only would one know it? If you finally made it to heaven, or whatever you want to call it, and as some distant state, how only would that be known or experienced? To say you finally made it, there would have to be consciousness, there would have to be awareness, and then, oh my gosh, well that state, and what is called this god would depend on consciousness being conscious of what this thing is called "god". Because if consciousness were not, if there were no life, no being, that god wouldn't be and you wouldn't be there to witness this so-called god as whatever. So the point of course is, that so-called god depends entirely on awareness or presence or Beingness for its seeming status. And then what that shows is that the real presence or power lies with or as consciousness or awareness of Beingness itself, life itself, which is this present one right here. And also one can notice instantly any attempt to say, no, that's not good enough, there's another state far off somewhere, what only is that? That's just a thought, more speculative imaging.

WIZARD: Imagination, yes.

PETER DZIUBAN: Exactly.

TRIP: Okay. Here's another one, man, that you do that sounds good.

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WIZARD: I used to go into incredible states and everything, but at the end I tired of it, there's just so much yellow brick road you can take. [Laughing]

TRIP: Peter, I just love, love, love, I love, love, love that. [Laughs]. Okay, here's another one. Okay, so people will get, okay, like time, the future, that doesn't exist, and okay maybe even god is trumped by consciousness, but then they'll think that consciousness is something that's inside their body, right.

PETER DZIUBAN: Oh, yeah.

TRIP: And here's the thing, okay, so you talk about the fact that the body is, I mean we know from physics that the space between like the so-called particles in the body, which aren't even matter, but they're actually energy, but the so-called particles in the body, the space between them is like the distance between the earth and the sun, so that the body is essentially space, it's 100% space. So go ahead and talk about that one, because that's a mind-blower too.

PETER DZIUBAN: Okay. And to take that even a step further, there's a chapter in the book, and by the way for those who are listening, this is also free on the website on the *Writings* page, it's Chapter 13, and it's titled *Check the Credentials*. And as you said, Trip, we're told, we can know theoretically in a sense and even scientific experiments indicate it and so-called prove it, that the body and any so-called material item is not a solid object, it's really just as much flowing energy at one level, and space in between becoming particles and it seems to be solidity. So we can see it in that way. And in Chapter 13 it takes it a little bit further, and says, okay, this seeming world that seems to be so physical, so material, so heavy, and so solid, let's really take a good close look at it. And there's an example of an everyday item, and it's an apple. And if one doesn't want to read the whole chapter, this particular example starts on page 129 in the book; again it's also on the website.

WIZARD: We'll link it in.

PETER DZIUBAN: Okay. So it says, okay according to the human mind, the sensing mind, and state of sensing and thinking, it experiences what it calls an apple. Now let's look at this thing, what is all the evidence, what is the entire basis on which the human mind would say there is an apple there? What have you got for evidence? Okay. You've got the visual, and that's an image, and it's a spherical roundish shape, and there's color there too, and by the way it's color that even gives the appearance of its being spherical as opposed to other things. If you look really closely it's just color, but it's an image, it's a visual image that supposedly the mind experiences. And science will say it's an image that comes, hits the retina, and then it's translated by nerves, blah, blah, and something happens in the brain, and the mind says, an apple is there. But it's like a visual image.

WIZARD: It's a hologram.

PETER DZIUBAN: Like a hologram. Okay, so then it says what else is there? Well, there's a sense of touch to the apple, if one picks it up there's a certain heft in the hand, and the skin has a certain feel to it. There might be a sense of temperature, feeling of temperature if it just came out of the refrigerator let's say, and other kinds of feelings. Okay, those are tactile sensations, those are feelings. And if you, even right *Now*, for example, we tend to think in terms of two separate objects, let's say an apple was being held in what's called the hand, and we tend to think in terms of there are two separate items there, there's a hand, and there's an apple, but if you close the eyes and just deal in terms of this tactile feeling, it's really not two things, there's just one thing going on there, and that's the tactile sensation, it's like a feeling of hardness. And right now feel the feeling; don't comment intellectually, you can almost imagine that sense, and what the texture of the skin of the apple is like, and a little hefty weight, and temperature. But it's just a *feeling*, and that's it.

And I don't think anyone would say that a feeling is a solid object, it's just a feeling, and it's a passing thing too, it's always moving, and shifting, and changing, it never stays the same. And if I say, this feeling of holding this apple in the hand, if I hold it for five seconds, actually each instant that there's a noticing of that sensation, it's really a new sensation, it's not the same one statically being present., It's like it seems to be a time thing. So okay, along with that there might be a sense of smell, let's say if a bite is taken, there's also a sense of sound, like a crunching sound, there's a pleasant scent, and then there's also a taste, like a sweet tart taste. Okay, now that's how the apple is experienced, that's all the evidence there is of an apple, that's it. If you just try and stop and think, there isn't any other way of claiming that one could be experiencing an apple, or dealing with an apple. So then you ask, okay, those are five sensations. Now what is the apple itself, what is the substance of the apple itself that supposedly is giving off those sensations? Can you come up with what the apple itself is, apart from the five sensations?

TRIP: No.

PETER DZIUBAN: You can't. There's nothing else there. And the bottom line is that what the human mind experiences as what it assumes is a separate apple is not a separate object. There's no standalone item there that is giving those sensations off to the mind, or the body. The entire and only evidence is those sensations, and what that's saying is like there's not the human mind's experiencing of an object *and* an object. There's only this so-called mental experience, there's nothing in what it goes onto. This by the way applies to any so-called object, it has no status other than mere sensations really.

So when they say mind is matter, it's not kidding on that basis, that's all there would be to it, there is not anything separate. And also there in Chapter 13 it says, the mind, the so-called sensing mind, does not know *about* the world, it *would be* the world, it is the world. And a friend interestingly just the other day sent me a quote that Ramana Maharshi made supposedly at one time, and

he said, "Apart from thought there is no permanent entity called world".

WIZARD: Yes.

PETER DZIUBAN: It's not there. And just to take this a little bit further, because this is huge-- it might be like that can be seen through, and there are no separate material objects anywhere out there, that there's no separate world out there anywhere. It's just a mental state like a dream, but sometimes what we'll continue to assume is that, okay, that apple is there, let's say the body is in the kitchen dealing with this apple, puts the apple down on the counter, then the body goes into, appears to go into the bedroom, and it will be assumed that there's an apple still there, in fact there's a kitchen there, as a material thing that was experienced previously and that it's still there, and that it has its independent status separate from thought. And that's the thing, it does not continue to exist, nor is it there before the sensations of it are experienced! As they say in physics, what appears to be the observing mind, the sensing mind, seems to create the world it claims its experiencing on the instant, but it really isn't there prior to the experiencing of it or after it. And in *Consciousness Is All there again* in Chapter 13 it says, the sensing mind never leaves a solid object in its wake, after the experiencing of sensations, nor is there anything there prior to the experiencing of them. And I know that that sounds so preposterous to our traditional way of thinking, so I would urge anyone that has a problem with this, don't take my word for it, but you've got to do a little work with this to see through these things. But that's the Truth, that's how it works.

And interestingly I read a book last fall by a very well established scientist, his name's Robert Lanza, who has done a lot of work in stem cell research, but he's taken this issue on himself, and he wrote a book called *Biocentrism*. He goes at it from a physics standpoint and basically shows, demonstrates the same thing but in a scientific way. Now we're doing it experientially. But apart from the very instant that it seems the mind is experiencing some

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object right *Now*, it may appear that the body is in a room experiencing different kinds of sensations, actually apart from what seems to be this instant there isn't anything out there. We will imagine that there's another room in another part of the house somewhere, but as the whole of this experience is inseparable from thought, that's just an *imagining* that there's another room off there. And, thought will say, yes, but if I get the body up and walk over into that other room, that room is going to be there. But again, it cannot be separated from thought, from the mind. And that shows that the body too is a part of this whole landscape, this dreamlike landscape that's being cooked up always on the instant.

WIZARD: They arise together. They dissolve together.

TRIP: Isn't that good?

WIZARD: They arise together and dissolve together.

TRIP: Peter, another thing that you say which was really helpful to me is the absolute equivalence of the word *Now* and consciousness, those two things, those two non-things, that's revelatory because for me I'd always walked around with this idea that *Now* is *Now*, and then there's this thing called consciousness.

PETER DZIUBAN: Oh, yes.

TRIP: Can you talk about that? I mean the absolute equivalence of *Now* and consciousness.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes, well if one examines it for oneself, one can see that what we call, (and again these are both words really), but what's of value is this un-go-away-ably present stuff that seems to be conscious, what we call conscious. Consciousness itself, not thought *about* consciousness, but just this pure aware Beingness, is always present tense only. It can neither be moved back into a past, or ahead into a future, and that is simply another way of saying what our word *Now* points to.

Somewhere in the book it says, I think this is Chapter 12, and it's also on the website by the way, but it says, "Did you ever stop to ask yourself what makes *Now* be *Now*? Where does it come from? What is that?" Do you know what I mean? It's strange when you say, well why should there be this thing called *Now* that we have? Who decided that? Or where does that come from? And what it is... is that it's the presence or the present-ness of what we call awareness, or consciousness., And a little investigation or inquiry shows that what we call awareness isn't something that, or rather *Now*, *Now-ness* or present-ness, isn't something that awareness is aware of, but awareness and present-ness is the same one being, they're the same, because one could not say there was a presence without being aware, and one could not be aware without being present.

WIZARD: Being absolutely still, it never began.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes, yes. And right here, I'd like to continue a little bit further with a point that a lot of times also doesn't come up that much or maybe is overlooked, I don't know, but I think it's very much worth emphasizing. To go back to what we were saying with the apple there, and that the point of that whole example, and by the way in Chapter 14, in the same way that an apple is deconstructed, it does the same thing with the body in Chapter 14, and shows that "body" too, really is just made out of so many sensations. And Chapter 16 does it with what we call the world, a material world. It is so easy to assume that there is a physical body on a physical planet right *Now*, and what's called a planet is just a bunch of sensations too. And there's nothing *behind* those sensations called an object that's backing them up, they're just those free-floating sensations. Everything really from the standpoint of consciousness is just this non-material floating-ness, but it's not floating *on* anything, it's just its own boundlessness.

WIZARD: That includes the universe.

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PETER DZIUBAN: Even the universe, what is the universe on? What would the universe be on? And those standards go out the window.

WIZARD: Even the big bang.

PETER DZIUBAN: Even the big bang, that's just a thought, that's right. And so the point is that what appears as this whole experience, what we call human experience, truly if one's going to talk about it, it's like a dream. And we will say even sometimes when we've "had some so-called spiritual experience", (and boy is this going to get blown out of the water in a second), it will be clear that okay, what appears as the world and experience, what I say was my past, is just this thought arising *Now*., Even if I want to speak of what appears as the present moment, it's just mental or thought, like a dream arising *Now*. There's really no material solidity there, no matter how much it may seem that way, there really isn't. That's seen through. And then we'll say, *Now* when it comes to this thing about history, and there's this long background, or there was a past in which I wasn't spiritual and *Now* which I have become somewhat more spiritual. And if you look at that, it becomes clear from the standpoint of present awareness, that all of that is just a bunch of thought arising in the present moment. There's no history of anything whatsoever, because whatever one would attempt to say happened back there, is not back there, it's right here this instant in this arising thought. And even all of the whole string of succession back there, 1,000 years ago, 100 years ago, 10 years ago, a year ago, it's like this one mental panorama that's got all of that in it. But actually it's all in this current arising thought, and it has no other status than that.

And so the whole of what is called history mistakenly is just a current imaging that's being done out of ignorance. And then that might clear, and then there will sometimes be this lingering assumption that well, okay, but presence or *Now-ness*, the eternal *Now* or being, or god--that has always been here outside of time, it's like eternal, but meaning forever in time. And yet, if you look at it, that too is just a thought arising in the current moment, the

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notion even that presence has existed before. This is why more and more when talking this way I use the term present-ness to emphasize that it's this instant and it's absolutely history-less, not even the present itself, or presence or being can be said to have been before.

TRIP: Yes, and yet there is this rock, there's this rock, and this is contrary to like the popular stuff you hear in songs where the one thing you can count on is that things will always change, that? And so people, who have all of these concepts obliterated by the stuff that you're staying right *Now*, they're a little bit lost but there is this rock, it's the infallibility that you say, okay. The absolute infallibility of consciousness, and its absolute certainty it is always there, it's your friend [Laughs].

WIZARD: Led Zeppelin said in *A Stairway to Heaven* to be a rock and not to roll.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes.

TRIP: So like last night after reading your work I was lying in bed, I was just filled with this expansive joy, it was just radiating. And it's the joy of that always count-upon-able...

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes, that's a great way to put it. Yes. It's like, yes, sometimes we use expressions like, yes, just let go, just fall into your own infallibility, or un-go-away-able-ness. And that sounds dualistic I know, like there's a me and an it, but it's just a total "letting go into that", all of a sudden it's clear, well, wait a minute, nothing's going to go away, and it's not like you are dropping *into* this boundless expanse, the boundless expanse is you.

WIZARD: Is already.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes. And there's no bottom, so you can't fall. The notion of bottom is just a concept, so there's no possibility of

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falling or losing hold, or, of crashing, or any of those, those are all just concepts.

WIZARD: Standing in infinity.

TRIP: Yes, it would be like if somebody pushed you out of an airplane, and they jumped out behind you and for the first 10 seconds you were freaked, you didn't know you had a parachute on your back. And then they tap you on the shoulder, and they're like, dude, you can't die. It turns from a nightmare into an absolute ecstatic experience.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes, and it's always, always absolutely brand new in the sense of it has no background. In this present-ness that's present right *Now*, it itself is not saying it has any history; Now is mentally unwritten upon--completely. It would only be *thought* that would try to say present-ness was present five minutes ago, that's just a thought. And as nothing exists outside of or separate from this brand new, talk about pure, and indescribable, present-ness...it's just... the words are so inadequate. But this “new-ness” really truly is all that exists, it's not like there is an existence that this fills, because there's no history of even any prior existence, just the whole of what is... is just absolutely brand new every so-called moment.

TRIP: I love how you said imagine how soft.

PETER DZIUBAN: Oh, yeah.

TRIP: Talk about that.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes. It gets to like it is right *Now* where words and thoughts about presence, no matter how magnificent they might be, they start to get in the way. It's like, okay, got it, I don't want any more of that. But then you feel like somehow there's still this endlessness and so it becomes a thing of like tasting one's own presence. I don't know how else to say it. But the fact that it's brand new, there hasn't been any time for any matter, or

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materiality, or even mentality to have formed, or accumulated. Now how soft is this?

WIZARD: Sentience. Sentience returns home from form in the idea that sentience has evolved is all illusion.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes.

WIZARD: Does that makes us creationist?

TRIP: Francis, Francis?

PETER DZIUBAN: Lucille?

TRIP: Lucille. He uses the word perfume.

PETER DZIUBAN: Oh, yeah. Yes, that's a great way to put it. Yes. In the same way as softness, in very similar territory is the word *lightness*, as in meaning in the absence of weight.

WIZARD: This has been great.

TRIP: [Laughs]

WIZARD: There's been no time.

PETER DZIUBAN: Oh, yes. I would just like to say thank you to the both of you, it's just an honor and a pleasure to be on your program and to "share this with you". I do have one request, or suggestion. Would you consider make your program maybe four hours long? [Laughing] We could do this...

TRIP: I've been transported. In the beginning of your book, you made a couple of claims where you said something like, you will never read another book like this, or something like that. I was like, yeah, yeah, Peter, right, okay. I've read some pretty good ones too I've read Francis Lucille, and I've read Rupert Spira, I consider his examination of the present moment of *Now* on some

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level is absolutely sublime. And I was like, come on, dude, there's no way. But I've got to give it to you...

WIZARD: [Laughs]

TRIP: You really ripped it, man.

PETER DZIUBAN: Some of those points were actually put in there after most of the book was written, and there was a clarity-- again, no thanks to some guy named Peter Dziuban, but thanks to presence or consciousness being what it is. But there was a clarity, that yes, this delivers the goods. And so why hesitate to say that?

WIZARD: Share it.

PETER DZIUBAN: Yes, I would say when that was written I had interestingly very little exposure to nonduality, traditional nonduality. And now having had that I would say some things differently, and I'll probably revise it at some point to reflect that.

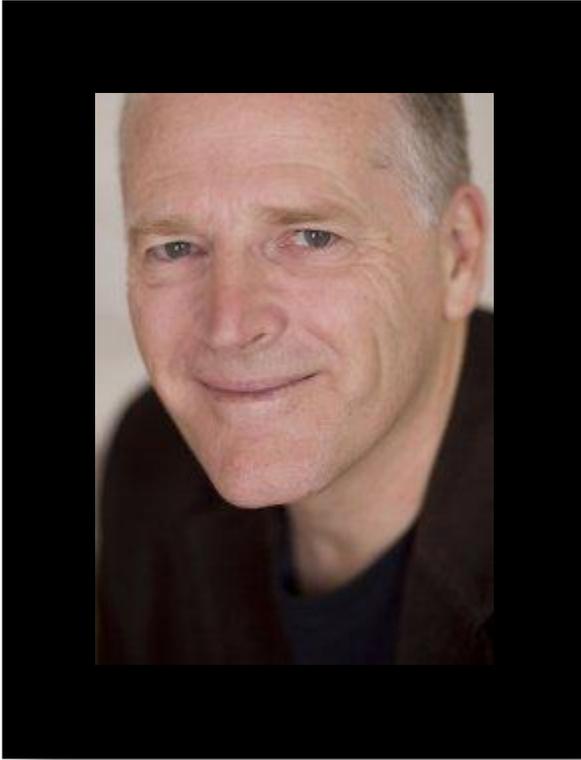
WIZARD: Keep that freshness, that's it. The freshness is nice.

PETER DZIUBAN: That's it.

TRIP: We'll get you back soon, okay.

PETER DZIUBAN: Oh, please, I would really love to do that.

TRIP: All right, thank you.



Peter Fenner

<http://www.radiantmind.net/>

WIZARD: Peter is a living Arunachala.

TRIP: We feel much honored to have you on our show, thank you so much for taking the time out to be with us.

PETER FENNER: Great.

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TRIP: Our most welcome and radiant guest today, Peter Fenner, is a leader in the adaptation and transmission of Asian nondual wisdom worldwide. He is a pioneer in the development of nondual therapy and creator of the nine-month Radiant Mind Course and the nondual teacher therapist training. He was a celibate monk in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition for nine years and has a PhD in the philosophical psychology of Mahayana Buddhism. And I hope I don't butcher any of these terms. Over a period of 38 years Peter has distilled the essence of traditions like Zen, Dzogchen and the Buddhist Middle Way, and adapted them to suit our post-modern culture.

Peter teaches in North America, Europe, Israel, and Australia and has presented his work at leading universities and institutions including Columbia, Stanford, CIIS and Naropa. His books include *Radiant Mind: Awakening Unconditional Awareness*, *The Edge of Uncertainty: Dilemmas on the Buddhist Path*; and *The Sacred Mirror: Nondual Wisdom and Psychotherapy*. Peter is also the Director of Education of Timeless Wisdom at www.wisdom.org. Wow [Laughs].

Yes, so usually I like to say a few things that I've learned about our guest before we launch into our interview. So the Wizard came back to the room and called you the Rock, and it's true you have an amazing presence. And, each of the guests that we have on our show have a unique and special talent, Puppetji uses humor for example to help people to have a good time with the Truth, and Rupert is a master at the present moment of existence, and we've had relationship experts like Gina and Nirmala.

So Peter, of all those we've met thus far, I feel you're unequalled in your capacity to demystify the mysterious changes that take place in a person who's called upon to extricate him/herself from the suffering of conditioned awareness, what we might call ordinary consciousness so that they might abide more consistently in unconditioned awareness. I think that's your great skill.

PETER FENNER: Okay, thank you.

TRIP: Now I have a few more compliments for you because I feel moved, and then we'll get right into it. I want to say that your teaching is practical, clean, and accessible, very much so. And when I first met you there was something different about you, I couldn't put my finger on, and now I realize it's the quality of your listening. Your listening is uncluttered by an active mind making judgments, I see something there that could be really valuable to me going forward. Your perception of yourself as an ordinary person is both accurate and refreshing, you have a special gift for making what seems like inscrutable Eastern mysticism accessible to linear and logical Western minds like mine. There's a lack of artifice in what you say and how you act, and your work appears to me as a creation of a framework of understanding to be embraced for a while and then discarded.

So getting right into your work, you say that your intention is identical to that of the, I'm don't know if I'm pronouncing this right, the Dzogchen tradition. Would you share what that is.

PETER FENNER: Well, the Dzogchen tradition is the tradition that emerged in North West India and then went to Tibet, but it's a tradition that's very minimalist, it's very aesthetic. What I appreciate about it is that it comes from what I call the result level, so I really appreciate traditions that are effectively saying, hey, maybe we need to do much less in order to be at the state that all of these traditions are talking about, maybe we can just experiment with being here at the culmination of the path. We just open that up as a possibility, we open up the possibility that we can be here right *Now* in a way that there's no more work for us to do, in a way that we say, where am I, *Now*, we can't even really say where we are. Can I do more of this? Can I enhance the state of consciousness that I'm in? We're resting in pure awareness we can't enhance this because we're already in pure awareness in the moment. So they are traditions that function at the result level, and they speak to me very powerfully.

TRIP: Indeed. I've got eight pages of stuff here to go through with you, so I do not want to ask you anything in particular because I

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don't want to miss anything here. But let's just start; in addition to your Radiant Mind work, you conduct nondual training for a variety of teachers and therapists. I have a family member in the line of work, he's a psychotherapist, and I'm wondering what are the outcomes for a psychotherapist, let's just say, of the nondual training that they receive?

PETER FENNER: Psychotherapists who join the training learn how to take people on a journey, take their clients on a journey from wherever they are when they come in to their room, to take them on a journey that essentially constructed in language and sometimes with the way that silence can be blended into that. But they take them on a journey in language by constructing a conversation that reveals how in the moment everything is taken care of, so people come in with some problem that they're working with from their past or in their relationship, and it's possible to go on a journey into this moment right *Now* to like make a shift in our state of consciousness so that we embrace or open to the unconditioned dimension of awareness. And then when we're resting here, we no longer have that presenting problem, and in fact it's impossible to reconstruct it. So if the therapist says to the client, what's happening *Now*, and the client says, well, right *Now* I feel fine. If they were to ask, I don't necessarily recommend that they do, but if they were to ask the client, and can you reconstruct that problem, can you bring that back? They won't be able to do it. Like the energy, our conscious energy, can't be deployed in creating suffering. So that's the journey that's possible for a therapist to take their client on, and then you do it again and again, like you start at different points, but then we become more and more familiar with that journey, so then it starts to become automatic, it doesn't require a lot of input for us to make that journey back to awareness itself.

TRIP: Very nice. Your work helps people realize how they move out of unconditioned awareness by making it into something, anything which can be lost or gained, or even by trying to figure out what it is. Can you elaborate on that?

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PETER FENNER: Yes. When we are resting in awareness, as we can be *Now*, so in a way it's a subtle process because even right *Now* talking to you and to our listeners, it's easy to talk about awareness, what we're looking for resting in awareness as something that hasn't yet happened, as something that may happen in the future. But I'm talking about what's happening *Now*, at the same time that we're talking to each other and sharing ideas, and perspectives, questions and answers, at the same time there's this no-thing, there's nothing, unstructured awareness, content-less awareness that's arising, not even arising, it's not even dissipating, it's beyond being and not being, we can't say it is, or it isn't. This is the awareness that can never be lost, because it's not a thing that can go out of existence, it's nondual, beyond existing and non-existing. It's also something that we don't gain; it's quite different from an experience like a specific experience that can arise in meditation, like some powerful insight, or even a spiritual realization. We're talking about pure simplicity of awareness itself.

TRIP: You ask folks questions that help them determine if they're resting in a structured or unstructured state, can you give us some examples of some of the questions you might ask someone?

PETER FENNER: Yes. First of all we move in the general direction of resting in awareness, which means we become less preoccupied especially with our self, and that reduction in preoccupation with our own existence with me, mine, what I have and what I don't have, that can arise through looking for the I through that type of self-inquiry. And I'm sure your other presenters have skillfully led your listeners, revealed those forms of inquiry that if I try to find who is experiencing this moment, I can't find the experiencer, the experiencer can never be found. And then that opens up centerless awareness, I can't find a me, a perceiver inside looking out, similarly I can't find the thinker of my thoughts.

So that's the way that we can open up into the processing of awareness. And then we can ask what I call checking questions,

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when we hear, which is not a location, because we're just in consciousness, like boundless consciousness, when we hear and we ask a checking question like, can I do more of this, that's a checking question, can I do more of this? No I can't, there's nothing that is being done, I'm not doing anything, there's no I, and there's no me doing anything, there's no agency. This is just happening as it is, I can't do more of this because there's no this, and I can't do less of it. So in a way that means we're here together, just resting here, just being here, totally effortless state, because there's nothing we need to know, nothing to be known, and nothing to do.

WIZARD: Beautiful.

TRIP: Yes. You say, and there are all kinds of wonderful interesting stuff in your book, I love your book, it really did a lot for me. And one of the things you say in there is that the Western mind is embarrassed and confused by paradox, but not the Eastern mind. I-thought that was interested.

PETER FENNER: Yes, I think so that we want things to hang together in a logical way. And when we move into the nondual, when we're like at the intersection of the conceptual mind, the dualistic mind, and connecting with awareness itself. So it's like at that junction where the mind is still thinking, and still producing some interpretation of that which is objectless, content-less, has no structure, then paradoxes naturally come forth at that junction, just as I said before, this is and it isn't. We can't say that this is because we don't know what we're talking about, so we can't say that it isn't that it's not a non-thing either. So this type of talking comes through naturally, it's like I can't say it differently when we're here, when we're resting here, when we're resting here Truth is often expressed paradoxically. It's how it is, and it's wonderful because those paradoxes can then function like keys that open the space, or in fact they don't even open it because it's already open, there's no process of opening a space. The paradoxes can help us rest here.

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TRIP: One of the things I like about your work is that you diminish this feeling that people have who are on a spiritual path that there's either Buddhahood or nothing, or that where they're at is somehow insufficient, or that they should not feel really happy about what they are. And I think that your work helps people to feel good about where they are because it creates a logical series of phases that people tend to go through, and obviously nobody fits these phases perfectly, but they go through these and it ultimately leads to abiding in content-less awareness. And so I know we're not going to have time to go through them all, but people start with disconnection, and then there's conflict and codependence, can you speak about that framework that you've created to help people understand where they're at in their evolution there?

PETER FENNER: A little bit, but we also can recognize that again from this result level perspective that there's nothing we need to do before we can be at the culmination of the path. So as soon as we begin to talk about different states, it's really easy for people to lock into trying to discover where they are, and then looking for what's next, so what do I have to go through next, how do I have to evolve and transform before. And again from the nondual nothing needs to happen, there's no action, experience, insight, teaching, or realization that's needed before we can be in and rest in our natural state.

Having said that, I just notice that we have different relationships to our experience that can act like obstructions to this natural resting, and the main ones are attraction and aversion, like just being in that conditioned state of mind in which we're assessing whatever we're experiencing in terms of whether we like it or we don't like it. I like this, I want this, I want more of this, I want this to last, or I don't like this, I want this to go away, I don't want to be here, I want to be out of here, I'd like this to diminish. So for as long as we're in that reactive state, nondual awareness doesn't present itself to us, because the energy is wrapped up in either trying to maintain what's happening, or in trying to escape from some mentally constructed prison.

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TRIP: I've got lots more things to talk about, but is there anything that you came today wanting to share with us?

PETER FENNER: What we're sharing, this is beautiful for me, right on.

TRIP: All right, well then let's just keep on going. This is real meditation for us. The Buddha said, "Don't keep searching for the Truth, just let go of your opinions", I really liked that, that was a nice one that you had in your book. But one of the things that really appeals to me and that I think you do in a beautiful way, in a way that I maybe haven't ever encountered before is this pure listening that you do.

PETER FENNER: Yes.

TRIP: That is a powerful, powerful thing that you do, because when you are listening to someone they get the feeling that they have your absolute attention, and that they're not being judged by you. So you create this space of incredible intimacy between yourself and the person that you're listening to, and I think if people could master that I think that their relationships would go off the chart. I mean, I know that mine would with my significant other, if I gave her that attention in my listening, she'd be just thrilled. Can you talk about that?

PETER FENNER: Yes, for sure. Because often, for example, in the Radiant Mind book and the Radiant Mind course, it's a nine-month course, so there are a lot of things happening in it, and people will often say, well is there one thing that you can point me to that would be really helpful. And I always come back to pure listening, because pure listening is something that everyone can do, it's not a particularly difficult or tricky process or way of listening. And what I do hear is I just distinguish between positive listening, negative listening, and pure listening. It's really quite simple.

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Positive listening is just when we listen to whatever we're hearing, and we're listening to it positively, it's like we're giving energy to it, we're positively assessing it, we think it's interesting, we're thinking it's great, and we're like overtly or in some way encouraging the person that we're listening to in their construction, in their story, in a description of what's happening for them. And then negative listening happens, the opposite, when we get bored, we wish that we weren't where we were, we're looking for an escape route, how to bring a particular conversation to a quick closure so that we can be on something more interesting, or in fact be out of the conversation totally. The pure listening is just listening from pure awareness, listening from no mind. One thing with pure awareness is that it can look like there's a close attention, but it's effortless, there's no concentration or attention involved, it's listening without judgment, beyond judgment, it is pure hearing. We're just listening to whatever is being said and it just dissolves in our awareness through our way of listening, and that transforms what other people are thinking and what they're saying, and it's an invitation for people to move beyond the creation of meaning. So we just listen without validation or invalidation.

An easy way to think about it is we listen in a way that we go beyond agreement and disagreement; we're not adding mental commentary from our own side.

TRIP: One aspect of that... I'm sorry to interrupt you.

PETER FENNER: We hear everything that someone is saying, we can feed back to it, we can relate to them, but at the same time we're connected with the nothing, the pure awareness that's always present in the midst of everything.

TRIP: One thing that I watched, and I watched you listening, and I've listened to your interviews and watched your interviews, this little piece about the not validating is huge, because we have been trained that it is our responsibility when we listen to someone to nod our head and go, yes, got you, got you, yes, uh huh, constantly

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getting sucked into identifying whatever the thought form is in a positive way. And I watch you, you don't do that, you are open, and clean, and attentive, and you have a smile on your face, but you don't do that, you don't nod your head and say, yes, or whatever. That's a very unique way that you do that, and that's a really powerful way of being.

WIZARD: There is no mental movement in that process.

PETER FENNER: Yes.

TRIP: Okay. Then you also, and I think it's worth spending the time on this, you talk about pure speaking as well, I think that's very powerful as well.

