

LIVING IN OPEN AWARENESS



ROY WHENARY

Living in Open Awareness

THE CHALLENGE OF LIFE

by

Roy Whenary

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Dedicated
to all teachings
that point to a greater clarity
and wisdom

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Introduction

I am very pleased to be able to offer this eBook, after maybe a year and a half of gradual modifications to the original draft, to sculpt it into the book it needed to be. I have deliberately chosen to lay it out in poetic form, simply to add clarity and slowness to the reading process. It is not meant to be a book that is speed-read for ideas, and in fact, there are probably no ideas here that someone else has not written about at some time or other. No, it is a book to explore gradually, either directly from front to back pages, or else by dipping in at any point and I would invite the reader to not just take in the ideas, but to also receive it on a feeling level, in resonance with the energetic that was there in the writing.

I apologise to those who would prefer a perfect non-dual linguistic expression, which deconstructs all references to the writer, the reader and the dualistic world ... but freedom does not express itself in a box. Since my first book: 'The Texture of Being' (2002), there have been many books published on the subject of advaita/non-duality, such that one may ask whether there is still a need for more. However, 'Living In Open Awareness' is offered more as a book of possibilities, openings and strategies ... not to arrive somewhere in order to feel great, but to find greater clarity, flexibility and wisdom by being more immediately embodied right here, where life passes. A side-effect of this is also a lighter sense of being and a more joyful existence.

Finally, this book is not meant to be a primer in how to become enlightened or to show the reader a new way of seeing. Hopefully it will provide a catalyst to something new and fresh. Who can say what that might be? Life is ever new and abundant. 'Living In Open Awareness' is not just a clever title ... it is also a real suggestion of how it is possible to live.

Roy Whenary
TOTNES, Devon, UK
April 2012

1

**OPEN AWARENESS
MEDITATION**

Meditation is many things to many people.
Various techniques and methods of meditation
have evolved over hundreds of years.

For some, meditation is a process
of trying to put oneself
into a different state of consciousness,
to transcend the normal state of consciousness
into something else,
perceived to be difficult to attain.

One could attempt to catalogue
and describe all the different practices
that have evolved
around the subject of meditation.
But this is not the purpose of this book.
Great respect is given
to the many forms of meditation,
but I would like to point
to a very simple and natural form,
that involves no attempt at all
at moving from our normal state of consciousness
to some other, more exalted, state.

The meditation I would like to mention
is the simplest of all ...

We just sit, lie, stand or move (whatever is preferred),
and we LISTEN. We just listen ...
to all the sounds that can be heard,
both inside and outside
of wherever we happen to be.

Then we become aware of the silence,
the ever persistent silence

that underlies all those sounds
that arise in our awareness.

Then we become aware of our breathing,
our body posture,
our thoughts that arise,
and we just let whatever comes into awareness
to just arise and fade within that awareness,
without any intention to change it.
We simply accept
whatever awareness focuses on,
for however short a moment it is,
without getting involved.

Such meditation allows us to stand back
and simply rest in awareness.
In such meditation,
there is no effort involved,
nowhere to go,
nothing to avoid.
Whatever arises in awareness
is taken note of,
accepted and allowed to go,
without any intervention on our part,
without any attempt to control,
resist, react or pursue.

In such meditation,
many things may arise in awareness.
Negative or positive thoughts may appear,
seemingly out of nowhere.
Past memories, of joy or suffering,
may come to our attention,
but we simply accept their presence,
let them be,

and let them leave as they will,
without getting involved in the process.

In such meditation,
nothing that exists in the mind
will remain hidden forever.
All will be revealed,
and is revealed,
in the calmness of now.
Whatever it is, we just let it be,
and take note only.

2

**THE SPIRITUAL
SEARCH**

It is natural to want to learn
about new things
and it is natural to ask certain questions
about life itself,
such as "Who Am I?"
or "Is there any meaning or purpose to life?".

Out of such questions,
the spiritual quest,
the search for answers,
is born.

So one starts reading books about philosophy,
religion, spiritual writings and teachings.
One may join some kind of group to explore further.

At some point,
someone will introduce
the concept of enlightenment,
and suddenly there will be a goal
to all the searching.

Then, the duality of 'here' and 'there' is born.

I am 'here'

(which I consider to be un-enlightened),

but I would rather be there

(because I am told

that enlightenment is a wonderful thing to have).

When we seek to be somewhere
other than where we are,
we are disrespecting where we are.

The truth is that where we are
is always where we need to be,
and it is also true
that we can never be anywhere else.

Enlightenment is desirable,
we have been told.
So we do all kinds of rituals and practices
in the belief that we are moving
ever closer to this mystical state.
But then, we never do.
We travel the world,
seeking out sages and teachers of all kinds,
discussing all the ins and outs
of the enlightened state,
and yet, after 10, 20, 30 or more years,
we still feel that we have not yet arrived
at this state of enlightenment ...
the spiritual equivalent of winning the lottery.

But could it be that we were looking
in the wrong place all the time?
When our focus is set
on acquiring something 'out there',
we perhaps stop seeing what is right here.

What is right here,
at any time of day or night,
is a continual unfolding
of all possibilities and potentialities
within us.

Reaching out elsewhere just doesn't work,
in the long run.
We always have to come back
to right here,
because until we are fully awake
to what is endlessly unfolding right here,
we can never fully understand
what is out there, anyway.

What is out there is always only
what we have projected
and interpreted as being out there.

When we are fully awake
to what is forever arising right here,
we realise that a search out there is misplaced.
Enlightenment is right here,
or it is nowhere at all.
There is nothing out there
that is better than what is already right here
in pure potentiality.

3

WHO AM I?

There comes a time when everyone asks
the question "Who am I?".
For many, the implications involved
in such a question
may cause the question to be instantly dropped,
and never revived.

Somewhere,
deep down,
we all know the answer to this question.

As a child,
you knew nothing,
but were gradually educated
and conditioned
into the ways of human society.
You were given a name
and were taught always to respond
to that name.
Bit by bit,
you learned all about the human world,
your immediate and distant environment.

You were told that you were a person,
and that you were special
(or not special at all).
You were encouraged to take great interest
in your own personhood ...
to nurture a sense of being
better or worse than other persons.
So, slowly, as you developed
your sense of being a person,
you also developed the sense
that others were out there,
separate from you,

different, but sometimes useful
in supporting you and your needs.

Learning how to make use of others
in supporting your needs,
you sometimes came into conflict
with those others.
Out of such conflict,
emotions were born,
and life started to become more complicated.
When we ask the question "Who Am I?",
we naturally are asking about this person,
this one, whose story we are familiar with ...
this person we refer to as "I" or "me".

Through all the development process
of this person called 'I',
and all the events in the life of this person,
an unfolding story emerges.
The story naturally revolves
around the body-mind
attached to this person,
so, when someone says "Who Are You?",
we respond from our belief
that we are this person,
with this body,
these memories and this set of beliefs.
We have nurtured this person all our life,
and this is what we present
to the world 'out there' as who we are.

But, when we strip everything away,
we see that this body is aging
and will one day die.
This person that is 'me' will come to an end.

Then where will 'I' be?
Where will all my memories,
my experiences, my skills ...
where will they go when I die?
There are many theories about this,
but I cannot say for certain.
All I know is that this person
will come to an end.

