

A TREATISE ON THE ENLIGHTENMENT- TEACHINGS OF BENTINHO MASSARO

BY

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The following is a presentation about Consciousness, Self, and reality by Bentinho Massaro, a really brilliant guy. It is a remarkable, step by step experiential guide to becoming aware of Consciousness and awareness, as well as that which is beyond both, which he calls the Absolute after Nisargadatta.

The problem is that he presents his discoveries about his own conscious/awareness in the same linear fashion as he originally found it, and thus has too many steps. Later he adds ideas that borrow too much from New Age teachings with concepts of creating your own reality by intention, by, in a sense, by willing, without proving them in any way. I think this distracts from both the elegance of his basic enlightenment teaching, and from the enormous boost we get from discovering something for our own self, as opposed to learning a spiritual ontology by being spoon-fed interpretations of our experiences by means of a philosophy of what those experiences mean. This is not really self-discovery, but an interpretative story added onto our deepening perceptions of our self-nature as a philosophy of enlightenment.

But Massaro's introductory lessons on recognition and mediation are brilliant, so I examine them here. What I do further in this discourse, is to call him out on his over reaches and simplistic confluences of experiences with conclusions.

There are three levels of teaching that Massaro presents here: The Ramana Maharshi theory of Consciousness; the Nisargadatta amendment of Nothingness and the Absolute which are absent in Ramana's teaching in any clear way; the New Age concepts of parallel worlds, intentionality, vibration and frequency, alignment, resonance, and creation.

My analytic focus is entirely on the Ramana and especially the Nisargadatta levels of Self-Realization-style enlightenment, and calling the reader's attention the New Age stuff which is irrelevant to the experience of Self-Realization. I also focus on the excellent tools Massaro clearly describes, but unfortunately, often uses interpretations outside of the context actually revealed by that exercise. An example is when he says becoming aware of our own beingness state throughout the day, becoming aware of that open-emptiness-speciousness, is enlightenment.

It is not. In my estimation, it is only the first step towards true, integrated Self-Realization of ourselves at all levels, from gritty everyday human experiences of being a body mind in the world, to the empty-spacious awareness or consciousness state, to the recognition that one is the Absolute, the creator and perceiver of Consciousness as a whole as well as being beyond it.

But I do tip my hat to Bentinho. His step by exposition is quite cool. Also, startlingly, both of us, years apart, created diagrams showing the levels of consciousness or awareness that are very much alike. I have changed his famous 2-5 second recognition time to a half minute because it is more powerful.

I think Mr. Massaro's techniques could be very valuable for most any beginner who can catch hold in themselves of the presence-existence-energy that he writes about, but his attitude that self-realization is really simple, and you are there after a few months of following his formulae, is naïve and unrealistic. Just realizing deeply that you are consciousness itself and not the body—the real first step towards enlightenment—may take years after first discovered. He also misses the importance of explosive realization experiences, Satoris, that mark major shifts in You.

THUS SAYETH MASSARO:

Recognition and meditation are your most precious innate abilities. There is nothing you cannot bring into your experience by these means; they are your gateway tools. Cherish them, value them, and most importantly: utilize them. They will set you free.

Teachers are storytellers whose stories make you aware of the existence of a gate that is said to lead into perfection. Their instruction is the roadmap showing you the exact location of this gate. The choice to apply this knowledge and to walk through the gate is yours to make.

The only way to make teachings truly yours—experiential instead of intellectual—is to actually experience what is being pointed to.

This is still an introductory discourse, as well as being a bit of a technical one, but understanding and applying this its contents will assist you in any and all future lessons.

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The Importance of Direct Experience

The terms “recognition” and “meditation” point to your innate ability to recognize, in various ways, the fact that you exist.

If you could pour your dedication and practice—your heart—into only one tool or ability, I recommend that you pour it into mastering the arts of recognition and meditation. These are the tools that will lead you into the direct experience of what you’re looking for, rather than filling your mind with concepts about what you’re looking for.

Take each pointer and utilize its power to propel you, until the dryness of the pointer is transcended and replaced with direct experience.

Ultimately, you don’t want a pointer. You want tools that will give you direct, experiential access to truth. Only that will set you free and satisfy the core of your being. Nothing else will do. If you seek such direct experience, Recognition and Meditation are your gateway tools.

The Art of Recognition

Whenever recognition is suggested as a practice, it refers to taking a half minute or more away from your thinking mind and naturally recognizing the space of the Here and Now itself—which becomes obvious when you choose to remain uninterested in thoughts for a brief moment.

In just a half minute or more of complete dedication to ignoring thoughts and instead noticing/recognizing the aliveness that is already here, a great deal can be accomplished towards Self-Realization, especially if these moments are repeated throughout the flow of your day.

I recommend 12 or more moments of recognition each day. In total, this means a minimum of six minutes per day that I encourage you to spend on honoring your existence—on recognizing the simple but brilliant truth of Now, seated right here, beyond the realm of the busy thinking mind. Not too much to ask for, right?

Recognition is your best friend in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Practice it while following your joy, while occupying yourself with activities of all kinds, while dealing with deadlines, and so on.

It doesn't require you to be proficient at stopping thoughts, it doesn't require you to cancel your appointments, and it doesn't require you to make major sacrifices. In fact, it doesn't require you to change yourself in any way!

The art of recognition simply requires that you sincerely relax your attention from all mental activity for a brief, but profound a half minute or more—a minimum of 12 times per day—to help you realize that you always already exist, with or without thoughts.

Here's How it Works

Why don't you practice with me, now?

Simply take a deep breath, then sigh/exhale, and withdraw your consciousness from the suggestions being fed to you by your mind's constant stream of thoughts and words.

Basically, you decide you want a break from your own inner chatter for a few seconds and, instead, you want to see clearly into the space that suddenly opens up—that space that has remained unaffected by all the thoughts and activities of your day.

In that moment of determined relaxation from your thoughts (however long it lasts), you will be resting in your natural state of awareness-of-being.

It is in this naturally restful place of being centered here and now, that the innate spaciousness, ease, silence, presence, vastness, and aliveness of your true being starts to become apparent.

When applied with dedication, this is all there really is to Enlightenment. Direct recognition of what is always already here is a short cut—only needed because, in the quest for enlightenment, we've invented so many winding roads to get us to where we already are! Where we truly are, in essence, is natural and obvious: we are already here, right now.

(Comment: This is not enlightenment in any classic sense, but it is an introduction to Zen's No-Mind or emptiness, aka as Clear Mind by Seung Sahn, and allows you eventually full access to hidden emotions, fears, desires, etc., for their release and integration into one's own fragile sense of self, as well as access to an always peaceful place.)

You can apply a moment of recognition at any time; this is what makes it such an appealing and modern-day-friendly option. It really does become your best friend, and for many, this method is the favorite to pour their dedication and practice into. It blends well with the lifestyle most of us have created: active and occupied with “things.”

Just make it a habit to take a break from focusing on things, and instead rest your attention on the clear sense of being here now—awake, alive, and free. And give yourself permission to enjoy it!

Your natural state is free, and its ease can be deeply enjoyed, if you so choose.

The Art of Meditation

Meditation is the self-gift of taking a more extended and intentional chunk of time out of your day to connect with the silence within, to explore the clarity of awareness and the presence of Now, and to become more attuned to your existence beyond the realm of thoughts, concepts, and words.

Meditation is the art of fully offering yourself space to unwind, a gentle retreat from everyday life, so you can move more fully into your own rhythm and center on being.

Meditation usually consists of nothing more than short moments of recognition, one after the other, for a period of time set aside for this purpose only. In other words, you give yourself the gift of ceremony—of spending time with nothing but your own Self.

Note: Ceremonial and durational aspects aside, meditation and recognition are essentially the same act, each being applied in a different setting and with a somewhat different attitude.

The very act of sitting down for 10 to 30 minutes to explore the Self inspires your consciousness to take more frequent moments of recognition during the meditation time frame.

(Comment: There is far, far more to Self than revealed here, the silence, emptiness, and clarity. The deeper aspects will be revealed later.)

When you get distracted from the recognition of awake Beingness and your attention is drawn back to the “world of things,” the intentional meditation setting quickly reminds you of your intention to recognize your Self: your body’s position, the environment, the time period, and your attitude all naturally remind you of your desire to recognize who and what you are as Self.

Outside of this meditation setting, “the world” you are aware of in your “normal” state of consciousness usually consists of things that do not remind you to recognize your essence beyond thoughts and emotions. In fact, they usually remind us of more things to attend to within the world of mental chatter.

Both recognition and meditation facilitate withdrawing your consciousness from the world created in your own mind by words and concepts, and allow your attention to merge within its essence. Both ways allow you to rest in recognition of the obvious presence of your existence: your Life beyond thoughts.

In a moment of pure Here-and-Now recognition, the idea and sense of there being “a world out there” vanishes—even if just for a half minute or more. As a result, we taste a real ease, a homecoming of sorts, even joy—as well as centeredness, truthfulness, and clarity. But when our attention shifts back to awareness of “the world,” it often creates a feeling of loss of ease, especially to the untrained practitioner.

Create a Conducive Setting

In the practice of meditation, we selectively control the things that make up “our world,” such as the intention to set aside time, the sitting position we assume, and perhaps various artifacts that resonate with us and symbolize Self-Realization to us (a Buddha statue, incense, harmonizing music, etc.) in a way that helps us remember again and again our intention to recognize what’s always already here: Beingness.

Note: You don’t have to use such symbols, or even a special meditation space, but some people find them helpful as reminders of their intention to explore the qualities of their beingness.

The meditation setting increases the chances of your attention naturally repeating the art of recognition more frequently within a shorter period of time. This allows the clarity to build upon itself and take root in different, and sometimes deeper, ways than it does when we recognize Presence in the middle of, say, a business meeting.

In many, many ways there has been the dedication to devotion of the beloved One-your true, deepest self. There has been time set aside to tabernacle with the Creator, to come in from the desert of everyday life into the oasis of grace and mercy; to enter the tent of prayer and to rest in silence with the Beloved, blind to the world, open to the spirit.

It’s really only the ambiance, or intentionality, that differentiates the art of meditation from the art of recognition. The heart of these two practices is the same: meditation is nothing more than being dedicated to applying the gateway tool of recognition repeatedly within a certain time frame—more frequently than your regular life, at least currently, inspires you to do.

And although meditation practice is typically performed in a rather motionless sitting or lying down position, with some practice you'll find you can "conjure up" the same centeredness experienced during meditation, pretty much anywhere and at any time, by repeatedly returning to the recognition of the Now that's always here.

To summarize: Recognition practice will help you see more clearly in everyday moments by creating little spark-like openings in the cloudy sky of your mind. Over time, this practice will allow the sun to shine continuously in your open sky, with full conviction. Meditation practice will help you to discover this more profoundly, more immediately, and with fewer perceived distractions.

How Do I Meditate?

If you are really new to spiritual awakening, you may not have studied the art of meditation before. So, although meditation is a very flexible practice, and there is no right or wrong way to do it, I will give you a simple template to start from. As always, feel free to dismiss or tweak it according to what works best for you.

As a general template, I recommend a sitting position for meditation because it tends to keep one more alert.

1. Find a comfortable position.

Sit down in a comfortable chair, preferably with a straight back that supports the spine. Personally, I prefer not to use the chair back, but instead keep my spine straight with good posture. Alternatively, you can sit on a meditation cushion on the floor and cross your legs in whatever manner makes you most comfortable in the upright position.

Is a straight spinal cord absolutely necessary? It is moderately helpful, but not crucial. It tends to allow for a better flow of the subtle and physical energies that help relax, align, and balance your body and its energy centers, but it doesn't change Presence or your ability to recognize it.

(Comment: But rigorous sitting in a Lotus or half Lotus posture can lead to a place where body and mind disappear and you BECOME presence rather than just witness it. You become bodiless, with no inner and outer, where the external world fills your emptiness, and you are thought free in the most delightful, light, and supremely happy place identified with the totality of consciousness, and not as a human. At the same time, there is a lagging noticing that there is a you separate from this experience of oneness with consciousness. I do not know of any way to have this experience other than in intense, motionless, Lotus sitting such as in a Zen monastery.)

2. Take a few cleansing breaths.

Once you find a comfortable, upright position, take 3 to 7 deep, relaxing, slow breaths.

Tip: I find it immensely relaxing, and even blissful to my body and its energy system, if I breathe in deeper than I normally would, sucking in extra air at the end and holding it for a few seconds.

Then, I use my tongue to slow down the exhalation, so that I don't have to control it with my diaphragm muscle—allowing me to relax my chest and abdomen muscles more fully.

To use this technique, simply relax the muscles around your lungs completely upon the exhalation, but place your tongue against the top of your mouth or the back of your top row of teeth. The exhalation will most likely make a hissing sound. That's fine. You can experiment with different mouth and tongue positions. You can also partially close your throat, instead of using your tongue. Each technique offers slightly different energetic effects on the body, which you will notice.

3. State your intention for this meditation.

For about 30 seconds, remind yourself—out loud if you wish—of your intention for this sitting. I find that saying it out loud can sometimes be tremendously powerful in creating a single-mindedness around the intention and its execution.

The intention for your meditation can be anything; it completely depends on what your unique desire for this meditation is. However, I will give you an example that goes well with the goals of this first course of the Enlightenment teaching.

You could say to yourself (internally and/or out loud) something like this:

It is my intention, for the next 15 minutes, to relax deeply into my true Self. It is my intention to withdraw my interest from useless mental chatter, and to instead observe it as it floats by and remain unaffected by it—I'm more interested in Presence than I am interested in thoughts.

It is my intention and joy to place my attention on the obvious presence of the Here-and-Now, on my existence itself—the fact that I exist.

(Comment: There is too much intentionality in this setup. You are already accepting as truth things you have not yet discovered for yourself. I advise just to relax and sit and experience what you experience, finding what arises by itself without intent of seeing something someone else suggests is there. Of course, you can practice both ways, with and without intent and see what works best for you.)

When I get distracted by thoughts, I will simply choose—with no judgment whatsoever and in my own good time—to return to a spark-like moment of recognizing that I AM, already free, here and now—and enjoy that moment of clear presence when it occurs.

(Comment: I never, ever found an I Am when meditating on the emptiness and light within. I saw thoughts, including the I-thought, to come and go into emptiness, but the I Am sensation escaped me until I clearly experience the life force (Shakti), which I discovered also to be in me, and who lived through me as an embodied human. That discovery came after shifting my focus of investigation from “looking” within, to “feeling” within, which focused on feeling the experience of Am-ness rather than just witnessing it. But the description provided by the author is good for beginners. But never, ever accept as absolute truth what the author is saying about one’s own inner experience of being momentarily mindless.)

This intention, and the time set aside for it to blossom, is enough in itself to facilitate a genuine meditation.

(Comment: Why intend? Why not just sit and look within to see what you can see? Intentionality is too much added weight and direction.)

Additionally—especially if you don't have a meditation room—you might place an item in front of you that reminds you to recognize the truth of your Being beyond thoughts. Keep it fresh and light-hearted; inserting humor into your practices is a great way to avoid cycles of self-judgment. It doesn't matter whether this item is a funny note or a picture of your deceased and beloved guru; what matters is that it has a strong inspirational quality for you or that it is very pragmatic and literal in pointing you back to your Self.

As a side note to this, feel free to place little reminders around your house, in your car, on your phone, on your computer, and at your work place. These reminders can be subtle and, quite frankly, you can make anything into a reminder if you choose to program yourself to respond to the item in that way.

These reminders will aid you in triggering a genuine moment of recognition for a half minute or more, 12 times or more throughout the day.

How to Meditate - In Short

Get comfortably seated.

Take a few relaxing breaths.

Clearly state/view the intention for the meditation focus.

(Comment: I suggest the intention of just looking and feeling within and experience what you will experience. You are a new explorer of your inner unknown, rather than just retracing his well-marked route. Be brave, be willing to go inside on your own without a guide that marks out the places he has been, which you then make yours, for his own path may not be complete.)

Then simply keep returning your attention to the intended recognition for the intended duration of your meditation.

In general, for regular meditations I recommend a duration of around 20 minutes.

Recognition or Meditation—Which Practice is Best for Me?

(Comment: To me there is no difference except the duration of inward attention, and whether it is a formal sitting as opposed to pauses in one's day. The actual practice is to look within and getting "under" the mind.)

Why not at least try both for a couple of weeks and see which one works best? Maybe they both benefit you greatly.

It is my experience that each one complements and deepens the other.

Some people find the Art of Recognition more useful on a constant basis; others prefer the Art of Meditation. Whichever appeals to you most in that moment is the one to pour your dedication and practice into at that time. Get a feeling for both.

In general, I tailor my teachings predominantly around the art of the half-minute second relaxation/recognition exercise, because it's so universally applicable and user-friendly. I feel there's a greater chance that people will actually use it to integrate the teachings into their everyday life. I recommend that you practice this simplest of all gateway tools at least 12 times per day.

In fact, I encourage you to make this simple exercise your new best friend—no matter what—while also utilizing the meditation gateway tool whenever it particularly resonates for you to do so, or when you wish to unwind more deeply or explore new territory.

I have found that the discoveries I make in meditation carry over into my everyday experience more powerfully and contribute to those spark-like moments of clear recognition, adding new dimensions to them.

The simple science behind it all is this: each moment of recognition is like digging deeper into an already existing hole that you're making in the ground. With repeated shovelfuls (recognition 12 times per day) you reach greater depths; but in between, a bit of dirt may slide back into the hole, because you are so occupied with other things. But ultimately, your hole will reach deep into the Earth.

The cumulative impact of repeated recognitions can also be likened to starting a fire with a flint stone: each moment of clear recognition is like a strike of sparks added to the kindling. The immature flame may initially decrease a little in power while waiting for the next strike of the flint and its shower of sparks, but ultimately, the many sparks combined in repetition together create a self-sustaining fire that will keep itself burning naturally.

When there is a sincere yearning, a deep longing, to meditate (not just the feeling that you have to meditate), less dirt seems to slide back into the dug-up hole between each recognition; the flame recedes less between each stroke of sparks, because the moments of recognition are closer together and more carefully attended to.

So, within a shorter period of "time" one can potentially dig deeper and burn brighter in meditation than by means of single moments of recognition spaced out throughout the day.

Meditation can also offer experiences of greater contrast to your "normal" daily operating mode. One may therefore feel "suddenly more enlightened," or changed. This is great, but it can also lead to periodic confusion about your "spiritual progress," due to the ups and downs that these contrasting states can seemingly create.

This is less likely to happen when moments of recognition are strung together organically throughout the day, allowing for a more gradual blending of the heightened clarity into your everyday default mode of being—with perhaps less contrast or “difference in enlightenment” being experienced.

Inspire yourself to keep recognizing the deeper truth of your Being, and let the world of appearances and ideas become unimportant for a moment, but at the same time, don’t feel like you have to “get somewhere” you’re not already fundamentally at.

All of this being said, I’ve never been consistent with meditation myself, partly because very soon I didn’t see the need—since what we’re looking for is always already here. So why meditate?

Well, even though what we’re seeking is always already here, our goal here is to discover this as fully as we can, to embody this to a great extent, so that the truth of Existence can cleanse our vision, balance out our life, and heighten our vibrational state of being.

Using these tools will take us to unimaginable heights of conscious awareness of the fact that we already are the omnipresent perfection and beauty that we’re looking for.

So yes, structurally speaking, we are already enlightened, aware, conscious, and existent, and we can never truly become more or less of what we are. And yet, experientially, there is a process of never ending exploration and deepening into this truth. This is where dedication/practice and recognition/meditation become such invaluable tools.

(Comment: Again, oversimplifying. One is not “enlightened” until one loses one’s primary identity as body/mind. Before that, what you are learning is only philosophy and exploring thoughtless awareness which frees one from concepts.)

The truth doesn’t require us to change in order to be worthy of it, but if we desire greater clarity of heart and mind regarding what is already ours, if we wish to vibrate more fully in alignment with the vibration of truth, freedom, bliss, and unconditional love, then we have to apply some dedication/application to the arts of recognition/meditation. Otherwise, the realization of what’s always already here simply remains too shallow to reach the deep wells of true inner satisfaction, and too intellectual to fuel the bright fire of clarity.

So, my goal with is to show you how to dig deep—until you reach the fountain of life, the fountain of joy, the fountain of unconditional love. I’m here to show you how to fuel your fire until everything you experience starts to count as firewood, feeding the flames until your fire is self-sustaining—burning naturally by itself.

At some point in your practice of recognition and meditation, everything that appears to you starts adding to—not distracting from—your recognition, your meditation, your Self-Realization.

Summary

Recognition is the art of noticing one's vast existence beyond the realm of thoughts, for brief moments, several times a day, integrated into everyday life.

Meditation is the art of gracing oneself with a period of time/space with no other intention than to repeatedly recognize what's within.

Try out both, experiment with the different approaches provided to you in this lesson; each approach offers a slightly different way to the same realization.

Dedicate/Apply. Recognize/Meditate.

Applying these Tools allows you to transcend intellectual understanding and enhance it with the direct experience that the information was merely a pointer to in the first place.

Everything has Presence

When we refrain from mentally labeling something—even if just for a half minute or more—we learn to see beyond our mind and into the essence of the actual object. What shines forth is beyond thought and word: It is the very Presence of the thing itself, not the name we are conditioned to give it.

It will help us discover how Presence applies not only to our personal existence, but to everything that exists.

It will help blur the imaginary lines between here versus there, now versus then, me versus you, Presence versus things, and reveal that all things are made out of the same Beingness.

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4 Explanation/Philosophy

What is a "Thing"?

Pick an object.

In my experience, it may be easier to start with an object that has a fairly simple configuration and is somewhat homogeneous in nature (made of a single, or simple, material) and has decent-sized surfaces. For example: a glass instead of a toothpick (too small), or a rock over a cooked meal (too complex).

Ultimately, it doesn't matter what you pick, so don't think about it too long. (The example I'll use here is a book.)

Now, place the object in front of you, or hold it in your hand. You're going to discover how that object consists of Presence/Beingness.

The following sentence is your direct access to the experience that "everything has is-ness":

Rule of thumb: Stop labeling what you see, and look at it as it is.

Two Ways to See Things

When I look at the book, I can either:

Look at it through the tunnel-vision of my ideas about it.

OR...

Notice my mind's automatic labeling mechanism as it fires off words and ideas about the book, but choose to ignore these entirely (just say you're not interested in labels anymore).

This second way of seeing—where I ignore the labels and words about the book because I desire to see its true presence—allows me to actually see beyond the haze of labels and words, until I sense the actual presence of the book itself.

It's a process of consciously “tuning into” the object until your consciousness starts to match the frequency of the energy of the object, allowing you to “sense” or “get a feel for it” much more clearly.

When we're tuning into something, rather than thinking about it, we get to experience the actual presence the object has, rather than be blinded by a myriad of assumptions and pre-conditioned ideas, names, and labels.

Can you see it? Can you sense the is-ness of your chosen object? Can you sense that no matter what label you throw at it, it will never actually touch the true presence of the object?

The object is free.

It is itself.

It is present Presence.

It is allowed to exist exactly as it is.

When you see the book like this, it is no longer really a book to you (even though common sense lets you know that it is), **because in order for it to be a “book,” it needs to be perceived through the word “book” first.**

In a wordless state of perception, what shines forth most predominantly from any object, is its immense, unique, and worthy presence: its true beauty, its true identity.

The more you place your attention on seeing the actual presence of the object, instead of talking about the object in your mind, you will find it is much like when the clouds part, allowing the presence of the sun to reveal its true glory.

“Thinking about something is the surest way to miss out on the beauty of that actual something.”

None of your labels can survive the presence of the object itself. The presence of the object itself is simply Is-ness-Energy: Existence existing in the shape of that object, just as Existence is existing in the shape of your own body.

To fully see the ridiculous nature of labeling things, just realize that even a letter or a word is not actually “a letter” or “a word” because those are also labels. Letters and words and, yes, labels—even thoughts—are nothing but Presence-Energy!

(Comment: A cool discovery indeed for anyone. But thirty years ago, if I had looked at an object, rather than presence, because of my own immersion in Emptiness at the time rather than experiencing my own “Presence,” I only experienced emptiness, formless space permeating the object with no presence at all. But a beginner can come in from Massaro’s direction without a dozen years of prior Zen focus on emptiness and the Void, if indeed one actually finds a presence-energy within and without, as opposed to Massaro’s statements of its presence. What he describes and the interpretations he gives may not be your experience at all, and his interpretations may not fit.)

So, in reality, when we perceive an object through a thought-label, we're doing nothing more than perceiving energy distorted through more energy. If you apply the same exercise I demonstrated with the book to letters, words, labels, and thoughts, you will find they disappear from view as "things" and shine forth simply as being Presence-Energy.

So you see, since every thing is actually Presence-Energy (Existence itself), and since the very means we have to label things (words/thoughts) are also Existence existing, there really is no escaping the realization that Presence-Energy is the only "substance" in Creation; everything is made out of it.

(Comment: This is a powerful beginning to a most deep realization coming later that everything is only consciousness and has no separate existence outside of you. The author builds on this later.)

Presence is inescapable. It's everywhere. It's everything.

You will find, as you practice this simple exercise over and over again, that the presence of objects starts to stand out to you more and more, and your ideas about objects start to seem more unreal and irrelevant, until they simply stop arising (unless they are relevant or practical).

When your labels for the object of perception no longer fool you into believing the word is the actual thing, you simply use them (labels) when it makes sense in the conversation you're having, or because they are needed to perform a task.

Remember, when you're thinking about an object, you're not actually tuned into the vibration and the presence of the object itself; you're just seeing your personal mind's projection—biased and colored through years of unconscious assuming. This is not a true way to see anything, and not a valid way to respond to the amazing phenomena of creation.

As you practice this lesson's seeing exercise, you will start to get a clearer sense of the veil of labels and words—the web of your personal mind's conditioning. Seeing this, it becomes easier to ignore the mind's interpretations and glimpse the vividness of Existence beyond the veil.

And so, as you keep doing this exercise with different objects (of all sizes and structures, including the sky, planet Earth, your own body, the chair you're sitting on, and finally that delicious-looking cooked meal), you start to see the same Beingness that you feel as “I Exist” reverberating inside of—and as—the objects of perception.

Your Presence Is Not Separate from Life's Presence

Remember where you started to glimpse and realize the energy of (your) existence, that conscious I-AM-Presence? Well, in this lesson, you will see how that Presence extends to include not just your own consciousness, but the entirety of creation.

By applying the “seeing exercise” introduced at the start of this lesson, and by choosing the second way of looking at things directly, you will be able to see that same Beingness—that same Is-ness you feel as your Self—extended out into the rest of yourself—the world that you have assumed to be “out there.”

Feeling the presence of your own existence, and that of Existence itself, are not two different sensations or realizations. There is no boundary separating you from All-That-Is. You, and everything else, are the same one Beingness!

And so, more and more, as you proceed through these courses, you start to realize there never was an “out there;” there is only “inside” (or as) Presence-Consciousness.

All There Is, everything within creation, shares the same Is-ness. It is all-inclusive and all-pervasive.

Imagine a void, a nothingness—an infinity within which Presence appears as a cloud of pure, raw, creative energy (Presence-Energy). Within this cloud or sphere of Intelligent Presence-Energy, myriad forms are created, because Presence-Energy can express itself as infinite forms, shapes, sizes, dimensions, times, spaces, and so on.

However, All-That-Is, Everything-That-Exists, is made out of this Presence-Energy and is simultaneously contained within it; anything that exists appears inside of this Presence-Energy, as part of its own self-expression.

This means there is nothing inside of this Presence-Creation that consists of something from outside of this Presence-Energy.

There is no substance other than this Presence-Energy—which is the entirety of Creation.

(Comment: Or, as Robert Adams would say, Everything is Consciousness; all that exists, including you is Consciousness, objects, emptiness, lightedness.)

Thus, all experiences are made out of Presence/Beingness/Is-ness. And you can start to directly experience this truth by tuning into the actual presence of an object, space, time, reality, or location, while ignoring your conditioned mind's mental suggestions.

Explanation/Philosophy

If everything is the same being, why does it all look so different?

Let's jump ahead a little, just for a moment. It's okay if you don't fully or immediately understand this; it will all become much clearer later on in this teaching process. For now, I just want to plant a seed and give it time to germinate before you reach the Infinity teaching. So, just relax the need to "get it," and let it do its thing.

Presence-Consciousness—or simply put: Presence—is the expression (the presence) of The Absolute, The Infinite One.

The Infinite One in its original "stateless state" cannot—though it desires to—directly experience itself. It cannot directly experience itself because it is One and therefore has no reference point to experience itself from, or in relationship to.

