

Inner Peace Solutions

Q & A's On Inner Peace

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InnerPeaceNow.com

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www.InnerPeaceNow.com

Inner Peace Solutions

InnerPeaceNow.com began in 2012. I had gone through a significant inner shift, experienced a great release of past emotions, pain and negative habits, and I found myself writing articles to help others who were seeking to be find freedom, stillness and inner peace within themselves.

Many people began to ask questions. I was able to write responses or answer them directly during [guidance sessions](#). Some of these conversations are shared here for you to gain benefit from too.

Click a question from the contents page that resonates for you, and read the response below.

I am always available to [contact here](#) if you need support, and if you are seeking to go deeper into inner freedom or emotional wellness, I have a range of [books and eBooks for inner peace that can help you here](#).

I hope you enjoy the questions and responses below, and thanks for subscribing to the website. I hope it greatly assists in your awakening, bringing true joy, peace and power to your life.

Speak to you soon,

Adam Oakley

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How Does Presence Lead To Effective Action?

Question:

"How does living in the moment, accepting things and already being at peace fit in with doing things in the world and achieving goals? Where does ambition go? If you already feel happy and at peace, why would you want to do anything?"

Response:

This is a common question. Most people's action comes from a sense of fear, or a feeling of lack, as if something in the future will permanently satisfy them. Often people do things, work and plan because they are afraid of what will happen if they don't. Or they feel like once they get something or someone, or achieve a certain goal, then they will finally be happy.

(This is not the case for all people - many of the most "successful" people in the world work for the pure enjoyment of it and what it can bring to other's lives.)

As you become more present, your reason for action changes. You already feel at peace, safe and secure, fulfilled, so you no longer look to the world to give you these things. At first it may seem as if you are going in a totally different direction to everyone else, as you see that everything you do and experience is transient. As you dwell in the present, fear diminishes, since you are not lost in concepts or lost in time.

Any action you take or motivation you have then comes from a deeper place. It may not always be there - you may go through cycles of little or no activity to cycles of intense activity - or somewhere in the middle. It depends on the individual. Your action becomes inspired by the evolutionary impulse of the universe, for the good of all. You are not so concerned with the fruit of your action, and instead act or work fully in alignment with the present moment. You become truly inspired. When

you function from this place, your work is actually of far higher quality and more likely to produce abundant fruit.

You operate from abundance. From a place of needing nothing - implying that you already have everything. Any obstacles that arise are fully accepted and worked around or through if possible. Life starts to use you for a greater purpose, rather than you trying to get something out of life.

To allow this kind of action or goal setting to arise, you have to align yourself with the present, which means fully accepting what is arising at this moment. Even if you are in a job you don't enjoy or an undesirable financial or living situation - acceptance will allow for useful change to arise.

Acceptance makes things lighter, less serious. It instantly places you in a place of inner freedom and transcendence - which will mean no suffering. Acceptance also takes you deeper into your formless nature - allowing space to arise to bring forth some inspired or useful action.

Do not worry if you are not suddenly filled with inspiration or "know" what your outer purpose in life should be. Surrender. Get in touch with the infinite field of still awareness and intelligence that runs the universe. Be that. Dwell as that. Then if your body can be used for any useful purpose - it will be. Remain conscious and present and allow life to work through you.

Do not question cycles of inactivity. Others may label it as laziness or failure, but cycles of inactivity are just as important as those of great activity. They can be rest periods, periods of contemplation or spiritual growth, often phases that lay the groundwork for a later creation or work in the world. These periods can also show the ego in you, or bring it to the surface - the thing inside that feels insecure, hates uncertainty, or feels inferior because it does not have some sort of label in the world e.g a career, job, specific personality etc. - all these things are nothing to do with who you are.

Periods of stagnation or external uncertainty/insecurity are blessings if you use them to disidentify from what is not real in you.

As you continue to disidentify from ego, you are the awareness in which the actions of the body take place. The body is moved to take action by itself - you are just the awareness. From this place you're at peace already, and the body moves in accordance with the divine intelligence that runs the universe.

You will not search for your sense of self in external things, so your egoic ambition will diminish. You may have goals, but they are based around what you can create or work towards that will benefit others, rather than enhancing your sense of self. You are no longer deluded in believing some "thing" in the future will bring you lasting satisfaction. You see that "now" is all there is. Then your actions take on a far greater power, and you are moved towards work that is in accordance with your inner state of consciousness.

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Nothing To Say To Others

Question:

"I am finding it hard to talk to people now. Everyone is obsessed with 'doing' stuff, as if you are no good or your life is boring if you are not doing lots of things. I do not know what to say to these people who are constantly asking me questions like 'what are you doing at the moment?'."

Response:

The world is mostly ego-dominated, so most of the world is obsessed with doing. Constantly being lost in doing things is one of the ego's ways of preserving itself, of keeping distracted and occupied, and keeping its personality in place. "If I did nothing, then I would be no-one" - seems to be an unconscious assumption of many people - and being "no-one" is scary to the ego - since it implies its destruction.

When you are fully accepting the present moment, words flow from you if they are required. You do not have to do anything, they just arise. Or they may not - you may find no words emerging from the silence of your being - but this is not to be judged by you. Others may mistake silence for rudeness - but this is only because the ego is threatened by this silence. It can imply the truth that the ego does not exist.

Surrender yourself and trust that the right words will emerge when required - and you will find that they do.

Allow people to be - allow them to ask you seemingly absurd and ridiculous questions - just be aware of what reactions it provokes in you, and simply dwell as the awareness of them. Other people show you what is still reactive and egoic within yourself.

As you become more at ease in these situations through surrender - you will probably find that they manifest less for you in your external experience, since the egoic state of consciousness that produces these external experiences is being dissolved.

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Being Judged For No Career

Question:

"People are judging me for not working or doing much for a career at the moment. I know that it should not matter what others think but it still makes me feel uncomfortable."

Response:

The thing that is uncomfortable is the ego in you. Use this as a chance to disidentify from it. What is around this feeling of discomfort?

"...nothing"

Yes, yet this nothingness can be perceived by you. It could also be called space or stillness. This space is not affected by what others think, nor is it affected by any feelings of discomfort that arise within it. Give more attention to this feeling of space, ignore the feelings of discomfort.

The space is eternal, full of peace and tranquility. As you remain in this space, as this space, any uncomfortable feelings or reactions will weaken by themselves.

Know that the thing that cares about opinions and judgements of others is purely the ego - nothing to do with you. Since it is nothing to do with you, let it be, do not identify. This is freedom.

You can also notice the futility of caring what others think - all it does is cause you confusion and suffering. People are so quick to judge, and their judgements are always based on their own conditioning - so it really is nothing to do with you.

Most people do not even see you - they just create a mental image of who they think you are, and take that to be "you". It is meaningless, so give it no meaning or authority over you.

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Law Of Attraction Meets Presence

Question:

"How does the Law of Attraction and "The Secret" fit in with being present and conscious?"

Response:

The Law of Attraction (sometimes called "The Secret") basically states that your external world is a reflection of your internal world. If you think a certain way about certain things - these things will manifest externally in your life. Thoughts are things. People then use, or try to use this to get what they want, and manifest the life they desire.

Everyone is using the law of attraction all the time - but many may not be aware of this, or aware of the effect of their thoughts on reality.

This is not disputed in many spiritual teachings - that the world is a projection of yourself. Your thoughts directly influence what is perceived to be your external world. Often people may believe that going deeper into the infinite peace of your true nature is opposite to using the law of attraction. It is not. The only difference may be the motives behind manifesting certain things, and the ease in which they are done.

As you become more present and conscious, you are not bound to the things of the world. In programmes like "The Secret" it seems to be implied that manifesting your desires leads to permanent happiness. However, permanent happiness comes from inside you, and is actually a basis for manifesting something, rather than something that you get from manifesting something.

People who use the law of attraction with little awareness of who they really are, just continue on a cycle of desire and fulfilment of desire. There is never a point of "ok, that is enough, I am finally truly satisfied" - since the ego, searching for happiness in external things or in time, is never satisfied. Some people may enjoy this, and will continue through life

constantly desiring things and then satisfying the desire, until desire emerges again.

Others may realise that nothing they create will give them a lasting sense of wholeness, and so they seek a deeper, lasting fulfilment that is not dependent on any transient form, but is part of who they already are.

As you realise you are already at peace and already happy, manifestation becomes more natural. It does not feel forced, and is not done because you feel like you will finally be happy once you get this or that. Manifestation happens through you. It becomes less serious. It becomes a play. The Universe uses you to create, and you create from a place of fullness and abundance.

From here you will not be concerned with what your external reality can give you. Yet, as you feel safe and peaceful already - your external reality changes to reflect this.

The law of attraction talks about believing that you have a certain thing or situation already - so that it first becomes an internal reality which will manifest externally. That is what you are doing with presence - you already have feelings of peace, happiness, abundance and satisfaction (which is all any of us are really looking for) - so your external reality can not help but reflect this.

Rather than searching for happiness in "things", I would suggest trying an experiment - use your external world to become more conscious. Try it out, and you will find a deeper lasting happiness, rather than a dependent, transient one. Since the world is a projection of your mind, use it to see what is still negative in you, what you still react to, what false identity you are still clinging to.

Without the external world, we would not be so easily allowed to witness these egoic traits within us. Our external lives trigger conditioned reflexes still present in us, which we can then disidentify from by using awareness.

Use the world to realise your freedom, rather than being dependent on things to be a certain way to be happy. Get in touch with the untouchable stillness and peace that is always within you as a silent, formless presence.

As you use your external world in this way - you break free of the world and of your mind, the fear of death diminishes and you realise what you are. All the forms of the world then seem meaningless and shallow in comparison to being in touch with who you are, and in this state you actually manifest an abundant, peaceful lifestyle, since this is a reflection of your inner reality.

Things of the world are still enjoyed, but they no longer matter so much.

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Being Let Down

Question:

"I keep getting let down by people in my life. It seems to be a cycle that keeps repeating itself. Do you know why this is happening and how I can stop it?"

Response:

Look at your reaction to these things. How do you feel about it happening?

"...I feel ok, as if I have to take action and make plans whenever these people are no longer involved in part of my life."

There must be some negativity in you, though, since you are asking me how you can stop this happening in your life. This is some kind of resistance, saying that you want it to stop. This is fine, since it brought you to ask this question, but you must be aware of any negative or resistive reaction in you.

If you still react negatively, you will continue to experience this in your external world. It is as if the negative reaction, in a dormant state, manifests something externally to trigger itself internally, to keep it alive. As you remove your identity from your reaction - there will be nothing to manifest this in your life anymore.

"I hadn't thought to mention it earlier - but I actually do feel quite a strong rage against the person who has let me down."

Ok, so you are now aware of the reaction that may have been somewhat unconscious before. This is an egoic reaction, full of resistance and judgement. You are the awareness of all of this. It is witnessed by your presence. As the reaction arises, let it be, do not judge, and be the silent space in which it is all witnessed.

It seems at first as if resistance and anger can help resolve an issue, or stop it from happening again. Actually the opposite is true. Resistance will

hold the situation in place, and will keep it manifesting again and again for you. Acceptance of your internal pain will transmute your negative reaction into peace. Be the loving space in which your reaction arises, and you will see you are not the one reacting.

This is all I can advise to stop this pattern repeating itself externally for you. Whether it happens again or not - you will be free anyway.

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Depression

Question:

"I need your help, I feel so depressed and I just want the feeling to go away."

Do you feel depressed at this moment, here with me?

"..No, I feel ok at the moment."

Then how can you be depressed if you are not depressed at this moment?

(laughs) "I know what you mean, but the depression will come later, it comes in waves."

Do not get involved with psychological time, particularly when it comes to depression. Depression is based on time. There is only this moment, the now. That is all there is. All else is imagined. You are not depressed, because you are not depressed now.

If a wave of depression comes later, do not identify with the feeling. It is not real, since it comes and goes. Let it be completely, do not even try to stop it or wish it was not there. Remain as the space around it, the untouched stillness in which emotions arise. As you do this the depression will weaken by itself, and you will no longer feel as if "you" are depressed.

As you realise you are the awareness of depression, identification with the emotion is removed. Then the emotion is not nearly as troubling as it first was.

As you remove identification with the feeling of depression, the feeling will disappear by itself. Whether it disappears instantly or not will be irrelevant to you - since you will already be free.

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Self-Hatred

Question:

"I have been experiencing extreme self hatred, how can i feel better? I try to talk myself out of it but it does not seem to work."

Response:

All the "voices in your head" are that of the ego. Even the voice that seems to be "talking yourself" out of feeling bad, this is also ego. You must remain as the awareness of all of this, do not identify.

"...Ah, I did not realise 'the second' voice in my head is not me, but just another part of the ego."

As self hatred comes, be the neutral awareness of it. As resistance to this comes - it could be the "talking yourself out of this" - be the neutral awareness of this as well.

This kind of suffering can quickly take you deeply into your true nature if you treat it the right way. Suffering like this forces you out of identification with what is not real, with what is painful.

If you can fully welcome suffering as it arises, you will not be negatively effected by it any more. See it as a chance to go deeper into peace, by fully accepting this pain. Anything else, such as judgement or resistance, will just make it worse. If you are to transcend and transmute the pain into peace, you must fully accept it.

Be the space for it to do what it wants. Completely surrender.

Even your self-hatred is part of the "isness" of the present moment. When you do not believe the judgements your mind makes of it, then you see it simply is. Let it be.

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How Can I Stop Feeling Angry?

Question:

Hi Adam, I have read your page on how to deal with anger, but I am finding it very difficult to put into practice. Some things just seem to get me so angry that I can not free myself from it. The feeling is so strong I do not know what to do to lessen the pain. I try to "surrender" and accept that it is there but this does not seem to work. When I become the awareness of it this seems to make it worse as well. Any help would be much appreciated, thanks.

Response:

Hello. It seems that you are still resisting the anger at some level. There is no "try" in surrender, it is a relinquishment of all trying. Surrender is what is left when you give up all trying, all resistance, any attempts to control your thoughts or emotions. If you were truly surrendered, you would not care if the emotion is there or not, since you would have no identification with it.

In this state of surrender/nonresistance/acceptance, you do not mind the anger being there. It can stay as long as it wants, but you have no part in it. Do not get involved with the anger, do not touch it, just let it be. When you do not get involved, you do not mistake it for who you are. You are then untroubled by any pain that it brings. You are not the one suffering, you are the awareness of any suffering.

If you try to get rid of anger, wish anger was not arising in you, or have any concept of "I should not be feeling anger", this is all resistance, part of the anger that keeps it alive. Do not resist it in any way. Since this anger has nothing to do with you, do not interfere with it, leave it alone. Then you are free whether the anger is there or not.

Only when you are in a state of acceptance that leaves you neutral as to whether anger is in you or not, only then will the anger begin to weaken and leave.

True freedom is being free even in the midst of suffering. The emotion then takes care of itself, and is no longer kept alive through your identification.

Take the "I" or "me" out of your anger. Take the "anger" out of the anger, simply by not labelling the emotion any more.

Your question says that when you become the awareness of it, this seems to make it worse....

-First of all, you are the awareness of it already, forget the idea of "when I am the awareness" and "when I am not the awareness" - who is talking here? The mind is talking. You are always awareness, aware of everything, even aware of the resistance to anger, or aware of the one that says "when I am the awareness". You are silently witnessing all of it.

-Secondly, it may feel worse at first since your mind may throw up extra resistance to combat your withdrawal from the emotion. This is ok, know it is ok when this happens. Let it. The whole reason for the extra resistance is to pull you back in to the emotion, to take you away from awareness. Witness all of this without judgement.

Remain fearless as the extra resistance arises, remain as the silent presence, accepting what arises. At this moment you are free already, nothing more needs to be done.

Do not believe the mind when it throws up extra thoughts like "yes BUT the anger is still there, how do I get rid of it?" - all this does is pull you back in to resistance.

Welcome what arises in you unconditionally, let it in, feel the essence of the emotion, drop all ideas of good or bad, painful or pleasant, just be the space for all of it, find the stillness in you that does not care whether an emotion is there or not, it is unaffected by what arises. Remain there and stay quiet.

Just because anger arises, do not be tricked into thinking that you have to do anything more, or you have to somehow be more present. Just remain as the neutral awareness, effortless and simple awareness. The rest takes care of itself.

It is extremely difficult to just "stop feeling angry". The emotion has a power and a mind of its own. All you can do is feel yourself as the awareness behind it. When you welcome it and do not expect the anger to dissipate, the anger miraculously dissipates much faster.

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Living In The Now

Question:

Hello, I have a question about living in the present moment. If we were always living in the present, not wanting anything more, how would anything get done? How could we live a normal life if we never thought about the future?

Response:

Before this is answered, let's touch on what can often be misleading for people. The phrase living "in" the present moment can be misleading. It implies that there is a person who can live in the present and can also live out of the present. Really this personal self is just mental construct, it is not real. The real you is presence itself, prior to the emergence of a conceptual person who is sometimes in the present and sometimes not. In fact this inner person who takes credit for doing things does not really exist, it is only an idea.

Let's not make the present moment just another idea, another concept to be in or out of. It is actually all there is. The rest, including the idea of "you", is just imagination.

For this question though, we will continue to use the phrase living "in" the present.

Living in the present moment does not mean there will be no more movement in your life. You may actually find that things become easier, actions become more simple, and progress can be made faster in whatever you are involved in. A tree is constantly in the present moment, yet continues to grow and grow. A flower is constantly in the present moment, yet follows the rays of the sun and opens and closes its buds. A squirrel is always in the present moment, yet it still stores food for the winter. Your life is no different.

When you are in the present, things just get done. Life takes care of itself. There is an underlying intelligence that silently takes care of everything.

This intelligence is interrupted or influenced (often negatively) when the human mind interferes or tries to take over. When you accept the present moment and remain there, you are allowing this intelligence to run your life, which can only benefit you.

You are the awareness of the action your body takes. If you need to get food, it happens, if you need to do anything, it happens. You can still make plans if you wish, but you spend no unnecessary time anticipating or worrying about the future. The present moment is the source of your peace and happiness, you no longer ask that the future (or your imagination) gives this to you.

You may find that a goal or plan of action arises from your peaceful state of alert presence. You may even write a goal or a plan down and then follow that plan. However all of your action towards any kind of goal occurs within the present moment. Your action occurs with your attention fully in the now, and this is when most effective action takes place.

You may indeed find that your life may change on an exterior level. Your need for future satisfaction, activities to do or relationships may lessen, so your experience of the world may manifest to reflect this. You may become less busy or your life may be full of things that require the action of your body and mind. Either way, you are aware that your peace comes from within, the external world can not give it to you, so you do not make this demand of the world.

When you live more in the now, it is normal for our conditioned minds to believe that we will no longer achieve anything or do anything of use or benefit, or we will no longer have the ability to make more money or improve our lifestyles. This is wrong.

Your external reality is a reflection of your internal reality. When you realise that the source of your peace, happiness, abundance and fulfilment are part of who you already are, then you begin to dwell in these pleasant states throughout longer periods. When this state of peace and contentment become your inner reality, your external reality changes to reflect this.

When you live in the present, egoic goals and motivations fall away. This leaves space for the movement of pure consciousness to influence your actions. You could say that you are then acting the will of God.

When you live in this way your physical existence becomes an effortless experience, even if challenges arise. You are already at peace and happy, so you do not ask your outer experience to give you these things. Then your actions take on an energy of very high quality, motivated by the life force and intelligence that runs everything in the universe.

When the ego runs your life, you feel completely separate from everything around you. You feel you are "on your own", and that worrying or being concerned about the future is necessary. As you become present as the awareness of these conditioned mind patterns, you feel that you ARE the whole, one with everything. You are alone in a sense, but as the one underlying consciousness of all things.

Rest as the ever present awareness, and watch everything take care of itself. Action will occur spontaneously.

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Money

Question:

Have you got any advice linking with money? I would find that extremely useful at the moment!

Response:

Only follow this advice if you feel it resonate within your heart/your being. I do not know any details of your situation, so this may seem vague. Hope it helps though.

If you are having "issues" with money, know that the issue is created in your mind. Your money is as it is. The mind will interpret a situation, create thoughts and pictures full of identity and tell you that "this is how it is". If it is a perceived lack of money, and you believe the concepts of the mind, you will continue to feed this situation of perceived lack. The number on the screen of your bank account is just a number. Do not personalise it, identify with it, or judge it.

Without mind, there is no lack. You can not know your financial situation without creating and believing in thoughts your mind generates.

Throw away your mind's interpretation of your financial situation. Leave the concepts, judgements and limitations and go deeper into the formlessness of your own self, where there is no such thing as money, no such thing as a person with money. The person and the person's money matters arise in your awareness, and when they do, give them no importance. Remain in yourself.

The surface of your life and the actions of your body will take care of themselves, and will reflect your natural state of peace and harmony

You will begin to feel at ease in the present, and actually connect with the source of all abundance. This will transform your financial situation far better than dwelling in thoughts will. The main thing to transcend is the thoughts of lack or fear or "not enough", since if these are believed in, they

seem to block the natural state of abundance that is part of who you are as consciousness. Be aware of the thoughts of worry or sense of lack as they arise - and do not believe in them.

However much money you have or do not have - do not take it personally. Do not identify. Do not interpret it through a mental filter. It simply is as it is. Do not believe in your mind's judgements around it. In this state, you are no longer resisting, you are no longer blocking more money coming to you, or preventing useful action arising out of your state of acceptance.

What would happen if you completely accepted your money situation - totally and completely? You would be at peace, yet free to take any action that arises from the intelligence that dwells in your own stillness - if necessary.

You are being looked after. When you believe you are on your own, you dampen your reality slightly to reflect this, yet you are still being looked after.

The mind's judgement of money is often greatly distorted. For example, someone may feel as if they do not have enough money, yet they are worrying whilst living in a house, clothed and fed, with more than enough for what they need at that moment.

Of course you may not suddenly go out and write a cheque for millions, you will likely be aware of how much is in your bank, but there will be no identity, no personality in the financial situation.

When you dwell in the present - for instance now - how much money do you need for what you are doing at this very moment? Much of our "money problems" are completely imagined, and only designed to keep us in a fake identity of a person thinking about their money, and thought about in a dysfunctional way, totally based in time - which is imagined.

The main thing to remember is that any sense of lack or worry you feel - because your mind says that it is justified to feel like this with "this much in your bank" or "this much coming in" - is not justified at all. It only perpetuates the situation. Do not identify with any situation in your life, including money. Then you will see that it is not even you who is at all

concerned. You are never worried and never feel any lack. You may believe you do get worried, concerned etc - but know that this is only identification with ego.

If you believe in the secret, law of attraction etc. - feeling free, abundant and at peace from going deeper into yourself and away from the mind means that you are living like a rich person. No longer worrying or even wanting money means you realise you already are rich, now. Ignore your thoughts and realise that you are not even a person - you are the witness of the person and all of its activities. You are not harmed or troubled by anything - even if the person is.

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Inner Power

Question:

Hi Adam,

I was wondering if you'd ever written or discussed anything to do with inner power?

I don't know if this will make sense but I think (when I go back through my childhood and adolescence) that I was often aware of the power within (the power from the source, the oneness) but was terrified of it. Does that make sense?

I have recently noticed that this is the core of my problem, that in the past (and now, if I'm honest) I struggled to accept and go with the flow of the power inside. It was too overwhelming, enormous, life could be too easy and that was not something that I recognised many others doing...

Have you ever felt that? Are there any tips for becoming at peace with the power that you could explain?

Response:

Hello. The one who is afraid of the inner power is not real. You are the source, you are the oneness which is intimate with this power. The one who fears the power is not you, it is just a mental fiction, a "me" that sees itself as separate from the power, and fears the power taking it over and dissolving it.

It is the ego that is afraid. It feels so small compared with this vastness. So, see for yourself that the one who is afraid is observed by you. It is just a visitor in awareness. Do not take it so seriously or see it to be important. You give the fear importance when you identify with it and link it back to childhood memories. Let it die and see what happens. You will never die, only the fake and limiting will die.

Let everything be as it is when both power and fear arise in you. Just relax and allow all feelings of "me" or "I" to play out as they wish, but relax into the vastness that you can feel around it. There is no need to fear.

Hopefully you can see that this fear is truly ridiculous, since it fears what is essentially the power of God (or the universe), and it protests to an easy and effortless life in which harmony is experienced.

You are not the one who is afraid or not at peace. You are peace itself. Whatever resists inside is simply a movement in your awareness, transient and unimportant, so just let it be. Don't make it personal.

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How Can I Move On From Anxiety?

Question:

Hi, I've been suffering from anxiety for about a year and a half now. I was having horrible thoughts and stomach churning. I know I'm fuelling my anxiety with my need to feel better and I'm getting very impatient.

When I have a good day I then expect the rest to be like that and get very agitated when they are not. I really just want my life back to the way it was. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Response:

Hi,

Is it possible for you to not identify with the anxiety? I realise the feelings and sensations can be intense, perhaps crippling at times, but is it possible for you to not look for yourself in the feelings, to not take them to be who you are? You are the awareness of anxiety, not the anxiety itself.

Anxiety clearly has a mind of its own. You can not control when it comes or when it goes. All attempts to stop it just make it stronger. I would advise total surrender to the emotion. No resistance whatsoever. Anxiety can not survive in an inner climate such as this.

Anxiety is a form of resistance in itself. The mind that reacts to anxiety is a resistance machine. These things can not survive you being an empty space for them, totally allowing them to be, even welcoming them.

An open, accepting inner environment gives these feelings no food to feed on. They can not stand it. Drop all name calling. Don't call it anxiety. Don't identify with the resistive or judgemental thoughts that come with the emotion.

Allow yourself to be uneasy. Allow yourself to be nervous. Allow frustration to arise. Drop the idea that you should not feel this way – since this is resistance.

Adopting this attitude, it becomes more clear that you are the unaffected awareness. Anxiety will weaken by itself if you are to take this attitude of allowance and emptiness, having no preference to whether these feelings come or go.

Even in the presence of anxiety in the body, having an attitude of uncompromising surrender will mean you are immediately free, since you have accepted the emotions in the moment, without mental labeling or identification.

You are far greater than these feelings and thoughts would have you believe. Even the one that suffers the anxiety is part of the illusion - the self image – the “me” inside the mind . The one that suffers anxiety is itself a thought, or a sense of identity – which is also witnessed by the unaffected observer – you.

Only be a silent witness to internal suffering. There is a distinction between suffering and the awareness of suffering. You are the awareness.

Let the ego suffer if it must. It will burn itself out if you practice being the space for the emotion. The space around emotion - in which emotion is perceived - is unaffected by the emotion. Space around emotion does not know anxiety or suffering. It is impersonal space.

Even if the whole body is shaking, let these energies rise to the surface and play out. They are rising into the light of your awareness, and they will soon pass.

Habitually the mind will throw up resistance, which you can allow. Allow everything to arise as it does in the moment. There is no need to take any responsibility for the anxiety. Let it manage itself.

It helps to practice staying rooted within your body. Practice taking your attention within the body and focusing on what you can feel – your legs, arms, breath, torso etc. Only focus on the feeling. Establishing attention here means you will not be swept away by anxiety so easily.

Then when the stomach churning takes place as it may, you can be there simply as a witness to it inside the body - rest your awareness on the feeling, watch it, without letting the emotion rise up into the thinking mind.