PETER FENNER: Yes, in a way there are different types of pure speaking, but pure speaking for me relates to another concept that I write about and teach about called ongoing completion, being complete moment by moment, and not creating residues. So in our speaking it's easy to say things that it's not necessary for us to say, and then we create future regrets, like we wish that we hadn't said things, and then we have to get involved in either processing it internally, or what I call remedial communication, we have to go back and fix things up, hey, that's not exactly what I meant, I'm sorry to have said that, I see that you're offended. We have to get involved in those conversations that take us back in time and preclude us continuing just to be in this fresh moment, in the *Now*.

So it relates to how to be on-goingly complete, so we don't say what we don't need to say, and we learn how to listen to the internal impact of what we're saying in our own minds. So ideally we don't have to ever think about what we've just been saying, we just continue to be in the moment, and we don't have to like go get into history, process what we've said. So that's one aspect of pure speaking.

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And the other aspect is how to talk from awareness itself, how can our speaking act like a form of an induction, how can we use what we're saying to lead people into this state of complete perfection where nothing is missing?

TRIP: You have quite an amazing background, various traditions. You've researched, I'm sure, many others, and you talk about the special conversation that is talking about nothing. You see this nondual conversation as a penultimate conversation. I think that's a beautiful thing, and I think that we in the nondual area feel that way strongly, it is a special conversation. Could you talk about that?

PETER FENNER: It is, it's a different conversation because in every other conversation we're talking about something, we're talking about what's happening in the world so we're talking about sensory phenomena, or we're sharing the content of our feelings, our emotions, and our moods, energies in our body and so on, or we're talking about our thinking, how we're seeing things, our interpretations, so we're sharing through our concepts.

So in the case of talking about nothing it's quite different, because there's nothing, nothing, that we are sharing, there's no object of awareness, it's what I call a content-less transmission, the nondual transmission, it is content-less. So when this is happening, like in a group, or one-on-one, it's being together and then learning how to point to this by saying, for example, that there's no this, or the this that I am pointing to can't be known. Or I can even say something like what I am talking about is unrelated to the words I am using, that's true. What I am talking about right now, I'm talking about something, but what I am talking about is unrelated to the words that I'm using because there's nothing for the words to be stuck on.

TRIP: You gently, gently gore a few sacred cows in your book, and one of them that I really love is one, which governs my own sense of who the biggest and best Trip could be, and it's this idea of unconditional love. I mean, I'd always thought that one's capacity

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to love unconditionally spoke to the state that one had arrived in, and if one could love unconditionally then one was an amazing human being. But you speak about the intimacy of embracing everything versus unconditional love. I think that's a very important distinction.

WIZARD: Is unconditional love something we "do", or is it...

TRIP: It's something that we do, yes. I mean, that's what I thought.

WIZARD: We think we do.

TRIP: Yes, we think we do it. Yes [Laughs].

PETER FENNER: I feel that unconditional love is the space that we're in when we're resting as or resting in pure awareness, because here there's no manipulation. In this space I, we, don't need anything, there's nothing that we need because we're fulfilled in the moment, and nothing needs to be different. So therefore we don't need people to be different, we're not asking or demanding anything from anyone else, we're not trying to keep people within our sphere of influence thinking that they are a source for our happiness and enjoyment. Nor are we trying to push people out of our sphere of experience, so it completely allows people to be where they are, brings forth the beauty of people's existence, because we know that everyone has access to this state of effortless being, resting as awareness.

WIZARD: Acceptance.

TRIP: Another way that you say that in your book is you say, "If I hold to your suffering as unreal, it negates the compassion, if I hold to it as real, it negates the wisdom. In order to really experience this union of love and wisdom I have to let go of the struggle to understand".

PETER FENNER: Yes.

TRIP: Beautiful.

PETER FENNER: Yes, it's a subtle point that you're bringing to our attention *Now*, but yes. And this goes immediately back to pure listening as well. In pure listening we don't reify, we don't consolidate concrete ties, what people are sharing with us, it is a different state. It's like a weird state, someone is sharing how something is not working for them, that they're struggling, that they're challenged in some way, we listen, but we don't make it real, like we don't project reality onto them, because that consolidates it, like makes this real. Nor do we like think and communicate in a way that it's unreal, which would be to trivialize someone's experience. And it's that way of walking the bridge between like neither getting into, neither energizing, people's constructions, particularly around suffering, nor trying to de-energize them, nor try to help people, not trying to rescue them. But being in that space beyond validation and invalidation that allows for a natural and what I think is often times the quickest release of difficult suffering situations.

TRIP: In my own journey, a critical tipping point in my own personal affirmation was the point at which my mind let go of its need to understand, do you see that to be the case for others as well? That is a critical aspect of the whole thing, isn't it?

PETER FENNER: Yes, it's a big one for sure. Often, say if I'm working with a group of people, sometimes it can feel like there are two mountain ranges to go over before we are just resting together silently in like deep contemplative appreciation of the nondual. And there's no particular order, but one mountain range is the mountain range of needing to know what you're saying, needing to understand what this is, how it works, what my life is, where I've been, where I'm going. So it's that mountain range of needing a reference point in knowledge. And then the other mountain range is the mountain range of doing, but what have I got to do, how do I do this, am I doing it right, do I have to do more of this? Realizing that in the nondual, especially when we come at it from the results level, there is nothing to do, no doer,

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and nothing to do, the work's been done, it's finished, it's been done. Nothing needed to be done, but it's been done and *Now* we're here. Now we're here, no one going nowhere, wow.

WIZARD: Peaceful.

TRIP: Hey, I'm going to play a little parlor game with you [Laughs]. I'm going to put you on the spot, okay, but this is for fun, because I think you're going to be able to do this.

WIZARD: Trip's a rascal.

TRIP: I'm a rascal. But it is a trick parlor game that I just created for you, all right. Okay, so we've got this friend, his name is Ganesan, and he once told me a story that really, really, really, rocked me, because it was my first glimpse into what someone who is walking in unconditioned awareness experiences, right, versus the ordinary consciousness that I was walking around with. Okay, so he tells this story and he told it from the perspective of the ordinary person and then the sage. I'm going to tell the ordinary person's perspective, and then I'm going to start with the sage's and I'm going to let you finish you. Alright.

PETER FENNER: [Laughs] Okay.

TRIP: Yes, but don't worry if it doesn't work out. Okay. So the ordinary person, he's walking down this path, and up in front there's a shiny object on the ground. So there's an immediate perception, wow, shiny object, a nanosecond after that perception he's thinking, oh, that could be a piece of gold that someone dropped on the ground. So there's an immediate differentiation that goes down. Then a nanosecond following on that is the idea, wow that could be worth something, I'll think I'll go over there and check it out. So the person walks over there and they reach down and they pick it up, and they look it up, and they saw it's just a gum wrapper, and they go, ah, just a piece of junk, and they toss it on the ground. Okay. Now there's an encapsulation of the traditional thought forms that go through a human being's mind

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with almost every experience that they undertaken. Now the sage walks down the path, and there's the perception of a shiny object, now what?

PETER FENNER: Wow. Well it's like you could walk closer to that, that's a possibility, but equally that shiny object could recede from our field of awareness, right, because we're not being driven or captivated by what looks good or what looks interesting or uninteresting. So for me it's this idea of not knowing what is going to be happening next. So for the sage, the sage does not know, does not need to know what will be happening moment by moment. It's this notion of the ever-fresh presence of awareness.

TRIP: Exactly.

WIZARD: The Mystery.

TRIP: Exactly. The sage doesn't do anything [Laughs]. Just shiny object and that's it, no let me go over there and pick that thing up and see if it's a piece of gold, and then I'm going to have some more money, none of that.

PETER FENNER: Lovely.

TRIP: It was lovely, that was my first taste. I love that. One of the things that you mention several times in your book is this concept of broadening the river of life.

PETER FENNER: Yes. Well I think that naturally happens when we rest more in awareness and that we become less involved with the particular events of our life that there's a broadening. So there's an enhanced capacity to receive whatever is arising, particularly in terms of pleasure and pain, it's possible to experience pain or more intense pain without freaking out, without thinking that it shouldn't be happening, hey what have I got to do, what's wrong, what do I do to alleviate this? So we have an increased capacity to just receive the sensations that can be produced by our mind and nervous system without needing to

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close down. Same thing happens with pleasure, possible to enhance the possibilities, or the refinements of pleasure and bliss that we can receive without fearing that this isn't good for us, without listening to some historical story in our mind, or without this feeling that it's dangerous to experience this much pleasure, this much bliss. So that's what I mean by broadening, expanding the river the life.

TRIP: All right, I cannot find anything in your work that I want to pick a bone with, but I worked hard to find something and even this I can't pick a bone with. But, okay, let's just talk about meditation for a second. You say we practice in order to deeply realize that we don't need to practice, but without this practice we don't see that we don't need to practice.

PETER FENNER: Because again we're looking to arrive at the point where the fruition of meditation is happening without needing to meditate. If we're meditating and our meditation is a function of a need that we have, there's a meditator looking for a particular result. So if there's a meditator looking for a particular result, and that's what's behind the meditation, then it's not producing the intended result, right, which is to let us be where we are totally fulfilled with nothing missing.

WIZARD: Meditation without doership.

PETER FENNER: No one needing anything.

TRIP: So here's my little tiny bone, and just for the fun of it, but now Urja Shanti says and I think the Wizard feels this way, and I do too, that he says that he sits but he never sits because he tells himself to sit, he only sits when it seems to want to happen, where it's just comfortably happening. But I see that in your work you do recommend that people actively create the space to sit, that's a little bit oppositional to just letting it happen of its own volition.

PETER FENNER: Yes, well I think that the way that you're doing it when you're used to doing it, it's great, because then the

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invitation is there for you and you just find yourself meditating, and you don't know for how long that will be, it could be for five minutes, it could be for two hours that you're sitting. But the point here is that this is meditation when it's being defined by our body, the placement of our body like in a particular position. What we're really looking for here is how to support natural meditation, in other words how to support discovering ourselves in the place where we're meditating without doing it, where the meditation is happening. How do we find ourselves in the place where we don't need to meditate because like the meditation wouldn't make any impact on the quality of the state we're presencing, because we're in a state that can't be enhanced, can't be prolonged by an action of meditation, can't be refined any further. That's what we're looking for, how to discover what in the Dzogchen tradition is called the meditation of non-meditation, when meditation is just happening.

WIZARD: When there's no doer?

PETER FENNER: Yes, there's no doer, there's no one looking for any outcome.

TRIP: Way more beautifully said than I could ever hope to. I would say, just to add to that, that the Wizard and I both concur in that accepting our true nature and in both of our cases, he's a rascal and I'm another rascal, accepting that nature for us trumps practice, and so we both feel that the pages of life is where our true practice lies. You probably feel the same way, right?

PETER FENNER: Yes, for sure. Often people think about the path for example, I've got to find my path, what is the best path for me? And then people think, am I on the path, I got off the path, I got lost, I got waylaid, I've got to get on the path again. If you look at it, we're always on the path, isn't it? The path is life, the path is exactly what is happening *Now*, there's no being on it, or being off it.

TRIP: I have a number of friends who are actfully engaged in the ripening of their spiritual lives, and I've had numerous occasions where people have reported to me where they've lost it and I'm sure you have too, where people talk about they've lost that feeling of centerness or whatever. And I've looked inside myself and I've asked myself what does it mean for me when I lose it, and for me it's always a shift of my attention away from awareness without thought into anything else, and it happens a lot. I mean, I have to admit that my attention being shifted away from awareness into everything else is pretty much a predominant factor in my life now, but I don't care because my attention always comes back to awareness. So even though obviously I'm not a realized sage, I do feel a possibility of relaxing into what wants to happen, because I know that awareness is going to come back again. So I guess my question is can you elaborate a little bit more on what losing it is really, when people express that feeling they've lost it, what's really going on.

PETER FENNER: Yes. That's an important question. Because people often have that experience, what happens is that if we're authentically resting in awareness itself, we're not resting in anyone, there's no one resting in anything, so we can't lose this. But what happens is that when we're resting in awareness, it's often accompanied by nice feelings, there are sensations and feelings that come along in the slipstream of resting in awareness. They can often be feelings of tranquility because our mind can slow down, because that whole enterprise of trying to understand, trying to create meaning, there's less energy involved in that, so the mind slows down, more or less tranquil. We go inside, we can experience incredible states of bliss, sometimes like sensate states of bliss, and we can say where the bliss is coming from. At other times it's unconditioned bliss, we can't say from where it's arising, it's like this amazing infusion of bliss energy throughout awareness. So what happens is people begin, they identify nondual awareness with these beautifully experiences of less thinking, deep tranquility, and bliss, they are conditioned experiences, they're things that are happening. Like tranquility, as

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an example, tranquility is an experience, whereas resting in awareness is not.

WIZARD: Beautiful.

PETER FENNER: So we can lose the experience of tranquility if something can change, again that's a checking question, and can this change? We say, yes, this can change, it means we're identifying with a conditioned aspect of this. So, yes, if we're tranquil for sure at some time it will change, we'll feel agitated, and then it's easy for people to think, ah, I've lost it, yet they haven't lost nondual awareness, they've lost something beautiful that was accompanying it.

WIZARD: The side effects.

TRIP: You're an amazing teacher, and I think you have a stable of teachers perhaps that are involved in the training of the trainers, but it appears that people can actually engage you if they want to, is that correct?

PETER FENNER: To some extent, yes. A lot of my time is now involved in teaching teachers and therapists here in the US and in Europe, and running the *Radiant Mind* program, but I have some time for working with people individually, yes.

TRIP: Well I think that's amazing, that you create that time, and the *Radiant Mind* program sounds fantastic. Did you want to talk about it at all so that folks who are listening who haven't heard of it might find it something they want to do? Or is there anything you'd like to say?

PETER FENNER: No, just a little how it came into existence. I taught workshops around the world and people would say, wow, this is so great, but how can we continue this over a longer period of time, so that's why I came up with a nine-month *Radiant Mind* course. One of the great things about it is that over a nine-month period of time real things happen in people's life, like losing their

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job, like forming a new relationship, like getting some serious illness. And so these things can be integrated and are integrated and worked with within the context of *Radiant Mind*, so that's what in a way makes it different from just a short-term workshop.

TRIP: Okay. And what's the Center for Timeless Wisdom about?

PETER FENNER: Center for Timeless Wisdom is the center that I founded and that I direct that delivers the two programs, and organizes retreats that I do. So it's a California non-profit that organizes and manages the nondual training at *Radiant Mind*. Its mission is to adapt Eastern nondual teachings, particularly from Mahayana Buddhism and make them relevant and easily accessible in the West, its overarching mission.

TRIP: I can keep asking questions [Laughs]. Are you going to do the nondual conference again next year? Do you know yet?

PETER FENNER: By that you mean the science and nonduality?

TRIP: Yes, are you going to do that again?

PETER FENNER: Yes, I'll be participating in that in San Francisco, yes. It's a fun event.

TRIP: I'm wondering you've probably been around a lot; you've definitely been around the block many more times than I have. I heard about a thing called spirit fest in Bali, that's the only other thing I've ever heard of, but what are some of the conferences that you have participated in that you think are really good?

PETER FENNER: I've been involved for many years; I've been involved from the beginning in 2000 of the Nondual Wisdom and Psychotherapy Conference that happens annually in San Francisco, that's a professional conference really more for mental health professionals. I don't do a lot of conferencing myself mainly because I love the training that I offer, and they're like a little conference in their own right. We had close to 30 people in

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the nondual teacher training this year, and in Amsterdam. So they are really much more rewarding for me than conferences which can tend to be a little bit intellectual.

TRIP: Yes. All right, well one last question for you. You've got the trainings, and the book, and the exercises, and it's all excellent material. You also confess that there must be a network of support for people that engage in this. So from your point of view, what is the ideal looking network of support, what might it include for somebody?

PETER FENNER: Well, it's really just a community of people who, or for whom, the nondual has become central in their lives. So in our training we create a sense of community, we have an online community, people also do a lot of work with each other by telephone, and in the nondual teacher training a lot of work in small groups by telephone. So that's the way that we create a sense of community, and have even begun to create bridges between our students in Europe and those in North America. So Timeless Wisdom is just one umbrella for bringing students together, but I think these days, people's practice can be powerfully informed and supported by working with other people, even down to meditation. We have people meditating together by telephone, so people will just connect, make a call, hi, good morning, and then they just begin, connected, even though they might be in different countries. So they're here together. And it brings a different quality to their contemplation just knowing that someone else is online doing this, this that can't be found, this that's not an action, but they know someone is doing, or a few other people are doing this with them at the same time. It's like they create their own mini induction field.

WIZARD: We aspire to be a part of that community in affirming that with our listeners and audience, and I really appreciate that.

TRIP: We only have a couple more minutes, but I had one last question for you. You've been blessed with a level of mastery, and it's quite apparent to me that it is beautiful and you're now able to

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help so many others. But I'm just curious. Before you became the celibate monk, was there a time in your life where you were a numb skull like me, where you were a little chippy, or you didn't really, get it, or you're confused, or whatever, and then, I don't know, can you reflect on that life journey, was there a time when things weren't so sublime?

PETER FENNER: Yes, I could but I just notice how like when you describe yourself like that, like you just did, that maybe that's not necessary, because that's so easy for us to put ourselves in a box and think, wow, I don't have what's needed, I don't have the history. So it's important to realize that no history is needed to be here in the purest and most ultimate way possible. We don't have to have traveled a path, we don't have to have suffered X amount, we don't have to have followed certain teachings, because we're just talking about being in our natural state in this moment, free of concerns about the past and the future.

TRIP: Well thank you for that, but if I want to really lay myself down on the couch, this is what I'll say, and maybe you can... my own self perception is perhaps negatively conditioned by an idea that because I don't abide in unconditioned awareness with nearly the consistently that you do, that this somehow then creates a hierarchical relationship in my mind between power relative peace.

PETER FENNER: Yes, but this is not like a competition or to get more out of it. Because you can't rest here, we can't be here, we're thinking in it about those terms. It's just a slow process of reconditioning our minds so that we can rest here more frequently that we can make the journey back here when we feel that we've lost it, even though that we haven't, we feel that that's happening, then we can make the journey back here more easily, less effort, more automatically. So it's just a slow process of cultivation over the years. So in five years' time, wow, I do have more access, this is really wonderful, the river of life has broadened for me. And I do spend more time in my natural state just resting as awareness, and interacting with others from this state. And then 10 years, we

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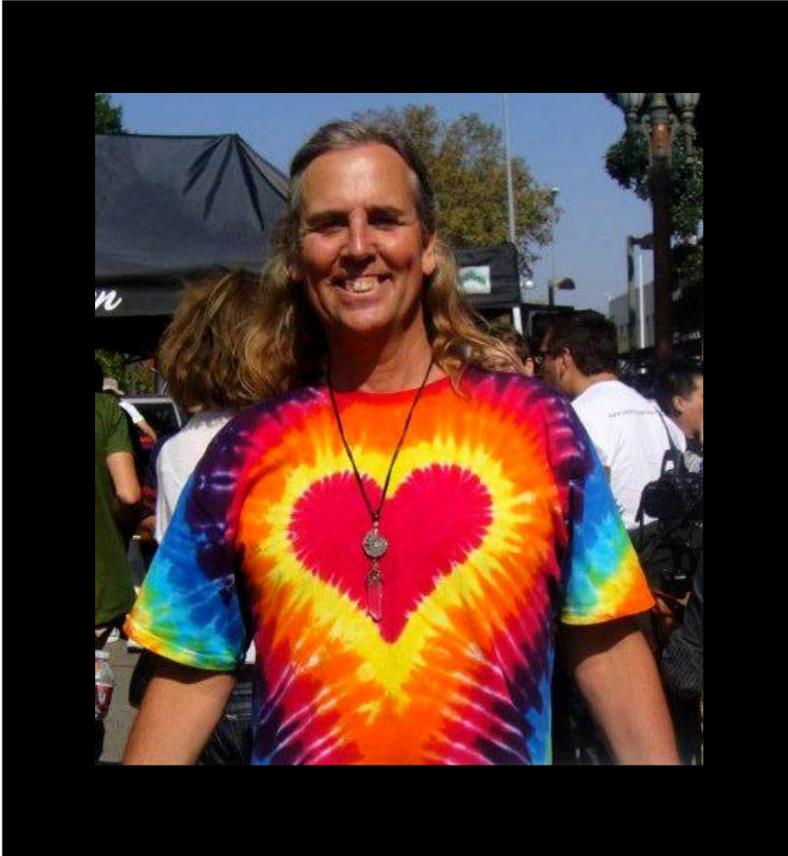
say, wow, and now it's developing further. So that's the type of timeframe that I invite people to look at their lives in when they're working with this nondual material, when they're integrating this into their lives.

TRIP: Peter, you're a beautiful, wonderful and gracious man [Laughs]. Thank you so much for joining us for this hour.

WIZARD: And thank you for sharing.

PETER FENNER: A really great pleasure. I loved being with you.

WIZARD: I was curious before this show as to whether that rock of silence and stillness would be accessible on the radio... It is.



Prasad Paul Duffy

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100003109517132>

TRIP: 15 years ago American-born Prasad Paul Duffy returned from India, having awakened to the reality of our true self through the grace of his teacher Papaji, a disciple of Ramana Maharshi. Since then Prasad has assisted thousands of people to realize the

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self through his Satsang, intensive, and retreats. After years on the road, Prasad currently resides in Los Angeles and writes, produces, and promotes conscious film and music in service to the awakening of humanity, and the healing of Mother Earth.

Now that's your spiritual persona, but you also have a daytime job, I'll read that one too. [Laughs]

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: That is my daytime job.

TRIP: Okay, all right. Then we won't talk about your short films, and the festivals?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: No, that is listed under what you read, it said that I am a conscious filmmaker and music promoter. So that is all an extension of sharing Satsang, all of the work I do is to promote the awakening of consciousness on this planet. Films are a great way to reach the younger generation, short films, music videos, feature films, TV shows; I'm involved with all of them.

WIZARD: How can we watch?

TRIP: Well it's on YouTube, his short film.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: *Back from Iraq* is on YouTube, and I'm actually I just cut a teaser to feature as a TV series to the networks this month, we're doing that. We want to do a series about the returning soldiers coming back, needing group therapy, and work out the traumatic stress of being in war, and while at the same exploring the issues of war, and why humans fight. And it's heartwarming too, about how people come home to their families after being away; it's called *Back from Iraq*.

TRIP: I watched it, and I thought it was a very nice film, and I thought that your lead actor did a really good job.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Thank you, I'll tell him that.

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TRIP: Well I've got some challenging questions, and some easy ones. I want to launch into one here. You're here, it says on our ad for the show today that you're here in celebration of World Peace Day.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, exactly. Today is International World Peace Day, and Day of Gratitude, interestingly on the same day. [Laughs]

TRIP: Well I love the idea of World Peace Day, but I'm going to ask you a question. In a cosmos that is quite violent, even without our participation, is it wise to seek peace in the world, or is it true, is peace only available within us?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Well, you make me think of the Tibetans who were very peaceful people, Buddhists, spiritual. And the Chinese Government took them over in the '50s, and they surrendered peacefully. And the Chinese Government did horrible things to the priests, and the nuns, and monks, and it was just a horrible display of human violence towards another race. And yet when I met a Lama a few years back in India, and he spoke of it, he smiled when he showed me his former monastery, which is gorgeous, and then he showed me the monastery in rubble. They destroyed 13,000 monasteries, the Chinese Government, the communist government.

So like that's the dance of humanity right there, and those of us who are pacifists, what we don't lose is our peace, our love, our life. We may lose our homes, we may lose our dignity, we may even lose our life, but we don't lose the peace that we are when we live beyond this realm, the way this Buddhist Lama was. He was like the Dalai Lama. And that was a lesson I learned from him.

So my job is to just help inspire people to be the best they can be, and I trust in the human spirit that people do really want love, and everything they're doing is a strange way of getting it, whether it's a lot of money, control, and power, all of those things. But they really want love. So I believe if enough of us love ourselves, and

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love each other, then the shift of this human arrogance, greed, and war mongering can change, and we can create a more evolved species to continue the experiment called Earth.

WIZARD: I like the experiment.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, we're having it together right now, right? It involves what you just said, Trip, the whole negativity, and the whole lower vibration of violence, and domination, and power struggle. But that's second chakra, and good chakra stuff. So we're raising the vibration and having the humanity evolve with us.

TRIP: All right. If young men, and this is a direct... this came off of my watching of your short film, *Back of Iraq*, and this is a question that came up for me. If young men want to experience the brotherhood of the warrior, which is a wonderful experience for these young men, they love being brothers with other warriors, and put their lives and limbs at risk, is it wrong? Would the world be a better place if the higher power limited us to safe and wholesome experiences?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Well first of all, let's not limit the military experience to just brothers, it is sisters too, it's brothers and sisters, having brotherhood and sisterhood together, it is peoplehood. And what they're doing really is just standing up for what they believe in, and protecting what they feel they own. So in a world where there's no ownership, there's just sharing and oneness, the people really get that we don't own anything, everything is on loan for us, including these bodies that we wear. Then from that perspective sharing is easy, and it becomes a little bit different than the model that requires protecting territories and borders, and fighting and killing over it.

Again, that's based on fear, scarcity, greed, mistrust, when one is living in a higher state of consciousness there's a trust that even if we don't have it now, it will come and through that trust we manifest it, whether it's food for our children, a place to live,

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whatever. Everybody deserves it, but everybody's responsible for creating it themselves as well. So the need to war is when people don't take care of themselves, they don't feel taken care of, and they need to dominate another to get it. So it's coming back to the source of that conflict, within that individual, that we heal, and then hopefully the ripple effect creates critical mass.

WIZARD: Yes, peace begins with one's self.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: That's right, Wizard. It's worldwide, starts from inside, as my Luminaries' band sings.

TRIP: Let me ask you, I don't know whether your description of yourself is a spiritual teacher or not, but I think you're involved in certainly modeling certain kinds of spiritual teachings if you will. If a young warrior came to you in your Satsang, how would you help him, how would you both validate what he's currently involved in, and also enlighten him? Or is there any enlightenment necessary?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, I think you answered your own question. A spiritual teacher, who can't call himself a spiritual teacher, because that's egotistical, and to enlighten someone is also in a sense of egotistical. That wounded warrior, or that warrior, is my own self, that's how I relate to everyone, including you, Trip. So as a writer I get to tap into what's it like to be him, and I did that through my movies, so that's how I relate to him, that's my own self had I gone to war. So that's how I relate to people, in Satsang especially, and give total space for them, their creation, and their experience. It's the awakensness, or the awareness, of who you are during that experience that I point to, not necessarily changing the behavior, it's really becoming aware of who you are as the behavior happens that changes the behavior by itself, that's the highest good of the being. But I certainly would honor any soldier who sat in my Satsang just for their willingness to do what they do, there's honor and valor in that movie. But it is still a movie, is it not? So my job is to wake people up that their life is just a movie, and to realize who they are.

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TRIP: So let me ask you something; does the higher power want us to wake up; if so, why the struggle? We could be awakened instantly by the higher power; therefore the struggle must be part of the plan. If struggle is part of the plan, why should any of us who have been fortunate to be awakened by the higher power lift a finger in the name of consciousness rising?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: What a great question, Trip. Damn [Laughs]. That was awesome. Okay, so the trick is in the question the one thing that you maybe are not pointing to is that we are the higher power, so there is no separation. So, yes, any "struggle" is a creation of the higher power, and we just say yes to what is. The struggle is really a perception of the mind, it's also a creation of the higher power, to experience that, or it experiences that through that perception of it as struggle. It isn't struggle, it just what is. The mind labels it as struggle, so the higher power is creating whatever the circumstances are, but the mind labels it as a struggle. So, no, lifting a finger, all the fingers mean lifting it is to point, just lift a finger and point. What I just did just now, oh, that's not a struggle, that's you creating a struggle, that's all.

WIZARD: Every action is perfect.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes. When one is awake, one sees it, every action is perfect, it's all happening in a divine play, a divine flow, and the struggle is no different, Trip, than when you're asleep and you want to sleep in and somebody's waking you up with the alarm clock, that's all, which happened to me this morning. I was up 'til one o'clock in the morning editing the teaser for *Back from Iraq*, and then I woke up a 7.30, prior to my alarm, which was set at 8.00, and I just meditated. But six hours of sleep is different than the usual eight. Some people when they don't get enough sleep, they resist waking up. So I say to people listening, are there people listening, or is it just us [Laughs]? I say to the people listening, enjoy the struggle, if that's what is happening, because when you say yes to it, it moves. What we resist persists.

WIZARD: Yes, yes.

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PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: This is on the local radio station?

TRIP: Yes, it is.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Nice one.

TRIP: There are maybe 10,000 people or so within the radio circle of this station.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Well hello to everyone listening out there. It is nice to be able to share with you.

TRIP: But it's not the numbers, it's the quality, and I don't mean that some of us are quality, and some of us aren't. But some of us have the quality of thirsting for our own realization, and for the persistent realization, and if just one of those people is listening, I'm thrilled.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: I've got so many questions for you, Prasad; I've got a couple more here. You ready?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes.

TRIP: All right. Your presence on this program is an answer to this question, but this is something I've struggled with. You and the Wizard are big users of social media, now some people swear by it, and others swear at it. Are social media an instrument by which people can truly further their spiritual practice, and by practice, I mean simply being, or is it a big distraction?

Now the reason I ask that is that even though, for example, through the social media we found you, and now we're having this wonderful Satsang, I find that when I'm on social media my mind is enjoined by the words and by the activity of using the computer, and that's really not being empty headed, and simply present. So

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it seems like a double-edged sword to me, what do you guys think, because you guys are on it all the time?

WIZARD: I love it, it is Satsang. I can have it at home with friends around the world, and Stephen Covey said something that I really like, none of us is as smart as all of us. And yet, the circumspection from so many different points of view that like ten blind men touching the elephant and describing a different thing, but all together you get the picture of the elephant. The circumspection is good.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: A great expression of oneness, Wizard. For me, I feel the Facebook is an opportunity to just share Satsang the way we're doing right now, you just put it out into the universe to see who responds to it, it's fun, and it's like fishing. But I think in terms of distraction, it's like anything, Trip, it's like you can claim doership of what you're doing, and identify with the action, and then there's a distraction. But if there's no doer, and it's all just happening by itself, then existence again is acting in perfection, perfect action.

So the previous answer that Wizard gave, I think applies to this as well. It's where your intention and awareness is, that's really one of the strong points of what I share with people, is enlightenment is not what you think, it's not the end of a journey, it's the realization that we are not these bodies, and these minds, and the non-identification frees up consciousness to be non-identified, and therefore resting in the silence of who we are.