The One is beyond experiencing. Beyond and before even Awareness.

You need two before experience—and therefore self-awareness—can occur as subject-object.

In order for Awareness, or free agency, to come into full experiential beingness, there has to be a palpable differentiation of some kind. Since the One cannot experience itself from its own stateless state, it needs to experience itself through contrast, through an "other"—just as you need a mirror to see your own face.

And so the Absolute, out of its infinite possibilities, birthed Creation (Presence-Energy), and in the face of Presence the Infinite One could start to see its true, original infiniteness.

(COMMENT: Recognize that is just another story. Massaro's story of creation, which is similar to that of Nisargadatta, but the latter does not get so explicit or detailed, because he did not want to introduce too many concepts to confuse the seeker of self-realization. But Massaro has this concept as centrally necessary for his New Age self-actualization teachings, which he hangs his coat on presently.)

Over “time” (seemingly), Creation’s expression expanded and developed into countless forms, dimensions, perceptions, and perceivers. It is the role of Presence-Consciousness—its “job,” if you will—to express Infinity in all the ways that it possibly can.

Think about it (but not for too long): experience is a finite concept, so how does Presence-Energy express true Infinity by means of experience? It can only attempt this (impossible) goal by expressing experiences in as many ways as it possibly can, in order to even approach the reality of true Infinity by means of experience.

This explains why Creation is so varied in its expression—because its underlying drive is to express and reflect the Absolute, True Infinity. Hence, even though there is only one basic substance in all of Creation, Presence-Energy can express itself in infinite ways and appear as anything.

What is important to take away from this, for now, is that no matter what form, no matter what particular signature-vibration a particular object has (size, weight, color, dimension, molecular structure, etc.), all of these specifications that are part of an object's unique vibration are still made out of Presence-Energy: The Absolute's way of expressing itself.

Bottom line:

There is no other substance but Presence-Energy for anything to be created out of. If something exists—if it has a presence—it must, at its heart, be Presence.

(Comment: This part of Massaro's teaching are consistent with Robert Adams, Nisargadatta, and Ramana. All that EXISTS is CONSCIOUSNESS. But they add there are processes, knowing, being that lie beyond or prior to Consciousness.)

Homework

Read this lesson's text at least two more times in a relaxed manner, gently contemplating what the words point to.

Practice the exercise of Sensing the Presence of Things Beyond Labels, with at least five different objects of entirely different signature-frequencies. For example, a car tire, a dog's bark, the sky, the floor underneath your feet, and your own body. I highly recommend including your own body as one of your chosen objects.

Don't move on to the next object until you get a real sense (even if it's just a momentary glimpse, that's fine!) of the is-ness of the object, of the fact/sense that it exists.

Feel free to apply this exercise to more than five objects—or even to expand it to include multiple objects or your entire surroundings simultaneously!

Have fun with it, for it can lead into really interesting expansive experiences, and will begin shifting you from your sense of separation to a greater sense of connection (eventually inseparability) with your surroundings.

What has never changed?

I have gone through many personal transformations over the years: physical, mental, emotional, circumstantial, and spiritual. Yet, when I look in the mirror today, I feel the same underlying Self I've always felt myself to be. The same truth that underlies everything has always been with me, changelessly so. I know this is true for all beings.

Later on, you will discover that Presence is never missing from your experience; it is always there.

You as a person-consciousness—the sense “I am this person”—will wake up to something “greater than you” and experience that Greater Self as the permanent basis of your existence.

Human wakes up to Presence.

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3.1 Homework

Realizing the Changelessness of Being: A Two-Step Exercise

I ask you now to look at your direct experience of life, and locate that sense of being, which has never changed throughout the entirety of your life.

Step 1 - Feel the Presence of Being

First, recognize the presence of Being here and now, using the techniques you learned in previous lessons.

For example: Relax your thoughts for a half minute or more, and recognize that there is a sense of being-here that remains effortlessly.

Even in moments when you don't think at all (not necessary, but possible!), Presence-Consciousness, or Beingness, remains clearly present as the basic energy of your existence itself. Presence remains undisturbed, indestructible, unwaveringly here and now...

Feel the sense that you exist, that sense that you are here, now.

Feel I AM.

Feel I Exist.

Feel Presence.

Feel Beingness.

Step 2 - Realize the Changelessness of Being

Now that you're tuned into the sense of Beingness, take a minute or two to pull up a memory from when you were a kid, perhaps 7 or 8 years old. Actually recall being there again, seeing through your own eyes as you were when you were a kid.

Do you see/feel it?

Now, notice how this same sense of Presence that you recognized in the here-and-now was unmistakably there when you were 8 years old as well...

It may not have been conscious to you at the time (or maybe it was!), but it was definitely there: that underlying sense of “there is something that never changes.” The sense of I-AM was fully present and intact, whether recognized at the time or not.

Next, pull up a memory of when you were around 16 to 18 years old and see that there was a sense of being present in that memory as well. Really go back to that memory as clearly as you can in your imagination and confirm that the sense of presence was right there, again, whether or not the personality you wore on top of your Beingness at that time was aware of this sense of presence. You are aware of it now, in retrospect.

Even if the personality you used to pretend to be was distracted at the time of your memory (for example, if the experience was intense), notice how presence was still fully there, pervading the whole experience. If Beingness-Consciousness had not been there, you would have had no memory of this experience.

After you’ve done that for a minute or two, pull up a vivid memory from yesterday, and tune into that experience again. Imagine it in as much detail as you can...

Feel how the same sense of beingness was present in your experience yesterday as well. Even if you did not notice it at the time, it was still there.

In a sense, we can say that, even when we were not present to Beingness-Consciousness at varying (most) times during our life, Beingness-Consciousness was nevertheless present to us.

(Comment. I urge you to go along with this exercise because of the impact it can have in breaking up the concept-ball that you identify with as you, but recognize this is a set up. While being aware of your sense of presence in the present, imagine yourself as

7, 10, 15, 20 years old experiencing some past event. Notice that while doing this, you feel the exact same sense of presence while imagining the past, as you do now before imagining the past. To me, this is like imagining a past experience and remembering you had a hand or foot, and immediately you are aware that you still experience a hand or a foot. Does this prove—as he later concludes—that both Consciousness and your hand or foot are immortal—does not change?)

Now, tune into the memory of a few minutes ago, when you went to open up this lesson and were just about to start reading this text. Notice how Presence-Consciousness was also there, underlying your every experience. Every detail you noticed on your computer screen in your memory of a few minutes ago was being witnessed by Consciousness, and there was a Presence enabling the entirety of your experience.

(Comment: As well as your hand on the mouse or touchpad, was there then as now. It seems like an argument, and it is exactly the same as the great mistake Ramana made when he concluded Consciousness was immortal, while the body was not. Explored later.)

And finally, back to now. Experience that same sense of presence right here in your immediate circumstance.

Do you see now, how the sense of I-AM never changes? It is like the water in the waves of the ocean. You have moved your consciousness through different moments of time, but the Presence that is the Eternal Now is always present. No matter what shape or size a wave takes on, it will always be water.

(COMMENT: Actually you have not moved your consciousness through time. You have attended to memories of past life experiences within the present. You are a bubble of feeling presence, and of course you feel that same presence in memories of the past being remembered in the present. You are also being instructed to see how past experiences had a same feel. You are being spoon-fed a reality construct. But go with it to see where it leads you.)

Take a minute now to consider what this exercise has confirmed for you. For example, realize that all your mind's stories about how difficult it is to maintain presence—how you sometimes attain presence, but then you lose it—none of this is true.

If you're a typical "seeker" who stresses about "losing" presence, right now you may be inclined to smile and laugh at the absurdity of believing you could ever lose Beingness. Go ahead!

Presence always feels the same: present, here, now, alive, available, easeful. It comes infused with a consciousness, a cognizance; it has a sense of self-intelligence and an awareness-of-being.

Things change, but Presence never does

"Existence doesn't have an off switch; you cannot stop existing. Notice this repeatedly."

(Comment: Notice Massaro does not deal with the off switch of consciousness during deep sleep or while under an anesthetic. Nisargadatta builds on the absence of knowingness in deep sleep in order to become aware that there is something about you that is aware both of consciousness, or knowingness, and the absence of consciousness. This beyond principle he calls the Absolute, a concept contradictory to Massaro's conclusions at this point, but which he adds in future writings after he discovers in while reading a Nisargadatta book.)

Thoughts and emotions at these different times of your life may have changed dramatically; even who you believed yourself to be may have changed significantly, but that underlying, most essential sense of “I Exist” has never changed.

This sense of eternal presence is what most people tune into when they say, at 70 years old, “I feel the same inside as I felt when I was 24 years old. I don't feel like I ever truly aged.”

The form of things changes, but the presence that these forms appear within, and are made out of, never changes; presence never leaves your experience and you never leave its experience.

You and Presence, are the same one, changeless and unalterable experience. No one and nothing can take beingness away from you.

(COMMENT: Except nightly in deep sleep, and especially after given a general anesthetic.

Also, the perception and conclusion of changelessness of your sense of being is in the now, the present, and may, in fact, be inaccurate as you cannot in the now, experience your sense of being in the past except as a memory now, which coexists with your sense of presence now.)

Recognize this truth as clearly as you can in your direct experience with everyday-life experiences. Confirm this truth over and over again, tirelessly so, until you feel it naturally, automatically. Until your sense of being shifts from the person to Presence.

(COMMENT: Yes, do continually feel the presence to shift identification to presence, because it is necessary to undo your identification with mental concept of who and what you are, and to switch your identity to impersonal awareness/space/emptiness.)

The more memories you pull up into your consciousness to investigate whether that same sense of present-beingness was there, the more obvious it will become that Presence is the ever-noticeable and reliable experience of Existence itself.

Explanation/Philosophy - You are Waking Up!

If Presence-Consciousness starts to become more (easily) noticeable to you, this signifies that your sense of self-awareness (where you place your perceived identity, your "self") is moving ~~up~~ (down)=the ladder of Self-Realization into a continually deeper seeing and knowing of yourself.

Your true being, your awareness, is unlocking itself from being so tightly wound around the idea of being a person and starts to instead identify more with changeless Presence-Energy, felt as the sense of I-AM or Being here, now, always.

Presence becoming more obvious to you indicates that your self-awareness is naturally (through recognition and interest) shifting from Person-World-Consciousness (the "I-AM-This" feeling) to Presence-Consciousness (the "I-AM" feeling), and is no longer rigidly identified with the personality.

(Comment: This is indeed true after a rather brilliant set of exercises along with his interpretations. In any event, you can ignore all of my clarifications to this point. I just want to point out some of his teachings are not really based on your own experiences, but on his interpretations of your experience.)

Congratulations! You are waking up.

Don't worry: This does not mean you will become unable to interact as a human being in the world, or that you will lose consciousness of the person and the world you have created for yourself. It simply means you are expanding into a greater awareness of the truth of Existence—and of your True Self—because, after all, Existence and your True Self are the exact same being. You'll still be perfectly able to interact with your loved ones and enjoy relationships.

Presence-Consciousness and Person-World-Consciousness simultaneously co-exist right alongside/within one another. As do all four levels of Reality.* One level does not interfere or conflict with the existence of another.

Person-World-Consciousness

Presence-Consciousness

Awareness

The Absolute

Presence-Consciousness is always already present, has never changed, and will never change. You can recognize this. When you recognize it repeatedly, your self-awareness (where you place your identity, what you perceive yourself to be) organically stops projecting itself full-time into the personality that you've been taught to identify with, and rests more effortlessly and naturally into the vibrancy of the true here-and-now.

In other words, you're getting free from automatic pilot mode, and you're becoming more alive, more spontaneous, freer, wiser, more loving! It's good to know you are becoming more of your original, authentic, spontaneous, bold, highly-intelligent, and giddy Self. Isn't it?

(COMMENT: The author overdoes the positive attributes all throughout his text. Always better, happier, deeper, etc., when at the ultimate stage there are no attributes at all. But go along with his interpretation as it does help free you.)

Overall, this shift results in a greater sense of everyday ease and liberation from a big chunk of your self-imposed mental and emotional suffering. It also results in a generally clearer consciousness of what is fundamentally true, compared to what is mind-created, imitated, contrived, unnecessary (suffering), or illusory.

Wisdom is arising from within you, thanks to your choice to wake up to truth.

Homework

Read Lesson Four at least once more, or as often as you need to, to get a clear understanding of the text, so that you feel comfortable and excited to move on to the next lesson.

Practice the “Realizing the Changelessness of Being” 2-step exercise a few times, where you pick different times in your life to remember and then recognize that in each memory, there was the same sense of “being you”—that fundamental sense of existence itself—present in your experience. Also, throughout your everyday experiences, notice it present in and as the Here-and-Now.

Practice the same memory exercise, but apply it to your imagined future. Just pick a handful of probable or desirable future experiences (future “memories”), and imagine that same exact sense of Beingness you’re now familiar with, present there in that experience as well.

Remember: When performing the “Realizing the Changelessness of Being” exercise, whether or not you were fully aware of this Presence at the time of the memory is not important. **What is important is that you become aware of it now, and understand that it has nothing to do with whether or not you recognized it consciously, because it recognizes you. It’s similar to how you know you had a good, deep sleep; you know it because that underlying Existence was still present, registering every moment.**

(COMMENT: Whoa! Author has sidestepped the problem that awareness presence is not there in sleep for most people, and just says it doesn’t matter because you have learned (been instructed), that presence is always there if not in your immediate awareness as a given. This is existential philosophy, not something you are really discovering for yourself. But keep along this track, because it is the only instrument you have for self-realization. Just be aware of the additional stories you are being told that are not yet proven by the author or in your own experience.)

What is Consciousness?

When the light of pure Awareness became aware of the Presence of Creation, it wrapped its brilliant cognizance around this Presence-Energy and became Presence-Consciousness: Awareness, conscious of Presence.

Some of you may be wondering at this point what the word “Consciousness” in “Presence-Consciousness” signifies. In the previous four lessons, I have been placing the emphasis mostly on discovering the sense of Presence. But what about Consciousness? Is there even a difference?

This is more philosophical in nature, and in some respects, it jumps ahead of where we are, experientially. So, I encourage you to let it be all right if you don’t fully understand everything yet.

Just take it as it comes, and be patient with me as I lay out more of the context—the bigger picture—behind this course and overall progression. It is my belief that, while it may seem confusing and complicated now, you will thoroughly enjoy the comprehensive, “no stone left unturned” approach of this cosmology. Ultimately, this will result in you never being existentially confused again, no matter what type of experience or circumstance you run into. Mystified and awed, yes; confused, no.

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What does Consciousness mean?

So... what does “Consciousness,” in Presence-Consciousness, point to? Let’s find out!

Did you notice in previous lessons, when you practiced placing your attention on the basic sense “I exist,” or when you recognized the Presence in Things, how there was a heightened sense of clarity or consciousness present in the experience of Being? More perhaps than when you’re going about your everyday business as a person in the world?

Great! If not, no worries; simply practice with me right now for a moment...

Take a deep, relaxing sigh and ignore (be uninterested in) your ideas about everything for a half minute. This, in and of itself, feels soothing and nice, right? Now, recognize the sense of being that remains when you're not as wrapped up in the person-world consciousness of thoughts and ideas.

Got it? Can you feel the sense "I exist here and now"?

(Comment: "I exist here and now" is a pronouncement about an inner experience that has no words. It is a story. It is the author's interpretation. Is it yours?)

I know for myself, the I Am alive feeling exploded out of me when I was aware of something else within my sense of presence. I was aware of "an-other," a spirit, an entity that felt like God because it was so bright, so powerful within me, within my sense of presence. The life force. It acted (actually, it exploded through me) through me like the Holy Spirit, entirely beyond the normal human dimension, and it arose because I loved another, and through that love experienced myself to be love itself. After allowing myself to be love-itself for a while, this other and more powerful sense of presence exploded in me as God, the divine, cleansed me of guilt and sin, sharing this body with me, like a big brother, with me, inside me, inside my sense of presence, emerging from my gut and exploding upwards as brilliant white light, through my heart area and upwards, through my brain and upwards into space. After that I was aware of my sense of presence, the life force within that acted with me and through me, in great joy and power.

What the author is providing is a very weak experience of the inner sense of being combined with a story about its qualities. Learning how to love your own sense of I A, especially the Am-ness, can result in an explosion of the divine within you as a self-realization of the Manifest Self.)

Now, in that sensing of “I-Exist,” can you notice an element of cognizance? Can you recognize that there is an awareness of the feeling “I Exist”?

In other words: Can you see in this moment of existing that you know you exist here and now?

(Comment: this is a very attenuated experience compared to being exposed to the full-blown experience of the immensity and depths of the totality of the Manifest Self.

I would suggest the practitioner instead of just the recognizing and meditating on the sense of presence, instead, love it and worship it. Play with it. Plunge one’s awareness into it in surrender.)

Do you notice that, sort of “in addition to” the Presence-Energy of Beingness, there is a consciousness available as well? Can you notice that you are aware of Presence, aware of being here? Aware of beingness?

Explore this awareness of being for a moment and emphasize the fact that you are aware of the presence of I-AM. Take a minute or two to taste this experientially.

Great stuff! This aspect of Beingness, or Presence, is the Consciousness aspect.

Now, keep this experiential recognition of awareness close to your heart as I guide you into a more expanded understanding of what Consciousness is and where it comes from.

Just relax, and don't be attached to "getting it." You can always go back to this at a later time and see if it makes more sense to you. So, for now, all you really need to know is the basics: that "Consciousness," in Presence-Consciousness signifies that Awareness is conscious of Presence. It points to the experience of being conscious of being. It points to the fact that Presence is infused with Awareness.

Note: We can only be "conscious of" anything, because what we ultimately are, is Pure Awareness.

Is there a difference between Consciousness and Awareness?

Consciousness is borrowed clarity from pure Awareness. Consciousness is Awareness, but wrapped around an object of perception. Consciousness is Awareness aware of something "other than itself."

Consciousness derives its existence, its presence, and its capacity to recognize, directly from pure Awareness.

In short: Awareness aware of—and/or identified with—Presence becomes Presence-Consciousness. Simple!

We could just as easily use the term "Presence-Awareness," but for the sake of precision and differentiation, I slightly prefer "Presence-Consciousness," because to me, Consciousness implies a subject-object duality, whereas Awareness refers to "pure awareness," not "awareness of something else."

In “being aware of Presence,” there is a subject-object experience present; therefore, the term “Presence-Consciousness” I find to be a more precise description than “Presence-Awareness.”

Nevertheless, the force we know as “Awareness” is the exact same force as the power we label “Consciousness,” but simply applied in a different way.

I also define Awareness as “I” sometimes.

I use “I-I” to signify Self-Awareness, Self-Realized Awareness, as it implies “I” being aware of, or reflective of, itself. “I-I” is simply “I” looping back on itself; seeing itself, being aware of itself.

Analogy - Awareness as a flash light

Imagine Awareness as pure light for a moment: a light that can be directed toward different things and, in doing so, takes on different shapes. It becomes whatever it shines upon, much like a flashlight beam takes on different forms as it highlights the object it is pointed at. Awareness is very much like this.

The free light of awareness can shine upon the experience of “being a human inside of a world,” for example, thereby creating Person-World-Consciousness—the only level most humans consciously know themselves at during their waking hours.

At this level, Awareness (the experiencer/seer) identifies itself as the person and the world it sees; its light is entangled, wrapped around, intertwined, and identified with the object(s) it shines upon.

If pure light shines upon an object for quite a while, it will gradually forget that it is—in itself—pure light, and start to identify itself with the form it is shining upon.

In the example of Awareness shining perpetually on the perception of the person inside a world, Awareness will start to identify itself as the feeling, or perception, I-AM-This.

“This,” in I-AM-This, can signify the sense of the body-mind itself, as well as anything we perceive through the body and mind, such as: personality, world, possessions, career, fame, body, hairstyle, relationships, bank account, other people’s opinions, society, being a peace activist, and so on.

Keep in mind, however, that even when Awareness is caught up, entangled, or identified with the perceptions of the person-world level, it is still noticeable (even in this concealed state) as the sense “I am conscious.”

Everyone can notice Consciousness

Everyone, even very “unaware” people, can notice that they are conscious. That’s the beauty of Awareness and Presence being Always Already Present.

If you ask someone, “Are you conscious of me asking you this question?”—whether they answer yes or no, their very response is a confirmation of the never-ending consciousness in them having registered that you asked the question! They cannot really deny their existence is conscious, awake and present, for their very denial of this would obviously be a confirmation of it.

(Comment: If you ask a corpse if it is aware of your talking to it, the mere fact that it does not respond, is confirmation of their consciousness. Sarcasm.)

Fun tip: I have found this question to be a great way to introduce curious family members and friends to their “Greater Self.” It’s an excellent and non-intrusive entrance into a potential conversation or exploration about what we truly are and how that is changeless. Of course, this is assuming they show interest.

The consciousness that people notice in their person-world-identity state as the sense “I am conscious” is the significantly dimmed-down light of the original “I-Awareness”—which is the pure light of the Creator in its original, super free, self-realized state.

If they (or you) were to trace this sense “I am conscious” back to its source, however, closer and closer to its original purity by repeatedly recognizing “I am conscious(ness),” what would be revealed—more so with each moment of recognition—is the transcendent light and clarity available within this ever present Awareness.

(COMMENT: Quite true and a real experience. It is the light of consciousness that illumines inner and outer specious emptiness.)

In other words: The dullest state of consciousness still is Pure and Infinite Awareness at heart, and as such, can be traced back to an ever more expanded and purer state of clarity.

From I-AM-This to I-AM

When Awareness entangled as the person wakes up to a greater sense of Self (Presence/Beingness/I-AM), it is like moving the flashlight away from the person and its world of forms and names for a moment (as if zooming out) and, instead, shining the light on Existence, or the Presence of Experience, itself (*--within, within, the author does not use the word within, but the beginner must.*)

Awareness, at this I-AM level, uses its light to illuminate and wrap itself around what I call “Presence-Energy”—the substratum of everything that can ever be. This is the unconditional love God-Energy that enables and creates all other energies, forms, shapes, and experiences. And so, Awareness aware of the existence of Presence-Energy, becomes Presence-Consciousness. It is Awareness aware of Creation’s universal Beingness-substratum. It is Awareness aware of Creation itself.

(Comment: This is an intellectual way of expressing the enormity of the actual experience of the Infinity of Manifest Self-Realization, or the explosion of the life force within. But the author is preoccupied with oneness/sameness, and misses expressing the majesty of the divine within, which was the felt-essence of that realization of presence for me.)

As a result of person-consciousness waking up to Presence-Consciousness, the sense that I-AM-This is softened, or released somewhat, and now we (Awareness) feel more rested—or identified with—the more essential and fundamental I-AM, instead.

We feel that we exist, that we are Beingness-Presence—inclusive of the person and the world, but not limited by them. We see ourselves as more fundamental—more changeless—than the person, the world, and all of its activities.

And we know that we exist; we know the experience of Presence. We feel stable, solid, changeless, alive, and present. Here and now.

Presence-Consciousness is a profound state of Self-Realization, yet it is still not the original, or primal, state of freedom: Awareness—the state in which Awareness is aware of itself as Free Awareness only, without entanglement in the perception of Beingness or I-AM Presence.

Presence-Consciousness = Awareness + the sense-perception (feeling) “I Exist” or “Presence.”

On this level of I-AM, it becomes even clearer to us that we are Conscious(ness). In contrast, at the level of identification as a human being, we are constantly distracted from anything changeless, and it requires more effort to answer the question, “Are you conscious(ness)?”

Now, having woken up to (recognized until obvious) a deeper level of being—that of Beingness itself—we can more easily recognize the light of Awareness infused into the fabric of our experience. We can more easily notice that there is a consciousness, a cognizing force, an awareness of being, an awareness of existence.

Review of terms

So, once again, why do I call Awareness “awareness” on its own level, and “consciousness” on the level of I-AM and I-AM-This?

It is because the word “consciousness” implies awareness of something in addition to itself. It implies some degree of a perceiver perceiving something or, simply put, subject-object experiencing. On its own level (Awareness as I or I-I), there is no subject-object experience; Awareness is only aware of itself.

Duality versus Nonduality

When Awareness becomes aware of a particular perception, and especially when it starts to identify itself with that particular perception, it creates the subject-object duality experience.

This duality is just an experience, and never a reality. Nevertheless, the word “consciousness” implies a somewhat dimmed-down version of Awareness; a veiled, concealed, or simply put: a mis-identified state of Awareness.

Consciousness is Awareness mis-identified, unless Awareness truly knows it is free as Awareness, while it is being aware of subject-object experiences. At that point, Awareness can engage with any level of Reality freely, joyfully, and even passionately. It can associate itself with things, without actually identifying itself with those things.

(Comment; Massaro makes a very important point.)

It's a beautiful paradox that is hard to explain.

In time, this will all make more and more sense. It's so much easier when directly experienced than when expressed in words. The more you take breaks, experiment, and re-read these lessons, the more you will start to see beyond the words and effortlessly follow the text with experience to back up what you read.

Awareness is not "better" than Presence-Consciousness; it's just more naked, more original, and freer from identification. All levels of Reality are equally valid and are ultimately to be treated that way. However, at this stage, it is for the sake of your initial discovery and awakening that I make these distinctions.

I want to give you the full context, the full understanding, because I know from my own experience that these subtler questions will come up at some point—whether arising from your own search for clarity, or through someone else's curiosity about your state of being and what it means for them.

At this point in your study/awakening process, don't let these terms and distinctions occupy your mind-space for too long, especially if you don't seem to derive any immediate, experiential clarity from it. Remember, I will take you step by step. Simply trust in the process.

For now, in this lesson, my goal was just to clarify the word "Consciousness" in Presence-Consciousness against the background of and Self-Realization as a whole.

Here's one more analogy to help you grasp the concept of Self-Realization:

Imagine Awareness as a camera. The camera can be aware of a person in a world, and identify itself with what it sees there. Or, it can zoom out from the personal picture to the more impersonal, grander picture and view Presence as shared throughout all of creation—the substratum of Existence—and place its identity with what it sees and feels there (Presence-Consciousness).

(Comment: In other words, leave the body/mind identification, and identify as the impersonal sense of presence itself, which is universal, inclusive, and not separable.)

Or, hypothetically, let's say the camera is not paying attention to any object, even if just for a half-minute or so). In this case, the camera would only be aware of itself as a camera, free from having to focus its lens on any object that would create the subject-object experience. In that moment, Awareness realizes it is Awareness, ultimately free from any object, **including the singular object that is All of Creation (Presence-Energy).**

Homework

Over the course of the next 72 hours (3 days) either revisit the previous lessons and discuss your experiences and/or doubts or confusions in the study groups, or if you feel completely confident and perhaps even a bit saturated with information, then I do not encourage you to re-read this chapter at this point. If that is the case (and you feel saturated) I would encourage most people to simply let it be—forget about it for a while—and instead continue forward now if you feel ready. At this point you might consider taking a little break and taking your new realizations out with you into the world.

Please note that very quickly from this point onward, with each successive lesson, I'm going to assume greater intelligence and increased ability to comprehend subtler material on your part. So, familiarize yourself as best as you can with the experiential sense of Presence-Energy, as presented in the previous four Lessons. Explore on your own, practice, and discuss the material in the study groups to gain a deeper understanding.

Presence is Unobscurable

If Presence is the substratum of literally everything, that means no thing can obscure it. Sunlight cannot blind the sun. A bird's wings do not prevent its flight.

In this lesson, you will unlock the realization that Presence comes at no cost, condition, or requirement. It is already here before anything else could ever be true. It is the truth before, within, and as all things.

You will recognize the freedom of its existence to be unobscurable, unblockable, inescapable, and undeniable.

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Already Present

Now that you feel comfortable recognizing the permanent, or always present, nature of Being, let's dive even deeper to discover the "already" freedom innate in Presence.

We'll start by unlocking your realization of the fact that nothing can obscure Presence-Consciousness, because it is, was, and will always be already present.

For just a moment, relax your mind's ideas about everything (take a deep breath, relax, unfocus your mind for a minute or so, and then read the following text:

You Are Already Here.

To Existence/Presence/Beingness, there are no obstacles or problems. There is only ever more of itself.

Presence has no requirement. There is nothing in between Presence and anything else, because there is nothing else but Presence. There is only one Presence, so how could there be an obstacle to it?

In the same way, there is no obstacle between Presence and you either, because you are (conscious) Presence.

Even if there was an obstacle between Presence and the being who is trying to discover Presence, it would still only be an illusion. Because the being trying to discover Presence, as well as the imagined obstacle to Presence, are both made out of the only substance or component of existence: Presence/Beingness/Energy itself.