It is a paradox that as you allow anxiety and thought to be there, whilst only being a space of awareness, anxiety will weaken without any effort on your part, and your natural peace beneath becomes more apparent.

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How To Apply Inner Peace In The Working Environment

Question:

In my past job I found it very difficult to be able to handle situations that required confrontation, anger management and diplomacy in order just to survive in the working environment.

Although I quit because I couldn't stand anymore the stress and the anxiety (however situations weren't at all like that when I entered this job 10 years ago) - I want to know how to apply the inner peace in such a challenging environment, when you are confronted daily, when there are clear attempts to manipulate you daily and you see all these things in front of you.

After quitting I had a very hard time with myself. Thankfully, this situation was the beginning of my awakening. But I had to suffer a lot.

Sometimes I'm still suffering but things are so much better when I let suffering raise and just watch, being the witness of the suffering.

However, I want to know: How to have awareness in such working environments and how to act consciously to change -for your benefit- such situations.

Thank you so much for your time.

Response:

Hello,

(1)

The first thing I would say is to bring presence in to your life when you are not in a challenging situation. If presence, stillness or peace are not in your awareness when you are in a more calm environment, then when challenges do arise - reactivity to confrontation or anything else will completely take you over.

To feel yourself as the awareness behind thought and emotion is obviously far easier when you do not have a colleague challenging you or piece of work to do with a short deadline. However, if your mind is in control of you when you are not being challenged, then being free of reactive patterns will feel near impossible when you are challenged.

When not at work, notice how often you think negatively about work or the people you work with. Any negativity, resentment or hostility towards working life act as foundations for much more severe reactivity and unhappiness whenever a challenge arises.

As much as you can, when not at work, rid yourself of negative thoughts around work and around people. To do this (as you have mentioned) let these thoughts or feelings come, but only observe them, do not judge, allow them to be. They then naturally weaken by themselves. Noticing their futility - that they only create suffering - is also very helpful

Then when a challenge is presented at work, not only will you be more naturally present and at peace, but there will be a weaker structure of negativity and resistance inside you, which will not be able to grow inside so severely whenever you are challenged.

To sum up the first point – whenever you are not at work, use this as the foundation for inner peace. Be the observer of your thoughts, redirect attention away from the mind by using breath awareness, inner space awareness, outer space awareness, surrender and non-resistance etc. – this is laying your foundation, and increasing your natural state of presence and peace.

(2)

Then when you are at work, your natural state of presence will be more apparent, with the enhanced ability to surrender to the moment and to not harbour negativity. As a result, negative reactivity in response to challenges will have less power over you – there will be more space around them.

Challenges will arise. Instantly accept what is happening, including the internal reaction that comes up. Even if there seems to be an attempt to manipulate you, simply allow what is happening, to happen.

This does not mean you will be paralyzed from taking effective action. Far from it. You will become empowered by something deeper, non-personal. Your actions will not be contaminated by negativity, personal relationships or reactivity, and instead your action will be more clear and non-harmful, if action is required.

It is easy for the ego to take over in the workplace. Not only are there many personal relationships, there is also the apparent hierarchical system, and the ever-present background of people getting paid. Where the ego can thrive can also be the place where it can become hugely exposed and transcended. Use work to let your ego react, so that you can observe it nonjudgementally, allow it to be, and therefore disidentify from it spontaneously.

Do not expect the ego to just dissolve at once. It will likely react and contribute many times to what goes on around, and sometimes draw you into complete identification. All of this is ok. Just being aware that this is happening is enough. Be patient with yourself, and rest in silence.

Let silence and space be the background of your life. Maintain some awareness of silence and space, both within and without, as much as possible. You may find that with a greater awareness of inner space, your ideas and thinking will be cleaner, sharper, and your interactions with others will flow, almost as if they are taking care of themselves.

When confrontation arises, have the attitude “bring it on, let this all happen” – not as a personal fighting attitude towards another, but as a surrendered attitude towards life. Totally surrender and let action take place through you, rather than having the person in the head deliberating and reacting over what to do.

Confrontation can burn up the ego extremely fast, if you can feel yourself as the awareness behind the mental reactions, rather than getting completely dragged in by them.

(3)

A work environment can promote minor negativity such as complaining what others do (even if this is just a mental complaining to yourself). Even this is resistance. Resistance always hurts, and isn't actually very

helpful. Accept others as they are, and from this place, if it is in your power, you will naturally say what you can do to help, but it will not come from negativity – rather it will come from a deeper, natural, creative place.

(4)

Non-resistance is the key, surrender is the key, which is all part of being present. The biggest trick is the ego's view of non-resistance being equated with non-action and paralysis. You may find you have less need to act, but whatever you do will be more useful, and non-reactive. You may even find yourself in a direct confrontation, saying whatever is necessary, but beneath this will be a feeling of space, a sense of non-seriousness, or even lightness.

Once the feelings of dread or negativity around work and colleagues begin to dissolve, effective action will take care of itself. Act from acceptance, working with what the moment presents, not against it. From here your abilities in whatever line of work you are in will be most effectively utilised, and nothing will be taken too personally for you.

More could be said, since the workplace will present so many different opportunities and challenges, so if you need to ask anything more feel free. However I hope this answer can help in some way.

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On Giving Opinions and Following Social Values

Question:

Hello, Adam! I really admire the work you've done here. Being a 24 year old myself, I'm amazed at how much you've delved into the topic and how much it's worked, considering the stigma that there tends to be about people our age.

I have a question regarding giving opinions and following your inner values. I have been suffering with crippling anxiety since last July, started out by a bad past relationship. Long story short, things got worse and worse and then I found Paul's website (anxietynomore.co.uk) and book. Things have been getting better at a rate I never imagined and I am advancing towards recovery at a pace I'm happy with, though it requires patience. I realize that you give the same line of advice, delving more into the spiritual side.

One of the things that started my long road with anxiety was the fact that my ex-boyfriend liked to argue and contradict, for the sake of debate (and being right). Both him and me study political science in uni and it's very common for debates to start there. I've never been particularly fond of debates (because of dislike of confrontation, in one hand, and insecurity, probably a bigger factor than I've thought); this resulted, that I would state things and my ex would contradict them, I would try to refute (and get agitated and frustrated) and he would refute again, and I would just be in a such a hurt emotional place that I would leave it there, leaving me in emotional distress. This caused me to start obsessing about the topic, to the point that I started to become mentally dependent on his approval, and fearing (completely irrationally) that whenever I would read something on the newspaper, on my school texts, etc., he would argue with me if I brought it up. It was painful and completely mad.

That kind of left for a while but now it seems like it's transferred to my father, since he seems to possess the same kind of personality and antics (wanting always to argue for the sake of debate, and more so to win and rub his ego). It's caused me to obsess and get anxious everytime I read my texts from school about confrontation with him to extremely ridiculous

extents--from extremely trivial things (like things I notice while I'm watching TV) to hearing lectures in school.

I've applied the same line of advice given by Paul and you and just let the thoughts be there, though it's incredibly frustrating, because in an environment where I'm supposed to, I guess, be in "thinking mode" (school) these thoughts always interrupt my line of thought or don't even let me start them in the first place. Also, I'll be casually talking with other family members and the slightest showing of opinion makes my mind fill up with dread and anxiety and frustration and anger. And then there's the situation where things are actually happening and my dad starts refuting at the table and I try to drive a point and it's always a nasty process, and it fuels up my incessant fear of the situation. It's...annoying to put it very mildly, and it's the thing that's keeping me the most in the anxiety cycle.

I've been mindful in situations of debate and argument and I've noticed just how much ego can (and does) play a part in them. So I'm left with two choices: either not take part in them (which isn't fair because then it means that my anxiety has completely robbed me of an activity that could let me grow intellectually, and I'm in avoidance mode, a big no no) or participate but end up feeling strange and not engaged (because while I'm mindful, I find it difficult to concentrate on the points at hand and I find the need to say things in return to be less and less).

I...don't want to give up my opinions and intellect (especially when it comes to deep values) because of anxiety and fear. But I also would like to be able to talk about things without getting so heated up and upset (as it seems to happen with most people). A true discussion, in which people share viewpoints and come to an agreement, not something personal and nasty.

My question is: how do you find inner peace when it comes to this situation? How can I overcome these thoughts and obsessions and think more freely? How would you recommend handling the topic of discussing opinions (especially those that are debatable) without losing your peace?

Any help would be very much appreciated. Thank you!

Response:

Hi, thanks for your question.

Overall I have four things mention:

- 1) Not identifying with opinions that arise in you
- 2) Letting other people be
- 3) Not expecting to come to an agreement
- 4) Presence outside debate

1) Not identifying with your own opinions

Not identifying with opinions does not mean that you will never have an opinion again. It does mean, however, that you do not look for yourself in them. You do not take them to be who you are, you do not derive an identity or sense of self from them. Opinions can change, and are by nature often unstable. You are that which is aware of an opinion arising and being formed. As awareness, you do not have opinions, but rather you are the space in which opinions come and go.

When you take an opinion to be who you are, you link your sense of self to it. Then when that opinion's validity is threatened, you will feel threatened. As you have noticed, this is a big driving force in debates and arguments, even more so in school where people may think that their grades (and therefore future) is on the line. To question someone's opinion can them feel as if they are in some way being threatened with death, and rather than it becoming a conceptual discussion about a matter, it becomes a fight for survival.

What if you did not identify with your own opinions? Even the opinions that seem to come from your heart rather than your mind? Let them be there, but do not identify yourself with them. Any useful opinions or viewpoints will remain with you, but the useless ones will leave. Stay present, stay empty inside. Allow what comes to come, allow what goes, to go.

(When anxious thoughts or emotions come, if frustration arises because of their interruptions, then this frustration is a form of resistance. Take another “step back” and do not resist this frustration. Allow it, be the witness of it.)

Then you may find yourself in a situation where you express a viewpoint. Then it may be challenged, but you do not have to defend yourself. Take the idea of yourself out of it. Only words are being spoken. Defensiveness and resistance, or frustration or annoyance may arise inside at any point, but these are also allowed to be as they are.

If a situation requires discussion (like at school), then you will likely find yourself explaining your viewpoint or even questioning another's, but without a heavy sense of personality contaminating it. If your viewpoint is destroyed, you are not. Do not take the thoughts and opinions your mind generates too seriously. Then they can be discussed if necessary, but never clung to or identified with.

Not identifying with your own opinion may feel uncomfortable at first, as if you are being diminished. It may, on the other hand, feel liberating. Let this all happen. Let the ego or your mental sense of self diminish - either through your own disidentifications or through criticisms of others - but do not get sucked into thinking. Stay present. Only the unreal diminishes. Let the ego die, and see what remains - pure presence.

The sense of desperation to prove the validity of an opinion mostly comes from identifying with it, unconsciously trying to prove the validity of one's own self. But this is a mistaken, conceptual self. You are affected by no opinion, whether it arises in you or someone else

Obviously this way of treating opinions would seem like madness to many, and often would not be understood. Of course when you treat opinions in this way and realise what you are (awareness), lose ego etc, the need to argue and debate becomes less and less. Your sense of self is no longer dependent on it. The mind may interpret this as somehow losing your ability to debate at work or school, but I see it a different way. All it means is that your inner state is different, and therefore your method of expression is different.

Some of the best debaters I have seen are very cool headed. They do not seem to get sucked in (as many do) into making the discussion a personal feud. They are not desperate to convince people of their views, yet they can still be enthusiastic – and that can give their words more power and volume. When you do not have the ego contaminating your discussions, you say whatever is required, but you are not dependent on your opinion or view being accepted by anyone. In this state, your mind is far clearer to actually come up with more articulate and intelligent responses. It is in service to the moment, not serving to preserve the ego. Your speaking becomes more spontaneous. It will come from awareness into thinking, rather than from just a bundle of personal thinking.

You may understand all of this, but habitual tendencies will likely still be occurring and operating inside. When they do come up, continue to let them be, surrender, do not identify. The frustration that comes up at school when they interrupt useful thinking, is also allowed to be and is not identified with. Don't identify with anything at all. Doing this and not even expecting these energies to leave is, paradoxically, the quickest way to dissolve them (in my experience).

2) Let people be

Do not try to control other people. Much anxiety comes when we unconsciously want to control what someone else thinks about us or what we say. Give that up. You can not control it. All you can do is speak from the heart (or from a sense of awareness), and how people respond is not your business. Mind your own business. Stay inside yourself. No need to speculate about how you are perceived or what will happen. Habitual needs to control the way other people see you may rise, but this is witnessed, not judged, and not resisted.

No one has to agree with you. The individuals you mention seem to be so blinded by ego and “being right” as you say, that they are no longer debating the issue at hand, they are just trying to preserve themselves. You may have noticed a complete madness arise in them, where they are totally closed to any other opinion, even if the alternative view makes sense. In these situations you can see that discussion is pointless, so you can keep quiet and not waste your energy. It is ok to keep quiet. Most will

tell you it is rude or that it is weakness, but that is because people want you to confirm their existence by talking to them or reacting to their views or actions.

Let silence be your foundation, from where actions or words arise spontaneously, if required.

When you let people be as they are, you do not give your power away. You become less reactive. When you no longer react to another ego who is looking for an argument, they will likely get confused, or even upset. You will speak if it is required, but allow the moment to be as it is (which includes the situation, people and your own thoughts and emotions). Then you do what is required, but without trauma. Letting the moment be means a greater intelligence takes over – you automatically speak if needed, keep quiet if not – there is no strategy involved, it is just natural.

Some people can not help but act out these argumentative traits. It is not even them, just their conditioning. It is as if someone is sleep walking. If your dad was sleep walking, came up to you and started an argument with you, you would likely not take it too personally, since you know he is not at all conscious. He is asleep. Ego is the same thing, the individual does not realise what they are doing, but from an outside point of view, it seems as if they do. This is the illusion.

Again, the pull of the argument or personal concepts may activate inside. Witness it, only be the observer of it. You may even enter a realm of totally spontaneous speaking, where words are being spoken from you, but it does not even feel as if you are doing it. It is just happening, impersonally. Don't expect this spontaneity to come though. It will come of its own accord when you allow the moment to be as it is. If you give over your personal will about what a situation should be, the universal will - will take over. You need to take the first step by creating (or being aware of) the space for it – which comes with surrender to the present moment, being aware of inner and outer space, presence etc.

3) Not expecting to come to an agreement.

This follows on from point 2 – drop your expectations of what should happen. For two people to have a calm conversation, two people are

required to adopt a certain state of consciousness. All you can do is be aware of your own inner state, and any transformative effects that has on the situation will occur by itself.

Be aware of your own reactions. All reactivity, fear, anxiety, frustration, defensiveness, personality, sense of “I” – all of these are witnessed by you. Stay inside. Mental garbage may come up for a while, but it needs to come up and be released. When all these things are kicking off inside, relinquish any opinion about how they should be. Don’t place expectation on what you should or should not feel. Allow, be the space or them. Notice that the space in which all thought and emotion arises, is an empty space. The space is not personal, is always here, and is unaffected by what arises in it. Be the space, not the things in space.

If you have no expectation about where the discussion leads, what can trouble you? Let it be. In this state you will naturally do or say what is required.

4) Presence outside debate.

When you are not in a challenging situation, let this be the foundation for presence. If you have no foundation of awareness, space, presence etc, then challenging events eg. with family or at uni will likely drag you in to negative reactivity.

As much as possible in your spare time, bring presence in. Thoughts are ok, but be the awareness of them. Listen to the voice in the head nonjudgementally. Be empty inside. Do not label the present moment or turn things into concepts. Be aware of space – inside or outside, direct attention away from thinking by being aware of the breath or feeling the body from within. All of these things help increase presence and a sense of peace, so when an external event triggers a reaction inside, it is easier to witness it, rather than being dragged in by it.

With all of this said, if it resonates with you, you will find the need for personal debate, as you have mentioned. You will certainly not feel a need to argue or convince someone else of something.

Yet, what you do say will come more from enthusiasm of a topic, rather than trying to just get “your opinion” across. You may even find things

being said, “confrontation” arising, debates happening, but it will not feel so heavy inside. You will feel more space inside, less seriousness - so people can talk on the surface, but inside there is a more stable foundation/awareness of unchanging stillness.

Being fully present means you will be able to still be with the discussion and points being raised, but at the same time not to be sucked in to the content of it all.

The last thing I feel to say is to give up your own self-judgments and opinions about who you are. You are not a concept. You are awareness. So if self-judgments do still arise, don't give them any importance. They are only thoughts generated by ego. If you have no opinion of yourself, the opinion others have of you will seem quite meaningless.

All obsessive behaviour and speculative activity of the mind is only witnessed by you. It is not you. All concepts of yourself and others are only thoughts, not the reality.

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Enlightenment

Question:

Hello, sorry I did not finish reading your web site yet, may be you wrote somewhere about it.

Did you have an experiment of enlightenment or nirvana? If so, how does it feel or what you felt in that moment exactly? How long did it last and how long did it take you to meditate before you reached it?

Thank you.

Response:

Hello, thanks for your question

I assume you mean “experience” of enlightenment or nirvana. What do you take these things to be? Is nirvana a place that “you” go to? Who are “you” (or “I”) to reach this place?

All experience takes place in you. You are the awareness in which experience happens. Whether the experience is blissful, alive and pleasant, or dull, dark or painful – you are always there, unaffected.

Ultimately there is no experience of enlightenment or nirvana or nonduality, as if they are separate things that “I” experience. If enlightenment is anything, it is the dissolution of “I the experiencer and that which I experience”, until the fundamental reality remains, which is beyond words or description. It can only be somewhat described in negative terms – thoughtless, formless, experience-less, distance-less. Yet it is ever present. What hides it is the feelings of thoughts and individuality.

....Still, these are only words, and this is only one possible explanation. Someone else may say enlightenment is something else – such as a constant conscious connection with the source of life, or God. This is also true. Since enlightenment is a word, a concept which attempts to convey a concept-free reality, it can become a huge obstacle.

If you feel you are seeking enlightenment and want to experience it, who is the one searching for enlightenment? This feeling of searching – are you aware of it, can you perceive it somehow? If you can, then you must be the awareness of the seeker, not the seeker itself.

Do not search for any blissful state, or a state that you have heard anyone speak about. Just follow whatever resonates with you. To report to you some past experience of my own would not be of any use, unless it was something real and unchanging. Experiences and sensations change. Your true self does not change.

Whatever your present experience, at this very moment, accept it without condition. There is no need to interpret anything mentally, let everything be, but claim nothing you can perceive to be what you are. Don't own any experience or thought, and feel your own presence, beyond thought. What happens next – don't be concerned about.

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Long-Term Solution For Anxiety?

Question:

Hello. By allowing and accepting anxiety, does it work for the long term or will it cure the present movement only?

Response:

If done fully, both. You mean even if the anxiety weakens in the present, will it come back again in the future? Yes it may come back, perhaps even stronger. Don't be concerned about what there will be in the future, if anxiety will be cured or if it will return. The belief and over-importance given to the concept of "the future" is what creates anxiety in the first place. If you did not believe in time, anxiety would not be real for you either.

On a practical level, acceptance and allowance and nonjudgement of anxiety, whilst feeling yourself as the awareness of it, will weaken the energy of anxiety. If it feels as if the anxiety leaves you, it has either fully dissolved, or partially dissolved, with the rest laying dormant, to arise at a later point. Either way, the anxiety is weakened, and if the feeling of anxiety returns, then taking the same approach will weaken it again gradually or suddenly. In this sense it could be called a "long-term" solution to feelings of anxiety, but they may not all go at once.

Anxiety tries to drag your consciousness and attention into thinking, which it calls "the future", as if "this is going to happen". None of it is true, it is just a bundle of thoughts based on past conditioning. The anticipation of events projected as personal thoughts is always far worse than the situation actually arising. Thoughts claim to be the reality, but are very misleading. Do not trust your thoughts.

If you feel you suffer from anxiety, and are asking this question, perhaps you have not yet adopted the witnessing, allowance attitude to anxiety. Let the feelings of the body be as they are. Do not expect the anxiety or the experience to be any different than it is. The very expectation or desire

for the experience to be different than it is, even if it is painful, is what causes most misery, and actually fuels the anxiety.

Do not identify with the feelings or join in any personal condemnation or justification for feelings arising. Be empty. Don't own the feelings.

It is easier if you have come to a point of feeling helpless, as if the feelings are now impossible to control. Don't even call it anxiety. Don't call it anything. Withdraw your interest and participation in it, yet allow it to be fully, and see what happens. Your mind may still be concerned about a long term solution, but this only pulls you back into time, and therefore anxiety. Don't look to the next moment, be in this one with complete surrender to the internal and external world, and anxiety will take care of itself.

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Now What?

Question:

I have a couple:

1. I can see, feel and know (in moments of clarity at least) that I am the awareness and the space in which everything happens. Untouched by either peace or disturbance that are both experiences in the awareness that I am. And now what? :) I still suffer. Knowing/feeling myself as the space for suffering, does not relieve it. I hear you talk about being at ease and at peace once you see who you really are, and there's a wanting happening in me to experience that ease and peace.
2. Is there a way to know that what you are saying is the truth? 100000 teachers offer 100000 teachings and techniques, it is very difficult to know which one cuts through all the rest. It is unclear which of those thousands of teachings is not just another illusion in mind.

Response:

1) After reading your question, I had nothing. Normally an answer seems to come straight out onto the page, but with this...nothing. I re-read, and feel as if your question comes from two different levels, like two different energies are speaking:

Awareness expresses: "I can see, feel and know that I am the awareness and the space in which everything happens. Untouched by either peace or disturbance that are both experiences in the awareness that I am."

Then the Person (the ego) says: "And now what? :) I still suffer. Knowing/feeling myself as the space for suffering, does not relieve it. I hear you talk about being at ease and at peace once you see who you really are, and there's a wanting happening in me to experience that ease and peace."

Would you agree it seems as if half the question emanates from truth, and the second half has a different, more limited quality?

The limitation is from the “I” that arises in awareness as a “me”, a separate person and identity. The awareness is here, as you say. This is original. It is what you are, which you feel is true from your experience....

Is there also an “I” apart from this awareness? It may even take credit and say “I can feel myself as the awareness”? If this is the case, is this extra “I” real, or just a thought? Can you witness it arise and speak?

Suffering may still arise for a while. Usually it is the old energies coming up and being dissolved. Do not identify. Don’t take it personally. If you are the untouched awareness, who suffers? The “I” that suffers all of this is also in your awareness, it is not who you are. Can awareness actually suffer?

If you expect suffering to leave, and want it to leave, it still has a hold on you. It can still disturb you. If you allow it to the extent that you do not mind whether it stays or goes, then you no longer feed it or maintain it. Be very alert to any resistance that arises – then allow the resistance to be as it is, without labelling it.

You, the awareness, do not suffer, as you have alluded to in the first part of your question. So you need not give suffering any attention or importance. Let it take care of itself and leave when it wishes. You are unaffected, so it is not your concern, nor your burden to bear.

If you still feel a sense of “now what?”, watch this feeling. Listen to the voice that comments from it. Let it be, do not interfere. You are listening, you are not the voice.

Be aware of the desire for peace and ease. It is fine, but do not identify with it. The quickest way to feel at ease, is to fully allow yourself to not feel at ease. To feel peace, even if very subtle at first, totally allow the existence of non-peace.

It is difficult to gauge how helpful these words will be for you, so feel free to ask follow-ups below if you wish.

2) How to know if this is truth? You mean that you are awareness? Ultimately only you can tell. But you seem to have already experienced

that you are awareness. It seems that from your seeing of truth, your mind has come in to produce doubts and distractions.

In terms of what other traditions or teachers say – is this not the underlying truth? You being formless awareness, not a person, not a voice, beyond time, beyond the concept of death – is surely the most common truth shared amongst many spiritual teachers and traditions. What varies is how to see it, how to enquire etc. Some may say meditate every morning for 20 years. Another may say give up every belief you have ever held about anything, including the idea of yourself. Another may say simply do nothing but feel your own presence, your sense of existence. Another would say surrender to the will of God, the supreme being.

Follow what resonates with you, what you know to be helpful and true. You may be attracted to various approaches. All effort will take you beyond effort, so enjoy it all. Do not take it to be a personal quest. It is not personal at all. You know truth when you hear it, but your mind may have other opinions.

Is it not clear that all you can feel and perceive must be secondary to you, that the truth of what you are must be the perceiver of all phenomena, including thoughts, doubts, questions, confusion etc? If so – since you are nothing you can perceive, things like thoughts and emotions are not your property, not even worth your attention. They are there when needed, but they need no personal regulation.

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Angry Sons

Comment:

I had a bad Christmas where my two sons dumped all their anger on me. They don't live here, they are two adults. Neither of them have been in touch since, no doubt they are getting on with their lives while I am struggling with mine. I am trying to live in the present - I have to let go knowing we are all ONE and let them find their own way HOME (inner journey), not easy but I am left with no other choice - or else go mad. Have just come across your website tonight and find it so inspiring. Thank you.

Response:

You're welcome, thank you for words.

Try this: do not hold any concept of oneness, forgiveness, or present moment awareness. Do not hold anything. Don't believe you should feel any particular way. Don't act like you know anything, just for a moment. Be completely empty of all knowledge, judgement or speculation. Just for a moment.

Whatever is happening inside you, let it happen. If pain and past events come and call for your attention, this is fine, do not judge or resist. Simply allow, be open. Let the personal identity engage with its food of thought if it wishes, but you remain empty of any intention or concept.

As the inner turmoil may move around, you are somehow aware. You are aware of its presence, degree of intensity etc. How do you know? You must be beyond, original to these things. If you wish, you can allow your attention to rest more on yourself, the awareness, rather than the things you are aware of.

In this way your emotional suffering can be a kind of blessing in disguise, a way to move deeper into yourself.

In addition, if you find it hard to “let go”, it just means that something inside you loves to hold on. Do not take this tendency personally, just be aware that something inside loves to feel pain, loves to bring up the past, loves to make stories. Just being aware of this and its futility can be enough for you to break free from any recurring patterns, without making any effort to let go of anything.

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The Art of Saying No

Question:

Hey Adam,

Could you elaborate on how to stand up for yourself in moments of aggression, manipulation or control? How to firmly and effectively say "no" without it being purely based on anger? I realize that holding on to anger clouds your judgement and is only an indicator that something must be done about the situation whether it be complete surrender/acceptance, walking away or expressing your feelings.

I live with an extremely negative family member and arguing with him about his behavior is not a good idea, as he is extremely defensive. Still, I do think that a good balance is required of personal power in order to determine what is right and not for you in a situation. Also, I'd like to learn how to do this as a general skill (as a lot of anger/fear creeps in when I do).

Response:

This can be one of the most challenging situations in day to day life to deal with. To start with, it may make things easier if you have no expectation that it should be easy or hard. Without your expectation that you handle it with a certain amount of effectiveness, suddenly you are free from the burden of handling it in a particular way, or judging yourself for how the situation is handled.

Gurus In Disguise

Other people can be like gurus in disguise – they show you the fear or negativity that lives inside you, that otherwise would go unnoticed.

If possible, you can be grateful that this family member is triggering your internal reactions. Triggering them means they can be released through awareness and acceptance. Let the reactions happen, just witness them without labeling them. Then you can begin to disidentify from them

(which happens automatically when you allow and witness). Be aware that you are simply the awareness of them.