On this planet earth,
there are many billions of human beings,
just like me ... billions of them.
In my own experience,
I have known probably thousands
of such human beings, just like me ...
or maybe a little different,
with different skills, different experiences, etc ...
but similar.
They all have bodies,
they all have this sense
of separation from others
that I have,
and they all long to find an understanding
of who they are,
one way or another.

But when I sit here, in my chair,
and look at this body,
when I see my thoughts racing
or my emotions running riot,
I suddenly become aware
that I am not these thoughts or emotions at all.
They are actually happening on their own,
fueled by a chain of memories
that are stored somewhere

in the brain and body
that has been labelled with my name.
But they arise continually before the eyes
that are aware, but not involved.
In awareness, all things arise -
all experiences, all thoughts and emotions -
the world within and the world without.

Awareness is not mine - it just 'Is'.
It is there in all sentient beings,
the fundamental basis around which
all notions of who or what we are is built.
But it is not an object,
something we can point to and say
"that is awareness".
However, without the faculty of awareness
there is no life, no existence.

So, it is said that this awareness
is the fundamental ground of all being ...
what we truly are, when all is stripped away.
There is nothing personal here in the end,
and the story that had been woven
around this character I have always called "me",
is actually quite fictitious.
All that I am is all that anyone is,
but it is not the story of this person.

4

**SUFFERING
& LIBERATION**

Whilst we believe that we are a person,
whilst we build up and hang on
to all the trappings of being a person,
we will continue to suffer,
one way or another.

Suffering has many faces.
The poor are clearly seen to suffer,
but the rich also suffer.
They can suffer from loneliness,
lack of trust in the intentions of others,
not getting what they want,
losing out to someone else,
fearing losing all
that they have accumulated, etc.

Human beings suffer
because they control
or are controlled
by others.
They suffer because they have
a certain view of themselves
and suffer when criticised
or laughed at.

Human beings suffer
because they live in isolation
from others
and are in competition with others.
Everyone wants to be happy,
but ahead of everyone else.
When I don't know who I am;
when I believe
that I am something that I am not;
when I think that I will be happier

by acquiring this or that ...
I set myself up for the pain of suffering.

The liberation from suffering
lies in the realisation
that I am not who or what I think I am.
It lies in the knowledge
and deep down
understanding that my true nature
is not this story that I have lived,
in this bodymind,
all these years.

This person
that I have thought myself to be,
is seen to be a complete fabrication,
created out of numerous elements
that arose in the awareness
that was present in this bodymind.

Suffering is caused
by a chain of actions, reactions, resistances, etc,
related to this bodymind.
When it is fully realised
that these are not what I am,
where is the suffering?

The suffering
is the suffering of the bodymind.
When it is realised
that the bodymind is not what I am,
the suffering is released.
The body may still go
through the suffering process,
with the physical pain of it,
but the suffering is released from the mind,

which identified with it, and,
in a way, held on to it.

The mind holds on to suffering
because it is an affirmation
that it (the mind/ego) exists.

The ego-mind does not want to hear
that it doesn't really exist.

That is not what it is about. But it is the truth.

In order to find liberation from suffering,
first we must be prepared
to look deeply
at who or what we are,
how we behave,
what moods we drift into,
what and how we think,
and what we are behind all this.

5

**DUALITY &
NON-DUALITY**

The world of objects
that I see and move about in,
is a world of duality.
When I identify myself
as a 'someone' in time and space,
separate from others,
and separate from objects around me,
I have entered the world of duality.
Of course, this was unavoidable.
This is just how things are.

'Non-Duality' is a concept.
Instead of saying that the universe is ONE totality,
we say it is NOT TWO (Non Dual) instead,
but ultimately it means the same.

The word 'NonDuality' is simply a pointer,
to the fact that, by the way we see things
in the world,
we create duality ourselves.
It is not possible to point to NonDuality itself, because
NonDuality is not an 'It',
is not a thing that exists in time and space.
It is only a concept -
one that is held in contrast
to the concept of Duality.

But Life is neither one nor the other.
Life is ONE coin,
and on one side of the coin is Duality,
and on the other side is NonDuality.

Some people believe
they have a clearer language
for expressing what NonDuality is (or is not) ...

a clearer language than others have ...
which is itself a dualistic notion.
There are many languages
for expressing that which points to the Oneness
(or 'Not-Two-ness') of Life.
All verbal and written languages,
by their very nature,
are dualistic.
It is not possible,
without entering duality,
to express it in words.

But Duality, like NonDuality,
is also a concept,
created within our mode of perception.
In actuality, conceptually,
Duality is necessarily embraced
within the concept of NonDuality.
If there is only ONE,
then everything that gives the appearance
of being the many,
is only an appearance,
but is in reality an aspect
of the ONE totality of Life.

Now, it becomes clear
that Duality does not exist.
It is only an appearance
of there being many different objects,
and this appearance
is one that is generated
by the subjective mind,
which holds itself in isolation
from everything that it perceives
as being outside of itself.

Only when we realise ourselves
in the moment,
in fully conscious Awareness,
is the dichotomy,
between Duality and NonDuality,
resolved.

But, the moment we open our mouths
to speak about it,
we are right back in Duality,
which is fine,
but not if we are in denial of this fact.
There is no 'perfect' way
of speaking about NonDuality
- there are many ways.

6

**UNDERSTANDING
AS FEELING**

Usually, when we speak about 'Understanding', we see it as a mental activity - something that the mind does.

When it comes to so called spiritual matters, an intellectual understanding alone is meaningless.

That understanding needs to be embodied, such that it is 'felt'.

Without that being the case, intellectual understanding is merely an abstraction from the physical world - conceptual only, but without any substance.

One can already hear the reaction to such a statement ...

'Feeling' is a faculty that helps to embody conceptual understanding. We move closer to 'feeling' when we allow our concepts space, in the silent emptiness of meditation, for instance.

In that space, our concepts become grounded, take on clearer form in the body of feeling.

The tendency of the mind is to cut itself off from the rest of the universe, and to see itself as separate. The mind creates the world of duality, but the 'feeling' by-passes that duality,

because 'feeling' is always
in the present moment.
With feeling there is no time,
there is no space.
It is immediate,
embodied in 'Now'.

It is with this understanding
that some spiritual practitioners
leave aside words and explanations,
and express themselves through silence,
sound, art or movement ...
which are all vehicles
that invite us to enter the non-duality
of our true nature,
in an embodied way,
in an immediate way
that leaves no room
for the abstraction of ideas and concepts.
Only in the continually unfolding
and arising present moment
is awareness fully embodied
in the human form.
When the mind is forever abstracting
and projecting itself in time and space,
present moment awareness
becomes veiled in the human form.
This is the weakness
of the intellectual exploration
of truth and understanding.
The mind has the tendency
to dis-engage from the physical reality,
and become dis-embodied
from the truth
it often professes to be devoted to.

Therefore, it is important
to bring 'feeling' into what we see
as understanding.

Feeling connects us,
and grounds the truth
that the mind comes to realise.

Otherwise, as is often the case,
we may spend the rest of our human existence thinking
we are enlightened and fully awake,
yet be living totally and utterly
only in a world that we have created
and projected ourselves -
calling it "NonDuality".

7

**THE ACTOR
& THE PLAY**

If the universe is indeed
ONE whole totality,
then all the heavenly bodies,
galaxies, stars, planets, sentient beings, etc
are merely what, in some traditions,
is called a 'shadow play', an illusion.