(Comment: Every THING, every object we see, hear, taste, or touch, every process, energy, thought is the same substance—consciousness,)

How can an obstacle consisting of Presence-Energy be an obstacle to Presence-Energy? It is impossible. Ponder this for a minute before proceeding...

Suggesting there can be an obstacle to Presence, or a requirement you must meet before Presence can be fully present, is the same as suggesting that existence stops existing because of certain things that exist as part of its existence!

The Unobscurability of Presence is Logical

To say that Existence can be obscured by certain portions of itself, is as ridiculous as saying that the presence of the finger on your body prevents your body from being your body.

Presence is unobscurable, because there is nothing but itself.

Anything that might obscure it, would only be more of itself: more Presence.

And does it really make sense to say that presence can prevent Presence from being present?

The appearance of any so-called obstacle is, therefore, not only devoid of the ability to obscure Presence-Energy; it is actually more confirmation, proof, and further expansion of Presence-Energy.

You can never not be here. You can never not be now. You can never not already exist.

Before you ever thought about existence, you already existed. Before you think about Presence, you are already present.

(Comment: Be aware that these are conclusions of the author. I would not be so bold. I'd rather be stupid and just observe without concluding.)

Give up your mind's conditioned ideas for a minute, and recognize this simple and obvious truth. Presence is always already staring you in the face, as well as it being the face that it's staring at, and from.

All you have to do to become Self-Realized in the powerful “alreadiness” of your Greater Self is open yourself up to recognize it, and to see as clearly as you can how logical it is that Presence-Energy is unobscurable because All-That-Is is made out of it. Become convinced in this experiential logic.

Can Anything Block Existence? - An Inquiry

Look at your direct experience of this moment... Now. And then ask yourself:

Has anything ever stopped Existence from existing?

Can anything prevent your Presence from being present?

Will anything that may show up as an expression of Presence-Consciousness ever truly block Presence-Consciousness?

Does (your) existence—even for a second—stop existing because of something that arises within your experience of life, whether it is a thought, emotion, feeling, person, or circumstance? Do any of these occurrences stop existence from existing?

Does anything stop or block your beingness?

Does anything prevent you from being?

These are some of the ways in which you can inquire into the unobscurable nature of Presence. Choose the line of sight (point of view) that resonates most for you.

If your answer to any of these “Can anything block Existence?” questions is “yes,” that’s okay, but please recognize that it’s like saying a wave in the ocean is preventing the water from being wet. It’s like saying that an area of space within space is taking up too much space for space to be spacious in...

It's like saying a wall in front of your face is preventing your eyes from seeing...

The Benefits of "Already"

So how does the fact that Presence-Consciousness is already present benefit you?

Already means that you do not have to meet any requirements or conditions in order to be as you are: you are already perfect, whole, and complete.

Already means that nothing can ever take your fundamental well-being away.

Already means that your natural state is effortless and obvious, and you can tune into it, regardless of what's going on in your life.

Already means that Self-Realization is in essence easy, accessible, and doesn't require any change or adjustment in your personality, character, circumstance, thinking, or lifestyle—other than the desire to realize it.

Already implies that it exists before you think about it.

Already implies that your changeless perfection exists before you created the idea of it being obscured.

Already implies that you can let go of striving and rest back into what's already here.

Already means you can finally forgive yourself.

Already means you can feel safe and supported by the Presence of All-That-Is, of which you are, already, inseparable.

Already points to the simple truth that Divine Presence existed before any path, religion, practice, or obstacle toward it was created.

Already suggests that every being basks equally in the truth of Existence.

Already shows that no one owns the truth; we're all a living expression of it.

Already is another word for before, prior to, or free from.

Already means that Presence-Consciousness can be realized without meditating for years, removing your ego and sin, working out your karmic debt first, eliminating thoughts, or surrendering your will to a special deity.

Already means that your essential purity has remained untouched and unaffected by the stream of experiences that you call "my life" and is ever accessible, no matter what.

Even Obstacles Are Presence-Confirming

Your ability to believe that Presence requires certain conditions to be met is itself derived from Presence-Consciousness-Energy.

You are able to deny or confirm Presence—and everything about it—only because Presence-Intelligence gives you that ability.

Presence was already here, obvious, and effortlessly present, long before you imagined the obstacles to it into existence.

See? "You imagined the obstacles into existence."

How could you have imagined obstacles into existence, if existence wasn't already there for you to imagine the obstacles into?

And what do you think imagination, and the obstacles it can project, owe their existence to? Exactly—the only thing in existence: Existence.

See? “Obstacles are Presence, too.”

So, the next time a limiting belief comes up for you, instead of buying into it, see that it consists of unobscurable Presence, as well. Anytime you catch yourself inventing a reason why Presence has not yet been realized, simply remember that that thought is just another appearance made out of perfectly-present Presence-Energy.

Realize this, and feel the untouchable freedom of it, the simple truth of it, and the liberation from conditions it offers.

Presence-Consciousness is already here; it’s as obvious as the fact that you are, and just as easy to recognize.

Obstacles, as such, can be opportunities for greater recognition: you start to see imagined obstacles (limiting beliefs) when they arise as presence-confirming and presence-enhancing—no longer believing them to be presence-distracting.

Now, go out there and familiarize yourself with the truth that cannot be obscured! **You can even start to fall in love with it.**

(COMMENT: His suggestion here is so true. I would even say you need to love it, adore it, accept it, and play with it. This will lead to a real explosion of higher sentience, love, and openness within you.)

Homework

1) Read this lesson's text at least two more times (or as often as you like) in a meditative, contemplative fashion, before you start the next lesson. Let the words in this lesson, which point to the directness, the obviousness, the simplicity, the effortlessness, and the unobscurable nature of existence, guide your attention to realize these truths.

Study each sentence in this lesson, no matter how repetitive it seems, to realize the same presence from all these slightly different points of view.

2) Actively go out into the world, into your mind, into your emotions and see if you can find an obstacle to presence. In other words: Explore your everyday life in between this and the next, with an extremely curious attitude toward it, and see if there is anything that appears that is truly preventing you from Being Presence, and if there is anything that truly disables you from being able to choose to relax into the vastness of Being. Feel free to use the questions provided in the inquiry in this lesson, as a way to train yourself to ask the right type of questions to come to greater conviction in Presence being Always and Already here.

3) Apply the momentary relaxation exercise often and on a consistent basis. By now this should start to become a natural and obvious choice for you throughout everyday experiences and "challenges."

The point of this delay is to give you enough time to fully integrate the concepts and practices introduced in each lesson. Of course, feel free to take as long as you need.

In fact, we recommend that you feel good about the material already made available to you before proceeding. In the meantime, feel free to discuss, interact, or ask questions in the Forum of whichever you are

Everything Confirms Existence

If proof of Presence is what you want, seek no further than to look closely at your every single experience: because every moment's very ability to appear to you, confirms the crystal clear existence of an all-pervasive Presence: You. Without Presence, no experience could arise. Experience, therefore, implies—proves—Presence. Now, experience happens all the time, so proof of Presence is always present. When you get this, the direct teacher of Presence is always with you.

This will show you how to utilize your every experience as a mirror for deepening your Self-Realization effortlessly.

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Flipping The Card of Experience

Just as there are two sides to a playing card, so too, there are two sides to every experience that appears within Presence-Consciousness.

One side of the playing card has a story to tell that is unique from every other card in the deck. It has a picture on it, a number, a label, a form, and a shape that all tell its story. It has a unique frequency that identifies its individuality, its uniqueness.

The other side of the card shows you only one picture and it is the same picture regardless of which card you draw. This is the non-story side of each card; it shows you the same truth over and over again.

Likewise, one side of any experience is the story-side of that experience—it shows you the labels you and others have given it. It shows you the thoughts, the names, the associations, and the ideas or feelings about what’s arising. The story-side of each experience is utterly unique and different from every other experience in the deck of creation.

Now flip that experience over, so to speak, as you would a card, and recognize that the existence-confirming side of that same experience shows you only one thing: the fact that the experience exists.

Just like the backside of every card in a deck shows a flowery red pattern (for example), the backside of each and every experience has this written all over it: “I exist, you exist, existence exists.”

If an experience can arise, it must have presence; it must exist.

Read between the lines—see past or beyond the stories—and you’ll see that the essence of any experience is nothing but Presence confirming its own existence (as well as yours).

We read books, meditate for ages, chant mantras, and offer ceremonies to the gods, all to experience more directly this divine, brilliant Presence-Clarity that we already are.

While that is all fine and dandy, why not take the direct route first, and stop searching elsewhere for what is staring you directly in the face over and over again?

Learn to flip over any experience, no matter what its story-side suggests, and see it from the other perspective. Emphasize to yourself that the presence of any experience tells you the same truth over and over again: “I exist. I appear to you, so you exist, too. We both exist as part of this singular Existence.”

We must be blind to never have noticed! This existence-confirmation process—the opportunity for life to wake up to its own existence—is happening every nano-second, with every change, or no-change, in your experience.

The man who sees me in everything and everything within me will not be lost to me, nor will I ever be lost to him.

He who is rooted in oneness realizes that I am in every being; wherever he goes, he remains in me.

When he sees all being as equal in suffering or in joy because they are like himself, that man has grown perfect in yoga.

Krishna, The Bhagavad Gita

While you read this paragraph, Presence-Consciousness is being confirmed, reflected to you—and therefore to itself, since you’re not separate from existence—billions of times!

So, instead of emphasizing the story-side of any experience, learn to appreciate that same experience from its Presence-confirming side.

It is all about a shift in focus. Where you place your attention—what you emphasize—is what you will notice most.

The Benefits

When you train yourself to emphasize the Presence-confirming side of an experience, rather than its suggested story or meaning, you start to experience greater and deeper ease in the midst of every experience.

For example, the story-side of you sitting in a field of flowers on a sunny day might suggest that life is beautiful, and as a result, you will feel ease and joy. The experience of someone then throwing a rock at your head, while you're sitting in the field of flowers, might suggest that something unpleasant is happening, and you might feel uneasy and anxious. But all the while, the beautiful flowers, as well as the rock headed your way, are pure Presence confirming this moment.

When you learn to soften your stories by emphasizing the Presence within them, you start to transcend your own definitions of “good and bad” or “ease versus unease,” and a stable sense of well-being begins to emerge and take up residence in the heart of your being—always available. You stop taking life so seriously and you start feeling freer, lighter, and in general, much happier and more empowered, because you know the truth of your being.

Emphasizing Presence, instead of seeing only stories and definitions, is somewhat similar to exercise of seeing the Is-ness of an object, rather than the label you've learned to apply to it. The subtle difference between the “Object Has Presence” exercise and the “Flipping Over an Experience” exercise in this lesson, is that here we place the focus not so much on the fact that an experience has Presence, but on the fact that every experience confirms Presence.

We do this to let go of ideas that we need anything but this moment to confirm the already present enlightenment of (our) existence.

In this way, we move from doubt to conviction by letting the obviousness of every-day appearances confirm the here-and-now existence, as often as we desire to see this truth.

Remember: an experience's existence and our own existence are essentially the same Beingness. The experience is an immediate extension of Presence-Energy, which is also what makes up your body, your thoughts, and everything else that has form or presence.

As you know by now, everything is bathed in, and shares, the same sphere/field/body of Presence-Energy, infused with intelligence—or Consciousness.

The beauty of utilizing everyday experiences as a teacher (confirmer) of Presence (or Awareness!), is the fact that experiences occur all the time. In other words, you're never even an inch removed from your next instruction, your next confirmation of Presence-Consciousness, your next enlightening moment.

If discovering your eternal, all-pervasive, unchanging nature is what you're after, you're never without a teacher. Your every moment, your every experience, can become a mirror convincing you ever more deeply that you are present; that Presence is present.

Soon enough (or even right now) you realize with great confidence that Existence continues to exist—no matter what arises in the field of Consciousness—and that all appearances (experiences) are bathed in, and made of, Presence-Energy.

(Comment: This is sheer brilliance of experiential sequences he provides, cumulatively resulting in reaffirming, but in a more experiential way, rather than an abstract way as per Ramana or Nisargadatta, or me for that matter, that Everything is Consciousness.)

The “Jewelry Store” Analogy

Imagine yourself stopping in front of a jewelry store window. Mesmerized by the jewelry on display on the other side of the glass, you marvel at the form, shape, size, color, material, name, price tag, and design of the necklaces and bracelets that you see.

You are mesmerized by form and name, by label and thought. You are automatically emphasizing the story-side of that experience.

Suddenly, a pigeon flies by, about a foot behind your head, at 45 miles per hour (pigeon’s are fast). You hear the swooshing sound and feel its wind trail hit your head. At the same time, you were also shocked awake by the sudden flash that you saw in the reflection in the jewelry store’s window, of this pigeon flying by your head.

At that moment, you are snapped out of the story-dream of the price tag of the jewelry displayed behind the glass, and you become self-aware once again. You remember that you are in a city, in front of a jewelry store, and that you have a body.

This time when you stare into the jewelry store window, you see your own reflection in the glass, rather than the necklaces and bracelets behind it.

Both the jewelry behind the glass, as well as your body’s reflection in it, co-exist within the same space, within the same line of sight, but you can choose to focus more on one, or the other.

As soon as you emphasize the jewelry’s sparkle and price tag, you lose sight of your reflection in the window. As soon as you emphasize your body being reflected in the window, you lose sight of what’s behind the glass.

Whatever you emphasize becomes your experience; everything else disappears from view—from your consciousness.

This analogy helps us see that every single experience works exactly like that: we can either be mesmerized by the form, shape, size, and labels we have learned to see our experiences through, or we can notice that the presence of the experience reflects our true and changeless existence.

When you apply this analogy to your own experience, you can see that within the space of an experience arising, you can either see (emphasize) the experience, or you can choose to see (emphasize) that its very presence confirms Presence-Consciousness.

Arguably, this is the most immediate and profound way to free yourself from needing constant confirmation and reminders by books and teachers: to develop the habit of looking at your immediate surroundings and using the ever-present nature of experience itself as a way to confirm and convince yourself of what's obviously true—that you always are.

Save Yourself Years of Seeking

The above exercise—when applied—becomes a handy short-cut to conviction, bypassing years that would have otherwise been spent in unnecessary cycles of seeking confirmation of what's already naturally the case.

Indeed, this almost overly simple exercise—when applied—can eliminate years, even decades, of vague instruction, books, trips to India, the search for teachers, and other external confirmations of what you already are, and replace them with just a few days, or even minutes, of your time enjoying the magic of your already present Greater Self.

You deserve direct tools. They exist, so why not use them and discard the dreadfully slow tools, cloaked in mystery and ceremony?

(COMMENT: So true, but realize that Massaro has led you down this experiential and defined route, and that there will always be steps backwards. However, its brilliance and clarity as a teaching cannot be denied.)

Unless you absolutely insist on not loving yourself—which you are free to do—I see no reason why you should not bypass the lengthy, windy, vague spiritual paths offered to you by unsatisfying and confused teachings and lineages that are reluctant, or unable, to reinvent themselves.

(Comment: This is so true. Massaro is utterly clear in offering his ontology, far more so than Robert or Ramana, who never explained baby steps realizations because they lacked the step by step baby steps of explanation and exercises. But, Massaro's logic is loose in many areas as show before, and there are alternative explanations for everything he offers to now, as when he adds Nothingness to the mix later as a result of reading Nisargadatta.)

With all due respect—this should be only about two things: you and what actually works.

So, take what works best for you, focus on what's obvious and immediate, leave out what feels unnecessary or redundant, and carve out your own direct path with the highest degree of joy and conviction possible for you.

Homework

Read this lesson's text at least once more before continuing with this course.

Practice flipping over the card of experiences, by shifting your emphasis (focus) from the form and story of the experience to the very fact that the experience appears to you, and see that it thereby effortlessly confirms your existence, over and over again.

Apply this way of seeing to your everyday life. Apply it genuinely—take your time with it until you see/feel its truth and wisdom. Do this at least 12 times per day—but for the sake of this being fully integrated, ideally more often than that—between now and when you decide to start your next lesson.

Presence Becomes Stable - Beyond Ups and Downs

At some point in my practice of recognizing “Existence exists no matter what happens,” I saw very clearly that every experience I had confirmed this to be true. Every appearance of life, I realized, confirmed its own presence, as well as my own existence as a witness to it. Seeing experiences in this way—as being proof of existence—was a great aid in dissolving my doubts about my ability to “maintain enlightenment.” I stopped giving meaning to the ups and downs of recognition.

Most of you are now two to four weeks into your practice with 's First Course, depending on how much time you are taking to absorb and embody the content. I'm sure, at one point or another in these past few weeks of recognizing here-and-now Presence, you've created the feeling (judgment) of “I got it, I lost it, I got it, I lost it.”

This is a common experience for many seekers of Presence, and for some, this turns into a long struggle reinforcing the painful belief, “I don't have it yet” or “I haven't achieved Enlightenment yet,” because they still experience the ups and downs of recognition.

This is a substantial lesson, so I recommend you take your time with it (a few days to a week). Read it over two or three times, perhaps give yourself a bit of a break after this (but no longer than a week), and let this (and the previous lessons) truly sink in, before continuing on with 10.

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The Ups and Downs of Recognition

On, off, on, off, on, off...

Clarity, unconsciousness, clarity, unconsciousness, clarity,
unconsciousness...

Joy, struggle, joy, struggle, joy, struggle...

I feel free, I feel stuck, I feel free, I feel stuck, I feel free, I feel
stuck...

Enlightenment, ego, enlightenment, ego, enlightenment, ego...

I responded like a saint, I reacted like a child, I responded like a
saint, I reacted like a child, I responded like a saint, I reacted like a
child...

I know that I AM, I forgot that I AM, I know that I AM, I forgot that I
AM, I know that I AM, I forgot that I AM...

Do any of the above examples feel familiar to you?

For many people, this can turn into a vicious cycle of self-judgment,
from which they hope to escape by becoming permanently rooted in the
recognition of Presence-Consciousness—by being in a suspended state of
pure meditation forever, where no distraction ever grabs their attention
again.

This is not the way the cycle of doubt tends to end, because, quite frankly, it's not relevant or possible for most people to experience Presence-Consciousness consciously 24/7. I don't.

The good news is—once you see it this way—Presence doesn't need to be experienced consciously all the time.

“Say what!??”

In fact, Presence-Consciousness doesn't need for you to do anything at all; it is perfectly enlightened already, by and as itself, since it already has permanent self-awareness on its own level of Awareness. It doesn't need you to be enlightened as well.

It's important to realize that 24/7 (permanent, constant) conscious recognition of Presence-Consciousness is not the goal, nor is it a hallmark of “finally having achieved Enlightenment.” If you've been thinking that this is the way to transcend the ups and downs of recognition, you've probably only created more tension and stress for yourself.

In fact, in some ways the desire for permanent Enlightenment is kind of an arrogant, ignorant, juvenile attempt at “becoming a better person.” It's a form of spiritual vanity that fails to appreciate the wisdom of natural momentum, rhythmic expression, ups and downs (or peaks and valleys), natural and helpful mistakes (lessons), and it misses one of the wisest, most mature of appreciations: that of unconsciousness itself being relevant, too.

That's right. Unconsciousness is relevant.

We Are Meant to be Human Beings, as Well

(COMMENT: So true, a point I have made over and over in my teachings, and which beget Deeya Gair and my system of Devotional Advaita. Intense love, relations, devotion, humanity are required for the explosion of the life force within, the divine within, the experience of love-bliss, all called the realization of the Manifest Self described in my book Self-Realization and Other Awakenings.)

We are created (have created ourselves) as human beings, with limited awareness of what's going on in the rest of Existence, precisely because we have a purpose and a task to perform.

In order to perform this task, we need to be focused on a particular slice of All-That-Is. If we were constantly in an expanded state of Consciousness, we would actually be unable to fulfill our highest desire: to express Infinity in a specific way, in a way that it hasn't before expressed itself—to build a new relationship from the One Creator to its Creation.

(Comment: Another way of expressing this is a felt need to experience and express our realization of Self and God as our destiny.)

Can you imagine if all the employees in a company stopped being focused on their specific slice of what needs to be done, and they all sat back, pretending to be the CEO? The company would collapse; it wouldn't function effectively, if at all. It wouldn't invent anything new or expand upon the organization's intended purpose.

In any organization—and Creation is most intelligently that—it is relevant for certain levels of the organization to not be constantly aware of other levels of the organization, and what goes on up there. Sure, there are regular meetings being held, within which certain parts of the organization come in contact with and transmit information to other portions of the whole, but then it is time to take that re-alignment and use it to focus more effectively at the designated task at hand.

There are individual employees in every department, office, and cubicle, each with a task specific to their line of focus, their field of consciousness and expertise.

That doesn't mean that each of these people cannot know and feel in their hearts that they are an inseparable, valuable, crucial part of the overall company or organization; it simply means they don't need to know everything all the time, and they don't need to see as the CEO sees all the time, either. The organization already has a CEO. It wouldn't be effective if the office clerk tried to be the CEO.

Following that analogy, because our purpose as individual humans is to express in new, unique, and highly specific ways, it is not relevant for our “person-in-the-world” consciousness to be permanently abandoned for the sake of remaining “stuck” in an expanded recognition of Presence-Consciousness/Awareness, let alone being absorbed in the Absolute—beyond experiencing.

(Comment: the word analogy is the author's story. Its purpose is to allow you to relax a bit and not chew too hard. But don't take the story literally as that you don't have to do anything. The author loves to tell stories to make people feel better. This is exactly why Robert Adams told stories: to make people feel better and to gradually find their way.)

We are not—as humans—designed for constant conscious recognition; that is not necessarily the intention and desire with which most of us gave birth to ourselves in form.

(Comment: This means you don't have to emulate the silent Ramana. You are free to be your own person on your own path. Don't take Ramana or anyone else as the be and end all of spirituality.)

You should never engage in action for the sake of reward, nor should you long for inaction. Perform work in this world, Arjuna, as a man established within himself - without selfish attachments, and alike in success and defeat.

Krishna, The Bhagavad Gita

To some extent, true wisdom involves honoring the higher purpose for which we created what we have created, even if we don't fully understand the why or how of our own creations. If “to remain as the Absolute” was truly the intention behind our creation, we would not have been created as human beings with a body-mind. Our consciousness would have remained purely non-physical, or even unmanifest altogether.

Presence-Consciousness is already aware of itself, at all times, on its own level.

The Absolute is already the Absolute. Infinity is already infinite.

Pure intelligence—which is you from a higher level—created the “you” everybody knows and perceives, as the body-mind-consciousness expression of the overall greater Consciousness for a purpose.

(Comment: Just another nice story. Hindu theology.)

You have a world—made of Presence-Energy—at your command, available for you to learn from, benefit from, give back to, and shape, in accordance with your heart’s inspired desire to express infinity in specific ways unique to your self-created individual expression of the whole.

The deepest you is already aware of all of itself all the time. So you—as a human-focused consciousness—don’t need to strive to attain perfect, constant awareness of yourself at that highest level. That level already has its own perfect Self-Awareness.

Higher Consciousness is doing its job and being itself at its level, while you are doing your job by being yourself at your level, and both co-exist inseparably from the totality of The One’s expression.

(Comment: This is true, but unless you experience the Godhead directly, as the divine energy, love, and bliss of the life force, or Holy Ghost, whatever you want to call it, you have missed out. It does not have to be continuous, but it has to have been an explosive enough experience such that it is always present when you look for it within yourself.)

One can become more aware of the other, but each level has its own relevancy. This has to be appreciated if you wish to attain stable peace.

Once you fully realize this, a deep appreciation for creation on all of its levels, and a great wisdom and peace in general, descend upon your state of being. And you are relieved of a burden: that vain and immature-but-cute seeker in you—that seeker who always judges itself, based on the idea that it needs to become better, or more enlightened, or maintain a certain expanded experience of Consciousness, in order to be worthy of existing as he or she is. or in order to feel/be enlightened.

You don't need to become "better." The best way to fulfill your specific job description as a human, is to be who you naturally are, with the greatest degree of self-love and appreciation for the purpose that made you you.

It is important to recognize this truth—that each level has its own relevancy—and feel the permission from that to relax and take expanded awareness as it comes, while also appreciating your human-focused consciousness, as it is an essential part of expressing the Infinite in new ways.

You are important on all levels of your being.

(Comment: These words are to give you relief from feeling a failure at any time or anywhere, including self-realization. This is a most important teaching. Even after realizing the existence of the Absolute, you realize you can never know the Absolute, you can only be the Absolute, and when you are the Absolute, what you experience is Consciousness from your POV as a human in the world.)

Realign rather than Imitate

It's simply about realigning with these higher truths, rediscovering them—ideally becoming convinced of them—and in this way, cleansing your vision from seeing separation, limitation, and conflict, and instead, seeing infinite potential, unity, and natural perfection.

It is not about trying to imitate the non-dual states of Consciousness, it is about re-aligning yourself with their truths.

In so doing, you will better execute your unique purpose in a harmonious, accelerated fashion and be attuned to your Greater Self with ever more joy, while you continue to be its executing force in manifestation.

Presence-Consciousness—or any “higher” level of Reality—doesn’t need us to recognize it 24/7 in order for it to know itself on its own level. So relax.

You are not responsible for the enlightenment of Consciousness; you are responsible for your own awakening to what is always already here, and to henceforth express yourself as freely, boldly, clearly and passionately as it excites you to.

Periodically—or as often as you are inspired to—recognize that you and your actions are inseparable from All-That-Is; that you are that higher Consciousness, as well as the human expression through which you have chosen to express Infinity.

You are simply to wake up, and in doing so, rid yourself of fears at an exponential rate, cleanse your vision, and be ever more awesome at simply being yourself with love and joy. If you go about it in this way, I promise you that your consciousness’ enlightenment deepens naturally.

BTW, purpose is not something we can fail at. Even if you were to simply live your life in total ignorance of anything awake, spiritual, or inspirational, you would still add to the expansion of Creation in a unique way, carve out a new path, build new relationships with Creation, and thus celebrate the infinite options of The One to express Itself. You always succeed. What is up to you is how you succeed, and how inspired and awe-filled that journey will be for you.

You will find much more explanation and a variety of tools on the topic of purpose, life themes, and how to be in alignment with your true joy, in the courses under the Empowerment teaching. For now, I just want you to realize that constant 24/7 recognition of Presence-Consciousness is not the goal, nor is it relevant or desired by your “Higher Self” to be in a space of conscious preoccupation with Presence all the time.

Now that you have heard me say that permanent recognition is (usually) not relevant, let’s relieve you of self-judgment regarding the ups and downs of recognition. Let’s end this potential struggle right now, whether it has come up for you yet or not, by realizing that even non-recognition of Presence-Consciousness IS Presence-Consciousness. You can therefore safely stop worrying about it.

From Recognition to Conviction

Before we continue with the realization that even non-recognition of Presence rests in and as Presence, I want to share some information with you in advance, so you know where this course is leading you: it’s leading you to Conviction.

More than recognizing Presence-Consciousness, what is important is truly knowing that it’s all there is, and that it’s what you—at a deeper level of your being—actually are, 24/7, whether you recognize it or not.

Initially, recognition is the sure way to realization of Presence-Consciousness, but slightly later on—possibly right around now, although it may still be somewhat early on in the process—after you’ve come to more fully recognize Presence-Consciousness and its obvious truths (qualities), the operative factor naturally shifts from recognition to confidence, or conviction.

So, even though recognition will always remain an incredibly valuable tool, one that you can always rely on, you will start to see how your expansion process is more about becoming convinced of Presence-Consciousness and its essential truths and qualities of being, than it is about recognizing it all the time.

(Comment: This is true.)

Gravity Analogy: Do you recognize gravity, consciously, a lot these days, when you're trying to get up from the couch and walk over to the kitchen? Or do you just get up and go there effortlessly, without the need to consciously think about, or recognize, the existence of gravity? I'm assuming you just get up and walk over to the kitchen without contemplating gravity, correct?

On the other hand, when you were just getting the hang of learning how to crawl and walk, you were very conscious of the presence of gravity. Maybe not the word "gravity," or the intellectual understanding of it, but you were instinctually contemplating its felt force on your body.

You had to recognize its truth—that it pulls you to the ground over and over again—and work with it, become familiar with its qualities in order to become convinced of its presence, its truths. And then after some practice, walking became a natural ability that required no further reflecting on gravity.

You have become convinced of gravity. You have become utterly familiar with it. This is what we want to achieve with Presence-Consciousness, as well.

We want the realization of your first nature to become second nature.

Recognition and/or meditation are the tools that propel us to the point of becoming utterly familiar with Presence-Consciousness, its truths, and its qualities of being: always already here, free, present, alive, conscious, stable, peaceful, undisturbed, the essence of all forms, and so on.