This does not mean reactions should not occur, or they should not be expressed. If you have no preference whether or not fear or anger arises in the body, then you can witness these things act out. They may even take over speech and action. If you remain as a witness, they will not become out of control. Give them space. From here they will be used or dissolved most effectively.

The negativity in others can seek to trigger the negativity in you. When people seem to enjoy upsetting others or creating drama, it is the painful energy in them looking to feed and sustain itself through the similar energy of others. Don't take these behavioural traits to be the identity of other people – it is just the hellish energetic state that controls them, which is looking to stay alive. The family member is not defensive, it is the ego that has taken over – which is defensive.

Natural Silence

Never underestimate natural silence. Silence is the foundation of all wisdom and right action. Appreciating and giving space to silence also allows others to realise what they are doing. When you remain internally silent (as simple awareness), you become like a mirror - without effort others can become more conscious.

However if you do not (in unchallenging situations) make space for space, allow silence, or treat unchallenging situations with acceptance and awareness, then when someone starts arguing with you, it will seem almost impossible to be calm and silent. Adopt the witnessing attitude with simple things. Walking, sitting, breathing, drinking - just observe, surrender expectation, allow the moment freedom to be. Then when challenges do arise, you are not so swept up by the content of the moment, but can remain with some attention within, surrendered.

Whenever someone does anything hurtful - they do not really realise it, they can not hear themselves speaking, or be aware of themselves acting. Silence, especially in verbal confrontations, can make the other aware of how they sound. You may find yourself speaking, but there is always an

inner silence that is unaffected, that does not contribute. Speech and action arise from here, or they don't if they are not needed.

This silence, however, is different from paralysis. If paralysis happens – where you feel too scared to speak or act – then what can you do? All you can do is watch this happen as well. It may be useful, or it may not, either way, if you fight it or try to think yourself out of it, it gets worse. Its hold loosens when you watch fear happen, without identifying or taking ownership of it.

Useful silence is that which comes with not resisting the moment, with letting life act out as it wishes. Then you become an empty tool that life is free to act through, if needed.

Don't Bother Justifying Yourself

Don't hold any attitude that you have to justify yourself or answer to anyone. This is just conditioning, and is something that can get you dragged in to pointless arguments. Trust that the right words will come from a surrendered state. Or there will be a simple silence. Not a silence due to fear of action, but natural silence, which is always beneath the mind chatter, in the space between two thoughts. Dynamic action can even take place, but from a surrendered state it doesn't even feel as if "you" are responsible – action just naturally happens, in the same way your body is breathing all day, and your heart is always beating – it happens without your preparation.

Don't try to hold any personal power. Give it up. True power is not personal. It is there when you as a person, are not there. Instead of being a person, be the awareness that the person arises in. True power can then mature inside. It acts spontaneously, without rehearsal or defensiveness.

When you are not caught up in trying to "be someone" eg. someone who can stand up for themselves – then you become natural, more intelligent

"Standing up for myself" is a common phrase, but what does it mean? What is "myself" – is it real, or a thought? Is "myself" a set of beliefs or opinions? Beliefs, opinions, thoughts and identity do not need defending. When you take them to be who you are, then you will feel threatened when a concept is threatened. Opinions are ok, but when you identify

with them, rather than knowing yourself as the witness of them – then you will feel the need to defend that which needs none.

Let Them Be

Let other people be as they are. If that is your foundation, you will not act with a conflicting energy. If you give other people the freedom to think and say what they like, then what can you be angry about? Then you also become more free to act however the moment takes you. You may hear yourself saying “no” to someone, but it will not seem so heavy, not so serious.

This may take a bit of time, or it may not. The ego may not like these words and may protest. You are not any voice in the head, you are that which hears the voice.

Don't place expectation on yourself, don't place expectation on anyone else. That in itself is a huge freedom. If someone acts negatively, if you had no expectation that they should be acting a different way, then you will not get caught up in tension and resistance. This attitude is also healing, it creates a different energy in interaction compared to the normal strenuous one.

I once heard someone say “without an ego you becomes passive, docile and easy to control”. You may become more passive as you feel you are not effected by so many things, and things are not all so serious as we are always told, but an egoless person is practically immune to control, certainly in the sense of psychological manipulation. When your sense of being a limited, transitory, solid entity diminishes, so does fear. Fear is the basis of control. So in terms of responding to control or manipulation attempts, why even respond? Is it actually worth your energy to turn towards it and give it greater reality? Or is it easier to just let it drift past you, or let it remain with the person that is attempting to control?

If you don't seek to control someone else, then it is very difficult for them to control you. You may find yourself doing as they ask, if that is what you are moved to do, but you will not get sucked in to any fear-based mind games.

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Anxiety, Tension and Physical Pain

Question:

“Hi,

Just came across your blog few days ago. I am suffering from anxiety for almost 15 yrs. Took Zoloft to control my anxious thoughts about something bad is happening to my body. My eyes and head become so tight and tense and then I suffer from pain because of these contracted muscles for 2 or 3 days. Nothing gets my mind off the pain. When I suffer from pain during those days more and more negative thoughts about the past conversations come up and I become more tense. Cannot relax at all. Then it becomes normal for 2 days. This has become a cycle of pain and rumination for me. I would really appreciate your advice.

Thanks.”

Response:

Hello,

So the eyes and head become tense due to anxiety, not the Zoloft?

“...Whenever I feel normal and relaxed, I get nervous and kind of start to tense up and either my eye muscles or head begin to contract and I get anxious and feel pain. No more relaxed and feel very irritated and unhappy. I feel this is more of a habit of tensing up for no reason, just compulsive habit. This stress has had a significant bad effect on my body health. “

Recently I started taking Zoloft antidepressant, but it did not help me at all. Not sure what purpose does tensing up serve?

I am just scared of this pain as it just starts anytime, maybe linked to negative thoughts in my mind.”

Response:

Ok. It is useful that you can see that this tensing up seems to be some kind of habit, and that it serves no real purpose. We could say that it serves to try to protect that which feels anxious or insecure inside, or that it tries to contain the anxiety and prevent it from being released. It seems to be a kind of resistance.

Obviously you can not stop it from happening. It can not be controlled at your will, since there is an opposing inner will that wishes to tense up and contract. So the only option is to no longer oppose it. This may seem difficult, since I am sure that after the tensing up happens, the pain itself brings resistance to what is being experienced. You may feel as if you are engulfed in resistance, frustration and aversion.

Simply be aware of what happens. Do not judge, interpret or try to stop anything. Let it happen. You need not try to detach or separate, since this is still some kind of resistance or intent to escape. Fully allow everything. Watch the tension arise from a neutral standpoint. Don't identify with the habit of tension, and don't take responsibility for it. You have already mentioned that it is an energetic pattern, so see it as no more than this. Don't fight with it any more, and don't call it bad.

Habitually the judgements and inner resistance will arise, but allow this as well. Remain as a space in which it all happens, an uninterested space. The feeling of "me" that suffers all of this, however real it may seem, is still a feeling or thought that you are aware of. The entity that suffers all of this is not what you are. Be aware of what suffers all of this, and see that it has no real foundation or tangibility, it is just a thought/feeling.

There is a natural tendency to fear this pain arising again. This tendency is not what you are, it is just another feeling you are aware of. As much as possible, adopt a different standpoint, of no longer fearing the recurrence of the pain and tension. Fearing just makes it worse, and can even trigger the tension again. Be surrendered, have no opinions, no ideas about how you should feel or what kind of person these feelings make you – none of these ideas are true. You are beyond everything, you are awareness, which is not a "thing" as the mind may predict, awareness is not an object or

image, it is what you naturally are. So everything else has nothing to do with you. Leave these energies to play themselves out.

If you can welcome pain as if it is pleasure, this can be very healing. It may sound crazy, but try it as a weird experiment. Take the pain to be pleasure, as if it is somehow enjoyed. This allows you to fully accept it, and it opens you up for healing. It also reverses suffering.

You can admit that this tension-pain cycle has become so strong that there is nothing you can do about it. All you can do is surrender to it. In this way it can be a very powerful teacher. These kind of things force you to go beyond resistance and sensations, if you treat them the right way. The mind sees it the opposite way, as if these things should not be there and must be eradicated – but this just makes pain worse.

If you can treat pain, anxiety and the thoughts that come with it with allowance and non-judgement, this is what heals them. Resistance fuels them. Instead of trying to relax, fully allow the feeling of not being relaxed. If you allow yourself to feel tense, then there will be some background of comfort. Drop your opinions about how it should be, and fully allow what is.

Seeing that the tension serves no useful purpose can also help. This is not judging it in a negative way, but just noticing the futility of it as it arises. Not trying to stop it, but noticing that it just serves to create pain can help withdraw your belief and interest from it. The same goes for the associated thoughts of past conversations – watch how they love to create drama and pain, as if there is an addiction to suffering. Observing in this way can highlight and therefore weaken the human madness inside.

Finally, without resistance, it can be helpful to be aware of other areas of the body. It is easier to do this at first when you are not engaged in some outer activity, but can be done any time. All the energy and attention can often rise up into the head (through thinking) and into the eyes (through perceiving the world and thoughts with intense interest). Be aware of this. Also be aware of the feeling of existence of the rest of your body - that fact that your legs, arms and body all exist – just feel from within. You may feel nothing at first, as if the body is somehow numb – that is fine, don't try to reach some next experience, just be with what you can feel. This can

help balance the attention and withdraw it from being constantly sucked into the mind and senses. The attention will habitually go back to the mind – this is not to be judged, it's fine – once you notice, you can be aware of the body again.

The key to dealing with unhappiness (or anxiety, irritation or any other painful emotion) is to drop your intention that it be different, to no longer wish or want it to be gone. If this is not possible, be aware of the intention it be gone, be aware of the resistance to it. Then allow it to be as it is. Do not be dependent on any emotion for you to feel relieved.

Welcome what comes, accept what arises. Then you are free, even if the emotions are still there. When you don't wish them to be different, you no longer perpetuate them and you no longer cling to them through resistance, so they lose their energy. Without resistance, you are no longer holding or supporting them. Acceptance, strangely, actually helps you dissolve and let go of these energies that arise. When you let them be there, they don't want to stay. They only want to stay with someone who doesn't like them. They love to fight, hate to be unopposed.

Be crazy. Become comfortable with the inner nervousness that triggers all of this. Don't fight it or try to cover it up. It is just energy seeking release, so let it rise, even if it starts to shake the body or become more intense, see it as apart from you, only watch what happens. It may attach itself to thoughts of "me" and "I", and take over the mind, but still you can watch this happen. What is it that can watch all of this?

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If I Am Consciousness, Why Do I Need A Body?

Question:

Hi Adam,

I came across your blog a couple of days ago, and find it very peaceful and interesting how the I is the observer of thought and emotion, and not the thought itself.

I am struggling to get my head around why on earth I would stick with my body, if it is ever eternal and does not need a body? Perhaps I have not read enough of your articles, but this question keeps arising in me again and again. I understand it may be my ego's attempt in highlighting its importance, but it seems to me a valid question.

Response:

Hi Ian,

Thanks for your question. You are right in noticing that the mind may be distracting you with this question – it always wants to know why, and to form a mental answer. Yet of course it is a fair question.

To ask why does the body appear and continue to appear for you is a question that no one can answer for sure. There are some possible reasons that I could say, some may seem to contradict others.

We could say that the body and the world are creations of the mind. In the same way when we dream at night our minds create a body and dream-world, the same could be said of the waking state – that the ego's sense of smallness and vulnerability, is expressed as an individual body, to justify its natural state of limitation and fear.

We could also say that the body is the vehicle for experiencing to take place, and therefore necessary to become aware of consciousness itself. Without the bodily experience and apparent experience of separation from the source, perhaps consciousness would not be able to become aware of its source. In the same way that when you are in deep sleep, you

merge in the source but not in a conscious way, the waking state and bodily existence allows you to consciously experience the inner realm (or just “realm) of no form, no thought, no person. If we did not experience being a separate person, we would not realise what it is to be transcendent of the person. If we did not experience apparent imprisonment in or as a body, we would not appreciate freedom from it. These are some ideas.

One may say that it is all a divine scheme for the imperishable source of the universe to become aware of itself. Another may say that we have fallen from grace and have believed that we are separate from God, or Life. Another may say both are true.

The reason for staying with the body, who knows? Some may call it destiny, some may call it divine will, or some may not even care to conceptualise. It is as it is. To one who knows themselves as they are, they will not be interested in the why’s or how’s, they just accept things and deal with things as they appear, but don’t take appearances for reality.

We can say that the body is not forever. In the scheme of time as we know it, the bodily life takes up a tiny fragment. From a personal level it may feel as if the bodily life and its duration are very significant. From a universal standpoint, it can be seen as almost nothing.

You can be aware that the body seems to still exist. At what point are you actually connected with the body? Where is the linkage point? If you look into this without haste or expectation, the bondage to the body may not feel so strong, yet the body can still act out in the world.

What feels most true to say here is that the bodily life gives a chance for consciousness to mature, refine and become self-aware. When the body serves no more use for this or for helping others to wake up, perhaps this is the point it drops away. Who knows.

The bodily experience allows you to become aware of the deeper feeling of “I AM”/Presence/Being/Consciousness that is felt most easily in the body. Disregarding all else and only being with this feeling of existence in the body, can be very beneficial, as long as you do not expect benefit from it!

You can be aware of the voice that has asked the question. Something says “why would the true I stay with my body” – as if both body and true self are separate from me. This very voice is the ego – not a bad thing, but not what you are.

When it comes to this area of introspection and understanding we are speaking about, the mind is no longer of use. It attempts to understand the life and intelligence that is beyond and before mental concepts. It usually wants an answer to present the same way we are trained to give answers in school. You seem to already know that you need not understand anything mentally. Remain without expectation or resistance, aware of yourself, aware that you are aware.

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How Can Dreams Disrupt Inner Peace?

Question:

I seem to dream a lot and when I wake up I try to recall the episode. Most of my dreams take me back my parental home in the village. Sometimes I dream about places I travelled to a long time ago. On awakening I spend many hours reliving the dreams and wonder why such dreams. In so doing I cannot live the present moment. Please advise what can I do to maintain inner peace?

Response:

Let the dreaming happen, but only be aware of it. If you remain interested in the dreams, then the thoughts of them in the waking state (which really are also dreams) will continue to drag you in. Fascination and belief leads you to get lost in these thoughts. It is not “wrong” to be lost in thinking like this, but if it disturbs you, then you simply have to lose interest and give no belief to what disturbs you.

The mind loves to analyse and figure out - “why this? why that?”. Then it seeks a mental answer. This is all the mind’s interests, which is also saturated with personal history.

Do not suppress anything, accept and allow – what else can be done? Suppression of anything will only lead to more intense dream experiences, so you can only surrender and lose interest. Don’t be fascinated with forms and content. Be more interested in yourself, awareness of being.

Be impartial to thinking. Let it happen, but do not interfere or judge. The sleeping dream and the waking dream will seek to pull you in, to live off of your belief and interest. Be aware of your own existence, the sense of presence, the sense “I AM” – this can draw attention from the fluctuating mind.

Lastly, you can be aware that these dreams are not real. The past is no more. If you realise this, re-living dreams cannot command your attention.

Another thing that comes to mind is to simply write your dream down on paper and be done with it. Or if you wish to analyse or revisit you can, but you need not re-live the dream in you mind – it will be on paper.

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How Can I Stop Judging and "Story-Telling"?

Question:

How can I stop making judgments and “story-telling” in the mind? I know it would be useful to let go of these behaviors but I find it very difficult.

Response:

Thanks for your question. The one that makes judgments and creates mental stories will not be able to stop them. Your job is only to be the witness of them as they arise, which leads to automatic seeing that they are not who you are.

The mistake comes when we believe that we are the one judging things, thinking thoughts and creating mental stories and interpretations about events. You are just the awareness of these things arising.

You are incapable of judgment, since you are pure awareness. Only the mind judges and interprets. Therefore, completely allow the mind to come and play as it wishes, but remove your interest and belief from it. You are the awareness behind the movements of the mind, and this can only be experienced when you relax and do not try to suppress or control the mind. You are always awareness, so relinquish any effort to realize this. From here it becomes clear that there is a distinction between you (the silent witness) and everything else that can be perceived by you.

As you come to see that you are not the one who judges or creates mental stories around events, these behaviours will weaken and disappear by themselves without any effort on your part.

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Fear, Racing Mind and Sleep

Question:

Recently I became really ill due to a family incident that dates back a long time ago. This resulted in stress, anxiety and then ultimately depression. I am on the mend but still struggling with fear and going backwards. I'm always resisting the moment and trying to do something about making it better, but always makes it worse.

I have lost 2 family members due to this process which really hurts and of no fault of my own, my mind sometimes has problems of trying to be right and justifying that I have done nothing wrong, but there is nowhere to go with this apart from round and round in my head which just causes anxiety.

Any help gratefully received

Response:

Hi. Yours is the kind of question that on the one hand can seem pretty awful, but on the other hand, these kind of situations can be those that force you into a different way of living, which is ultimately more peaceful for yourself and those around you.

From your message it seems that I do not have to go into depth to explain that resisting what the moment already holds - only acts to create more tension, suffering, and a perpetuation or worsening of undesirable situations. Inner resistance is habitual, but realising its futility is the first step to freedom.

You are in a good position so far as that you are realising all this resistance, inner fighting and needs to justify yourself are in fact only now creating suffering. Some people never work that out. Suffering has brought you to this point, now you can begin to move past it.

How can you go beyond this inner suffering? The two main pointers are presence, followed by surrender (or acceptance).

First be very present. Be aware of what you are feeling at the moment. Without mentally labeling anything or feeling as if anything has to be named, become aware of what emotions are present in the body. Take your attention within. You don't have to be concerned with what you have felt or what you will feel like later. Only be aware of what is going on inside yourself right now. Also be aware of what thoughts the mind is generating - the person in the head pretending to be you. Judgements, unpleasantness and inner complaining may habitually arise. First just be aware of these things, be an impartial witness.

The next stage is anti-intuitive. Rather than resisting any unpleasant emotion or frantic thoughts, rather than trying to eliminate their existence, give them space to exist. Offer no resistance. Fully allow these thoughts and emotions to be there. Even as resistance itself habitually arises, this is just another thing you allow to be. Simply let these feelings be as they are, without trying to change them. Treating them in this way will remove their fuel, and will aid the evolution of your consciousness.

As you allow your thoughts and feelings to be there without judging or labeling them, you may become aware that you are the awareness behind them. They have their own momentum, you don't need to take responsibility for any of this pain or suffering. Be empty inside, with no preference as to what your internal state is like. Paradoxically, your inner state then as a result becomes cleaner - but do not fall into the trap of expecting this to happen. Just be like a space for all the internal noise to play out in.

This can be done with any troubling thought or emotion. You say that resisting and trying to make things better, only makes them worse. This is a perfect opportunity to let things be as they are. Give the world some space, and you will automatically give yourself space. Then any action you take will happen more intuitively, automatically, from deeper intelligence, not from the claustrophobic and reactive ego consciousness.

You say your mind has problems with trying to be right and self justification – and again this has imploded and has become unbearable. If your mind still seeks to justify itself, then it has nothing to do with you. You are not the mind, which you know already – since you said “my

mind has problems”, not “I have problems of trying to be right”. Don’t give the suffering mind so much respect. Let it be there, but you don’t need to give it much importance or value.

The mind, the past and worries of the future (all the same thing) will likely still oscillate in the body for a while. Do not identify. Surrender to them completely. Give up your strength, and you will find it. Suffering may rush to the surface so that it can be purified through your acceptance and space of awareness.

Any repetitive patterns of the need to control or self-justification should not be treated as if they are you. They are just old mind-patterns that will exhaust themselves as you allow them to be, without judgement. The voice in the head arises by itself. You are just listening. Disidentification from these patterns occurs naturally from here, and the mind loses force.

You can perceive the external world, thought and emotion. Pay some attention to the space that allows all of it to be. The space around a thought or emotion (usually overlooked, since it is formless), is not affected by the thought or emotion. It has no preferences. Be the space, and all will take care of itself.

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Dizziness

Question:

I feel dizzy all the time, I feel like I have pressure in my head and my neck is really tense. People tell me that it is anxiety and not to think about it - but how can I not think about it when I can feel it all the time and feel like I'm going to fall over or pass out? When I try not to think about it it seems to come on even stronger.

I get on with my life - I go to work, I go out all - that sort of stuff but yet it is still there all the time. I feel that my heart is racing then I think is it because of this then I think I am ill and it isn't anxiety and the doctors have missed something. Really dizzy all the time and it just won't go no matter what I do.

Please help if you can

Many thanks

Response:

Hi. I would recommend grounding techniques if you have not tried these already. "Grounding" or "Earthing" is enhancing your connection to the earth and spreading your energy throughout your body, not just keeping the majority in the head/neck area.

- 1) - The first thing to do is to sit down with your feet flat on the floor. This is most effective if you are outside, in contact with the Earth, but if you are in a flat or apartment block, this can still be effective.
- 2) Then drop all name calling of these feelings you have. Let them be there. Resisting them will only make them stronger. Allow them to be.
- 3) Then become aware of your feet in contact with the ground/floor. Just be aware of the existence of your feet, and that they are touching the floor beneath. This begins to redirect some attention away from the dizziness, down towards the earth. Just feel your feet on the ground/floor, and be aware of the ground as a vast, solid foundation for your feet.

4) Be aware of the connection between the floor and your feet. This can be enhanced by creating a feeling of having strong roots (like a tree) coming out of your feet and connecting you to the Earth. Feel these roots going further and further down into the Earth, constantly strengthening the connection to your feet and rest of your body.

You can also do this with your legs – Feel the existence of your legs, be aware of them. What can you feel? What are your legs in contact with? Enhance the connection between your legs and whatever you are sitting on using the root technique, or anything else that feels comfortable. Some people like to imagine an anchor pulling them down into the Earth.

Whatever thoughts come up while you do this – allow them to be as they are. Do not resist or judge them. It may feel worse at first as you withdraw the fuel of your attention away from the dizziness, and down into your feet/legs/Earth. Just allow everything to be, and calmly redirect the attention. Focus on what you can feel around the feet/leg/ground area, and then hold your awareness there as much as possible.

The attention is likely to go back up in to the head/neck area or into thinking from time to time. Allow this without judgement, and redirect the attention again. This just takes practice.

You can also use the breath to help draw your attention in to the body. Simply noticing what the breath is doing can help create an awareness of inner space and help the attention move towards the Earth or lower down the body.

Another useful grounding technique (which may seem strange) is to breathe “from your feet up” – meaning to feel the breath moving from the ground, up your feet and legs, into your lungs, and then out of your lungs, down your feet and legs, into the Earth. This may in fact feel easier than the techniques already mentioned.

At first grounding may seem difficult, and there may be an impulse to just give up. Try it for ten minutes, earnestly but without resistance, and see if it helps.

For more on grounding, see the guided grounding meditation on the website.

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How To Deal With Negative Family Members

Question:

I've taken some steps towards becoming a peaceful and happy being. However, there's the matter of other people and their own negativity, in this case my closest family. They are quite a wonderful but negative bunch. I've often been mad at them and have tried to change their ways but I realize now how wrong I was. Nowadays I try to change myself.

I've actually decided to cut back on my relation with my mother a little since I believe we have a very unhealthy relationship. I really want to keep seeing her in the future but I'm afraid to fall back in old habits of arguing. And I want to see my grandmother. She is very lonely but also incredibly negative, she shouts and complains about everything all the time, and I don't know how I can handle it. There's nothing I can do to help her, she complains about stuff on the news, about things that happened over the last 60 years, about our relatives and I realize that she, and my mother, just want to express their feelings but I guess I'm really sensitive because I get such anxiety and unpleasant feelings and sometimes such anger when they do this.

At the moment I just ignore every negative thing they say, but it really really bothers me... How can I change the way I feel about this? I really want to be the happiest me I can be.

Response:

Let your family members be as they are. Give them space. I mean this even if you are sitting with them – give them space to be. Don't take any responsibility for what they say or do, and do not take any responsibility for your own reactions...

When these waves of unpleasant feelings arise in you – let these be as well. Do not identify with them. Be the neutral space of awareness in which feelings arise. Be a witness to them, let them be. Treating feelings in

this way will begin to remove their power over you. Negativity can not survive in an accepting, surrendered, alert inner state.

Even if you understand that being affected by other people's negativity is useless, still this behaviour may habitually arise in you, by itself. This is why I say do not take responsibility for your own reactions or feelings – only be responsible as a nonjudgemental witness of them as they come, stay, and go. Have no opinion of how you should be feeling when around these family members – and as a result you will be more surrendered and at peace, not fighting and fuelling any negativity inside your own self.

Obviously you can not control someone else's negativity or opinions, and if you argue against it, you just make it worse. So you can use it to burn up any latent negativity inside yourself. With family members in particular, other people can trigger negativity inside you, or trigger shared negativity that exists within many members of the group - which you can then transcend using awareness and nonresistance (surrender/acceptance)

Give up any need to control your mother or grandmother, and don't try to control your own feelings. Trying to control these things is like trying to cage a wild beast – the beast will get more upset and will fight even more. Surrender completely. If resistance and negativity arise in you, surrender to that, be a space for it all, let it be as it is. This is a far quicker way to peace than consulting the mind or thinking about anything.

To go a step further – the “me” that is upset by all of this - is also observed by you. You can be aware of this “upset me” as it arises – remain as the awareness.

All of the above may at first seem as if you are becoming weaker – but this is only the mind's interpretation. If you let yourself be as you are – including any uncomfortable feelings, and you let other people be – then action or speech will happen more naturally, and less traumatically for you. You may find yourself not reacting at all to the outside negativity – almost as if it does not exist, or you may find yourself speaking or expressing yourself, but in a less argumentative way.

Usually when people are negative around others, they are looking for a reaction or confirmation from someone else. Sometimes the negativity in them wants to create negativity in others. Giving someone else space to be, without mental judgement, is a great antidote for this. The negative one may get confused or upset – but you just continue to let them be, and you will do (or not do) whatever is needed.

The main thing to do is stay inside yourself. Stay as the witness of your inner state. Nonjudgementally watch the reactions arise in you. Be there as a witness only. Be aware of the story in the head that is formed around these family members –when you are with them and when you are not. Notice how the mind makes these people into concepts and judges and interprets their behaviour mentally. Drop this mental labelling as much as possible, and remain as a witness to it if it continues to arise.

When you give up all attempts to change the way you feel, and instead totally allow yourself to feel what you are feeling – then these feelings will gradually or suddenly be transformed into peace. Don't take ownership of your thoughts and feelings.

Negative family members like this can actually be great spiritual teachers – if you approach them a certain way. They show you what you are still holding on to inside, what you react to, what the negative patterns inside you are - so that you can be aware of yourself as the untouched witness of it all.

Some of the unpleasantness you feel may also just be the energy field that emanates from these people, rather than only being the emotions that are triggered in you. All the above advice is useful to help with this.

If you don't involve yourself with negative energy, but let it be, it will not have anything to feed on inside you, and it will diminish.

Taking the above words into account – saying that their negativity puts you off being around them (or any other honest expression from you) – will arise spontaneously if it is needed, and will come more from love than aggression.