WIZARD: Yes.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Buddha pointed to the emptiness. So that place, thoughts rise and fall, and participate on Facebook, participate in relationships. And one's practice is to watch the thoughts without engaging that them, that's called meditation, and then eventually just to keep your attention on awareness itself, and let everything happen by itself, because it's already happening by itself, and who needs to judge it, control it, or change it; only the

mind. That said I like to take it the next step where we co-create consciously, a little bit like the piece we talked about where we attract, but it's really through intention, and the power of intention is like the rudder on the boat that's sailing on the ocean, it keeps us on point, and towards our vision. But if we make that vision a goal, now suddenly a doer arrives at the goal. I mean, disappointment of the expectation not turning out the way the doer wanted it creates more of this struggling and suffering.

So it's that balance, that fine line of just being, like you said, Trip, while at the same time letting life happen through us and as us with non-identification with any of it. But yet we truly know we're all of it, right? We're all of it. We are co-creating it right in this moment. It is so exciting when we just surrender and let it all happen.

TRIP: You've had very good teachers, I can see. But there are a few things on the web that are attributed to you, and one of my jobs here is to challenge my guests a little bit, so here's one of my challenge questions for you. This is a tweet that's attributed to you on the web, and you know what, I mean you can pull out my tweet, I don't tweet, but I'm tweeting all day long. You want to put anything I say in quotes, you can make me look like an idiot, like 24/7. So I'm not trying to nail you down here.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: I probably will remember it when you tell me it, because I've only tweeted a handful of times.

TRIP: There's a tweet on there, attributed to you, and it's not consistent with the beautiful teaching you just gave. You said apparently, "I am on a mission from God; the time to awaken to our true self is Now". Is that your tweet?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, how does that not resonate with what I just said earlier?

WIZARD: I'm aligned with that one.

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PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: The evolution that I said earlier into one line, through I guess what a tweet needs to be. It's all now, awakening is now. It doesn't happen in the future, there is no future, it goes only until tomorrow, tomorrow never comes. So that's from my teacher Papaji, you mentioned I had some good teachers, I had one teacher, Papaji, and I've been influenced by many others. But I had one teacher, Papaji, and he said, "Call off the search, you are already that which you seek". And that's what stopped me in my tracks.

WIZARD: I met Papaji.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: You did, Wizard?

WIZARD: Yes, way back when, it was right before he dropped the body. And a musician friend of mine, K. Sridhar, his guru had told him to take me to several different places and that was one of the places on the stop. And we had a dinner with him and then Satsang the next morning. And it was busy, David Godman was there, and there were a lot of cameras, and book doings, and pictures and stuff. But later that afternoon when I was back with Sridhar, we were looking at one another and fell into a really beautiful Darshan, and then later I went to Benares, and we arrived at sunset, and I had an apparition of Ramana Maharshi there that just totally blew me away.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Wow.

WIZARD: Yes, I liked Papaji; I got a good hit from him.

TRIP: I want to hear about your time with Papaji, and what you took away from that experience. But I want to finish up on that last question I had for you. Because I think you've got it really together, conceptually and within yourself. However that statement that I am on a mission from God, that statement would be indistinguishable from one who had a religious idea about the Truth where divinity is some externalized God, and that you are a separate individual who's been sent on a mission from God. It

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doesn't ring true with the instrumentality that I know is your true...

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: The I might be pointing to the ego's i, so i, small i, is on a mission from God, the big I, higher power, whatever you want to call it. But it's a reference to the Blues Brothers, bro'. [Laughs].

TRIP: I need to get current. All right, well I've got a bunch more questions here.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: But I was just playing, it's a message from the Blues Brothers. It is funny, that old Twitter thing is very strange, I don't really resonate with it, it doesn't feel user friendly in some level, and I don't know how to figure out how to communicate with other people. I think it's just, what, you just put a tweet out there to the world, and people respond to it. I prefer the Facebook way of communicating over Twitter. I don't know how Twitter is such a hit; it's not amongst my peeps, not in my world.

WIZARD: I agree.

TRIP: It's for teenagers who are into nanô-second segments of communication. It's unbelievable. We have a special guest today, Prasad Paul Duffy, who's a spiritual teacher, not self-described, but by others, and also author and filmmaker. We're having a great Satsang with him. Before we go on with some more questions, I never met Papaji but I've had a really intensive training over the last four years in Indian sages and in spiritual wisdom. And I just have this really warm feeling for the guy, just based on everything about him. He just seems like one of the really beautiful sages, really warm. So you were so privileged to spend time with him. Can you talk a little bit about it, what it was like?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes. I always love to speak of Papaji. Many people sat with him who had been with Osho, and other

teachers, and had done a lot of prep work, but those teachers, including Osho, always put enlightenment in the future, and Papaji was the one that helped us see that it's Now. And being in his presence is Shaktipat, which was huge, his Buddha field, allowed us to fall into that silence where we could recognize it. And he really only had one teaching, it was, "Keep quiet". But all the teachings happened around him like any other guru, there's a circus that comes around him, and all the people who push to get close, and be special. And as a guru myself, I know that that's required to help the whole thing happen, the whole organization, which is no organization.

He didn't want to have an ashram, that's why he was the perfect guru for me, because he was the role model in which I mirrored myself in so that I could serve, once I realized Self is indeed to share it. And not remove people from the struggle, Trip, but give people an option, okay, to veer from the Papaji conversation. The conditioning of the mind is one thing, but the conditioning of the mind in America is another, and I feel people have been dumbed down so that they can be controlled, and I feel religion has done that for ages.

WIZARD: Amen.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: To control the masses. So Papaji just freed us from all of that. And one of the great things, because I was the guru buster before I went to India 15 years ago, I was going around and looking at who was the real deal, who wasn't, who was misleading people; the same part of me who's challenging the Government today, and our political leaders, because I feel like those people... and you seem to be like that person, Trip [Laughs]. We need to oust them, keeping people in check, keeping the leaders in check, right.

So when I walked in and saw Papaji the first time, no, before that actually, when I met his assistance who brought me to one of the housings that they had nearby for me to stay, I said to him, "How long have you been with Papaji?" And he said, "Three years". And

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when he looked at me, two beams of silver light came out of his eyes, like I've never seen before or since. And I remember thinking, oh my God, if this is a disciple, I can't wait to meet the master. And of course I was familiar with Papaji from reading his book, *Wake Up and Roar*, prior to going to India.

And so I spent the next few months trying to get Papaji to look me in the eye, but he wouldn't, he'd just give me quick furtive glances. And I eventually left because he wouldn't look at me, and I went up to Hrishikesh, and I spent time with Maharaji, another guru, and I ended up meeting another one of Papaji's disciples called Dawa [phonetic 28.55], or Pravavarti, and she was running a center for indigenous children and their families. So for six months I got involved with that, working with the children, help opening up clinics, and schools, it was very rewarding. And then in the afternoon I would just meditate by the Ganges by myself all day, every day.

And finally my visa expired, and I had to get an extension, and right at that time, the power had closed the borders for that ability to go to Nepal and get your visa renewed. And then I went to Delhi, and told them I was working with the kids in this NGO organization, would they extend my visa, they said no. So the only way was for me to go see Papaji again to get the visa extended to work with the kids. And when I did he said, "Pravavarti told me about you", and he gave me the juice that I'd been looking for. And then he sent me back to work with the children, and that's when I knew that he was my guru. Of all the different ones I'd been with, he was the one who's mirroring the Truth of who I am as the soul, as the being. And that's what happens with the Satguru, the Satguru shows up usually someone who resonates with your own world in some way, and finishes you, finishes the search, finishes the desires for something other than what it, finishes the doubt of who you truly are, and that's what Papaji did for me, finished me.

TRIP: Right on.

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PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: So that I make myself available to others who are ready.

WIZARD: When you mention Maharaji, are you talking about Neem Karoli Baba?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: No, not that Maharaji, this one lives in Hrishikesh, she's still alive actually. She's also the guru to ShantiMayi who travels around America giving Satsang, if people have ever heard of her. But he's a traditional guru, and so I spent time with him, but Papaji was beyond tradition, that's what we were saying earlier, he's beyond tradition, beyond religion, a true awakened being, and so many people woke up with him because he held space for it, he didn't put it in the future, he didn't need to be in front of a room. When I first saw him that first day in Satsang, I could tell he would prefer to be watching cricket.

WIZARD: When I met him he was sitting at the kitchen table watching cricket.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, and he was very agreeable for people to come into the house, and I would just want to sit next to him, but the point is he didn't... there was nobody there trying to be a guru. In all the new age spiritual American gurus that I saw, the Indian gurus who came to America, they would all identify with being a guru, they were all trying to get their gig going, make some money, keep their religion going, whatever it was. And Papaji wasn't, so somehow my ego trusted him fully because of that. So I'm a non-guru guru, I just live my life but I'm very active on Facebook, and I'm very active in what I call with my community live Facebook.

TRIP: Dude, we are so on the same page, oh my God, oh my God.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: I go outside when I'm hanging out with the friends at these dance concerts. I'm a music promoter I told you too, the conscious music, so I throw events, and I go to events, and I'm very much involved with the underground Venice Beach

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music scene, and it's very exciting. Because it's young people awakening to who they are, and celebrating, which is different than people who are struggling and working on themselves, and that's great too, I'm able to help them. But the ones who are in a sense already embracing this teaching, and then together we can go to the next level to co-create a world that works for us, even if it's just starts in our community, then it can resonate out into a bigger community, into the State, California, America, the world, you know.

WIZARD: There we are.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Conscious revolution.

TRIP: So I want to ask you about the whole guru/student relationship and the larger issue of spiritual teachers out there on the landscape. In my opinion the guru in the room is the one who's most deeply confirmed in his or her own non-physical reality, and simply their Faith alone is the deciding factor in which way the wisdom is running. So if I'm in a roomful of people and my sense of my own non-physical reality is more confirmed than the folks that are in the room, then I'm the guru for them. And when I'm in the room with somebody like the Wizard, who's had a head start, 35-year head start, turned inside out 35 years ago, then I tend to shut up and bathe in his Faith, in his own confirmation.

So I see though out there on the spiritual landscape basically the main situation that happens is all these people go out there, and they get a little taste at some event of somebody that gives them a little electricity, or charge, or whatever. But the thing is they've had that taste many times before, and I think that the only really useful kind of... well, I don't want to get too judgmental, but if you hang with someone on a regular basis, like the Wizard, say for example, who's not charging you for it, they're simply sharing this wonderful joy, then after a while it rubs off on you, and you become more confirmed, and you begin to resonate in that deeper Faith. But when you run around, and you are trying this teacher and that teacher, whatever, then that's really almost a spiritual

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masturbatory experience where you're going out to get like get off on a taste of it, but then during the week you're not abiding in it. Do you agree with that assessment?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, you can either do the work, or do the workshops.

TRIP: Exactly.

WIZARD: Papaji said give up the search.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Exactly.

TRIP: All right, we're on the same page. Okay, moving on, consciousness raising, okay. Big box films versus independent low budget films, just for the heck of it. Take *Avatar* for example, that film mixed themes of violent corporate aggression rising to the level of what I'd call fascism, with the story of our oneness. Everybody loved it, because you could have been like an ignorant farm boy out there watching people get their heads busted with bionic machines, all the way up to being someone who's very gentle and meek, and enjoyed that film. Did that film raise our collective awareness? I mean, what's your view, given...

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, I believe it did, I believe it did. Just saw it again on re-release with my nephew when I was visiting him, and it was just so beautiful, he's eight years, and was so happy to see it with him. I believe it did, it definitely did exactly what you just described, and it took us out of the world of war in corporate America, and world domination, and to this sense of oneness and peace of the indigenous people and their spirit. It was such a huge hit that it cannot help but affect consciousness, the pop consciousness, and the mass consciousness. And even if it was negative and it was a huge hit like that, it would affect it. So why not make positive media that's going to inspire our youth, and inspire people, to step into the power and be who they are here to be. And that's the media that I'm involved with making.

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I have another TV show called *The Vortex*, it's about the Venice Beach awakening youth, street musicians on Venice Beach, I'm creating with Sykes from the Sykes and the People, and got lots of conscious rappers, and musicians participating. It's a very exciting project because it's documenting what's actually happening, but we're staging it too, so it's like an alternate reality show.

TRIP: I perceive that the films that are made that have mass appeal have to do a couple of things. One, they have to stimulate the limbic system and the viewer that responds to sexuality, and to violence, as well as parts of the brain that perhaps are in the frontal cortex related to the perception of our oneness, or whatever. Because you look at every single one of these films that does big bucks, and everyone of them practical has intense amounts of violence, and then sexually imagery like the little... she was hot, that Pandoran creature, or whatever. So I mean my question...

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: That's the Hollywood formula, even *Lord of the Rings*, has that formula. That's the formula, so that's the mass consciousness where they're at right now. And like you said earlier who are we to lift a finger to remove them from their struggle.

TRIP: That's fine.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: But we as individuals can make the alternative, and one day the alternative will be the mainstream.

WIZARD: It'll hit critical mass.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Many years ago I started promoting, with a bunch of other people, like a logical green lifestyle, okay; we all were on the cutting edge. Now it's become main-stream, and it has been co-opted by the corporate machine, okay. And BP was the first to jump on the green bandwagon and change their logo, and change their gas stations to reflect it, and look what happened with their oil spill.

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So it's like let's just see these movies as metaphors to awaken a dormant side of us, which is the side that is here to stand up for our rights, to protect our earth, and the people, and the creatures that live on it. It's this higher awareness, its higher evolution that these movies depict the journey from violent sexuality which is lower chakra, through the heart into our upper chakras. So that's the movies that I make. But mine are realistic and low budget indies, so that people can... A, so I don't have to deal with the Hollywood machine and making of it, and it can have a purity unless you're of course someone like James Cameron, who has the *Titanic* behind him. And then also be just that people can relate to them in their daily life, because I think there's enough magic and fantasy in this reality that we're creating that we can tap into and draw from to inspire people.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Something you said that really resonated with me that I just love, and the Wizard's on board with this too, but I just thought we might have a brief Satsang around this. You said "The chasing of romantic love stands in the way of realizing true love with the self; One love that is unconditional and lasts forever". I love it.

WIZARD: When you discover that love is not a verb, that love is God and love is peace and who we are. Then all the other relationships fall in alignment with that, if you are loving another that's idolatry, and that'll rob you of love.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: It's so true, idolatry, and that's the obsession with sexuality too, and mixture of love and sexuality. But I love what you said, bro, love is not a verb, love is the subject. [Laughs] Love is just another word for God too, I think.

WIZARD: Yes, love is God.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: It creates and sustains this reality, right, love is our true nature. But we use that, it's so heavy laden the way the word God is that people are going to hear it through their

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subjectivity as you mentioned, Trip, earlier, you know. How will people perceive it? I have to say as a "spiritual teacher", and as a filmmaker, I try not to be concerned anymore with how people will receive the message. I think that's on my Facebook too, I don't care what others think about me. It took me a while to get here, to realize it, but I'm here now, and it's the only way I'll succeed in Hollywood too, is from this perspective. If I care what others think about my art, and about my message, it dilutes it, and then it activates my mind in reaction in response to what is being said. So I'm practicing sharing in a way that I'm just putting it out there, if people challenge it, I'm awake enough to be able to, as you've seen, Trip, meet you and take it the next level even, your "challenge", you know.

But that said, I'm not responsible for how people receive what I say or the films I made, I can't be. That's the old co-dependent Paul Duffy [Laughs], Prasad it's not. Prasad is sharing from his heart, and trust, that even if people can't receive it at first, eventually sometimes, they'll be grateful later, because that's been my experience countless times. People come around and thank me for holding that mirror up to them that they didn't want to see at that moment, and I don't know why it was happening, but it was happening, through existence's grace, and that's what we have to do as filmmakers, and as gurus, and as awakening beings, to help shift the consciousness of this planet from the selfish mass consciousness to a self-less mass consciousness. And I know we can do it, because enough of us taken that journey already. And we can mirror it with other people.

WIZARD: In this information age, where we're communicating globally and interconnecting there's exponential, I don't want to say growth, but there's an exponential awakening that's happening. Really it hit the information age at about the same time like they were made for each other. And I like it, I like everything I'm seeing happening.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Let me just add, while we still have a bit of time, what we've all touched upon is there are, from my

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research, I fortunately haven't met them directly yet, but from my research there are those people with the top of the pyramid chain with the big bucks who are old world families that have been running the show for a while, illuminati, freemasons, reptiles, whatever people are calling them, but there are people who through their money and power are making decisions that trickle down and affect the rest of the world. And they're right now working towards creating a one world Government, okay, since Bush Senior announced it way back. And those of us who are looking in to uniting one world, we can fall into that trap that they are setting.

And so the autonomy that we speak of in awakening, meaning I'm free, I live by no other law but by the Self, no other law. When the police and the Government try to come in with their laws, I challenge them, if I feel it is appropriate to challenge them, I play their game when I feel it's appropriate to play their game. But make no mistake to anyone who's hearing, that the awakened sage today is available to challenge the fascists of tomorrow, in a way that the Dalai Lama and the Buddhists did not. But in America there's a fascism taking over, we've seen it since 9/11, the Patriot Act, and a lot of other movements that has been happening amongst liberties being taken away. So there are those of us who are awakened, and we're not going to just stand by and let it happen, we're going to wake people up to the fact that it is happening, and therefore you have a choice to make at this point to shift the consciousness, to shift the victim sheep consciousness that they have put people in through the media, through religion, as we said earlier.

So by taking back the media, we are doing, by us posting on Facebook, by us making films, making YouTube videos where people are sharing Truth, this is helping to shift consciousness, critical mass, so that those few powerful people will no longer have the power over the masses, because the masses will take back the power themselves.

TRIP: All right.

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WIZARD: I call it the great reformation.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes.

WIZARD: That everything is reforming now, is tremendous... I've been an entrepreneur for the better part of my life, and it takes a lot of Faith to be an entrepreneur. [Laughs] But I see opportunity now, just unbelievable opportunity especially in the emerging markets of the world, the smaller people who are enterprising and figuring out little answers, little tiny pieces of the puzzle, coming together. And coming apart is a part of coming together, and some of us are concerned about the coming apart, others are busy on the coming together. And the coming together is, and it necessitates a coming apart in a reformation.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Break down, break through. And like they say, we can either be part of the problem, or part of the solution. I'm a solution-oriented person. But one has to wake up from denial first in order to heal their life, and that denial of whatever it is, your addiction, your lack of self-worth, your self-hatred, whatever it is, that is somehow in the way of one's realization, or one's self love, and bliss is all that needs to be dropped, and removed. And so you hold up a mirror to society, while at the same time winking with the other eye and saying, it's all our creation, it's all our creation, it's all an illusion. Why not create the best one we can, the best dream we can together.

WIZARD: I like a good dream over a nightmare any time.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Yes, why not create a dream over a nightmare, exactly, is that what you said?

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Right on. So I've got a little selfish question here for you. Okay. Here's a question for you, just because you're a filmmaker and you know I'm one of the 125 million Americans who thinks he has a killer screenplay inside of him.

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PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Ah-hah. [Laughs]

TRIP: Besides the entire population of Los Angeles [Laughs]. And I don't know, I won't get into the details of my screenplay, but it's about the true nature of consciousness, about gurus, about... I feel like I can do a very imaginative job of bringing a lot of interesting elements, using the blockbuster action film format, okay. So I feel like I know I've got work to do, I would have to storyboard the idea, and I'd have to put it into marketable form. But I'm not interested in making money from something like that, but what I want to do is I want to know how is it that I can take my idea and find a collaborator who would probably be another writer, who has film industry experience, find someone trustable that I can share my idea with who isn't going to rip it off and run with it, and I don't get to enjoy the creative process or whatever. What's your advice on that, finding a collaborator who could help bring a piece of creative work to somebody?

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Well the odds are in your favor, there are 125 million people [Laughs], to find a collaborator. I've done it many times, many people have approached me through the years with ideas, if it resonated with me, and I would take the project on. I had a 50/50 rule that I would want to do, if I was going to develop, and write it, and shop it, and produce it, you know. And then I've done the same with my projects, the TV project I've given 50/50 to my co-producer, because he's the one who's shopping it, getting us into the big agencies, and he has a famous director to direct it, and stuff like that.

So it's all about what people bring to the table, and the resonance you have with them, and if you believe they can protect your work, as they shop it around, because it does need to be protected, screenplays are stolen all the time. My friends wrote an amazing one, and it was stolen by the *Heroes* series. So you have to protect yourself there. But I would recommend to you that, to not go for big budget for your first outing, if you want to actually produce it to do it low budget with the video in HD, things can be done for so

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cheap nowadays, and it's a way to capture your vision of what you're trying to do on video.

If not, you can also write it as some type of book first, then you have total control of the storyline, and Hollywood picks up books faster than they pick up screenplays. But the adaptation you wouldn't have control over of course, and when you're meeting with Hollywood people don't tell them you don't care about the money [Laughs], that's all they care about. It's like looking at your dog and saying, I don't care about meat, I'm going to make you a vegetarian. Although I know some vegan dogs, most dogs want the meat, and that's how Hollywood agents and producers are, they want the cash, they're doing it for the cash.

So I take very interesting meetings with them, I take them the same way we're having this Satsang, I finally have become integrated and I am Prasad. In fact my producing partner, Matt Muzio, who I've been referring to, he kept saying over the last three years as we were struggling to break in and having conflicts and all the drama that ensued, and all the ego trips, he kept saying to me, "Just be Prasad, just be Prasad". And finally a couple of years ago I realized I've just got to be Prasad, and that surrender happened, and attached to my film *Freedom High*, which is about awakening youth. And I had another couple of young movie stars, one of them who retired on Twitter, and so now I have to attach a different person on that role.

So the producing game is not very fun for someone like me, who doesn't really believe in money even, but it is an entrepreneurial effort like Wizard spoke of. And there's something to be said about being entrepreneurial, because you're a self-starter, self-regulated, you create your team, you work together, you create a product, and put it out to the world. And that's what a filmmaker is, but once you move into the Hollywood game, now you're talking corporation, and so it smacks of all of those trappings that we spoke of earlier.

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TRIP: Well, we'll continue this conversation offline sometime, if you want.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Has the show been archived, so my friends who couldn't listen now can hear it later?

TRIP: I will archive it, and I will do it this week, okay.

PRASAD PAUL DUFFY: Perfect.



Regina Dawn Akers

http://reginadawnakers.com/?page_id=923

TRIP: After two early exposures to *A Course in Miracles*, our very special guest today, Regina Dawn Akers, finally decided to study

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the work in earnest, and in response to a prayer, guidance was given through visions and dreams to make fullest use of the material. Eventually a different sort of vision came that made no sense, so Regina Akers went to the keyboard and said a prayer; without thinking, a message flowed instructing her to teach without fear. Nevertheless she was frightened by the experience.

Over time she let go her fear, and let herself be lived as an instrument for writing. Short writings began to come daily, usually related to her daily workbook lesson. Then in June 2005, right after she finished *The Workbook for Students*, an inspiration spontaneously arose to reinterpret the New Testament as “symbology” for Truth. This was the birth of an internal knowingness to allow conceptual understanding of Truth to ripen into direct experience both for herself, and her students. Regina left her career and home in Massachusetts, and moved with her young daughter to New London, North Carolina. In March of 2006, she was guided to start *The Foundation for the Holy Spirit* with David Fishman and Phil Frisk, to help all awaken as the quiet voice within.

Visit Regina's website at www.reginadawnakers.com . Welcome, Regina.

REGINA AKERS: [Laughs] It is funny to hear you sharing that, Trip, I don't know why.

WIZARD: He sounds serious, doesn't he?

TRIP: It's funny because I rewrote her bio and Regina, [Laughs] and I think you should let me rework your bio on your website.

REGINA AKERS: Well that sounded wonderful, if you send that to me, I'll send that to Phil and we can have him put it up, it sounded great.

TRIP: All right. Well here's why I think you should let me rework your bio, because I see you as completely free of any school of

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thought, and also maybe from an earlier concept you had of yourself as having a relationship with God as a kind of external entity. And you are now established as presence, and you've become a gifted no-BS clear mirror for our ordinary inherent divinity. I really love the way you share the Truth.

REGINA AKERS: Thank you. I think you and I talked a little bit about this when we met, about this experience that some people call channeling, and I mentioned that's how it started for me; it didn't remain that way, but that's how it started. I actually never called it channeling, something in me told me not to label it that, but yet there was still this experience of like hearing an inner dictation from another. But I think it started that way because I was so attached to the belief that I was Regina, and the wisdom was not...you know, heard, it was not a part of that personality. And so it seemed to come from another, that's just how the experience appeared in those early stages. But with time, and with listening to what was said, and with trusting, and with giving willingness, that experience of other definitely faded, and then died.

TRIP: Yes, so you've become more established as presence since your earlier work, and *A Course in Miracles*, and it's had an impact on what and how you teach. So what's changed, and how does it affect the way you teach others still more intensively guided by the Course work than you are?

REGINA AKERS: In some ways the funny thing is it hasn't changed. My perspective has changed, but it, the actual teaching, or the actual writing, in some ways hasn't changed, because what has always happened...athletes call it the "zone"...what has always happened when I was in the zone is that there was a spontaneous flow. My interpretation was that the spontaneous flow was coming from another, but the spontaneous flow was there, so what never happened for me was there was never the worldly experience of thinking about what needed to be said, thinking about how to say it, looking in advance for resources or ideas; everything has always been spontaneous, and that still occurs.

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In that way it hasn't changed. What has changed is my perspective of it. And watching the spontaneity, and I know you know this, watching the spontaneity is always somewhat miraculous. Because when you know that there has been no conscious planning of anything, and yet you see the perfection of what is done, you do realize that this has nothing to do with anything that seems to be an individual. It's too perfect.

WIZARD: Amen.

REGINA AKERS: And that has been extended from the teaching and writing, which for some reason it was more natural for me to get in touch with the spontaneity there; that has now extended into daily life. So why I was able to get in touch with it so automatically with teaching and writing, and then it took some practice to put it into life, I don't know. But that seems to be how it happened for me, and it also seems to be what that first message told me when I went to the keyboard. It asked me to write, and then to teach what I write, and it told me teaching was my path. So for some reason I was able to get into the spontaneous flow with writing and teaching easily. I didn't have to learn that. I didn't have to practice that. I had to practice getting into that same spontaneity, that same flow, that same trust, in my life. And it expanded from there.

WIZARD: Well said.

TRIP: Yes. Tell me if this is true, because it seems to me that your path has been one that's moved from what we might call a devotional path where your early passion was to be of service to God, in a very kind of moving emotional kind of way, right. And then it almost seems you've become more of a Jnani, like you've taken now the direct approach of clear seeing through inquiry, which has now established itself in your daily life. Is that true?

REGINA AKERS: Yes. [Laughs] I've never heard the word Jnani before. I still perceive myself as very intellectually uneducated spiritually, so I'm always learning these new terms. But, yes, what

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happened for me was after *A Course in Miracles* as you mentioned, what felt like inner guidance came to read the New Testament and let it be interpreted for me. And through that process I went beyond where I went with the Course, and then after that, after a year or so after that, I felt like it was time for me to go a next step. I could just feel that intuitively, but of course I had no idea what that next step was. I said another prayer, saying it to the Holy Spirit, because that was still my tradition. I asked the Holy Spirit to please send me something that would take me to the next step, and that's when I felt guidance to go over to the computer and order a book from Ramana Maharshi.

Now I didn't know anything about Ramana Maharshi, and in fact up until this time I was from a Christian type background, so I had, you could say, a prejudice or a judgment against Indian gurus. But I always followed the guidance of this inner prompting that I called the Holy Spirit. I ordered the book, and when the book came, I thought that I would open it and just love it, because it came through guidance. But when I opened it, I didn't understand it at all, partly because it uses so many Hindu words and concepts that were completely alien to what I knew.

WIZARD: Which book was that?

REGINA AKERS: It was called *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi*.

WIZARD: Yes.

REGINA AKERS: It's a small thin book.

WIZARD: Yes.

REGINA AKERS: But I ended up just throwing the book down, because it meant nothing to me. And a couple of weeks later when I was sitting near the table where I had thrown it down, in my stillness time, the picture on the cover of the book, which now is

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why I think I was actually asked to buy the book was for the picture, the picture on the cover of the book seem to come alive.

TRIP: Was that the *Essential Teachings of Ramana Maharshi*? Was that basically a picture book?

REGINA AKERS: No, it's not a picture book; in fact the only picture is the one on the cover. It's a very good picture, and I think that really that's why I was asked to order it. It's simply called *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi*.

WIZARD: Yes, I've had that experience with his form.

REGINA AKERS: Well, yes, so you know how that happened. And this picture just seemed to come alive, and vibrate, and then I heard again this familiar prompting within me to "Ask him what he wants to say to you." So in my practice then of being what I perceived to be a scribe at that time, I grabbed my notebook and my pen, and I asked him what he wanted to say to me. And these messages began to come. And they started in a familiar zone, they started again by teaching surrender, and they took me into practicing a mantra in order to carry meditation and inner focus throughout the day, instead of just in that quiet time in the morning, but taking it everywhere by using the mantra. And then after that teaching it took me into self-inquiry. But through this inner learning that occurred, seemingly coming from Ramana Maharshi, this is how that bridge happened, where I moved over away from the more Christian tradition, and more from the surrender and devotion...although that's still very much a part of it for me...but added, you could say *added* the inquiry to it.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Well given how excellent a teacher you are, and I'm sure you're going to have a lot of influence on a lot of people because you are so clear, it'll be nice I think to talk a little bit about the Ramana Maharshi experience you had. Because I had a meltdown when I saw a book of Ramana's, and many of the people that we've

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interviewed on this program, and others, have had powerful awakening experiences, often the first one coming through an exposure to Ramana, his book, or whatever. But the Wizard has helped me to remain very clear that there was no transmission going on there; there was no deity there in Ramana Maharshi, and I think it's really important when you've had that kind of a powerful insight that comes on the heel of exposure to someone like Ramana that you're really clear when you share that with other people. And I'm not saying you're not being, but I hope everyone is that it's not about Ramana, you know.

REGINA AKERS: Yeah, well in fact the funny thing is if you pay attention to these messages that came to me from Ramana, or seem to come to me from Ramana [Laughs], the very last message was a message about three states of mind. The first state of mind was called resister, the second state of mind was called doubter, and the third state of mind was called abiding. And the way it was described to me is that the resister is more like the average person in the world today, who thinks they know who they are, they perceive themselves as the person, they know what their likes and dislikes are, and their fears, and they're fully identified. And that's called the resister because it's fully resisting the Truth.

The doubter is the stage that most people seem to be at when they're on what is perceived to be the spiritual path. It's where you're beginning to both doubt that you are that person that you thought you were, you're beginning to question that, and you may be receiving teaching. It could seem to come through a guru, through a book, like *A Course in Miracles*, or through an inner source like I experienced. But you also do not see that as you, *that teaching*. You perceive that to be an other, so you're doubting yourself in both directions. You're doubting that you're the person but you're also not feeling that you are the true Self, or the wisdom. So that's the doubter.