The whole shadow play is powered by
Awareness/Consciousness,
which pervades the universe.
Wherever, in the physical world,
a sentient being is formed,
there also, Consciousness is.
Depending on the evolutionary development
of specific sentient forms,
they are more or less awake
to the full implications of the world of duality,
and, in some, that which transcends it.

Seen from the perspective of the whole,
I am an actor in a cosmic play,
myself animated by Life itself,
but with no substance of my own
that is separate or outside
of that cosmic whole.
Like the actor on the screen,
I am not the character that I play.
That is just the way
that the ONE individuates itself
to become the appearance
of a myriad of separate forms.
So, when I take myself to be this actor,
which is given a name,
and forget that I am really
the ONE life expressing itself

in just one of the millions of ways
it can express itself,
then I am actually losing touch with reality,
and abstracting into the erroneous belief
that I have an independent
and separate existence.

Ultimately, though, this doesn't really matter.
Life is ONE whole vast immeasurable totality.
The natural process of birth,
maturation, decay and death
deals with all erroneous beliefs.
You may believe
that you are the actor on the screen,
but life will, sooner or later,
put you right about that.
It is not possible for us
to totally live beyond the illusion of duality.
The bodymind functions in duality.
We are Awareness, present in duality.
That awareness is not different
in you and in me,
except in so far as one bodymind,
or the other,
is in some way impeding or veiling
the free flow of that Awareness.

However, each bodymind,
because of the conditioning/programming
it has received,
will express quite uniquely
its understanding of Life
as the ONE Awareness/Consciousness.
It is good never to forget this,
lest we become enmeshed

in the erroneous belief
that the way in which we personally express
the truth, the reality, the ONEness,
is the best, or only, way
in which it can be expressed.
This is a common mistake,
even amongst so called 'NonDualists'.

8

**THE JOY OF
NOT KNOWING**

There is a beautiful quote from the Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki:

"If your mind is empty, it is ready for anything; it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities - in the expert's mind there are few".

Let us not be experts in spirituality.
There is much more that we don't know
than that we know.

When we believe
that we know everything,
and when we try to convince the world
that we know so much,
then we have to spend all our time
stating and defending our knowledge.

And what is knowledge anyway?

Information? Facts?

Of what value are these,
when life is continually renewing itself
before our very eyes?

The knowledge that we think we own,
could just as easily be keyed into a computer.

Are we merely computers,
designed to retain lots of knowledge,
facts and information?

There is great joy
in having a mind
that is not burdened with vast knowledge.

In the world of work,
knowledge is useful
and allows us to function well,
but inwardly,
what is there to know?

When we have the belief
that we have the answer,
that we know and others don't,
that we have all this experience,
this knowledge ...
there is a tendency
to become fixed in that.
This closes us to new expressions,
new ways of describing or explaining.
We may even begin to think
that we are an expert,
and have more of a right to speak
on a certain subject
than other people.

We can see this tendency
in some scientists
who pontificate
on subjects that they have little understanding of,
and whose understanding
is heavily influenced
by their scientific conditioning.

We can see it in ourselves,
when we start to give our opinion
on a particular issue,
or judge someone else.
In such situations,
it would be much better to stay silent,
to not comment.
When we stand by the sea,
watching the sun go down,
with the sound of seabirds,
a warm breeze in our face,
in the fading light -

a stillness descends,
and we find ourselves
lost in a sea of tranquility
within.

In that place, in that space,
there is not knowing,
and a quiet joy
that radiates through to our heart,
to the core of our being.
This is the joy of not knowing.
Why fill our heads
with such useless nonsense,
when there is this joy?

9

**AWAKENING
OF THE HEART**

There is a beautiful phrase, in Buddhism ...
"Awakening the Heart of Compassion".
The mind can be very cold and clinical,
but when the heart has been awakened,
there is a softness, a warmth,
that is unmistakable.
If you have a teacher,
or someone that inspires you,
and you do not get this feeling of warmth,
ask the question "why?".

The mind can be very clear,
very sharp, very tuned-in.
But it can also be enclosed within itself.
This can create a disconnection
with the broader view.
A teacher in whom there is this disconnection,
will lack the ability to offer the broader view.

The broader view comes
when the mind has expanded
beyond its own little sphere of vision,
to realise a more global view.
There comes a time,
in the maturing process,
when it is seen
that all the suffering of humanity
(past and present)
is in this bodymind,
here, now.
It has been carried forward
by each generation,
going back into antiquity -
the whole suffering of humanity.
Then, when this is seen,

the heart opens, to embrace all.
Then, it is clear that realisation,
awakening, enlightenment,
or whatever one wants to call it,
is not just a question
of having the right answers,
the right concepts ...
there is more to it than that.

Enlightenment is actually a deep connection
and engagement with life itself.
It is a dropping away
of the obsession with the little ego,
and an opening into awareness itself,
in which life and experience
simply arise in awareness.
But this also has the effect
of opening the heart
to embrace all and everything.

When there has been an awakening
and opening of the heart,
impatience falls away,
the connection with 'others'
becomes more intimate,
more immediate and present,
and a sense of compassion
pervades the moment.

Without this,
non-duality, advaita, enlightenment
are all merely ideas, concepts,
divorced from the reality
of embodied existence.

10
PEACE IS
EVERY MOMENT

In this very moment,
you have an infinite number of options.

In this moment,
you can actually decide
how you are going to feel.
The mind has this ability,
to decide on this important issue.
But, often, the unconscious mind
automatically engages
in a particular mood or emotion
that is not helpful or supportive
to the overall wellbeing.

In this moment,
you could be anxious, angry,
frustrated, fearful, resentful,
desirous, ambitious, impatient,
hateful, jealous, unhappy
or you could be peaceful.
Yes, peace is possible right now.
You just step out of a negative mood
into a positive or supportive one ...
all with the power of intention.
You decide that you are not going to continue
supporting a self-destructive mood,
and you just drop it,
for good.

Well, that is what happens
if you see the danger
of residing in negative moods.
Nothing is possible
if you allow yourself
to go into such moods.

If we stop what we are doing,
at any time whatsoever,
it is possible to easily bring ourselves back
into awareness,
and rest in that.

A good way is through simply listening
- start with listening,
then see awareness open up
to embrace all the senses.

But the simple act of listening
brings us immediately into awareness,
and out of moods.

There may be the residue of a mood
remaining in the mind,
but in listening, this is seen,
and it fades away before our very eyes.

Without peace, what is the point?

If we allow ourselves to be anxious,
on edge, unhappy, frustrated ...
what is our game?

What do we get out of this,
other than a little self-pity?

But this is exactly it ...

we may be doing it because we want others
to feel sorry for us,
to see how depressed we are,
or unhappy.

But this is also because
our notion of who we are
has become limited
to this little bodymind entity
we believe ourselves to be ...
which is exactly what we are not.

When we bring ourselves back into awareness,
we see that everything
(including our own body and mind)
are seen by this awareness,
and we are that which is seeing ...
which is awareness.

Try to grasp awareness,
and it is not possible to do so.
Awareness is not a thing,
not an object in time and space ...
It just 'Is'.

All our moods arise in this awareness,
but they are not what we are.

In this awareness
is the peace that is our fundamental birthright
- and it is here, right now.

We don't need to go out looking for it ...
It is ours if we choose,
and if we choose to let go
of what gets in the way of this peace.