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How To Deal With Negative Family Members Part 2

Question:

Hi Adam, I am also faced with this situation. I am doing everything you write here and it helps a lot, but I feel like I am thrown back into being a sulky teenager around my mother who is a very anxious person, negative and I find it hard to express love towards her and my father. I feel sullen instead of the joyful person I am when they are not around. I am observing all of this happening. But I want to feel joy around them, but comments or interference from them or my siblings makes me immediately defensive. How can I still be loving towards them when faced with feelings of dislike?

Response:

Hi, since this response ended up being quite long, I split it into sections:

Don't Try To Feel Differently

Your expectation and desire to not feel sullen and to instead feel open and loving is what creates most trouble. If you fully allowed yourself to feel sullen, closed or defensive, without believing that you should feel differently, then you may witness a miracle inside. Forget everything you have been told about how you should love people, not be defensive etc. Give yourself a break and stop expecting anything from yourself.

Your resistance to feeling sullen or closed down is what perpetuates it and keeps it alive. If you not only observed these feelings, but accepted them as if you wanted them to be there (which I realise is counterintuitive) - this is the energy that creates healing and peace. If you ever wish to feel differently than you do, this just creates more conflict and maintenance of sorrow.

These emotions you feel are old energies that live in the body and seek to be maintained. They actually love when the parents show up, when the siblings make comments, because it means the energies can renew themselves.

Don't Force Anything

Don't force anything. The inner love is there, inseparable from your own Self, and need not be manufactured. As you are aware, the surface feelings (even if they actually feel deep-rooted) of dislike and resistance are what cover up your natural state which naturally is love itself. Having said that, this does not mean you will be expressing love to everyone in the same way. If someone has heavy layers of anxiety or negativity in them, you will likely not relate to them the same way as you would some divine being with no personal cover-ups. Interactions are energetic. You may naturally not feel drawn to engage much with a negative person, it may even feel as if you overlook their existence – but this is only because you see no value in the negativity they carry. This is not rude, and if anything, is beneficial for both of you. Let interaction take care of itself, you need not judge it or police it in any way.

Self-Preserving Energy Fields

The energy in you that is heavy and negative is no different to the energy in family members that makes you feel sullen or closed. The energy in one triggers another, and they feed off each other. It is not personal, but is more like life-forms of energy seeking to preserve themselves. Notice that it is not strictly true that your mother is a negative person. It is more true to say that your mother is possessed by a negative person. The negative person has taken over, and the true being is lying asleep beneath the surface.

In the same way - you are not sullen, but the sullen sensation is there. You do not become a sulky teenager, but the sensation of a sulky teenager arises. When you have the attitude of "come, let me watch you" to these negative feelings inside, rather than "how can I stop feeling like this" - then you become an inner alchemist. If the inner energies want to flare up, judge, blame, criticise or tell stories - let it all happen without reservation, but see it only as an energy field that seeks to maintain itself, rather than believing it to be the reality of what you are.

Don't Be Sure That Thoughts Are True

It also helps if you allow thoughts to arise without automatically believing they are true. If you can't tell which thought carries truth and which does not, this is ideal. In fact no thought can represent absolute truth, but without your automatic belief in thoughts that arise, intuition can take over - which does not create suffering for you. Just to be unsure about the truth of thought, without trying to be sure, is enough to reduce their sting and sticking power.

The Person Arises In You

As you have eluded to - the feelings take over the personality, they take over the thoughts of "me" and turn this "me" into an unhappy person rather than a happy one. Neither person is who you are, since you watch them both come and go. One has more baggage of course and is more heavy, but both are limitations, conceptual selves, rather than the awareness in which they both arise - which is what you are.

Allow Vulnerability

You may also notice that before feeling defensive, you feel vulnerable. Something inside feels as if it will be attacked, and it fears destruction. If this is the case, fully allow yourself to feel vulnerable. It is only the false in you that feels vulnerable, since only the false can be destroyed. Therefore allow vulnerability, and you may find the urge to defend becomes less intense. Instead you can allow your family members to be like vicious gurus, tearing down the house of the ego.

So in summary - don't try to feel different. Love can only emerge when you are no longer in conflict with your inner state. This means allowing feelings to be as they are without trying to change them. Paradoxically, when you no longer wish the feelings to be different, they lose their power, and instantly you are no longer in conflict. All ease, peace and natural tolerance arise from here.

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When Is It Right To Change The External Circumstances?

Question:

I have come to loathe my job even though others would say I have nothing to complain about. I show the symptoms of burnout and the urge to leave is enormous and growing. I get a lot of unpleasant physical sensations whenever I think about work. I try hard to stay in the present moment, letting such thoughts and sensations go without identifying with them but they seem to be getting more frequent and stronger.

I know that present moment awareness works in as much as when you get it right you can endure almost any external situation. If I do succeed in always living fully in the present moment I would never leave the job! Part of me says I should stay in the job regardless but sometimes it is right to make changes to external circumstances. The dilemma is that if you are always living fully in the present moment, accepting whatever is, how can you ever know when it really is the right thing to do to move on?

Response:

Good question, well put.

If you are fully present, accepting what is (within and without), you will have a deeper feeling that you “know” what needs to be done. Or action is even more spontaneous, and you notice yourself acting or speaking with no intention or pre-planning, as if you are listening to the words coming out, or witnessing the body act by itself. Either way, it seems important that we discern what is a true, guiding feeling, and what may just be egoic resistance.

Never feel as if full acceptance of this moment means action can not be taken to change the situation. The only difference tends to be that action arises from a deeper place. Action sprouts from intuition and space, rather than from a claustrophobic personal mind. Yet, even action coming from a very personal place is not to be judged. Let it all happen.

If your arm was on fire, you could accept that it was happening, but this doesn't mean you would let the arm burn. Perhaps you would put out the fire.

You mentioned the urge to leave is enormous and growing. Be with it fully. See where it is arising from. Be the space for it. Have no intention to even "know" what you should do. From here the urge will translate into action if it is coming from a "true" place, and it will command less power if it is only coming from personal resistance. It sounds to me that this feels like a deep urge, not just a mental feeling, but as if it is from your heart or from your being. If so, it is likely a driving force for external change.

The easiest way to know what to do is to give up any intention to know what to do. Don't try to work anything out. Let everything be. Leave it to the intelligence of life itself. Then your useful feelings produce action quite naturally, and the ego stuff just fades away. If these urges are true guiding forces, then you can rest assured they know what to do. Put your personal mind aside and see what happens.

Full acceptance of this moment and its contents reduces suffering, and allows space for right action. If you remain in the job or feel as if you can not leave, then surrender will cut the suffering. The job even becomes a vehicle to burn away inner suffering tendencies. You become even less dependent on externals. If you do end up leaving, there will likely be less mental deliberation about it, less mental decision-making than we are often used to. The solution (if one is required) will arise naturally when we stop searching for it or trying to grasp it.

So through presence, your decision-making is less personal, more intuitive. You are not so bound by the ideas of "should" or "shouldn't", nor are you so fearful of future happenings. You do not make decisions based on past conditioning, it is more as if decisions are made for you when needed. The right feeling, intention or action will emerge when required.

What the mind may do is step in to search for a solution to "should I stay or leave". Then it turns the whole thing into a problem which demands an answer. Don't force anything.

If a Zen master was sitting in a hall, and a hundred chatting people walked in, even though at his core he is unaffected, energetically he may feel to leave, so he finds himself walking out. External changes can happen when your outer circumstances no longer reflect your inner climate. As you become more alert and conscious, the outer life can change with it, without any real personal effort.

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How To Deal With Confrontations Through Inner Peace?

Question:

Hi,

I have always been experiencing problems with confrontations every now & then, be it at work or during the course of my personal life. Whenever an undesirable situation/circumstance encompasses me, my defense mechanism strikes me immediately, to the extent that it immobilizes my sense of awareness & I cease to take appropriate action/response to the circumstance at hand. Vulnerability sets in, & I end up resenting myself for doing something that is not in accordance with my feelings.

Take for example; I would end up doing something that is not within my scope of work, even though I knew I had a choice in rejecting what is demanded of me. The overwhelming thoughts in my head have prevented me from responding appropriately to my feelings. Negative thoughts have taken over me completely, & I ended up doing things that are not in accordance to what I felt, which results in an internal dilemma with myself. How do I overcome this?

Response:

Hi, thanks for your question.

Just noticing that this is happening and being willing to resolve it is already a lot of the work done.

I have ended up with quite a long response, so have broken it up with subtitles:

Awareness Is Still Here

It may seem as if your awareness is somehow immobilized, or awareness disappears, but awareness is always present. If you were not aware of all this happening, you would not be able to report it in such detail. An awareness is always there, always here. Even if the turbulence of negative

thought or emotion takes grip, you are the awareness of the grip, and you are the awareness of that which is being gripped. The awareness is never affected.

It feels as if you get taken over by these reactions of the mind, but even this “me being taken over” or sense of “me being struck by an inner defence mechanism” is somehow observed. You are aware of it all happening. But the mind comes in and takes responsibility for all of it, claiming “me, mine” etc. Don’t identify with “me” or “I”.

Don’t Seek To Control

You may feel as if these reactions are too strong to control. However painful they are, to resist them or interfere with them only makes them worse. This is an excellent stage to be at, since you can now stop taking responsibility for them. The “me” (which is just a thought) and its related reactions flare up and come of their own accord. You can only watch.

Just watch. Don’t interfere or find fault with them. Become as comfortable with them as possible. Allow them, but do not identify, even if the feelings are full of identity. Don’t wait for them to leave either. They will leave when they want, not when you want.

In the same way, don’t seek to control other people or their reactions. This is an impossible task. Let them be as they wish. Then whatever action needs to be taken through you, if required, will naturally arise.

No Voice Is You

Know that no voice in the head is ever who you are. You that which hears the voice. This will also be useful when the mind comes in after an event has passed, and begins the self-blame routine. This voice is not you. Let it speak, but listen without any judgement or interpretation. This will naturally loosen its grip over you.

The mind’s reactions belong to the mind. They are not your domain, so you can leave them alone. Don’t feel as if you are the “do-er” of any of it, as if you have a choice in them being there. All you can do is withdraw your belief in the mind’s interpretations, but allow them to be without expectation that they be different. As a result they will weaken.

Allow Vulnerability. If You Do, It Will Not Last.

Be vulnerable. Feel fully vulnerable. The mind's defense mechanisms hold most strength when we fear and resist the feeling of vulnerability. This vulnerability is something that most of us carry, and all have a chance to transcend when we cease trying to cover it up with anything else. Of course the defense mechanism springs up by itself, but it will command less power if you fully allow the feeling of being vulnerable to be as it is. It does not belong to you, this vulnerable feeling, so give it space, allow it to rise up and shake the body if it has to. This may not seem easy from the mind's perspective (since it loves to resist), but if you can get more and more comfortable with feeling vulnerable, without looking at it in a negative way, then it has space to be released and to be transcended.

Defending or covering up feelings of vulnerability (which serve no useful purpose), will mean that they will always stay inside your being. Expose them. Let them fend for themselves.

You may have also noticed that no amount of thinking will resolve these flare-ups of negativity. All self-blame etc of the mind is useless, it does not help. So notice the futility of self-resentment when it comes. It only serves to maintain a sense of time and personality, not to help you improve your actions.

No thought that arises is the absolute truth of anything. It's always a limitation.

Relinquish Blame

Don't blame yourself any more, and no longer try to keep your feelings together. Relax. When you let everything flow, good or bad, you will not be so caught up in it. You just know it is happening. All are images, sensations and voices appearing before you. The awareness itself, which you are, is never affected. It is always just awareness.

What has happened can not be changed. Who knows what was for the best and what was not? No one really knows. But the mind claims to know. When the mind invites the past to be revisited, know that it is a pointless exercise. The past wishes to be left alone, so hurts you when you seek its company.

Presence Outside Of Challenges

All of this will be easier if you take the above approach to thoughts and emotions when you are not being challenged. When you are in a calmer setting, notice your breathing, notice the space that allows all inner and outer objects to be as it is. Feel your own sense of presence. Be the awareness of the thinker. Don't seek any different feeling. Then you may find that your reactions to outer challenges are naturally weakened, non-existent, or that you are able to take a step back and simply observe the turbulence of thoughts take over the attention. Remain as a neutral, undisturbed witness.

No one ever teaches you that you have a right to remain undisturbed, even if the mind is suffering. If you have no expectation that your inner state be a certain way, but accept it as it is, then there is peace. From here, action will take care of itself, spontaneously.

Removing Power By Surrender

All this reactivity may not all leave you at once, but through surrender to these feelings, without trying to control them, you will not feel desperate for them to leave you. When you no longer fight them, but can allow them without any negative labels or interpretation, then their power over you is gone, and as a result they dissolve.

Ultimately reactivity will dissolve when you no longer react to your inner state. Have the attitude "let everything come. As the witness, I am unaffected. Whatever emotion arises must arise so that it can be released of its own accord". Then you are free.

Instead of dreading these challenging situations arising, you can treat them as life's way of exposing all of your inner fears and tendencies. Once exposed, they can be released as previously mentioned. Let it all happen. Just let it.

Allowance=Intelligence

The most extreme confrontation is obviously a physical conflict. Even in this situation, to let the other person be, to be in full acceptance of what is happening (within and without) is the best state to be in. Even if fear

floods every cell of the body, allow it. Then you are open to universal intelligence to guide your words and actions.

Leave your speech and action to be taken care of by the moment itself. Don't claim any of it. You will see that when left to life, your speech and action will take on a spontaneous, non-conceptual intelligence of their own. No rehearsal needed.

Other people's reactions and thoughts are not in your control. Let other people be as they are. Their reactions are not your burden to bear, so you need not try to cater for them. As much as the mind may like it to be otherwise, you can't please everyone – so don't even try.

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Balance Between Awareness and Getting On With Life

Question:

Hi Adam

I have a question regarding when I get obsessive thoughts, or thoughts that I don't like about a person - I start thinking "oh no I don't like this, I don't like thinking this way, I am stuck like this, I want to get rid of this thought and way of thinking, I wish I was how I was before this happened in my life, why did this happen, I can't shake this feeling and I'm a loser for keep on thinking this way" and round and round it goes.

I want to be more involved In my life and getting on with my job and not fighting these thoughts that seemed to have got stuck in my head.

Thanks

Response:

All of these voices in the head are not who you are. You need not take responsibility for any voice you can hear. Just hear it, passively, without resistance, without any judgement. Even if a thought feels strong and dense, it arises by itself, and is observed by you.

You are aware of all this happening – the thoughts, followed by judgement and resistance. All of this is just the mind's play. Let it happen. The voice in the head is not who you are. It claims "I" and may feel very strong – but it is not what you are. You can not fight it, so give up. Only be an awareness to what happens. In the midst of inner turmoil, do not stand to fight any of it. Let it all come if it wants. Have no interest, take no responsibility. All of the inner turmoil arises in an untouched space, which is not a person. Let the person chat, you be aware of the space it all arises in.

The resistance and thoughts of "Oh no I don't like this" etc is all just the mind speaking. It isn't you speaking. If you only listen, you can hear the voice speak by itself, the person in the head with all of its opinions and

judgements. As you let him speak without fighting him, it becomes naturally apparent that this voice is not what you are, and it loses its influence. You need not interfere with any thought process. Let it do its own thing.

Don't look to the mind to give you any peace. The mind is confused, carrying baggage, believing that it is helping – it knows no better. Have compassion for the mind. Be peace itself – empty, spacious, not wanting anything to be different. The desire for the experience, thoughts etc. to be different is just another thought from the mind. Leave it to be, but do not identify with this desire.

You said yourself that you no longer wish to be fighting with these thoughts that have become stuck in your head. So stop fighting. Completely give up fighting. Surrender. Even if habitual fighting arises, surrender to this. Thoughts become stuck because of the fighting, and because of the interest that is given to them.

Don't even call them "my thoughts". Why be so interested in what creates so much trouble? I realise the thoughts call for attention and seem to demand interest, but if you can see that all thoughts are illusory, – that they are limited, transient, dream-like, often forming incorrect interpretations, claiming to represent truth, but in fact being completely separate creations to actual events or people – then your interest can leave them.

....Then thought is there when required eg. at work, but you do not take it seriously when it tries to take over the whole show.

It is more like a mental energy of a person visits you. The person won't stop talking and creating drama, as if it is addicted to the circles of pain. When you take this visitor to be who you are, much suffering ensues, and it lives with you. If you can see it to be a visitor, which loves drama and past and future, which requires your identity, interest, resistance and belief for it to survive, then it will be easier to stop fighting. If you force the visitor to leave, it wants to stay with you, it loves the attention. If you have no preference whether it stay or go – it won't have a reason to stay.

The suffering that all of this causes “me” is also observed. What suffers from all of this is also observed by you – is it not? Be clear – sit for a few minutes – the sense of irritation, frustration, sense of being stuck etc - you can witness the feeling. If you can witness it – is the witness affected? Can the awareness that you are, actually suffer? Is it a person? Is there a “you” separate from this original awareness?

Give attention to yourself, awareness. If only for a few minutes - don't be bothered about what you can perceive. Pay attention to awareness itself – yourself. Awareness is not a thing, not an object. It never changes, it is never affected.

Leave the rest of the suffering to life. Life creates it – it is part of the moment – so let life deal with it.

Then life can flow easier, more spontaneously. Getting used to yourself as neutral awareness rather than a personal voice, will mean that thought naturally serves the moment – be it at work or any other situation, but thinking will not become a burden.

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How To Control My Mind

Question:

I am a 55 year old man, much interested in spirituality. My problem is that whenever I come across beautiful women, I am attracted by them, even have the feeling of sexual desire.

I know it is bad, but I can not control it. Please help me.

Response:

No need to call these things bad. This is an idea that you have been told, that these feelings are bad. They are not bad. They are as they are. Concern may be more justified if they took someone over so much that other people were violated, but it seems this is not the case.

First of all, stop fighting them. Watch them happen. You have said yourself that you can not control them. Good. So if they are uncontrollable, are they really anything to do with you? The mental image that you have of yourself as a person who is a body - gets dragged in to sexual desires. This makes you feel as if you are the one producing these feelings that you can't stop. Really what happens is that these feelings arise by themselves, and subside by themselves. They are part of nature, not your personal responsibility.

What fuels them is your belief and identity mixed in with them. Watch them, do not identify. See them as separate from you, which becomes clear when you watch them, when you observe them without judgement. Witnessing without judgement is a staggeringly effective tool for feelings like this, or any other emotion. Don't expect them to disappear or dissolve, just witness them impartially.

When you observe these feelings, be aware of what is observing them. You are the awareness of these feelings, so don't take responsibility for the feelings arising.

The fact that you can not control them means you can give up assigning them importance and attention. This may not seem easy, because they surely have a strong pull, and the pleasure-seeking part of the mind believes it will get something from these feelings arising, so is quick to go off and fuel them. Observe all of this happening, without interpretation or responsibility.

It is natural for a male form to be attracted to a female form. To witness this attraction and desire in yourself, without judging it, is where most of us miss our chance. If you can allow these feelings to arise, for the energy of attraction to move, yet be an uninterested witness, then this can be a profound spiritual practice. This is in fact a great way to become more conscious, by witnessing desire arise without interfering. Then you see you are not the desire, you are the awareness. This recognition happens automatically.

All these things you describe are energetic movements, part of the human experience. The desire to be free from them is understandable. You can not be free from something that you wish to control or manipulate. You can't be free from anything if you give great importance and value to it, or show great interest in it. So cease turning these energies into a personal problem. You are beyond them, since you can witness their absence and their presence. Notice the attention and importance that immediately goes to these feelings. When you notice importance being assigned, then importance is no longer assigned, and power is removed.

You will not feel so dominated by sexual desire if you can be fully aware that the enjoyment of sex is not permanent. Once the desire is satisfied, it comes back again. The sex desire seems one of the most cunning, since it promises great pleasure and satisfaction as if it will last. But the satisfaction never lasts. If you can be aware that whatever sex desire fulfilled will come back again once it regains energy, then the mind's need to satisfy its own desires will not be taken so seriously. Sexual energy may be there, but it will no longer dominate your being.

All of this will be easier if you drop your identity. Have no opinions about yourself. Don't even assume that you are a body. Without a strong conceptual identity, the sex desire can not keep such a grip. After all, who

is there to be gripped and molested by these inner energies? What is affected by them is only a self image, an idea of “me”. If you look for this person who is affected by these desires internally, if you try to locate him to determine his reality, you may find that he does not exist.

So to conclude – don’t let your mind turn this into a problem. Don’t call this bad. Don’t do anything. Refrain from expending your energy in giving importance to these feelings. Then without effort, they are witnessed, allowed, and their power over you is removed.

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Can We Experience Any Thing Outside Our Mind?

Question:

Sir,

Is it possible for us to experience any thing when there are no thoughts in our mind? Is there such a state as a "thought-less state"? Is awareness of mind or is it beyond mind? I cannot comprehend anything that is beyond mind. Please answer my question , even if it seems a little absurd.

Response:

All these question come from the mind, which is attempting to understand what it cannot.

Yes, there is such a state as a thought-free state, but we are describing with words something that contains no content, so words can be very misleading here.

You experience no-thought during deep sleep, the moment you wake from it, the moment you hear a bird or look at the sky. Before the mind's interpretation of events, there is no thought.

With no-thought, there is not such a distinction between "me the experiencer" and "that which I experience" – it is one. The same could be said of awareness and that which I am aware of – it is one – but these words can be very misleading, so I wouldn't cling to them.

Don't be dependent on no-thought. If you are, then thoughts will always disturb or distract you. Just disregard thoughts, be aware that all thoughts arise out of space and silence.

Is awareness of the mind or beyond mind? What is mind? If you mean mind as thought, then consciousness or awareness are the source of this mind, and beyond it. The word "beyond" can be misleading, since it makes awareness seem to be beyond you, when in fact you are awareness. What makes this seem not true is the functioning and belief in a personal mind that arises in awareness.

Perhaps you can not comprehend anything beyond mind, since you are using your mind to try to comprehend.

That which is beyond the mind (you) is believing itself to be the thinking mind, so anything beyond or before the mind seems impossible. Really what you mean is you cannot comprehend anything outside yourself – which is profound – but you believe yourself to be the mind. The mind can't understand any of this. How could the thinking mind really understand anything to do with no-thought?

Mind will probably take these words and turn them into repetitive concepts. There is not much use in this. Listen to what is happening in the distance – in that moment there is no-thought. Be fully aware of one breath – in that moment there is no thought. Look at the stars – at first there is no thought. You probably experience this more than your mind will tell you. Mind will say it is not possible and it does not happen, but the mind is not an honest companion, don't believe what it says.

I don't feel much more can be said about this, other than give up words and concepts about “mind”, “experience” or “if's” or “can's”. Just give up concepts for a moment.

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Strange Feeling

Question:

When I was younger, I would go into this state (I can't seem to do it now) and the state would make me realise I exist, this strange feeling would come over me, then as I became aware of the feeling, it disappeared. I wanted to know if you knew what this was? I have checked many sites and people have experienced it too, but they, like me have no idea what it is.

Response:

Hello,

No I am not sure what you mean. If it felt as if your mind or sense of individuality merged into its source, where there was no longer thought or a sense of person, but rather a feeling of presence, being or awareness, then sometimes that is called Samadhi in Eastern teachings – intense absorption in the Self. Did the feeling disappear or was it more as if the thinking mind re-emerged, making it seem like the feeling disappeared?

Whatever it was has come and gone. You have been here to experience both the feeling and non-feeling. You may find it helpful to be aware of yourself as that in which the feeling/experience has come, gone, and may come again.

Other than that I can not find much else to say. I take you describing it as “strange” to mean it can not be described, all you were aware of is your own existence. The experience may return if you are aware that the “me” who enters this state and then comes out of it, is only a mental concept, rather than the reality of what you are.

Don't search for any experience, but a useful pointer could be to simply disregard all that your mind says and does, and be with the feeling that you exist, which is present here and now. Beneath the mental noise, prior to the mind, easily felt in the body, is the sense I AM – be with this

feeling, without searching for any experience. Even if you devote 10 minutes to this, it can be profoundly transformational.

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Not A Social Person

Question:

Hi Adam, I have another question for you. I am not a social or a party person and I avoid or make excuses to go to social events because I don't enjoy being social. I criticize myself for not being social and think that I am lacking something and I am not doing good karma. Please suggest...

Response:

Sure. Good question. I have some experience of this myself. I prefer to stay in than go out. There is nothing wrong with it.

Today's society promotes the ideas of social activity to a great degree, often as if being sociable, going out, interacting and meeting with people is the way to a healthy and happy life. But what is really the point? You may at some level feel that most interactions are quite shallow, and what most people tend to be interested in and talk about, simply doesn't interest you. Your nature may be an introverted one – this is not to be judged as good or bad. Those with an introverted nature do not gain energy from interactions, they are more likely to lose energy, whereas extroverted individuals tend to gain energy from interactions, and perhaps feed off of the energy of others.

Fully embrace this aspect of yourself. We hear so much about the “desirable” qualities of being open, confident, friendly and chatty, that we judge and resist qualities that seem to be in opposition to this. If you feel closed or unsociable, fully allow yourself to be this way. One can never feel more open by resisting the feeling of being closed. Simply let yourself feel however you do, without believing it should be different. This, paradoxically is where healing occurs if it is required.

There are generally two possibilities: the first is that the ego fears destruction and disturbance from other people. If this is the case, then self-judgement or criticism (which is of course also from the ego) will just

serve to keep this illusory self-defence mechanism in place. Allowing and accepting your tendencies, without labelling them as good or bad – will heal what is limiting and useless. The other possibility is, as I eluded to before – that you are happy as you are. You do not need interaction to give you a buzz, more energy or mental stimulation – it simply is not necessary for you.

If you feel reclusive, accept the feeling. We will get nowhere through judgement and resistance, especially when most of our judgements come from the conditioning of an insane society. So however you feel, accept it, let it be, without even entertaining the idea that you know whether it is good or bad that you feel unsociable. Others may say it is bad, but how can anyone possibly know?

With this acceptance comes relief, a feeling of “there is nothing wrong with me”, “I can be as I am”. With this you will not feel such a strong urge to make excuses for not socialising, and you may find yourself just saying “I don’t feel like it”. Don’t believe you have to explain yourself to anyone. How can you really explain the reason for your feelings? Do they not arise of their own accord, rather than being deliberate constructions? Self-explanation is futile, so don’t force it.

On the other hand, with this acceptance of one’s own feelings or thoughts, you may naturally find yourself seeing social occasions as not a big deal – nothing really - in which case you may partake more often, or you may naturally lose interest altogether, without carrying resistance.

Be aware of your mind forming an identity out of this. Watch how your mind creates thought of “not being a party person” or “being unsociable” or anything similar, and see how it makes an identity out of these thoughts – the idea of “me”. If you form an identity out of these behaviours, you simply limit yourself. Again this is not a bad thing, but can create a sense of limitation or constriction that may not serve you. Don’t even be a person. Just be. Be aware of the deepest, truest aspect of yourself – which is the simple feeling “I AM” – the sense that you exist, that you are – be with the feeling alone, and pay no attention to thoughts that try to associate with this (such as I am “this” or “that”) – just be with the I AM. Be the I AM – which is no different than inner stillness or inner

space. It is the natural space of being, before the ego arises. It is felt, rather than seen. This sense of being – yourself - needs no defences, does not change or diminish, and is free from person-hood.