Abiding is being that which you are in Truth. And in the very last message this seeming Ramana told me that I had had a very strong doubter phase [Laughs], but it was time to move from the doubter

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into abiding. And then this seeming Ramana presence shortly after that left me, because obviously you cannot perceive yourself as a scribe, perceive yourself as receiving wisdom from another, and move into abiding too. So that is how that ended with that lesson, that it was time to move now from one phase to the next.

WIZARD: Right on!

TRIP: Everything that you're telling us now, this all happened before our last, our meeting that we had, like a year ago?

REGINA AKERS: Yes, this Ramana experience was in 2009.

TRIP: I just totally underappreciated you when I met you [Laughs], I didn't realize, I didn't realize like how nuanced your whole grasp is of all of this when I met you. I underappreciated her.

WIZARD: I found Ramana Maharshi for me to be that perfect mirror, that perfect reflection of what I am. And in that there's no other, but it's reflecting; it's material plane reflection of the Truth. His teachings or his conversations for me are my favorite piece of literature is *Talks* and it's my bible, so to speak.

REGINA AKERS: Well, you know, it's interesting because first of all the messages that I received from this seeming Ramana Maharshi have been published. A friend one day in the shower felt guidance to start a publishing company and publish them, so they're published in a book now called *The Teachings of Inner Ramana*. And one of the messages in that book is called *The Grace of the Guru*. And basically what *The Grace of the Guru* says is that the reason that I, meaning Ramana..., the reason that I have come is to show you yourself. And he said something like, I light a little campfire in your heart, but when you come you light the entire chamber.

WIZARD: Yes.

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REGINA AKERS: What was interesting was my experience of this seeming presence was exactly the way you're describing it, John, in that when I felt this presence of Ramana teaching me, I felt like I knew my Self so clearly and so much better than I ever had before. And it's kind of funny because this personality again never would have asked for an Indian guru. I would have thought of maybe Jesus as my spiritual teacher. But when I asked for something to take me to the next step, what was provided was this presence instead. And I was told in the message *The Grace of the Guru* is because this presence was a match for my heart, and there's just no way I can argue that, because the Self that I saw was clearly my Self.

WIZARD: Yes. I concur.

TRIP: Yes, we both do. So you spoke a moment ago about the resister phase, and it's the attachment to knowing that you think that you know, and then you shared *The Seven Steps to Awakening* in one of your lectures. And the first step to awakening is letting go of all attachment to "I know anything"; that's the false self that thinks it knows anything.

But I wanted to ask you guys, both of you, a question here, because there are two things that I think I know, and I think that they fit within this framework of not knowing, but I feel absolutely certain about these two things. And actually having a kind of proactive certainty about something seems to serve my passion about this, or my conviction. So the two things that I do know are that I do know that I don't know [Laughs].

WIZARD: That's wisdom.

TRIP: All right, and I do know that this is a Mystery, okay.

WIZARD: That's correct.

TRIP: And so I do know two things.

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WIZARD: That's correct.

REGINA AKERS: And maybe three. I think that in my inquiry one of the things that I've gotten to that I know, obviously again the idea that I am a woman can be questioned; I have seen that, I have questioned it. The idea that the thinking mind is me can be questioned; I've seen that, I can question that. The idea that the world is real can be questioned. But this presence, this Beingness, this existence, that can't be questioned. I cannot question is there something here? Is there a presence here? So that's another fact.

Now what that is can be inquired into, and can be discovered, and can be realized. But Course students used to always say to each other, "I exist but you don't; you're in my dream." And when you hear somebody saying that to you, you know that there's something that's not right. You may be completely confused about who or what you are, you may believe that you're an entity that you aren't, but there's something here, and that's something that we all know.

WIZARD: The *Now* is irrefutable.

REGINA AKERS: Right.

WIZARD: The I thought is a belief, and with the belief of the I thought, that's the root of the tree of thoughts is the I-thought, self-inquiry goes to the very root of beliefs. And when you see the I-thought is no more real than the tooth fairy, and the belief structures start to fall away, the *Now* itself becomes what we all are. Any words or a pointer to that divinity, or that omnipresence is synonymous with *Now*. And it's indivisible, we all share it, it's beginning-less, and endless, birth-less, deathless, it's all of the adjectives and pointers that we use to point to Truth with a capital "T" of our non-physical existence or seamless sentience prior to the appearance of bodies and differences.

REGINA AKERS: "Is" is a word that really seems to resonate for me, just...

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WIZARD: Is.

REGINA AKERS: Is.

TRIP: Speaking of Is, in those *Seven Steps to Awakening*, and I don't know if those were yours or you were speaking a lot about Nisargadatta when you were sharing them, but this right here that you said is the most concise, complete instruction for living I've ever read. This is what she said, "Be with whatever is in peace".

WIZARD: Amen, Amen.

TRIP: That is it.

REGINA AKERS: And again you can hear "is" in that. Just to let you know about *The Seven Steps to Awakening*, that's just something that I felt to spend my time with this year. It's actually, it's both me and it's not me, in as far as there's a book called *The Seven Steps to Awakening*, which is a collection of quotes by people like Ramana Maharshi, Muruganar, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, and others. And what I am doing is reading the quotes, contemplating them, and then writing from within myself. So when I teach from *The Seven Steps*, first I read the quote, and then I read what I wrote after contemplation. So the journal is of my Self, and what you just read was of my Self, but when I'm teaching I'm reading both. So that's what *The Seven Steps* is.

TRIP: Well it's a very effective teaching style, and you use repetition, this is an interesting thing to maybe talk about; Repetition. You know, everyone, all good teachers seem to use repetition a great deal. And Wizard, you use repetition a lot, and I find the repetition to be extraordinarily helpful, because it's really difficult to incorporate all of this into yourself and own it without repetition over, and over, and over again. I see you use it to great effect.

WIZARD: It's like a mantra; it creates a Vasana, or an impression, that becomes a part of your Dharma. So it's taking the tool to

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change the rule, the mind to change the mind, and your outlook. You become more pointed on that and then it fades away. All teachings fade away and leave you in naked Is-ness. Ramana Maharshi said that the truest and the purest language is silence.

TRIP: I wanted to spend a little time on *The Seven Steps to Awakening*, because they were so rich, so right on. For example, and I'm not going through the order, but here's another one that I loved. You say, "Earnestness will take you through, not cleverness, your own or another's" [Laughs]. And I don't think earnestness can be over-estimated, I think it's critical.

REGINA AKERS: Yes, I agree. And in fact this is one of the things that Ramana Maharshi helped me with, with the mantra. Because what I had gotten into the habit of through my work with *A Course in Miracles*, and also as I was receiving *The Holy Spirit's Interpretation of the New Testament*, was I got in the habit of spending my mornings in silence, but then when that time ended and I need to get up and go onto other things, I left the silence [Laughs]. And so this is why, when Ramana Maharshi seemed to come to me, one of the first tools that was taught was the use of a mantra. I was asked to say the mantra every time the thought came into the mind to say the mantra. I was asked to say it with love and devotion, and also to allow myself to stay in the silence after saying it. And the mantra that I was given was "I am that I am". And by practicing that mantra for quite a period of time, it did allow me to take that silence with me once I got up and moved out of my chair. I use to only be able to be silent when I had my butt in that chair [Laughs]. And the mantra allowed me to move into a walking silence.

WIZARD: I've used mantra in times of a troubled mind, the resort of mantra, and it works.

REGINA AKERS: It works.

TRIP: One of your Seven Steps, you say, "Be still and unattached, do not be anything". And I think that's correct, but you do want to

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be yourself, unadorned, what comes naturally, without regret, and without trying to change yourself unless that comes naturally too. So would you agree that being yourself is a good thing to be?

REGINA AKERS: Yes, there's another Seven Steps writing that's later in the journal, that continues that insight about not identifying with being anything, but it also gives the symbol of a puppet in that when the puppet strings are pulled, the puppet body moves. And so it's this understanding that I may teach, and I may parent, and I may hike, and I may whatever. But that's different from saying, I am a teacher, or really identifying with I am a teacher, or I am a parent, or I am a hiker.

So it's the ability to allow the movement to happen in the way it happens, allow the moment to be what the moment is, without identifying with it. And if you're not identifying with it, then you're not identifying with it in a prideful way, nor are you identifying with it in a guilty or a regretful way. Those are just two different sides of the identification coin. You're just, again, allowing all things to be as they are, and allowing the movement to happen, without identifying with it.

WIZARD: Trust the Mystery.

TRIP: You told a story that gave a sense to the nature of enlightenment that was very down to earth, and we interview a lot of avant-garde sages here that are in the woodwork, nobody knows who they are; they're working in warehouses, and they've been released from prisons, they're very ordinary. And they're willing to share the ordinary parts of their lives, and they have their relationship things that go on, and what have you. And they uplift me because throughout all of it, they have equipoise. And you told a beautiful story about this monk in the village, which I know is maybe other people have heard it, because it's an Eckhart Tolle story or something?

REGINA AKERS: Yes, I think it comes from his book, *A New Earth*. I think that's where I saw it.

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TRIP: You told it so beautifully, would you mind telling that story again? I know that your folks that are over on your side there have probably heard this, but I just thought it was a great story. And in fact this might even be a story that could go in our book, just somewhere.

WIZARD: Yeah, that was just on my mind; this program with Regina, would be a really nice chapter.

TRIP: Regina, tell that story about the monk in the village. I agree Wizard.

REGINA AKERS: Sure. Yes, the story is that there was a monk, and he lived in a village and he was very well respected, and he had lots of followers who would come and listen to him every day. There was a young girl who lived in the same village, and she became pregnant by the boy next door. But when her parents questioned her, she was afraid to admit that the boy next door was the father, so she said it was the monk. And the parents became outraged, and they took the baby when it was born to the monk, and they said that he was the father, and they gave the baby to him. And all he said was, "Is that so?" [Laughs] And he took the baby. And of course there was outrage in the village; all of his followers saw him as nothing but a great big fake, everything he said was not true, they all abandoned him, and he spent the next year just lovingly raising that child.

After about a year the girl was just eaten up with guilt about this lie that she had told, and so she finally went to her parents and admitted that the father was the boy next door. And the parents were just appalled what they had done of accusing the monk. So they went back to the monk and said that he was not the father, and that they wanted the child back. And again the monk just said, "Is that so", and gave the child back without any attachment from this year of a loving relationship.

The moral of the story, at least for me, is that enlightenment, although I don't really have a lot of meaning for that word, so I

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giggle inside every time I say it, but I guess as I said yesterday you have to use words. Enlightenment is a state of constancy, a state of Is-ness. So if someone thinks that they're enlightened, sometimes what they really need to pay attention to is are they able to be constant as things shift and change. Or is there a sense of enlightenment dependent on the environment being a certain way, like being in a particular inner circle, or being in a particular place of peace? Or can things shift and change, can everyone abandon them, can they be accused of things they didn't do, can they lose all of their money? Can the world shift and change and that constancy remain? And that monk in that story definitely demonstrates that constancy.

WIZARD: I have a similar experience in my life where I thought a child was mine for 30 some years, and then discovered that it wasn't. It's quite a trip.

TRIP: So I've got a question about that, and I'm asking it because one of my goals, (Wow, I'm on that one, and you're on this one, okay.) One of my "goals", that's obviously ego if there's a goal there, but is that enlightenment for lack of a better term is demystified, and no longer viewed as some in-game that's only within the prevue of a millennial prophet, but rather enlightenment is for everyone, and accessible to everyone. And I know that Trip can't be enlightened, but know that the constancy of which you speak has performed the one called Trip. And I was in jail for a couple of days back last summer, and at one point when... I couldn't believe that this woman that I loved had brought this down on me really, it felt unfair, and I just broke down and I just wept, I wept for about 20 minutes solid. But during the weeping there was a seeing [Laughs] of the whole scene that would not have been there in the past that brought great comfort, and it contextualized the entirety of it such that it didn't like harm this one; it wasn't harmful, it was weeping, but there was still an underlying joy of being there. So would you agree that even this constancy is a subtle thing that transpires underneath the still ordinary human emotions that are going to play out every day? Or

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would you say that it's going to bring the emotional states to some kind of less prevalent state, less demonstrative?

REGINA AKERS: I can only honestly and authentically speak from my own experience. Of course I've read stuff that would give me an idea of how to answer that question, but I never feel right in doing that, so I won't. What I will tell you is my own experience is that there is almost what I would describe as a stepping back that occurs, and one of those phases of the stepping back was both still experiencing the emotion and seeing it. But as the stepping back has continued to occur, the constancy is taking more of the foreground, which means that the emotion really is fading out. So it's almost like there was a foreground and a background, and before the human was in the foreground, and the constancy in the beginning was so far in the background, it wasn't even noticed. But eventually it came in, so that even while the human was still really running in the foreground, the constancy was there. But then it seems like there's a shifting of place where the constancy moves more into the foreground. And then what happens is things that obviously would have been upsetting before, the upset really is just not arising. Or if it does arise it's very small, and very short lived. So that's the way I experience it.

WIZARD: That's like Ramana Maharshi would use an example of the movie and the movie screen, that the movie's always moving on the movie screen, but the movie screen is constant. And the constancy is our seamless sentience, and the movie is insentient in and of itself without the screen. And so there's still a oneness with the movie and the screen, but the primacy of being into the forefront rather than a character in the movie, frees us from that seduction, and inherent pains, and suffering that go along with being a character in the movie.

TRIP: All right, Regina, we're at the end of a love fest, now we have to get to the challenging questions here, okay.

REGINA AKERS: Wait, before you end the love fest, I want to tell you that I do love chatting with you two, and I think you know

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that. I came out there in November because I just felt this heart drawn, go meet you. And I do radio interviews from time to time, but I was really looking forward to spending this hour with you all today. And I do hope we get to spend more time together, either on the phone like us, or as you know I'd love to come back out to North Carolina and be with you again. So now love fest has ended, let's go.

TRIP: No, I'm just kidding. Well where are you physically?

REGINA AKERS: I am in Pueblo, Colorado now.

TRIP: Lucky you.

WIZARD: So we're ending this program in June.

REGINA AKERS: Ah, well then I'll just have to come and see... are you talking about the weeklong program?

WIZARD: The weekly program is ended.

REGINA AKERS: Yes, I will be in Israel then, or else I would come.

WIZARD: And then there's a book, Trip's doing a book and taking the cream of the crop so to speak out of three years of many conversations, making chapters, have the really clear ones in the form of an eBook, where you can... for the transcribed, edited, cleaned-up all the you knows, and everything taken out. And then there's a little microphone and you touch the microphone and you can listen to the actual piece of conversation; a link to the guest site, and everything. And then that will conclude a body of work. And Trip's given me the job of editing it, and I love it, I think it's really going to be a nice offering. As Trip was saying, I think we both are in agreement; this is a conversation that deserves to be shared in that piece of work.

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REGINA AKERS: Thank you, and while we're talking about e-books, I know that the people who listen to you all the time know this, but those who listen to me may not. The way I became familiar with the Wizard, John Troy, was through a book called *The Human Gospel of Ramana Maharshi*, which he put together. For those of you who are listening who aren't aware of the book, it's a great book. It's about 800 and something pages, and I did read every bit of it. And if you go to his website, www.thewizardllc.com, and then go to his library, the book's available there as a free download. And I do highly recommend it.

WIZARD: Well it's not there anymore.

REGINA AKERS: Never mind.

WIZARD: I'm going to turn that over to AHAM. They have put so much work into it on their side, and there was some difficult feelings around that body of work with Ganesan, so I think I'm going to relieve myself.

REGINA AKERS: I understand. Well I'm happy...

WIZARD: ...of my part of the work and turn it over to AHAM.

TRIP: We've got three black market copies if anybody wants. [Laughs]

REGINA AKERS: I actually have it on my iPad, and I actually printed out the whole thing. [Laughs]

WIZARD: Yes, if somebody wants a black market copy, just email me, and you'll have it in minutes.

TRIP: Okay, this is a two-way thing. I've learned a great deal from you already, but maybe we have some insight into a couple of things. One question I have for you is your *Foundation for the Holy Spirit*; it's described on the website as a religious educational

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foundation. Do you still feel it's a religious educational foundation?

REGINA AKERS: I don't think I ever did, it's just that when we applied for 501C3, that seemed like the most appropriate box to check. That's just legal language.

WIZARD: I did a 501C3, 1a of the code, and boy they said, where are your articles of faith? I said, what the heck is that? And so I wrote down the articles of faith, and they were really very Advaita, and they accepted it. And I was amazed. But you had to come across as...

REGINA AKERS: Exactly.

WIZARD: As a church.

REGINA AKERS: Yes, and we had to do like a five-year budget, and a five-year plan, and I don't actually plan [Laughter], but later we did those things; we just never in Truth measured ourselves against them. But we had to do all of that documentation and turn it in, and we just did what we needed to do.

TRIP: I hope you can take this the way it's intended, with love, but I don't think that your written representation on the website does justice to how clean and accessible, and avant-garde a teacher and organization you really are.

REGINA AKERS: Thank you, the website actually was originally put up in 2006, and it hasn't really changed. So maybe that's something that we can look at, but as you know, most of my live work, like the website I actually touch every day, is www.reginadawnakers.com, and that's where my audio teachings are. I teach approximately three times a week, once from *A Course in Miracles*, right now, and twice from *The Seven Steps*. Oh, I also teach once from the *Holy Spirits interpretation of the New Testament*, so four teachings a week are posted up there, as well as every teaching I've ever done, which is funny because I've

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gone through so many phases in this awakening process, and everything I've gone through is there. There are literally hundreds of free audios. So that's probably, if people really want to go to "my website", they probably should go to www.reginadawnakers.com. That's the best place to go.

TRIP: All right. Well I hope I'm not beating a compliant horse here. But I think this might be valuable to spend one minute on this, because the representation of the work and the organization on the website is similar to that of a number of other organizations and websites that are so, so close in their representation of Truth, but like just there's this one degree of difference. And so for example like on the thing it says, this is how it starts, "We are all the child of God." I would scratch "the child", and we are all God. That is who we are; you say yes, our awareness is not focused on this fact because our attention is focused on the world, yes. The world is quite literally a distraction from God, yes. It is a place where we choose to experience individual will instead of the one will of God, okay Then it says, we are loved, and we are free. Now that then implicates a two there; there's a duality there, we are loved. No, we are love, there's a D on the end of it. Okay. The expression of our freedom within the world is not a sin, true. Then you say it is also not our joy, joy is freedom as it is expressed in heaven; again duality is there. This is heaven. At some point each one of us seeks to return to inner peace and the true joy of heaven, yes. When we do the Holy Spirit, okay, don't need that, when we do we are guided from within in a way that is most helpful.

So it's like so close, but there's just a little bit of that sort of lingering duality external God speak mixed in there, and I just think that the world has woken up, and I think there was a time where maybe to get funding as a foundation to draw in people who are heavily steeped in that kind of a world view outlook, this would have been absolutely essential. But you have now come so far and you're such a great teacher, I think you need to let go of that and clean out some of that stuff.

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REGINA AKERS: Yes, I don't disagree with you, and in fact I haven't read that myself in years to be honest. So your reading it to me just now kind of brings me back to what the state of mind was when that was written. And that was shortly after I had finished *A Course in Miracles*, and the Holy Spirit's interpretation was only beginning to come. And in fact what happened in the Holy Spirit's interpretation as it came is it met me where I was, as I finished the Course, and then it took me further. And if you ever look at that book, and we call it NTI for short...if you ever look at that book, if you look at the beginning like the interpretation of Matthew, you're going to find a lot of duality language there too, because that's where I was. But as the book goes on, it slowly drops all the symbols, and as you get near the end of the book, you're in a much more non-dual type of language. Still not perfectly non-dual, because I think what you're really looking at is my pace of acceptance, my pace of transition, but it's much more non-dual by the end of the book. And then of course the thing that came after that for me was *The Teachings of Inner Ramana*, which is where you know we step into non-duality.

So sort of what you are looking at is my own process, my own path, and again the writing of that page is very old, and I will take your suggestion, Trip, and look at it. And I will also take the rework that you've done. I'd be very, very happy to take that. So maybe you and I can have a conversation later, and maybe I should do kind of a website review and see what needs to be changed.

WIZARD: My first impression of *A Course in Miracles* was it was Advaita in Jesus speak, and it was a real good bridge for those who'd been conditioned in a Christian paradigm to keep going, to bring them out of a belief system into a Self-realization. But I always saw it as Advaita in Jesus speak.

REGINA AKERS: Bill Thetford, who of course was one of the scribes, not the one who wrote it down, but the one who typed it up,...he called it Christian Advaita as well. For me personally, it had to have come first, there's no way that this personality would have gone straight to Advaita. That would be like trying to jump

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over a river. *A Course in Miracles* was a part of the bridge, and when I first started my thought system was much more like the North Carolina Southern Baptist thought system. I knew nothing about oneness. I saw God definitely as separate from me. I didn't even know about the ego. I'd never even heard the word manifest. That was my starting point, and *A Course in Miracles* was the absolute perfect place to greet me and begin moving me out of that thought system into seeing.

TRIP: Yes, beautiful. We've got about nine more minutes, and I don't have any more questions prepared here.

WIZARD: Well we've got a message from Ted Poppe. Thanks for having Regina on the show; she wears her quiet time well. Love you guys. Ted.

REGINA AKERS: Now Ted Poppe is the one I told you had the..., he had received guidance in the shower to start a publishing company and publish *The Teachings of Inner Ramana*. I never had any thought of publishing those messages; I saw them as just something that I received because I was to receive them. But when he approached me, and told me that he was going to start a publishing company and publish them, I started to say, the personality started to say, "Well Ted what do you know about publishing?" But then the inner prompting that came was just say yes, so I said, okay, yes. And he did start a publishing company. It's called Diamond Clear Vision, and he did publish *The Teachings of Inner Ramana*, and it's a lovely little book. So that's Ted Poppe.

TRIP: Great, I love the name of that company.

WIZARD: I've got a portrait that was painted by Wendel Field, who lives in Tiruvannamalai in the winter next to where Arthur Osborne used to live across the courtyard, and it was very synchronistic; I met him and he was just finishing up a painting of Ramana Maharshi, and my son had turned me onto him. And I still go to the that portrait at any time, and it comes alive for me, it

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transfigures a little bit, and it's live. It's just like he's right here. It's just amazing. It's just a perfect mirror. Just eyes so clear reflecting, quite amazing.

TRIP: Wizard, we need to rent an RV and go on a countrywide visitation with our favorite avant-garde sages I think. Regina would be right in there.

REGINA AKERS: I would love for you all to come. And as you know...

TRIP: Let's do that; let's go on a book tour.

WIZARD: A book tour [Laughter].

REGINA AKERS: When I am back I will hopefully be coming to see you as well, because I'm not exactly sure why I feel so drawn to spend time with you, but I know that I do, and that's all that matters. So whenever that happens I look forward to it.

WIZARD: I've got a guesthouse.

REGINA AKERS: Yes, wonderful.

WIZARD: It's got that picture in it, so...

REGINA AKERS: Good.

WIZARD: So it's waiting for you.

REGINA AKERS: That sounds wonderful.

WIZARD: Is our time up already?

TRIP: Yes, just about. Regina, any parting thoughts, other than the fact that we love you madly, and this has been fantastic?

REGINA AKERS: I love you madly too. You may find out more about me at reginadawnakers@yahoo.com ; there's also some

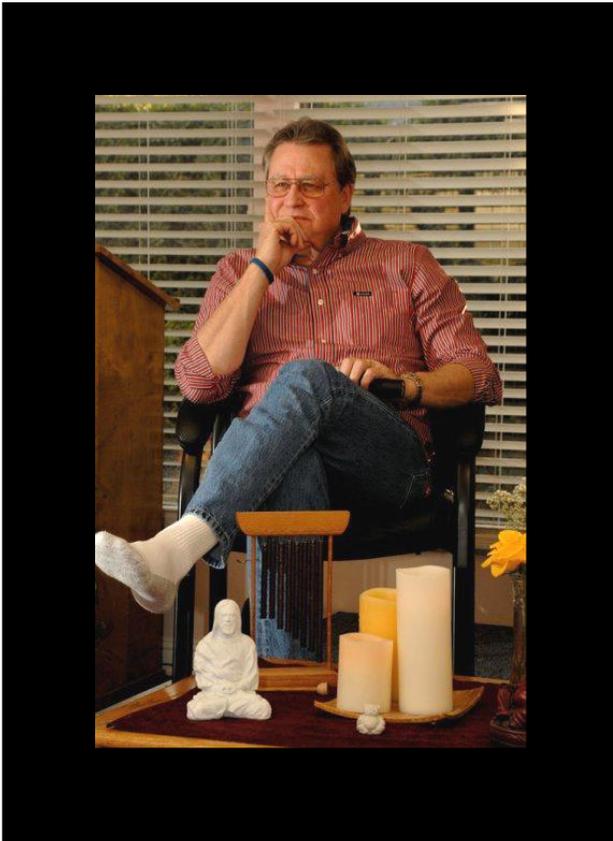
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other events on my website, including a conference and silent retreat right here in Colorado in October. So if you're interested in that you might just go to www.reginadawnakers.com , and click on the Gatherings and Events link on the right.

WIZARD: Thank you so much.

REGINA AKERS: Thank you.

WIZARD: A real blessing.



Richard Young

<http://pathwayscounselingctr.com/home.nxg>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Dr. Richard Young, is an author, licensed psychotherapist, and ordained minister who has been exploring the mystical and healing aspects of the world's spiritual traditions with his clients and students for the past 20

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years. His book, *Paths of a Prodigal* is on the cutting edge of a growing body of literature on religions mysticism, alternative medicine, and the universal perennial wisdom. The many hats Richard Young wears include Director of the Pathways Counseling Center, Director of the Center for Contemplative Christianity, and founder of the Community for Conscious Living, an innovative, educational organization providing classes, seminars, and retreats, for professionals and lay persons on a variety of spiritual and psychological topics. Richard lives in Riverside, California, with his wife and two sons. Well I'm raring to go, I've got lots of questions for Richard whenever he wants to call, oh, and there he is. Hello, Richard?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes.

WIZARD: Hi, Richard, Wizard here.

RICHARD YOUNG: Good morning.

WIZARD: Good morning to you sir.

RICHARD YOUNG: How are you all?

WIZARD: We're doing pretty good.

TRIP: Hey, Richard, I'm Trip Overholt; I'm the Wizard's sidekick here.

WIZARD: I'm your sidekick.

TRIP: No, I'm your sidekick. I know the Wizard and you have had some good Satsang on the Internet.

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes we have, yes we have.

TRIP: And I've been boning up on you for the last 24 hours, as I'm one to do, and I see a little bit of myself in you, Richard, in that you are a cage rattler, and a little bit of a provocateur. But you are also a very loving person with an intellectual curiosity, a profound

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interest in human relationship I can see, and also you seem to want to give back through your teachings and your personal connections with others. I regret I was unable to read your book as I could not download it onto my iPad, but Richard, I have stolen a strand of your hair and I've run it through my proprietary DNA personality decoder.

RICHARD YOUNG: I see, I see.

TRIP: And I've identified the following three personas of Richard Young. Are you ready?

RICHARD YOUNG: I am ready.

TRIP: All right. The Richard that is closest to your heart has taken his stand on the ground of being, that Richard is your Facebook persona, a deep submariner resting motionless at the bottom of oceanic awareness setting off periodic pings into the nothingness without concerns about the forms that show up on the radar. That's the cage rattler I just spoke about.

RICHARD YOUNG: I love that guy.

TRIP: Then there's the all-creed welcoming mystic Christian Richard who wraps his arms around his fellow seekers and welcomes them to come on, let's all draw closer to God. And finally there's the teacher counseling motivational Richard reaching out to clients and young people with the promise that they too can transform their lives through predictable practices if only they'll open their hearts and minds. Beyond that my crystal ball grows dim, Richard, but in the darkening haze [Laughs] I see an integrative approach to your counseling practice, and a wife and kids on the lawn calling out to you as your balloon floats off to Oz.

So, Richard, what's my BS meter reading?

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RICHARD YOUNG: Your BS meter reading is low, actually. I think you came really close describing who I am. And I think better than I've ever heard it before actually [Laughs].

TRIP: All right, well thank you. I will, I'll chalk it up to the DNA meter, it's very good, and it's good for proprietary technology.

RICHARD YOUNG: I'm sure it is, yes.

TRIP: Well in your book, you say, "Our institutionalized religions have given us a totally inadequate definition and understanding of the profound transformation of consciousness that constitutes true salvation". Talk about that.

RICHARD YOUNG: Well, as I talk about in the book, I grew up in a very conservative Christian traditional, Protestant Christian tradition, and the emphasis was always on the outward aspects of religion and spirituality. And it never really satisfied some hunger that was deep inside of me. So I set on a search on my own basically through books and seminars, and meditation retreats, and discovered the rich inner world that my religious tradition had never pointed out to me really. And the more I got in touch with that richness and that inner world, the more precious it became to me, and the more motivated I was to tell other people about this mystical land that lies inside all of us that we are mostly ignorant of, at least mostly in the terms of the tradition where I grew up.

So I became very, very excited and passionate about trying to help people look inward and find that place inside of themselves wherein they can find the answers to their questions. And I think more than just the answers to your questions, but you can find the source of your own being, and that's transformative, that changes everything. And so the last 20 or 25 years that's been what I've been doing.

TRIP: Good stuff.

WIZARD: I'm curious as to what authors, or mentors, or folks of radical understanding that influenced you to take that deeper look inside.

RICHARD YOUNG: Well, I'm glad you asked that questions, John, because the first book that I recall I really mark this book as the end of my religious journey and the beginning of spiritual journey. And it was a book I picked up one day in a bookstore by Thomas Merton; it was called *No Man Is an Island*. And I looked through the bio a little bit, and this guy was a Catholic Monk, and here I was a very conservative Protestant boy. So that was a leap right there for me to even consider reading a book by somebody who wasn't in the approved reading list of my tradition. And that book lit me up, I don't know, I couldn't even tell you what it was about that, but of course Merton was a mystic, and very aware of the inner landscape, and it came through in his writing.

And as I read that book, and became just curious and then it progressed to on fire to know more about what this man was pointing at. I basically went through and bought every book he ever wrote, and that was I read his entire corpus one summer, that was no small feat, let me tell you, because he wrote something like 60 books. But as I was reading through Merton I came to trust him as a teacher and as a mentor figure. And so when he started talking about Eastern traditions, because towards the end of his life he became interested in Buddhism and other Eastern traditions, then it gave me the permission to become interested in those traditions.