11

LIFE, DEATH & THE UNIVERSE

If we stand back and take a look
at the phenomenon we call 'Life',
what do we see?

We see a vast, immeasurable universe,
containing billions of galaxies, stars, planets
and all kinds of incredible phenomena
we can only wonder at.

At the other end of the scale,
we see an infinitely tiny world
of molecules, atoms -
with their protons, electrons, neutrons,
neutrinos, quarks, etc
until matter has precisely no substance at all.

In between these two extremes,
human life on planet earth appears,
in all its glory.
Living organisms have developed in this world
to be able to replicate themselves
over and over again,
learning to modify each generation
with the wisdom of experience.

Now, one of the fundamental rules
in the world of what we call matter,
is that every 'thing' has a birth,
a growth period, then decay, then death.
Atoms and molecules come together,
for a short period of time,
only to then dissolve back
into the nothing
that is their fundamental background ...
or, ground of being.

Everything that 'Is'
appears courtesy of no-thing.
There is no substance to that which appears,
which we have come to understand
through scientific exploration,
and original commonsense.
Everyone knows this, fundamentally,
although most probably choose
to ignore it for most of their lives.
When we realise this,
there is no more any room for the ego ...
that self-constructed projection of the mind.

Ego doesn't want to know
that it doesn't really exist,
so it doesn't look at this at all,
but, instead, goes about building
an artificial reality,
based on the assumption
of its own solid existence.
It spends the whole of the life
of the bodymind,
constructing and maintaining
the belief in its own world ...
until something happens
to jolt the mind
out of this self-induced dream world.
The ego becomes attached to things,
to people, to a husband or wife,
and when anything happens
to anyone or anything
that ego has attached to,
ego is threatened,
so it has also constructed various mechanisms ...
like denial, strong emotions and so on,

to avoid having to look at the reality of life itself.

When we realise that we are nothing,
that we are empty of lasting substance,
there is also a sense of fullness,
because we also realise
that we are Life itself.

It is not "my life"

I am an expression of Life.

I don't exist in separation from life,
such that I can own a life.

12

EMBODYING THE TRUTH

What does it mean ...
"Embodying the Truth"?

What is "The Truth"?

The "truth" is the truth
about the way things really are ...
not according to the imagination,
thought, memory, belief, personal prejudice ...
but things as they are.

To find out how things truly are,
we need to stand back from a position
of thinking we know how things are.
We need to de-construct the world
as we have always known it,
and see it afresh, as it is.
Only with fresh eyes
will we be able to see things
as they truly are.

A part of the process of learning
how to see things as they are
involves taking down the barrier
that keeps us separate from things,
and people, in the world.
It is our own sense
of being a separate 'self'
that divides our world into
"me, the subject" and
"he, she, it, they, them -
the objects around me".
So who am I? ... what am I?
I have always taken it for granted
that I am who I am,

but what exactly is this "I"
that I have always taken for granted
as existing in separation
from everyone and everything else in the world,
in the universe?

If you look closely at what you are,
you can see that a picture of what you are
has gradually, throughout the course of your life,
been constructed,
from all the experiences,
meetings and happenings that have occurred.
They have formed you,
as you have come to know yourself to be.
But take them away, and what is there?
What is it that underlies your personal life story?
When you look at your personal story,
from a point of not being involved in it,
you may see an actor on the stage of life.
But beneath that,
there has always been a sense of 'Be-ing'.
This has oftentimes become confused,
such that you felt you were be-ing someone,
rather than just simply Be-ing.
But now you see that this 'someone'
you have always thought you were,
is merely the construct
of many years activity in the world.
Now you can see that this 'someone',
this 'person', you thought you were,
is really quite empty of substance.
However, there is this 'Be-ing',
and you come to realise that this Being
is always in the here and now.
This Being is never in the past or the future ...

it is always here and now.
But what is this Be-ing?
Is it totally without substance too?
Does it have a shape and a form at all?
Alongside this sense of Be-ing,
there is also 'Awareness',
which seems to merge in the sense of Be-ing.

When the mind is not always projecting
into the past and future,
or creating the facade of "me",
clear seeing just happens.
Awareness is like a video camera,
seeing everything, recording it,
but not interpreting it
psychologically, emotionally.

Embodying the truth happens quite naturally, without
the need to try to grasp
that embodiment process in any way.
Gradually, the more one allows oneself
to be open to Awareness, as it is,
without the ego-self being involved,
the more that self-less Awareness
becomes embodied in the bodymind
that we used to think was what we are.

Mystics from all traditions have spoken
of "the ground of being",
and the ground of be-ing
lies in pure Open Awareness.

Living in Open Awareness
does not make us 'special' in any way,
although it does stand us out amongst humanity,

as so few seem to find themselves
as who they are, in this way.
But it is quite ordinary, really.
It is how everyone is,
before the world and all its travail
is pasted onto us.
In truth, we never ceased
to be who we always are
we only lost touch with this,
our true nature ...
blinded by our conditioning
in the world.

When we rediscover who we really are,
a big weight is lifted
from our heart and mind,
and we feel that life is full of joy overflowing ...
for we are that joy.
That joy is our true nature
shining through, and we always are that ...
no matter what.

13
TEACHERS &
THEIR TEACHINGS

Some people like to think
there is only ever one way to do things -
the way they themselves prefer.
But, looking at life as a whole,
it is very clear that there are
a myriad of ways to do most things.

When it comes to spiritual
or religious teachings (and teachers)
some people really do get fixated
on there only being one way, one teaching,
one teacher, one method, one saviour, and so on.

Naturally, we are attracted to some things
and not to others,
and everyone is different.
We are different because
we have different experiences in life,
different conditioning
in what we like and what we don't like.
It depends on the environment
we are brought up in, or live in.

There is a lot of intolerance
towards those who hold
different views or beliefs to ourselves.
Most of us cannot understand
those who do things differently to us,
so we often condemn them for being different.

In the field of non-duality,
there is a certain amount of conflict
between those who follow
the traditional teachings
and those who follow the new

(neo) advaita approach.

In fact, this conflict existed
many hundreds of years ago,
in Zen Buddhism,
between the adherents
of the 'Gradual' and 'Sudden'
schools of Awakening.
Essentially, it is intolerance,
and the arrogance of the ego,
which always believes
that what it is into is the only valid thing.

There are many ways of describing an elephant,
depending on which angle
one is viewing the elephant from.
So, when it comes to matters relating to the mind,
the heart, truth, reality, etc ...
it is no wonder that people do not see eye to eye.

If someone tells you that they have a better way
of describing an elephant than you,
why would you believe them?
People become attached to repetition,
and a teaching that is repeated
over and over again
may take on more apparent significance
than it really has.
The mind becomes attuned to things,
then can only see things in that light.

So, it is good to look at things from different angles, and
not get stuck in a rut,
looking only from one angle.
The teacher you regard
as the best thing to happen on this planet,

may actually, when viewed from another angle,
be seen to be a charlatan,
a crook and a schemer.

When I was younger,
I was very much inspired by J.Krishnamurti,
but when I lent his books to friends,
they were often not at all interested
in what he had written.
I couldn't understand this at the time,
but I do now.