Once we are familiar with the fact that Presence-Consciousness exists, and once we know that it innately exhibits all these qualities effortlessly—these fundamental truths of creation—we don't need to emphasize the recognition-aspect as much anymore.

Consciously generated recognition might still be relevant sometimes, and it certainly does continue to clarify our understanding of Presence-Consciousness, since truly there is no end to the familiarization process, but it becomes less crucial and slightly less relevant to your experience and purpose as a being of Creation.

At that point, past the threshold of needing it to become more known to you, it is simply super enjoyable to relax into the ever-clearer and more brilliant recognition of the beingness that's already alive, here and now, peaceful, satisfied, soothing, awake...

But you won't need the recognition anymore to know that you are okay, no matter what happens. You won't need the recognition anymore—in most scenarios—to enhance your well-being, although you may need it in certain intense moments when doubts regarding your eternal well-being may still arise.

In these isolated cases, you can once again simply recognize what's true and distinguish that from what's imagined, and find even deeper conviction. Perfect! But for everyday enjoyment and confidence in your freedom and stability, recognition becomes more effortless, more integrated, more automatic, more natural and less crucial, albeit totally available for you to tap into at will.

Recognition also becomes less stressed, because it develops into a more organic part of your everyday sense of Self. This is because your base-identity (where you place your sense of self) starts to shift from Person-World-Consciousness to Presence-Consciousness, and as a result, you begin to perceive more from Presence than you perceive from the point of view of being a person.

Note: At this early stage in your familiarization process, many of you may still find recognition to be crucial, and by all means, I encourage you to follow that instinct. I just want you to be aware of the fact that permanent recognition is not the point; natural conviction is. Recognition is a means to an end, not the end in itself. It is the means to knowing what is true, instead of doubting or wondering. Once you truly know something, once it is obvious to you, the means that were used to come to this knowingness are exhausted; they are no longer crucial or relevant.

When you have this conviction—and no longer need recognition—this leaves you open to move on to different realizations, such as the even subtler enlightenment of waking up to Awareness and its fundamental truths and qualities of being.

Or, after having embodied this course and being ever more convinced of the greater Presence-Consciousness you always already are—less fooled by the idea that you are the person you create yourself to be—you might choose to go more fearlessly into exploring the bliss of your individual alignment. You will do this with less, or even no attachment to outcome—simply being passionate for the sake of the activity itself, for the sake of being an expression of Presence-Consciousness, for the sake of knowing that, by following your bliss, you are accelerating your purpose of being an agent of Creation's expansion to express the ever-unknowable, infinite nature of The One.

Before you can authentically go beyond the need for recognition, you first need to realize that even non-recognition of Presence is held in loving Presence.

Remember: Anything you can possibly be searching for is Always Already Here.

(Comment: Where did this story come from? How does he convince anyone just by stating it as truth?)

Non-recognition is Presence-Consciousness too

The Presence Rewind Theater Exercise

This exercise is similar to the exercise where you took a trip back to different points in your physical life, remembering yourself at different ages and in different periods of your evolution, and recognized that throughout all those physical and psychological changes—something never changed.

(Comment: This is because you are always in the feeling present while imagining past experiences, so naturally you will feel the same presence in that past experience (memory of). This is not the best way to proceed. I suggest the alternative of digging deeper, dive deeper into one's inner emptiness, or to fall backwards into non-being, or to turn around and look at the looker.)

The Presence Rewind Theater exercise is not so much about realizing the changelessness of Presence, but rather the fact that it is as present as ever, even when we are not aware of it.

Let's begin.

Pick a memory in which you judged yourself to be unconscious of Presence-Consciousness; a moment when you felt you were not awake to Existence.

Or, it could be a moment in which you judged yourself to be acting unconsciously, on automatic pilot, out of old habits, or in any other way that you do not feel good or “enlightened” about.

Now, I want you to close your eyes and bring your consciousness back to that moment. If it helps, you can imagine your present self in a big movie theater, seeing that “unconscious memory” projected vividly onto the screen, and you have the remote control in your hand. You can fast forward, pause, rewind, and replay at will. You can even change the camera angle, if you want to.

Replay that scene however you wish. Perhaps start with how you originally remember that moment, from the first-person perspective (the perspective of being a consciousness inside of your head, looking out of your eyes, seeing your hands move, witnessing your thoughts, and so on).

See every detail in that moment, even if some of it seems “imagined” and not accurately remembered. It doesn’t matter. Just be there again, in that moment you labeled as “unconscious,” or a moment of non-recognition, of “not being aware enough.”

Go on, have fun...

Now, as you’re clearly sensing into that memory, rewind it and go through it again, but this time, place the emphasis on the fact that you were there at the time of the event... that you existed, that you were present at that time.

Recognize how something deeper in you was aware of your personal-consciousness. Even though your brain-consciousness, if you will, was not aware of Presence, Presence was somehow aware of you! Presence-Consciousness, your deeper Self, was totally and completely there.

Alternative: Presence is Present During Sleep

You can even apply this exercise to your (often vague) memory of being asleep, and you can sense that, even when you are dreaming, this changeless Presence-Consciousness is there.

Even in your vaguest memory of deep sleep, of nothingness, there is still some profound, super subtle quality of knowingness present—Beingness/Awareness is still registering the presence of no-thing. After all, you recognize upon waking that you have been in deep sleep, and you can even say whether or not you “had a good sleep.”

This is possible because the fundamental presence of your being is still existent, still present, even when you are dreaming and sleeping.

Back to the exercise. Replay that memory of “unconsciousness” and emphasize the details.

Remember (or imagine) your hand movements, the other person’s face, what you felt or thought or feared in that moment. Perhaps you felt uncomfortable or somewhat avoidant. Recall who else was around you, what was going on in addition to you, and so on.

Rewind.

Play the whole scene again, but now emphasize that you were fully conscious of that moment, that the basic sense of Being was present at the core of your experience of that moment. That which never changes was there, even when you didn’t pay it any attention.

Look even further. As the rewind reveals another layer of awareness, see how you were even fully aware that you were acting and thinking in unconscious, automatic ways!

Presence-Consciousness was effortlessly and inescapably present and conscious!

Profound Discovery

Unconsciousness is an experience held in, and registered by, Presence-Consciousness. Even unconsciousness is (an expression of) Presence-Consciousness!

Let this exercise convince—or overthrow—your doubtful mind by confirming to yourself over and over again, that there is truly no escaping the already-present nature of Presence-Consciousness. Your freedom, your natural state, is absolutely invincible.

Give yourself permission to stop beating yourself up about the ups and downs of recognition, realizing that it is all an expression of Presence-Consciousness anyway, even unconsciousness is already perfect.

You see, non-recognition is itself a moment, an experience, still held by Presence. Non-recognition has only one substance: Presence-Energy.

After all, how else would you know that “you were unconscious?”

Every moment - no matter what it contains - is safe, supported, embraced, pervaded by, and already inseparable from Presence-Beingness-Consciousness. There is simply no escaping the fact that you are always already awake. Always already present.

There is nothing you can do, or not do—including the act of recognition or non-recognition—to change Presence-Consciousness from already being here, now, always and forever.

Let this sink in deeply.

Let this recognition turn into a natural, unshakeable, obvious conviction.

You cannot stop being here, now. Realize this now. Be convinced of it. Let go of doubt. Embrace the obvious truth of Existence existing effortlessly. It is a given, not a choice.

There is Only Now

The only kind of time that deserves your attention is the fact that it's time for you to come Home, now. To come into your true Self and rest in what's already here, Now.

You will discover another major truth about Presence-Consciousness—the fact that there is only ever Now.

As a bonus, this truth will help you spot some of the misperceptions of “you-as-a-person-trying-to-become-enlightened.”

The clearer you see the shenanigans associated with the idea that you are a separate, un-enlightened person, the more naturally you will strengthen your association with that which transcends the person: Already-Enlightened-Presence-Consciousness.

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Perfect, Pervasive I-AM

The idea that future and past exist as real realities, independent of the all-embracing Now, is one of the core perceptions that generates and perpetuates the sense “I am a person inside of a world of time and space.”

To realize the truth of Now is to cut off the power supply to the unhealthy identification with the person and its endless string of petty-minded, unoriginal, conditioned concerns regarding past and future.

What remains is freedom.

How much remains of the sense “I am a person inside of a world of time and space” when, for just a moment, say a half minute or more, you tune into the actual presence of the here-and-now moment—and refrain from thinking about a past or future?

Just tune into now—here, now...

Do you see how the sense “I am a person inside of a world” disappears—for at least the duration of your moment of non-engagement in thought?

The Now is free from the illusions of time, as projected by your mind. You cannot think about the true Now; you already are Now. You can only observe and recognize that this is true: that you are (the) Now.

The true Now—Presence-Consciousness—can only be recognized, as already here, inescapably so.

This Worry-Free Moment

The person in us is trained to perceive time as a real and linear thing. It regrets or enjoys things that it says happened in the past; it is worried or excited about things it projects into the future. But before the dream-illusion-energy of time can be utilized joyfully and creatively, we must first realize that we've never left the Now, and we never will. We must let that realization settle us into our Presence-Self and have it absorb the majority of our delusion—that there is a past and future to be concerned with at all.

So, right now... Relax and give up your choice to see life through the projector-tunnel of thoughts for a half minute or more, and recognize the effortless Now-Presence that is here.

Feel it? I AMness...

Existence exists... Isness is... Presence is present... Here and Now.

Alive. Free. Conscious. Awake. Aware.

Now, can you see how there is an innate absence of the ability to worry about the future when you're sufficiently tuned into the Now that's already here?

Can you see how suddenly your personal concerns take a back seat, and a sense of trust comes into your experience naturally? A sense of ease is here.

When you clearly recognize the Now-moment, an absence of referencing things outside of this moment—outside of you—arises. With this absence of referencing external things, a relaxation sets in that takes a load off of your chest and shoulders. You can breathe easier, your body relaxes, and your mental tendencies start to become transparent, less dominant, less controlling.

Have you noticed that the Now is naturally at ease? That's because the Now doesn't know any time, and it doesn't know any lack, anger, threat, or any other reason why it should be concerned.

And neither will you. You are about to become more convinced of Now and see as Now sees.

“The Now” Sounds Familiar—Are You Teaching Mindfulness?

No.

A very important distinction to make between what I share and what you may have picked up from mindfulness teachings or other popular works regarding the Now, is that, in the Now is pointed to as always already here—without exception—and is therefore innately free of needing any special means to recognize it, nor does it need to be maintained.

There are subtle but crucial differences. Once you fully get those differences, you can never truly go back to your old conscious-presence practices (if you had any) without seeing more clearly into the nature of freedom and feeling at least somewhat liberated from your perceived need to “be mindful.”

Our aim is not to imitate the truth by trying hard to be-here-now when the Now is already here.

Our aim is much simpler than that: to repeatedly notice—even if just for a half minute or more—that Now is always already perfectly fulfilled, achieved and inescapably present, until this truth sinks into the very root of our being and is as naturally known to our consciousness as breathing is performed by our bodies.

Most mindfulness (and the like) practitioners and teachers I've met, emphasize the need to remain in the present moment, as if there is a possible alternative.

Now, I'm not saying that by keeping one's attention fixed on the "now-sense," one cannot deepen one's recognition and conviction of the fact that it's always already here, unobscurable, and all-inclusive. I am simply saying that most people don't effectively utilize these practices to come to greater conviction—they just keep repeating the practices, as if they are an end in themselves, and believing they have to maintain this repetition.

People seem to continue to believe for many years (even decades) into their practice of mindfulness and the like, that it is about imitating the present moment with one's conscious attention; that it is about remaining in, or somehow maintaining, the Now and having few, if any, thoughts anymore.

This belief and conduct leads to what I call suppression by stillness. At best, it trains the mind to be quiet, which seems nice, but can induce a state of pseudo-enlightenment and leave one immobilized in many areas of life.

We don't want a quiet mind; we want clarity bursting with aliveness. At least I do, but I think you do too.

If anything needs to be maintained, it cannot be Life Itself, for Life Itself cannot and does not need to be maintained by anyone. And if what is being maintained is not Life Itself, we don't want it because enlightenment implies the discovery of Life Itself.

Now, this is not always the case, but often, what slows down the average mindfulness practitioner in their recognition of Life Itself are limiting notions regarding the Now, which often underlie the practice that is suggested to them: that the Now is a thin slice of reality between illusory slices of past and future, and that one must remain in between the slices of past and future thoughts in order to attain the Now, in order to reach nirvana or Enlightenment.

This limited, isolated way of seeing the Now leaves one still believing in separation (that the Now is something other than past and future), and thus, one will attempt to silence the mind and maintain clarity, not recognizing that clarity is already all there is, and that the Now includes past and future.

There is no separation and there is no escaping Now. We want to fully realize this, otherwise we're not liberated, we're stuck in the practice of having to be present and suppressing portions of our natural spontaneity.

I made a distinction earlier regarding the difference between “recognizing the Now” and “thinking about the Now,” only to sharpen your ability to recognize the Now as the actual freshness of this moment. It was not shared to reinforce the idea that you can somehow not be here now, and that you need to retain attention on the Now, away from thoughts permanently, or for as long as you can.

No self-judgmental delusions allowed

I don't wish to leave any room—here in —for self-judgmental nonsense regarding not yet being enlightened. So let me reiterate some facts and refute this possible assumption (that you're not yet enlightened):

The Now is already free, always here, and all pervasive.

Do you see this??

Know it now more closely than you've ever known anything in your life before.

Fall in love with the always and the already principles of this/your Perfect Existence.

Whether you get it or not does not even affect this all-inclusive Now.

The Now includes you seeing it or not seeing it, getting it or not getting it. All states of mind are happening inside of Now, and arise by the power of Now-Energy only.

The fact that the Now is already free, always here, and all pervasive, means that every single thought you have, even when you're deeply worried about a future outcome, is an energy already rested in the eternal Now of Presence-Consciousness.

There is presence-ease at the heart of your every anxious emotion. Presence-ease, or Enlightenment, is the essence of everything that is. There is perfect acceptance of whatever appears. All is allowed to appear as part of Now.

Presence-Consciousness is always Now—whether it thinks, doesn't think, recognizes itself or doesn't recognize itself, feels good or doesn't feel good.

Presence-Consciousness cannot escape the Now, just as you cannot escape you. Presence-Consciousness is the Now, and the Now is Presence-Consciousness. You have never not been Now, and you can never not be Now.

Now is the only moment you've ever experienced.

True Conviction

Many judge themselves for not being in the here and now enough. They judge themselves for being too occupied with past and future; too distracted. They punish themselves internally for perhaps not meditating enough, for not being present enough.

Well, if you really desire freedom, there is an easier solution than to beat yourself up about your mind's daily distractions, while hoping that "someday you will start practicing being here and now, like a real Buddha."

There is a way around this need for the endless practice of being present. There is a short-cut...

Early on in my practice of recognizing Existence, thoughts became very transparent to me. This simply means I realized that thoughts, too, appear in—and as part of—the Now-Energy I was searching for.

I, too, had believed there were distractions or obstacles to becoming enlightened. I believed my thoughts were the main obstacle or distraction, and that I had to somehow put in effort to bring my mind to a complete stop, all the time.

The belief that my thoughts were distractions on my way to enlightenment caused tons of internal struggle and self-criticism for me every day. This self-imposed stress and judgment went away, or was at least softened by 90% right away, and then later for good, when I saw clearly that thoughts did not actually distract from the present moment; they simply confirmed it!

So, whether or not labels, thoughts, words, ideas, etc. are presented to me in my mind-space today, these appearances don't fool me into believing I'm not yet Now, not yet perfect, not yet awake, enlightened, or present enough.

All they do is show me more of how present I am to perceive them, and how present they are to be able to present themselves. I am not “being present” all day long—in fact I couldn’t care less whether I am present or not. I simply stopped doubting that my beingness could potentially not be perfect already.

In other words: I don’t force myself to have a silent mind or try to eliminate distracting thoughts except on rare occasions when I simply resonate with being in such a space.

I can always see, with ever-expanding clarity, that all is Now, including what I would formerly have judged to be “distractions.” Distractions are perfect appearances reflecting Presence-Consciousness.

In short: distractions no longer distract me because I stopped believing they are distractions. The shift from seeking enlightenment to finding more of it every day, with ease, is as simple as understanding this basic principle: that distractions are simply more confirmations of what you’re looking for.

How?

By looking at the facts. Whenever you’re confused, just take a deep breath, relax your mind, and look at the facts. Start from scratch. See afresh.

When I look at the facts, I see irrefutably that the nature of Now is always already present, all-inclusive, and unobscurable:

The experience of being distracted by the future is happening now.

The experience of regretting what I did several years ago is happening now.

The thought, “Oh, I have to practice to be more here and now,” is happening now.

The thought, “I am distracted from now,” is happening now.

None of the above appearances or thoughts prevent me from recognizing that I exist here and now.

Appearances don't have any power to obscure or distract from anything; they are simply appearing in, and as part of, perfect Presence.

We cannot do or not do the Now, and we cannot practice being here now—for it's already here, now... regardless of action or no action on our part.

Our purpose is not to be here now; we are only to recognize that we already are, until this truth is naturally understood and our perceptions are automatically realigned.

Seeing clearly the many truths of Now, convinced me of its all-inclusive nature. When you are truly convinced of something, no appearance can move you into doubt.

Note: For me, conviction is not a mere idea I believe in and then use it to try convince the world that I'm right, or that I know the proper God or path to follow. True conviction has nothing to do with beliefs, and although it unlocks true passion and authenticity, it is not aggressive in nature, nor does it feel the need to convince others.

I have nothing to prove to anyone, including myself, regarding the nature of Presence. Natural proof has set me free from needing my beliefs to be right.

In my case, conviction is a matter of simple and continued observation, to the point of no longer needing to confirm or deny what's true and what's not; it has become naturally obvious, beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Conviction is not something I identify myself with. It's not a stick I hold onto tightly so I can beat other people's sticks with my "superior stick." True conviction transcends vanity, belief, and claiming knowledge of any kind. True conviction sets you free, and doesn't leave you with the need to hold onto some type of "truth" to make you feel safe or better about yourself. If it did, it wouldn't be freedom.

True conviction leaves no trace of doubt or pride; it leaves you in ease—in natural confidence—and reveals, in an ever-expanding and ever-humbling way, the infinite connection you have to All-That-Exists.

I am free because I allowed myself to recognize repeatedly that Existence never stops existing, no matter what, and that this truth is always already available for me to recognize, no matter what.

This is another way of saying that I allowed myself to recognize repeatedly that ease, well-being, satisfaction, non-neediness, transcendence, joy and love are always already continuous, cannot be stopped, and are ever-available for me to sink into as deeply as I want.

I simply started paying attention to what's always already obvious, and I set myself free because I was more interested in freedom than in holding onto my doubts, fears, pride, and arrogant ideas of being unworthy of existence, love, bliss, or enlightenment.

If I ever get confused regarding the nature of Presence-Consciousness again, I shall simply gaze at the facts and be set free once more by natural proof.

This is what I mean by true conviction: To let Existence cleanse your vision until you naturally see as IT sees.

If you have any remaining doubts about the already-achieved nature of Now, then perhaps the Now Detector Test below will be your friend.

To let the obviousness of Existence cleanse your vision and transform your doubts into natural conviction, allow me to ask you a few questions...

“When Do Past and Future Occur?”

Answer: Now.

The above question in the title is the short version of the Now Detector Test, explained below. Remember this question and take it with you into everyday life.

When it comes to your doubt regarding the attainability of Now due to the interference of past and future thoughts, the question above is an immediate internal conversation killer.

The Now is not something in between the past and the future; it is the only reality there is. And it is already perfect, complete, and here.

Both past and future are projections of the Now. In no time, you will come to see that the Now is not only the only moment you will personally ever experience, it is the only moment there is in all of Existence.

The Now is the mother of any and all experience, space, time, dimension, or thing. Now is time-inclusive as well as time-transcendent.

Where—or when—does the thought, and the corresponding imaginative experience following it, occur when you say, “I am having lunch with my friend tomorrow?”

Now, right?

Have you ever had a thought occur outside of the present moment—even if it was about some distant moment in time and infused with anxiety?

Just as you discovered that every experience confirms its own—and your own—existence, doesn't a thought about the future only confirm the fact that it is appearing now?

It's so beautiful—and almost too simple to be taken seriously—when you realize how universally applicable and liberating this “already” way of seeing life is.

This is the power in the word *Already*: it liberates your many assumptions and lets you see as Existence sees. It is “the gift that keeps on giving” when it comes to your Self-Realization.

You are *Already* perfect, complete, whole, and enlightened. Simply notice this until you know it as fact.

The Now Detector Test

Note: This is a variation of the Truth Detector Test from 7.

Imagine a future scenario for a moment... Got it? Feel it? Really picture it.

Now let's examine three different ways of looking at this thought about the future:

We could look at this “thought about the future” through its own story-filter and be completely absorbed by whatever the story includes. In this way of seeing, there is the experience of a lack of clarity. We indulge in the blindness of believing in the thought.

We could then look at “the thought about the future” through the filter of certain types of teachings, or misunderstand the Now and come up with a judgment: “This thought takes me away from the Now; I should still my mind and practice being more in the here and Now.”

But since all that we are interested in is liberation by clarity of natural truth, let's just look at the facts again, instead:

Question 1: When and from where is this thought about the future arising?

Answer: Here, now.

Question 2: Could it arise anywhere else (outside of Presence-Consciousness)?

Answer: No.

Question 3: To whom or what is this thought about the future appearing?

Answer: To me, Presence-Consciousness.

Question 4: When is that "whom" or "what"?

Answer: I am Now.

Based on your answers in the Now Detector Test above, can you truly believe that a thought about the future or past denies you access to Now?

Below are some additional examples of how to look at the facts of life, which should get you in the habit of asking yourself questions like these whenever doubts or self-judgments arise:

Can a thought be anywhere but Now?

No(w).

Can a thought have derived its energy to exist from outside of Presence-Energy?

No(w).

Is a thought about the future happening in the future?

No(w).

Is a thought about the past happening in the past?

No(w).

When you're "lost in a future-thought," is that happening outside of this moment?

No(w).

Clearly, after you answer questions like these (and those in the Now Detector Test) a few times, practicing with different types of thoughts and beliefs, you start to become more naturally convinced—simply by looking at the facts—that nothing can escape being inseparable from Now-Presence-Energy.

You will find, over and over again, that thoughts about the future or the past only confirm The Now's unobscurable nature, and are therefore not to be labeled as "enemies" or "distractions," but rather, as "friends, teachers, and reflections of the truth of your being."

The purpose of this lesson—and this entire chapter—is to transform your subconscious and conscious mind to the point where it has no grounds from which to judge itself, when it comes to not yet being perfect, present, awake, at ease, and enlightened.

You see, the Now shines forth as everything it creates, and is thus expanding upon itself, upon Creation, through anything that it makes move, crawl, expand, contract, or otherwise exist!

End of discussion—that is, unless you wish to insist on a lifetime of seeking, striving, general discomfort, and ignorance regarding the hidden-in-plain-sight truth of your amazing existence.

Do you?

Homework

“Am I worthy of Liberation?”

Ask yourself this right now. Ask yourself the question above and the questions below, and take five minutes to instinctively answer them honestly for yourself. Feel into your reactions and write these feelings out in whatever format happens. It doesn't matter if you write coherent sentences, whether you write in Q&A format, story format, poetry format, or simply compose a list of beliefs or statements about yourself.

Don't overthink your answers. Respond to the questions immediately, and let your hand do the writing, or your fingers do the typing.

The point is not to judge what comes out, but to simply let it be all right. Give what emerges the space to be a part of you; look at it with a loving gaze, and don't try to change anything for now. The purpose of this exercise is just to gain greater clarity into yourself, which often results in greater freedom. Ask yourself these questions:

Am I willing to look at the facts of Existence, and have these obvious truths transform and clarify my beliefs about Presence-Consciousness? Can I receive and allow the goodness, the simple beauty, and the resulting ease and self-love of Existence into my being?

Can I accept that I am already perfect as I am, inseparable from All That Is?

Or, do I insist—with the use of my petty mind—that I know better than the obvious truths of Existence Itself, believing that there must be more to it than that, or something other than that, or that I must be different in order to earn the goodness that’s already here?

Do I insist upon doubting the obvious and perpetuating more strife and suffering for myself?

Or, can I let these beautifully simple, non-mystical truths of Existence cleanse my vision, empty my heart of confusion, and then fill it back up with a loving fulfillment so pure that I cannot even begin to describe it?

Using the “Now Detector Test,” run through a few beliefs you have (or used to have) that suggest that the presence or absence of something can obscure your access to Now. Get in the habit of looking at the facts by asking yourself questions like these more often.

Reread this lesson, and let it sink in, at least twice more before you start your next lesson.

Consider sharing your answers with the rest of us in the corresponding Study Group if you want.

Now that you have had your initial recognition of Presence-Consciousness (Chapter 1), and now that you have become (more) convinced of its always-already-present nature (Chapter 2) and its innate qualities of Being (its truths), you are ready to dive even deeper into being Presence-Consciousness.

This will significantly loosen and soften your identification with the human appearance (body-mind inside of a world) that you have created for yourself.

Since this signifies the end of an extensive chapter containing lots of transformations of your brain and consciousness, I again suggest you take your time to digest this information, take it with you into everyday life for a bit, perhaps re-read some of the lessons.

When you feel sufficiently rested and established in this new way of understanding your Self, you may proceed with Chapter Three, which functions almost like a bootcamp, and is very practice/meditation/observation oriented, to help you really experientially shift your sense of self and attain the realizations of deathlessness, or eternity being what you are.

From Person to Presence

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Reality Check

Before you continue, let’s recap:

After having studied and applied the materials in Chapter One (the Introduction), you can now feel/sense/recognize at will:

Your own existence (the sense I-AM).

How to recognize and meditate.

The Presence in things.

The fact that Presence never changes, even when things do change.

That there is a Knowingness of Presence (Consciousness).

After having studied and applied the materials in Chapter Two, you can now feel/sense/recognize at will:

The unobscurable nature of Presence.

That your not-yet-enlightened beliefs can be easily released by exposing them to the light of Presence-Consciousness.

That every single experience confirms Presence-Consciousness.

That even non-recognition rests in Presence, that each Level of Reality has its own relevancies, and that the goal is not to be in a state of permanent conscious recognition of Presence.

That Now is the only moment, and you cannot be more Now than you already are.

It's okay if these realizations still feel somewhat new to you, and require some conscious attention to conjure up. This is natural, and good enough to continue with the third chapter of this course.

By this time, the materials should be very familiar to you, and close-to-effortless to recognize.

If you feel you have too little of a sense of these realizations, I suggest you go over the lessons once more and take your time with them before proceeding. There is no rush.

That being said: don't be too quick to doubt your ability to recognize the Presence that is always here. It's easier than you think. We tend to make the idea about it more complicated than the recognition of it actually is. You got this!

Transcending Person-World-Consciousness

Now that the first half of this course has introduced us to Presence-Consciousness and its most important, fundamental truths and qualities; now that the groundwork is established and there is no way back for us into total ignorance, this chapter enables us to significantly loosen up our identification with the person—the body-mind—and its attachments to “the world,” so that we may even more effortlessly feel and know ourselves to be Presence-Consciousness, rather than “a body-mind within a world.”

Chapter Three is a Self-Realization boot camp of sorts, focusing you into a relentless, day-after-day, deepening of your practice in directly realizing the eternal truth of your I-AM.

This chapter is designed, to an extent, to tire you out. Be prepared for this, so that you can enjoy it all the more. You will experience tremendous benefits from this that will stay with you for the rest of your life. This is arguably the most repetitive and practice-oriented chapter. Give it all you've got, and you will walk away transformed, ready to enjoy—that much more effortlessly—all the fruits of the courses to follow.

Yes, is all about making Enlightenment easy, offering it to you step-by-step so you don't have to be confused about the order of things. But it does require you to exhaust yourself in the form of practice and dedication from time to time, especially in this course, because we're talking about truly shifting your core sense of self from limitation to God-nature.

Again, this course—and this chapter—lay the transformative groundwork for all the beautiful goodies and empowering realizations to come.

This chapter will help you go from feeling like you are a person recognizing Presence, to feeling that you are Presence-Consciousness recognizing the person-appearance—a true shift in identity from person to Presence. Welcome to your ever-more-obvious enlightenment!

A Little Cosmological Refresher and Overview

Let us review a couple of things before we proceed with the actual boot camp.