So let go of the idea that you should be different. Everyone has been fooled by this idea that the way you are is not good enough, that you lack something or should be better somehow. This is simply not true. Let the feeling “I AM” which can most easily be felt within the body – be your self. The “I AM” does not know lack or self-criticism, it simply is as it is, and when felt without mental filters - is itself love and joy. If you allow your solitude or solitary preferences to fully be as they are, everything will sort itself out.

Even if self-judgements or self criticism arises – let this be. Do not be interested. Be aware that it is the domain of the mind which is not who you are. It creates a false, conceptual identity, which feels separate from the natural being “I AM” – and then it creates other thoughts to attack this false identity. Let this happen, again without even labelling it. If guilt or any emotion arise – just watch it without giving it instant belief.

Being alone is extremely undervalued in society. Not only is it useful for spiritual purposes, but also is the ground in which creative endeavours can come to rise. When you accept the unsociable behaviour – you actually become more comfortable in social situations – since you are aware that you do not need others to like you. You feel no pressure to make friends or to be liked. You are not closed, but you are not needy. With this being said, social interactions can still have their place, and are actually enhanced to a far more genuine degree if you fully accept your own feelings, without judgement. One who accepts their own inner energies and behaviours is far more genuine, and therefore tends to be more likeable.

At the deepest level, the person that feels responsible for not being sociable, for making excuses, for creating any karma etc. - is illusory. Can you see that all thoughts, behaviours, actions and tendencies arise by themselves, of their own accord? Then there is the idea of “me doing it” – which is just another thought, rather than the reality of what you are. When you no longer take responsibility for what is done or not done, said

or not said – you may find that this is not some reckless, childish behaviour of “not taking responsibility for your actions”. In fact action carries on, it takes place, often more effectively and without negativity, and without the feeling of heavy attachment. Even the idea of doer-ship arises by itself. See that things happens by themselves, and the idea of doer-ship is simply an idea in the mind, rather than a truth. Then naturally all false and limiting behaviours will have no ground to stand on. If this final paragraph makes no sense to you, that is fine, just discard it.

Questioner:

"Thanks Adam for such a useful advice. I feel like people think I am weird because I don't socialise - all my neighbours are so outgoing and friendly with each other. I don't feel like going out with them.

Also I feel that this is what my 2 little children are learning from me. It really hurts me when my children see that their mom is so introverted. Just worried what if they become like me?"

Response:

So if you are worried your children will pick up the same behaviours, then this must mean that you see your own introversion as a bad thing. It may also indicate that your introversion is partly due to some inner limitation or fear which you detect may somehow be harmful to your experience of the world. Only you can say for sure, but just be honest. Does introversion arise due to fear? If so, this is fine, but watch this fear. Do not identify with it or cling to it. Do not see it as who you are. Allow it, let it be, and in your awareness you may see that it is simply an old energy pattern, perhaps linked to thoughts. Through allowing it, being aware of who is watching it (yourself), it will likely lose its grip and gradually dissolve.

If it hurts when your children see you as introverted, this is really your own mind's judgement about an idea of yourself that creates pain. It is all judgement from your own mind. Relinquish self-judgement, even for a

moment, and see how it feels. How does self-judgement help you in this situation? Likely not at all.

Kids are more likely to pick up on motives behind behaviours rather than behaviours in themselves. For example, if someone didn't feel like going out with other people because they were so happy as they were, at home with their family or by themselves- then this does not carry an energy that would hinder children. The basic energy is freedom and happiness, so the children would be affected by this more than the actual introversion.

They may feel free and happy, but feel as if they wish to be very socially active, according to their individual nature. If, on the other hand someone (in an extreme situation) was similarly introverted, but because they were paranoid of what would happen if they would step out of the front door - then likely they would speak to and train their children (directly or indirectly) to live in fear of the world - which would likely cause the kids to carry this same fear.

- Do you see the difference? Both are "introverts", but for very different reasons, which affects the kids in different ways.

If your nature is to be introverted, but it comes from a simple lack of interest in doing a lot of socialising with people you do not particularly like, or perhaps it comes from simply being happy to be at home with your children - then surely there is nothing to fear if the kids pick this up? If introversion was due to contentment, of needing no-one else, then likely you would not be worried about this rubbing off on the children. Perhaps what you are worried about is the fear that lives in you being passed on to the kids, and therefore hindering or limiting their expression or actions in Life. if this is the case, follow the advice in the first paragraph of this comment for dealing with this fear.

There is nothing else I can say, other than be aware that your mind seeks to create another fear-based problem of the children becoming introverted. Worry or fear is never helpful for these situations, so witness the worry in yourself as it arises - notice its futility, and how it does not help. If you are introverted and then worry about your kids being introverted - it will only make you feel even more introverted!

Children have their own intelligence. Simply be aware if fear moves through you and tries to mould or influence their actions. this simple awareness is enough to allow parenting occur without placing your limitations on to them.

Questioner:

"So if one does not socialize because of fear of getting anxious & stressed out, is that wrong? What should one do in that case?"

Response:

No it's not wrong. No longer treat anxiety or stress as if it is something to be feared, hidden, avoided or suppressed. No longer judge these things in any way. Feel the feelings without thinking about the feelings. Just feel. Surrender. Let them be there.

When the feelings arise, accept them as if you had chosen they arise. Do not identify with what you can perceive. Everything reports to you and survives from you, whereas you do not need these things to be as you are. Embrace fear and vulnerability, be aware that you are simply the awareness of them. You can not control them, so stop fighting them, as awareness you are unaffected.

Follow this advice, which is basically to accept your feelings without expecting or wishing they be different. If you were to actually adopt this approach, you would witness the paradox of healing or transcendence, without expectation.

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Family Dilemma

Question:

Adam, its great to come across your website InnerPeaceNow.com accidentally while surfing internet.

You are doing a great job to those who seek spirituality outside the domain of religions. I am a born Hindu who is not staunch believer in rituals of Hindu religion.

Since childhood I was very confused about sex and its significance in our life. It was always between the urge of fulfilling the pleasure aspect of sex and being celibate. Before marriage I didn't experience sex. Now I am married for 16 years and have a 15 year old son who is autistic.

My marriage is fantastic and I have very satisfying sex life. Now at the age of 43 years, I feel like straying away for sex outside marriage as I feel like having a normal child with another woman. I am in a relationship with a married woman who is not happy with her marriage.

With a conscious way of living my life I know it's inappropriate, but my egoic mind is dragging me ahead. The justification I have is that my wife cannot give me a normal child.

Adam, please help me out.

Response:

Ok. I am not sure what your question is, or what you wish me to say. From your message it seems as if you have a great marriage, but because you would like a child who does not have autism, you want to have sex with other women. I have no idea if your current wife is aware of this or not.

This seems like madness to me, although I understand that I am not in your situation. How do you know that it is because of your wife that your child is autistic? What if it is due to your genes rather than hers? Is this not possible? Why would you even want another child? Is it because you

think it would make you happy? Do you not love your current child? Do you label the child mentally as autistic and carry resentment, rather than viewing the child as they are? Are you aware that the mainstream view of autism is seen by some people to be a complete misunderstanding of what autism is? What is a “normal” child – one without autism? What is autism anyway really? Is it not something that is in all of us but in varying degrees?

It is a coincidence perhaps that two days ago I watched a TEDx Teen talk given by a teenager who was diagnosed with autism, to such an intense degree that therapists said he would never be able to talk or learn anything. He was placed in a non-learning class at school since they thought he was a lost cause. He ended up, at the age of 10, learning trigonometry, algebra and calculus to a college level (within 2 weeks), and was soon after accepted into a college. He also came up with an original solution to a calculus problem which is beyond my understanding of course, that has yet to be disproven. He said something along the lines of “I bet there is a therapist watching this talk who is freaking out right now”. If you are interested, here is the link to the talk on YouTube.

From my limited understanding of autism, it seems that no one understands it. Perhaps rather than being an actual condition, it is simply a label given to individuals that carry certain behaviours. Are your mind’s judgements actually trustworthy?

Stop being possessive. You say “my wife can’t give me a normal child”. Don’t treat children as if they are possessions. This is normal in society to some degree, to act as if you own the children, but in reality you do not. If you stopped acting like you own any other being, then you may not find yourself carrying such resistance to your current situation, and you may not feel such a strong urge to “have” another child different to your son.

I feel to say again, the way your mind has created the idea of a “normal” child must imply that when you look at your child now you are really looking at your mind's labels of the child. Stop judging the child in this way.

You are right in that the ego seems to have consumed you and your intentions. These desires should not be given any credit. From where I

am, they seem to be selfish and strange desires of the human dysfunction. Let them be there, but do not identify with them, watch how they try to consume all of your attention, how they attempt to seduce. Watch this without being a slave to desire. Just watch the inner energies. This will weaken their grip.

This is not about whether polygamy or monogamy are right or wrong. It is more the fact that you seem to believe you will be better off if you get someone else pregnant who can have a child without autism. How do you know that would even happen? What if the next child had some other apparent disability – would you then go out and try to get someone else pregnant?

One of the worst reasons to have a child is because you think it will make you happy. Be aware of how your mind creates an ideal picture of how life should be, and then tells you it is different from the way things are now, and that if you had a so-called “normal child” (of which there is no such thing), then you would be happy. Stop placing all your expectations on what is outside. Turn in, surrender, keep quiet.

What you are is far beyond all of this personal stuff. Go beyond form, accept what the present moment holds without reservation, be aware of the force of Life that permeates all things, and is one with who you are. These intentions you speak of are meaningless in comparison.

It is also possible your mind is trying to escape your current situation. Go the other way, accept it, use it to destroy your ego and its expectations, and therefore naturally bring peace and harmony into this world.

Another possibility is that your justification is not true, but instead is a cloak that hides the intention of simply seeking some next pleasure or excitement somewhere else. This can be destructive to families, and again is not worth entertaining as a genuine impulse to action. It only comes from natural dissatisfaction of the ego, which is not who you are.

From a practical point of view, be there for your wife and child and disregard your mind’s false, serpent-like promises of a better life with a different child. Fully accept what life has brought you with your current

familial situation. Instead of wanting it to be different, accept it as if you had chosen it. If you do this, you will see miraculous results.

I can not tell you what to do. What do I know? I can only point you to live from Truth rather than from falsity. From Truth, there is no one to ask what to do. There is only Life. Action takes care of itself. What is aware of all the inner feelings? All labels, desires, intentions, resistance, hopes and dreams - you are the awareness of these things. Do not identify with what arises in your awareness.

The question you have asked, of course, is based on you. But who are you in the first place? This person that has these deliberations and desires – what is it? Is this “I” actually real, or is it in fact simply a thought that has been given belief and strengthened through the conditioning of family and society? Live from truth, emptiness, surrender, be aware that the sense of doer-ship is another illusion of the mind. Locate the inner person, and confirm whether or not they actually exist. What remains without concepts of yourself? Yourself.

This has been challenging to answer, since I do not know you in a personal way and I am not aware of your situation other than how I have interpreted your message, therefore I realise I may have made false assumptions, if so I apologise, but be aware that anything I seem to be speaking against is the falsity that lives in you, rather than the truth of what you are. I don't know anything really, but this is what has been written. You may feel your mind become defensive or angry, watch this happen, don't be consumed by it. None of this is advice you have to follow if you do not want, but I don't feel I can say much else.

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Health and Awareness

Question:

Hello

I've been interested in spirituality for 15 years now, but the last 3 months I really understand what it means to stay as awareness or stay present, I am that, I am before every thought, emotion, body and event, I'm the witness of the 5 senses, that "I" does not really exist etc.

Anyway I have some chronic skin problem and I was wondering if there is a way through spirituality to heal this body. Even this problem has helped me to come closer to spirituality. Maybe staying as awareness on the body that the problem exists, without expecting anything healing may come - but I would like to listen if you have some other opinion.

Thank you

Response:

The first thing that comes to mind, although you may have considered this already, is that some people report that skin conditions are a reaction to a certain diet that other people seem to be unaffected by. This only comes from a TV programme I once watched where a guy suffering from intense eczema found the condition greatly alleviated when he reduced certain foods (particularly processed sugars), and replaced certain foods with other nutrient-rich alternatives. If you have not looked into this, it is worth some research.

In terms of self-healing, what you have mentioned is one option which I will expand on, which can be applied to any physical ailment. As a disclaimer, I will say this is not attempting to replace medical advice.

You may wish to establish a conscious connection with the skin condition, not calling it good or bad or anything at all, but feeling it from within. Feel the energy of the skin or the skin condition, be with it, allow it. If you allow your attention to be with how the condition feels from

within, how the skin is reacting, then you may come to a deeper understanding of what is happening. If you approach this in silence, without expectation as you have mentioned, then you may find some insights arising on the cause of the condition, how it can be aided, or you may find yourself feeling the energy of the skin directly. If you can, always be in acceptance, let it be, welcome what arises – this is the space for healing. Don't force anything. You may find that the condition is linked to certain emotions or inner tendencies, I am not sure. Again, acceptance, allowance and non-judgement is what heals.

If you are in touch with the stillness within, the timeless aspect of being, you can allow this to emerge to engulf the energy of the body, allow the Life within to fully inhabit all of the body. Be aware of the pictures that your mind throws up about the skin condition, and then let them go. Be without mental pictures, and only be with what you can feel. In this way your mind or conditioning is no longer contributing to the skin condition, and healing may occur in the openness and simple feeling of the energies present. None of this need be a strain, just be empty and open.

Feel the underlying force of Life that is the source of the skin condition, without which the condition could not exist. This awareness, this approach of pure feeling, may purify any heavier energies that manifest themselves as the condition.

The final thing I could say is that through complete surrender to a condition like this, you may find pockets of resistance, feelings of wanting the condition to be gone etc. If you allow these, surrender to these feelings, you weaken the resistance that may sustain the condition in the first place. You also go deeper into peace, as I am sure you have already found. The strongest surrender, which seems counter-intuitive, is to accept something as if you had chosen it be there.

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If We Are Awareness, Why Does Awareness Weaken When We Are Tired?

Question:

Hello Adam,

I have a stumbling block with regard to being convinced that we ARE awareness. At the moment the idea that we ARE awareness requires “belief” on my part and I don’t go in for beliefs anymore.

My job involves early starts, many hours of commuting and switching between working at day and working at night. Unsurprisingly there are times when I am very tired and I’ve noticed that it’s very much harder to sustain objectivity of mind in that state. The same applies to meditating when tired.

It seems logical to me that mind activity should require more energy than quiet awareness and yet when tired, the egoic mind seems to be able to dominate easily. Why is that the case if awareness is what we are? Is there anything one can do about it?

Many thanks in advance for your help.

Response:

You bring up a good point, in that the nature of awareness must not be turned into a concept or a belief. Awareness is still just a word, pointing to yourself, so certainly let go of all concepts and beliefs. If you go all the way and actually have no concept of yourself as awareness, as James, as a human being or a man, if all concepts are relinquished, then what remains? Who are you then, without effort? The answer is not conceptual – any concept is just another concept of self that arises and falls. Certainly drop all concepts of yourself. All these concepts have somehow come through conditioning, which is not reliable. Go back to your original nature by giving up all concepts of yourself. Even give up the concepts of “mind” and “thought”. What remains?

Yes, when tired, sometimes people do feel that the mind is more quiet, since there is simply less energy available for it. On the other hand, tiredness can mean that consciousness, or presence begins to fade. Alertness decreases, as if you are half-drifting to sleep. You lose awareness of yourself as consciousness, and so the mind can move in and take more of a charge.

To point to your nature of awareness, you already prove it in what you describe. If full presence is there, or no-thought, then you are aware of it. When tiredness is there, you are aware of it, when no-tiredness is there you are aware of it. Whether the experience is of dullness, high energy, low energy, disturbance, tranquility, peace or dread, you are always aware of it. You can report it. You can even report that consciousness fades and the egoic mind takes over. Do you see that even when it seems as if you lose awareness, you are aware of it? The only confusion that arises is when we identify with anything, including the concept of awareness. Let everything be there, including tiredness, including a loss of presence and an intensity of the mind. When you allow these things, you are aware that no matter what is happening, you are aware of it. Therefore you are not “in” what is happening, the one “in” the experience is just an idea of “I”, rather than the truth. The mind may try to deceive, and may say “I am not aware anymore, or I am losing awareness” – but even this voice or feeling is something you are aware of. Identify with nothing. You remain here when you identify with nothing that arises.

When everyone speaks of awareness, it is easy for the mind to turn this into a thing, some kind of attainment or object to be grasped. In fact you are it, all the time. Only the mind has its own identity, which can cause confusion when you believe it to be what you are.

You mentioned objectivity of mind is difficult to maintain. How do you know this? You must be aware of this state of mind being there or not. You are beyond it. Also I am not sure exactly what you mean by objectivity of mind, but this does not matter, since it is another thing you are aware of. If it is in fact anything to do with the mind, forget it. You are not the mind. All attitudes of the mind such as impartiality, nonjudgement etc. are useful since they cut resistance and allow presence to emerge. Yet, if resistance is there or not, you are aware of it. If

objectivity is there or not, you are aware of it. You are the original source of all that can be perceived, including the identity of a person. Whether the mind is still there or not does not matter, you are the awareness, which is impersonal. Of course these words only point, as concepts they need not be retained.

Since tiredness can result in a natural decreased alertness, a decreased natural presence, there is room for old tendencies, pain and noise to come up. So in a sense, there is nothing you can really do about it. You can give up trying to change it. You can give up trying to maintain presence, and see that all efforts, particularly personal efforts, are also somehow observable by you. You can give up trying to make the tiredness different, or give up trying to make the mind less noisy.

Notice that all efforts to be awareness, to discover awareness or anything similar, all happen in an awareness that you already are. We can take the example of someone who says “I am still not convinced that I am awareness” – does this feeling not arise in an already-present awareness? Are you not aware that something inside says “I am not sure that I am awareness”?

You mention the egoic mind can dominate easily when tired. Who does it dominate? The answer may be “me” – but what is this me? The true being can not be dominated, but the self image, which itself IS the mind, can be easily dominated. Let it happen, be aware that thoughts can only disturb other thoughts, thoughts can only molest the thought-based image of a person. You are aware of all of this happening.

It is fine if you are not convinced or sure of anything. In fact this is ideal. No longer seek any certainty or conviction. Be fully comfortable in not knowing who you are. In this uncertainty, you are still aware that you exist, that you are awake. You need not know “what” you are, just be as you are. Feel that you are, without needing any concept of self. Concepts may still emerge, but they are nothing. Be aware of your own existence, which is aided by not claiming any concept of self. This sense of existence, which is the deeper “I AM”, is who you are before conditioning was fed to the mind. This feeling of existence is not a person or a body, it is consciousness prior to false conditioning. Surrender any remaining

expectations, and be aware of yourself as this simplicity of being. Feel, rather than trying to see or think. All else occurs naturally.

"If We ARE Awareness, Why Does Awareness Weaken When We Are Tired?". The title of your question carries a clue. If awareness weakens – how do you know? You must be aware of it. I do not wish to get caught up in words, but what can seem to diminish is the waking consciousness, that which emerges in the dream and waking state, and subsides in deep sleep. Awareness does not weaken, but it can be overlooked. Whatever weakens or strengthens in reality does not have a name. Simply be aware that whatever changes in this way – you are aware of it. Something is even aware of alertness and emergence of waking consciousness coming and going. This awareness has no name and no form. The “you” that feels separate is only a thought.

I hope this response has helped somehow. If anything poses confusion to your mind, discard it, none of this is for your mind, it is for you.

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Loneliness, Jealousy, Isolation

Question:

I have felt an intense loneliness my entire life. I have a raging jealousy within me that I cannot just watch. It completely overwhelms me every time. It is isolating me. Any ideas on how I might overcome this demon?

Response:

Ok.

Loneliness

Most people carry a sense of loneliness to some degree. Most of the time it goes unnoticed when we are surrounded by other people, by electronic devices etc. No longer call loneliness a bad thing. The worst part is our natural aversion to it. Along with the loneliness comes the desire for it to be gone, so many of us try to get rid of the loneliness by seeking company, external stimulation etc. The sense of loneliness, at first does not feel pleasant, so of course a resistance arises to it, which makes the feeling even stronger.

The only way to really dissolve this loneliness is to fully face it. Do not wish it to be gone, do not try to eradicate it from the inside (or from the outside), and instead fully let the feelings, and perhaps related thoughts – be there. Just give in. Welcome it. Go the other way to the norm of wanting the feeling to be gone, and instead accept it fully. You need not even interpret it as “loneliness”, instead just fully let the feeling be there, without trying to change it.

When we look at feelings like this directly, without strain or effort (which comes with surrender/acceptance), then they can no longer cause so much trouble. Your objection to the feeling is what keeps it alive. When the mind wishes the feeling not be there, this is what creates most disturbance. Don't try to manage or police the feelings of loneliness, just let them be there, without trying to escape them.

At first the feelings may intensify, unpleasantness may arise, thoughts may become more strong. Don't be concerned by this, just stay surrendered. The feelings kicking up a fuss shows they are under threat, and begin to rise to the surface to be released. With surrender comes a sense, even if subtle at first, that the feeling of loneliness is not all there is. There is also the untouched space in which it arises, which you can begin to give some attention to. The key is to have no aim, no intention to dissolve or transcend the feelings. Then, paradoxically, they are transcended, and lose power gradually or suddenly.

You can also notice, that as part of the loneliness, there is an inner "lonely person". This person says "I am lonely". This person, or any inner person, is not what you are, it is a visitor that most of us identify with. The inner person, however lonely, can be there, but do not take it to be what you are. Do not identify with "me" or "I".

You can simply notice the futility of both this emotion and the related thoughts. Does it help? Does loneliness help you? If you can watch the loneliness, and realise its futility, then its power is weakened. You can also notice that in a strange way, something inside enjoys to feel lonely. The feeling is both despised and enjoyed at the same time. This is part of the human condition, which is the addiction to suffering or negativity. To notice this strange sense of enjoyment is to see that the loneliness is not as personal as it appears. It is an energy movement, tied in with the self-image of being a particular person. The feelings arise by themselves, they are not your doing, so don't take them personally.

The reason the personal mind hates to be alone, without external stimulation, is that it knows in this environment, it is liable to collapse. With no one around to give you a label, the mind feels unstable, insecure. It must do something to enhance its identity, to make you believe that "me as a separate person" exists, and so it throws up the sense of being lonely. Lonely not only implies "me", but it also implies "other people" – it is another trick to feel separate. The person that feels lonely is only a creation of the mind. This is your chance to go beyond it.

Jealousy

In the same way as with loneliness, you can first notice how useful the energy of jealousy is, if it helps you in any way. It need not be resisted, but just seen to be a futile waste of energy. Jealousy claims to be helpful, as if it will perhaps get “you” (the mind) what it wants, but actually, if anything, it does the opposite. A jealous person becomes repellant rather than attractive; therefore you can notice that the jealousy no longer serves any useful purpose. It may still function and take over “you” (the mind), but it is no longer taken so seriously.

Again, notice how the inner “jealous person” simply loves to feel jealous, in a masochistic kind of way. It absolutely loves the drama, the negativity, the sense of “otherness”, the enhanced separate identity that feels hard-done by or somehow unfairly treated. It even loves to hate the jealousy and the sense of helplessness of being overwhelmed by it. In a strange way, it is all love.

Yet, I see that you have said you simply cannot just watch it. The above two points may help with this, but if the jealousy still commands great force, then accept that you cannot just be aware of it without getting involved. Don’t try to watch it, just accept that you can’t. This takes the pressure off.

It doesn’t actually take you over, it takes over the self-image of a person, which claims to be who you are. So if the energy of jealousy completely takes over every cell of the body and mind, then what can you do?

Nothing. To fight it is to suffer, so give up the fight. Have no preference whether the jealousy be witnessed and dissolved, or if it be tyrannical and overpowering. Simply surrender your desire for anything to be different at that moment. When you no longer want it to be different, the fuel of resistance diminishes.

As with all emotions, the jealousy arises and subsides by itself, it is an energy field with its own intelligence, it is not who you are, yet it needs you to survive.

All negative emotions need to create a disturbance, need to cause an upset. If they do not cause an upset, they have no more ground to stand on. They may upset the personal identity, but you are aware of this upset as well. Let all upset be there, don’t be upset with being upset, if that

makes sense. In this way you are no longer fighting the Life-Energy which takes the form of these emotions, and they begin to refine and clean themselves, by themselves.

Summary

So to sum up, no longer be hard on yourself. Give yourself a break. If feelings can not be watched or witnessed, - fully accept it, this is ok. From here, you notice that there is actually a deeper awareness, an awareness that can tell if jealousy can be watched or not. This awareness is so immediate, that it is overlooked to be who you are. Notice that whether these feelings take over the mind and body or not – you are aware of it. This awareness is untouched, even if the body/mind is in pain. Without this original, primordial awareness, you would not be able to report “I can not just watch”.

These words can only point to this awareness. They can not fairly represent it, since this awareness is not a thing to be grasped, maintained or reached by effort. It has no name, it is not a concept. It is what you already are, but the imaginary identity of a person often seems to mask it.

If you can not allow feelings to be, if you still find a strong desire for the feelings to be different, then surrender to this as well. Give up completely. All resistance that arises is not your doing, it is habitual, part of the negativity itself.

Our conditioned mind thinks in this way: “my resistance to unpleasant feelings (or anything else undesirable) helps them to go away. If I wish they were gone, then they will go. If I let them be there, they will become stronger and will completely take over. If I give in and stop arguing with them, then there is no way this can be resolved.” Actually, the opposite is true.

Question:

Thank you so much for your response.

Are these feelings and thoughts instincts?

Also...

When for the odd minute or so I am able to detach myself from the drama, I find myself searching for the feeling of awareness so that I can have something to refer to when the drama really starts to wind up, but I find it doesn't have a easily definable feeling. I find it difficult to maintain this odd feelinglessness. I sometimes have trouble finding awareness when my mind gets noisy. Does this make sense to you? Do you think I might be on the right track? This is exhausting in a way.

The spell check tells me that 'feelinglessness' is not a word, but I think it is effective so I will use it.

Response:

I would not call them natural instincts, no. They are more like dysfunctions, if we have to label them, since they are forms of self-created suffering. If you look at any other animal, loneliness and jealousy is uncommon. Perhaps they are more common in domesticated animals such as dogs, but that is likely because they are so close to humans, they pick up on their energies and behaviours, and become dependent on human attention.

They may pretend to be instincts, and in a way, on reflection, perhaps they are. They are ways that the mind-made identity can survive. Self-preserving mechanisms of the ego. So if we were to call them instincts, they are not yours, and they do not serve you, they only serve the falsity of the personal identity. They are not instincts necessary for the survival of the body, such as ducking if something is thrown at the head, or emergence of intuitive spontaneous action.

Things like loneliness and jealousy are based on a mistaken identity. You can only feel lonely when you feel you are a separate person. You can only feel jealous when you feel you are a separate person. The separate person is a thought/energy form that arises IN you, rather than being what you really are.