We must follow our natural instinct,
following the law of attraction.
What we are attracted to
probably is what we need
at any given moment.
But sometimes we may follow
a particular direction,
because we are attracted in that direction,
but we then become locked in that direction,
instead of listening
to our own gut-feeling about things.
The mind can like the security
of 'knowing' where it stands,
but this is not always good for it.
Sometimes we would be better
to turn away and ask ourselves
what we really want in life.
What do you really want in life?
Do you want to follow a teacher or teaching,
or do you want to find fulfilment,
become clearer about things,
and become your own teacher?

One of the great things these days
is that we can have many teachers ...
drawing inspiration from many directions.
There are endless numbers of books that inspire,
written by sages past and present.
Finding the way in an unfamiliar landscape,
one is helped if one has a map of the terrain.
But let us not come to believe
that there is only one map,
only one way of describing,
only one language to explain things in.
There are as many maps
as there are those who need them,
and that is all we need to understand.
Our way is not the only way,
and the moment we start to believe that it is,
then we are well and truly lost ourselves.

14

**FINDING OUR
ORIGINAL VOICE**

It is easy, and natural,
to use the same words and phrases
as our teachers.
But when we 'come of age' (as it were)
we start to find our own unique way
of expressing what we understand.

If we are speaking for a tradition,
continuing a line of enquiry
that goes back over time,
then maybe our words and phrases
will be much the same,
but our own unique understanding
will find authenticity and diversity
in some way,
through our unique personality, perhaps,
or in that we will find a particular clarity
in expressing some aspect of the tradition.

But to find our own unique way,
first we need to find out
who and what we are,
deep in the ground of our being.

What we are is not
what we have always thought ourselves to be,
and it is not what others think us to be.
We each have unique talents, skills,
pre-dispositions,
and it is through these unique aspects
that we channel whatever truth
and understanding
we have come to realise.
In fact, we cannot even help this
it just expresses itself as it does.

But, for many,
there are certain things
that get in the way,
inhibiting the free flow
of our unique talents and insights.
These may be personality scars,
due to past traumas, mood shifts,
a sense of guilt, resentment, anger,
hatred, pride, fear or whatever.
Until we are able to free ourselves from the past,
it is very difficult to maintain
present moment awareness.

You cannot escape your past.
You carry it with you all the time.
But you do not have to be inhibited by it.
When past memories arise
in present moment awareness,
they are seen clearly for what they are.
You do not have to go into the mind
and clear it out
it happens naturally,
if one only stays awake in the now.

The other thing that awakens
your original voice
is sitting alone, in silent meditation,
specifically in open awareness,
in which you are not following a tradition,
not chanting a mantra,
not practising
a tried and tested method of meditation,
but are simply allowing yourself
to 'Be' what you are, without naming it,
in open awareness

in the listening, in the feeling, in the seeing.

15
STANDING
BACK

Through the course of one's life,
one learns to, and becomes conditioned to,
getting very involved with everything that arises.
Every word, every sentence, every thought,
is charged with emotion,
born out of past involvement,
past identification with objects,
events, situations, relationships, etc.
This involvement traps us, in a way,
such that we do not have a choice
with regard to our response
to what comes at us in life.
Our responses are habitual reactions,
built up over the course of time,
with memories embedded
deep into our unconscious mind.

Our habitual response to what arises in life
also denies us the possibility
of meeting life afresh in the moment,
in the now.

So it is important
that we explore how to not become
automatically embroiled in what arises,
how to find a way to stand back and see clearly, without
the need to get involved.

In standing back (from involvement)
we give ourselves permission
to be simply the witness
of what arises in awareness.
A witness doesn't need to get involved,
doesn't need to react to, or resist, anything.
Open Awareness Meditation
is one way of encouraging witnessing.

We simply listen, sense, feel what is present -
we do not judge, interpret or make preferences.
We just allow 'what is' to be,
and we accept it for what and how it is.

Of course, standing back
can also be sitting back, or lying back.
We simply invite whatever needs to arise to arise.
This is not a formal, religious, or spiritual practice ...
it is merely a commonsense thing to do ...
to give space to what is crowding us out,
what is causing us anxiety,
pain, discomfort, nervousness.

Standing back is a way
of being friendly with ourselves.
Quite often, people punish themselves
for being stupid,
for not having taken advantage
of opportunities, etc ...
but there is no need for any of that.
There is always the possibility of standing back
whatever the situation.
People often try to get us involved,
try to get our emotions engaged,
to get a reaction from us,
but we don't have to take the bait.

When we realise the importance
of allowing ourselves
to stand back from involvement,
new things will start to happen
in and around us.
They always do.
When we give space to things,

allowing creative solutions to arise,
things start to change.

16
BEING PRESENT
NOW

'Being Present Now'
means simply "Being Present" ...
not as the separate person
you may imagine yourself to be, from memory ...
but as yourself ... your true self.

You cannot be present fully
if you are still putting energy
into maintaining the facade of 'myself', because, then,
a part of your energy is actually going
into maintaining your self-image.
That means you are not fully present.

In being fully present,
you (as ego) must be absent.
Only when 'you' are absent
is it possible for the real 'you'
to be present.

Being present is about being receptive
to 'what is' ... listening, feeling,
seeing, sensing, being.

In being present now,
there cannot be any reaction or resistance
to what arises, what appears now.
There is total acceptance of it, as it is ...
even if the mind realises that 'what is'
has to change, or has to be changed,
for good reason.

BE-HERE-NOW is a famous phrase
from the 60s and 70s.
As human beings,
we are always projecting into the future ...

thinking about what might happen,
or what will happen -
and we are always harping on about the past.
Both past memory and future projection
are movements away from being here now.
In being here now,
there is no room for the ego.
When we are totally present in the here and now, there
is no space for an ego ...
so ego tries to avoid the here and now.
In the here and now, ego is dead,
so ego tries to make connections
with the past memories and future dreams,
to maintain its existence.

The conclusion that follows,
after pondering the famous Descartes phrase
"I Think, Therefore I Am",
is that if I don't think, then I am not.

The thinking mind is the vehicle for the ego,
which invents itself, feeds itself,
then flaunts itself,
until it realises, eventually.
that there is nothing to flaunt
that ego is totally empty of any substance.
It has been constructed,
bit by bit, for many years,
and will continue to be,
because each new experience modifies the appearance
and presentation of the ego.
When death comes,
all there will be
is the possibility to either be present now
(which is the absence of ego),

or to escape into memories of the past
or dreams of what may come
(which, in life and death, are attempts of the ego
to maintain its own sense of continuation).

17

FLEXIBILITY OF MIND

There is a natural tendency, it would seem,
as one becomes older in years,
to start to become fixed in one's views, opinions, beliefs.
We see this not only in the religious,
in academics, atheists, politicians,
but also in some animals.

However, as the path of self-enquiry
is more of a de-constructive process,
we should see that those on the path of self-enquiry
are much more flexible in their thinking.
But this is not always the case.

There are many layers of being fixed,
and we may unfix some layers,
only to find that we become aware
of other layers of fixed-ness
that we didn't previously see.

One way in which those on the path of self-enquiry
become fixed
is that they/we get hold of an idea,
a particular concept,
and we follow it,
without much questioning going on.

For instance,
we may get hold of the idea
that "there is nobody here", literally.
We de-construct our thoughts
to the point where we can see
that there is no substance to the image
we have constructed of ourselves.
This is a revelation to us,
so we are then enthused to go out

telling everyone that they do not really exist.
When people object,
we may then further emphasise
that there is nobody here,
as if repeating the phrase is going to change anything.