Most of us have always taken something we're not, to be what we absolutely are: Awareness has become identified with its perception of the person, which is but a single expression of the entirety of Creation (Presence-Energy).

The Person and the World are ideas, perceptions, creations, manifestations—slices of the greater all-pervasive intelligent God-Energy.

No matter how elaborate, complexly built, or separate a thing seems to be, our lessons to now has shown us directly that it has beingness as its only substance. We realized that nothing of form exists outside of the realm of Presence.

Presence-Energy is the Expression (Creation) of The Infinite One, The Absolute.

Awareness (The Absolute's Ultimate Free Agent) wraps around Manifestation (Presence) and its activities, like gravity wraps around a planet and its creatures.

With Awareness wrapping itself around Presence-Energy, Creation is now complete: It is, and it knows that it is. And so it can evolve, expand, and experience itself, with supreme intelligence.

Now it can play and perform its honorable duty: to express Infinity as best it can, in as many ways as possible, by multiplying itself into infinite directions and exploring the possibilities of creating in infinite ways, of which you—your body-mind-world experience—is one.

The Person and its self-created dream world are an expression, a manifestation, of the pure, ever-present force that everything in creation is made out of: Beingness-Energy-Consciousness.

Even though the Person and the World are relevant and important regarding their duty to express Infinity, it is indescribably valuable, and worthy of celebration, each time a portion of the whole wakes up to the whole. Each time Awareness of “being a person in a world” wakes up to “Being Presence-Energy,” all of creation is amplified, clarified, and empowered.

In other words, every time you wake up a little more, Creation wakes up a little more with you, since you and “the whole” are not two separate things, but one complete being.

From that point (realization of Presence) onward, “Awareness as that individual” will express itself with less and less allegiance to the idea that it is separate, lacking, isolated, and that it has to fight and steal for its needs to be met.

It will start acting and experiencing itself along the lines of the innate qualities of Presence-Energy, such as: Wisdom, Love, Compassion, Clarity, Non-Separation, Interconnectedness, Fullness, Courage/Fearlessness, Authentic Leadership, Abundance, Satisfaction, Always Already Present, Connection, Eternity, and so on.

Once Awareness wakes up from being a person to this Greater Self-Presence, it starts shifting its placement of self—its sense of identity—away from the perception of the limited, separate individual, and into the vibrational-conviction that “I-AM the Presence of All of Life.”

Awareness stops feeling I-AM-This to be true, and starts feeling that the simpler, but endlessly more profound and pervasive, I-AM is true.

I-AM-This means identification with “this, or that”—identifying oneself with certain individual things within Creation, usually one’s body and mind.

I-AM means identification with Creation—Beingness itself—that which every individual thing depends upon and is made out of.

(Comment: i.e., Ramana’s and Robert’s concept of Consciousness.)

This chapter is designed to aid your dormant-yet-already-awake Awareness in making this shift, so that it will predominately feel itself to be Presence-Consciousness, rather than Person-World.

This should release you into a state of greater effortlessness, ease, clarity, presence, aliveness, connectedness, fullness, and joy-for-no-reason in your everyday life.

Now, please enjoy—for no reason at all—or just because you exist and you can read this sentence and recognize that you are reading this sentence.

What a miracle life is!

What is the Person?

I was desirous of freedom enough to not take pride in my self-created suffering and personal drama; when I saw I could dis-identify from it, I did. I recommend you do the same: Give up your right to believe you are “a person” and see that there is no further value in continuing to identify yourself with a drama-driven life. It’s one of the absolute best gifts you can give to yourself.

This offers a simple step-by-step description of what comprises “the person” and explains the three means of conditioning we are exposed to that form our personality and determine our perspective on life.

From that angle, this also touches upon the idea of shifting from feeling separate to feeling inseparable, from feeling contracted to feeling connection.

You may find this a little bit “dry and intellectual,” as it simply offers an overview of how the person-idea developed and what it roughly consists of. But the lessons following this one will take you deep into transcendence.

Enjoy yourself as a person while you can.

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What is “The Person”?

“The person” started as an idea the moment you became aware of the fact that you (apparently) had a body, and that people called that body by a certain name. They called it you.

Everything you approached in this world was experienced from the same focal point of the body, over and over again. No matter what you did or where you went, the body appearance remained your focal point from which, and through which, to gain experiences on this physical plane.

When you tried standing up, you had to somehow make your body do some balancing work. When you stubbed your toe on something, your body felt pain. When your mother smiled at you, her eyes would point in the direction of your eyes. When people called your name, they expected you to look in their direction, and when you did, they showed signs of acknowledgement.

This constant association of your Beingness-Consciousness (I-AM) with the body-appearance gave rise to the idea and consequent feeling, “I am the body,” or “I-AM-This.”

As this idea and feeling progressed, and the association was further strengthened over the years, what was initially just an idea, turned into a deeply rooted and automatic belief that formed the energetic foundation of your personality: the conviction “I am this body” was the fertile ground for your psychological sense of self (mind) to develop within.

With the body as the basis of what you were, you could now start to develop who you were, as a personality with stories and possessions, skills and challenges, desires and preferences—unique from everybody else in certain ways.

For the body-mind appearance to stand out to Consciousness as “this is what I am,” there must be contrast—there must be something Consciousness thinks it is not. Without that contrast, Consciousness would simply identify with all that appears, in equal measure.

The necessary contrast was provided by the appearance of “the world,” which, in our society, is largely agreed to be external to us—as “out there,” or “not us.”

Thus, the rather distorted feeling of separation was born: not only were you the body, but everything else was also separate from you.

Three Primary Forms of Conditioning

Social conditioning

Environmental friction, or physical-perception-based conditioning

Self-reflection, contemplation, and meditation

1. Social conditioning

The first form of conditioning is usually offered by our parents initially, and is then reinforced by our family, our circle of friends, our schools and teachers, strangers, the media, the Internet, government, society, and so on.

Social conditioning includes verbal, conceptual, and energetic conditioning. Our parents give us a name, tell us what is right and wrong, share their beliefs with us, punish and reward us. They display emotions in response to events, and they interact with other adults in distinctive ways.

All of this imprints upon us energetically, conceptually, and verbally, and this is where the great majority of negative, limiting, and distorted beliefs we carry around with us today originate.

Somewhere along the way, in the process of “growing up,” we acquired an enormous number of beliefs that were not originally ours. These beliefs didn’t come to us through inspired contemplation or intuitive clarity regarding how the universe works. No, these beliefs were manmade; our parents picked them up somewhere along their path (also unoriginal to them) and simply transferred their updated versions onto us. We then “chose” to make these beliefs our own, and so shape our realities.

If the beliefs we adopted are in alignment with our purpose, our passion, and our Higher Self's true vibration, they feel overwhelmingly good, reassuring, positive, and supporting to us. They then help us build the structure of energy that we could call "our world," or our circumstances.

If the beliefs we adopted are not in direct alignment with what our Higher Self sees and desires for this life, then these beliefs turn into feelings of a negative nature, causing the wide range of human emotions that we have labeled with different names.

Despite all these names, ultimately we have only two emotions: Joy/Excitement and Depression/Anxiety. These are really just two ends of the same emotional spectrum, so we could also say that we only have access to one emotional spectrum or field.

When we feel joy or excitement, it signifies that our belief system is in alignment with our true frequency of being, whereas when we feel depression, anxiety, or negativity of any kind, this is pointing us to the fact that what we believe is simply not true for us and does not serve the manifestation of our truly desired, heart-felt dream life.

This form of conditioning, the social type, is what most people who are interested in personal or spiritual growth are dealing with today, through observation, analysis, and in some cases, transcendence—realizing it's not who they are at all.

In my teaching, we aim to transcend our assumed identities altogether, so we can see the deeper levels of our eternal existence. In my Empowerment teachings, on the other hand, we will realign all of the individual energies so that the mind/body/spirit being becomes laser-like in its intended purpose, in its meant-to-be passionate and limitless expression of Infinity.

2. Environmental friction, or physical-perception-based conditioning

Most people on the spiritual or self-help path seem to be aware of the fact that their conditioning comes from the social sources mentioned above. However, the second form of conditioning is in some ways more fundamental and tends to program itself quite deeply into our automatic mind, forming the basis of our nervous system's conditioned responses to life.

That being said, it's usually much easier to dis-identify from this type of conditioning.

If social conditioning forms the contents of our mind, environmental conditioning forms the rudimentary, animalistic container for these contents. It's similar to the difference between our personality self-identity defining the content of who we are, and our body self-identity forming the foundational context that we feel is what we are.

Environmental friction plays a prominent role in the development of the sense of oneself as a separate entity in a "hostile," or external, world. It is the conditioning offered to us by our physical environment, by the friction that occurs when you put a moving physical vehicle inside of a physical world.

It's the "stubbing your toe on a rock" kind of conditioning; it's the feeling of gravity, the seeing of things "over there" in relation to our body, which seems to be always "over here." It's the "time" it takes to get from China to the United States, and all the intermediary steps of transportation that must be dealt with.

To a great extent, it's physical conditioning, or environmental friction, that makes us feel like we're victims of, or at least inhabitants of, a linear space/time container. There are many environmental factors that condition us, on a very basic level, to feel we are the body and that we are separate and isolated and temporary (subject to death).

Even if we had been born on a planet with no social influences whatsoever, and no other human beings, we would still most likely develop a strong sense of “being the body” and “being separate from our environment.” We would still most likely feel that we were living inside a space/time container—due to simple, basic actions like running around on the surface of the planet, bumping into things as we go along, receiving constant physical feedback from our experience, seeing the sun rise and set every day, and searching for food to satisfy our body’s hunger sensation.

Environmental conditioning can be thought of as the instinctual, or animalistic, part of our body-selves. It’s what initiates the physical survival response that often flares up before we even have time to think about things from the socially conditioned part of our mind—especially in seemingly physically threatening situations. It’s what activates the adrenaline in your body, and puts you on high alert. It’s what freezes your body as you approach the edge of a cliff. It’s what gives you “a scare” when a funny (or not so funny) neighbor hides in your closet at night and pops out to see your response.

It’s a physicality-oriented, nervous system type of conditioning, and although deep, it belongs only to the bodily vehicle, and not to you.

Most people do not feel heavily identified with this response, even if the sensations that come with this conditioning are quite strong. They don’t feel that it is “who they are,” and they can quite easily understand that it is not who they are.

As such, this type of conditioning is not often seen as a “problem” to overcome psychologically. Nevertheless, it does contribute significantly to many of our everyday feelings of contraction and our self-protection responses to events.

Even after you've freed yourself from many (or most) of your personal and/or socially-induced fears, the physical conditioning may still have its way with your body, because that is its purpose—to respond when it needs to respond. This is most noticeable to us in times of immediate physical threat.

However, even these very animalistic effects can be greatly softened and untangled, the more we recondition our nervous system, by showing it our experience of the soothing presence of non-separate is-ness or beingness, and seeing over and over again that everything is our Self, and therefore safe—even threatening circumstances.

Which brings me to our third type of conditioning:

3. Self-reflection, contemplation, and meditation

The third major means to condition oneself is more advanced, kicks in later in the development of our bodily-complex, or age, and although most humans make use of this to some extent from a certain age onwards, when this happens seems to be governed and influenced largely by the first two types of conditioning.

The ability to self-reflect, or contemplate, tends to run around in a loop or pattern for most people, which leads us to question whether it is truly self-reflection or merely the echoes of what the entity has heard before through the verbal/conceptual/social means of conditioning.

It isn't until this third means of conditioning (and de-conditioning) reaches a significant point in its lucidity and its mind-transcending capabilities, that it becomes a source of increased clarity, rather than more of the same limiting conditioning.

This third way starts to stand on its own and offer solutions to the contractions of the conditioned human body-mind, once it is able to look at itself as-if from outside the box that was created by the first two methods of conditioning.

When it begins to stand on its own, it usually does so either by way of the psychological approach of careful self-analysis, or by way of the spiritual approach, through contemplation of the spirit portion of one's mind/body/spirit beingness. The latter approach has the benefit of activating more of one's innate ability to access the intuitive mind, as well.

Whether psychologically-inclined, or spiritually-activated, the ability to self-reflect also conditions us to see life from different angles. In a sense, everything does.

Nevertheless, this third method of (re)conditioning oneself is a most helpful gateway into spiritual realization and the transcendence of past conditioning.

I consider you, the seeker of spiritual realization, to have already opened this gateway. You have become, in this sense, intelligent and responsible for your sense of self.

The 5 Levels of Consciousness (Relevant to the Human Being)

Tune into I-AM for a moment... Just that naked, pure sense of I-AM, with nothing attached to it as a distraction. Pure Presence....

Now, imagine that this I-AM Presence can, through intelligently altering its vibration, generate endless different points of view. In other words, Presence-Consciousness can, through vibration, change what it sees and how it sees what it sees. It can interpret appearances from all kinds of different understandings.

When consciousness then lands on a certain point of view and deems it true or relevant, it “chooses” to crystallize that point of view into a more solid form, so that this solid form can function as the stage for a play to appear on. This crystallized state of an otherwise malleable and etheric point of view, is a “belief.”

Beliefs can also be understood as the unconscious mind of a person.

Imagine that a person carries a certain belief that has formed its context, its background—the unconscious underlying conviction from which it perceives the events in its life. Now, imagine this person encountering a situation that triggers this belief. When triggered, the belief will generate a feeling or emotion in the person.

Emotions, or feelings, can also be understood as the subconscious mind of a person.

Side note: The feeling that has been triggered may be positive or negative, depending on whether the belief was in or out of alignment with this being’s Higher Self. Beliefs are the energies that create the person’s inner and outer reality. Hence, it is of true value to get to know oneself on this level more clearly.

Finally, the conscious mind, the thinking mind, reacts to the feelings in the body. Thoughts are really nothing more than reactions to what has already occurred, to what is already aroused by means of beliefs and feelings in the person. They are the end of the line, and therefore, they are not the level that actually creates our reality.

Diagram of the 5 Levels of Consciousness

Here is how all these levels of consciousness relevant to the human experience, structurally, connect together. Starting from most fundamental to most surface-level, from creator to created, from cause to effect:

I-AM (Presence-Consciousness)

Points of view (vibration/state of being/understanding)

Beliefs (unconscious mind—a crystallized point of view)

Feelings (subconscious mind—triggered depending on belief)

Thoughts (conscious mind—reactive)

The last three together (Beliefs, Feelings, Thoughts) form the person; the crystallized, manifest portion of an individual's expression of Presence.

When a thought or circumstance triggers an underlying belief, it generates a feeling. That feeling then causes further reactions or reflections by the conscious mind, or—(more) thoughts.

I will not go too deeply into this now, but I wanted to offer this overview to you and lay out the structure: the fact that beliefs cause feelings, and feelings cause thoughts. Noticing this in your everyday life can help you see more clearly how “the person” operates in you, so you can realize your freedom from it that much more vividly.

The more clearly you see how the person engages in these automatic shenanigans, the easier it is either to change these habitual patterns, and/or to see that, ultimately, it is not what you are.

The Illusion of Separation Leads to Contraction

Once we identified with the body and could feel its pains, we were automatically wired, from that point onwards, to protect ourselves against whatever was “not us”—in this case, everything besides our own body, including other selves.

This brings us to examine a very basic, but crucial, topic: the different levels on the spiritual spectrum, which range from the very animalistic state of separation and self-protection, on the one hand, to some of the highest states of spiritual understanding, on the other hand:

Condition of Separation

If everything, except for the body, is seen as not you, then everything forms a threat to your existence (as the body). This applies to the Person-World-Consciousness level (I-AM-This).

Condition of Wisdom

When nothing is seen as you, then nothing poses a threat to your existence, because you are not identified with the body. This applies mostly to Awareness and Infinity levels (I-I and No-I).

Condition of Love

When everything is seen as you, you also don't feel a threat because you know that everything is your Self. This applies mostly to Awareness and Presence-Consciousness levels (I-I and I-AM).

These very simple distinctions can be likened to physics:

If you perceive only the body as yourself, you will contract.

If you perceive everything as not yourself, you will disappear.

If you perceive everything as yourself, you will expand.

As soon as we developed a personality, or mind, and added it to our "I-AM-This" sense of self, we started protecting ourselves mentally and emotionally—in addition to physically. Again, this was due to our partial identification with creation: seeing only the body-mind as who we are, not everything else, as well.

We started hiding from other parts of our being (other-selves), as we perceived them to be separate from us, and thus considered them a potential threat to our mental-emotional privacy-existence, or simply as a potential source of suffering.

From Person to Presence; From Separation to Inseparability

The sense of separation that dominates most people's actions in life can be relieved, uprooted, and dismantled. It is a major reason why waking up from Person to Presence is such a worthwhile realization to invest your dedication and practice into.

Realizing Presence-Consciousness to be what you are—which the next few lessons will aid you with profoundly—will greatly alleviate the conviction of separation, since it shows you experientially that you are not just the body-mind creation—you are the Presence that makes up all of Creation.

Presence-Consciousness will show you that everything you can ever encounter is simply more of your Beingness, and therefore safe and friendly.

The beauty of life as a human is that every moment offers another opportunity to label the things you encounter as either separate from yourself, or as more of your Self.

Hence, from this day forward, let's regard anything that is not your body-mind appearance not as external to me, outside of self, or even as the world, but as simply being the rest of myself, or more of myself.

And for sake of clarity, when we're talking about other beings, let's use the term other-self, which includes the word "self," implying that others are simply other portions or aspects of (our) self, or Self (Presence-Consciousness Self).

Terminology Summary

The Person refers to the body-mind appearance.

Person-Consciousness usually refers to Awareness identified with the body-mind appearance.

Person-World-Consciousness refers to the totality of the individual identity-experience, complete with its perceived external, separate-from-itself associations, possessions, relationships, actions in life, and so on.

Homework

Read this lesson's text at least once more before proceeding. This lesson's contents are somewhat technical and dry, but when this overview of the make-up of the person-identification is applied to your every day life experiences, the contents become more alive in you as actual wisdom. In order to support that, it might prove helpful if you dissect and study this and see how it applies to your own mind.

Study the "5 Levels of Consciousness (Relevant to the Human Being)" diagram and see in your direct experience how the I-AM-Consciousness generates different perceptions by altering its point of view (vibration), how this point of view then—when chosen as real, or valid—crystallizes into a belief-system, and how this belief activates feelings when it is challenged or triggered by outside events or thoughts. Finally, see how the thinking mind then comes in and reacts to the feelings, attempting to protect itself or gain knowledge from what just occurred by contemplating (thinking about, reacting to) what's going on.

(Comment: These is great danger in totally accepting this part of his teaching as it oversimplifies, and gives you his POV on who and what you are. Read it, and see if it fits. The teachings in this section seem to drift away from self-realization.)

Sit down and contemplate five real-life examples of yours, whether recent or long ago, and see how an event triggered your feelings, and that this could only have happened because you had a belief about what occurred. See how—or where—that belief originated as a point of view that you—at the time—started seeing as real, true, or relevant.

Meaning is optional

Some people have a hard time accepting the essential neutrality of life's appearances, as they see it as the death of the validity of their drama, suffering, passion, and stories. In this regard, I guess I was different as a seeker. When I discovered that my stories did not affect reality—and that reality was, in fact, free and neutral—I could not have been more thrilled! Freedom from myself was the highest freedom I could think of.

Your stories are optional, self-made, meaning-based projections that you have learned to automatically place on top of the essentially neutral appearances of life. You will learn to see through the illusion of the person's conditioned responses to events, and liberate yourself from story-based identity!

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(COMMENT: Also Robert Adams primary tool outside of self-inquiry. It introduces space between you and the world events.)

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8.1 Homework

The Person Thrives on Meaning

Note: I will be using the word “appearance” a lot in this lesson.

An appearance is Presence in form; anything that has an identifiable form can be called an appearance. Anything that shows up in your experience—in your Consciousness—is an appearance.

It can be a thought, an emotion, a feeling, a story, a belief, your body, a love affair, an event, an accident, a paradox, simple physical objects, or literally anything else that takes up presence.

The word “appearance” implies that something appears inside of Presence-Consciousness—as part of the field of Presence-Energy.

The more clearly you see that meaning is optional, not inherent, in any event or appearance, the more freedom you will find from the majority of your personal, story-based drama.

After all, in order to psychologically suffer about your person, you need to believe that the events you have encountered in your life were filled with inherent meaning and that you were a victim of the meanings attached to these events.

(COMMENT: Way oversimplified. 20% of US population suffers from some psychiatric disorder, due to physical or mental trauma, and endogenous factors of genetics and environment. No matter how “advanced” you are, given multiple physical or mental injuries, falls, bad health, repeated deaths of loved ones, both mind and body are affected. Chronic pain actually changes the brain to be more susceptible to pain, and there are secondary cardiovascular damages. Chronic pains leads to a chronic depression at least 40% of the time, which become built into one’s psyche.)

We never actually fear an event; we fear that an event means something we don’t like. When you discover that the meaning of things is up to you, fear about events can be very quickly eliminated.

And what is not an event?

Even your own death is an event that can mean whatever you want it to mean. You don’t fear death; you fear what it means. But what it means is up to you, so why fear it? Neutralize the meaning you’ve previously given to your death by seeing that the event itself does not include that meaning.

Question: When do you feel most intensely drawn into the sense that you are a separate person inside of a world?

When an appearance triggers you.

What gets triggered exactly?

The meaning you've learned to give to appearances. In other words: what you have learned to believe is true about the appearance.

The Process

Something happens (something appears).

Your body-mind complex reacts with a bunch of feelings and thoughts about what just happened.

The truth usually overlooked here is that you don't actually feel the thing that happened; you feel your reaction to what happened.

The reaction feels good or bad, depending on whether the meaning (the belief) you give to that happening is rooted in lack (it feels negative, frightening) or in abundance (it feels positive, exciting).

Note: We tend to believe we experience the actual things that happen—the circumstances—but in reality, we only ever experience the feelings inside of us that flare up as a result of something triggering a dormant belief, a meaning.

(Comment: Oh my God no! Please Bentinho< I deal with injured works with chronic pain, physical stress injuries, mental stress from high volume, deadline work, being held up at gun point, seeing a coworker crushed by a truck and killed. The events themselves, uninterpreted or not reacted to cause pain, depression, PTSD, psychosis.

What you are proposing as a solution is a type of therapy called reframing, where the event is looked at and given a different slant (POV), or no slant. It is only moderately effective when combined with psychotropic medications. Unfortunately, you are recommending a radical form disassociation from humanity and events, to absorption in beingness as a defense against suffering and pain.)

In other words: we only ever experience our state of being, our energetic response (thoughts, emotions, beliefs, points of view) to appearances. It is structurally impossible for us to experience an actual circumstance or physical matter. This fact will become naturally clearer in Enlightenment II and Empowerment I.

You cannot feel something that you have not given at least some kind of meaning to. This makes sense if you consider that, if you truly only ever experience your state of being, then things cannot make you feel anything, unless you believe something about that thing.

So, it is our own set of definitions and meanings that give us the experience of life. Life's appearances are essentially neutral, or open to interpretation.

In other words: you are the boring one, not Existence.

Bottom-line: Beliefs dictate how you feel, and where your attention goes, as well as what you decide is valuable and worthy of your time and energy—and what is not.

Neti Neti with Circumstances

When you see very clearly that you exist, independent of the things that appear and disappear in your life—not separate from them, but independent from them—then your identity shifts from things to Being. When this happens, usually through the direct recognition of Existence itself, you inherit all the benefits inherent in Beingness-Existence.

In this lesson, you will learn what “Neti Neti” stands for, and in the next six lessons, you will apply the Neti Neti Meditation diligently to different aspects of your experience, so that you can embody the realization that your true Presence is completely unaffected by circumstances.

You will stay with I-AM as clearly as you can, letting everything else come and go as it pleases, until you realize your independence—your freedom—from the things that appear and disappear in life.

The practices contained within the next handful of lessons will go a long way in showing you directly the immortal, eternal nature of your Self.

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4 Summary of the Neti Neti Meditation

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What is Neti Neti?

In Advaita Vedanta (Nonduality) and Jnana Yoga, “neti neti” is a Sanskrit expression meaning “not this, not this,” or “neither this, nor that.”

Neti neti is the Vedic method of analysis of negation. Using this method, the Jnani (the Adept) negates identification with all things of this world that are not the Atman (true Self, Presence-Consciousness). In this way, the Jnani negates the Anatman (the unreal, the transitory).

Through this gradual process, the Jnani negates the mind and transcends all worldly experiences until nothing remains but the Self (Presence, and eventually I, Awareness).

Instead of directing you to recognize what you are, this ancient practice instructs you to negate everything you are not, so that what you truly are will remain as self-evident, after having negated all the things you assumed were you.

It’s a filtering process of sorts that lets you see what’s false until you’re left only with what is true. It is like undressing yourself from all the clothes you have put on over the course of your life, until you are nakedly present as your true body of Being.

I think this practice is especially effective in shifting your sense of self—your perceived identity—from Person to Presence at this point in your familiarization process with I-AM, so I will give you my version of the practice in the form of The Neti Neti Meditation, below.

The Neti Neti Meditation

Step 1: Preparation

Make a list of the primary things, or situations, that you feel you—or a portion of you—identifies with. This list can be as long as needed; allow these items to organically come up in you and write them down.

An item on this list can be anything—from the body, to a starving African child, to the potential of a zombie invasion.

Whatever intensely grabs your attention frequently in life, and makes you feel some kind of significant charge, contraction, or importance can be added to this list.

Divide the items on your list into the following five categories:

Stage 1 - Circumstances

Stage 2 - Thoughts

Stage 3 - Emotions

Stage 4 - Physical sensations

Stage 5 - Beliefs

Do this now, then come back with your list and proceed with the next step.

Step 2: Execution

Sit somewhere comfortable and relaxing.

As always, to aid in your body-mind relaxation, take a deep breath and surrender your interest in thoughts, things, past and future, until you're naturally more aware of the eternal here and now.

Repeat each stage, as explained over the course of the next five lessons, as many times as necessary to free yourself—once and for all—from the false identification with these layers of your body-mind-world-experience.

Use the items on your list, and whatever other significant identifications come to mind, during the following practice.

Note: It might be helpful to read through the following text first, to get a good feel for the process, but to then use the audio version of this for the exercise. This will allow you to relax and perform the meditation, while listening to my voice guiding you through the process.

Neti Neti Meditation (Stage 1) - “I Am Not My Circumstances”

Imagine, or simply observe, your present life environment and the circumstances that take place within that environment.

Look at each item on your list that is a circumstance, and notice any other circumstance-related appearance that comes up for you when contemplating your circumstances.

Especially notice the stressful aspects of your present circumstances, and practice with them. Include things like money, appointments, peer pressure, your boss, your partner, your kids, your move, and so on.

In other words, allow everything that causes some form of tension, and is seemingly external to your body-mind, to pass through your consciousness in this meditation, and observe each such item passively, ideally one by one.

Passive observation is naturally achieved by pretending to be—or by actually being—uninterested in what the appearances you are observing have to offer you.

It is always helpful, before any type of inquiry, to start by feeling into—as clearly as you can—what’s always already here, true, and now. This clears the mind’s tendencies to distort your present activity, and thus allows the following meditation or inquiry to be utilized most effectively. Let’s call this The Starting Focus.

The Starting Focus

“I am here and now. I exist without effort. I am Present. I am Conscious. I am changeless. I am Pure Beingness. I-AM.”

Then Realize...

“The circumstance I observe is over there, while I am over here...”

Go back and forth a few times between being centered on I-AM, over here, and the circumstance, over there.

“I-AM—before, during, and after the appearance and disappearance of the circumstance. Circumstances come and go, while I remain like the ocean remains, as its waves rise and fall, appear and disappear.

Since I am over here, and I remain unchanged by the comings and goings of my circumstances, I cannot possibly be my circumstances—for I am here witnessing their arrival, their temporary presence, as well as their departure.

All the while, I abide, I remain, I know my Self—I stay home.

I exist prior to, and am therefore more fundamental than, the coming and going of circumstances, of which I am effortlessly aware.

If I am conscious of the circumstances in my life, then I am that which is consciously present, not the circumstances that appear to this conscious presence.

I am Presence-Consciousness. I-Exist—no matter what. I-AM— independent of this circumstance or that circumstance. My fundamental beingness remains unaffected by circumstantial changes.

My true Identity is Presence-Consciousness. Circumstances are just a sequence of appearances created out of Being's essential Presence-Energy, just as waves are made out of the ocean's water.

Just as the water is unaltered by the dancing of the waves, my basic existence remains unaffected by the forms it uses to express itself.”

Summary of the Neti Neti Meditation

Relax and center your attention on I-AM (The Starting Focus).

Choose an appearance you have some lingering attachment to, or identification with.