So the next author that really had profound effect on me was Alan Watts, and I started reading everything I could get my hands on with Watts, because he was more or less contemporary with Merton, and Merton mentions him in a couple of different places. So then I read Watts, and that put me even closer to being in the Eastern tradition. And so then I picked up DT Suzuki, and some of the other authors in that tradition, and started reading a lot about Zen Buddhism. And that just I think opened me up even more and introduced me to the idea of meditation and other

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contemplative practices, which was truly a transformative moment for me in my life. And I've often thought the greatest gift I ever gave myself was the gift of meditation.

That's when I started going to meditation retreats, and learning from meditation teachers like Jack Kornfield, or Shinzen Young, Ruth Denison and others out here in the West Coast, and took up a serious meditation practice. Then over the years the authors are just I suppose too numerous to mention, but I eventually found my way into the writings of various Vedanta Advaita writers, Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Ramesh Balsekar, those guys. And I think that pretty much marks what I would call the end of my spiritual journey was when I discovered those writings and those teachings.

WIZARD: Same for me, Ramana Maharshi's talks was the one that nailed the coffin shut.

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, exactly. The book that nailed the coffin shut for me actually was one by John Wheeler, are you familiar with his writing?

WIZARD: No, I'm not.

RICHARD YOUNG: He's a modern day Advaita; I suppose he would resist that label, but nondualist. And I went through about a year, this was three or four years ago anyway, about a year of very, very intense introspection and self-examination, and spent a lot of time in journaling and thinking and so on. And really felt like by the end of that year that I was spinning my wheels, I was exhausted, I was tired of the search, and I was just at a place where I said where do I go from here? Where is there to go from here? Because there was still some longing left in my heart, and I happened to pick up a book by John Wheeler called *You Were Never Born*, and that was the final nail in the coffin. As I was reading through that book, I didn't even get all the way through it before just this intense sense of seeking that I had always had from

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as long back as I can remember, fell away. And I just knew that the journey was over.

TRIP: I was suspecting that the journey was over for you from your writings; however I went onto your Community for Conscious Living website, okay. And you're the founder of that website. Are you the writer; are you the writer of that website?

RICHARD YOUNG: No. I haven't contributed in a long time in that website.

TRIP: Oh, okay. Because on the website it says that it's a community of likeminded seekers.

RICHARD YOUNG: That's right.

TRIP: And I figure you're a founder not a seeker.

RICHARD YOUNG: Right, right. It is a community of likeminded seekers, and those folks are still at the stages of the journey where they're looking, they're continuing to look. And hopefully they will one day come to the place where they realize that they are that for which they have been seeking all this time. And as many times as I say that to them that they have to discover it for themselves, they have to discover it in their own direct experience. And so I point it to for them, but most of them are still in the seeking stage, yes.

TRIP: So when you have your hat on as a mystic Christian, or Christian mystic, you're dealing with folks who have a sense of an external god who for example in the mission statement of the Community for Conscious Living they say, "We desire to draw closer to the loving and enhancing spirit which pervades all creation". So there's a desire to draw close up to God. But you've kind put the nail in your own coffin on that one, so how do you play those roles where on the one hand you seem to intermingle in a Christian community that does still have an idea of God as an external presence, and then in your own personal nondual tradition? [Laughter] Yes, what do you do with that one?

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RICHARD YOUNG: You probably should talk to the people who come to the classes and see how they balance all of that, because I'm always pointing inside of them to look for and find and discover the divinity which they are, trying to take what has always been external for them, and help them realize that it's truly internal. But it's a process and we all have to go through it in our own way and at our own speed. I've become pretty adept I think over the years in speaking in language that people can identify with, or understand, at whatever stage they're at. Being a psychotherapist I have to do that a lot in therapy, because it does no good to share a Truth with someone if they have no way of understanding what it is you're saying. So you try to start where they're at, and use language they're comfortable with, and then gently, sometimes gently and sometimes not so gently, you try to lead them forward to the next stage of understanding so that there's a growth process that you're helping to facilitate. So if you're standing at the end of the road looking back and saying, okay, watch out for this ditch over here, and this is smooth going here, so you can go a little quicker. What you're trying to do is help chart out for them the journey as you remember it, and as you walked it, and you do so in language that they understand and that you used and understood at those stages as well.

TRIP: I get it. That's what I-thought you were about, because you tell your students, for example I listened to one of your talks with your students.

RICHARD YOUNG: You really did your homework, didn't you, Trip?

TRIP: Oh, yeah man, I spent days. You tell your students that their contemplative inquiry into their own minds will absolute transform them and that it transformed you. But then I've also seen you speak on your website where you let people know that there's really nothing they can do really to...

RICHARD YOUNG: Further more there's no such thing as transformation.

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TRIP: That's right. [Laughter] Exactly. So you're just talking to the students there, right, motivating them?

RICHARD YOUNG: That's what I hope I'm doing, yeah. Again, I'm using language that they understand and identify with, but ultimately the nondual Truth is there is no journey, there are no stages, there is no such thing as enlightenment, transformation. There is only this *Now*, and that understanding is beyond even the ability of mind to contemplate, or to understand. So, it's acquired, or it's not acquired it's realized through direct experience, but an experience that's not just of mind or can't come from mind. The reason for that is simple, mind arises within that, so mind is derivative of that, or ego as most people call it. So that which is derivative can't possibly describe that from which it derives, or that from which it arises. So we are programmed in our society at least to approach everything with mind to try and understand it through mind, this is one thing that can't be approached that way, the only thing perhaps that can't be approached that way, because mind arises within it. So for the mind, for ego, for individuality as it's understood, there is as journey, there are stages, there is transformation and an enlightenment. But in the true sense, in the absolute sense, all of those things are an illusion.

WIZARD: It's burnt in the funeral fire; it's the stick that's burned.

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, exactly.

TRIP: Speaking of students, we've got one listening to our show right now, is it a Lyonas, Lamos, do you think, Lyonas, Lymos?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, yes.

TRIP: He's at the New University of Lisbon, in class of 2007.

WIZARD: He said something about the nail in the coffin.

TRIP: Thanks for joining us, he or she, I can't tell by Lyonas, is that a male or female name, I'm not sure. In any event, you've

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described Christianity as both the belief system and that it has a potentialism mirror; is it all in the eye of the beholder?

RICHARD YOUNG: Is it all in the eye of the beholder?

TRIP: Yes, I mean Christianity, for some people it's a belief system, and then for others they look into it and it's a mirror into the Truth of who they are. It's both; it depends on who's doing the looking?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, I believe that's true. And I've certainly been in both places with Christianity where it was a belief system, and I pursued that belief system with rigor, and came to the end of it basically. I've always said that organized religion plays a very, very important role I think in the lives of people, and I don't ever want to diminish that, it was incredibly important to the journey that I took. But I also say that organized religion is probably something you have to graduate from sooner or later.

WIZARD: Yes, school's out.

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, school's out and then you're on your own to discover your own Truth, and so I've seen it from both sides.

TRIP: One last question about Christianity. What's the difference between Christianity and Christian Mysticism?

RICHARD YOUNG: Oh, wow. It's night and day in my mind. Growing up as a Christian in a traditional southern Baptist tradition, I never heard about the mystics. And I discovered them through Merton actually. And then when I started reading the Christian mystics, especially Meister Eckhart, I was blown away, where these people have been all my life [Laughs]. Why didn't somebody tell me these people were here? And so I made a study of the Christian mystics and actually taught a long series of classes on each of the mystics, and was just blown away by that tradition. They know and they knew exactly what we're talking about this morning, they knew that the inner landscape, that the inner

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journey was the only journey worth taking. And that the esoteric, or outside, or external trappings of religion were simply there to serve the purpose of supporting that journey, but because of human nature, or the way things tend to develop over the years, those external trappings became the point themselves, they became the end themselves, and the inner search and the inner journey got lost. And I think that's still true of Christianity today in most circles, is that that inward journey is not supported, it's not even pointed to, and I think that's what the external structures of venture or initially did quite well was to support that inward journey. I don't think it happens that way now.

WIZARD: I've described a lot of your postings on Facebook to Trip as profoundly affirmative. And my own journey; what I've been fascinated with is how in affirmation like for you in the form of Thomas Merton, in many different ways comes of its own volition when one is ready to hear it. It's just amazing.

RICHARD YOUNG: It is amazing. It is awe inspiring in fact, how the very book you need to read at a given moment comes into your hands, and the very person you need to speak to comes into your presence. It's quite amazing.

TRIP: Well speaking of books, you admire the author Harrison who told you to make his book the last one you ever read about the spiritual journey.

RICHARD YOUNG: Good old Stephen, yes, I did.

TRIP: Did you take his advice?

RICHARD YOUNG: Eventually I did. His wasn't the last one I read, but it was probably one of the last generations of books I read, that's for sure. I had the privilege and honor of getting to know him personally, and interview him for a magazine we used to publish, and he used to chide me a little bit about that. "When are you going to be done with this, Richard, when are you going to get

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done with this?" Well, Stephen if you're ever going to listen to this I'm done with it and you were part of that, thank you.

TRIP: You have beautiful ways of saying things, and I want to share some of them, and also I might ask you also if you want to do one of your guided meditations, for example, you did flowing with the Tao, or the walk on the beach. It might be fun for you to do one of those, but I just thought I'd read something you wrote. You said, "Healing presence", and this was advice for therapists, you say, "Healing presence is the key to everything in the therapeutic encounter; it is the key to everything in any encounter for that matter. Pay attention to every word as a thirsty man pays attention to water. Keep your mind silent and don't think of what you want to say next. Forget your treatment plan; allow your words and interventions to arise naturally in the moment of the encounter with the other. Listen intensely and your therapy will become a healing meditation for your client and for you". That's beautiful. You write beautifully, and you've written many beautiful things like that.

RICHARD YOUNG: Thank you.

TRIP: Do you want to comment a little bit more about the therapy of intense listening?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, I would. I've been doing therapy now for 32 years or something like that. I can remember as a young therapist in the first five years I would spend inordinate amounts of time getting ready for sessions, reading the case notes, and planning in my mind what techniques I was going to use next, and trying to fathom what it was this person would need from me. And more times than not I would get into a session with this treatment plan in my head and ready to go, and ready to change the world, and change this person, and it would just flop, it would just fall flat. They would come in with some entirely different thing they wanted to talk about, and would totally screw up my treatment plan [Laughs]. , I thought that was pretty rude of them quite frankly.

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Well as time went on and I continued to practice, my practice grew to the point where I had so many patients that I just didn't have time to do that preparation anymore. I felt guilty about it, and I certainly tried to do the preparation, but it just go to the point where logistically I couldn't put that time into it. And I was also teaching full time at university level, and so I just had a lot going on. I stopped with the intense preparation, and what I started doing was going in, sitting down, and listening to my client. And it just so happens that about this same time I had discovered the practice of meditation, which is nothing probably more than just intense listening to your own inner being.

So what I discovered was things were happening in the sessions that had never happened before. I tried to understand that because the ego wants to take credit for what's happening in that session. But what's happening in that session is sacred, and you can't control it, and if you'll just let it be it unfolds exactly the way it needs to unfold. So over the years I came to understand that, and practice it with intention, whereas I did it accidentally in the beginning. I've trained many generations of interns, counseling interns, and they'll come in all eager and sit down in supervision and say, "Dr. Young, I've got this case, and this is what's happening, and this is the situation, and here's what I anticipate in the next session, and what should I say?" And I always give them the same, in fact after they've been with me for a while they stop asking those questions, because I always give the same answer. I go, "Go into the session, sit down, shut up, and pay attention [Laughing]. And if you will do that what you need to say will arise naturally in the moment, and you can trust them". So what I tried to teach them to do is to trust their own being, and to trust the process, and to simply bring their presence to that moment, and let it do what it does.

WIZARD: Beautiful.

TRIP: Beautiful, yeah. Well we're speaking with Richard Young, an author, psychotherapist, and many other things, here on *Wisdom's Soft Whisper*, I'm your host, Trip Overholt, and with me

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today as always is the Wizard Baldour. You finally reframed your father's once painfully experienced shortcomings as actually blessings, and it really felt great. I think it was a transformative shift for you, can you elaborate on that?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes. I suppose we all grow up with at least one problematic parent, or at least what we define as a problematic parent, and for me it was my father. My father was a very harsh man at times, he had a terrible temper, and as the oldest of three sons I seemed to be the most common target for that temper, and there was some physical abuse even through the years. And so I grew up with a deep sense of disconnection from him, and anger quite frankly, for how I felt he treated me through the years. And I struggled with that on and off, I think it was a dynamic in my personality that eventually bore fruit, but it was certainly something that I struggled with early on. I couldn't tell you why or how this came about, but there just came a time; I think it was because as he started ageing and growing feeble, and I just started seeing him differently. And I came to understand that, what, he did the best he could do, he really just did the best he knew how to do. And it wasn't my best, hopefully I was better as a father, but , my sons someday are going to look back and see all the faults that I have [Laughs]. I always kid them and say, "guys don't worry, when that day comes, I've been saving up, I didn't save up for your college, but I saved up for therapy, so you guys can go and hash it out with your therapist".

So nobody's perfect, and I made mistakes, my father made mistakes, and we're all just human and doing the best we can. So that made it possible for me to just forgive him and let it go. And then I began to see what things I was because of that man, who I was because of him, and then I could honor that, I could honor him and I could honor that in me that is part of him, and that came from him and his influence. But I think I had to first get past the anger and the bitterness and let go of all of that.

WIZARD: A good friend of ours, V. Ganesan, who is Ramana Maharshi's grand nephew, shared with us one time that every

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action is perfect, and we were a little stunned with that. But upon reflection if every action is perfect, anything that's ever happened is perfect, anything that's ever going to happen is perfect, and it puts that narrator ego-I out of a job.

RICHARD YOUNG: It does. It sure does.

TRIP: Another one that's hard for people to stomach is this idea that there really aren't any problems, and the Wizard and I we're pretty fond of that, but you've got a beautiful way of saying it, you say, "Where there is no personal self, there's absolutely no problem". I think that's a very elegant statement. Wizard, I think we need to put that one up somewhere.

WIZARD: Amen. We'll put that quote up.

TRIP: You want to elaborate on that?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, I do. This idea of a personal entity, of a personal self is an illusion, it's not real. If you go looking for that self you are never going to find it, yet it's an assumption that's rarely questioned. And it is that illusion of self that causes all of our pain and suffering, because we imagine that all of these things are happening to this self, rather than just being a flow of energy in this amazing playground called life. So once that illusion is seen through, and I don't know any other way to do that other than go look for it until you give up the search because you can't find it. You go look for it, it's not there, you let go of that illusion, or more accurately, there's nobody here to let go of it, the illusion simply drops away. But with it drops away all of the things that were attendant to it, the seeking drops away, the problems drop away, the sense of person or individuality drops away. The sense of being a separate entity adrift here in this sea of life by yourself trying to connect as best you can with other separate selves, all of that drops away. And what's left is this amazing, glowing, understanding that you've never been separate, you've never been alone, you've never been by yourself, there's never been anything amiss, all things are well, and all manner of things will be well.

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And that understanding is not of the mind, it is a direct... in fact it's beyond mind, it's beyond the ability that the mind conceptualize. In fact it arises most naturally when the mind is quiet, when the mind's not doing its thing, this awareness of our wholeness and our connection to everything arises naturally. And this is how it is; this is the Truth about us.

TRIP: Something I'm really curious about, because I have a fantasy about some day having resolved my problems, or them having come so dissolved that I'm able to sit in my cottage on the edge of my lake, and provide counseling services on a pro-rated basis.

RICHARD YOUNG: There you go.

TRIP: That's my fantasy, but are you able to actually bring that to your therapeutic practice. I mean, because I have this theory that it's better for someone to dissolve their sense of their personal self than to focus on their personal problems. Do you counsel that, or do you have to work with people at the level of personal problems first?

RICHARD YOUNG: You have to work with the level of personal problems first, if you hit them with this higher understanding right off the bat, two things are going to happen. First of all they're not going to understand it, it won't do any good. And second of all, you're going to appear to them as the most un-empathetic person on the planet. And in order to help someone you have to create rapport, you have to have a relationship, you have to sit in their presence and them in yours and create a joint presence. That happens when they feel understood; when they feel that you are walking with them in their shoes.

Well, while there's a certain amount of pointing ahead, you only point about a half-mile down the road, you don't point 20 miles down the road. So you start where they're at, and you start pointing half a mile down the road. Now look at this, look at this, this is a possibility. But you start by empathizing with where

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they're at, and most of the time that means buying into their problem's definition, and working with that. I had a patient one time that was very skilled at helping people back in the '60s. She did a lot of speed, I mean a lot of LSD, and she said she became very adept to helping people get out of bad trips. And the way she did it was by entering into it with them, and then gradually talking them out of it from there. And that's how it feels to me sometimes in therapy, I go into the bad trip with them, and then I try to gradually help them take steps towards a better or higher understanding about it.

TRIP: How old are your kids?

RICHARD YOUNG: My children are grown, they're 32 and 30.

TRIP: Were you able to broach spirituality with them, say when they were in their teens?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes. We provided our children with what we felt was an important basic starting point, which was we took them to church, but even as we did that I was I was talking with them about some of these other understandings. I'll never forget one day when my then younger son, who was probably seven at the time, came back from Sunday School and he'd gotten in trouble I think with the teacher because he had shared something that the teacher didn't agree with. So he was running it by me, he said, "Dad, is it true that God loves everybody?" I said, "Yes, I think that's true, son". He goes, "Well then he must love the devil too". Of course my head's thinking is this the time to tell him there's no such thing as the devil, no, probably not. So I resisted the urge and I said, "Okay, yeah, I guess that's true, I guess God must love the devil too". He goes, "Okay, fine, that means that the devil will be in heaven with us". And off he went; he had puzzled that through that nobody gets left out. And then one time I was teaching a class on comparative religions at the church, the adult education program, and my then older son who was probably about 12 or 13 at the time he would sit in on those classes. And I was talking about the perennial philosophy and I was talking

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about various religious traditions, Buddhism, and so on, and we were discussing reincarnation that day. And I'd said something like the bad news is that it might take you 1,000 lifetimes to become enlightened. And then I looked at this group of about 50 adults, very sophisticated, intelligent people, and I said, "But what's the good news?" And I waited. And I waited. And nobody raised their hand. I said, "Come on, this, what's the good news about this theory of reincarnation?" And in the back of the room my 12-year-old son is waving his arm in the air wanting me to call on him, and I'm saying, "Well I don't know what he's going to say, so please one of you adults give me the answer", nobody would. So finally I pointed back down, I said, "Chad, what's the good news?" He goes, "Dad, the good news is eventually everybody makes it".

WIZARD: Amen, amen.

RICHARD YOUNG: You should have seen the looks on those adults' faces. I think they wanted him to teach the class after that.

TRIP: Well, that was wonderful. You know, here's another beautiful chunk of yours, you say, "God's radical perceptual and intellectual absence is God's total complete and undeniable presence".

RICHARD YOUNG: I wrote that, eh?

TRIP: You're profound, yes.

WIZARD: It's good stuff.

RICHARD YOUNG: I don't know about that, you need to talk to my wife.

TRIP: She's the ghostwriter, right?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, exactly, exactly.

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TRIP: I think that's it, I mean I don't know about you, but it's fun to sit around the campfire and talk about God, and what God is, and how it's experienced, and that's a good one.

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, I like that too.

TRIP: Radical absence is actually radical presence.

RICHARD YOUNG: I think the thought I had in mind as I wrote that was the old saying, I'm sure you've heard, I don't know who discovered water, but I know it wasn't a fish. It's the idea that we are so absorbed in the divine, we are so much the divine ourselves that we miss it. It's so much a part of our moment-to-moment experience, we breath it, we live it, we feel it in every instant, so we take it for granted.

WIZARD: So it's the constancy that hides it.

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, that's right. It doesn't stand outside of our experience for us to compare it to anything. It is our experience, so there's no way to compare. And without that ability to compare between this and that, the mind is lost, the mind can't understand it, it can't even recognize it. And so God's absence is really God's presence in our lives.

WIZARD: Well said.

TRIP: Hey, Richard, would you be interested in doing one of your short-guided meditations, because I really enjoyed them. You had one where somebody is flowing down a river, and then you had another one flowing with the Tao, and then there was a walk on the beach then with a child.

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes.

TRIP: You want to do any of those?

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RICHARD YOUNG: I'd be happy to do one of those. How about the beach one?

TRIP: Okay.

RICHARD YOUNG: How long do you want me to take with it, Trip?

TRIP: Like three minutes or something.

RICHARD YOUNG: All right, I'll do that. Okay, everybody who's listening to the sound of my voice, close your eyes. Take a nice deep breath, hold the breath for a moment, when you let it out, let it all the way out, and force it all the way out of your lungs. And then just breathe normally. Now listen to the sound of my voice. Use my voice to help you relax, block out all distraction. And now I'm going to ask you to picture in your mind the scene that I will paint for you with words. Try to picture it as best you can, don't worry if you're not very visual, just try to feel the experience if you like. But I want you to imagine that you're at the beach, it maybe a beach that you visited sometime in your life or maybe it's a place you've just created right Now in your imagination. But you're walking along the edge of the water and on the hard packed sand, and you're barefoot, and it's a warm day, but not too hot. And you walk along and you listen to the sound of the waves as they crash and turn and make their way to shore where they dissolve into foam on the sand. You feel the cool breeze blowing in from the water and caressing your face, blowing through your hair. The warm sun on your back, and oh the wonderful aroma of the sea, the salt in the air, you drink it in. When you look out passed the breakwater, out there towards the horizon, you can see the sunlight sparkling on the ripples of the water like millions of starbursts dancing on the water. And as you walk along play tag with the water, just like a little kid would where sometimes you let that cold water come up over the tops of your feet, but then other times you dance out of the way at the last second. As you walk along, you realize this is a perfect moment where everything is just right, nothing is wrong, no concerns enter your mind, and you're

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just completely relaxed. You look off down the sand, maybe 50 feet or so down the beach, and you see a little child there playing in the sand, sitting a little bit up from the beach playing in this warm sand. That child's got a bucket and a shovel and they're digging in the sand. Something about the picture of that child on the sand draws you and you start walking towards them. Does that Now, walk towards that child? Now the child won't be frightened of you, so just walk up and stand there and watch them play in the sand. The child will look up and smile at you, and you'll smile back. Now the child is going to do something curious, the child is going to reach into their pocket, and they're going to pull out a piece of folded up paper. Now the child is handing you that piece of paper, don't open it, and leave it folded. Put that piece of paper in your pocket because, somehow you know, that this is an important message to you. There's something written on that piece of paper that's very, very important for you. But for Now just put it in your pocket, smile back at the child, and resume your walk on the beach. And sometime when you're by yourself and feeling reflective and quiet, close your eyes again take out that piece of paper and read what it says to you. Now open your eyes, take a big breath, blow it out, and return to what you were doing.

TRIP: All right, we're not allowed to dead time on the radio.

RICHARD YOUNG: No, dead time, eh?

TRIP: That was beautiful. I'm going to challenge you now, this is my challenge moment, we're so on the same page, there's too much of a love fest here, and I'm going to have to...

RICHARD YOUNG: Well I'm sorry, Trip, but , my time is up, and I'm going to have to go now. It's been nice talking to you.

TRIP: All right. In one of your cage rattling moments on the web you said, "Accepting your Self as you are does not help anybody to realize the non-self that they truly are", and by non-self you meant small S, like non-personal self that they truly are.

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RICHARD YOUNG: Yes.

TRIP: Well I'm not sure, because we have this apparent identified small self that does make its appearance quite often, even for those of us who are pretty steadfastly focused on the Truth of who we are, and we can invest in that pridefully, or we can reject it, or we can maintain neutrality, and I think neutrality quiets the mind, so accepting one's self as one is the neutral path. So I do think it's helpful in realizing the non-self. It has for me, because I have a very aggressive personality, I'm the person that will say things very pointed. And I used to get into the shower the next day and go through a Tourette syndrome rehearsal of all the things that I said at the party the night before. But I'm okay with that now, and it really has helped. So I say accepting oneself is useful.

RICHARD YOUNG: As you're framing that statement I would have to agree with you, but I had something else in mind when I wrote it. I was really trying to speak to the obsessive culture that we have of self, self-acceptance, of self-concept, of self-esteem, my God, there's even a magazine called *Self* out there. And I was really talking about the futility of ever being able to come to a place where that's where you're satisfied with that, where you are okay with that, where that somehow becomes an end in itself, or somehow resolves issues, the issue for you.

WIZARD: As identification.

RICHARD YOUNG: Ultimately you have to withdraw that identification with self, it's a matter of subtraction, not of addition. It's not trying to make the self better by accepting it, or by improving it, or by another other means, it's a matter of taking away your identification with it. And so that's what I was trying to get out with that statement.

TRIP: Another thing that you talk about, which I think is a very interesting and useful discussion is the healthy balance between mindfulness and being fully present, watching oneself and then

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letting go even of watching oneself and simply being present, can you talk about that?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes. That comes from my own practice of mindfulness over the years, and also of knowing people who are practicing it. And it's an artificiality to be blunt, it's an artificial way to live, but I think there's so much to gain from it, so much to learn from it, that it's an important practice. But I think there needs to be this rhythm, this breathing in, and this breathing out where I am aware of my experience and that I am in my experience. Now it is possible to be both, to be in it and to be aware of it, but that's a pretty highly developed skill. Most of the time for most of us it's one or the other, we can either be mindful of what we're doing, or we're completely in what we are doing. And I think there are moments when that's called for, for example when I'm in therapy with somebody, I'm not sitting there mindfully watching the experience, I am in that experience, I am that experience. And I may be mindful about it later and observe in retrospect what would happen and what went on, but sometimes that mindful awareness just seems to give way to a complete engagement with the moment.

TRIP: Here's another beautiful thing you wrote, you say, "As the early Chan Zen masters taught, Buddha mind does not exist, and it also does not exist [Laughter]. In other words the dualistic characteristics shared by all objects whether physical or mental do not apply to God, God is beyond all dualities which is how it can be the source of all phenomenal objects. It cannot even properly be called it, but it can be lived directly unselfconsciously and without cognitive mediation. Ironically others will know we are living it long before we do".

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, I often use the illustration of a white board to try and get at what I'm saying there. With a white board it can manifest all colors of the spectrum, you can have every color of dry marker you want, but there's one dry marker that you can't use, and that would be a white one. So a white board which has only one characteristic, it's whiteness, cannot manifest white. So

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therefore God or what we call God, or higher Self, or whatever Buddha mind, or whatever word you're comfortable with, must be completely bereft of characteristics, and qualities, in order to be able to manifest all experience, and all qualities.

TRIP: Right on.

WIZARD: Ramana Maharshi would agree with you on that one big time.

TRIP: So, Richard, you've got a rocking Facebook page, there were something like 512 likes to the fact that we were having you on this program, which means that at least 512 people are actually going to your page and seeing that there's something there and liking it, that's pretty phenomenal.

WIZARD: That's quite good.

WIZARD: Did that we share over 300 friends with Richard?

RICHARD YOUNG: Oh, wow [Laughs] There's at least 300 demented people in the world [Laughs].

TRIP: I was going to call you, I'm not going to do that, I had a little petty... I mean it is really hard to find, you're clean [Laughs]. I am a garbage man, I'm looking around for garbage, and you are clean, dude.

RICHARD YOUNG: I'm sorry, I can't accommodate you, Trip.

TRIP: I'm like Kali with the heads around the waist looking to harvest BS man, wherever I can find it, you're clean, dude. You're very, very clean.

RICHARD YOUNG: Oh, gosh.

TRIP: I've almost run out of challenging questions and things, but I'll go for one more and I already know the answer to it, but what the heck. You say the only divinity that exists in the universe

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resides solely in the human heart, and it is there that we should look for our courage, direction, and nourishment. There is no God but the one God and we are that. I think you were talking about, well there is I think an important distinction to be made that we human beings move within this divinity, we move through this divinity, even our hearts move through this divinity. It's not actually a locus there in the human heart to which we look, right?

RICHARD YOUNG: That's right.

TRIP: Right, okay.

RICHARD YOUNG: We are that, that's that final statement. We are that, so there's no movement, there's no moving through, or around, or in, or anything else.

WIZARD: The white board is not moving.

RICHARD YOUNG: Exactly, it's unchanging, it's eternal, it's eternal in the sense of beyond time, and beyond everything. So there's no movement within it, and yet all things move within it. So in itself is just what it is, and that's what we are, that's who we are.

WIZARD: So build your house on that.

RICHARD YOUNG: So build your house on the rock, that's right. We are the unborn, we are the undying, we are the unchanging.

TRIP: Okay, one last question and we can end with this how to build your house. Your friend Ken Wilber and you had a chat, you rarely get an interview with him, he doesn't give very many of them, and you're very fond of him. And he said, when answering your question about his integral approach, which means an approach to being that takes place across psychological, emotional, all kinds of...

RICHARD YOUNG: Sociological, cultural.

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TRIP: Levels, yes. He says, "Be all that you can be", and he was chuckling it, he didn't mean to sound like a marine, but, "Be all that you can be, the point being that the more of your dimensions you engage in the quest to find the source of this crazy game of life, the more likely you are to discover the stunning fact that you are its one and only author, and that's not a theoretical proposition, it's the very best chance we have to get our ticket to Athens", and Athens is what... what do you call that magical... Babylon, what's the other? There's Babylon and there's?

WIZARD: Zion.

TRIP: Zion, okay. So just in two minutes people are sometimes confused by the emptiness of God, and so they start to think well there's nothing be done, and there's no self improvement. But on the other hand, good things tend to happen to those that actually improve themselves, right?

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes.

TRIP: So what's the deal there? There's a dichotomy.

RICHARD YOUNG: This is the perennial question, especially among people in the nondual tradition, they face this a lot. If there's really nothing we can do, then why do we do anything? And my answer to that is simple, because we do. It's not a matter of setting out to design whether I'm going to pursue a spiritual path or not, it simply happens, it simply is something that expresses itself. And people think that if you really buy into the idea of the emptiness of God, or the emptiness of reality that you're going to sit around like a bump on the log, my experience is that people who realize that Truth are the busiest people on the planet. But here's something else I want to comment about the emptiness of God. That's a misnomer; nothing could be further from the Truth. God, reality, Truth, Oneness, whatever word you're comfortable with, is conceptually empty, in other words there's nothing there the mind can wrap itself around. So to the

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mind it appears like emptiness, but it is plentitude, it is the source of all manifestations, so it is pure potential.

WIZARD: Pure infinite capacity.

RICHARD YOUNG: Exactly. Which is exactly what quantum physics is trying to tell us, that they've discovered, that this so-called emptiness is the ground of being, it is the source of all plentitude and all manifestations. It's anything but empty, but because the mind can't get its mind around it, the mind label says it's empty, but it isn't empty at all, it's completely full.

TRIP: Well, Richard we have come to the end of a particularly delicious hour of Satsang, oh my gosh, yeah, man, you're gorgeous.