We see this also in religious fundamentalists,
who get hold of an idea
and then proceed to try to convince everyone else
that this idea is the only correct idea ...
despite all the evidence.

And this person, who claims not to be here,
may become very extreme
in their denial and assertion,
and even abusive to anyone who disagrees ...
thus clarifying that the ego does take control
of our ideas,
and actually directly seeks out fixed-ness,
because the ego does not want to not be here,
and so will even grasp hold of the concept
of not being here,
as a means of preserving itself.

But, if we are able to see through this tendency
towards self-delusion,
as we become older,
we will also become less stuck in our ways,
less fixed in our ideas.
And, as the body is said to be the temple of the soul,
if the soul is free of fixed-ness,
then the body will almost certainly be too,
and we may live to a ripe old age.
But, that is also an idea not to become fixed to.

In the end, there is only NOW.
Everything else is a possible diversion
from 'Here, Now'.

18
LETTING GO
RESISTANCE AND
REACTION

Things are the way they are,
because that is how they have evolved to be.
People are the way they are,
because of what preceded this moment for them.
When we resist them or react to them,
we are really saying
that they should not be the way they are.
But that is nonsense,
because that is how they are.
It is a fact.

“Acceptance of what is” means
that we are no longer in resistance or reaction.
What is, is what it is.
It is not how we would prefer it.
The person who annoys me
may still be an annoying person.
I cannot control that,
but I can control my reaction
to that annoying person,
by not being annoyed.
I can be not annoyed, by letting go,
accepting how that person is.

When we resist something or someone,
we give them greater power over us ...
When we put up a wall,
others will keep bumping up against that wall.
When we let things go,
and let them flow,
we don't get stuck in this way,
we can breathe more easily.

Sometimes, when we react to another,
it is because that 'other' has qualities
that we recognise in ourselves,
which we do not approve of.

When we are unable to let go
of resistance and reaction,
it is good to step into a mode
of listening, receiving, feeling.
When we respond out of our own sense of 'self',
and our opinions and beliefs,
we are also contributing
towards conflict in relation to others.
We may also appear to be annoying to others
and receive their reactions to us.

In the 'Open Awareness' approach,
we resolve to be in Open Awareness.
This involves not being fixed in our own views,
looking also from the point of view of the 'other' ...
listening to what actually is,
rather than just developing opinions about what is,
which then cloud our clear vision.

In Open Awareness,
we are aware that things come and go,
that change is forever unfolding
new possibilities and new realities,
and we resolve to accept that change as it occurs,
and not be fixed in what things used to be
or what we would prefer them to be.

However, in accepting things as they are,
we also do not blind ourselves to the fact
that the way things are

may sometimes need changing.

It's just that we no longer see reaction or resistance as tools for that change.

19

AWARENESS

Awareness is not an object.
This sounds like a strange statement,
and it is something that most people
wouldn't even think about.
But, for those involved in self-enquiry,
it is an important thing to understand.

What is the difference
between 'Awareness' and 'Consciousness'?
Or are they the same thing (no-thing)?

Some people use the word 'Awareness'
when others might use the word 'Consciousness' ...
for both individual awareness/consciousness,
and also for the universal consciousness/awareness.
But it's not worth fighting about ...
the different use of words.
Words are only pointers anyway.

There is a particular viewpoint
which states that there is only Awareness,
and that nothing else really exists -
all is only appearance, in Awareness.
This Awareness is universal
and it is also individual,
but there is in actuality no individual to be aware.
There is only Awareness.

In this sense, Awareness is universal,
and finds its being in and through
the billions of sentient beings in the world,
which act as vehicles for Awareness.
Indeed, without Awareness,
they could not function at all ...
so Awareness is the universal principle

that enables everything to be.

There is nothing wrong with this view ...
but when the mind gets hold of such a view,
sometimes (within certain minds)
it creates an obsessive logic ...
and a denial of all human values,
or even existence.

Ultimately, it can be said, that nothing exists,
that everything is merely an appearance,
with no substance whatsoever to it.
In terms of quantum physics and eastern philosophy,
this is an absolute truth.

But the problem, for human beings,
is that our senses do, in fact, tell us that we exist.
We come to believe that we exist,
and by eating, drinking and sleeping,
we appear to continue to exist.

Let us understand that, yes,
we may not ultimately exist as entities,
but, as Awareness, we have always existed,
and always will.

Through us (our human form),
Awareness finds shape and form,
it finds colour and fragrance,
and the unique character
that is each and every human being.
Although the appearance may not be
what is usually regarded as 'spiritual',
it is what it is ...
an expression of the ONE life.

20 RESPONSIBILITY

It is said that with freedom comes responsibility
meaning that freedom is not just an excuse
for doing what one likes.

In this sense, the politically free
should seek to bring about freedom
for those who live in some form of slavery,
and those who are spiritually free,
have a responsibility to help others
to find that freedom.

Now, the question is,
with regard to spiritual freedom ...
do I try to help you to think like me,
so you can be free like me,
or do I try to help you to see
why you do not experience yourself in freedom?
There is quite a difference
between these two approaches.

As a writer, as a teacher,
if I take responsibility seriously,
I try to help you to discover freedom
in your own unique way ...
not in a way that imitates another,
or follows another.

My own view is that you are already free ...
it is only that you may have constructed
your own self-image
in such a way that convinces you
that you are not free.

So my responsibility, in this book,
is to suggest to you

that you are not who you think you are at all.
I suggest to you that you were born free
and have always been free,
and that your sense of not being free
is merely an attitude ...
and an attitude that can change just like that.

In fact, if you look at yourself in the mirror,
what you see is a physical body,
and that physical body, you know,
will grow old and then pass away.
You are not that,
and you are also not your thoughts,
your hopes, your dreams, your emotions,
your memories, your experiences
These too will pass away.

When you were young,
you had the sense of "I",
the sense that you are.
You still have that.
Is that sense of "I" any different
to when you were young ...
does it feel any different?
Almost certainly not.
You are ... you are aware ...
you are awareness,
travelling in the unique vehicle
that you think you are -
you are a pure channel for Awareness.

Can you say that this is not so?
My responsibility,
as Awareness channelling through this vehicle,
this writer vehicle,

is to point towards the Awareness that you are ...
for in the realisation that you are that,
you will find that you have always been free,
and that you still are.

Awareness/Consciousness
is the fundamental ground of Being,
and in that lies your freedom.

21 MOODS

We all know about the moods of nature ...
we experience them all the time,
through the weather, the seasons, the nature ...

Human beings also have moods.
But those moods are not always helpful
to the person having them,
and become a problem in the life of that person.

Do you ever feel depressed,
angry, fearful, sad, resentful, envious?
If so, you do so willingly.
When I say this, I am talking to the ego-self,
because the ego-self
actually enhances its own sense of separateness
by attaching itself to different moods,
and feeling self-pity, righteously angry
or over concerned.
This makes the experiences I feel
seem most important,
and therefore 'I' am important,
in my separate self-enclosed way.
When I feel a negative mood,
it is important that I realise
that I am involved in holding myself in that mood.
I can shift that mood instantly,
if I decide to.
But usually, I don't, because I like the feeling
of being so important within myself
that I can choose to be depressed, for instance.

This is very childish, un-evolved behaviour,
and yet we continue to hold on to certain moods,
even into old age.