Awareness is actually beyond effort. It is what you already are, but it is overlooked. We can already see that your nature is awareness by the way

you speak. You describe “I find myself searching for the feeling of awareness”, so the feeling of searching for awareness, happens in your awareness. The only difficulty comes when you identify with what arises in awareness. The mind wants to search, find and grasp what awareness is. This searching of the mind, carries the identity of “I”, and so it seems you are searching for it. But the mind is searching, not you. The searching, and any need to understand, all arises in your awareness, or to be more specific – arises in the awareness that you are. Do not identify with whatever you are aware of. You are already aware of everything, naturally, without effort.

Efforts to reach awareness, arise in awareness.

This may be enough for you, but I will respond to the other point you raise....

I understand what you mean by the “feelinglessness” of awareness. The awareness can not be located or grasped, it is not an object or a person and so is beyond words. It is also not a particular experience or state, since all states and experiences naturally appear in it. A useful tool to stabilise the attention somewhat, is the feeling that you exist. Not you as a person, but the feeling of existence itself, prior to labels of being a particular person. This feeling is synonymous with other words you may here such as “presence”, “beingness”, “I AM” or “inner space”. This feeling that you are conscious, that you exist, may be subtle at first, but if you simply FEEL what it is like to be, to exist, prior to concepts and labels, then this can be a helpful tool. It may seem difficult at first, since the mind will hate it, but as the heavy energies in the body start to burn up, the feeling of being becomes more obvious. Since it is formless, you may wish to use the simple awareness of the breath as another re-director of attention away from the habitual thought streams, and deeper into your Self.

The only obstacle to feeling this sense of being and allowing your mind to merge in it, is the habit of giving objects more importance than the foundation of being. Objects can be anything including thoughts, emotions, sensations or external objects. Everything can be as it is, but don't give objects such respect. Everything reports to you, everything you

can perceive depends on your existence, rather than the other way around. Therefore, give attention to yourself, as the feeling of being, of pure existence. And don't worry about achieving anything in this regard, there is nothing to achieve.

The mind may say that if you give objects less respect, then your Life may be less efficient. The opposite is true. Through simply being aware of your own existence, you become aware of the source of everything else, and natural, non-conceptual intelligence can emerge more fully into ones Life, influencing both the "inner" and "outer" worlds.

Be grateful if it seems exhausting. It means the personal efforts can more easily be relinquished. Feel free to give up your efforts, to not pick and choose what thoughts or emotions come or go. Lose your interest in whatever makes you suffer, let it sort itself out. See that the person that seeks to reach anything or find anything, is another movement that arises IN you.

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Family Feuds

Question:

Hi Adam,

I don't know if you can help me, it's quite a longish story, I will try and shorten it as much as possible...

Firstly, I lost my mum 18 months ago to cancer (I had a difficult relationship with her, both me and my sister did). During this time when all this was happening, I had another sister (half-sister) that was traveling down a road of drug addiction with these types of boyfriends that were in and out of the jail. I was of course worried about her safety and tried everything I could to advise her the best way I could. She never listened to me though. Now, I knew so much about her double life and at the time my father didn't. As my mum passed, I was soon suffering panic attacks and anxiety on a daily basis. I knew I was imagining the worst when it came to my half sister, I realized (not at the time) I was being over dramatic about her situation and couldn't help what I did, was then inform my dad of the very life she was leading. Since then, with now everything out in the open, my anxiety seems less, but now I am no longer in contact with my half sister. In a way I am glad as her negative energy drained me and the worry I felt for her kept me awake at nights. Even though I told her this, she would put over she didn't care and it was her life. I know this, but I can't seem to get over what has happened. I now carry this anger, bitterness of what has happened. I feel like I have become a mug and was used. And I feel hurt that I was going through so much myself at the time.... I don't know if it's the realization of the toxic relationship has made me angry or it was always there.

I have read so much of your blogs and articles and try to take on board your advice but I can't seem to move on. I want to. I want to be able to sit with it, but as I watch these stories and memories run in my head I get so took by them, I get wound up again...and before I know it, I become aware and then I am back to suffering again. I think I know what you will say, is to watch it, sit with it, be aware of it, let these feelings become my friend, have more acceptance. I try, but it feels exhausting at times, and

then I can be okay, they rise all on their own again. I feel I am going around in circles.

I am sorry for the novel Adam. I hope you can help and I look forward to your reply.

Response:

Indeed, all that you are speaking of no longer exists. It only appears to exist in imagination, but in reality, the events have disappeared. Notice this, that the reality, what exists, is not what is causing trouble, the trouble is now a fabrication of the mind, which seeks to preserve itself. Notice that the energy of the past loves to be taken seriously, it loves to sustain itself, to take on a huge charge of identity and hostility. See how it is somehow enjoyed.

If you notice that the past events have actually disappeared from existence, then when the mind replays them, you will naturally not take them to be so real.

Don't try to stop it, don't try to stop anything. Even if it feels you are being dragged into the stories, allow this as well. You are the awareness that can notice even the sense of "me" becoming dragged in to the thought streams. Be indifferent as to whether the stories come up or not, be indifferent as to whether or not they take over or subside.

The most exhausting thing is the effort to not get involved with the stories, and the desire to be free of them. Give up your efforts and preferences. If the stories drag you along, if they really take charge - surrender, don't try to break free, just completely let go of trying to manipulate or in any way control what happens inside. So if the thoughts are followed and you seem to become lost in them, let this happen. Relinquish all efforts to try to feel differently, or efforts to try to observe.

Without effort, you are aware of the feeling of "being okay", and also of the rush of feelings of the past. You still exist while both these two varying experiences play out. Neither are your responsibility. Don't take it on yourself to try to be free or try to be aware. Without trying, without effort,

you are naturally aware of your inner state. The only mistake we make is the search or expectation of reaching or attaining a clear, calm, free inner state. The search or expectation for this peace, and the aversion to all of the mental stories, is what creates stress. Imagine you had never been told anything about how you should feel. There is no other possible experience other than the one that is here, at this moment. The present experience has already arisen. Therefore, see that arguing with it is pointless. The experience, or stories, or sense of being ok, already is as it is. Notice this. Notice that you don't actually have any control over how you feel, since as you wisely say, the inner emotions arise all by themselves.

Voluntarily giving up resistance or control can seem challenging. If we can see that actually these things are futile and only make things worse, that we can not manipulate our thoughts and feelings, then it makes complete sense to no longer fight the inevitable experience at this moment. Don't bother interfering, leave your mind alone, whatever it does.

The energy of the past wants to stay alive. So let it stay alive. Let it cause as much trouble as it wants. It is not your responsibility to change the experience. All change arises spontaneously and unexpectedly, so don't bear the burden yourself.

Of course resistance and desire for the inner disturbances to be vanquished will also arise by themselves. They are also spontaneous appearances. Don't identify yourself with these either.

The goal to be free of this inner trouble is the real agony. The mind creates another ideal for the future, and says that this present experience should not be happening. The mind also feels that it should be able to bring about a more peaceful state, yet at the same time feels absolutely powerless in doing this. Give up all striving to feel better. Don't label or judge what is felt. Notice that for all this experience to exist, there is a greater emptiness, or awareness, which has already allowed and accepted the experience, as it is.

You say you want to move on. Give this up, just to see how it feels. Don't try to get anywhere. Give up the idea of progress in this area. There is

nowhere to go, nothing to be free of, in reality. The discomfort will not last, and the less you label it as discomfort, the less you try to be free of it, the quicker it will dissolve.

It is a huge paradox. Once you stop trying to be free of something, you are free of it.

Often we try to use awareness, acceptance etc. as more tools to try to feel better, to have a more pleasant experience. So at the root there is still a resistance, an aversion to feeling a certain way. If the initial aversion, or argument with experience is seen as self-harming (which it is, since the aversion itself is suffering), then it is dropped, and the rest is much easier.

Hopefully that has helped in some way, and may relieve the exhaustion of trying to be free.

In terms of the actual situation, it seems that losing contact with your sister has brought greater freedom for you. Your efforts to influence her Life have failed, so you need no longer bear any burden for her. You are not in control. You tried your best, now time to let go. You can put down your baggage.

When the past shows up inside you, let it hold you, but don't hold it back. All the stuff that seems to trouble you so much now need not be taken so seriously. Don't trust the mind. No need to fight it, but no need to trust it either, since it creates complete fictions.

An additional note:

There is the feeling of "me", thoughts emotions, sensations, etc. Around them, already allowing them to be, is an untouched space - one with stillness, or being. Feel this space, be this space, notice that it does not suffer what appears in it. The energetic feeling of "me" as a dense object is just another appearance arising in the space. This space is the same as the intuitive feeling of existence, the sense "I AM". It is not personal. Notice how this feeling of existence remains the same no matter what appears within it. Give less importance to the content of the space, don't be fascinated by any of it, and simply BE this space of being - like the sky, and all else is merely clouds.

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Scary Meditation Experience

Question:

Hi Adam,

I have been meditating for 7 months now everyday and finding changes in my mood are improving and becoming aware of thoughts that enable me to not follow them at all and stay in my present moment.

But recently, last night in fact I was very focused on listening during meditation. As I concentrated on my breath and listening to the silence around me, I felt my eyes became locked, all thought dropped away, I soon entered into a void. I started to feel I was letting go of everything, and the feeling of immense joy surrounded me.

But, suddenly my heart rate increased, hammering inside of my chest and an intense amount of energy rushed and surged inside my whole body. With my eyes still closed I tried to just be aware of it, but I felt if I kept going I was going to die! I felt that I was very close to an out of body experience, or going somewhere and noticed my breathing was slowing down while my heart raced, I felt it pulsate through out my whole body. I obviously became frightened and opened my eyes. I felt shaky all over and tried to calm myself down.

Afterwards, I had so much energy in my body, though I did feel okay I wasn't scared once I stopped the meditation. I couldn't sleep at all last night, my body would just keep jerking as I slipped into sleep.

Do you have any idea what happened? Does this sound familiar to you? Am I meditating wrong? Do you have any advice on what happened?

Response:

Hi. I would not say you are meditating wrong at all. All of this is fine, it's all okay. These kinds of experiences can happen, and they can feel terrifying. It felt like you were going to die, because the little self, the conditioned, mind-made entity called "me" was dying. This is not a

physical death, but a dissolving of the unreal psychological self. You have noticed, I'm sure, that it all happened by itself - the listening, the absorption, the letting go, the joy, the terror - all was quite spontaneous. This can be a joyous and liberating experience, whilst at the same time, the limited illusory self does not want to dissolve, and so something inside becomes extremely scared. The mind generates a fear of the unknown, and tells you that you are dying. It is not true, it is just a trick of the mind. The fear of death, physical or otherwise, is generated by this limited, small sense of self, and ultimately meditation allows this limitation of identity to dissolve, or to be seen as unreal.

It is all fine. No need to fear. Even if fear comes up, let it happen. Some people have reported, some of them quiet famous sages or teachers, that before the mind-made self dropped, there was an intense fear of death immediately before.

Whilst we can speak of experiences, there is still an ever-present awareness that remains. Throughout all experiences of life, however joyous, or terrifying (or both!), you are the awareness in which it all takes place. If any similar experiences happen again, they will not seem quite as terrifying, not such a massive shock.

The most important thing to say, I feel, is that when this kind of experience happened (which many would call a "good" one to have during meditation), you were not hunting for it. You were free of expectation, merely aware of the silence. The more I think of it, the more people I can think of who report terrifying experiences prior to or during liberating experiences, so it is nothing to be concerned about. Let your meditation continue, enjoy. This kind of experience just shows the old, known, tangible stuff is dropping off, and you are stepping into the mysterious unknown (or to speak more clearly: the energy of the little self is dissolving into its source). The mind fears this, but it is not to be feared. You will not become stupid or dead or just a blank zombie, you will find your human expression becoming even more alive, intelligent and spontaneous.

Whilst it is a joy, for a while an energy inside may be revealed as very scared or shaky. Let it all happen. I am not sure what to make of the jerky

energies that seemed to prevent sleep, other than to say if you drop your resistance to them, they will work their way out of the body far quicker, without you even demanding that they leave. It was likely residual fear, perhaps fear of losing consciousness, and so it would seem to shock you out of sleep. Nothing to worry about.

Most of us carry great fear inside. Let this fear emerge if it ever does again, surrender to it, and it will leave by itself. It will take you deeper. There is nothing to fear, let it be.

It does not matter that you were shaken up or felt resistive in any way, even the resistance and sense of being shaken up is another appearance that emerges by itself. It may not happen again, perhaps it was necessary to get rid of some old fear, but whether it happens again or not - doesn't matter.

I enjoyed reading your message. There is a common assumption that spirituality or meditation is just some luxury indulgence, or that it should just be only peace and joy, but for a little bit, sometimes it can be a bit of a rollercoaster, and it shows that the consciousness is evicting its old fears. So all is fine. The awareness itself always remains the same.

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Difference Between Being Present And Being Mindful?

Question:

Hi Adam,

What is the difference between being present and being mindful?

Response:

Hi. No difference, both are the same. Both could be explained in different ways.

Mindfulness is allowing whatever the experience may be, without judging it or trying to change it. Being present is the same thing. They actually don't require any effort, they are more a relinquishing of trying to change or get involved in whatever forms may be playing out, either "inside" or "outside". They are not personal either, no person is responsible for presence or mindfulness, it is the natural state, in which the personal self arises from.

They are just gateways to knowing yourself. Once the attention is not so interested in trying to manipulate the transient experiences, it can turn back on itself, to know the source and substratum of experience, which could be called presence, or could even be called prior to presence. But to talk about any of it is quite futile, since it can just add more ideas.

Someone else may give you a different answer, but for me, mindfulness and being present are the same. They are not activities or exertions, they are more a relinquishment of judgement, resistance and expectation for the next experience.

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What To Do When Past Experience Creates Anxious Thoughts And Headaches?

Question:

Hi Adam,

I had a very long term bad experience with/negativity from a person at my workplace, it was so difficult to be near him and to maintain peace, it had created a lot of trouble (mentally) to me and maybe him, too. Finally I thought there is no way to maintain peace this way (I could not surrender more), so I was forced to take an action myself and asked my supervisors to give me a different place to sit and work - not like any complaint, I told them it might be just my thoughts, but would like to have a seat/position change.

But there were still thoughts coming back. For some time I tried to accept those thoughts and emotions completely and I even felt like some sensation or movements from left side of my head to heart to feet after consciously observing it, and I felt such coolness and lightness in my body after a long time. At that moment I had total forgiveness to everyone and it felt peaceful. It feels like something is released from my body.

But these thoughts come back again. Should I just accept it as is it coming to be fully released without getting drawn into thoughts? Sometime these thoughts create headaches. Please advice.

Thanks,

Response:

Hi. To answer the question of the title directly: do nothing. Have you ever tried this? It is not even something you can try or do, but how else to say it? Have you ever let yourself do absolutely nothing about this trouble that comes? To not feel as if you need to manage it, catch it, analyse it or get rid of it? We assume the result is that it will get worse and stay. It may get worse at first, but it will not stay. Stay with who?

What you described was great. When the thoughts come back again, they can trick you into thinking you may be doing something wrong, and they regain all of your precious attention. Since resistance has arisen again, it feels as if there is trouble. Don't resist resistance. Stay as you are, your approach is fine.

To answer your question of your final paragraph directly: Yes. See that Life is already allowing it, it is already being accepted by the moment. And yes, as some old patterns are leaving the body/mind, they may actually be felt to be more intense. But don't be fooled, don't believe you are doing something wrong or need to do something more. Let them be, they will pass, and will pass quicker if you lose your concern over them. Any concern about anything will keep your object of concern there for longer, since you are feeding it with energy.

These kind of thought patterns stay longer if they can create trouble. If you don't give them such importance (even though they claim to be important), if you give up reacting to them, if you give up trying to do anything to deal with them, then they will lose power. You have noticed that they arise by themselves, like waves, and so if you attempt to handle them or manage them, you end up getting tangled up in them. If they arise by themselves, they are not yours to get rid of. Leave them alone. You may reach a point where you just can't be bothered to hold them with your interest anymore, and when this lack of interest is there, they lose energy.

A good anchor for attention can be the simple, involuntary breath, or the simple, intuitive feeling of being, of existence - the space of Life in which all else plays.

Don't try to reach that same point of peace or lightness. It may come again, but if you are striving to get to some different experience to the one that seems to be there now, then there is more conflict and suffering. Drop any ideas of an "ideal" experience. Then you can relax.

These kind of thoughts may have some past momentum, they are nothing to worry about. The biggest trouble can be experienced when we feel as if we are very attached to thoughts and feelings, as if we are personally creating them and then suffering them. Who is suffering here? Who gets

drawn into thought? Is the body suffering the thoughts or the headaches? Is awareness suffering? Can the sufferer be located? These may be helpful questions, which may be easier to look into when the pain is not at peak levels.

These kind of experiences or thoughts are not enemies, they just highlight the limitations of the personal mind. If you let them play, you may naturally become aware of the larger space of Life that allows them, but does not suffer them.

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Emotions Within Relationships

Question:

Hi Adam,

I have an attachment/want and need for affection in the form of love (not sexual intimacy) but the kind that is nurturing and passionate. When two people really love each other to the highest degree, and one person naturally shows and produces this affection, and is somewhat stuck in a holding pattern from the other person not reciprocating (because they may not be capable to show or feel the same back) - I (the one showing love) instinctively want to move on, run or end this. Not because it's anyone's fault , I accept that person's decision, but believe intuitively to move on. Am I crazy or is this me being disturbed by emotions?

Response:

Hi. I don't know. I can't give you a definitive answer. Perhaps it is a kind of defence mechanism that says "well if you don't show me love then I will just leave you", or it may be something inside that just does not see the point of maintaining the relationship if the other person does not feel the same way? The fact that you mentioned "run" could show that you feel some hurt or embarrassment, and you want to get away from what triggers this feeling? Maybe you don't enjoy a relationship that is not mutually expressive? Perhaps you are unfairly demanding energy from someone else, and do not like that you can not get it? I don't know.

It would be all a lot easier if you stopped expecting someone to give you anything. If you just gave it up, you would be so much happier and probably have better relationships. Another way of approaching it is to not demand your need for affection to be met, so that you are no longer trying to satisfy it, no longer designating such importance to it. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but without trying to satisfy cravings such as these, and instead simply allowing them to be there, then they begin to lose power.

It can be normal for a relationship to often be built on "you give me this and I'll give you that", but when you continue to be dependent on someone else for love or affection, you will always feel like a beggar. It is also a tendency that can actually stop people from opening up around you, because they may feel as if you take all of their energy. The love is already within you, as you, but when it is sought elsewhere, it seems to be elsewhere. I don't want to force this too much, however, since your question was not about your wanting affection from others, it was why you want to run or end the relationship.

Just let yourself feel however you feel would be my advice. I can not help you analyse yourself very much. If you let yourself feel how you feel, then all the rubbish can not stick anymore. If you want to analyse your feelings, however, then they will stay with the idea of yourself, you will feel stuck in the mind, stuck in concepts.

Not sure how much this answer can help you, but thanks for getting in touch.

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How To Be Non-Judgemental With Negative Thoughts?

Question:

Hi Adam,

From all that I have read about spirituality I got to know that non-judgement is one of the best practices for inner peace. I do believe that we are already the peaceful Self but when the same thoughts that really trouble me come, I find myself helpless. I try to not judge and not rid them as you have said but they really take my attention away and make me unable to concentrate on the thing I am doing.

On top of that fighting/resisting happens which makes me fear the future even more. Please tell me how to best deal with that and how to be non-judgemental so that the peace remains intact?

Response:

Hi,

Thanks for your question. Don't do anything. Just don't do anything about what you describe. That's the short answer.

It is just a habit of the mind to resist and judge. It is not as important as it claims to be. Lose your interest in what now seems painful and out of your control. If you become fed up with it, there is no need to fight or accept it - you will just no longer assign it any importance. Don't get caught up with feeling caught up, if that makes sense.

We can spend so much energy trying to make the mind a certain way, or act a certain way to be at peace. Don't bother. Just forget about the mind. The experience is energetic, including the extra resistance and judgement you mentioned. Let the energy flow, even if it seems painful. Just let it all flow.

Non-judgement as a practice can be taken up by the mind as an unnecessary effort. In the moment of any thought/situation arising, it is

free from judgement, already. The interpreting mind can then judge after it has been seen. Judgements are always judging the past, what has already arisen. These judgements keep the past alive. To see that all judgements are past judgements can help - that the judgements are always lagging behind. They are always talking about what has already been perceived.

There is nothing wrong with judgements in themselves. Give up judging judgements!

Let yourself forget every word you have ever read about spirituality, including these ones. Most words can not help but suggest that you are an individual that can do something as an approach to thoughts and feelings. This can be helpful at first, but now no longer assume that you are an object that must do something for peace.

You mention you already know we are the peaceful Self. So who or what is this "me" that is troubled by thought? Is this "me" that becomes troubled the peaceful Self, or is it a thought/appearance that arises within the peace?

You mentioned feeling helpless when certain thoughts come. Good. So be helpless, completely helpless. Trouble comes when you believe you should be able to help yourself, believing you need to change something to be at peace, or perhaps believing you are "doing something wrong".

Sometimes when the mind seems to be a kind of monster or demon that wreaks havoc inside, we can believe that surrendering to the mind will mean the mind will then completely take over and dominate. But this is not true at all. If you allow it all, including the judgements, including the automatic resistance, including the fear, if you don't decide that any of it is wrong or should not be happening, then a miracle will occur. Allowing the attention to become lost, as if there is no problem, means that there is no longer so much power for the mind to draw on. The mind, despite appearances, has no separate power of its own. All the power comes from you. The more you want the mind to be a certain way, to leave you alone, to be at peace, the more it will rebel. If you no longer place conditions or expectations on the mind then as an unintended by-product, the ego-mind's power naturally dissolves.

To answer your last sentence directly, there is no method to non-judgement. It is a bit like saying "my habit is to always stand up, but how can I just stay sat down?".

(Note added 3rd Dec 2014: It can help to notice that in itself, in its purity, nothing means anything. The meaning of anything that is perceived only comes from the judgements themselves, rather than what is being judged. Noticing this helps to see the "isness" or "suchness" of Life.)

No need to create more conflict. If there is judging, that is part of what is. No need to fight yourself.

It is never you that judges anyway, all judgement is just more mind content, so is nothing to be concerned about. It may continue for a while out of sheer reflex or habit, but it need not be your concern.

Don't make "non-judgement" any kind of goal to achieve, since this is all more judgement, more mind, more effort.

All judgements arise in a space of non-judgement. Feel that for yourself, and that is what non-judgement is. The ever-present space of non-judgement does not have a problem with the judgements within it. It is not trying to be anything, it has no aims to be non-judgemental. Are you actually separate from this space/field of being?

Whether there is judgement or an absence of judgement, both take place in your awareness. A lack of judgement just opens up space inside, gives less solidity to the form the mind assumes. Judgement will drop off the more it is noticed as futile. If you had no judgements of attention being lost and whether this was good or bad, no ideas about whether feeling disturbed was good or bad, no ideas about what you should or should not be experiencing, then is there still a problem?

Have no ideals of the perfect inner state, and don't expect yourself to be perfect or always free from judgement. See how that feels.

Expecting the mind to not judge things is like expecting a dog not to bark. Then every time it barks you become very upset and disturbed. The mind is not so important. You are not what the mind does.

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Trying To Get Better

Question:

Hi Adam,

I am struggling with trying to use so many techniques to "get better". As you know from a previous question I was really ill due to a stress related illness and still continue to suffer. I just want things to be different from how they are all the time and am depressed and anxious and also struggle with sleeping due to the constant rumination (repetitive negative thinking). I just want to get away from thoughts and pay them no attention but they are such a distraction when I am feeling this way.

Response:

I wonder what techniques are you using? Give yourself a break from them.

When you use getting better or feeling better as an aim to any kind of inner technique/meditation, then you remain stuck in the idea of time, of self, and heighten the sense that there is something wrong that you have the power to manipulate.

What if, as an experiment, someone said to you that there is absolutely no chance that your experience will improve? That it is no use trying to change or feel better, because this is the way it will always be, and you can't do anything about it? If you believed this, sincerely, then how would you feel? Please try this as an experiment.

At first you may feel worse, but then you may realise that this will simply not change at all, so what else is there to do but stop fighting all of it? Perhaps you could drop hoping to feel better?

If your underlying expectation is always to feel better, to feel differently, then there is no real acceptance, since it is all based on resistance. And yet, even this underlying resistance takes place in a space that is already surrendered to what is.

When you think you have the personal power to change how you feel, then you will always be very interested in suffering, as if it is your responsibility to rearrange your inner state to become pleasant again. If you experiment with the inevitability scenario I mentioned above, then you may find that the level of interest in suffering begins to weaken.

I do not want to speculate further about anything happening, because I do not wish to attach your mind to something other than what is, since for you this seems to be creating a conflict, the hope for better creates a resistance to Now.

The final thing to mention, which I may have mentioned before, is that the trouble is not so much the thoughts, feelings, depression etc, but the entity inside that feels as if he is suffering all of it. The one that finds it hard to not resist, finds it hard to not suffer, finds it quite impossible to be silent, and has written the message in another attempt to feel better. Most people assume that this entity is real, is who you are, but what is it? Does it have any reality? Do you actually have a self, a person inside the body? Is it real? Who are you?

If any answer comes up, then can you possibly be that either? Can you be anything that comes and goes?

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Choiceless Awareness

Question:

Hi Adam,

I would like to know what you think on “choiceless awareness”, as has been suggested by Jiddu Krishnamurti, as the only option we have.

It is keeping a moment to moment awareness of our mind, thoughts and habits without having a judgement of whether they are good or bad. That the mind is conditioned from the past (a mechanical device), and in the present we have no choice but to just be aware of our mind activities.

But my doubts are that the mind might be having some way of escaping certain situations out of fear or something, and habitually we tend to follow it or engage in some other habits to avoid painful emotions - so just being aware of this habit without any choice and repeating them - will it help in removal of such habits and to do what is required in any situations irrespective of mind conditioning?

Choiceless Awareness is best I guess, since it's seeing what is exactly there. If fear/jealousy is there, seeing it clearly without choice and not disliking or hiding it.

One of the problems when we try to accept the conditioned fear is that the mind tells you that you won't be able to do anything in certain situations, and you will just have to sit and accept it.

Also a problem is when our mind turns this into a technique or concept, we tend to fall in the same mind traps. These truthful ways also tend to become mind burdens sometimes.

I would very much like to know your experiences or opinions on choiceless awareness.

Response:

Hello, yes I agree with a lot of what you say, that once the mind forms a belief/concepts/technique around choiceless awareness, then more mind-stuff results.

Choicelessness takes away the option of resistance. We are used to choosing which experiences we like and don't like, want or don't want, and this choosing operates particularly in the midst of any experience that is deemed undesirable. Then the mind wishes it could escape through choice, but its method of resistance is ineffective in escape.

It highlights the delay of choice - that the idea of choice hides the fact that the present experience already is as it is. The choice of "I do or do not want this experience" is often futile, since it just makes discomfort seem more significant than it really is.

However, if some mental/emotional experience comes up, one may feel they have a choice. They may say "I will no longer support this", and they may find themselves actively giving up some behaviour. This can happen, so I wouldn't say there are any strict rules. Whatever feels easier, whatever feels natural, whatever feels good, go with that.

We are very used to giving the transient nature of our experience great importance. For a while, the sensations and thoughts of the mind seem very important. But they are only important when we assume that they are important. An absence of choice means you are no longer interested in manipulating how you feel or trying to create a certain state of mind. It helps to withdraw focus from the fleeting, so that the timeless aspect of all experience is felt.