RICHARD YOUNG: Well thank you.

TRIP: You are gorgeous.

RICHARD YOUNG: And I've loved talking to you.

TRIP: You're clean, baby. Clean. We're going to put you right up there on the top.

RICHARD YOUNG: Oh, wow.

TRIP: And bring yourself on down to whatever the heck...

RICHARD YOUNG: Yes, you put me up at the top.

TRIP: Nonduality conference they've got going next time.

RICHARD YOUNG: I'll bring it right back down.

WIZARD: Thank you so much, Richard.

RICHARD YOUNG: Oh, it's been my pleasure.

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WIZARD: And keep up your work on Facebook, you're my favorite poster.

RICHARD YOUNG: Thank you, John, I appreciate that.

TRIP: All right, love you Richard, be well.

RICHARD YOUNG: Take care.



Robert Wolfe

<http://www.livingnonduality.org/robert-wolfe.htm>

TRIP: Author Robert Wolfe has labored as an auto assembly line worker in Detroit, as a carnival worker, a journalist in New York City, on a farm of a Zen community in California, as a landscaper, a financial consultant, and a janitor. After living in the Mendocino area for about 20 years he bought a camper van and moved onto a

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property in a redwoods forest where he studied the inner life intensely. Something fell into place there after a number of years, and out of that period of solitude, Robert began writing and sharing his observations on the reality that surrounds and includes us. Shortly thereafter, Robert moved to Ojai, California where he continues to live and write.

His book, *Living Nonduality*, enlightenment teachings of self-realization, is available for free on his most excellent website, www.livingnonduality.org.

So, Robert, you come off as a rather quiet unassuming fellow, but I think you're a head harvesting spiritual warrior, dude.

ROBERT WOLFE: Thank you.

TRIP: Enlightenment is not for the faint of heart, is it?

ROBERT WOLFE: True.

TRIP: And I'll follow that up by reading something that you wrote in your book, you say, "If divine recognition is your urgent priority, then the essential aspects of your daily life are, or are obliged to be, organized around that sustained motif. Are they? If not then conditions are not appropriate for proceeding". That's the straightforward talk that's like replete throughout your book, and I found it very refreshing.

ROBERT WOLFE: Thank you.

TRIP: [Laughs] Yes, so you've had a very interesting life, we can talk about that, or we can get right into your work, what would you like to do?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well I'd rather not talk that much about the past, so let's talk about what's present.

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TRIP: All right. Well let's talk about some of the things that really rung my bell that I just loved in the book. One of the things that you write about is the photon experiment that points to that which transcends cause and effect, Bell's theorem. Now I think it's pretty amazing that we have absolute evidence that there's something beyond cause and effect, and people should take it to heart. Can you talk about that?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well, yes, I too think it's pretty amazing, and one of the things that's of interest to me is that the findings that are being made these days in physics, seem to take about 50 years to come down to the common man in the street, and Bell's theorem is a good example of that. Here we have something that 10, 15, 20 years ago became known as a scientific fact, and yet very few people I think generally are aware of the import of what that discovery had to do with.

So we're talking about an experiment which has been conducted several times now, and has shown conclusively that there's something taking place, which until just recent times was not really known. And that is that subatomic particles separated in space know somehow what each is doing. I won't go into a lot of detail here, but for anyone who's interested in that subject, if you look into the material that's available on the physics experiment that's called Bell's theorem, the evidence is there.

TRIP: So the amazing thing about that is that these paired electrons or whatever they are, particles, when they go off in opposite directions and they're a scientifically significant distance apart, which is a little more than a mile or something like that, instantaneously affect each other. And it happens more quickly than could be transmitted by anything that happens at the speed of light, therefore we know for a fact that...

WIZARD: Does that point to that within which these particles are arising is the sentient intelligence?

ROBERT WOLFE: Yes.

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WIZARD: As opposed to the stuff that's arising and departing?

ROBERT WOLFE: Yes. Basically what's it's saying I think is that there's a field of intelligence in which these subatomic particles are operating, and of course subatomic particles make up everything in the universe, including our own bodies, our own brains are made up of subatomic particles. And so what these experiments are showing is that there's a field of intelligence in which these things are operating, and the experiments have been done with these subatomic particles miles apart. But of course, for something as small as a subatomic particle it may as well be a universe apart. So this is a pretty profound discovery, and yet it's something that very few people generally are aware of.

WIZARD: When I was consulting with the Rhine Center, J.B. Rhine, over what is extrasensory perception, that came up as that which is extrasensory perception, or the sixth sense, or the sentience sense, which is prior to the arising of forms, and bodies, and particles, or whatever.

TRIP: I think one of the important aspects of that though is how that pertains to us, and you say in your book, you say, "Well 90 years passed", and you're talking about the 90 years that passed after the Copernican discovery before like the mass of human beings took up the fact that the sun's not revolving around the earth, but it's the other way around. You say, "Well 90 years passed before you incorporate the supportive scientific evidence of what the sages have maintained for 3,500 years, which is you are not the doer". And there's this rigor to your work like it's not that life has to be serious, it can be a mirthful exercise, but there's a rigor that you bring to this where you're constantly asking folks are you prepared to live this Truth?

ROBERT WOLFE: Right, exactly. Yes, that of course is the whole point, living the nonduality, of course. Go ahead.

TRIP: So how's that been for you? How's that for you, living that non-doership *Now* in your life?

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PAUL NAGY: How did nonduality sneak up on you?

ROBERT WOLFE: [Laughs] Well, in the first chapter in the book I describe that, but basically to answer the second question first. It came a point in my life when I recognized that the most important thing for me to be doing was to come to clarity, so that I was living out of clarity rather than living out of confusion. So I at that time was living in a camper van out in the redwood forest in Northern California. Basically, I spent three years just living in the redwood forest contemplating, reading, taking long walks, and at the end of that amount of time things fell into place. That for me has been, this is we're talking 20 years or so ago, that has been a matter of living that awareness from that point on. There's never been a time in that 20 years when that awareness hasn't been present. And so it's a matter of living out of that awareness, and as you said, Trip, that's where the rubber meets the road.

TRIP: We're going to skip around here and ask you one heavy-duty question.

ROBERT WOLFE: Sure.

TRIP: Okay. I don't know if you'll even remember your own answers to some of these questions, 'cause they're pretty profound. And I'll be amazed if you could just like snap them right off here. So what is our purpose in life? Now I know what you said in your book, do you remember what you said?

ROBERT WOLFE: What did I say?

TRIP: You said it's to do exactly as we are doing.

ROBERT WOLFE: Well, I think it's pointless really to think in terms of purpose or meaning to life. If there's any meaning at all or any purpose at all it would seem to have to do with coming to this Truth of what's here, in other words, who are we, and what our reality is. If there's any purpose or meaning it seems to me to have to do with recognizing the Truth of what our existence is all

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about. Beyond that I wouldn't... to me there isn't any real purpose or meaning beyond that.

WIZARD: I concur.

ROBERT WOLFE: Good.

TRIP: Now we've had a little, the Wizard calls it a bustle in our hedgerow here around deification and what not lately.

ROBERT WOLFE: Around what?

TRIP: Deification. In your book you say, I've got a two-part question here, you say, "Godliness or holiness is not an acquired trait". So my question is, is anyone holier than anyone else? And before you answer that I want to say that my friend here, the Wizard, used to call his friend Ganesan, an Indian holy man, Ganesan, right?

ROBERT WOLFE: Sure, I know Ganesan.

TRIP: Okay. Is that title BS to put holy man behind anybody's name? Is anybody holier than anybody else?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well, you might say holy man in the terms of someone who is living a life which is, you might say, not worldly. But, no, the question is... is there anything that is sacred in terms of we'll go into this temple and we'll dip our fingers into this particular vat of water and so on and so forth. No, nothing is more sacred than anything else.

WIZARD: So there's no mask any closer to the Truth than any other mask?

ROBERT WOLFE: That's my opinion.

TRIP: One of the points that you make, and this is a point made by others recently we've had on our show, and I think it's a really important point that eluded me I think for quite a while. I've only

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been at this for about five years, for a while this eluded me. But you say, "To realize the Truth of one's self, one must ask questions from the point of view of the nondual". Why and how is that true?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well one of the things I think that it's possible to do is to come at this matter as an experiment, in other words you can consider the possibility that the actuality of our existence is that there is no separation, no division in Truth, all of the separations and divisions are mind-made, manmade. So you can take that as a proposition that there is no division, no separation in Truth, and apply that to what arises in your daily experience. And look at things from the standpoint of there being this one unbroken movement, and see if that doesn't have an effect on how life is lived, and how it's perceived.

So basically I think you can just experiment with that if you want, and see how that relates to the so-called difficulties and problems that arise in life, are these difficulties and problems the consequence of our seeing things from a dualistic perspective? And then if we switch our perspective and see things from a nondual perspective, what becomes of those problems and difficulties.

So I think even from an experimental standpoint, you can approach this matter.

TRIP: Agreed.

WIZARD: So from that point of view, then lineages and things of that nature are of the mind.

ROBERT WOLFE: Everything is of the mind.

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: We often speak of being on a spiritual path, I've often spoken about that person's on a spiritual path, or I'm on a spiritual path. But there is no path, is there?

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ROBERT WOLFE: Well, to think in terms of a path is to think in terms of starting out from somewhere and arriving somewhere, and that probably is one of the most problematic elements in terms of looking at this matter. All of these teachings tell us that what we're looking for is here, *Now*. So if it's here and *Now*, there's no place we need to go to find it. We don't need to set out somewhere, head in some direction to find what is here and *Now*.

So we speak of the path, that is the picture that's presented, it's an idea that we're going to start out *Now*, and we're going to arrive at some point later where this that what we're looking for will be found. And obviously the sages continually tell us that are not the case, but what we're looking for is here, *Now*. So that's the problem with this metaphor of the path.

But from the standpoint of what you might call the seeker, or the seeking, there often arises in a person's life an occasion when they question the nature of existence, and in some cases that question becomes so prominent that a person basically follows through on that question to its conclusion. And so in that sense, you might say there's a path, but what I'm saying is that to think in terms of it being a path where you're going to someday get somewhere that you're not already, that's the difficulty there.

WIZARD: Well said.

ROBERT WOLFE: Thank you.

TRIP: There's a million different ways of saying the same thing, but I thought your take on enlightenment was interesting. And I'm sure that you feel that the point of enlightenment is more than one thing. But you say, "The point of enlightenment is to sever the bonds of our selfishness". I thought that was interesting, because I think most people think of it as freedom.

ROBERT WOLFE: Basically, it is freedom, in other words, to the extent that selfishness dominates our life, there are problems created by that selfishness. And that is a situation, the problem of

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our situation, which we would like to be free of. So the freedom of the conflicts that we experience in life has to do with this matter of self-realization.

TRIP: Okay. We're all devotees of Ramana Maharshi, and this program's for us, I mean, we don't have a huge listening audience, so we like to talk about what we like to talk about. And I just wanted to ask you...

WIZARD: I don't know. I wouldn't call myself a devotee.

TRIP: Not a devotee?

WIZARD: I would say that he affirms that in a very clear way for me, but I don't feel that...

PAUL NAGY: No incense at his altar?

WIZARD: No, I don't...

TRIP: You've set up some pujas for him when we went to Tiru; you have a picture, put flowers up on it, and everything.

WIZARD: I think veneration of those who are clear reflection is veneration of our self. But deification, or idolatry, or just that to worship an "other" is counterproductive, unless it leads into the recognition that there is no other.

TRIP: Well I've got a question for both you guys, all right. Because, Robert, I don't want to misquote you, but I think in your book you would say that the term, Thy will, or let's just say, Thy will be done, which is what Ramana apparently said when he hit Tiruvannamalai. You and your book say this whole idea of thy will doesn't really quite get it because there is no thy out there. And, Wizard, I've heard you say, Thy will be done, as well as a biblical reference. So I'm just wondering was Ramana having a moment of forgetfulness around the absolute saturation that unconditioned

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awareness truly is. I mean, what do you think about that? Thy will be done, guys?

WIZARD: For me it reflects non-doership. The act of doing requires a sense of separation to accomplish something rather than accepting what already is. The act of doing takes the movie on a movie screen and breaks it up into pieces, when the perspective, or the outlook of non-doership, the images on the screen are all one, and the screen is one. If it moves, it's the movie. If it doesn't move, it's the Truth.

TRIP: I get you, but Thy?

WIZARD: As opposed to my.

TRIP: Or I, I will be done, or my will be done.

WIZARD: The statement I usually refers to a separate sense of who we are, rather than there's the state of being that Ramana Maharshi called the I—I, which erases the locality of it, the Rasta call it the Far-I, or really the state of I that makes the claim of its own within which the thought of I arises and falls. So thy refers to that without the I-thought.

PAUL NAGY: Another way of looking at it in the classic way is to see it as the nondual dream. When you're fully in the dream, that all parts of the dream are yourself. And yet as an actor in the dream, there are parts of it that seemingly you move, and there are other acts, parts of the dream, that don't move.

WIZARD: Yes, you accept your role.

PAUL NAGY: Yes, there's this acceptance of the role. But that it is all Thy, and by Thy it means that it represents a bigger simplicity, the simplicity that you're experiencing *Now*. If you're experience anything *Now*, you're not totally immersed in the whole, in the One. However that doesn't mean that you're forgetful of the one, it just simply means that you see levels, like tides in the ocean. The

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ocean is still the ocean, but it has different levels, two different things.

WIZARD: Muktananda called it the *Play of Consciousness*, which was the play of all the forms and visions, all of it together was a unified display but fundamentally it is insentient. The sentience is in the stillness.

PAUL NAGY: Now we ask our guest.

TRIP: Well I want to ask, Robert. You had an example that illustrated this point I feel in your book, you talk about stardust, and you talk about how everything's made of stardust. And then you use that analogy when you talked about how a person is...most people are unable to grock the idea where they'll say, if I am the observer of that tree over there, clearly I am not the tree, okay. If you go out and talk to 99 people on the street, they're going to say, sorry, I'm not the tree; I'm me.

ROBERT WOLFE: That's right.

TRIP: You use this example of stardust to unravel that strong distinction that people make, and could you share that? I thought that was good.

ROBERT WOLFE: Well I think the point that I was making there was that all that we see comes from the same source, and from a limited physical standpoint that source would be stellar. In other words that all these elements that make up the earth are basically debris from stars, from suns. So there's a commonality to all that exists in this world, in our bodies, in the plants, the minerals, and all, it's all essentially from that source, that stardust.

So I was just making the point that there's a commonality in all this. We take these bodies and so called cells to be so special and separate, and yet dust-to-dust is what it amounts to.

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TRIP: I want to quote something you said in your book, because I loved it. You say, "Although it still appears that the sun revolves around the earth, once you've recognized this is simply ignorance, you do not persist in referring to the earth as the center of God's universe. And once enlightened to the significance of the deep meaning of the observer is the observed, you do not then revert to the myopic question, and then why do I appear to be separate from the tree. When there has been penetrating clarity, such a question will not be seriously entertained". It really is all about clarity, right, Robert?

ROBERT WOLFE: Oh, yes, absolutely. That's the word that's used for enlightenment basically is clarity. And that's what it amounts to; it's ending the confusion that's in our mind, ending the confusion that we have about who this is, and what it's doing. When you see this unbroken wholeness, then the separate ideas that we have come to an end.

One of the things that's of interest to me is that sometimes I will be talking with someone about these matters, and they will come to acknowledge that there is no separate self, that the I-idea is just that, an idea, it's an identification that we make regarding something that we sense as being different. So a person will come sometimes in these discussions to say, yes, I am not an *I*, I'm something that transcends that. And yet in the next sentence or so they will begin, but I this and I that, and I this, and I that. The point of these teachings is to come to a place where you recognize so fully and deeply that there is no separate Self, that the I-thought really doesn't present any longer as something to be taken seriously. In other words, the I-thought may appear on the screen of consciousness, but it's seen to be basically illusive.

So that is the point of these teachings, is to come to the place where the sense of being separate completely ends, totally ends, that's not to say that we don't use the word "I" any longer, or answer to our name, and so on and so forth. But while we do those things on a relative level, when there's never a moment in our mind when we're not clear that this is all basically an illusion.

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WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Yes. And in this time of chaos in the world, and there's all kinds of crazy stuff going on, you talk about how when you were sitting in that redwood forest back there, when you were getting clear, there was world peace in that chair that you were sitting in, that redwood forest, because there was no one there to change, influence, or control anything, you were simply part of the landscape. So what does that say about so many people out there agitating for world peace, then they're out there and they're rattling the bars and all that. I think you might suggest there's another way to get to world peace, right?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well it's a very difficult thing for people to deal with, but basically what these teachings are telling us is that there is at this present moment a particular reality, we may not like what that reality is, but it's present, it's a present reality. We can hope that it was otherwise, or wish that it was otherwise, but that doesn't change the fact it's still the present reality, regardless of what we feel about it, or think about it, or wish about it, or hope about it.

So these teachings are telling us to come to terms with what's present, be present with what is. And it doesn't say that we have to like what is, but we're talking about being present with what is, as opposed to continually seeking things to be other than they are, wishing, hoping, things would be other than they are. And it's this sense of hoping and wishing that things were other than they are which causes what is called idealism, we have an idea that something should be this way, or should be that way, when it isn't that way. And these ideas translate into idealism, the world should be this way, people should be that way. And so our effort is to control and manipulate and so on to try to make our ideals reality. The point of these teachings is to be present with what's present, rather than seeking to have the world be the way you think it ought to be.

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WIZARD: Ramana Maharshi said once that acceptance is the mightiest prayer.

ROBERT WOLFE: Actually, for my own part, I don't think in terms of acceptance because if there's acceptance on the one hand, there's rejection on the other hand. And so this reality we're talking about isn't something that we can accept or reject, it is what it is, and like it or not it is what it is. So from my standpoint, I don't really even think in terms of accepting or rejecting. I just think in terms of being present with what's present.

PAUL NAGY: We call that an equilibrium.

ROBERT WOLFE: Yes, absolutely.

PAUL NAGY: Okay. So, I'm walking along and suddenly I see something that's unjust, I see an adult beating a child. Okay, I can stay in the equilibrium, but to what degree in this accept things as you are, do you have a moral vision for what is right? I'm not saying what to do, what is right to do in that particular situation, but is there a moral vision? Is there a vision of the good that's relevant to your accepting things as things as it is? Or should we just allow dictators to be dictators, and sadists to be sadists, and the victims to be victims?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well, some things are very difficult to get a handle on. But part of this matter of, we'll use the word accepting, part of this matter of accepting things as they are, really comes home to accepting what the organism is doing as it's doing it. In other words, we respond to things and we sometimes react to things, and we can critique that, analyze it, say I should have done this, I should have done that. Or we can observe what's taking place without making those kinds of judgments. In other words... you see what I'm saying?

WIZARD: Yes, it is what it is.

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ROBERT WOLFE: Yes. So in other words, you go down the street and you see somebody beating a child, and you do this thing, or you do that thing. Who's the doer? Something's being done, the organism is doing something, there's something aware of what the organism is doing, there's something witnessing what's taking place. Do you need to go any further than that? Do you need to have some idea of why this is being done, or can you be content as it were to notice what's being done without the idea that something other than what's being done should be done. Do you follow what I'm saying?

PAUL NAGY: But in that, that seems to be... then you lack any moral compunction.

ROBERT WOLFE: Well yes, morals are an idea.

WIZARD: I agree with that.

TRIP: Speaking of the suchness of things. One of the things that is true of our show is we affirm people, and I want to say that as far as I'm concerned, you're a realized human being, and by the way, you're an amazingly good writer.

ROBERT WOLFE: Thank you.

TRIP: I think I'm a good writer, but I read your writing and it's just way beyond what I can do.

ROBERT WOLFE: Thank you.

TRIP: I'm really enjoying it. I didn't realize your book was 440 pages, I left in enough time to reach 250 okay, and I'll get to the other 200 tonight. But I want to say that I think...

ROBERT WOLFE: I want to say that as an interviewer, you've done your homework.

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TRIP: Well, thank you. You are a realized sage as far as I'm concerned, and I think that we've had a number on this show, and then I read sometimes... we recently had a request for us to interview somebody on the show, and there were students of this person that wrote testimonials, and in the testimonials they said things like, "It was a transmission thing". And we had a guest on our show earlier, Saniel Bonder, out in California, he's a devotee of Da's, and he talks about transmission. Okay, and I think, I don't know, I think because people have an idea of certain realized individuals' capacity to transmit unconditioned awareness just by their presence, I think it has lead a lot of people to put sages or realized human beings up on some platform. And unless you have this transmission thing going on or something like that, you really can't or shouldn't be recognized. But I recognize you, and the Wizard, and Paul, here, and myself, as realized human beings.

So could you speak to that gradation if you will of realization that seems to be playing out there where some people can transmit it and other people just walk along like you do, an ordinary man, you've got your website, I love your free MO, as far as I'm concerned, you're rocking my world. I don't need to go sit down with a woman who gazes on me, and I get something.

ROBERT WOLFE: Well there's a lot of mythology in the area of the enlightenment matter. As a consequence it seems to me that people come to it with some exaggerated ideas as to what it amounts to, and basically you might say how it's arrived at. It's not rocket science; it's basically a simple proposition. In fact, so God damn simple that we're confused by it. [Laughing]

So if we begin to remove some of the mythology that's been constructed around this matter, I think we'll find that people will come to this recognition much more simply and clearly without some exaggerated ideas about what's involved in it. And I have actually had discussions with people in which within 30 minutes of our sitting down and talking, they have come to see the substance of what we're talking about. And I know that's so in some of these cases because I have observed what's taken place in

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their lives since that time. So I know that it's possible for these teachings to be transmitted in a clear and comprehensible way in short order. It's possible; it's possible to sit down with someone who talks about these things, and to get the point of the message in short order.

So what do we need with sitting and staring into some master's eyes for three or four hours? The point is we're not talking about some mystery here, we're talking about something which is so God damn plain and evident that people can't comprehend it. So do you follow what I'm saying there?

TRIP: Yes, definitely. So there's the ego's idea of enlightenment, and I certainly had it at one time about the guy I was going to be.

ROBERT WOLFE: Exactly, exactly.

TRIP: I got enlightened and I had...

PAUL NAGY: Superman.

TRIP: [Laughs] Thoughts of Jesus, and walking on water, miracles, and everything.

ROBERT WOLFE: Of course.

TRIP: And contrasted with this other non-attachment to everything including life itself, okay. So you've coined a term which is pretty cool, you say prescient awareness, which you call the enlightened perspective. Can you talk about prescient awareness?

ROBERT WOLFE: To tell you the Truth I don't remember what I said. [Laughing]

TRIP: Well, we can let that one go. I think it was really coming from the state of oneness as a foregone conclusion perhaps. That might have been what you were talking about.

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WIZARD: Sanial Bonder edified the transmission discussion that there was not anything moving from an apparent one to an apparent other, but a sharing of the stillness. And he referred to it as the white-hot transmission. But it was a really a sharing, a coming to a sharing of mutuality.

TRIP: You've got a lot of little nuggets in there, jewels in here. But one of the ones that I loved was you simply looked up or whatever, but you shared the meaning of the word intelligence. Yes, and I tell people intelligence is overrated, in fact it's an obstruction. But I don't do a very good job of really explaining why that is, but in the very meaning of the word intelligence, you say it means to choose among things, to choose among, its discernment, to choose among. And in that choosing among one is invalidating one's own reality, right?

ROBERT WOLFE: Yes.

TRIP: So therefore the very act of being an intelligent person means choosing from among things, and therefore when you're engaged in so-called intelligent activity, you're creating a duality, dual reality, that doesn't in fact exist. You're bifurcating reality.

PAUL NAGY: Well, there's a classic meaning of intelligence, which means nous in the sense of Plotius. And in that particular case you have to say that discrimination is not so much bifurcating, which is the way we usually use it here, but in the nondual sense of discrimination in which one allows the one to come forward and re-vision what's seen. Since we're using our senses we see things as many, because we see things in gradations. In the sense of the one, we don't see the many as many; we just see the many as a variance on this one, because our discrimination has been changed. It's like what I usually say, and I think you're alluding to it, is jumping over the nondual awareness that we all are. We jump over it into senses, into sensations, into thoughts, into feelings, into acts, into discriminations. Yet, if we go back, we calm down, become aware of what awareness is we learn to listen to it, it heals those apparent separations without doing anything.

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TRIP: For sure. But while we may not do anything in that realization, there's a dramatic message you say, Robert, and it's abundantly clear. "Exposure to profound illumination is exposure to definite risk of radical transformation of one's material existence or security. The willingness to risk is not separate from the openness to awakening. One who is not willing to take this risk of possessions, career, family, security, stature, future, and past, has encountered the first barrier of the eye of the needle". I love the way you write, you are good, dude. So good.

ROBERT WOLFE: Thank you.

TRIP: But that's true, you don't know where it's going to take you, so you have to willing to risk it all, right, Robert?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well at the risk of sounding overly dramatic, basically, what we're talking about is moving from the known to the unknown. Krishnamurti titled one of his books, let me think what the title was... anyway, if we are going to leave ourselves open to the light that leads us, then we have to be willing to follow where that light leads, and you can't know ahead of time what that's going to mean. This is basically a risk in a sense that if we would say that we're going to cease to be attached to the separative conditions that we're accustomed to, the separative ideas, relationships and so on, then this is going to represent a different way of living.

As I was starting to say about the Krishnamurti title of the book, having to do with the wholly different way of living, title of a book, *A Wholly Different Way of Living*. We're talking about a wholly different way of living in the sense that when one lives from this nondual awareness, things change, behavior changes, circumstances change, relationships change. So if you're not up for change, then this is going to present a problem. So again without making it sound overly dramatic, we're talking about change, we're talking about moving into a way of living that is in some ways unpredictable, and to that extent some people find that threatening.

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WIZARD: And there's a wisdom to that insecurity.

ROBERT WOLFE: Yes, absolutely. In fact I think Alan Watts had a title of a book to that extent, *The Wisdom of Insecurity*.

PAUL NAGY: In your more recent book you've devoted yourself to, was it retranslating the Gospel of Thomas. What is it that you did with that, because I haven't actually seen the book yet?

ROBERT WOLFE: Yes. I should clarify that. No, I did not retranslate the Gospel of Thomas, there's a very adequate translation which the scholars use, you can look it up on the website, Thomas O Lambdin, has done the translation which is most commonly used. Let me give a little background.

I was raised as a Baptist and baptized when I was 13. I became an atheist by the time I was 20 seeing the hypocrisy in the church. [Laughter] But I've always wondered about how much of what the bible told us about Jesus and what he is purported to have said was true, and I'm not the only one who's wondered that because there are hundreds of scholars around the world who do nothing but try to determine who Jesus was, how he lived, and what he had to say. And so there are a lot of books, there's a whole library of books on what's called the historical Jesus. I've read quite a number of those books, and when in 1945 the Gospel of Thomas was discovered, for those who aren't familiar with it I should say a little bit about it.

The Gospel of Thomas is a collection, scholars have broken it up into a 114 sayings purportedly of Jesus, and in fact virtually every one of them begins, Jesus said, and then has some quotation. Many of these appear in the New Testament, but many of them do not. And the ones that do not appear in the New Testament are quite different. And this document that was discovered in 1945 in an earthen jar in Egypt has been dated back to about 300 AD, but it was evidently translated into Coptic, which is an Egyptian language from Greek. And the Greek manuscript may go back to the time of Jesus, in other words within say 50 years of Jesus'

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death, the original Greek manuscript is thought to have been compiled. So we have these 114 alleged sayings of Jesus.

WIZARD: Could you share a few of those?

TRIP: We have about three minutes, so go ahead.

ROBERT WOLFE: Well, I don't happen to have the copy of the book handy, but if we only have three minutes, let me summarize pretty quickly. So I've looked at quite a number of books written by scholars who have tried to interpret the Gospel of Thomas in terms of these esoteric teachings, which aren't in the New Testament. And the scholars tend to be professors of religion at universities, so they come from generally a Christian background. So they're really looking at it through a Christian filter. I found no one who was looking at it from the standpoint of nonduality. So what I've done is gone through the Gospel of Thomas and the 114 sayings, and looked at them from the standpoint of nonduality.

So the title of the book is, *The Gospel of Thomas - the Enlightenment Teachings of Jesus*. So in my opinion what's found in the Gospel of Thomas is enlightenment teachings, the same thing that Buddha and others taught. You wanted a quote from it, someone put a copy of the book in my hand, and on the cover it says, "I shall give you", this is a quote from the Gospel of Thomas, "I shall give you what no eye has seen, and what no ear has heard, and what no hand has touched, and what has never occurred to a human mind". What do you think he's talking about there? Is he maybe talking about the absolute?

TRIP: For sure.

ROBERT WOLFE: So that's what I've done there with the Gospel of Thomas, go ahead.

TRIP: We're major fans of the janitor formerly known as Robert Wolfe. And you've got a website, www.livingnonduality.org, and

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if someone wants to have a relationship with you, communicate with you, share with you, they can do there and do that, right?

WIZARD: Read the book.

ROBERT WOLFE: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

TRIP: You're very accessible, and you're a sage as far as I'm concerned.

ROBERT WOLFE: Thank you very much.

TRIP: And we've really loved having you on the show. Robert, any parting thoughts for us, anyone here have anything they want to share?

ROBERT WOLFE: Well I just want to thank you for what you're doing, and for allowing me to have the opportunity to talk with you and your guests. I appreciate it very much.

WIZARD: We appreciate your sharing.

PAUL NAGY: Thank you, thanks a lot.

TRIP: Thank you, Robert, really enjoyed it.

ROBERT WOLFE: Bye.



Rupert Spira

<http://www.rupertspira.com/>

TRIP: Rupert, thank you so much for joining us today, we are extremely excited to have you.

RUPERT: Not at all. Thank you for asking me. It's a pleasure to be with you.

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TRIP: I went through your website and we've read your book and looked at some of the audio interviews that have been done of you and so that's had an impact on how we're going to structure our Satsang with you today.

I just wanted to start off by saying a few things about you that I think the Wizard shares with me. I feel you are a realized sage. I want to acknowledge that because I want people to realize that there are ordinary human beings walking around that have realized the Truth of who they are at a very deep level as you have and it's just beautiful. There's a gentleness to you that is wonderful. A humility, I feel that you're not identified with your role as a celebrated spokesperson for non-duality. I've watched you at the conference and when someone gives you a somewhat silly question or maybe you encounter a difficult personality, I feel your first inclination is compassion, it's to help someone clarify a misunderstanding rather than demonstrate some superior understanding of your own; and that's so refreshing.

I've read a lot of stuff and I've been paying attention now for nowhere near as long as you have, but I've been paying very close attention and for me, your book, *The Transparency of Things*, took me down the royal road of existence in a way I've never been taken down before. It was unbelievable.