However, one of the reasons such moods continue is that after repetition of them for many years, they become quite unconscious in their appearance ... they appear automatically, given perhaps specific conditions or situations, and so happen without one knowing.

Moods may also be related to our physical condition, which often informs our mental condition.

To explore deeper why we go into certain moods, we need to become more aware of how our mind is working, and find a way of making conscious those things which happen unconsciously. Open Awareness Meditation is a perfect tool for doing this (see the beginning of this book), as are practices such as Amerta Movement, as initiated by Suprpto Suryodarmo.

22

**THE LANGUAGE
OF NON-DUALITY**

Whatever language we use,
to try to explain or describe non-duality,
will fall short.

Sometimes people get the idea
that their particular way of describing non-duality
is either the only way, the best way,
the clearest way or the purest way
of speaking about it.

But that is clearly erroneous thinking.
However you package it,
non-duality is not a 'thing'
that is best explained in words.

In the clear state of Open Awareness,
there is total receptivity.

If someone asks me to describe that,
I will do so in a different way to you,
a different way to a Zen monk,
a Christian mystic or a Sufi.

All speak in their own unique language,
and one language is no more precious than another.
The flower has no choice but to send out its perfume.
How this is received is not down to the originator ...
it is down to the receiver.

So, if your ears naturally respond
to one form of expression moreso than another,
that is fine ...

but it doesn't mean that that expression
is the best or clearest one there is.

It only means that you are receptive to it.

I may be totally unreceptive to the same expression.
That is just the way things are.

The Language of Non-Duality is that language
which points towards what you truly are -

undivided, whole ... your true nature,
resting in awareness.

23

**SPIRITUAL
PRACTICE**

Some people think
that 'spiritual practice' is unnecessary ...
but that is merely an opinion.

What is 'spiritual practice' for? What is its purpose?

Some think that all spiritual practice
is born out of desire ...
out of the desire for enlightenment, for instance.
They see it as no more useful
than trying to polish a stone
in order to see one's reflection.

My own feeling is
that if someone feels the need for 'spiritual practice',
for whatever reason,
then it is valid that they do it.
Maybe they question their practice,
and maybe they don't.
It doesn't really matter,
but the practice itself presumably is of some benefit,
otherwise they would not do it.

When there is a lot of confusion, or inner conflict,
a practice of some kind
may help to stabilise the bodymind,
may help to give the space needed
for clarity to emerge.
But then also, maybe not.

In some practices, it is understood,
right from the very beginning,
that there is nothing to be gained from the practice,
other than enabling present moment awareness,
during the time of the practice, at least.

Some practices offer the chance to transcend;
others offer the opportunity to surrender;
yet others may offer the chance to be more embodied.
Sometimes the animal with a particular illness
is able to find and consume
the natural herbal remedy it needs for its condition.
In the same way,
sometimes the seeker's instinct
is to follow a particular path or practice,
because deep down he/she knows
that is what is needed.
It is good to trust in our instincts and intuition
in such things.

24
TENDENCIES,
LIMITATIONS &
DIFFICULTIES

Many people struggle
with what they perceive as their limitations -
their tendencies, their habitual responses,
desires, fears, behavioural addictions,
the struggle to survive, etc.

If you see yourself
as that which struggles with all this,
you are imprisoning yourself
in a world where freedom is impossible,
where you will always be a slave,
never feel fulfilled
and always be in resistance.

Instead, a small shift
in how you perceive the world,
will totally change your experience of it.
A cup that was previously half empty
will now take on the appearance of being half full ...
even completely full.
It just depends which story you believe
about who you are.

On the one hand,
you can perceive yourself
to be this entity that struggles and fights
his/her way through life,
carrying the weight of the world
on his/her shoulders,
or you can be who you truly are ...
'pure awareness' being channelled
through the vehicle of this bodymind.

Forget all the stories you hear about 'original sin' ...
there is only 'original purity'.

The 'sin' is simply the error
of identifying with the limitations,
and believing that one is those limitations.
What we truly are is completely and utterly free,
always was and always will be.

When we allow this shift in perception to take place,
all the troubles of the world will not bring us down.
We may lose everything we think we owned,
we may lose our property, our money,
our relationship, even our health ...
but the realisation is that we are not this, not that.
We are neither this nor that,
because we always reside in our true home,
which is pure, pristine awareness ...
and pure, pristine awareness resides only here, now,
fully present to whatever arises.
It rejects nothing ...
it simply takes note
of all that arises,
but is not affected by it.
The 'person', with the personal story,
may be affected ...
but pure, pristine awareness,
which is what we are,
simply takes note,
even of the effects of what arises in the person,
and remains unmoved.

Know that you are this awareness,
and be free of the story of the person
you have always taken yourself to be.
Love that story always,
but do not forget what you truly are.

25
EMOTIONAL
FREEDOM

'Emotional Freedom' doesn't necessarily mean being free to express your emotions. This could easily become 'Emotional Slavery'.

What are emotions? Here is an explanation from a popular online source:

"Emotion is the complex psychophysiological experience of an individual's state of mind as interacting with biochemical (internal) and environmental (external) influences. In humans, emotion fundamentally involves physiological arousal, expressive behaviour and conscious experience". Emotion is associated with mood, temperament, personality and disposition, and motivation".

Many people consider themselves to be "working on their emotions", which could involve anything from psychotherapy to dance therapy to meditation, etc.

But, as emotions tend to arise unconsciously, perhaps the best thing one could do to work on them, would be to continuously bring oneself into present moment awareness ...

through meditation, awareness-based body movement, and suchlike. Absolutely everything appears in the present moment - even past memories.

Certain emotions create havoc in our lives, one way or another

emotions such as anger, fear, jealousy, envy, pride, resentment, hatred, self-pity, etc.

In practising, naturally, open awareness, one becomes more aware of emotions as they arise. Without doing anything to control those emotions, the simple act of being aware of them as they arise, has the effect of calming them down, bringing equanimity.

But emotions are deeply ingrained
in the psychological patterns of the brain/mind,
and they come up time and time again -
partly, also, because they are deeply involved
with our sense of 'self' -
the image we carry of ourselves.
Death of the emotions could be viewed
as death of the ego,
so losing our emotions
looks like a very threatening thing to the ego-mind.
So most of us cling on to our emotions,
as if it was a matter of life and death ...
which, of course, it is, for the ego.

But, in reality, emotional freedom
doesn't involve deliberately controlling
or getting rid of the emotions ...
it involves the realisation of who and what we truly are.
Self-Realisation creates new pathways,
and brings an end to the impetus
behind some of the old pathways.
When we truly know who and what we are,
we are not so interested
in maintaining an image of ourselves,
either to ourselves, or to the world.

26

**SEEING THAT THE
EGO IS NOT IN
CONTROL**

It doesn't matter who you think you are,
what you think you are worth,
how in control of things you are ... you are not.
Simply put, everything that you think you are is untrue,
a projection of your mind.

Life is vast, so very vast
Looking outward, there is a universe so vast
we cannot, and never will be able to, see it all.
Looking inward,
into the microcosm of sub-atomic particles,
life is also vast ...
some say just as vast
as the big universe "out there".

Ultimately, where is there any 'substance' anywhere?
If you think you are "a man (or woman) of substance",
exactly where is that substance?

Human beings are capable
of creating many worlds within worlds -
outward projections of inner fantasies,
fears, hopes and dreams.
In such 'worlds', the poor man
may become a merciless king of his domain,
dominating all those around him,
when in fact he may be living
in something that is little more than a hovel.