Go back and forth between focusing on the sense of I-AM, and seeing the appearance come and go, in front of you, until you...

Recognize clearly that I-AM is who you are (changeless) and that you cannot possibly be the appearance, because you are aware of it. You are/exist independently of its comings and goings.

(COMMENT: Another very different and opposite method is to always bring the circumstance, emotional reaction, emotion, object within to you. Bring it into your inner heart node, the place you feel most vulnerable, accept the circumstance, emotion, object, such as fear, love, humiliation, guilt, sadness, joy, into your heart and become it. Let it be you for a while and you will have it dissolve into you sense of being and you will feel an underlying river of bliss as this is accreted to your sense of self. This is Tantra and can be done with a love object also, so that you can actually become love itself.)

I-AM, without “This”

When you see very clearly that you exist, independent of the things that appear and disappear in your life—not separate from them, yet independent from them—then your identity shifts from things to Being. When this happens, usually through the direct recognition of Existence itself, you inherit all the benefits inherent in Beingness-Existence.

Now that you’ve applied the Neti Neti approach to circumstances, thoughts, emotions, sensations and beliefs, in this you will not so much focus on seeing that your I-AM is not tied to any appearance, but on experiencing this independence directly and solely, by withdrawing all attention away from the appearances, and noticing only the I-AM-Presence for a period of time.

This will allow you to really come to experience exactly how independent your I-AM-ness is from any appearance that appears within Presence-Energy (Creation). Enjoy your freedom!

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Deepening I-AM—Becoming Undisturbed

Now, once you have applied this “contrasting” way of seeing that your I-AM is not the appearances in your consciousness, you can deepen your realization of I-AM, as independent from appearances, even further, by really turning your attention deeply into the sense I-AM itself—letting go of all focus on your individual world with its forms and changes.

Close your eyes, if that helps you to initially “spot” that I-AM-ness, without form and additions.

In this deep sense of beingness, of pure I-AM, you can start to see how there is no focus, necessarily, on thoughts, emotions, sensations, or things. “The World” ceases to appear—at least for the moments in which your attention is fully absorbed in I-AM, in Presence-Consciousness.

Remember the example of the jewelry store?

The one where, if you stand in front of the jewelry store window, you can either be focused on and aware of the jewelry behind the window—at the expense of seeing your own reflection in the window—or you can notice and become absorbed in your body’s reflection in the window, and for that moment of time, not be aware at all of the jewelry behind the window?

Both the jewelry and your body’s reflection co-exist within the same line of sight—the same space of being—yet, when you are very focused on one, the other appearance ceases to exist to you for that period of time. When one is obvious to you, the other one’s noticeability is greatly diminished.

The same goes for I-AM and This (the world of appearances).

When—with great dedication and desire—we really tune into our sense of I-Exist more than anything else for a moment... we only experience pure is-ness. I-AM, without this or that!

Suddenly, we start to notice that, not only is our I-AM not affected by appearances, but it becomes our immediate experience in a very powerful and confirming way.

We can now start to experience our essence without having to necessarily experience “external things” as affecting what we are anymore. Whenever we choose to, we can simply have our whole consciousness be filled up with I-AM, instead of with I-AM-This.

This feels profound, unshakably stable, reliable, and peaceful—perhaps even blissful to some extent.

It can be likened to taking your submarine of self-identity—of focus—and moving beyond the realm of waves and currents, into the depths of the oceanic waters, where there is only the experience of stable water—of is-ness—with no focus on or awareness of the movements of water.

In this sense of pure and independent beingness, where you pull your focus away from the world of form, and tune in profoundly to the sense I-Exist only, you will really recognize (as clearly as you can) that this I-AM exists independently from circumstance, emotions, thoughts, and bodily perceptions.

When you realize that your true being is free from worldly perceptions, you start to really tap into your realization of immortality beyond the body: the deathlessness of Presence-Consciousness becomes more of an experiential fact to you, rather than speculation or belief. Now, who wouldn't want that?

Realizing that I-AM endures and exists independently from experiences coming and going, is the true “holy grail” of immortality. Eternal life is not sipped from a mythical artifact destined only for a few to find; it can be extracted from anyone's direct experience with I-Exist-No-Matter-What.

Beingness Stands on Its Own

You can see, in the purity of feeling I-AM—with no distractions for just a few seconds—that this Beingness stands on its own.

It is one thing to discover the great I-AM. It is another to directly experience this as what you actually are. It is yet another to experience this as self-sufficient and standing entirely on its own, without anything life has to offer being able to destroy it or take it away. This is the freedom of immortality.

(Comment: Like I said before, you have to go deeper than this level before you discover immortality, that which is beyond Consciousness, because Consciousness itself is changing and essentially an illusion, witnessed by you as the Absolute. It is this ultimate witnessing principal that energizes Consciousness, and that knows both consciousness and nothingness, and is thus beyond both, that is beyond the attributes of life and death. Complete freedom from the fear of death is not found at this level, but at a deeper one that Massaro brings up later.)

In your direct experience with Presence-Beingness, can you notice that it has its own complete reality? Your here-and-now effortless existence has a right to exist; it does not depend on anything that comes and goes in your attention, and it does not need permission from anyone or anything.

See your Greater Self nakedly, free from forms other than its own presence.

Deeply feel into the ocean-like depths of I-AM, and see more and more, as you hold this light of I-AM against the appearance of this and that, that I-AM is independent—free from—being attached to, or defined by, appearances of any kind.

The more you explore this I-AM-Space by itself, as free from form, the easier it becomes to recognize that you are not the appearances that arise, even when they arise full-force!

What this means is that you become aware of, and intimately familiar with, a deep feeling of presence, peace, ease, and undisturbedness. This sense of Presence-Energy—and the consciousness it is infused with—will start to reside more obviously at the heart of your existence throughout everyday activities and appearances.

(Comment: Exactly this is true, but there is much further to go. And for the reader, this is just an unproven promise, an energizing phrase.)

Congratulations on your enlightenment. That wasn't so hard, now was it?

(Comment: For me this is not enlightenment at all, but just an identification with presence, less still the explosion of the divine spirit within, the explosive arrival of your awareness of the life force, Shakti, aka the divine feminine. I call this self-realization of the Manifest Self.)

This sense continues to deepen with practice, even after you have already clearly recognized it and its basic qualities, or truths. Enlightenment is easy, yet it has no end.

You Can Trust in I-AM

Beingness, I-AM-ness, Presence—is ever reliable and trustworthy. It always remains, and it is always with you. There has never been an experience where it has not been what you are. What could be more reliable than the indestructible essence of each moment?

Changeless I-AM-ness is already the case, and this implies that—no matter what happens in the realm of the body-mind-world, no matter what happens within the Person-World-Consciousness you previously identified yourself with—you can now surrender your defenses as you slip into an ever more expansive sense of your true Self.

Now that you have the ability to acknowledge and emphasize the experience of Beingness over the illusion of appearances, you have a most incredible tool at your disposal, at all times.

At any given moment, you can now choose to feel and highlight the sense of Presence, even in the face of challenging appearances, and you can identify with the undisturbed nature of your existence while everything around you goes nuts.

Appearances no longer sway you, for it is crystal clear to you now, that your true beingness remains as it is: unaffected, undisturbed, unmoved.

And so, you stop projecting your happiness onto appearances and the meaning-driven personality construct. You learn, for a period of time, to derive your joy and satisfaction instead from the depths of the eternal Now-Presence—free from needing any particular outcome in the world of changing forms.

You are now becoming truly self-satisfied, self-sufficient, and self-reliant.

You are fulfilled by your very own being-here and your choice to recognize this amazing existence that never ends, never stops, and knows no separation.

You are now at ease—or at least can choose to be—no matter what. Even when you freak out, you feel you are fundamentally at ease, underneath the surface-appearances of your person-world experience.

Movie Theater Analogy

When you're watching a movie in a theater, you are fully engaged with a story for about two hours straight.

If the story is compelling enough, you may even forget that you exist and be completely engaged with the characters who are being projected by nothing but light, onto a screen that never changes, even as millions of images are projected onto it.

Your life is exactly like this.

You have been watching a movie this whole time, and you've forgotten for years—decades—that you were sitting in a movie theater. You have forgotten that you exist—independent from the movie—all this time.

And now, you are remembering to recognize that you are not the characters on the screen, engaged in their meaning-driven dramas, but that you are the changeless screen itself.

Or, from another angle, using the same analogy, you could think of yourself as the being sitting in the theater, the one to whom none of the movie's events actually happened. You are the one who is able to walk out, at any time, and remember your own existence, once again.

Just as the screen has been the substratum that the images are projected onto, so, too, has the presence of your existence—your I-AM-ness—never been separate from the projections of your life, yet has never been affected by them, either.

The movie that is your life has never changed or affected your beingness. You have never actually been the movie you’ve been witnessing. You have never truly been defined by, or limited to, “your life.”

Now, remember what you really are.

“I Am Not My Body”

This stage (6) truly signifies the crossing of a new threshold—a new realm of possibilities opening up.

However, in order to fully go there, some much needed practice with the previous five Neti Neti stages is in order. The meditation (above), “Remaining undisturbed and centered on Presence solely,” is extremely helpful for this purpose. So, practice it well and sincerely, and take your time before proceeding to the next lesson.

If you feel you wish to take a week or two off to integrate all you have learned so far, and to deepen your experience of I-AM throughout everyday life experiences—to allow it to become more natural—then please honor that desire.

Listen to whatever resonates.

Then, when you’re ready... In the next lesson, we will take what you’ve gained from your familiarization with this entire course, and your deepening experience with this chapter’s contents, and apply it to the core sense “I am this body.” For this tends to be the closest and deepest association that people have identified themselves with.

“I am this body” is an idea that has become a visceral, instinctual feeling, which has most likely penetrated deep into the different layers of your psyche. As such, it deserves its own full-sized to help you unlatch your true being—I-AM— from your assumed being: I-AM-this-body.

This will catapult you into a whole new level of allowing true fearlessness to blossom in you, positively influencing every area of your life and transcending the majority of your fears. Just like that!

Homework

Now that you have applied the Neti Neti meditation to the different levels of your experience, withdraw your attention from the world of appearances altogether and rest solely in the recognition of I-AM, as much as you can without creating strain. Dedication and desire are key, but we don't really wish to strain ourselves. If we strain ourselves, it could be an indication that we simply don't yet desire as much of the pure I-AM experience as is possible, and that is totally OK. Everyone has their own timing with this, so just honor wherever you are at, while conjuring up as much desire as you can—to stay with the sense of Presence, at the expense of noticing worldly things, thoughts, appearances, and so on.

Sit down, as in a meditation session, and conjure up as much desire as you can to really penetrate deeply into the secrets and independence of Presence-Beingness, or I-AM. Quite naturally, you will find that by now, your attention is naturally starting to enter into your own beingness; starting to realize its independence from all other experiences.

Do this in your own way—make it your own—applying whatever you have learned up to this point, to bring you to an experience of pure and undistracted I-Am-Ness. Even if just for a half minute or more at a time, frequently repeated in a single setting—focus on realizing, in this purity of experience, only I-AM—that it is, in a sense, detached from the world and its appearances.

Perform this meditation at least twice at separate times before continuing with the next lesson.

As an additional support to your deepening Self-Realization, watch the guided meditation video “I-AM Alone Exists” a couple of times, or as often as you like, to really tune into the transmission, the vibration, the availability of Presence being reflected back to you from your own Self, in the form of that video.

Beyond Body, Beyond Death

The body is simply a brilliant invention of Consciousness to focus and localize its experience of creation so it can explore space and time in a linear fashion, from a particular and limited point of view, sequencing the lessons it wishes to learn in a certain order, and building a relationship with itself that continuously expands in a completely unique way. Bodies are the pens with which Consciousness writes its odes to The Absolute. Regardless of the brilliance that is the body-appearance, it is crucial to realize that we are ultimately beyond the body, and that we are continuous, whereas the body is a temporary means to meet an end. No pun intended.

By recognizing that your existence is independent from—beyond—even the body, you start to open the gates to a whole new, much more profound and expanded sense of being and understanding of your Self and the universe.

As with all of the practices I provide in, most of their results unfold and deepen over time, with practice and through sincere desire. Hence, I ask you to be patient with yourself and be excited for the possibility of experiencing true eternity.

The intention behind this lesson is for its contents to unlock what is potentially your first real glimpse of your Self as body and death-transcendent.

“The seeker is he who is in search of himself. Give up all questions except one: “Who am I?” After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The “I am” is certain. The “I am this” is not. Find out what you are in reality. To know what you are, you must first investigate and know what you are not. Discover all that you are not—body, feelings, thoughts, time, space, this or that—nothing, concrete or abstract, which you perceive can be you. The very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive. The clearer you understand that, on the level of mind, the real you can only be described in negative terms, the quicker

you will come to the end of your search and realize that you are the limitless being.”

Nisargadatta Maharaj

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Stage 6 - “I Am Not My Body”

You've already seen clearly that you are not your circumstances, thoughts, emotions, sensations, or beliefs.

Now, I'm going to ask you to observe the idea, or instinctive feeling in you, that suggests that you are this body.

Look for this instinctive sense; it is very subtle and pervasive, hence it can be harder to pinpoint than, say, a mosquito bite sensation, which is very defined and has a specific location.

The conviction "I am the body," in a sense, forms the background of your very existence as a person-world-consciousness. It has been conditioned not only by the humans around you, but also by your very own experience with environment.

The feeling that we are the body is one of our remaining animalistic aspects, and it runs quite deep in our genes to believe we are the body. There is nothing wrong with that at all, but for the purpose of this lesson, it's helpful to not give too much importance to the existence of the body. In later , the body is again included as a vehicle of expressing one's true Self, and appreciation for it returns in full.

So, just give it your best shot at this time, and if you cannot get a sense of the belief "I am this body," simply find a sensation or an idea as close to it as possible.

To further help you pinpoint the feeling, you can try repeating the following sentence verbally and/or in mind 30 times, with a full second or two in between each sentence:

"I am this body."

As you start to get a feel for this belief, idea, conviction, or sense, again shift your attention back and forth from the stable, changeless Presence of your true I-AM Beingness, independent from any appearance,

and then shift your attention back to the appearance of the feeling “I am this body,” which you are an observer of.

Back and forth between I-AM, and the appearance of feeling “I am this body.”

Really see that even the idea “I am my body” is an appearance that comes and goes, and that you remain beyond it, more eternal, truer, than the idea that you are—and the consequent feeling of being—a body.

See that the body itself—not just the idea that you are the body, but the very body itself—is an appearance appearing to you.

The more you can view the body as an appearance in consciousness, the easier it is to go back and forth between the appearance of the body, and the I-AM sense purely by itself, free from the body.

You cannot experience the body without being present, without I-AM, but you can experience being present, I-AM, without any focus on the body-appearance or the body-feeling, or the identification with the body-appearance.

(Comment: This argument proves nothing. Yes, you can feel the I Am sense without focus on the body, but can you feel the I Am sense if you had no body, were under an anesthetic, or were deeply asleep? Nisargadatta says the I Am sensation is not available to you without a body in complete contradiction to the author. Maharaj speaks of a deeper awareness than that of beingness. Bentinho here creates a concept, an idea, that the sense of I Am is totally independent of our bodies. It may feel good to believe you are immortal because you believe his argument, but eventually you will question this understanding and it will crumble, and you will have to dig deeper.)

Find this in your own experience.

Neti Neti Meditation

Everything is changeable, everything appears and disappears; there is no blissful peace until one passes beyond the agony of life and death.

Buddha

The Starting Focus

“I am here and now. I exist with zero effort. I am Present. I am Conscious. I am changeless. I am Pure Beingness. I-AM.”

Then Realize

“The body, which I observe, is over there, while I am over here.”

(Comment: This is an excellent teaching, because it teaches you that everything observable is consciousness, even your experience of your body. But it does not prove that consciousness or beingness is eternal, ever-present, in any way. For that you need to go beyond or prior to consciousness, be become that which observes consciousness itself as an object. This is the major difference between Ramana and Nisargadatta. For the latter, you have to be prior to consciousness; for Ramana there is only Consciousness.)

I-AM before, during, and after the appearance and disappearance of this body. Attention on the body comes and goes, and the actual body comes and goes, while I remain as the ocean remains while its waves rise and fall, appear and disappear.

(Comment: Slick argument, but untrue. I, as beingness, no longer exists in a dead body or in one under an anesthetic. Then there is no I Am, no awareness of the world, emotions, beingness. Consciousness disappears locally, for that specific person, but remains in other individuals, and collectively as universal consciousness.

This is where Ramana made a large error in logic, when, during his death experience, he imagined himself dead, yet still felt his awareness, the life force within, and his consciousness, wherein his

awareness of his body laid, seeing that consciousness was not affected by his death (imagined), and was different in feel from his physical body, wrongly concluded spirit or consciousness was immortal, eternal for each individual. But his death was only imaginary. He pretended to be dead, assumed his pretending was the same as actually dying, felt his remaining aliveness as unchanged, and concluded it was immortal.

You have to go deeper than consciousness to find the eternal. You have to go back to nothingness.)

Since I am over here, and my beingness remains beingness, even while my body-consciousness comes and goes on the surface of my beingness, I cannot possibly be my body or my body-consciousness, for I am here witnessing the appearance of the body.

Similarly, I shall be there to be a witness to its disappearance and whatever follows that experience.

(COMMENT: You can literally do this each night, if, through practice, you can watch consciousness being swallowed by the nothingness of sleep, and in the morning, you can watch the conscious self emerge out of the Nothingness of sleep. With practice, you can stay aware of Nothingness for some time after awake consciousness disappears, dream consciousness appears, and then waking consciousness appears in the morning. What is closer to your heart of heart's is that which observes the coming and going of the states of consciousness.)

I exist prior to—and am therefore more fundamental than—the coming and going of the body-focus. I am effortlessly aware of the body at some times, and I exist without being aware of this body at all other times.

(Comment: This is only an imaginary argument. It cannot be spoken by someone who is dead, or someone without a body. Yes, no one ever is continuously aware of one's own body, but that does not

prove consciousness, or presence can exist without a body, a sentient instrument through which the Absolute can experience a play, so to speak. The body is a physical instrument for exploration, an organic sensor with feedback capabilities.)

Even without the body being in focus, I still exist.

I am Presence-Consciousness. I-Exist, no matter what. I-AM, independent of this body or that body. I remain unaffected by the turmoil, the presence, and the absence of this body. I-AM, beyond the body, already.

My true Identity is Presence-Consciousness. The body is just a complex, brilliant configuration of energy; an appearance created out of my being's essential Presence-Energy—again, like waves are made out of the ocean's water.

The water is not actually changed by the dynamic forms of the waves, just as my basic existence is not altered by the body (or lack thereof) that my existence uses to express itself.

Your Future Is Bright and Deathless.

(Comment: Only if you believe your consciousness, your I Am exists after your death in some way, as a soul that will reincarnate or will go to heaven or hell. This is a belief system, contrary to our own experience of being without presence in deep sleep, under anesthesia, or when being dead. The body being alive is necessary for sentience. It is the instrument for consciousness to explore itself, as objects, emptiness, and space.)

As you exercise the Neti Neti experience, you will gain a clearer and clearer, visceral and experiential (as well as intellectual) realization of the fact that your existence, your Presence-Consciousness, is in fact independent—free from—the coming and going of the body or bodies.

As a result of this growing conviction in your eternal Self, while your body is still active on this physical-vibrational plane of Play-Presence-

Energy, the man-made misperception of fear of death—which is subtle and pervasive in its infiltration of the mind-portion of a being—will gradually be uprooted from the different layers where it has settled in some form, and be dissolved by the loving light of your clarity regarding the eternal and independent nature of Presence-Consciousness.

So, as your clarity regarding the true deathlessness of Consciousness becomes more brilliant, more bright, you will be increasingly better equipped (with “light”) to engage ever-more-wisely with the arising fears in the mind-portion of your mind-body-spirit complex, as it walks its path through this temporary physical life-appearance.

You are already deathless and eternal, and you can realize this with the appearances in your life right now, by seeing that you exist no matter what comes and goes.

Since the idea of being this body generally runs the deepest of all identifications, I feel that a little more context regarding the expansiveness of Existence is necessary to prepare you for any realizations that may follow the application of this lesson—now, or in the future.

After decades of having moved around/with/in/as this seeming bodily complex, most people will unconsciously, instinctually, deeply feel and respond to life’s events as if they are their body—even when they can intellectually, spiritually, or philosophically understand that they are not their body.

Stage 6 of the Neti Neti Meditation above will further aid you in experientially unhooking the sense “I-AM” from the sense “I-AM-this-body,” and leave you knowing your Self as truly free and independent of the appearance of the body.

Presence-Beingness shines on its own accord—is its own source for being—and is therefore self-existent and self-sufficient. The body, however, is merely an appearance of which we are hardly ever truly

aware anyway. Our body-awareness comes and goes, but our existence remains at all times.

The body needs Awareness and Presence-Energy to be experienced—to exist—but neither Awareness nor Presence-Energy need the body in order to be and endure.

(Comment: But that does not mean awareness or present energy can exist without a body, except as a raw potential that springs forth when a physical instrument is supplied. One needs to go entirely beyond existence and consciousness to reach that independence and deathlessness the author speaks of.)

By disentangling the “I-AM” principle from the “body-appearance,” you will also automatically grow in your conviction of the fact that you, as Presence-Consciousness, are eternal and beyond the physical illusion of body-mind-world. In other words, you start to naturally know that death is an illusion.

This opens up a real gateway into being able to more consciously access a greater reservoir of intuition and metaphysical knowledge regarding yourself and creation in general. You will start to notice this increase in intuitive clarity throughout your everyday life, following this lesson and this .

The feeling of trust, confidence, or faith in your true Self can translate into many feelings or realizations. One way that it translates itself is as the feeling: “I continue to exist beyond the cessation of this physical apparatus.”

(Comment: But not as an individual. Not as Alice, John, Ed, or you as a body-mind. Without a body and its ability to perceive the world, what would you be able to perceive and know, let alone express, and relate to? What could you think without a brain?)

Expect this conviction to continue to organically grow in brilliance and brightness over time, removing more of the fear of death as you go. This happens largely by itself and “unconsciously.”

You may find that a year from now, perhaps without having put in any special effort to work through your fear beliefs psychologically, you will look back on your present level of fear of death, and you simply won't be able to experience it as real anymore—and you won't be sure what you did to deserve that freedom.

“About six weeks before I left Madura for good, a great change in my life took place. It was quite sudden. I was sitting in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I seldom had any sickness, and on that day there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden, violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it; and I did not try to account for it or to find out whether there was any reason for the fear. I just felt, “I am going to die,” and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor or my elders or friends. I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, then and there. The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: “Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.”

“And I at once dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff, as though rigor mortis had set in, and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the inquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word “I,” nor any other word, could be uttered. “Well then,” I said to myself, “this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body am I dead? Is the body ‘I’? It is silent and inert, but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the ‘I’ within me, apart from it. So I am Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. This means I am the deathless Spirit.”

“All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without thought-process. “I” was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centered on that “I.” From that moment onward, the “I,” or Self, focused attention on itself by

a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on.

“Other thoughts might come and go, like the various notes of music, but the “I” continued like the fundamental sruti note that underlies and blends with all the other notes. Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading, or anything else, I was still centered on “I.” Previous to that crisis, I had no clear perception of my Self and was not consciously attracted to it. I felt no perceptible or direct interest in it, much less any inclination to dwell permanently in it.”

“If a man considers he is born, he cannot avoid the fear of death. Let him find out if he has been born or if the Self has any birth. He will discover that the Self always exists, that the body which is born resolves itself into thought and that the emergence of thought is the root of all mischief. Find where from thoughts emerge. Then you will abide in the ever-present inmost Self and be free from the idea of birth or the fear of death.”

By Ramana Maharshi

Life and Death Are the Same

“I believe there are two sides to the phenomenon known as death, this side where we live, and the other side where we shall continue to live. Eternity does not start with death. We are in eternity now.”

Norman Vincent Peale

At some point, you will not only know that consciousness remains after death, but you will start to realize that consciousness already resides beyond the physical presence of the body, simultaneously, right now...

You will, thus, see that life and death are simply different experiences of the same always-ongoing dream that is Creation. You will

see that death never applied to Consciousness, and that you, as Consciousness-Presence, in that sense, were never truly incarnate to begin with. Even while you experience the body, you are already beyond it.

(Comment: This part is true, but not as individual consciousness, or even the universal consciousness, the totality of all manifestation; rather, you are even beyond consciousness and nothingness, as its witness.)

Death, at some point, is no longer viewed and felt as something that actually exists; nor is its opposite, “being alive,” seen as something that stands out on its own as a separate occurrence.

The idea “I am alive” is the result of the belief “I could be dead.”

Both ideas are rendered irrelevant to you at some point. Can you imagine the freedom in this? You will :-).

Soon, life will be known by you to be all that there is, and that it is endless in its exploration of itself. The idea of life/death as two opposites will simply disappear.

When the charged ideas of life/death as actual things or events equalizes, harmonizes, and becomes less and less charged with a feeling of stark contrast, what shines forth through this transparent equalized understanding of life and death is simply the stability and conviction in eternally-free Presence-Consciousness.

A fearlessness descends upon your heart.

(Comment: A false fearlessness based on a too-superficial identification with consciousness and the assumption that individual consciousness is eternal. Consciousness as a whole is eternal, in the sense of multitudes of existing sentient beings being aware, but not so as something that stands completely apart from the physical world. But exactly as the author describes will happen after you realize yourself as Nothingness that embraces both being and not-

being, existence and non-existence. You have to go one full level deeper in self-exploration than the author provides.)

I-AM Shall Remain

Presence-Consciousness always prevails over any idea of limitation. Presence-Consciousness always prevails over illusion.

I-AM will continue after this or that falls away from it, including the body. The body is, ultimately, just another this or that; just as I-AM continues right now—after thoughts, emotions, circumstances, and even awareness-of-the-body fall away—constantly already, in your everyday life.

Appearances die every second, and you remain to see them all come, be, and dissolve back into the Presence-Energy substratum from which they arose in the first place. You have experienced many, many deaths—even in this single “lifetime” perception.

What makes you think it will be any other way with the body?

Just because the body forms the focal point around which, or due to which, a large degree of your experiences are known to you, that does not mean that the vehicle for physical, localized exploration is the great I-AM itself; existence itself is not contained within, or by, the body-focal-point-appearance.

The body is made up out of I-AM Energy, so how could I-AM disappear when it stops sustaining the body-illusion it created in the first place?

(Comment: A child can die and the parent still live and they are of the same blood.)

That is as non-sensible as saying that the person eating his own home-cooked meal, disappears as soon as he swallows the last bite. It is as illogical as suggesting that the tree disappears when the apple is plucked. Does the ocean disappear when a wave collapses back into it?

(Comment: The author is trying in a way to make the individual immortal as a soul that can take form and manifest its own destiny and intentions. It is quite a sales job but many like it because it promises a shallow immortality, supposedly proved by his exercises and philosophy of what is. But we really need to get prior to consciousness for this to happen.)

I-AM is free from the body already; beyond the body already. The body does not limit or define Existence-Consciousness. It never did, and never will. The body-reality is an illusion; it's just a thought, an idea that developed into a sense-perception.

It is Presence-Consciousness that knows and witnesses the body; it's not the body that knows and witnesses Presence-Consciousness.

The body does not have any means of knowing itself, of being intelligent, other than for awareness to come in, wrap itself around the experience/perception, and then breathe intelligence, life, and self-consciousness into the body-experience.

(Comment: He takes a different tact here. Here he assumes a body exists, then the "spirit" comes into it, animates it, and gives it self-awareness. This is 180 degrees different from his earlier position that the body is merely a thought in consciousness.

Nisargadatta's position is more subtle than Ramana's or the author here. He posits that the body is necessary for Consciousness to exist; the body is the host, and also the body appears in consciousness as an object. Then Nisargadatta moves one level prior, saying the Absolute is the creator and witness of consciousness, but itself is without quality or perceivable, or knowable.)

You have never known anything because of the body, or even through the body—not really. You have simply known what you witnessed—whatever was created out of Presence-Energy within your Presence-Consciousness. That includes the body-appearance.

The body is an appearance.

(Comment: This is true. All that you ever know are appearances in your consciousness. But from my point of view, even consciousness, the container of consciousness objects, itself is only a witnessed appearance, witnessed by the Absolute. Even this is not it. This is just another concept. In “reality” there is only nothingness and somethingness, Nothingness and Consciousness, and you, the ultimate perceiver are beyond both.)