Yet, if there is an aim to use "choiceless awareness" as a practice to "experience the timeless" or "be enlightened", or to "dissolve the mind" then it is pointless, because the mind and its time-bound nature have taken over. There is no aim, no goal, nothing to find. If choicelessness becomes a means to an end, then it will likely end in frustration.

I would not say that the specifics of what you describe are our "only option", although choicelessness can help a great deal. Another sage such as Nisargadatta Maharaj would advise an awareness of natural presence,

the feeling of existence, the sense “I AM”, which although involves choicelessness, would not be so mind-orientated, it is more beingness - orientated. Perhaps they are two aspects of the same thing. Both are choiceless, the first seems to be in the direction of thoughts and feelings, the second is in the direction of, and merging with, existence itself.

Without the burden of choice, you become unpredictable in your activity. Even you do not know what you will do next. No label can stick, no outcome can be predicted. Existence becomes completely spontaneous, but extremely intelligent. It is not something the mind can understand, there is now space for a deeper intelligence to emerge more fully into one's activities. Although you will not even feel as if the activities can really be called your own. The mind will appear to be in opposition of this, or perhaps sometimes support and pretend it understands, but you can just forget both aspects of the play, don't ask anything from the movement of thought.

All of your doubts you mentioned are based on choice, on choosing which habits are favourable, which are not favourable, which state is the right state to have, which state is wrong, that avoidance is bad and non-avoidance is good. Choicelessness is the absence of deciding about any of this. Even choosing to be choiceless is still a choice!

If I said choiceless awareness will get rid of your habits you think are bad, then you will be waiting for them to leave. Don't wait for anything to leave. Let everything stay if it wants.

Awareness is naturally choiceless. It is not something to be “practiced” from an individual standpoint. It already is. The individual who tries to practice awareness, is just another appearance within awareness.

I don't know how useful the answer will be for you, but thanks for getting in touch,

If this or anything else creates extra concepts for you, then forget about it. No need to pass it on to your mind.

Adam

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Awakening - A Lengthy Process?

Question:

Hi,

I know that the less you care about time, the closer you get to your your awakening. But even great masters such as Eckhart Tolle say it's a process that takes a lot of time. So, do you have to commit a lot of time (months, years) to your meditation. And even if you've witnessed a glimpse of that inner peace inside you, it's very hard or nearly impossible to maintain that state for a longer amount of time. So, is it really worth it? Especially for depressed people (like me) who are more enslaved by their minds - is it even possible for them (me)?

Response:

Don't worry about any of this. This is all still mind-play. It is true that some refinement/quieting of the mind can seem to take place gradually, and this is fine, but you need not tie yourself or "awakening" within a time frame. Never assume awakening is in the next moment. What are we even talking about when we say awakening? We are still using concepts. We are still assuming that there is a "me" who "wakes up". Don't even assume you are enslaved to your mind. It is useful to notice that the thinking mind seems to create a false self, and can appear to be taking attention away from stillness, but none of it is really true.

The state that you mentioned, I agree, is impossible to maintain. No-one can maintain it, because it is natural and without effort. The illusion is the belief that you are the personal energy which believes it can maintain the state or leave it. But you are it.

Perhaps it would be helpful to say "no, don't bother trying to wake up, just relax". Then what is left?

So to answer your question directly: "No, forget about setting yourself a time frame for meditation". All inner processes still take place within the awareness. Someone knows that last year they were depressed, and now

feel much lighter, for example. The awareness is always here, and is not the result of some process. Without awareness, no process could take place!

Quiet time or meditation will happen if it is useful for you. It will just happen by itself. But meditating with the expectation of some awakening experience will keep you in the land of the mind. Just rest as being, as the simple sense of existence, which is not personal, and is not interested in "me waking up". It is natural existence. Be familiar with the feeling, relax the attention into it.

Anyone who awakens will usually say that there is no-one who awakens. Awakening is not a personal thing, it is the falling away of the personal thing. There is nothing wrong with personality, it does not have to be destroyed, but it may spontaneously be seen to not really exist. What is the mind? Can you locate it? Can you locate yourself within the body?

When meditation or "awakening" is approached from the perspective of "me", then it becomes extremely difficult, even frustrating. If the personal shape is not identified with, then there is no-one left to even be bothered about how awake they are.

With all of that said, the urge to be free, or the attraction to truth, will naturally turn the attention away from what is fleeting. So it is all fine. If you drop the idea of "me awakening through a process", then the "me energy" can drop off by itself.

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What To Do With Constant Anxiety?

Question:

Hello Adam, I have been on a journey of awareness and am so excited about knowing the truth about being one with all that is here in the present moment. I am blessed.

My question is I have felt anxiety in my stomach for over 52 years. I have tried everything, it's like the feeling when you were little waiting in the dentist's office, only I have had this constantly like a real pain, an ache since I was 10 years old.

Bless you if you can help Adam.

Response:

Hi,

Ok, I'm not sure if this will help, since I will not tell you do do anything in particular. Is it possible to feel the feeling, without calling it anything? So you can give up calling it anxiety, do not give belief to any thought that comes with the feeling such as "I am anxious" or "this feeling will not go away". Is it possible, just for a few minutes to sit, without trying to escape the feeling, without trying to fix it, without trying to resolve it?

Do not act as if you are the caretaker of the feeling. Do not act as if it is your personal creation which you must now be responsible for getting rid of. If we are to call it anything, we can call it energy. Not good energy, not bad energy, just life energy.

Even to try to accept the feeling can be used as another technique to escape it, so don't try anything whatsoever. Give up fighting, give up allowing. If the feeling is so stubborn that it has not left in 52 years, then you may as well become comfortable with it. See that it is inevitable at this moment, it is already here. Take the approach that you no longer have a choice as to whether it is there or not. It is not up to you or anyone else.

Sense, feel energetically without assigning any labels or understanding, just feel what is really there.

Let me know how this goes (comment below if you wish), and I can always add more if you should require, but I will not give you any method, so don't hope for one. Give up all hope. Give up any hope for the feeling to be gone later on. Then how do you feel?

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Explaining Inner Silence?

Question:

Hi Adam,

I have been blessed to experience interior silence for several hours each day. Not all at once, but intermittent periods throughout the day.

The problem I have is that I am trying to explain it to my family, but they don't understand it. Does one have to be fully awakened to teach it? Why is it not working?

Response:

Hi,

Surely it is impossible for anyone to explain silence? Silence is the absence of explanations, the absence of any kind of idea or concept. Yet it is still there even whilst concepts and ideas arise.

If people can not understand or even comprehend an inner quietude, then there is no space in them yet, they have not consciously experienced it. If someone doesn't understand you, particularly with this sort of thing, there is no need to bear the burden. It is not your problem. Enjoy your silence, that is enough.

The moment the mind attempts to explain silence, it brings noise, so don't bother any more would be my advice.

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Talking To Myself...

Question:

Hi Adam,

My name is *****. I am 33 years old. From my childhood I have a habit of talking to myself loudly. It seems there is one "I" and one "You" are talking to each other. I am the one who questions loudly and I am the one who replies. Besides, I am a muscular dystrophy patient, can't walk and I always take the help of others for my works, most of the time this was and is unacceptable to me.

After reading Eckhart Tolle's book "The Power of Now" I tried not to talk to myself and started to listen to whatever comes and I saw that the conversation between I and You is still going on and I find it very hard to stop it. Sometimes the language of the conversation is very negative and abusive. Sometimes when I try to stop the conversation and take my attention outside of my mind, I find a pressure on my chest. Sometimes in my mind the "You" says "you are doing it wrong, nothing will happen, it will not go". I want to know the process to stay present always. Should I listen to the conversation without doing anything? Please help.

Response:

Hi,

There is no process to stay present always.

If you try to stop any thought, any feeling, any resistance, any reaction, any inner turbulence, then you will feel tied up in everything. There is no need for mind-control or suppression.

Both voices, both sides of the arguments, are not your responsibility to control or maintain. They happen by themselves, with no control on your part. You hear both voices, so how could you be either? It may seem as if they terrorise or torture you, but the "you" that is or feels tortured, is another self-image, another thought that is taken to be who you are.

You are already listening to the conversation without doing anything, and then a resistance reflex arises that acts as if it is resisting or forming opinions about what is happening. If you believe that this resistance reflex is who you are, then it will seem nearly impossible to relinquish resistance. It is simply a reflex that happens by itself.

Give less importance to your opinions about what the mind is or should be.

You are not the feeling of being a person. You are simply the being.

You can listen to the conversations without doing anything, yes. Then without your effort, it is seen that you are not the voices in the head. You may find that you do not wish to give such importance to these voices. They are painful and are not true representatives of anything - they are just a bunch of opinions, usually from other people. Notice that they claim to be true, but can not possibly be true, since they are always limited interpretations based on a way of thinking that has come from other people.

So you may not even be interested in listening to them. You are the substratum, the silence and being that exists prior to and during the movement of thought. There is nothing personal in this.

If you give up trying to fight or manipulate your mind, it will lose its power without you needing to do anything about it.

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How To Let Go Of Grief And Regrets?

Question:

Hi, I just came from a traumatic break up with my partner of 8 years. Six months on, I still live with lingering feelings of regrets and should-haves and could-haves. Anything can trigger the memories and emotions....a song, a movie scene, a place, even a word or thought.

How does one let go? Or should I just accept this as part of the grieving process.

Response:

Hi,

Notice that they come by themselves. They are not feelings that you have any real control over. When they come they come, when they go they go. They may feel extremely personal, but notice that at the foundation, there isn't a person who is deciding to feel regret or to go over past stories etc. - they just happen by themselves.

How to let go? Do you want to? Who would you be without these feelings and stories? There is nothing wrong with them, no condemnation of anything is needed - and this can help - neither condemning nor justifying the experience. Then the judgement and resistance relaxes, and healing can take place by itself.

You can let these feelings be, yes, whether to call it part of the grieving process or not is up to you. You don't have to call it anything. Just because these experiences can come and go, does not mean you have to act as if you know what they are for or why they are happening.

It is quite normal for all of these experiences and stories to happen, there is nothing wrong in it. Sometimes they can seem to be staying unnecessarily long if we believe that this pain will resolve a situation - maybe believing that going over what you could have or should have done will alter the past and fix what seemed to go wrong. Or believing

that feeling upset may bring harmony back to the relationship. If this feels true for you at all, you can see the futility of it - revisiting the past in an attempt to change it, and yet always believing that the past is a certain way, and is unchangeable.

Some may say that you can actually change your memories from the painful ones you have, and change them to more healing or lighter ones. But I feel a much easier and liberating approach is to see how the revisitation of pain from the past, is a futile effort, which happens of its own accord, and yet feels as if it is under the control of a person, who has no real existence at all.

If any of that was confusing, you can just forget about it or comment below if you wish. Hope that helped somehow.

The bottom line is: don't argue with your experience. If you try to control the experiences, you will likely feel tied up in them. Give up the self-control.

Thanks for your question, I wish you all the best.

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What Should I Do With The Energy-Pressures In My Body?

Question:

Hello Adam,

I felt this energy at my right ear hole since about 1-2 weeks. I thought it would go away but it is there. I tried to meditate, sometimes just let be and not bother it but my attention goes back there at my right side ear.

After I have watched videos of Satsang with Mooji. He did mention about allowing thoughts to flow, come in and go without participating in it, just be the observer. I am doing this currently, I felt being fully in the present, in the Now. I felt truly peace with myself, it means a lot to me. I'm somehow unsure how to cope when it comes to energy that I can feel and sense that's attached at my body. When I am just sitting or lying down, I can feel these energy that comes to body for example feet, wrist, shoulder and leg. I just be aware of it and not give any interest to it, as Mooji said, give no interest and so it will pass/go (for thoughts).

I'm wondering how about the energy, because I'm conscious and fully aware of it and I can feel it physically, rather than the thoughts (abstract) which I can just simply let go. When it comes to physical sensation, to give no interest and let go is quite uncomfortable for me because my attention goes back there to my right ears. What should I do? Please enlighten me with this.

I have read the other Q&A it was helpful for me and I wish to have your guidance for this. Your approach for the answers and understanding resonates with me. I mean the way you answer the rest of the questions speaks to me. Like in the "Scary Meditation Experience" your approach for the answer heals me in some way. I was in that situation, your explanation gave me an insights and I felt relief and good vibes from you. Honestly whenever I search online, people's opinion mostly are scary and far from love. I'm truly glad I found your page and a beautiful soul.

I apologise for this long message, this is my first time to ask question in a spiritual/awakening websites

Hope to hear from you, thank you in advance.

Response:

Hello, thanks for your question and words, I'm glad the site has been helpful for you.

These sensations are normal, particularly for people who have been getting into some kind of meditation or spiritual guidance. I am not absolutely sure what they always are - sometimes they can be energies and old structures being released, sometimes you just become more aware of the denser vibrations in the body, and sometimes they seem to be like tricks - once the thoughts no longer hold too much of the attention, energetic sensations come to cause distractions.

It may help to look at it this way: the sensations have arisen by themselves. You did not decide that they arise. So they are not your responsibility to let go of. Out of habit it is fine for the attention to gravitate towards these feelings, but even the localised point of attention is not what you are, since you can report what the attention is doing, where it goes etc. So if the attention gets sucked into these sensations, then let it. You don't have to strain or fight any of it.

Is it possible to no longer call the attention "mine"? Is it your property if it moves around by itself?

The attention can go towards these sensations because of an underlying interest or belief that giving attention can fix these energies. If you notice that the attention going towards these energies only tends to make them feel more intense, then interest will drop off by itself. Interest can only really drop off when you see that the object can't give you anything. If you feel as if you can get something from the energies coming or going, then an underlying interest may remain. So simply see the futility of trying to figure out these energies - since in themselves, they have no meaning.

There can often be a subtle underlying expectation that these feelings should be released or relieved, or that you must do something to solve

them. Trying to relieve them or wanting them to be gone, may well keep them seeming more important than they really are.

I am not saying that they do not feel uncomfortable, but they arise in a space that is beyond comfort or discomfort. Be one with the emptiness that the sensations arise within, do not take yourself to be the self-image, and do not demand that the sensations be gone. They will shift or drop off by themselves in their own time.

Drop the idea of yourself (or "I") altogether for a moment.

It is also normal to feel identified with these sensations sometimes, as if your identity is intimately linked to or connected to the energies or sensations that are felt. But since the personal identity that feels attached to these sensations is also somehow observed from a non-local point - it shows that this identity is also a transient energy.

So the short answer is you don't have to do anything. If you give up relying to your personal strength, and let the power lie fully in the hands of Life, then things will resolve themselves all the more quickly.

Don't hunt for an ideal experience, don't aim to eliminate these feelings by yourself - since this will probably just keep everything in place. Do not oppose the experience, do not argue or fight with it. Then how do you feel?

If there are no objections, arguments with or interpretations of the current experience - then is there any issue?

If these words resonate, let them in. If they do not resonate, you can ignore them.

Extra note:

An extra thing to say, if the attention still seems to gravitate towards certain energies, is to disregard everything other than the simple sense of being/existence, the sense "I AM". Just the simple feeling or intuition of existence, which Mooji often talk about. If that is given importance, and everything else regarded as unreal or not your responsibility, then this can help the attention settle into being.

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How To Do The Things You Hate To Do?

Question:

Hi Adam, your books and website have helped me a lot. I am calmer and more peaceful than before. Now I would like to solve a few works wherein I struggle doing/carrying out as they are some of the basic things of life. I find cooking, studying and falling asleep arduous. I dread to carry out those acts and usually procrastinate when I have to.

While cooking, I feel like I'd rather not be doing it throughout the course. While studying, my mind wanders around a lot. I try to bring it back and concentrate but in vain. I feel terrible afterwards for having not learned anything after a good duration of studying. And while sleeping, I have to either wait a lot or put up some form of stuff on (like music) that helps me in falling asleep. I mostly feel bad afterwards for the fact that I could not achieve my objectives (in studies), and that I wasn't feeling happy at all throughout (in cooking and sleeping) – probably because of difficult thoughts throughout the latter two activities.

Next thing when the need to perform them arises again I feel dreadful about them and rather feel like not carrying out. So my question for you is how to carry out these things efficiently (studying) and not dread (cooking & sleeping)?

Response:

Hi. I don't think there is any absolute answer to anything you have asked about, so I will probably give a bunch of different answers, and you can just go with what sounds true for you.

Procrastination is usually when we see a task as somehow painful, and we wish to avoid it. It is not unnatural to wish to avoid pain, so the first thing you can do is let yourself. Let yourself procrastinate if that's what is happening. In a total allowance of it, without condemning it or wishing it be different, you may naturally gain some insights about it. Whenever you fight with it or judge it as anything, then the true nature of it is

masked, and it instead feels as if it is something you have control over or should be responsible for, and conflict ensues. Let yourself procrastinate, and the tendency may burn itself out far quicker. You may see that it is quite futile, or may indeed see that it is an avoidance of something else that is deemed painful.

So what is so painful about these other tasks? You have eluded to it already, but talking about it conceptually is different from the living experience.

Let's take sleep – is it the lying on the bed that is physically uncomfortable? With cooking, are the hand movements painful for you? Probably not. So it would seem the physical acts themselves, the actual movements are not what hurts – it is the mental strain, or the uncomfortable sensations that arise when the mind is no longer distracted by some form of pleasure. See that the thoughts about the tasks are not the tasks themselves. They are not actually related to each other, but the thoughts pretend that they are inseparable from the tasks being carried out. See that the discomfort is self-created, or mind-created, rather than the task inflicting anything on to you.

Don't take any of it personally, at a certain point there can arise in someone an absolute tiredness, a sickness of doing anything at all. It can feel as if the burden is just too much to bear. This can be helpful, as it allows the responsibility to fall back into Life itself, rather than the imaginary person believing they are responsible for all of it.

Are you actually doing it? Sometimes doing basic things can begin to feel painful so that you question your role as the doer of it all. When cutting food, is it really you doing it, or is it happening by itself? Reading these words, is there someone doing it or is it just happening by itself? Are you breathing, are you beating the heart, do you digest food, do you decide when to fall asleep? The idea of doership is engrained from birth, and so inside the body an energy rises up that says "I am doing this, I did this, I will do that", but is this really true?

Take the movements of Life as an impersonal energy movement, rather than something that anyone is doing.

Often the mind can use tasks such as these to maintain resistance, and therefore an identity for itself. Notice how rather than simply moving in Life, the mind will try to tell a story of a whole task that needs to be accomplished, all that needs to be studied, a whole meal to cook, or a certain period of time spent waiting for sleep. These are all illusions. The reality is always very simple. See the simplicity of everything as it happens. Picking up a plate, lying on a bed, reading a word, or writing a word. Let everything be, including the discomfort or avoidance. If you, whilst waiting for sleep, forget all about sleep and instead let the entirety of the moment be as it is, then you may notice a difference.

Don't give so much importance to your goals or outcomes, because they can dwarf and hinder present action. For example, if you study, don't be so attached to doing a certain amount. Just sit, see what happens, forget about time. Alternatively you can break it down, so you just study for 10 minutes. You could try 10 minute periods, which sounds like nothing, but will gradually build up and may make it all seem easier.

Are these things you have to do? Do you have to cook? Do you have to sleep? Do you have to study? If you really consider these things, rather than just taking someone else's word for it, then it may make everything easier. If you absolutely have to do something, then you will see the futility of complaining about it, or rather see the futility of the thoughts that wish the situation were otherwise. If it is something you don't have to do, then relax from putting any pressure on yourself. It is true that sometimes self-created pressure can sustain action for someone, but for others, it just creates a useless burden and more conflict.

You can also notice that something inside enjoys complaining, enjoys avoidance, and then enjoys feeling bad about it afterwards. You do not have to get rid of anything, but notice that there seems to be some strange enjoyment going on, or at least the belief that things such as complaining, feeling bad, procrastinating – are helpful for your life or for doing things.

That's all I have for now, thanks for your question, and I'm glad the material has been useful for you.

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Meditation & Obsessive Thoughts

Question:

After getting through most of your book "Undisturbed: A Guide To Emotional Wellness", it hit me that while during meditation one tries to focus on one's breath and block thoughts, doesn't this seem to conflict with what you are saying?

Also, to dismiss obsessive thoughts, what have you found to be the most helpful way to start and helpful way to continue to do this until it becomes a habit? Thanks.

Response:

I suppose the main message of that book is that there need not be any ideal way to feel, that thoughts are very difficult to stop or block, and any self-created suffering will strengthen itself the more you resist it, judge it has bad or want it to be gone; that you are already that in which thoughts and sensations and emotions appear and disappear.

Being aware of the breath is fine. Trying to block thoughts might seem a great effort. If it works, that's fine, but thought appears by itself, without choice, so to try to stop thought appearing may seem quite arduous, and is not necessary in my opinion.

If you seek or try to create a thoughtless state, you may forever feel as if you are struggling.

Being aware of the breath is normal, but usually we believe ourselves to be entities, independent objects that can be aware of the breath or other things. But is that which is aware of the breath actually separate from the breath? Is there the breath as one thing and you as another thing, or is there actually no separation?

Being aware of the breath fits in with what the book says, since in being aware of the breath there is no resistance. If it is mixed with trying to feel a certain way or trying to reach a certain state, then I feel this becomes an

unnecessary effort. Trying to block thoughts is not in line with the book's message, I agree.

Obsessive Thoughts

Don't call obsessive thoughts obsessive thoughts. That is a shortcut to them losing power. You don't have to deal with them in any way, notice that they happen by themselves. They live on the more you take yourself to be the thinker of them, or if you believe you must be able to control them. Are they not merely appearances, that do not have anyone "thinking" them?

See that struggling with any thought or stream of thinking merely keeps the stream alive. The struggle keeps the attention interested, and can create a dependency on the thoughts not being there. Let them do their own thing.

Meditation Without Attachment To Its Outcome

People can often feel like meditation is a means to an end, a way to get a silent mind, or a way to feel calm, or to be more creative. This is all fine as well, but the mind is likely to calm far sooner if thoughts are no longer given such importance. Whether they are there or not is not up to you. This attitude can promote relaxation, and easier meditation. It also relaxes the seeking mentality that can make the mind feel stronger than it really is (the mind in this case being thoughts that cause disturbance).

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A Question On Self-Enquiry

Question:

Hi Adam,

I have been asking myself who am I and going into introspection of the self enquiry. I have come across a doubt and wondered if you can maybe elaborate on what that might be?!

As soon as I ask the question, I immediately understand that I am not looking for the answer to this question, but, that the question is bringing my awareness to it. If that makes sense? That I am the awareness only. I then watch youtube videos and read about the self enquiry and really get from a deeper level, rather than an intellectual level what I am, this pure awareness. Like eyes floating through space? I know I am trying to intellectualize it and this is when I run into my problem. My brain is still trying to make sense of this awareness I have come to realize, and I observe the brain trying to figure it out and be like a dog chasing it's own tail, I even become aware of how much anxiety it can produce in the body.

I also know the more alert I become there is nothing. Absolutely nothing, stillness, just pure aware, but recently the mind convinces me that either this is boring and it will fluctuate with throwing me memories of the past or images of trying to predict a future. I watch this, sometimes I identify with it and then I am back in the game. I even witness my frustration of trying to stay so alert all the time.

My question is, the more practice I do staying with the alertness, does it become second nature? Because at the moment it's very much like an effort, constantly reminding myself it's just thoughts, that's just an emotion, that's just a sensation. . . I feel like I am going crazy and again, I observe this. It's like I am observing a body malfunctioning! I don't even know if I am doing it right. Basically, I just wondered if you had steps for self enquiry, because though I can be absolutely alert and there is nothing in my mind for a few seconds, sometimes a few minutes, I find myself even doubting this is the truth.

I look forward to your reply and I hope you can elaborate. Maybe I am thinking that something amazing is going to happen once I find truth. Maybe I have concepts and idea's about truth. . . but I always thought when you reach truth, all doubts are gone, I wouldn't even be asking you for advice as I would know. I would feel within myself that I am home, or I'm just that, the awareness. But when I become the awareness, I can't help feel, is this it? Is this really truth? The majority of the time it just seems to lead to more confusion more than anything else.

Hope you can help, thank you for your time Adam.

Response:

All of this mess is created by "I". Stop saying "I", stop claiming that you are anything. Forget all concepts, tales of experience, ideals, predictions, responsibility to find anything. Stop saying "I".

If self-enquiry happens, it may do spontaneously, let it be genuine, without trying to get to a point of awareness or freedom or whatever. It is best if it is spontaneous and genuine - "what am I at the deepest level?". I don't want to give you too many words because the mind has created a new mess out of it, which is not your fault or something to be blamed for, but it has obviously, as you say, taken it all conceptually.

Just give up concepts about all of this, they are extremely misleading. You feel you exist, that is it. if you read the words of a master, his words should enter your heart and do their work without you needing to intervene, The mind replaying the words of a master on auto-loop are just thoughts like any other. There is nothing to achieve by anyone. You are not an entity. That's all I feel to say.

Hope that can help,

Adam

P.S. The very search for something is what makes you feel as if the "real you" is at a distance, somewhere else to be attained or realised. Really the "me" that searches, that wishes to find or achieve something, is the very energy that masks the Self.

The mind will also testify that awareness must be a thing. It can not understand any of this. How could awareness be a thing that can be seen?

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Scared To Try Meditation Again! Help!

Question:

Hi,

I am very new to yoga...practicing 2 weeks to be exact. Actually, I don't even know what kind of yoga I have practiced. I looked at youtube videos and basically followed the instructions of sitting still and clearing my mind. I would typically try yoga in the afternoon when I was free to be alone from my family. I wanted to share the experience I had tonight.

In the past when I meditated my thoughts were running and eventually leveling off for about 10 minutes leaving me feeling a little relaxed. It wasn't bad but there was something that gave a feeling to try it again...almost like an addiction. Let me add that when I meditate I listen to soft music like ocean waves and I listen to this through my headphones on my cell phone through YouTube videos. Well...today I switched my music and listened to a more tibetan form of music...more of Buddhist feel. During the meditation I thought I saw a silhouette coming toward me...it had no legs, just more like a shadow and it was coming toward me slowing. My subconscious mind wanted to find out what it was and when it appeared to be really close I experienced the strangest sensation ever. I felt scared and I felt like I was about to fall into a black hole so I jumped up petrified! I have had anxiety for about 8 hours off and on and I don't have anxiety or panic attacks at all! Never! Not sure what happened but can someone help? Did I come out of meditation too fast? Am I possessed? Help! Scared for my sanity!

Response:

Don't worry. Scary meditation experience can happen sometimes. You describe it as if some kind of entity was coming towards you. I'm not sure if that's the case. When people feel they are about to enter a black hole, lose themselves in it, or actually die, it is usually the old mind structures falling away, or the old personal self being absorbed back into its own

source. The intense fear can put someone off meditation, which keeps the old mind structures in place.

I don't really have a solid answer for you, but looking at what you have written, you have asked if you came out of meditation too fast. No, I wouldn't say so. Are you possessed? No, I don't think so. It may well be any experience that never happens again. Sometimes "strange" meditation experiences can happen if someone becomes very "spaced-out" during a meditation - e.g. if someone feels their mind goes up and out, almost in the clouds. It may be helpful for you to have a more inward-turned meditation, such as a simple awareness of breath, feeling of your own existence, or even grounding/earthing. Those kinds of meditations are available on this site for free in the meditation section.