RUPERT: It's true.

[Full laughter]

I'm happy to hear that.

TRIP: Oh! My gosh. I'm almost through with that part of it, but when I met you I really liked you. We listened to you talk at the non-duality conference but when we read your book I think we both fell in-love with you. [Laughs] But it's still true that you're easy to love and I think that's a great teaching in itself. It's not that we fell in love with your Rupert spiritness; it's just that Rupert's spirit is dissolved as an obfuscating personality and that creates the space for people, for love to flow out of them and to share with you.

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RUPERT: Yes, absolutely, that's the case. Whenever we fall in love with an apparent person, we never truly fall in love with a person; it's always the true Self or love itself that we truly fall in love with.

TRIP: Other interviewers have spent a lot of time on your storyline and I found it fascinating, but this is such a rare opportunity for us to go deeper down the rabbit hole of ordinary experience I didn't want to spend too much time there, but there's one part of your storyline that I did want to ask you about. You were uncommonly introspective as a teenager and you spent decades voraciously reading. You might want to talk about some of your teachers, but there was still a gap between your understanding of life and life itself. I think that many on the path feel that way. Can you elaborate on that some more?

RUPERT: Yes. As you say, I spent a lot of my teenage and 20s studying, meditating, and attending spiritual meetings. I was brought up in the classical, advaita nondual tradition so I received the neo advaita teaching first of all and become Indian, a classical Indian form but I spent a great deal of time reading and studying Ramana Maharshi. And from a very early age, from the age of about 15 or 16 I had a deep intuition of what these people were talking about; it was truly--well, it resonated so deeply in me, something in me said, "Yes, I know that this is true." But there was a connection that I couldn't make so that after about 20 or so years, in my mid-thirties or so I felt that I had read everything, or at least everything in the tradition that I was interested in. I had started with Krishnamurti, Rumi, Nisargadatta and Ramana Maharshi and others in that tradition.

But there was, in a way, I couldn't make it my own; it wasn't my lived, felt experience. And this precipitated a crisis in me--there was--I didn't know what else to do. I had been meditating every day for twenty-odd years. I had learnt the Sufi turning. I had learned that they're just movements. I was reading voraciously, I had done everything I knew how to do. But still the teaching was

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at a distance from me. And I haven't really been able to take it in and make it my own and say, "Yes, this is my actual felt-lived experience." It wasn't until I met my teacher, Francis Lucille in my mid-thirties that all this preparation, this 25 years or so of preparation came to fruition during the time that I spent with him.

TRIP: What was it about Francis do you think or was it just that you were ready?

RUPERT: I think that I was ripe having spent the best part of two decades exploring and preparing myself as it were for this encounter. What was it about Francis? Simply, that he thought and felt and acted in an unrelated from the true Self. So, everything that's proceeded from him and therefore the entire content of our friendship, not just the conversations, but everything about it was heard and nourished by nurturing in this love of Truth.

TRIP: In describing that relationship you talked about being silent together, doing activities together, so did you go live with or near Francis?

RUPERT: No. I was living and working in England when I met Francis and shortly afterwards started to raise a family. So, I had a very full life in England. But I spent every spare moment I could with him and that's amounted to several weeks a year. But it wasn't really the amount of time, although I did spend a lot of time it wasn't the amount of time, physical time so to speak that I'd spent with him because my heart was always there. I never left. I never had the feeling that I was going on retreat and then I was leaving and that it would be another two months before I would go again. I was always there. My heart was always there. And to begin with it seemed as if this place, I was always there in a place with a person. But as time goes on this sense of the teacher being at a place or as a person begins to thin out as it were. And it wasn't--I didn't--I began to no longer feel that I had to travel to the other side of the world in order to be with a particular person, to be with my teacher. In other words, to be actually with the person

of my teacher. My teacher began to permeate everything and everyone. I just thought that I was always in the presence of my teacher which means in the presence of the Self, in the presence of awareness and I was that. So, although Francis, to begin with, was like an emblem of this presence for me and I always related to him as that. Nevertheless, in time the specific characteristics of the teacher, the physical teacher began to dissolve until I really felt that I was with my teacher all the time, in other words, with the presence, with the Divine all the time. It never came and went. I never travelled towards it or further away from it. In fact, that ceased in time to be a sense of a me travelling towards or moving away from--so there was this--it was a process in time that took place over a number of years.

WIZARD: This has been Ram Dass's most recent confession. We are here all along with Neem Karoli Baba. That physical presence has dissolved away into the presence and that otherness has dissipated and though I've never read it in his new book, *Be Love Now*, and I look forward to reading it.

RUPERT: It's just a unique and just to carry on just a bit from that. The unique thing that I felt when I first met Francis was that right off the bat he treated me as impersonal awareness. That that was where we started and we started there and we never really left there. So, it's a very subtle thing. It took so many years. We have been accustomed to being treated as a person that means as a limited physical entity. As a body man, so when somebody doesn't relate to us in that way, when they don't think of us in that way, when they don't speak to us in that way, when they don't relate with us in that way something very deep in us responds. It recognizes our true Self as it were, wakes up, it responds to being treated as it truly is, rather than being treated as a limited separate entity. Now, how that works I couldn't tell you. But this was the condition of our friendship right from the very first moment and it remains the condition of our friendship to this day.

TRIP: Wonderful.

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WIZARD: Beautiful.

TRIP: We're going to talk a lot today about consciousness and in Ramana Maharshi's teachings, the word awareness is used a great deal. These are very important terms, are they interchangeable? Those two terms, consciousness and awareness?

RUPERT: The way I use them, yes. They're identical. That's not the case for everybody. And that is--of course, it is fine; everyone uses words in their own way. But, yes, the way I used them and for this conversation they are identical.

TRIP: You say that and I want to go through some of your basic stuff and then there's some more subtle stuff that I want to go through but I think it would be good to go through some of your basic teaching here first. And so, you say that consciousness is both witness to and the very stuff of reality. Can you get into that more fully?

RUPERT: Yes. We're going to go right into the deep end.

[Full laughter]

TRIP: I thought that was the basic end.

RUPERT: Okay. Let's start with the first thing, that consciousness or awareness is the witness of our experience. We normally think that I, the body mind, is the witness of the world. In other words we think I, this person, witnesses, knows or experiences the world. But if we look very simply at our experience, we realize that actually our thoughts and our feelings are known in just the same way that our perceptions are known. In other words, we know the perception of the world – we might look out of the window and we see the sky, we see the perception of the sky. We experience or are aware of the sky. But, if we take the thought, "I wonder what we're going to have for dinner tonight." That thought is known in exactly the same way as the perception of the sky. And likewise, if we were to, let's say, rub our

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foot against the floor now, a new sensation would appear. And that sensation, which we call the body, is known or experienced in exactly the same way that the sky and the thought is experienced. In other words, this seeming I, whatever exactly I is, is aware of not just the world but is aware of the body, mind and world.

We move from a position of thinking I, the body mind, am aware of the world to realizing, no, I, whatever I is, is aware of the body, mind and world or is the witness of the body, mind and the world. So, here we move from the position of considering ourselves to be an entity, a body mind that is aware of the world to considering ourselves to be this aware presence that is aware of the body mind and world. And as such, this aware presence has no perceivable or objective qualities. It can't be seen

If we were *Now*, right *Now* as we speak, if we were to turn our attention towards or try to turn our attention towards this aware presence that is for instance hearing these words or that is seeing whatever it is that is being seen at the moment. We wouldn't even know in which direction to look. But because this aware presence, that we intimately know ourselves to be, is not in any direction, it's not located in a place or at a time. So here we've moved from thinking, "I am something," that is I am a body and a mind aware of the world, to what is sometimes said to be "I am nothing" nothing in the sense that it is not a thing, not an object that can be perceived. So we've moved from a position, what could be called a position of ignorance. In which we think I am something, I am an object, and I am a person. To a position that could be called a position of wisdom. Which is "I am nothing; I am not a thing, empty, void." Void of objective, perceivable content. And yet, I am present and aware. So this is the position which is traditionally known as the witness position. And it is a half-way stage of understanding in which we have, as it were, separated ourselves from the body-mind-world in order to establish in our actual experience that what we are is just witnessing-aware-presence, that we are not a body mind or a world. But now that there is a problem or perhaps not a problem but a question – what is the relationship between this witnessing aware presence that I am and

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this appearance of the body-mind-world? How are they related? Is it because we are still in a position of dualism here? I, the subject—awareness, and the body-mind-world, the object. So now what is the relationship between this subject and object? And if we make a very close and simple exploration of our experience we find that our only knowledge of the body, mind and world is in the form of sensing, thinking and perceiving. And when everything; sensing, thinking and perceiving are present they are utterly, intimately one with this presence of awareness that I am.

In other words, there is no real relationship between awareness and its apparent objects. That it is too close to be a relationship. That all we know of the body-mind-world is, we could say it is knowing or experiencing. And that experiencing is utterly, intimately pervaded by awareness. We can explore this more in detail if you like later but here, the idea of a witness and a witnessing subject and a witnessed object has collapsed and there is just pure experiencing and this could be called a position of love. It's a position in which I, this presence of awareness and understood and more importantly felt to pervade all experience that nothing is at a distance from this aware presence. So this is a position we've moved *Now* from the position of I am nothing, I am not a thing, to I am everything, I am the substance of all seeming things."

WIZARD: It's due to the constancy of this state that renders it invisible, it doesn't present itself or go away.

RUPERT: Yes. It's not constancy in time. It's not something that lasts forever at a state in time it is rather this ever present awareness that we know ourselves to be. It doesn't exist in time, it is just always *Now*.

WIZARD: Yes.

RUPERT: But even when I say always, that implies time, it is ever-present *Now*; just this ever-present reality of awareness, which is what we refer to when we say "I". And it is ever-present and all

experience is intimately pervaded by it. But not pervaded by it like a sponge is pervaded with water. Because there are not two things at the, there is not experience and the awareness that pervades it. There is just awareness. As it were and this is really just a matter of metaphor taking the shape of perceiving, fencing, cleaning, imagining, tasting, touching, and although that the forms, the names and the shapes of these appearances may seem to be changing all the time, their substance, this knowing presence is ever-present, it never changes.

TRIP: And is present without a human mind.

RUPERT: Yes. It doesn't require a human mind to know itself. It knows itself simply by itself. Its nature is awareness. It doesn't need the help of the puny human mind in order to become aware of itself. It is the awareness of itself; in fact it cannot not be aware of itself. It can seem to forget itself and I emphasize *seem*. But by taking the shape of thinking it can *seem* to lose its own knowledge of itself and become something else, for instance, a body or a mind. In other words we can *seem* to forget our true nature and pretend to be something else, like a body mind. But even then, that is only an appearance in just the same way that the two-dimensional screen can seem to be veiled by the image a three-dimensional landscape. But the screen is never truly veiled. In just the same way awareness never loses or forgets its own knowing of itself that's the knowing of its own being. It just seems to. And when it seems to, the peace and the love that is inherent in awareness or more than inherent but is awareness itself, are seemingly veiled. And for that reason this imaginary entity that we believe ourselves to be is always in search of peace and love. Because in order to imagine that what we are is a limited entity that the peace and love that is inherent in the knowing of our own being is similarly veiled.

TRIP: There are video web seminars at neti-netimedia.com, and also, you can go to www.rupertspira.com, where you can partake of a tremendous amount of free information and download books

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and other things and there are some interviews there that Chris Hubbard did. And those are wonderful as well.

TRIP: I-thought we might have some fun, just a little fun, because sometimes this gets a little heavy. I can slurp it up all day long. I mean, I could just but, remember that silly question that the kids, even kids on the playground would ask tauntingly or just having fun, they'd say, so if there's a tree in the forest and it falls down and there's no one there to listen, is there a sound? Remember that question? That these kids would ask that question?

WIZARD: I remember that.

TRIP: Okay. I know the answer to that question, now. [Laughs] But rather than say what it is, can you answer that question?

RUPERT: Let me ask you another question.

TRIP: All right.

RUPERT: If there's a tree in the forest that falls and there's nobody there to share it. By the same token, there is nobody there to see it. So how do you know there's a tree in the forest?

TRIP: You can't.

WIZARD: That's right.

RUPERT: You see, by asking the question in this way. You say if a tree in the forest falls. So, the question presumes that there is a tree in the forest. Although we've already stated that there's nobody there to see it. So at first we make the presumption, in spite of the fact that there's nobody in the forest. Nevertheless, in other words, in spite of the fact that the forest is not being seen, nevertheless, there is a forest. Then we ask the question, if there's nobody there to hear it, does it make a sound? So, right there in the question there is a contradiction. We affirm the existence of an object independent of its being perceived and we then ask is

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there an object such as a sound independent of its being heard? But how do we know that there is an object if it's not being seen? Has anybody or is there any evidence anywhere that there is a world outside awareness?

TRIP: No.

WIZARD: Right on.

RUPERT: Could there be? Would it be possible for there to be such evidence?

TRIP: Well, what the mind says is that while my personal perceiving may cease, I'm quite sure that there are others out there perceiving while I'm in dreamless sleep.

WIZARD: And holding it together.

RUPERT: Yes. Yes.

TRIP: That's what everybody says.

RUPERT: So, there may be, at that moment, there may be perceptions but whether or not the perceptions are our own. But, the question is not whether it is just our own perception that is real but let's say perception in general. But outside any perception, how do we know that there is a world?

TRIP: We cannot.

RUPERT: We don't. Exactly. Not. We do not and we cannot. Now, that is not a proof that there is no such world. That's important to say that. But, the presumption we make that there is something called an object or a world independent of awareness is a fundamental presumption. In fact, it is the main building block of our culture. It is the main idea upon which all other ideas are based. This idea that things, objects, the world has a reality independent of awareness. And that that reality is therefore made

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out of something other than awareness, such as mind or matter. But what is strange is that although we have this deep presumption, nobody has ever found this stuff called mind or matter independent of awareness.

TRIP: So if you take that rock, that bedrock away from almost everyone for whom that is the bedrock, where should the person stand? Where do you stand? What's your bedrock?

RUPERT: In awareness.

TRIP: So I wanted to ask you, I thought you did an amazing job of parsing out the sleep state thing. Okay? Sleep, the dream of sleep, dreaming and conscious states, which are not actually states. But, I spent months wrestling with Ramana Maharshi's descriptions of the various states and how "I" is present throughout all, whatever. But, you had a beautiful way of explaining how in fact they aren't really states, there's a difference in the quality of the objects that appear within the dreaming state and the conscious state and their absence in dreamless sleep. And that's the defining characteristic. Not in fact that we're unconscious if you will.

RUPERT: Yes.

TRIP: That was very, very, very interesting, could you elaborate that?

RUPERT: Yes. They're states from the point of view of the waking state.

TRIP: Exactly.

RUPERT: But from the point of view of awareness, which is the only real point of view, there are no states because awareness is always simply knowing itself. And what are called states, the waking state, dreams, images, these are all, as it were, modulations of its own being. So, you could say that when you open your laptop there are three different qualities that appear.

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There are word documents, there are web pages and there are images. We could say that these are three very different types of document. And from the point of view of the documents, yes they are three different types of document. However, from the point of view of the screen there is always only one substance there. So, the different documents are different documents from the point of view of one of the documents. But from the point of view of the screen there is no difference there. In other words there is no diversity, there is no multiplicity there. Multiplicity and diversity is for the mind, not for awareness.

TRIP: I have to say, I think your book is an extraordinary book and there are so many little areas where you tuned up my understanding. And I'll give you another one, and it's interesting because it relates to something that's in the news right Now, the horrific killings in Arizona.

RUPERT: Yes.

TRIP: Apparently one of the rationales of the killer was that this is all a dream. So, it really doesn't matter that I blew all those people away. And I look in your book and boom, of course there's synchronicity there because you say right there that reality is not an illusion, it's the perceived separation of objects from consciousness, that is the illusion and so there is the potential as this teaching reaches critical mass, people do misunderstand, misinterpret, constantly misinterpret the teachings. Maybe that would be one for you to elucidate some more because I think that idea of the world as an illusion is one that many people that are on the path still haven't quite got it right. And I didn't have it quite right either.

RUPERT: Yes. The world as an object separate and distinct from awareness, such a world is an illusion. In fact it is so illusionary that nobody has ever found it. And just to make sure that we're not talking theory and philosophy here. Let's just – everyone who is listening try now and look around at the so-called world and ask yourself; is what you see, independent of the seeing of it, and is the

seeing of it independent of awareness? And if we explore our experience we find the answer to both those questions is, no. In other words, the world as an object separate from awareness is never experienced. So, that world, that imaginary, separate, outside, distant world is an illusion. However, that doesn't mean that experience is an illusion. All of us now, we know that our experience is real. We could be dreaming *Now*. We can't be sure that we're not. But even if we're dreaming, our dream is real. There is something – there's a reality to it. But if we look deeply into that reality we don't find a substance called matter or mind. We find awareness. It's like watching a movie and there's a landscape in the film, so it seems that we're seeing trees and fields and sky. But when we go up to it, to touch the field, to touch the trees, to touch the sky, to find out what they're made of, we touch the screen, we don't actually touch the grass. So it's not that the landscape was an illusion, there was a reality to it and the reality to it is the screen. It's an illusion; grass and trees and the sky. But it's real as the screen. So it's the same with the world and with people and with objects. As objects separate, other, distinct, and made out of mind or matter; as such they are illusory, so illusory in fact that they are never found. However, as experience itself made only out of the intimacy of knowing or experiencing, as such they are real. Their reality is this experiencing presence or awareness, not matter.

TRIP: What I love about listening to you, reading your book, Self-inquiry, the entire field of non-duality is that there are answers to some of these vexing existential questions, ultimately it is a Mystery but, you answer some amazing questions. Now, on your website you say, and I want to read something that you say, I just found this was extraordinary and I don't really fully understand it so I thought you might get into this more. You say, "Every appearance is, at its origin, already that for which it is destined. The meaning and purpose of appearances is in their absence. And the meaning and purpose of life is already life itself."

RUPERT: Yes. So this is said in response. I don't remember specifically. But in general it was said in response to one who is

seeking the meaning or the purpose of life. In other words, the current situation, this present simple, ordinary situation has got a meaning to it. In other words, it is leading us somewhere. Now that somewhere is obviously not here because we've said that the current experience must have a meaning or a purpose. So, with this idea of there being a purpose or a meaning, we create a future in which the real purpose of life is going to be found which the current experience, towards which the current experience is pointing. That's the normal view of things. It's basically called the search for happiness, the search for meaning or purpose in the future. So what this statement, that you've just read, was pointing towards is that the substance of this very experience, whatever this experience is, however, simple and ordinary is itself already that for which all plans and purposes are made. In other words, our search for happiness, for projected happiness in the future that we're going to find when we acquire a particular object or a particular relationship or a particular situation, that happiness that we are seeking is actually the substance of this and every experience. It is already present at the heart of every experience. There is really no purpose to life. Life is already that to which all purposes are made. However, having said that, if we have forgotten that, if this experience or understanding has been veiled seemingly veiled and we have imagined ourselves instead to be a separate, limited and located self. It is inevitable that we will be on a search for happiness in the future. It's not possible to consider oneself a separate entity and not be in search for happiness. In fact the separate entity is a search for happiness. And as such the purpose of life, not the highest purpose of life but rather the highest meaning of life is to find this peace, happiness and love for which we are reaching, longing. So we could say from the absolute point of view there is truly no purpose in life, it is already that to which all plans and purposes are made. However, if that has been veiled from us, if we believe and feel that we are a separate entity then happiness or love is the highest goal in life, the meaning of life.

TRIP: Yes. Well, we have an email from an admirer. Perhaps this person; I hope I don't mispronounce her name, but Shaya

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RUPERT: Oh, yes, yes, hi Shaya.

TRIP: Okay, she says, “Hello Rupert. Isn’t it such a Mystery that that which moves us from living as a separate person whose actions and thoughts apparently come from a seamless consequence of previous events and conditioning, to a being who seemingly rests knowingly as a universal Being, unlimited and this recognition that everyone and everything else is this unlimited consciousness as well. Such a Mystery is it not? With love, Shaya.” [Laughs] Thank you Shaya for that sharing. Well, I’ve got some...

RUPERT: Thank you Shaya.

TRIP: I’ll jump around here. A couple more things, I got tons of things. I haven’t even gotten into my real questions here yet but, maybe we can--I’ll ask you to respond to these quickly because I have about 10 or 15 quick items I wanted to ask you, if you don’t mind.

RUPERT: Okay.

TRIP: Okay? Let’s just start with...

RUPERT: Quick response. As you’ve discovered I’m not myself but I--even though...

TRIP: I’m a burner. I go to the Burning Man event out in Nevada. And it really is an inspiring event. And one of the things that make it a sacred event, a pilgrimage, is the art. And I see that you’ve spent an entire hour on the topic of what is the nature of sacred art. What is the nature of sacred art?

RUPERT: The nature of sacred art. That it’s an art; we mean an object, something that is made. That the nature of that object is to transmit directly a taste of art through nature what the reality of our experience, what Cezanne called nature’s eternity that which is

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ever-present in our experience that the nature of the sacred work of art is to give us a taste, to transmit the experience of that. Not to give us the intellectual idea about it but to evoke actual experience. And that is why very often if we're faced with a true work of art we weep, we laugh, we cry, it cuts through our normal conceptual way of thinking and feeling, and takes us right to the heart of the experience.

TRIP: All right. I got that. All right. What is you say the “real blasphemy”?

RUPERT: The real blasphemy is to think and feel I am a person. I'm a separate entity. We normally think that it is blasphemous to say I am God. And because of our language it would be inappropriate to use that phrase. But to say I am this unlimited un-located presence of awareness is just the simple fact of our experience. And to say I am a separate limited, located entity; that denies the reality of our experience. That is the true blasphemy.

WIZARD: Right on.

TRIP: And so you also spent an hour discussing how does the separate self get validated? How does that happen?

RUPERT: The sense of separation can appropriate almost anything in order to validate itself, including spiritual teaching as you quoted earlier with the shootings in Arizona. The term blasphemy will take anything, even the highest formulation of Truth and appropriate it in order to substantiate and validate itself. But one of the main ways it does it is by imagining locations in the body where it resides. So, for instance, it not just thinks but feels that I am located in the head hearing these words. I am located in the chest, feeling love or the lack of love. I am located in these hands doing. I am located in these legs, moving. So, indeed this is one of the main ways it validates itself is by appropriating bodily sensations and imagining that it lives there, making its home in the body.

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TRIP: Right on. So Rupert, is there something to do?

RUPERT: If we think and feel that we are a separate entity, doing something is not an option. It is inevitable. And the reason for this is the separate entity of the imaginary separate entity – because there is no real separate entity but the entity that we imagine ourselves to be is not in fact an entity, it is an activity already. In other words, if we think we could be our separate entity, we are already doing something. We are already seeking happiness, peace and love in the future. That's what the separate entity is; it is the search for happiness. So there is no question, if we feel that we are a separate entity, there is no question of not doing something. In fact if we feel that we are a separate entity and we think at the same time that we're not doing something, then we're just fooling ourselves. It probably means we've been to too many Advaita meetings [laughter] and we've adopted the new Advaita mantra of there is nothing to do as a new belief and we have just added it to our repertoire of beliefs. So, I could imagine the entity, yes. We are already doing something and as this imaginary one, the very best thing we can do is to explore and investigate this entity that we imagine ourselves to be. And if we do that, we discover sooner or later that this entity is an imaginary entity. When we look for the "I", the separate entity, we don't find it. We find I, the true Self of awareness. And what is it that finds that? The only one that is present and aware, capable of finding or knowing anything. In other words, when we look for the separate I, we, I, awareness finds itself. And that is what Ramana Maharshi meant when he said, "When the I is divested of the I, only I remains."

TRIP: I feel like I put you on one of those exercise treadmills and I've cranked [laughter] cranked it up to 12 or 13. We've got three more minutes and we'll say our goodbyes. Okay. So, what is the one thing the separate self cannot stand? You gave a talk on that. I'm very curious.

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RUPERT: The only thing it cannot stand is being clearly looked at. What is the one thing the pink elephant sitting under your chair cannot stand?

TRIP: Scrutiny? [laughter]

RUPERT: Looking. Scrutiny. It thrives on inadvertence. As long as we don't look, its imaginary existence can be perpetuated ad infinitum. But if we looked it and that means if it is brought to the light of awareness because awareness is the only one that sees or looks. But when we look to find or see this separate entity, it's not there. It's a phantom self. It thrives on inadvertence, or not being clearly seen to be non-existent.

TRIP: I'm convinced you're a realized human being. I know that you are. And I also know that means that you're a transparent human being and I don't think that there's a question that you mind answering as long as it doesn't go and offend anyone or compromise something that's held in confidence but, I'm always interested by sages who are in relationships and your companion's name is Ellen and a lovely woman, and I saw her at the conference although I didn't get to speak with her. I'm always interested if – and either way you answer the question it can either give hope or it can dash illusions. But, are you able to negotiate the conflicts that inevitably arise in your relationship in a deeply respectful loving way such that you two would characterize that your relationship is sublime? Or are there problems in there just like ordinary relationships where you go through periods where things feel problematic and then you come back and things are good, I mean, is it a cyclical thing or have you found a way to be in sublime relationship?

RUPERT: The relationship is sublime. But that doesn't mean that issues don't arise in the relationship. Of course they do. When two body-minds from two different universes, because if we imagine these two different sets of conditioning come together, there is an inevitable meeting and the meeting is not always harmonious. It takes some time to fit together, to melt together,

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so that yes, there can be issues. But the difference is that these issues, the place where all these psychological conflicts are resolved whether they are your own psychological conflicts or conflicts that arise in relationships; they are resolved in the true Self of awareness. They're not resolved on the level of the body mind. Although there may be a process through which the body minds have to go. But, truly in the end they are offered up to this open empty luminous and loving presence of awareness. And that awareness slowly permeates all the objects of the body and the mind. Your own body-mind, but the objects of the body-mind is the relationship become progressively saturated with the peace and the love of awareness and are, as it were, realigned with the peace and the love that are inherent in awareness. So, those parts of the relationship that may be outstanding to begin with are gradually saturated more and more with the peace.

TRIP: Rupert, I've been transported by you for the last 24 hours. I mean, literally, I've just been like on pins and needles and so excited to have this time with you, to read your book. I'm going to continue to follow your writings and make myself present where you're present. I know the Wizard probably shares that, so.

WIZARD: Absolutely and thanks & praises for your appearance with us here...

RUPERT: Well, I'm very touched by both of you. Thank you, Trip and Wizard. Thank you. Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure being with you.

TRIP: Oh, thank you.

WIZARD: Likewise.

RUPERT: Okay. Bye-bye.

TRIP: Okay. Goodbye.

RUPERT: Bye now. Bye-bye.



Scott Kiloby

<http://kiloby.com/>

TRIP: Our very special guest today, Scott Kiloby, simplifies and demystifies the message of enlightenment or nonduality. He reaches out to all people who are suffering or seeking or cannot seem to find fulfillment in this life no matter where they go or what they do. He assures them that freedom is available, and that it is actually contained in their very presence, yet it is overlooked,

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the benefits of recognizing presence or living with a mind that is at peace, a heart full of love and compassion for others, and the end of looking for happiness outside ourselves.

Scott Kiloby is the author of *Love's Quiet Revolution*, *The End of the Spiritual Search*, and *Reflections of the One Life: Daily Pointers to Enlightenment*. He's also the creator of an addiction/recovery method called Natural Rest. His book, *Natural Rest: Finding Recovery through Presence* is scheduled for release in early 2011.

WIZARD: Hi, Scott, Wizard here. Welcome.

SCOTT KILOBY: Thank you, is this John?

WIZARD: Yes.

TRIP: Yes, you got the Wizard. This is Trip.

SCOTT KILOBY: Hi, Trip, good to meet you.

TRIP: Scott, thank you for joining us, I feel like Larry King interviewing a shining star of nondual wisdom.

SCOTT KILOBY: All right.

TRIP: You really are. You are one of the shining stars of nondual wisdom, and I think it's your simple accessibility, and you're an ordinary guy, you're not pretentious, and yet I've got to say, you're one heck of a writer. Do you write all your own stuff, or do you have editors that clean it up? That's because you are amazingly well-written.

SCOTT KILOBY: For the books I have editors, but for the website and things I don't really have a formal editor, but I have people working with me, mainly one good friend that looks over things but some other people watch out for me in case I misspell words or stop making sense at a certain point.

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TRIP: Well, it's good stuff. I've spent about 48 hours with you [Laughs], yes, and I loved it man, I loved every minute of it. So let's dive right in. Your simplest message is the Middle-Way, what is the Middle-Way?

SCOTT KILOBY: I took that from some Buddhist practice that I've been involved with because I like the spirit of it, although I think I've turned it into my own thing here. It just came from looking at my own past and seeing that I started out like we all do with the belief in being a separate person, having an ego, and not really questioning that. And then through Inquiry and certain other things, I found that that's not perhaps as real as I thought. Then there was a sense of like it's almost like the other end of the view started to come in for me, I would use words like well it's all oneness, it's just pure awareness, pure consciousness. Or I would even say it's almost like nothing exists in a way. And although those insights ring true in their own regard, it started to feel like after a while it was like there's something else wanted to shake itself into my experience, in other words, I started to see that those are all viewpoints, also mental viewpoints, even though they're definitely real insights that arise. When you see that you're not that limited separate self there can be that sense of I don't have a limit, I don't have a boundary, whatever I am it's not personal, it's impersonal. What happens is the mind likes to sink its teeth into the latest thought about whatever it's discovering, and crystallize that into a Truth.

I felt like the freedom that I was experiencing couldn't really be placed into a viewpoint, there was no way that I could say that it was either/or, that it was everything or nothing, or oneness, or the many. It just felt like something, what they call the Middle-Way felt more experientially true to me about what my experience was. And it frankly just avoided things like nihilism and essentialism, just nihilism being that nothing exists and there's no meaning, which is an extreme view. And essentialism was just the idea that things exist a certain way, and that I can know that, and it having a fixed view even maybe an absolutistic or certain way about it.

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So I think the Middle-Way just felt like if I like this place where I could definitely be Scott, but Scott felt like, or Scott feels like, not the way that it used to feel, it feels much lighter. Like I love the Buddhist expression like the moon reflects on water, it's not the same sense of Scott that I had before, but yet I don't have to push away those thoughts, I don't have to sit in moments where I don't think about myself or think of my story because even when it appears it doesn't destroy the freedom. That's what I tell the Middle-Way, I hope that's not too convoluted but that's how it showed up for me, it just started making a lot of sense. Another way of saying, it's just balance, I mean it's a way of cherishing all the viewpoints and insights but not really having some fixed way of knowing myself or knowing reality, and remaining open and free of fixed views about things in life.