“Everyone has to die; so die as your true nature. Why die as a body? Never forget your true nature. It may not be acceptable to many, but it is a fact... this body has nothing to do with you. If you must have an ambition, have the highest, so that at least while dying, you will be the Absolute. Decide that now firmly, with certainty and conviction. Giving up the body is a great festival.

“Death is generally considered to be a traumatic experience, but understand what happens. That which has been born, the knowledge “I Am,” which is the same everywhere, but which has gotten itself limited by the body, again becomes unlimited. A speck of consciousness is given up.

“Why the fear? How has this fear of death crept in? That which cannot die somehow became convinced that it was going to die. It is based on the concept that one is an individual who is born... all the fear arises from mere words told to you by someone. This is the bondage.”

By Nisargadatta Maharaj

(Comment: The author quotes Nisargadatta, and thinks the quote supports his viewpoint. But the author misses what Maharaj says about death: A speck of consciousness is given up. For Nisargadatta and me, the I Amness returns to the unmanifest; it is given up, and does not continue as the author states. One dies as an individual unless that individuality has been transcended by seeing it is a human construct. One has to become impersonal before death. Not too many will actually do this.

Ramesh Balsekar on this point said the individual does not continue, but a different individual with different experiences and different destiny is born elsewhere. Life continues, not the individual. But what you are, that which is beyond birth and death, beyond somethingness and nothingness, beyond Nowness, or presence energy, always is. It is this conviction which is beyond the author's and rings more true than the survival of an individual soul. This position is more subtle than the author's, and I think heuristically of higher value in liberation.)

Dream-Body Analogy

To help you realize that the body is just an appearance, the following analogy may make this truth really palpable for you.

When you dream at night, your consciousness creates a body to explore the dream-world with, using subtle energy (non-physical Presence-Energy).

In your dream at night, you use your fake ears to hear somebody call your name, even though your ears are dreamed up and don't actually exist. What do you use to hear in your dream?

You can taste a peanut butter sandwich in your dream, even though your tongue is itself an appearance with no real ability to taste anything. What are you using to taste in your dream?

You can see far and wide in your dream, even though your dream-body's eyes are simply subtle-energy phenomena created inside of your consciousness and don't actually have nerve endings that see a world outside of itself. What do you think sees the dream?

You can touch the Earth in your dream, using your dream-hands, and you can feel the sensation of touching the Earth, even though your hands are "unreal." What do you use to feel in your dream, if your hands are unreal?

You can smell a dream-rose using your dream-body's nose, but you know upon waking that your dream body was imagined—so was the nose, the rose, and the smell. What was doing the smelling, if not consciousness directly, without an intermediary or medium?

You see, the medium of the body was simply a “permission slip”—an excuse, if you will—a symbol for consciousness to experience a certain thing, time, or location. It doesn't actually need, nor does it in actuality use, a body to experience things. It experiences appearances directly.

(Comment: Whomever reads this needs to know this is one POV, Ramana's POV. As such, it is very powerful all by itself, and in a sense, obviates my POV and Nisargadatta's if one does not want to go deeper and more subtle.)

This can be hard to viscerally understand in physical reality, but if you remain open to the idea that this might actually be how reality is set up, it will show you how true it is and it will become your lived experience.

(Comment: Experiences and further understanding flow out of conviction, which is ultimately a belief strongly held, which will create its own set of experiences and understandings.)

Consciousness directly experiences all sensations, stimuli, and phenomena, with no real intermediary. The body is a beautiful illusion.

(Comment: True, the body does not experience, consciousness does because the body is a sensor for consciousness. Its configuration determines what consciousness experiences.)

The intermediary (the body) is just an excuse to experience one particular space-time moment at a time, so as not to confuse the linear learning process you chose to have, before you started dreaming this waking dream within your consciousness.

(Comment: This sounds like New Age bull. You, as a deathless spirit, had the intention to have some certain kind of creature birth

in order to fulfill some lesson plan created again by your consciousness. Unfortunately, you knew nothing about this until the author told you. How can he know, and you not remember? This is just a tale.)

If you did not focalize your consciousness into a singular, linear space/time reality, with a vehicle such as the body as the center of your point of view, you would simply be experiencing too many parallel realities at once. This, although expansive in its own way, would not actually be conducive to learning and evolving as much as is a restricted, sequential learning environment filled with catalyst, where your sense of self is limited to the dream scenario and the dream body, and the stakes seem to be high.

Hence, your—shall I say—Higher Self (more on this in the Empowerment teaching), will only allow as much expansion of consciousness as is relevant for you to experience, one step at a time.

(Comment: Massaro here posits the dual existence of a higher Self forming lesson plans and a destiny for the purpose of teaching you in the here and now (lower Self) about your true nature as a Higher Self. A tale. Many current New Age teachers also talk about alternative realities, intentionality, etc., all based on cosmologies and ontologies based on speculative modern physics.)

If your Higher Self would allow for a total obliteration of your singular experience and show you all that you are—on a higher level—all at once, that would most likely not serve your chosen timeline experience, unless it was given as a glimpse, that then gives you something to chew on and allows you to change your perspective as you go about exploring your life's theme. But as a permanent experience, this is not relevant for almost anyone. If it were relevant, one wouldn't have come into this incarnational timeline experience in the first place.

So, I ask you to be patient with your waking up process and trust in the way your enlightenment unfolds. Nevertheless, give it all you've got, because the higher your desire for enlightenment of any kind, the more

amazing your life-experience will become and the more effective use you will make of this life-experience.

Let's briefly return to the dream-body example:

In your dreams at night, your body is completely composed of the same dream substance that makes up the dream world. There is no separation between the dream body and its environment, or the illusory air that it breathes. It's all the same substance, across the board. It's the same energy shaped into different colors and frequencies.

And neither your dream-body, nor the world it appears to reside "inside of," exist as real, inherent things separate from the Consciousness that dreams them into creation. There is no experience apart from Presence-Consciousness.

When you are dreaming, Consciousness (Awareness in subject-object focus) uses the power of infinite intelligence to shape Presence-Energy into the experience it desires it to be.

(Comment: This is a pretty simplistic explanation of the dream process, that Infinite Intelligence is shaping presence-energy according to its desire with an intent.)

In exactly the same way, your body in the waking dream also consists of Presence-Energy, simply in a more crystallized, denser form, generating what seems to be "matter." But even matter is exposed to be nothing but space and energy, by those who are Self-Realized, as well as by modern-day empirically-oriented (quantum) physicists.

In other words: all is an illusion of Consciousness, a dance of energy—The Play of God.

All energy—regardless of the dimension of experience—utilizes the same Presence-Energy, which is Creation Itself, to shape its experiences out of. Each level, realm, or plane uses this energy intelligently, in different vibrations and configurations.

(Comment: New Age here we come. Easy to state, impossible to prove. The best you can get is a conviction and for what end? What does this theory do for the reader/seeker of enlightenment? This is all speculation, similar to dozens of New Age teachers.)

Physical reality is shaped by Consciousness, using the same substance your dream reality, or other non-physical realities, are created out of—basically, light.

This one light of Consciousness is simply vibrating in different configurations, at different “rotational speeds,” or simply put: at different frequencies, creating different appearances.

(Comment: Frequencies in what medium? What is vibrating, electrons or consciousness itself vibrates? How does consciousness create matter?)

So, everything you see in your waking dream is consciousness utilizing its innate intelligence to shape the Presence-Energy that makes up everything you experience.

(Comment: It sounds like I am making up the experiences that I create for myself. But I don't know it until the author tells me that I am both the infinitely intelligent creator, but also the “victim” of all the calamities I have created for me.)

Hence, the same Is-ness, or Beingness, can be found and felt in every single seeming “object” of creation; because it's all made out of the same Being.

Waking up

When you are sleep-dreaming, you usually don't realize that your body is illusory. You are convinced you are the dream-body, inside of a world. It is upon waking up that you realize it was all a dream inside of consciousness.

What if you could wake up from this waking dream too?

That is precisely what is happening every time you remember to recognize the clarity and awakeness of Presence-Energy, or Awareness itself.

Waking up to Presence-Consciousness, or to the Awareness which enables the experience of it all, is akin to, in the dream, remembering that you are actually lying in your bed, dreaming this dream.

This realization—that you are dreaming—changes your whole sense of self and identity-placement, and induces a sense of lucidity into your experience: a sense of transcendence, freedom, and fearlessness. This goes for both the sleeping dream, as well as the waking dream. These are two different types of dreams, but dreams nonetheless.

Which Came First—Consciousness or the Brain?

When I ask people the question, “What makes you so convinced that you did not exist before the body appeared?”

Many people say, “I don’t remember anything prior to my birth.”

This is because this body’s brain does not have memory-images of what was before this life. This body’s brain is made up out of this body’s perceptions only. Conventional methods of remembering won’t cut it.

If you wish to remember more of who or what you are beyond this life, however, you can—there are various ways to do this.

Many people remember this during dreams (when Consciousness is out of body), during trance sessions, or during meditation. Some, for whom it is relevant, connect to their parallel life-experiences (usually interpreted as past—or future!—lifetimes) while in their waking state. Some people are suddenly “struck by a memory” of another life, and it feels so real that they cannot deny they are more than they thought they were.

If a parallel lifetime is close in its orientation to one’s present physical reality, one can even retrace where that person lived and find

confirmation that this other lifetime apparently actually existed or exists, even though before this glimpse, there was no knowledge of this “other person.”

(Comment: Speaking of the concept and experience of alternative realities, astral projection, intentionality and vibration or frequency alignment are the New Age equivalent of magic and witchcraft. I warn students about diving into alternative realities because they can become detached from their “home world” so to speak, and end up with grandiose delusions and lack of any stable reality check. Their living world becomes very fluid and no reality is experienced as stable of real.)

Many young children vividly describe knowledge and experiences from before this physical lifetime. We often discount this as “imagination” (and sometimes it is), but many of these “imaginations” have a true origin. The veil of forgetfulness is not yet thick in young children, especially in the generations that are being born today.

Another confirmation can be found in the hundreds of thousands of accounts of near death, and/or out of body experiences people are experiencing every day.

The idea of “past lifetimes” is not nearly as universally relevant to The Way of Self-Realization as realizing that you—as Beingness, as a Consciousness, as I-AM—exist outside of (independent from) the realm of the physical body’s world-experience.

(Comment: Actually, “you” both permeate it and are beyond or prior to it, but not outside of it. But you have to go deeper to find this.)

Knowing about alternate lifetimes your Soul-Consciousness has lived before—or more accurately, is experiencing right now, simultaneously—is not crucial to knowing that you are death-transcendent.

Also, it is simply not relevant for everyone to have these experiences in this lifetime. As such, a person won’t necessarily access

this knowledge, and thus, we cannot rely on it to instruct you into greater confirmation of life beyond death. I just wanted you to know that there is the option to explore this idea, if it resonates for you.

What IS a more universally, experientially-reliable pathway into confirmation of consciousness beyond death, is the following exercise.

Where Were You Before You Were Born?

You can feel into, or sense, Presence “before” this life.

You can “remember,” intuitively and viscerally, that you existed before your body’s birth.

Start with the Starting Focus, by simply relaxing your mind, attuning yourself to Presence/Beingness. Perhaps sit down, if it feels more centering and silencing.

Then ask yourself, “Where was I before my birth?” or, “Who was I before my birth?”

Feel into this...

Really let this question sink into the silence of the here and now.

This is called “contemplation,” or meditation.

Let it show you the answer—feel into the answer.

Whenever you sincerely ask for a realization, and then remain in the most receptive, attuned, open state you can presently assume, you will always be shown something of value, whether it is something you expected or not.

Some Variations

You can also pinpoint a specific time period, a handful of years or so before your birth, to give your consciousness a specific time/space frame to tune into. It doesn’t matter much which time period you

choose, as long as it is a time/space frame before your physical birth on this planet.

For some people, this makes it easier; for others, slightly more difficult or more distracting. If you find it distracting, stick with the original question above.

For me, for instance, being 26 at the time of writing this, that question could be:

“Where was I, 50 years ago?”

Or, an alternative question could be:

“What was I, 50 years ago?”

“Who was I, 50 years ago?”

“Where was I when the Wright brothers completed their first flight?”

“What was I doing during World War II?”

More varieties:

“Where/who/what was I before my grandfather was born?”

“Where was I before planet Earth supported animal life?”

“Where was I before planet Earth was formed?”

“Where/who/what will I be 1,000 years from now?”

And then there is a potentially very powerful question, which jumps a few steps ahead of where we are (in general terms) in this progression. This will be addressed in greater detail in the Infinity teaching, but can already give you access to an instinctual, experiential confirmation of Consciousness beyond the body:

“Where was I before Creation was created?”

Choose whichever one of these examples resonates most powerfully. Which one excites you the most? Pick that one for now, then sit down, and in silent receptivity, ask the question. Tune into the answer as you would listen carefully for someone calling your name in a noisy crowd. Attune yourself to the frequency you wish to receive, and ignore everything else.

Feel free to try a few more, or all of the varieties given above, or come up with a question yourself that works best for you.

Now, since time as we know it does not exist outside of our mind-consciousness, it is more accurate to say that when we have a feeling of having existed before our birth, we are truly just sensing into the Presence-Consciousness which is here, now, beyond the realm of linearity and physicality already.

We get to know ourselves as deathless aliveness—here, now, exploring and expanding forever—as free agents of Infinity itself. We are desired to be exactly who we are.

(Comment: Notice the logic. We can imagine a pre-life past, and a post life past, but what we are really doing is feeling our presence energy, and recognizing we are immortally from to travel to pre and post birth alternative realities. Yes, we are free to imagine such travels while we daydream or get lost in “Higher” energy pursuits. But so many people who would normally love science fiction, also love these speculative existences.)

Discover your Blueprint

As another fun alternative, which may not be everyone’s “cup of tea”—especially this early on in the progression—you can also tune into the moment right before your conception. This is the moment when, in a sense, you were looking down upon what was about to become your experience as an incarnational focus of Consciousness.

In this alternative, you can imagine yourself anticipating the conception that would lead to your about-to-be-manifest experience and

the ideas you chose to explore in this particular lifetime. As such, you can imagine a high degree of excitement and anticipation, akin to a director about to see her movie come into being.

For those to whom it is relevant, this proves to be an interesting experience of “who they were,” specific to preparing for this life’s incarnational experience.

It can potentially give great intuitive insight into the blueprint, theme, or intention you had in store for this life. In addition, it can be a confirmation of your presence-consciousness beyond—or before—inhabiting the physical body, and therefore, also confirmation of the time frame after the physical body is let go of.

This exercise can greatly clarify why you have chosen some of the challenges in your life; what the reason or intention behind them is.

What Will Happen After the Body Dies?

Die happily and look forward to taking up a new and better form. Like the sun, only when you set in the west can you rise in the east.

Jelaluddin Rumi

I’m going to state the following descriptions as fact, as it is as obvious to me as a circle is round; however, it is always up to you to take from whatever I say the things that resonate, and leave out what does not. This, as a principle, is always more important than whatever I say.

If you’re not sure what to think or believe, or if you’re not sure what resonates, I encourage you to simply remain open to receiving these confirmations in your own good time, through your own direct experience with Consciousness, and become convinced of what is obvious in that way.

There is no need to believe in anything; just let information and confirmation come in stages and be presented in ways most natural and relevant to you.

The absolute truth is that all points of view are equally true.

Without going into too much philosophical/metaphysical detail at this time, I will summarize:

(Your) Consciousness, upon the cessation of the body-vehicle, will experience itself as if it wakes up from a long dream and enters into a “more real” reality of Self, remembering much, much more of its Greater Self. You will wake up in a different, lighter dimension, where space is not the container for time, but time is the container for space. I will explain this in more depth later.

For now, you can liken it to your dream-substance experience at night, where you can be in any time and any space you can think of.

Your Higher Self’s Consciousness will then, in all its wisdom and self-knowledge, assist your level of consciousness in synthesizing the life experience gained from the incarnational experience (a “life-review”) to grow in wisdom, clarity, and precision of intent. Your Higher Self’s Consciousness will then decide, from a very expanded place of seeing the entire Beingness totality (of which the individual you now know yourself to be is but a portion—like a finger belongs to a hand) what it desires to explore and experience next.

Then, when it’s ready, and the incarnational experience is synthesized/integrated, it will start focusing itself into the proper configuration/frequency of energy to generate another vehicle/body of some kind. This does not have to be a physical body; it can be a time/space vehicle, instead of a space/time incarnational vehicle. A time/space, non-physical body is much like your dream-body.

Whether your consciousness’ next choice is to wear another physical representation (body) in a space/time reality, consonant with your desire to explore, or whether it is to dwell more freely within the time/space planes of consciousness for a while, or whether it is to embody a different density/dimensionality of energy altogether and explore creation there—it (You) will choose at that timing whatever is most

desired and relevant for your ongoing expansion into, and expression of, All-That-Exists.

(Comment: My God, what fantasy. It really does not help anyone except by allaying the fear of one's death, and the promise of a bigger, brighter future, not unlike the Christian promise of heaven, or the promise of certain types of experiences in heaven due to Muslim warriors fighting a Jihad. It gives Hope.)

The Journey Has No End

Some people are so afraid to die that they never begin to live.

Henry Van Dyke

Make no mistake, this human journey of spirituality offers merely the beginning reflections of an infinite exploration of creation in its endless dimensions and expressions of The Infinite One. We explore—and accelerate—this exploration by means of effective utilization of Infinity's Free Agent, which is Awareness, or—You.

Each way encourages greater subsequent embodiment of the other. They are, most certainly, complementary.

Personally, I tend to go back and forth in my primary focus, and yet to an extent, always simultaneously deepen and expand in my embodiment of both ways.

We have, after all, infinite time at our disposal, and an ever-expanding journey ahead.

You don't die.

Nobody dies.

Death doesn't exist.

You only reach a new level of vision,
a new realm of consciousness,

a new unknown world.

Henry Miller

(Comment: Robert, Ramana, and Nisargadatta would agree to this as all hold that consciousness itself is illusory, but that which is beyond Consciousness is not trapped in the time and space, and object world of Consciousness. To them, you are prior to consciousness. As such, why would you plan a rebirth to create a new incarnation? Why would you come back to a new physical life if you knew it was illusory? Bentinho also posits the existence of a separate soul that embodies or incarnates.)

There is no rush, yet we do our best to utilize our intended time in this “incarnational experience” as effectively as we can, to accelerate as joyfully as we can and learn what we came here to learn, as well as share with other-selves the love that we came here to share, each in our own unique ways.

The following, I find, is a helpful attitude to have throughout the entire spiritual journey during our time in the human suit: the attitude that this life is both urgent/precious and timeless/indestructible. That we have to be on top of things and do our very best, yet know that nothing can be out of place, realized too late, or realized too soon.

This balances will, desire, and intent with peace, healing, and faith, so that we don’t become either controlling or lethargic/inefficient, but instead live as joyfully alive, creative, and powerfully effective—as non-insistent, stress-free co-creators in alignment with the higher levels of (our) Consciousness.

However, I want you to realize this very clearly—there is no end to this Journey.

There are finalities to be realized, for sure, but none of them end the journey.

Even the most “final” of realizations—that on the Absolute level you are beyond experiencing, beyond Creation altogether, and that nothing ever truly happened to you at this level—does not end the journey; it just steps it up a notch and destroys all assumptions regarding who or what you are. But the journey continues.

(Comment: This is true. Even after escaping the body continues, and one’s consciousness does continue to deeper its understanding thus changing how the apparent person relates to the “cosmos.)

Note: Since this is such a substantial and potentially perception-altering lesson, I strongly advise you to take your time with this one and not rush through it.

I suggest you take a minimum of four days to be present with the contents, exercises, analogies, and quotes contained in this lesson and contemplate each of them profoundly.

When you feel good about your new perception of deathlessness, and feel significantly more independent from the physical body’s shenanigans, you can proceed.

Attachments are the result of misplaced happiness. They are not hard to transcend or transform, you simply need to see that you are actively projecting your okayness into things that have absolutely no ability to give you what you don't already have. You are the source of your own happiness. As soon as you see logic and sense in this, you will stop projecting your joy elsewhere, and voila-attachments dissolved.

Now that you've built a true, experiential foundation in seeing the independence of your being from appearances, this will explore the topic of attachments: why/how they are developed, and how they don't make any sense any longer.

As with everything in life, as soon as you discover something that you are used to doing no longer serves you—as soon as you truly see this with pristine clarity—you automatically stop chasing the thing you thought was going to bring you great benefit, simply because you realize it won't.

And this is really all there is to the science of attachment: To realize that you are falsely and fruitlessly projecting your satisfaction into things that are not real (the future).

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What is attachment?

Most people know attachment as the feeling of contraction in the body that follows the mental “fear-projecting” of a (potential) loss or lack of something we think contains a portion of our well-being.

In short: we become aware of our attachments as soon as we think of losing something we desire, or not getting something we desire.

But what is attachment exactly?

Attachment is misplaced happiness.

Our attachments to certain things is due to the fact that we have come to associate our good feelings with the presence of certain items, people, or circumstances in our lives, and bad feelings with the seeming lack thereof.

It is really that simple.

In order to free yourself from an attachment to, let's say, a person, you will need to somehow show yourself—realize—that your happiness did not come from that person, it came from your very own heart, your very own being, and was simply channeled into your body-mind experience as a result of you giving yourself permission to feel good upon seeing or experiencing the other person.

Allow me explain in greater detail:

What is a good feeling?

A good feeling is nothing more than to be in alignment with your True Self's natural wavelength. Literally, feeling good is the result of having the vibrations of your mind-portion dance in sync—in harmony—with the underlying ever-present wavelength of your True Being; or: your true frequency.

What triggers a good feeling?

A good feeling is triggered by our mind's perspective of that moment being in alignment with our True Being's perspective of that moment.

What does my Higher Self think of this?

Develop the habit of asking yourself when you're feeling bad: "How would my Higher Self view this experience? Would it also project all the lack that I project into it, or would it view it from a place of knowing infinite possibilities, endless abundance, true faith and unconditional love?"

If a good, peaceful, joyful feeling is released into your state of being by your perspective being in alignment with Reality, then what is it that triggers your mind's perspective to be in alignment with your True Being's perspective? A thought based in the idea of abundance (usually), or some variation of it.

When we look at our life and perceive an abundance of love, possibility, potential for satisfaction, money, resources, the ability to do what we want to do, free will, appreciation, and so on, we feel good because that is how our True Being perceives every second of our reality.

When we feel good, it doesn't really have anything to do with the actual circumstances, for they are inherently neutral and without meaning. When we feel good, it signifies that our way of seeing life is presently in alignment with our True Being's way of seeing life.

I will explain a little bit more about abundance in the section below, however I will not go too deeply into the practical specifics of abundance and the aligning of frequencies, for that is very distinctly the purpose of the Empowerment teaching. The purpose of this lesson—and the Enlightenment teaching in general—is simply to get to as clear of a picture as we can regarding how and why attachments form, and what they are, so that when they come up, we can apply the proper clarity and “relaxation-into-beingness” to release those misperceptions and remember the true value of our here-and-now existence.

What is Abundance?

Abundance—as a principle of Existence—is the idea that: “Everything is never-ending and originating from an infinite source.” This translates into our human experience more along the lines of: “There is more than enough (infinite amounts) to fulfill every being's every desire.”

In reality, abundance is one of the given facts of Creation, for Creation itself is infinite, and not bound by space or time. As such, Existence itself (your True Being) does not know the existence of lack. It doesn't understand it. It doesn't compute with the idea, with the vibration, of a thought that suggests there is a lack of something in the universe. This is why we feel bad when we think like this.

The source of all negative emotions: “Believing in lack”

As soon as we think in terms of lack—which I sometimes call the “anti-thought” because it goes against everything true about Creation—what happens is that your personal vibration does not match up at all with the vibration of your True Being, which is Existence, or Creation itself.

The bad feeling you get is the distance you feel between your view and the true view of Existence itself.

This is the only reason most people on this planet feel so miserable, scared, confused, and betrayed most of the time: their minds have been taught to believe, through and through, in the existence of something that absolutely does not exist: lack.

Hence, every time you project that something is missing or lacking, or that something could potentially be missing or lacking someday (fear of the future), whether that is a loved one you lost, or a loved one you imagine you might lose some day, what is mechanically—energetically—happening is that you are attempting to separate yourself from the fundamental laws of Creation.

You are, in a sense, creating a gap between yourself and the core frequency of Creation, which is limitless Love, Infinity, Abundance. You attempt this every time you think something rooted in the belief that “lack exists” or that “lack might exist someday.”

The beauty of this insight is that it cuts through the heart of every piece of suffering known to humankind. There literally is no type of suffering that I have not been able to trace back to this core idea of lack. Try it out and see for yourself.

All of our suffering—all of our resistance and contraction as a human being—whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual (but it is especially obvious with mental and emotional suffering) is based in the idea that lack can occur or that it has already occurred.

You might not believe that it is this simple right now, but as soon as you start looking for it, you will see that the idea that lack exists or can exist is the root cause of all of human suffering. This is a far more accurate perception than to suggest that “desire is the cause of all suffering.”

I am tempted to explain more, but I want to stick to the intention behind this lesson, so for now this will do. All you need to know at this point is that lack is the root cause of all of your mental and emotional suffering. More on this topic will be explored in the Empowerment teaching.

Now that you know this, let’s use this understanding to again ask ourselves the question:

What causes a good feeling, and how does attachment begin?

As you may have been able to deduce: If we did not believe in lack on any level of our being, we would constantly and effortlessly have “a good feeling” because our vibration would be that of our natural state. Hence, being synced-up, we would feel good, because that is what a good feeling is based on.

In our society, a truly good feeling has become a rare thing and so we have come to associate “feeling good” with certain situations, things, or people. But really, when we look at it scientifically, we are supposed to feel good all the time; it’s our natural state.

We have just become so insistent upon interpreting and projecting lack unto everything that the few times we do feel good, it is because some appearance that enters our life triggers a thought rooted in abundance, which then syncs-up with our true vibration, and because of this link up, we experience good feelings, good vibes.

However, most of us fail to see that the good feeling is due to the alignment of our view with our Higher Self’s view, NOT because it comes from the appearance that entered our perception.

An Example: Lisa and Joshua

This is a fictional story that simply looks a lot like yours. All similarities between these fictional characters and events, and the ones in your own life, are completely incidental.

Lisa was taught from an early age onward that lack is a real phenomenon. Her parents told her to be careful to never let too much of it come into her life.

She was taught to make sure she has insurance for everything and to rely on her government to live a safe life. She behaves well so she doesn’t have to experience a lack of love and an abundance of rejection, which is also seen as lack.

Lisa has never seen lack before, has never tasted lack before, but like everybody else who never truly encountered the presence of lack (because nobody has), she still believes it exists, somewhere... Perhaps right around the next corner? “Who knows—lack might show up at any moment now!”

She believes in this fictional phenomenon of lack so much that she believes it is present in her life right now, even though she's never seen or tasted it outside of her mental imagery and definitions.

For example, she interprets and defines the abundance of alive space in her house as “the lack of a partner,” and because she sees an abundance of air molecules in her house, and tells herself that she doesn't ever bump into other skin molecules in her house unless she has guests over, she believes she is currently lacking a partner.

She has been taught by many movies, stories, and by papa and mama's example, that people are supposed to have a partner in their house. If they don't, it means they are lacking something called “love and companionship,” which then means they should feel lonely. Hence, Lisa believes she feels lonely, thinking that something nobody has never experienced before—lack—is all around her.

Because Lisa has been unconsciously imprinted with this idea that lack exists in certain ways, she now experiences the only thing that doesn't exist in all of Creation: A lack of love!

That's how powerful of a creator, of a consciousness, she is—she can conjure up the illusory experience of a phenomenon that goes against the infinite nature of Creation itself. She is literally creating the experience of the only thing that can never actually manifest—lack!

Lisa is an amazingly powerful co-creator, but she interprets herself as a lacking loser, thus positioning herself out of sync with the truth of Creation (that she is amazing and abundant), and she feels bad.

Then, Lisa's friend Jack invites her to a party.

At this party, she meets one of Jack's friends, someone she has never met before. He is a handsome, tall guy with dark hair and good posture. And he looks friendly and approachable. Exactly the image she has of Abundance embodied!

He also has a very gracious, magnetic personality; he seems sincere, too! OMG.

Lisa feels good feelings right now, because she is having thoughts that are somewhat close in vibration to the original vibration of Creation: unending Love, infinite Abundance, all is possible, and so on.

She doesn't feel completely in bliss, but that's because the thoughts she is having are not pure truth; they are only marginally close in their vibration to the true vibration of infinite Abundance. They resemble truth closer than most of her thoughts, but they are still rooted in the game of believing in lack.