Perhaps it was to do with the energy of the music? I don't know.

Fear and anxiety can be a very normal part of meditation. The old, conditioned energy field of the mind does not wish to be destroyed, and can throw up a lot of fear if it is threatened. I have not heard of or experienced the specific thing you mention, but it may never happen again.

Let yourself feel anxious if that's what is there, and simply be aware that the body is breathing by itself. That is the most simple meditation

Sorry if I could not be more help, but if you wish to ask any follow-up questions, then feel free below. Or if anyone has any advice to help Robin, feel free to comment below

Adam

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Breathlessness In Meditation

Question:

Hi,

I have been feeling breathless. It's almost impossible to meditate as focusing on the breath only takes me back into the fearful mind. I try to take my mind off being breathless, but the tight sensations and pressure around the chest only bring my attention back to these feelings. It's been like this for a few months now. The doctor puts it down to anxiety. I don't know what it is. I have tried to figure out what it is but I notice this only makes me worry more.

I wonder if you have any advise or suggestions on how to accept the breathlessness, how to relax through it, as I notice if I focus on the breathlessness (for meditation) it always intensifies and goes straight into the fearful mind.

I, of course do not want to worry about it, there is simply nothing I can do to change it, but accept, but it leaves me so irritable, unable to relax and feelings of stress.

Any advice and suggestions will be gratefully appreciated.

Response:

Ok, I'm not sure.

So is the breathlessness arising only during a meditation where you focus on the breath? Obviously breathing is happening all day, so when you take attention to it specifically, only then does it create discomfort?

I will assume so for now.

If it creates a painful reaction, perhaps relax your attention from watching the breath. Perhaps just sit, with absolutely no intentions or even ideas of meditation. Then it may all start to feel more natural.

It is true that meditation can cause inner-flare ups to occur, but I am not sure exactly what the ones you describe are related to. It could be pent-up anxiety that begins to be released, and as it rises to the surface it feels intense and uncomfortable.

Perhaps you are trying to control your breath in some way? Making it deeper or slower? If so, there is no need for this, you can just let it go on by itself, as it does all hours of the day and night, and there is a simple noticing that it is spontaneously happening by itself

The truest acceptance is noticing that the experience already is at it is. There is no one to accept or reject it. Then there will be no intentions to overcome it or figure it out, and it is not even expected to leave.

The stress tends to come from wishing the reality or experience to be different to how it is. Notice that the stress over it all, the wish to relax, does not help alleviate anything. Noticing futility, without condemning anything, can help old energies to drop.

I feel it will work itself out, particularly after you become exhausted of trying to control it in any way. No need to turn it into a problem or an enemy, treat it with compassion, as if it is a response that is doing its best, doing what it thinks is right, but has become blind to the harm it causes itself.

You also don't have to manage it. It arises by itself, so it is not your responsibility to fix. Leave it to the intelligence of Life.

There are some alternative meditations that are not so breath-orientated. For example, simply feeling, dwelling in and allowing your attention to merge with the primal, impersonal sense of being, the sense that you exist, and allow this sense of "I AM" or beingness, to remain in itself, not connected to any ideas. Eg. not "I Am Mick" or "I Am Meditating" or "I Am Breathless" - just "I AM", without description.

There is also earthing/grounding meditation - feeling the connection of the body to the Earth beneath you, or first feeling the connection to your building, and then the Earth beneath, and allowing the sense of connection to strengthen and mature, perhaps by using things such as visualisations of roots connecting the body to the Earth.

Some of the videos and audios in the Meditation Section of this site may help you.

I'm not sure how much of this answer will help, but I hope it has somehow.

Thanks for your question, you can always ask follow-ups below if you wish,

Adam

Questioner:

Thank you Adam.

You mentioned the 'I Am' meditation. Can you elaborate what you mean? I like the idea of not focusing on the breath.

I also take your advice about the breath. To answer your questions, I do not become breathless with meditation. I am breathless when I wake up, then all day, then before I go to sleep. It only seems to go away whenever I am distracted, basically, when I am not focused or obsessing about the breath. And it does make sense that when I am worrying about my breathing, of course anxiety comes into play. Breathlessness being an anxiety symptom arises, and I watch this all day, but just can't seem to get out of the mind. It only happens when I get so overwhelmed and I know this sounds strange, but burst into tears, I find my body goes back to equilibrium and I calm and relaxed again.

The thing is though, I force myself to cry to release whatever tension is going on and it never works. It always has to get to the stage of being so overwhelmed all the time.

This is when I tried meditation, but the meditations I tried all focus on the breath. Then my anxiety gets worse. I watch it and I know it's because I am holding my breath at times, or trying to control it, then I get chest pain and pressure. I try to stop it. Then I get into a mess. Then I give up. Try again. I simply cannot focus on the breath.

But, this 'I Am' meditation sounds interesting. I hope you can explain further in detail what you mean.

Thank you. And much appreciation for your reply.

Response:

"I AM" - It is simply to be. To not do anything.

Everyone feels as if they exist. What I mentioned was to just take attention to this, the sense of presence, or of being.

What is it that makes you feel as if you exist? Be that.

It is not something to be thought about, or even "practiced".

Just rest with and as the sense of impersonal existence, which is not trying to be or do anything, and is the ground of all other experience.

It is felt at first as if in the body, as the sensation of existence.

It may feel difficult at first to remain with the sense of being, but don't bother about anything, take nothing as important other than the simple sense of being, the existence that you are.

I hope that is sufficient for you. The "I AM" presence is intelligence itself, be loyal to it for ten minutes, and see how you get on. But do not search for any state to happen.

To talk about it a lot can give too many words to something that is wordless, and is prior to any word. But if you wish to ask more, then that is fine.

Adam

Questioner:

Thank for elaborating and I fully understand what you say. So, thank you.

I love to immerse myself in my writing. It's the only thing that I notice (not during my writing) after I have wrote that I have took my attention away from my anxiety, my breathlessness. Unfortunately I can end up writing for hours on end, to the detriment of not being able to sleep. I found responsibilities/family life would end up being neglected because of it. So I made the conscious decision to put an end to it.

This of course made my symptoms much worse. So, my question is; When I write, is that being? Or is that more an auto-pilot thing? As if I fall back asleep. Because I know I am, I know I exist when I write for hours upon end. But the joy I find it brings me. . I can basically do it forever until I breathe my last breath. It's when I come back to the conditioning of what Society tells me to do. Be this way with your family, don't be so selfish, etc. And I wonder if that sense of being is actually more of an auto-pilot way of thinking rather than actually being.

Maybe I have completely misunderstood your guidance. I hope you understand what I mean.

P.S I also found when I lay in my bed at night and I just stay with the sense of being there. Being in the I am, aware that I am aware of what is going on not only around me, but inside the body too. I found an incredible amount of energy inside my body, which leads me to get up and write more as the inspiration to write just comes from some source. I didn't mind the energy, though it didn't relax me to sleep. I just let it all happen. Is this also part of the practice you talk about too?

Response:

Well, "being" is itself the source of creativity. It is life itself, so it would make sense that when the attention sick back into it, inspiration can come. You may not find it always like this. Sometimes it may release lots of creative energy, and other times it may just be a peace, or a stillness. Something like writing is very creative, so it flows out of being, or presence. You probably fall into it quite easily when you write, and so you don't feel disturbed by anything. You also may notice there is a sense of

oneness when you write - just writing happening, rather than "me doing the writing", there is just writing. Oneness.

From here I would say its good to let it all flow. To try to put a stop to it will be very difficult, or at least very uncomfortable.

I don't think you've misunderstood anything, but you may find eventually, all intellectual understandings are no longer of use, and you can give up all concepts about it.

Adam

Questioner:

Thank you for your reply, suggestions and information. Love the work you do, the site and once again thank you for your help. I have been less focused on the breath. I am very grateful.

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How To Deal With Addictions

Question:

I am addicted to nicotine. Though I know it's not good for my health. I can have a cigarette and this burning sensation can happen in and around the chest.

I got it checked out and the doctor of course advised me to quit smoking, but all the chest x-rays, blood results, and other relevant tests show there is nothing there to worry about!!! But the doctor has put the fear into me about smoking and because of the causes, he offered me NRT (nicotine replacement therapy) but the side effects were horrible. So I stopped the NRT.

Now I am back on the cigarettes and now I just feel so much fear and so much guilt. I try to let myself 'off the hook' and go easy on myself that this is an addiction. But I am struggling to stop and now I am really worried that I am never going to be able to stop and I am going to bring on the worst possible smoking related illness on myself because of this addiction. I feel like I am being forced into quitting because of fear.

It's a catch 22 way of thinking as I know smoking is bad for me, but I can't quit because of the addiction. The more I try to quit, the more pressure I put on myself. The more I worry about my addiction leads me to another cigarette because of the stress I put on myself. I even notice that the mind throws up images on WHY I should smoke, and the cravings are so intense and strong it's so difficult not to give in, but, I always do! The cycle continues. I don't know how to find some inner peace with it. I wondered if you have any advice on how to deal with or cope with addictions?

Response:

I'll say some different things. Some may resonate, some may not.

Addictions, first of all, are nothing to be condemned. The moment you condemn it, call it bad or turn it into an enemy, or even something to

overcome, then you just give it more strength and reality. There is obviously value in noticing that a behaviour has become addictive or compulsive, but after that, to continue labelling it as an addiction can do more harm than good.

Obviously, as you imply, there is no use having a cigarette whilst feeling bad or guilty, since the guilt does not help you to stop. You can notice this - that the guilt and fear does not make you stop, it just makes you feel guilty and afraid in the moment.

Don't treat an addiction as if it is yours. It is more like a dissatisfied, hungry kind of energy that seeks relief from itself. A discomfort or agitation arises inside, and the cigarette is proposed as the symbol to end this discomfort, and temporarily, it does. Notice the cyclical nature of it, the constant yearning, satisfaction, yearning, satisfaction. If you notice the futility of it, without even calling it futile, then its intimacy with your sense of self may start to dissolve.

I can not speak from direct experience, I have never been addicted to smoking. Some may say that the only way to do it is all at once, just quit. I'm not sure. If you find yourself smoking, be with it fully. Consciously smoke. From the moment your hand grabs the box, takes one out, puts it in your mouth and lights it, let everything be. If there is enjoyment, let it be, if there is guilt, let it be. If there is hurriedness or a kind of hunger for it, let this be as well. Rather than trying to stop the behaviour, watch it act itself out. Habits feel more severe when they are unconscious, just a blur in an attempt to relieve the craving inside. Let it be very conscious, without judgement. You need not identify with the behaviour, calling it "me" or "mine".

Through doing it very consciously, you may notice that rather than it being "you", it is an energy that moves by itself. If your sense of self is involved with it, then this feeds it with power. If you notice it as an impersonal energy movement, the quality of it will change. You need not expect it to disappear, or reach some goal of only smoking so many in a day, but you may notice the energy itself shifting.

Feel the pull of it, the sensation of it all, without trying to fix it in any way. Just be with it. Then if it acts itself out, that's fine, or you may feel the attraction to smoking not carry its usual force.

In terms of the fear aspect of it, fear tends to keep you stuck in that place, vibrationally speaking. There are no facts. Some smokers can be relatively healthy, some non-smokers can be experiencing illness. When you make decisions based on fear, you are still energetically in a disease or "disease" state. Let all actions be a natural by product of health awareness, rather than fear of disease. If there is no health awareness, then that is fine, but you don't need the fear. Obviously it has not taken the desire for smoking away.

I would say do give in to addiction. Yes, do. But I don't mean instantly go to satisfy it. Going to smoke is in a way a form of resistance to the desire to smoke, since there is also a feeling that you wish to be rid and free from this inner urge, and smoking gets rid of it for a while. Do not resist any urge. If you resist it, it persists and uses resistance as fuel. Don't have any intentions of getting rid of the feeling, either through smoking or otherwise, and just let it move and flare. It may well feel uncomfortable, but surrender to it.

The biggest conflict is that a certain sensation arises, and then an energy inside called "me" says, "No, it should not be like this, I want it gone." Give up this conflict, stop fighting, see what happens.

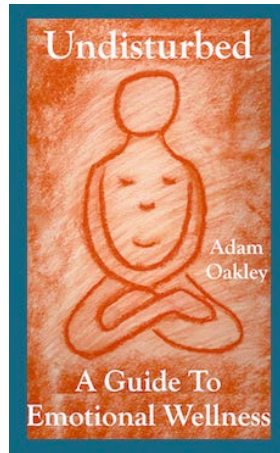
Hope that helps in some way,

Adam

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Book Preview:

Undisturbed: A Guide To Emotional Wellness



A book designed to dispel the myths we have about emotions, showing how to treat them in such a way that they no longer become a burden...

We are often faithful to emotions, feeling somehow owned by them, when in fact emotions depend on us. We need not cling to them or take them so seriously. They are energy movements, which would not exist if we were not here to witness them.

This book aims to show that we need not label our emotions in any way. We need not regulate or police ourselves. We can relinquish suppressing something because we believe it is "wrong" to feel a certain way - this is all just conditioning. We can stop distinguishing between good and bad emotions, right or wrong feelings, feelings "I should have" or "should not have", what is "spiritual" or "not spiritual", and instead return to pure experience, which is untarnished by story-telling, resistance or personal attachment.

From here we become aware of the deeper peace available prior to emotional movement, where emotions can not stick, which is also the source of all useful action.

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Introduction - Discarding Conditioning

The aim is not to stop feeling emotions. Let all emotions come. This book aims to show that emotions are not wrong or bad, and need not be clung to or given such great importance. Emotions are fleeting, they are not meant to be held and kept, they are energy movements that come and go. To hold and cling on to emotions is a habit of the human mind, and it ends up creating great inner turmoil.

We can read spiritual or self-help books, listen to different teachers, and often a theme is to be at peace, cool and calm. Then, if we feel an emotion, such as anger or some kind of resistance, we can end up resisting the experience even more, since the mind believes it is "bad" or "should not be happening". Enough conditioning, spiritual or otherwise. Forget what you have learned about emotion.

If you were to forget what you think you know about emotions, if you were completely empty, had no assumptions that the emotions are who you are, and had no assumption that emotions need to be figured out or resisted, then this book would not be needed. This book aims to help you allow yourself to just be empty – an empty space in which emotion can come and go, rather than a solid-feeling person that sticks to emotions and suffers them. Even all useful spiritual guidance points you to no longer judge emotions. They point you to natural emptiness, natural unknowingness. In this inner space, negative and futile reactions are no longer sustained, and so can be released naturally.

To be free of something, you give the thing freedom to be. The same can be said for emotions. Give up the fight, withdraw the belief that you should feel different, withdraw "you" altogether so that rather than the experience being personal and "yours", it is just an experience arising, affecting no-one.

Surrender to emotions without reservation. Let them be. Then what is useful remains, what is useless or harmful becomes dissolved. This takes place by itself when you allow inner trouble without resisting it. No longer believe what you have been told about emotions, no longer believe what your mind says about them, and no longer believe what the emotion says about itself. Go back to basics, just be aware of what happens. See

that whatever you can perceive, including thoughts, personality and emotions, are all movements that happen by themselves – they are not who you are, nor are they yours to police. You are the awareness itself, which remains undisturbed. In the midst of inner trouble, your nonresistance dissolves it. You can allow yourself to remain untroubled. Nonresistance and nonjudgement are what burn up old pain most quickly and effectively, and set you free, whether emotion is there or not.

So, simply give up the burden of analysis and control. No longer argue with inner disturbances. They all arise in an undisturbed awareness.

Part 1

What They Told You Wasn't True

Part 1, and in fact the whole book, is attempting to show you that the way we have been taught to think and treat our feelings, is completely ineffective. There is a more efficient way of treating ourselves, which is not weakness, but sanity.

Not many humans have really known how to be happy, many people have suffered from their own minds, and this gets passed on down the generations. Often we have had parents that simply believe Life should be an ordeal of suffering, as if that's just the way it is, and your experience should be no different. No one is to blame, but let's not go along with the charade of suffering any longer...

Emotions Are Not Personal

“No longer ‘have’ emotions. No longer own them. No longer identify with these energies that arise in the awareness that you are. Let them be. They arise by themselves, they are not yours to regulate or police.”

They claim to be personal, but are they really? If you just observe your inner state – whatever emotions come or go – do so of their own accord. There is not a person inside that says: “ok, now I’m going to get angry” or “ok, I command anxiety to come”. No – they arise by themselves. They are energy movements. What gives them their strength is our belief that they are personal. Belief is everything. We overlook its power, but it is obvious that whatever you believe – is true for you. This is massively significant in determining suffering or lack of it. Your whole experience of the world is affected by what you do or do not believe. Two people’s experiences could be vastly different just from believing or not believing in one thought.

Is this not some kind of relief? That the emotions you experience are not yours to manage? They are not who you are. They are not your responsibility – you may have noticed that they are very difficult to control. All of our frustration and confusion come when we believe we are the ones producing these emotions, yet they seem to have some uncontrollable force behind them. This can make negative emotions create a kind of inner hell for us.

So let this be your realisation – that emotions are nothing to do with who you are. You are aware of them, but you do not personally create them. There is an energy in us that enjoys creating emotions and seeks to maintain them – we will get on to this later. See the impermanence of emotions, that they come and go, that they seem to have a will of their own. They can be triggered by certain events or they can come up unexpectedly. If you take ownership of them as if “I should stop feeling anxious” or “I should stop getting angry” – or whatever – then you can get into a mess and end up suppressing things which can do more harm than good. Notice how emotions rise and fall by themselves, without personal volition. You are the awareness in which they move.

Why Do They Feel So Personal?

Emotions feel personal because they are tied to a personal identity. From birth we are conditioned into taking ourselves to be separate people, separate personalities living in bodies. The personality is only the surface aspect of yourself. Have you ever looked a little deeper? How can the personality exist in the first place? Where does it come from? From where does it arise? Is it actually real, or just a bundle of thoughts and automatic behaviours?

What we believe to be our real identity as a separate person, is made up of imagination. It is a construction of thoughts. Even “I” or “me”, in itself, is a thought.

With this formation of the imaginary inner person, also known as the separate “I” or “the ego”, – a great deal of thought and emotion arises, all based around this central thought of “I”. This “I” claims to be the thinker of thoughts and the producer of emotions, so we believe that the thoughts and emotions that arise are our own doing.

But are they your own doing? Do you choose to think, or does thinking happen by itself? Do you choose to feel angry, or sad, or calm, or happy, or do these feelings arise by themselves? For the most part, emotion and thoughts are playing in our awareness, by themselves. If we knew ourselves as the awareness in which all thought, emotion and personality arises, then we would naturally be undisturbed and at peace. Thought, emotion and personality would be in service to us, rather than dominating our experience of Life.

The real disturbance comes when we identify with the inner person, who is very involved in all the inner noise. This imaginary person enjoys the pleasant feelings, and suffers the painful ones, it is responsible for inner turmoil, yet feels a victim of it.

So, in a sense, nothing is personal, since it all happens by itself. The person “doing all of it” is an illusion, simply a creation of thought. It is a false self. Yet, because of this inner person absorbing so much belief and attention, it seems emotions and thoughts are “yours”. See what happens if you can let thought and emotion be there, without calling them “yours”. You will see that a voice in the head speaks, analyses and commentates,

emotions come and go, all by themselves. They arise in the space of awareness, which is who you are.

There's Nothing Wrong With You

"You are awareness, not an object that rises in awareness."

It naturally follows that whatever emotions or thoughts you experience – does not imply that there is anything right or wrong with you. It could be said that there is an inner dysfunction that loves to create suffering – and this is part of the human condition – but it is not who you are in essence.

"I can't stop having these terrible thoughts", "I can't stop feeling anxious", "I can't stop thinking!" – all such thoughts are voices of the Painmaker – the energy field in humans that loves to create suffering. Be aware of yourself as the awareness in which dysfunction, noise or any insanity arises. This natural, ever-present yet non-objective awareness, when recognised, is the emergence of sanity, the end of the domination of the thinking mind.

We often think awareness must be a thing. If there is a painful emotion inside or a lot of noisy thoughts, we can be tricked by the mind that says "I have lost awareness". You haven't lost awareness. Awareness can not be lost. If you are aware that there is a lot of inner noise or emotion rising up – then that is enough. The only other thing is to stop arguing with it. Give up your fight with the inner state. The thoughts and emotions that make us suffer are based on conflict and resistance. They are in themselves, forms of resistance.

The antidote is no more conflict. Don't fight the fighter. Don't resist resistance. Without resisting your inner state, without calling it good or bad, without wishing it be different – you become more effortless, and it is easier to see that you already are the awareness in which these inner energies move.

The Sufferer

The inner person that seems to suffer thoughts and emotions, is not who you are. The person, or the sufferer, is only another thought. The inner person that suffers pain, is part of the pain itself. The inner person that

seems to be dominated by thoughts, is part of the thoughts themselves. You are not a person, the feeling of a person arises IN you.

Be aware that the content of your mind, however potent or turbulent, arises in an untouched space. Surrender to the content, let it be, welcome it even, and it is easier to sense that rather than being the thought of “I” that arises as the mind, you are the untouched space, the impersonal source from which the inner person and its related thoughts arise.

Thoughts or Reality?

“This chapter may seem a bit philosophical, but the basic message is this: our thoughts often create unjust and unnecessary suffering for us. Thoughts are ok, but when given great importance and belief, they begin to cause trouble.”

Be aware how much of your suffering comes from thoughts about things, rather than the things themselves. Do not be fooled by the mind. Humans have a habit of experiencing the senses with an added world of unnecessary interpretations and concepts, which can create vast amounts of suffering, for themselves and others. If there is no thought, does the problem or troubling situation even exist? Most of the problems we think we have, are merely creations of thought that are taken to be real.

Be aware of how often you view the world of thoughts, rather than the actual world. If you are thinking about what has happened, or what might happen, thoughts have taken over. If you are telling a story about what is happening now, thoughts have taken over. If you are thinking about someone else, thoughts have taken over. If you are thinking about yourself, thoughts have taken over. If you are thinking about your Life, thoughts have taken over. These thoughts have their place for practical purposes, but usually the attention of the human being is so completely absorbed by thinking, that we no longer see things as they are. We look at the conceptual version of the world, which differs in each person according to conditioning and personality. Thoughts have replaced reality for many of us. The mind labels everything, gives everything a name, and we become trapped in a conceptual world, without even realising it.

A basic example is a tree. If you look at a tree, often it will be overlooked. The mind says, “it’s just a tree”. The mind creates a label, and assigns it to an object. But in reality, it is not a tree, this is just something we have made up. A tree does not call itself a tree. This label is just something the human mind has created for communication purposes, but it has now been mistaken for the actual reality. Have you ever really looked at a tree, without calling it anything? If you simply look at it, without needing to add thought, you sense the reality of it. You sense the Life within it, the truth of “the tree” which is masked by the mental label. In the same way,

mental labels can completely mask us from the truth of Life. We begin to believe the mind's labels are the truth of things. This is how we become tricked. The stories we tell about Life, our interpretations of events, are merely a bundle of thoughts. If you can see this, and that most of the time, these illusory thoughts create trouble, you will give them less respect, less importance, and the truth will emerge by itself.

This is most relevant for this book, because a great deal of human suffering is self-created. All tendencies such as anxiety, worry, problem-making, depression, guilt or hatred, are all creations of thought! Since we unquestionably take thoughts to represent truth, we suffer when the thoughts become dysfunctional.

Obsessive thinking carries on until we begin to question the truth of thoughts and what they claim to represent. Are they true? Do they fairly represent Life, or are they false interpretations? Are they serving you in this moment, or are they just draining energy? Are they in fact based on what you have been told by other people, rather than a reliable resource? What would be a reliable resource anyway? Even in the realm of science, what we call "facts" are often later disproved, and another "fact" replaces it. We try so hard to understand Life, how it works, but really we can't – it just turns into more thoughts and the mind says "this is how it is".

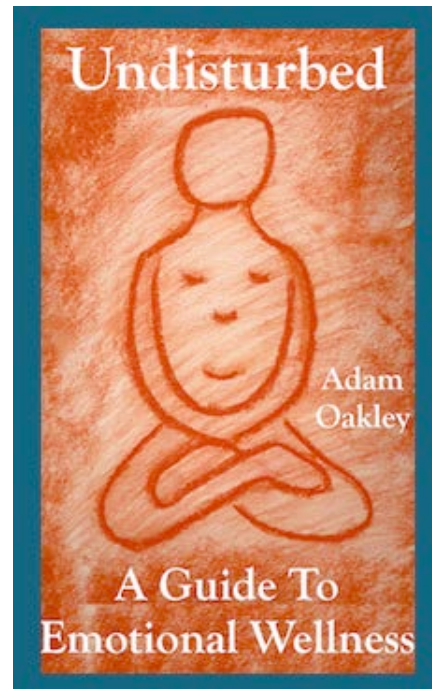
Distinguish between events as they happen, and the thoughts about them. See how there is a difference. The event is as it is. The thoughts that come of "me", "he", "she", "this" and "that" are all extra additions. They always claim to help, to enhance our understanding, but they create a limitation. They even enhance suffering. Thoughts are limitations. Often they create a false understanding, creating an illusory barrier between the present moment and our sense of self. The present moment is a unified whole, which through thinking, becomes fragmented into separate events and individuals in the mind. Without thought, what is an event? Without thought, who are you?

Thought is useful for creative purposes, for practical means, but the tool we call the mind is no longer a tool for many of us, it is the boss. Many people's waking lives are completely tyrannised by thinking, dominated by the concept of time, and everyone is looking to get away. We watch

TV, crave company and stimulation, become obsessed with activity, drink or even do drugs, just to get away from the thoughts in the head.

There is a natural way. Start by realising that a world of concepts has been created by the mind. Everything is an idea! Everything from “me” and “other people” to what has happened and what might happen – are all just thoughts! No longer take thoughts so seriously.

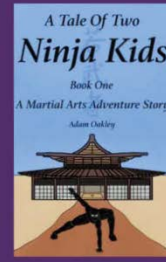
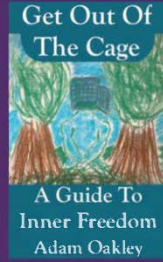
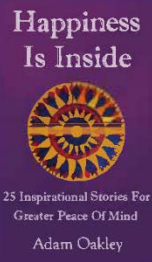
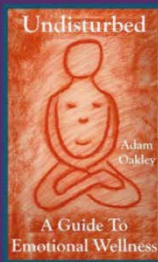
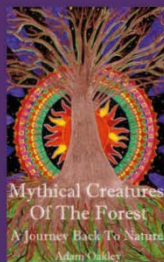
Then there are the deeper emotions, the feelings that seem etched inside, creating suffering. Drop your arguments. Stop trying to mask your emotions or get rid of your feelings. No longer resist disturbance or trouble, welcome it. Whatever you accept, without judging it, without pushing away, no longer commands power over you. It begins to dissolve, since it is no longer being fed through your resistance. Inner disturbances seek to disturb. To let them disturb, to give up the fight, means they have no more reason to stay. Through nonresistance, you become aware that as well as the emotion being there, as well as the associated thoughts and identity, there is an untouched, empty space in which all arises, which is one with who you are.



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