The king or wealthy banker or businessman
may have all the appearances of money, power, control
... but is also dependent on those around him,
in his organisation, in his family, his home, his employ,
support staff, doctors, friends and so on.
Any one of them could bring him down ...

either physically, reputation-wise,
maybe even financially.
He is also dependent on the food he eats,
the things he consumes, society as a whole,
for being who he is in the community.
In short ... no man is an island ...
and no man, or woman,
has complete control of anything.
When one sees the fragility of this human life,
and that one is not above it,
or the forces that are at play within it,
humility is born.
To know that one is not separate from life,
not independent or capable
of any serious level of control,
is to be closer to reality.

Within relationships of all kinds,
the ego often tries to dominate,
but when we realise that 'ego'
is simply a programmed mechanism within us,
its importance becomes somewhat diminished.
There is nothing for anyone to prove,
nothing to be gained by such an 'ego',
because life is very clear ...
ego has no control whatsoever over life ...
Life is what it is,
and ego is but a temporary blip
in the imagination of the human mind/ brain ...
completely without any substance at all.

27

**EMBRACING ALL
LEVELS OF BEING
& EXISTENCE**

Habitually, we usually see only what appears, visually,
to be around us at any particular time.
But, if we stop, do nothing, and just tune in,
we become aware of other aspects,
other levels of being,
that somehow are always there,
but which we are not always fully aware of.

Most of us are dominated very much
by what we 'see' with our eyes,
and this leads us often
into projecting ourselves forward in time,
anticipating what we are going to do next,
where we are going, etc.

But if we stop and listen,
we become aware that there are often
many sounds going on at the same time,
which we are usually completely deaf to.

The same goes for our other senses ...
the taste in our mouth,
the smells that are present,
the feeling of sitting on a chair,
wearing particular clothing, shoes, etc.

Then there are all the thoughts
that quickly pass through our heads,
and the associated feelings
that trigger emotional reactions,
chemical changes within the body.
There are the various aches and pains in the body ...
and discomfort.
There is the process of breathing,
either shallow or deep.

There is the resistance we feel in some situations,
the freedom we feel inside sometimes
and the sense of constriction
we may feel at other times.

Becoming open to receiving
all these feelings and impressions
is a real eye-opener.

Thought dominates such large chunks of time
for most people ...

thoughts concentrated very much
on being "me" inside this body, this mind,
with this life ... "my" life.

But when we let go of all this,
open ourselves to just receiving,
at times it seems difficult
to even locate where "I" am.

In the still depth of being present in open awareness,
there is just being open;
there is a quality of listening and feeling
that is not possible when thought is running rampant.

This has great ramifications
for our health and sense of well-being.
When we allow this space in our lives,
the chemistry within our body changes,
and we feel at ease.

It is important to give ourselves time
out of our mind ...

time out of the repetition of thoughts,
habits, obsessions, addictions.

Individual life is too short and precious
to waste it on following our habitual ways.

If there is no expansion of our awareness,
It is likely we will remain

In the contraction of the mind.
This has a profound effect
on our general health and wellbeing
As we grow old in body.

28

**BEYOND SELF
AND OTHER**

It would seem,
and we have always understood it to be,
that the world (this planet)
is populated by billions of separate individuals,
all going about their lives,
doing the best for themselves and their families,
and there are untold trillions of other creatures
doing the same, or similar,
on this planet alone.

When you look at someone else, what do you see?
You see a person ... a being that is autonomous.
Let's call him Paul.

Paul wakes up in the morning,
has a shower, gets dressed and goes to work.
During the day, he performs
countless numbers of small tasks,
under his own steam,
consciously doing them.

Who or what is it, within that body that we call 'Paul',
that performs such tasks?
They are performed, obviously,
from memory of how such tasks need to be done,
but who does them?

When we look at a person,
we objectify them as being outside
of what we know ourselves to be.
Our life is spent mainly concerned
with preserving and maintaining 'this' life
"my" life.
But who am I? What am I?

When we breakdown what we think we are,
we soon find out
that we are nothing at all fixed in time and space.
Take the body -
it is continually breaking down and being re-created.
The body you were last year
is mainly not the body you are today ... hysically.
So, which body are you?
That of today, that of last year or of some other time?

The same is so of the mind/brain.
Thoughts come and go; memory is never the same.
Old things are forgotten
and new things are remembered.
Eventually, it all fades away.

So, why do I identify with this body and mind,
and not with your body and mind?
Why do I feel that I am special
and you are just another body in time and space?

When we see ourselves
as mere temporary appearances of body and mind,
we put up fewer walls between each other;
there is less conflict.
Multiply and expand from you and I,
and suddenly, the whole of this world is awake
to the fact that there is really no fixed person,
no fixed bodymind to identify with,
defend or to be offensive.
Truth is that life has multifarious modes of expression,
and we are those expressions.
We do not have existence in isolation.
That is only appearance.
Seeing this, we move beyond 'self' and 'other'.

29

**WHOSE LIFE
IS IT ANYWAY?**

We have expressions like
“I don’t know what to do with my life”,
“I have struggled all my life”
and “that accident ruined my life”, etc.
But this implies that I am one thing
and life is another thing entirely.
It is “my life”,
but the obvious question that arises is
“If this is my life, who the hell am I”?
I must be something else, to be able to “have” a life

Life is not ours ... we are Life’s.
Life is not our property, something we own ...
It is something that inhabits us.
We are an expression of Life ...
a temporary arising in a particular and unique form,
that will never repeat itself exactly, ever again.
It is also changing from moment to moment,
so “my life” is not stuck in time.
I am not fixed in a certain way,
because life is always creating and modifying,
always moving, always inventing.

When we open out our vision
to see that we are not in control of life,
that we are not separate from life
and that our little enclosed concept of ‘me’
is not at all interesting to life as a whole,
then a new dynamic will have seeded itself in this life,
and this life will have realized that it is not “my life”,
with my likes and dislikes, my feelings of despair,
my personal traumas, my anger,
my fear, my desires, my loneliness ...
they all drop away.
This doesn’t mean
that we are no longer sometimes angry or frustrated,
but that we do not give weight to such feelings,

and joy arises in our heart much more readily.

There was a film, many years ago,
called “The Incredible Lightness Of Being”.
Just that title alone is inspiring.
Life does not have to be heavy,
depressing, problem-riddled, a struggle.
We do not need to invest the energy that life has given us,
in things that bring our energy down.

Narrowing our possibilities by being too focused
and attached to our own little world
and its aims and objectives,
to the exclusion of all else,
is not a good investment,
if we intend the fruit of that investment
to be greater happiness.
Contracting our sense of who we are
seriously restricts our ability
to be a channel for pure joy,
which is our natural birthright.

Naturally, we are not contracted within ourselves.
This is an imposition of habitually enclosed thinking patterns.
The more we open our vision, our perspective, our world,
to include all and everything,
the more room we create for joy to flood in, and through ...
and the more joy we can bring to the world at large.
The more joy we bring to the world at large,
the more fulfilled we will feel inside.
Only when we go beyond the sense of thinking about “my life”,
will that life be a joyous and effortless expression of Life itself.

A Final Note

If you wish to find out more about Roy and his work, there is more information and there are free downloads available at his personal website: www.LivingInOpenAwareness.com