TRIP: That's very useful because all of us who've had a profound spiritual experience immediately grasp the fact that this ego, I, that we had thought was so solid and so who we are before, we get the grip on that, but then we tend to jump over into the nothingness camp there for a while. And we get really taken by nothing, and we often go down a road where we forget that it's not just about nothing [Laughs].

SCOTT KILOBY: Right.

TRIP: So, when I read your book, *Living Realization*, which is your e-Book, and by the way is that free or is there a charge for the e-book?

SCOTT KILOBY: its \$14.99, it's only downloadable as an e-book right now at www.livingrealization.org , that's how it's available right now.

TRIP: Okay. I could not skip over any part of that book, I mean, I would have liked to, I had a lot of reading to do, but it is so packed full of juicy wonderful stuff I just... , I've read 15 books in the last 15 weeks, and there was nothing in there that I didn't think was useful or wonderful. It was one of the most enlightening books

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I've ever read, really. I think it's a masterpiece. So not to diminish that accomplishment, but I wanted to share something with you that's curious and I thought you could comment on it. I have felt that way to some degree about each of the last 10 or 15 books that I've read and so therefore I'm feeling the experience of joy and enlightenment that comes from reading a book like that is not necessarily a quality of the book itself, something else is going on. What do you think that is that's going on there?

SCOTT KILOBY: Gosh, it's quite a Mystery, isn't it? Because if it were just about like reading a book, and when you read a book like that I think the ultimate point is that we don't walk away having memorized the ideas, because the ideas are great, and the ideas can be helpful, but the ideas are like little tools, . One thing I talk about is if you use a wrench to fix a toaster, once you're done with the wrench, you put the wrench away and you just enjoy the toast, and something happens, that's having the toast, eating the toast, that was the point of it, it wasn't to carry the wrench around for the rest of your life. And so something happens, that's why I call it living realization, something happens in our experience that we use the words and the pointers to bring us to the experience of that, and we don't have to completely discard the words because we can't really ever discard language, if we're ever going to communicate we never can really discard the words, but we can see that our experience is there's something else here that's happening that's not just a bunch of words, that it's an energetic experience of life. And that's what those words are there to help people find in their own experience, and that to me is the mysterious part. I don't have the answers, I can only say here are the tools that helped me, why don't you try these tools and see if they help you.

TRIP: Most great teachers like you don't particularly care to talk about their own personal story, because they don't feel it's all that relevant, but you suffered you say through 20 years of addiction, and not much helped. And I thought it might be interesting just briefly to talk about that, because it led to you developing a Natural Rest, which is a holistic addiction recovery method based

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on presence, and in fact your whole teaching is that presence is a palliative medicine for everything.

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes.

TRIP: And so can you talk about your addiction and then your Natural Rest method?

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes. I won't go into all the details, because my story of addiction is like so many other stories, there are just so many of us that have suffered in that way. But I just early on started using drugs and alcohol to escape and then it became to where I had no choice, but I had to take something just to feel, quote "normal", and to function. And then it got so bad that it had totally taken over my life, and I had really, really gotten to a place where my health was being threatened, my life was really being threatened, because of what I was doing to myself. And I just had one of those moments where I knew that, as I say, one more drug is too many, but a thousand is never enough. So it was one of those crossroad moments where it was like I knew something had to change and it did change, and I was able to get clean off the drugs. But what I found is that the core element of seeking didn't really leave me, it's like this substance got taken from my hands, and I felt freedom from the substances that I had been... but I noticed that it shifted towards other things, it would shift towards food, it would shift towards self-improvement, it would shift towards all these other things, and then eventually it shifted towards enlightenment. But I noticed the underlying thing that was there was just this sense that there was something missing and something wrong.

And finally I met the nondual message, and what it was telling me is that if you'll relax into your very presence *Now* that before your name, before your story, before anything that arises, even a craving energy, or anything else, and just relax in the space in which all that stuff is happening, the stuff that wanted to pull you into the next moment, or to reach for that object, those energy arisings began to lose their power, and they start to be seen just as

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like, as I say, in the Natural Rest book, they're like ripples on a pond. It's like you're the pond, and you're completely still, and you're fine and complete just as you are, and the ripples, they take a different perspective, they seem to be just little aspects, movements on the surface of what you are. And from that place, the seeking energy and the addictive cycle just releases itself naturally from that.

So in a way I do think, although I wouldn't say presence heals for example cancer, or anything, I think it goes a long way in healing what most people are suffering from, which if you get to the root of it is suffering from this sense of separation, this sense of I am an embodied separate person that feels incomplete and that is moving in a story of time, and that I need in future some other thing, whether it be an object or at a later point in time to be complete. And so that's the core affliction, and so the answer for me was to recognize that when I look from awareness, present awareness, when I rest and relax as that, and I see all of the phenomena simply coming and going in what I am, then I start to feel a sense of completeness that's always here, and then I don't have to... and there's just a natural relaxation, I don't have to then seek after this object and that object, and it just heals that, whatever that was that was operating before that sense of lack, that sense of separation just gets healed in that somehow.

WIZARD: Beautifully expressed, beautiful.

TRIP: He's unbelievably articulate.

WIZARD: Beautifully expressed, wow.

TRIP: I did not read all your stuff, I just read *Living Realization*. So many of the questions I'll have for you today are coming from that. But I'm going to read all your other books, because I was really blown away by *Living Realization*. And some of our listeners are pretty established, and others may not be, but I just thought we might go through this really basic approach that you have in *Living Realization* where you say there's really only three

things that we have to do, and being able to say that is pretty fantastic, it cuts it down to something that's manageable. Can you say what those three things are?

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes and this really just comes from my own experience. The first one is just to recognize awareness as always present, and I'll get back to that in a second. The second one is just to let the appearances be as they are, which is an old meditative practice. And then the third one is just to see that the appearances are inseparable. And it flows in a nice direction there, because the first thing that I tell people is have you ever just throughout the day as often as possible just rested without having to exercise your story, or the various viewpoints, or labels that you've been, so just take a moment. And sometimes I'll start with people, and I'll say, try it right *Now*, like just five seconds, or even three seconds, where you do nothing but just rest without your story. And by keeping an experience like that, it's hard for them to then say that they can't recognize awareness as in their experience, because they just did it. And although it might not at first be this incredibly enlightening experience with all sorts of bells and whistles, what it does give them is a sense of rest or a sense of just very short moment of completion that everything is okay here at the core level. And then I just invite them to revisit that briefly but very repeatedly throughout the day, and to get away from the idea of meditation in the morning. You can still do meditation in the morning or whatever you're doing, but really taking these moments throughout the day as often as possible, and that's the first part of it, recognizing awareness.

And then I do a little bit of coaching with people sometimes just meeting them one-on-one and saying, of course you can do this, you can do this in the middle of when your kids are yelling, you can do this in the middle of being in the grocery store or being in a hurry. Because all that I'm saying is taking a moment without emphasizing your viewpoints or thoughts, I'm not saying take a moment to experience pure bliss in the middle of your anger, I'm not saying that. I'm saying take a moment and just to relax all

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your viewpoints for a moment, even if you're feeling anxious in the body, you can let that energy just be there in the body.

So the second part of it is just that, it comes from an old teaching, letting all the appearances be as they are. I've heard many teachers talk about that, it was really, really helpful for me, it's also an old Dzogchen practice, but it just means that from that place that's recognizing awareness as always present, you start to see that awareness is like space in that it doesn't come and go, it's not moving anywhere, it's just awake and always available. But all of the appearances are coming and going, so all of the thoughts, and the emotions, the sensations, the experiences, the states, all the colors, the object, everything in the phenomenal world is coming and going within your view. And so the suffering and the seeking, and the conflict comes from instead of recognizing yourself as that space in which all the appearances are coming and going, there tends to be a clinging towards the various appearances. So it might be a view of myself like a thought that says, I'm not worthy, or I'm unattractive, or for whatever reason, I'm in debt and I'm going to retire as a homeless person, or whatever. Those are appearances, those are thoughts we suffer because instead of relaxing as the open awareness that we are, we move and cling, we so to speak, emphasize that viewpoint and then add other viewpoints on it, and then we feel lost in that phenomenal world of thought, when all we ever have to do is relax again and recognize that we're the space in which the thoughts are coming, and just literally to stare at the thought as you would stare at a star at night. And when you stare at a thought that way, it melts away into space, it loses its force.

So that's the second part of this, just letting all the appearance be as they are, and that means getting people out of their heads from the neck up, and more into their body from the neck down, so that they can begin to experience the bodily sensations and emotions that have been there all their life, but they weren't directly aware of them. So for example, if a thought comes to you and says, I'm going to retire as a homeless person and I'm going to lose everything. With that thought there's usually a corresponding

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bodily energy, a fear, but very rarely are humans able just to experience that fear directly as pure energy without labeling it and without emphasizing the thought. So I get people used to experiencing their bodily energies as different arisings than the thoughts, so that they can become aware of all of those energies, and let all of those energies just arise and fall within what they are. Once people start doing that, they start to experience a natural ease in their lives, they start to experience that they're able to recognize this awareness in all situations, and that they're able to allow all the phenomena just to appear in disparate, they don't feel like they have to do anything with it anymore. They don't have to change it, they don't have to understand it, and they don't have to categorize it, which takes a lot of the pressure off of living. And what opens up so wonderfully is that there's just wisdom there, there's an ability to be and experience your Self as the flow of life instead of having control and manipulate all the phenomena. And then at that point, then I get people to recognize themselves as this awareness, you can see all the appearances as coming and going within that.

Then it just takes a little bit more to see the third thing, which is that appearances are inseparable from the awareness, and that just comes from really looking closely into our experience. For example, if you look at a chair, something as simple as a chair, the mind has been superimposing its memory where it stops one so much on our experience. It's almost like the chair is telling us it's a chair, it's a separate object. But a chair never speaks, it never says anything, it's a thought that comes up to habitually label that as a chair. But as you start to see that that's just a thought, and when you see that the thought is inseparable from awareness, in other words, it's a movement of awareness, it's moving inseparably within awareness, when you walk up to the chair and you look at the color of the chair, when you're looking from awareness, you're not looking from person, I'm Scott, an object, looking at a chair, you're looking from that awareness that you've *Now* recognized.

You can't find a line between the awareness and the color of the chair, or the shape of the chair, it appears. Even if you found the

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line it would just be some thought that the mind is superimposing, it would say, you would have another idea. But when you're looking without thought, you're just seeing color and color just appears inseparably within the space that you are. And then even if you went to touch the chair, because people say, okay I get that, but then I go to touch the chair, because that's what makes it feel like a separate object. But if you feel, your fingertips never talk, they never say I'm touching a chair, they merely experience softness or some other tactile sensation. They never superimpose an object on the other side of that sensation, they just have the raw sensation, and that raw sensation is happening within the awareness too.

So we start to see that all objects are like that, that they're being experience as objects because we have thoughts and sensations happening inseparably within awareness. But that becomes like this really beautiful discovery in your life, you walk around and I tell people, try to find a separate object, just try it. And you might find a thought here and a sensation there, or even an emotion there, but you never find the object, you only find those things, and all those things are happening inseparably within the awareness that you are. That takes them through the third part of it, which is the inseparability or nonduality.

WIZARD: Wow, absolutely we're looking at a blue chair in the studio here.

TRIP: When you read his work, and it's full of exercises to do, but they're very simple, you can do them right from the chair where you're at while you're reading the work and you just able to move from conceptual thought and away from conceptual thought. And then that's really pleasurable, and then you go back to some really juice conceptual edification, and then you go back to letting go of it. It's a wonderful flow back and forth.

WIZARD: Remember the book, *Be Here Now*, A mandala with just a chair sitting there in the middle, just not saying anything.

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TRIP: I just think that we're in this fabulous time where guys like you have taken this nondual teaching to the starship level. And for example, I revere Ramana Maharshi, and it was a book, a wisdom of his that woke me up and the Wizard reveres Ramana as well, he's had a central place in his spiritual edification. But for example, Ramana talks about the I-thought, for example, he doesn't really break it down that much. But you have, for example, a term you call the self-center, you say it's more than just the I-thought, it is more than just thought in emotion, in fact it is an entire physical and emotional contraction supporting a time bound thought based story. Now that's taking Ramana's stuff and putting it on steroids.

WIZARD: The I-thought arises with all we perceive, all simultaneously.

TRIP: I don't know where you get all your stuff, but you've really got a delicious way of looking at it. So I've got a follow up question on that. You talk about the triangle of the self-center, and you can talk a little bit about the self-center, which is your version of the ego, and you say the conceptual stuff makes it appear that we're in storyline, like a movie. But I have a question for you and this is probably, I don't know, it's not a great question, but one thing that I find difficult to overcome in seeing the storyline for what it is, simply a movie, although I am able to do that fairly well at times. But there's a consistency to the story that goes beyond facts, and has to do with your karma, your good luck, you know what I'm saying? And it tends to colorized everything, even these disparate events, and what not, tend to take on a feeling, there's a cohesiveness to your life story that is more than just events and stuff, what I'm talking about, Scott?

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes, it gives it personal meaning like you're moving from one point in the sense that things are connected to other things, and that's why it's so convincing.

TRIP: But even like I mean, don't you feel yourself to be incredibly blessed?

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SCOTT KILOBY: Absolutely.

TRIP: And I bet you have all kinds of wonderful friends, and beautiful other things going in your life, and doesn't it almost seem beyond a random series of events that happened to you? Doesn't it almost take on a consistent feeling, and isn't that easy to attach to as more than just a story, but rather... I don't know.

WIZARD: Like Forest Gump, Forest Gump said I'm not smart, but I know what love is.

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes. Well when you get to that level, it's quite a Mystery and I don't even really contemplate it on that level, because for me nonduality was not that I came to an understanding of how the universe works, it was all about experience to me. I mean, when I got deeply into the experience, it just seemed like something opened up so that the freedom to live in this Mystery and to watch it unfold, without believing that I know what's going on, that's what happened for me. So I'm so open to all sorts of stories about how the universe works, and the Mystery, and the magic of it all, I think it's just beautiful.

I can just say that from my... often what people are surprised when they talk to me, is that I didn't figure out how it really is, I simply looked into my experience and found that I couldn't find any separation, and when I couldn't find any separation, a lot of egostential confusion, and angst, and separation just simply relieved itself so that I could just be and enjoy this Mystery. But it didn't download information to me that now how it all really works, if anything I just got dumber, in the dumbness I was able to experience and enjoy my life much more. I was able to stop clinging to all the viewpoints that say, I know how it really is and simply be in my experience more.

WIZARD: You put a capital M on that Mystery.

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes.

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TRIP: Well you may have gotten dumber, but interspersed in your teaching, and I've read a lot of stuff in the last five years, and this is what I think about all the time, you have your own little juicy way of adding in these little pieces that, maybe they're not unique to you, but they're the first time that I've encountered it. And I'll give you a little example for our listeners, like for example you say we experience a car as if it exists all by itself, now that's not exactly earth shattering. But you say on its own side, independent of thought and the rest of the universe. That sense of things being over there on their own side. A little phrase like that can unlock the mind.

WIZARD: It's fresh, ever fresh.

TRIP: Yes.

WIZARD: Of the living spirit.

SCOTT KILOBY: Go ahead; did you have some questions on that?

TRIP: Well I just think that each teacher, or you may not call yourself a teacher, but each person that has something to share brings these unique little tit-bits that have a way of unlocking little obstructions in the mind of the reader whoever they are and you never know which one's going to do it, so it's great to expose yourself to lots of different stuff.

SCOTT KILOBY: Absolutely. And one of my friends, past teachers, but really a friend is Greg Goode, and he introduced me to Mahayana Buddhism, and they speak that way often about inherent existence, things existing on their own side, which I really think that's what happening, but until we see that the force of thought is behind those objects coming from our side, just as much as anything, and then you start to look at the world that way, that really started to open things up for me. Because in just a phenomenal relative experience of having friends and having a father, or whatever, I noticed that when I look for the objective father or the objective friend that existed on its own side, I

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couldn't find it, I only kept finding my own thoughts and feelings, the sensations. And so I started to experience people as being right here in myself. What was funny about it is even the people that I would get angry at, I would experience them right here with me, like they were right here. It's not like they were out there, because the thoughts, my only access to them were through my thoughts and my feelings, and my sensations, which were also happening intimately right here. But it just took out the separation, and Greg, I was very grateful to him for giving me those phrases, he introduced me to look at it that way. Because it keeps the juice in life, because it's like, we can still have our relationships and be in this world, this Mystery of this world, but at the same time we can be here without that sense of separation.

TRIP: I like to pick out things in the writings of the teachers that I read, and some of the ones that I've picked out here that really struck me, as simple as they are. One of the things you say is notice that two thoughts never exist at the same time and that the first object of thought has to disappear for another to take its place. That is a hellacious proof right there.

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes.

TRIP: Can you talk about that, because that was one of the... The Wizard is laughing. That's like a really solid proof that objects don't appear without a thought, because you can't do two at once.

WIZARD: I love that. [Laughing]

SCOTT KILOBY: Right. But they happen so fast that we don't see it, but what I'll take people through is I'll say look at the image of a tree, if I say the word tree, look at the image of a tree in your mind's eye, or in awareness, and then a tree pops up. And then I'll say now look at the image of a car, and you see how in order to see the car, you have to drop the tree image, you can't have them both at once. And if I say now look at the image of your feet as a mental image, and see if you're going to talk about the feet, you can't have also the tree, and the car. And then of course somebody will say,

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well now I'm in my car, I have my feet, there's the car by the tree, and my feet are right there too. But that thought is one thought appearing, and one mental image, and you can't have that as long as you have... I'm sorry, if you move to the image of your favorite restaurant you lose that image of the car-tree-feet-image. [Laughs] One really neat thing I was going to share with you, I was doing an interview in New York and the guy was saying, he was more interested in speaking about this in terms of God, which I think is beautiful, and he said that whenever he was self-centered he pushed God out of the way. I said; try to have a thought of yourself and the thought of God at the same time. You can only have one or the other, and it helped him see what thought is doing its dividing up reality into parts that aren't really there. And so the idea of a self-chasing enlightenment or self-chasing God becomes clear when you see that both the self is a thought and the enlightenment is a thought, or the self is a thought, and God is a thought. Then it takes you beyond that idea that you're going to somehow think your way into it, and you start to see the illusory nature of these thoughts and what they're doing.

TRIP: Exactly. However, you edified me again in an area that's easy to get into which is that you say living realization is not permanently getting rid of thought either.

SCOTT KILOBY: Right.

TRIP: And I know that for me for a long time there I really felt like I can judge my dissolving here as an ego by how little thought is going on in my head, but that's not really where it's at.

SCOTT KILOBY: It is part of the Middle-Way for me, the Middle-Way being this is not a realization in which you're completely free of thought, or the opposite where you're doing nothing but thinking. There's a middle way in which there's a sense that there's a non-conceptual realization that at the core there are divisions until a thought arises, and when the thought arises it seems to create a division, whether it's between the self and other or between inside and outside, or any other duality. And so

while we're believing all of our thoughts, the separation feels true, it feels like there really are separate things like a chair is a chair by itself, and the sun is the sun by itself. Until we start to recognize that non-conceptual aspect of our experience, and that's where I think a lot of the traditions speak in terms of the quiet mind, or dissolving the conceptual structure into a chair of silence, or pure non-thinking recognition, or non-conceptual. But if you don't leave it there, and you see that from that a thought might arise, or within that a thought might arise, and still this thought doesn't divide the universe, it's simply like a fiction, it doesn't really divide, it's just thinking. And so then it's like you're seeing through the thought, you're seeing the transparency of it, and you no longer believe that it's pointing to a separate thing. It's really like that reflection of the moon on water, it's like it almost has an unreal quality to it, at that point it doesn't matter whether you're thinking or not thinking, because you're free either way, your freedom is not conditioned on either one of those things. And so that's where I think this had to go for me otherwise I was constantly monitoring my experience, and if people get themselves into real... having a quiet mind and resting in silence can be a powerful practice in the beginning, but then in the end can be almost like a crutch because you almost divide your experience between silence and sound, or no thinking and thinking, which you create another duality that in the end it's helpful just to let that one go too. But it sometimes happens later for people.

WIZARD: Ron Dass wrote in *Be Here Now* that when you understand that thought is the thought of the thoughtless, your singing and dancing is none other than the voice of the Dharma.

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes, that's great. Love that.

TRIP: Scott, you've got so much good stuff, man, I love it. Here's another jewel of yours, okay. And this is another one I've fallen victim to this, you say, and it's about oscillation. But you say the sense of being pulled out of awareness comes from the false belief that we're supposed to feel good all the time.

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SCOTT KILOBY: Yes, yes. That just came up for me with the addiction thing. I mean, I saw when I moved from my addiction of substances into my addiction towards enlightenment, I was doing the same thing, I was looking for pleasurable space and experiences and sensation, which kept me like that little laboratory rat on the wheel that just keeps spinning, he thinks he's going to get there if he just accumulates enough experiences or if he tries to keep the good experiences around, or get back to the good experiences. And all he ever does is experience the wheel continuing to go around, and he's really experiencing suffering because the moment I went to chase after... the moment I was moving away from what was presently happening, or thinking that I was moving away, I was seeking in time again to cover that up, or make it go away in favor of some other later experience. But as I begin to just recognize myself as that presence based on which all the positive and negative thoughts, and emotions, and sensations come and go, you really start to welcome all the good and bad because you see that the awareness so to speak can handle all of it, I mean because it is all of it, it is all of it. So awareness is not just good feeling, good thoughts, and pleasurable spiritual experience, it's also it could be just as easily a moment of feeling just bored or angry or frustrated. The point is there's a lot of these things that might die down, they did for me, a lot of the highs and lows, but in the end the freedom for me has been letting all of those things be as they are, because they are already that way. And so to fight that doesn't make sense, it starts to hurt actually.

WIZARD: Saniel Bonder brings that up a lot, the acceptance of that wound frees us from that, just accepting oneself totally and confessing that, as you have done, Scott. I mean, it is part of the letting go and transcendence.

TRIP: I think one of the fundamental illnesses of our culture is that unlike the Native Americans who didn't view any experience as good or bad, it was all beneficial. We bifurcate everything into good and bad, everything.

WIZARD: It's what the mind does.

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TRIP: Now culture does it uniformly, it's everywhere; you can't get away from it. I'm wondering do you think, well this is a silly speculation question, but it would be wonderful don't you think if a culture could flip back into a paradigm shift of recognizing that everything has equal value, that would be a ground changer there, game changer.

SCOTT KILOBY: It would be. I mean, I've often said like just the capacity to experience your negative emotions, just to go into your body and just to feel the energy of anger without trying to get it to go away could probably have a monumental affect on the Earth. I would say it starts a revolution, because I just meet so many people who are just like myself that, like you say, I don't know from an early age if we're just told that boys don't cry, that you need to behave, cheer up, stop crying, whatever. We learn, at least over here in the West, at least in my own experience, I learned that if I could compartmentalize I get attention and praise and acknowledgement when I'm acting happy, and when I say I'm having a good day. And I get shunned or at least told that there's something wrong with me if I'm having something negative, or something coming up. So if everybody would simply be willing to rest and recognize themselves as this awareness and feel anger directly without trying to analyze it, or doing anything with it, I can't even imagine what that would do in our relationships. It would probably change everything.

TRIP: I'm sure it would. I couldn't help but share this, I don't like to occupy too much air time but have you seen the movie *Starman* with Jeff Bridges?

SCOTT KILOBY: I have not, no.

TRIP: Okay. Well he comes to Earth, he's just a disembodied energy and then he takes the form of this dead husband of a woman who's grieving over her dead husband, he's been gone for about a year. And so he's completely innocent, and they go into a diner, and she orders him a piece of cherry pie, and he puts the cherry pie in his mouth and for about the first five seconds from

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the expression in his face, you can tell that he doesn't know whether he's chewing on dog poop, cherry pie, or what, . And it takes about a good three or four seconds of chewing before the qualities of sweetness and cheeriness, get conceptualized, and he's able to break into a smile and go, umm, like that. That's what I thought about when I read your teaching where you say in recognizing awareness, the tendency to identify exclusively with mental labels relaxes. We experience the warmth of the sun directly rather than through the label it's a nice day. I mean, we all go around all day long, how are you, nice day, we don't actually, right?

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes, I think that part of that is a like being aware of the sensory and emotional experience more fully in our experience instead of always collapsing it straight down into a concept. Although the concepts are fine too, it's fine to say it's a nice day, I just think that my tendency was always to live so much in the labels that I forgot that part of the nice day is literally the sun beating down on my skin and the warmth, the raw sensation of that. There's so much to our experience that's so full that when we collapse everything down and just stay only in the viewpoints we kind of, it feels like we miss out on part of our experience, the fullness of our experience.

WIZARD: That ego wants to be a narrator.

SCOTT KILOBY: Yes.

TRIP: You give a lot of stuff away on that website for free, Scott, thank you for very much.

SCOTT KILOBY: No, you're welcome, that's great, yes.

TRIP: Let me see here. I like to make sure I get through all of the things that really blew me away before I just get...

WIZARD: You usually have a tough question. [Laughter]

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TRIP: Where was it? There was a common misperception that you spoke to that I wanted to get to. Anything you want to share while I'm fumbling around for my next question.

SCOTT KILOBY: No, nothing's coming up, I hope the people who are listening are okay with me not having anything to add right here, just I'll just wait until we... we'll just sit here until something comes up, I guess.

WIZARD: Dead airtime is okay.

TRIP: All right, well you are particularly talented in providing folks with simple exercises to undertake that are extremely helpful in moving through where they're at, and let's just have you talk about a couple of them. For example, what's the un-findable object inquiry that you do?

SCOTT KILOBY: Again that came from some of my work with Mahayana Buddhism but I modified it for myself to put it into the living realization stuff. What it is, it's a way of questioning your experience where you start out with a notion that something has a separate existence. I call it just an object, it could be yourself, and it could be another. I've done this inquiry with people on things like death, on Fibromyalgia, cancer, financial debt, just on the witness, people get to a place where they establish that they're the witness, all phenomena, the witness feels like a stuck position. So I've done on that, so it could be any object, physical or otherwise, and what we do is I ask a series of questions, I pull up little arisings one at a time and I say, is that the object? So in other words I'll pull up if I started with... Well, to do it with the self, someone comes to me and says, I'm unworthy, and I just feel like nobody likes me, I'm depressed, such and such. What I'll say is, is the thought, *I'm unworthy*, and is that the person? Because all these thoughts seem to be describing or pointing to the person but we ought to be able to find is the object, the person. If we can't find them then they might experience the emptiness of that object and experience the emptiness would be that no-self. So let's ask the question, is this thought, I'm unworthy, if the thought itself is

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that the person? And then the first reaction might be well yes, because that's me. And all that means usually is that some emotion or sensation in the body's coming up with it. So then I direct their attention into the body, and I say, what's happening when you have that thought? And they'll say something like I'm feeling a sadness. So I'll say, is the thought I'm feeling sadness, is that the person? And they'll say, no. So I'll say, then drop that thought and be with the actual sadness as a pure energy non-conceptually. And when they sit with energy they start to see that the emotion itself doesn't have nearly the power that it did when they were describing it, or when they were only in the viewpoint. So the emotion starts to fill empty and I'll say, is that emotion the person? And they'll say, no, that's just energy. So I'll say, go back to the thought, unworthy. But now that they've faced the feeling, the thought loses its power because the feeling's a sense fueling the viewpoint. So now that the emotion has been seen as empty, I go back to the thought and I say, is the thought I'm unworthy, is that the person? They say, no, that's just a thought.

So then we go to the next thought, the next thought. We literally get to this place where it's a direct experience of emptiness, because where they thought there was an inherent object they found only this arising followed by that arising, none of which are the person itself, and so just leaves them that emptiness, and often just stops the mind, the mind just withdraws from its ability of thinking that there's a separate person there. It's just a little tool that I do with people, then I try to help them go out and use it on their own, it usually takes two or three times of just meeting with me so they can understand the process, how it works, because there's a few things you have to do in order to really make it effective.

TRIP: Well thank you. So we've got just a couple more minutes. What are the opportunities over say the next few months that people will have to hang with you? What are all the different means by which they can do that?

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SCOTT KILOBY: Yes. Well right Now we're in the middle of *Living Realization* online meetings, we're using a technology that everybody can see each other on web cam, it's really wonderful and we're having a lot of fun with that. Meetings are full though, and so we're going to announce a new series of meetings starting probably in the beginning of June, but those will be announced on our website, www.livingrealization.org.

The other thing is that I'm constantly meeting with people just to help them explore their experiences; we're doing that on one-on-one sessions so people can email me at scottkiloby@AOL.com and set up a one-on-one that way. I'm also on my kiloby.com website on the meetings page, I'm traveling to different places, a host of places I'll be if you want to meet me there, and we can talk about these things there. And then of course this summer I've got the Natural Rest method which is an addiction recovery book based on this stuff, and so I'm really excited about that, to get out there and talk to people who want to look at recovery in a different way. So those are the main, I hope I'm not forgetting anything, those are the main ways that I'm active this year. And maybe through one of those ways people can find out what they need, and find what they need.

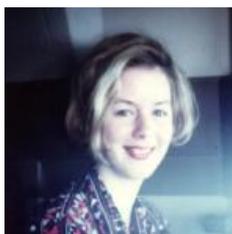
WIZARD: I want to say, Scott, Wizard's hat off to you my friend, and this has been real jewel. Thank you.

TRIP: Scott, I usually ask somebody a few tough questions because there might be a hint of something that I think I've dug into, but man, you're clean, and wonderful, wonderful teacher, and down to earth person. Thank you so much for being with us today.

SCOTT KILOBY: Thank you guys for being gracious hosts, you've been nothing but kind and what a pleasure, I'd love to do it some other time but you guys have a good day.

TRIP: All right, I appreciate it.

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“Reading and listening through *Conversations with Avant-garde Sages* left a sweet taste of joyous Silence, all-pervading peace and exhilarating bliss – I highly recommend Trip Overholt’s outstanding masterpiece birthed in conjunction with his wise friend, Wizard John Troy.

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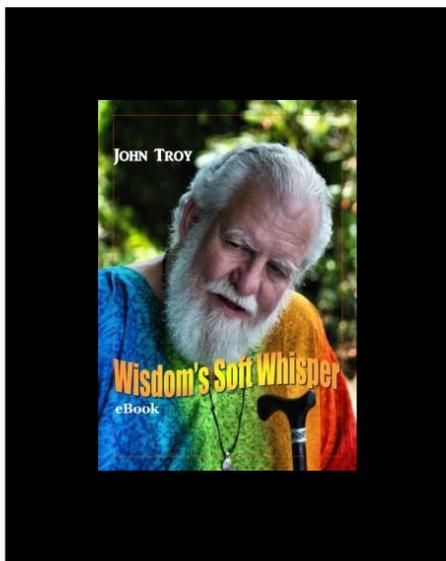
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