She is having thoughts such as: "There is the presence of a handsome man in this room," and "I got to shake his strong hand and look into his beautiful eyes," and "He said he was pleased to meet me, and he seemed to actually like me!"

These thoughts triggered good feelings in Lisa because these thoughts were aligning her mind's perspective more closely with the perspective of Existence itself. Her good feelings had very little (or even nothing) to do with the presence of this guy; they had everything to do with the fact that she gave herself permission to have thoughts rooted in abundance, rather than lack—for once.

Since Lisa doesn't experience her mind being in-sync with her Greater Self very often, she is now associating the good feelings even more with the presence of this guy, because after all, she's feeling good when he's around!

Lisa doesn't realize it was her own shift in perspective from lack to abundance that caused her self's vibration to be closer to the vibration of her True Being. Hence, she is now starting to build a strong association—an attachment—to this guy. She is beginning to misplace her happiness; she believes this guy can make her happy.

Uh-oh!

2 weeks later...

Lisa and Joshua have been on four dates already since the party at Jack's house. Things are really looking up for Lisa! Abundance seems to be in her future, and lack seems to have disappeared into her past.

Lisa is getting her hopes up, which simply means that the unconscious idea that she's been imprinted with, which is that if she finds a good partner, let alone a handsome gracious one, then there will be the absence of lack, and the presence of abundance.

So, Lisa finds herself in this uncertain and transitional phase of being in between a life of lacking a partner, lacking love, and therefore experiencing a lot of sadness and loneliness, and being potentially—but uncertainly—headed in the direction of what could be a life filled with an abundance of love, kind words, intimacy, and the presence of another body in her house.

This is why “getting her hopes up” feels both good and bad at the same time. She doesn't know exactly why it makes her feel both good and bad, but you guessed it already, didn't you?!

She is experiencing perspectives rooted in abundance (which feel good, because abundance is all that there is), but this scenario also brings up a lot of her perspectives rooted in the idea that lack exists or can exist (which feel bad, because lack doesn't exist).

Whenever she imagines, “It is actually going to happen! We are going to be together; there is going to be presence and abundance in my life, and love!” she feels really, really fantastic! In fact, she feels leaps and bounds better than anything she has allowed herself to feel in, like, forever!

Hence, she is starting to become a little attached to the idea of it working out. She has projected her well-being, her abundance, and her happiness onto an idea of a man outside of her. And he could die or he could not like her (once she starts letting her hair down and accidentally farts around the house). He could turn out to be mean, or he could find someone else.

So, Lisa feels good about the idea of being in abundance with him, but she feels worried and anxious at the same time about losing her happiness. After all, if he runs away, he runs away with her happiness, which is now inside of him! If he dies, her happiness dies with him!

Oh lord, what a predicament! Such a double-edged sword this game of lack/abundance, rejection/love has become. So unnecessarily complicated!

Now imagine this: A similar scenario is happening constantly, everyday, to about 7 billion people, and it is repeating itself with no end. What a cosmic show (joke)!

Sometimes I imagine that the aliens are watching the universe’s longest version of “As the World Turns.” I bet they simply cannot get enough of watching a show that is all about trying to create the only thing that Existence cannot create: lack. It’s kind of fascinating.

If this Joshua episode doesn't work out like a perfect fairytale for Lisa, this will only confirm again that she's unworthy of love, lonely, ugly, unwanted, and so on. These ideas will root themselves even deeper into her psyche, until she feels there is no hope possible, and she will close down the idea of a relationship altogether.

She will feel deluded and stupid for ever having believed in abundance—for even a second. And so Lisa becomes a little pessimistic and a little more sarcastic. She buries the carefree dreamer—the aligned kid—inside of her a little bit more.

After all, can you imagine that, in addition to being unwanted, unlovable, unworthy, and ugly, you are also stupidly delusional? What will people think of her? No way! Lisa doesn't want that. Lisa would rather play it safe and enclose herself with controlled amounts of lack, so that she can protect herself from potential future surprise-lack.

Lisa is resolved to kill the kid inside her for good, so that she will never have to believe in abundance again. She wants to at least keep her dignity, which she believes means something along the lines of being a realist that doesn't believe in love, or isn't open to too many possibilities in general.

Have a look in the mirror

Now, can you do me a favor, dear reader, and walk to one of the rooms in your house where there is a mirror and look into your own eyes?

While you're looking at yourself, see that you are just like the example of Lisa.

Admit it. Feel it. Acknowledge it. You have this in you as well.

You have been there and done that, at least to some degree. You have played this game of lack versus abundance, failure versus success, realist versus dreamer. And you are tired of it. You are tired of your own pessimism, sarcasm, and beliefs in lack. You are tired of struggling against your natural flow.

Make an agreement with yourself that you will always keep dreaming, that you will keep recognizing the endless abundance which IS Existence itself, and most importantly, that you will always release beliefs of lack as soon as you identify them.

What we can learn from Lisa

There is a lot we can learn from this simple example of Lisa.

For one: attachments exist only because we believe we are lacking abundance, love, and happiness in the first place.

If we did not have any beliefs regarding lack, we would not be able to attach our happiness to a thing, person, or event, because we would know and feel an overwhelming presence of love and infinite possibilities always present in our hearts, overflowing from the inside out, not from the outside in.

We would feel like giving, rather than taking. Supporting, rather than asking for support. Sharing, rather than craving love from the outside.

The more we discover that the entirety of Creation is inside of us, and that we are the Infinite One creating this dream, the less we will be able to be attached to things. Makes sense, no? The science of unhappiness versus happiness is essentially so simple.

This does not mean we become cold-hearted. In fact, our fountain of satisfaction and eternal confidence overflows in the direction of those who do not know. Whether that love is received or not doesn't ultimately matter. We just cannot stop overflowing when we are in this state of being—confident in the abundance of our existence.

Everyday Practice: Take Action Without Expectation

Those who are motivated only by desire for the fruits of action are miserable, for they are constantly anxious about the results of what they do.

You have the right to work, but never to the fruit of work. You should never engage in action for the sake of reward, nor should you long for inaction.

Perform work in this world, Arjuna, as a man established within himself—without selfish attachments, and alike in success and defeat. For yoga is perfect evenness of mind.

Bhagavad Gita

In order to anchor in the observations you have made by now, regarding how the human mind is trained to project happiness into empty and meaningless appearances and, as such, feel “attached to these appearances,” a really helpful exercise can be to go out in everyday life and learn to take action, regardless of response.

This is helpful in many ways: It helps familiarize you with a state of being that is free of attachments, waiting, hesitating, doubting, hoping, fearing, and perceiving lack altogether.

Selfless action isn't so much actions oriented only around the idea of "helping others;" selfless action simply means you learn to take action, regardless of outcome. You act based on your intuitive navigation, rather than on your mind's fear projections.

Any act performed with zero need to be rewarded in any way, is a selfless action and leads you into greater conviction regarding the nature of Reality. It will show you what it feels like to live according to who you truly are, not waiting for anything outside of yourself to come your way first.

Learning to act without expectations of any kind regarding the results of your actions will directly propel you into great bliss through achieving harmonious vibration with your True Self. As such, attachments are simply eradicated.

It is one thing to think about the nature of attachment, and to make helpful observations about it, but what is way more powerful is to go out there and live your life according to your highest impulses—free from the need for a certain outcome and free from projecting your happiness onto your future appearances and misplacing your true connection in that way.

So, once again, to anchor this in, you have to deliver the goods: test it out in your own life. Put it into action.

Homework

Read this lesson's text at least once more before proceeding with the next lesson.

For at least the next 2 to 3 days, sincerely apply the exercise of taking actions in life with zero expectations as to what the outcome ought to be.

Set a note or alarm on your phone, or write a note on a piece of paper and lay it next to your bed, reminding yourself to take a few minutes in the morning to center yourself in the presence of Being Here Now, and to imagine yourself taking action throughout the day, with no attachments whatsoever. Imagine a flowing life, free from needs, expectations, hopes, and fears. Imagine a life where you feel satisfaction welling up in each moment from the infinite depths of your heart, overflowing into this world in all directions, and positively enriching your every action. Imagine an action-filled life, free from lack. What would that look and feel like? Imagine it for 5 minutes in the morning for the duration of at least 3 days, and then...

Take action on your imagined reality and show yourself what it actually looks and feels like in real life to live without fears, without hesitations, without future projections, without attachment—to the best of your ability and without judging yourself negatively.

Bye Bye, Attachments

Attachments are the result of misplaced happiness. They are not hard to transcend or transform, you simply need to see that you are actively projecting your okayness into things that have absolutely no ability to give you what you don't already have. You are the source of your own happiness. As soon as you see logic and sense in this, you will stop projecting your joy elsewhere, and voila-attachments dissolved.

Now that you've built a true, experiential foundation in seeing the independence of your being from appearances, this will explore the topic of attachments: why/how they are developed, and how they don't make any sense any longer.

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But what is attachment exactly?

Attachment is misplaced happiness.

Our attachments to certain things is due to the fact that we have come to associate our good feelings with the presence of certain items, people, or circumstances in our lives, and bad feelings with the seeming lack thereof.

It is really that simple.

(Comment: If only it were that simple. Massaro has no awareness of developmental psychology and the developmental sequence of one's sense of self versus our felt sense of other. That is, of the development of the self-image and self stability within a world of alleged objects. This goes very deeply into understanding the creation and individuation of the self-image we have with feelings of need, succor, dependency, etc. If things go wrong in the developmental sequence leading to psychopathologies, these are not repaired merely by sidestepping the repair work by adopting a theory such as Massaro is proposing. The rules of development of the human individual are in a large sense, stronger than Massaro's magic.

Followers of his who follow him to fix early developmental failures that has led to chronic depression, a lack of personal instability, a tendency towards manic behaviors, chronic anxiety, schizoid withdrawal, etc., will find at a point long after adopting Masarro's magical view, that there will be a profound disillusionment and thence anger towards Massaro.)

In order to free yourself from an attachment to, let's say, a person, you will need to somehow show yourself—realize—that your happiness did not come from that person, it came from your very own heart, your very own being, and was simply channeled into your body-mind experience as a result of you giving yourself permission to feel good upon seeing or experiencing the other person.

Allow me explain in greater detail:

What is a good feeling?

A good feeling is nothing more than to be in alignment with your True Self's natural wavelength. Literally, feeling good is the result of having the vibrations of your mind-portion dance in sync—in harmony—with the underlying ever-present wavelength of your True Being; or: your true frequency.

(Comment: Here we go! True Self has a frequency! Vibrations in sync, in harmony with the ever-present wavelength of your True Being? Magical belief.)

What triggers a good feeling?

A good feeling is triggered by our mind's perspective of that moment being in alignment with our True Being's perspective of that moment.

What does my Higher Self think of this?

Develop the habit of asking yourself when you're feeling bad: "How would my Higher Self view this experience? Would it also project all the lack that I project into it, or would it view it from a place of knowing infinite possibilities, endless abundance, true faith and unconditional love?"

If a good, peaceful, joyful feeling is released into your state of being by your perspective being in alignment with Reality, then what is it that triggers your mind's perspective to be in alignment with your True Being's perspective? A thought based in the idea of abundance (usually), or some variation of it.

When we look at our life and perceive an abundance of love, possibility, potential for satisfaction, money, resources, the ability to do what we want to do, free will, appreciation, and so on, we feel good because that is how our True Being perceives every second of our reality.

(Comment: At this stage, Massaro's teaching have become a total mind-fuck, a continuous reframing, a reinterpreting of all experiences from from the imagined perspective of a Higher Being's awareness of abundance and infinite possibilities. Massaro here is turning away from true freedom of realizing oneself as the Absolute, towards an illusory life of imaginary self-fulfillment. This is how he got so many followers—people who want better lives, lives in control, lives of perfect male/female imagined relationships, rather than going beyond it all to the peace of the Absolute. Massaro has become

totally distracted by the imagined infinite alternative realities that he says are available if you follow him.)

When we feel good, it doesn't really have anything to do with the actual circumstances, for they are inherently neutral and without meaning. When we feel good, it signifies that our way of seeing life is presently in alignment with our True Being's way of seeing life.

I will explain a little bit more about abundance in the section below, however I will not go too deeply into the practical specifics of abundance and the aligning of frequencies, for that is very distinctly the purpose of the Empowerment teaching. The purpose of this lesson—and the Enlightenment teaching in general—is simply to get to as clear of a picture as we can regarding how and why attachments form, and what they are, so that when they come up, we can apply the proper clarity and “relaxation-into-beingness” to release those misperceptions and remember the true value of our here-and-now existence.

What is Abundance?

Abundance—as a principle of Existence—is the idea that: “Everything is never-ending and originating from an infinite source.” This translates into our human experience more along the lines of: “There is more than enough (infinite amounts) to fulfill every being’s every desire.”

In reality, abundance is one of the given facts of Creation, for Creation itself is infinite, and not bound by space or time. As such, Existence itself (your True Being) does not know the existence of lack. It doesn’t understand it. It doesn’t compute with the idea, with the vibration, of a thought that suggests there is a lack of something in the universe. This is why we feel bad when we think like this.

The source of all negative emotions: “Believing in lack”

As soon as we think in terms of lack—which I sometimes call the “anti-thought” because it goes against everything true about Creation—what happens is that your personal vibration does not match up at all with the vibration of your True Being, which is Existence, or Creation itself.

The bad feeling you get is the distance you feel between your view and the true view of Existence itself.

This is the only reason most people on this planet feel so miserable, scared, confused, and betrayed most of the time: their minds have been taught to believe, through and through, in the existence of something that absolutely does not exist: lack.

Hence, every time you project that something is missing or lacking, or that something could potentially be missing or lacking someday (fear of the future), whether that is a loved one you lost, or a loved one you imagine you might lose some day, what is mechanically—energetically—happening is that you are attempting to separate yourself from the fundamental laws of Creation.

(Comment: And the mind fuck deepens.)

You are, in a sense, creating a gap between yourself and the core frequency of Creation, which is limitless Love, Infinity, Abundance. You attempt this every time you think something rooted in the belief that “lack exists” or that “lack might exist someday.”

The beauty of this insight is that it cuts through the heart of every piece of suffering known to humankind. There literally is no type of suffering that I have not been able to trace back to this core idea of lack. Try it out and see for yourself.

All of our suffering—all of our resistance and contraction as a human being—whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual (but it is especially obvious with mental and emotional suffering) is based in the idea that lack can occur or that it has already occurred.

You might not believe that it is this simple right now, but as soon as you start looking for it, you will see that the idea that lack exists or can exist is the root cause of all of human suffering. This is a far more accurate perception than to suggest that “desire is the cause of all suffering.”

I am tempted to explain more, but I want to stick to the intention behind this lesson, so for now this will do. All you need to know at this point is that lack is the root cause of all of your mental and emotional suffering. More on this topic will be explored in the Empowerment teaching.

Now that you know this, let’s use this understanding to again ask ourselves the question:

What causes a good feeling, and how does attachment begin?

As you may have been able to deduce: If we did not believe in lack on any level of our being, we would constantly and effortlessly have “a good feeling” because our vibration would be that of our natural state. Hence, being synced-up, we would feel good, because that is what a good feeling is based on.

In our society, a truly good feeling has become a rare thing and so we have come to associate “feeling good” with certain situations, things, or people. But really, when we look at it scientifically, we are supposed to feel good all the time; it’s our natural state.

We have just become so insistent upon interpreting and projecting lack unto everything that the few times we do feel good, it is because some appearance that enters our life triggers a thought rooted in abundance, which then syncs-up with our true vibration, and because of this link up, we experience good feelings, good vibes.

However, most of us fail to see that the good feeling is due to the alignment of our view with our Higher Self’s view, NOT because it comes from the appearance that entered our perception.

An Example: Lisa and Joshua

This is a fictional story that simply looks a lot like yours. All similarities between these fictional characters and events, and the ones in your own life, are completely incidental.

Lisa was taught from an early age onward that lack is a real phenomenon. Her parents told her to be careful to never let too much of it come into her life.

She was taught to make sure she has insurance for everything and to rely on her government to live a safe life. She behaves well so she doesn’t have to experience a lack of love and an abundance of rejection, which is also seen as lack.

Lisa has never seen lack before, has never tasted lack before, but like everybody else who never truly encountered the presence of lack (because nobody has), she still believes it exists, somewhere... Perhaps right around the next corner? “Who knows—lack might show up at any moment now!”

She believes in this fictional phenomenon of lack so much that she believes it is present in her life right now, even though she’s never seen or tasted it outside of her mental imagery and definitions.

For example, she interprets and defines the abundance of alive space in her house as “the lack of a partner,” and because she sees an abundance of air molecules in her house, and tells herself that she doesn’t ever bump into other skin molecules in her house unless she has guests over, she believes she is currently lacking a partner.

She has been taught by many movies, stories, and by papa and mama’s example, that people are supposed to have a partner in their house. If they don’t, it means they are lacking something called “love and companionship,” which then means they should feel lonely. Hence, Lisa believes she feels lonely, thinking that something nobody has never experienced before—lack—is all around her.

Because Lisa has been unconsciously imprinted with this idea that lack exists in certain ways, she now experiences the only thing that doesn’t exist in all of Creation: A lack of love!

That’s how powerful of a creator, of a consciousness, she is—she can conjure up the illusory experience of a phenomenon that goes against the infinite nature of Creation itself. She is literally creating the experience of the only thing that can never actually manifest—lack!

Lisa is an amazingly powerful co-creator, but she interprets herself as a lacking loser, thus positioning herself out of sync with the truth of Creation (that she is amazing and abundant), and she feels bad.

Then, Lisa's friend Jack invites her to a party.

At this party, she meets one of Jack's friends, someone she has never met before. He is a handsome, tall guy with dark hair and good posture. And he looks friendly and approachable. Exactly the image she has of Abundance embodied!

He also has a very gracious, magnetic personality; he seems sincere, too! OMG.

Lisa feels good feelings right now, because she is having thoughts that are somewhat close in vibration to the original vibration of Creation: unending Love, infinite Abundance, all is possible, and so on.

She doesn't feel completely in bliss, but that's because the thoughts she is having are not pure truth; they are only marginally close in their vibration to the true vibration of infinite Abundance. They resemble truth closer than most of her thoughts, but they are still rooted in the game of believing in lack.

She is having thoughts such as: "There is the presence of a handsome man in this room," and "I got to shake his strong hand and look into his beautiful eyes," and "He said he was pleased to meet me, and he seemed to actually like me!"

These thoughts triggered good feelings in Lisa because these thoughts were aligning her mind's perspective more closely with the perspective of Existence itself. Her good feelings had very little (or even nothing) to do with the presence of this guy; they had everything to do with the fact that she gave herself permission to have thoughts rooted in abundance, rather than lack—for once.

Since Lisa doesn't experience her mind being in-sync with her Greater Self very often, she is now associating the good feelings even more with the presence of this guy, because after all, she's feeling good when he's around!

Lisa doesn't realize it was her own shift in perspective from lack to abundance that caused her self's vibration to be closer to the vibration of her True Being. Hence, she is now starting to build a strong association—an attachment—to this guy. She is beginning to misplace her happiness; she believes this guy can make her happy.

Uh-oh!

2 weeks later...

Lisa and Joshua have been on four dates already since the party at Jack's house. Things are really looking up for Lisa! Abundance seems to be in her future, and lack seems to have disappeared into her past.

Lisa is getting her hopes up, which simply means that the unconscious idea that she's been imprinted with, which is that if she finds a good partner, let alone a handsome gracious one, then there will be the absence of lack, and the presence of abundance.

So, Lisa finds herself in this uncertain and transitional phase of being in between a life of lacking a partner, lacking love, and therefore experiencing a lot of sadness and loneliness, and being potentially—but uncertainly—headed in the direction of what could be a life filled with an abundance of love, kind words, intimacy, and the presence of another body in her house.

This is why “getting her hopes up” feels both good and bad at the same time. She doesn't know exactly why it makes her feel both good and bad, but you guessed it already, didn't you?!

She is experiencing perspectives rooted in abundance (which feel good, because abundance is all that there is), but this scenario also brings up a lot of her perspectives rooted in the idea that lack exists or can exist (which feel bad, because lack doesn't exist).

Whenever she imagines, "It is actually going to happen! We are going to be together; there is going to be presence and abundance in my life, and love!" she feels really, really fantastic! In fact, she feels leaps and bounds better than anything she has allowed herself to feel in, like, forever!

Hence, she is starting to become a little attached to the idea of it working out. She has projected her well-being, her abundance, and her happiness onto an idea of a man outside of her. And he could die or he could not like her (once she starts letting her hair down and accidentally farts around the house). He could turn out to be mean, or he could find someone else.

So, Lisa feels good about the idea of being in abundance with him, but she feels worried and anxious at the same time about losing her happiness. After all, if he runs away, he runs away with her happiness, which is now inside of him! If he dies, her happiness dies with him!

Oh lord, what a predicament! Such a double-edged sword this game of lack/abundance, rejection/love has become. So unnecessarily complicated!

Now imagine this: A similar scenario is happening constantly, everyday, to about 7 billion people, and it is repeating itself with no end. What a cosmic show (joke)!

Sometimes I imagine that the aliens are watching the universe's longest version of "As the World Turns." I bet they simply cannot get enough of watching a show that is all about trying to create the only thing that Existence cannot create: lack. It's kind of fascinating.

If this Joshua episode doesn't work out like a perfect fairytale for Lisa, this will only confirm again that she's unworthy of love, lonely, ugly, unwanted, and so on. These ideas will root themselves even deeper into her psyche, until she feels there is no hope possible, and she will close down the idea of a relationship altogether.

She will feel deluded and stupid for ever having believed in abundance—for even a second. And so Lisa becomes a little pessimistic and a little more sarcastic. She buries the carefree dreamer—the aligned kid—inside of her a little bit more.

After all, can you imagine that, in addition to being unwanted, unlovable, unworthy, and ugly, you are also stupidly delusional? What will people think of her? No way! Lisa doesn't want that. Lisa would rather play it safe and enclose herself with controlled amounts of lack, so that she can protect herself from potential future surprise-lack.

Lisa is resolved to kill the kid inside her for good, so that she will never have to believe in abundance again. She wants to at least keep her dignity, which she believes means something along the lines of being a realist that doesn't believe in love, or isn't open to too many possibilities in general.

Have a look in the mirror

Now, can you do me a favor, dear reader, and walk to one of the rooms in your house where there is a mirror and look into your own eyes?

While you're looking at yourself, see that you are just like the example of Lisa.

Admit it. Feel it. Acknowledge it. You have this in you as well.

You have been there and done that, at least to some degree. You have played this game of lack versus abundance, failure versus success, realist versus dreamer. And you are tired of it. You are tired of your own pessimism, sarcasm, and beliefs in lack. You are tired of struggling against your natural flow.

Make an agreement with yourself that you will always keep dreaming, that you will keep recognizing the endless abundance which IS Existence itself, and most importantly, that you will always release beliefs of lack as soon as you identify them.

What we can learn from Lisa

There is a lot we can learn from this simple example of Lisa.

For one: attachments exist only because we believe we are lacking abundance, love, and happiness in the first place.

If we did not have any beliefs regarding lack, we would not be able to attach our happiness to a thing, person, or event, because we would know and feel an overwhelming presence of love and infinite possibilities always present in our hearts, overflowing from the inside out, not from the outside in.

We would feel like giving, rather than taking. Supporting, rather than asking for support. Sharing, rather than craving love from the outside.

The more we discover that the entirety of Creation is inside of us, and that we are the Infinite One creating this dream, the less we will be able to be attached to things. Makes sense, no? The science of unhappiness versus happiness is essentially so simple.

This does not mean we become cold-hearted. In fact, our fountain of satisfaction and eternal confidence overflows in the direction of those who do not know. Whether that love is received or not doesn't ultimately matter. We just cannot stop overflowing when we are in this state of being—confident in the abundance of our existence.

Everyday Practice: Take Action Without Expectation

Those who are motivated only by desire for the fruits of action are miserable, for they are constantly anxious about the results of what they do.

You have the right to work, but never to the fruit of work. You should never engage in action for the sake of reward, nor should you long for inaction.

Perform work in this world, Arjuna, as a man established within himself—without selfish attachments, and alike in success and defeat. For yoga is perfect evenness of mind.

Bhagavad Gita

In order to anchor in the observations you have made by now, regarding how the human mind is trained to project happiness into empty and meaningless appearances and, as such, feel “attached to these appearances,” a really helpful exercise can be to go out in everyday life and learn to take action, regardless of response.

This is helpful in many ways: It helps familiarize you with a state of being that is free of attachments, waiting, hesitating, doubting, hoping, fearing, and perceiving lack altogether.

Selfless action isn't so much actions oriented only around the idea of "helping others;" selfless action simply means you learn to take action, regardless of outcome. You act based on your intuitive navigation, rather than on your mind's fear projections.

Any act performed with zero need to be rewarded in any way, is a selfless action and leads you into greater conviction regarding the nature of Reality. It will show you what it feels like to live according to who you truly are, not waiting for anything outside of yourself to come your way first.

Learning to act without expectations of any kind regarding the results of your actions will directly propel you into great bliss through achieving harmonious vibration with your True Self. As such, attachments are simply eradicated.

It is one thing to think about the nature of attachment, and to make helpful observations about it, but what is way more powerful is to go out there and live your life according to your highest impulses—free from the need for a certain outcome and free from projecting your happiness onto your future appearances and misplacing your true connection in that way.

So, once again, to anchor this in, you have to deliver the goods: test it out in your own life. Put it into action.

MUZIKA'S DISCUSSION

When I first Massaro's Enlightenment I lessons above, I was briefly taken by the hope that this teaching style might be a shortcut to a deep self-realization through baby-steps. But late into his description he loses the orientation towards self-inquiry and self-exploration, and gets lost in New Age concepts of energy levels, vibrations, resonance and harmony, astral or infinite alternative realities, mixed with old Eastern concepts of reincarnation, driving progressive lessons for a soul, and happiness is found by getting rid of ideas of lack in one's life. It is all imagination, a false hope based on New Age concepts based on speculation of realms of existence suggested by science as applying to quantum levels as well as cosmological levels.

But the human level is quite different from quantum level science, and quite different from cosmological science based still in the theory of General Relativity and its more recent successors, such as string theory.

Also, the initial discovery of presence-energy, Isness, or nowness as ever-present, abundant, and its eventual proof of your immortality and deathlessness at first made sense because the theory is so elegant.

But when I actually practice self-inquiry or self-investigation for myself, what I experience is very different from the line suggested by Bentinho.

When I began my spiritual journey, I followed the path set forth by Ramana Maharshi and Zen Master Bassui, doing self-inquiry on the koan or questioning of who or what am I. That led me to look to where the I-sensation arose, which meant looking within, by developing an ability to introspect, to look inside my innards of self experience.

This led me to discover the inward dimensions of a vast emptiness inside, an empty space which was experientially the same as the empty space around me. That space, at first dark and kind of moist, became gradually illumined by the "opening" of my Third Eye and illumined that

inner empty space with the light of consciousness. My awareness penetrated the darkness with light.

I never saw an Is-ness, or a Nowness. Already, even at this beginning *I was already aware that everything was Now, and that past and future was just a creation of the mind in the sense of memories creating a past, and speculation created a future. I never experienced a quality called Is-ness or Now-ness. But I was aware of emptiness, spaciousness, and object being rather flat and transparent, like hologram images, or what Robert Adams called “optical illusions.”*

I eventually discovered and isolated the I-thought as it arose and passed away. I found it arose from emptiness and also became swallowed thereby. I clearly saw that that same translucent, infinite, emptiness pervaded everywhere and permeated all objects of consciousness. This vast emptiness with the container of all of consciousness, and the objects of consciousness.

When I first experienced the vastness of this discovery that everything was indeed empty, swallowed by the void, permeated by the void, including my sense of self, it was such a stunning revelation of becoming aware of being totally nonexistent except as the light of consciousness illuminating the vastness of the totality of emptiness that contained everything internal and external, and that the separation between internal and external was only an idea.

I also saw that thoughts created both my sense of self, and the external world. Thoughts appear to me like tiny clouds that floated in space around me, and when they came close to my brain, “I” became aware of the object to process created by that thought.

A few weeks after this experience, I had another, which was the realization that consciousness itself was only an appearance, and illusion, and that I was set apart from it. I observed the states of consciousness of waking, sleep, and dream to come like a cover, covering me and immersing me in that world, the world of waking consciousness, of deep sleep consciousness, and of dreaming. I was the witness of the states of

consciousness, and had nothing to do with them, they were all like dreams, unreal, transient, passing apparitions, appearances with no reality of their own.

I recount these experiences in my book *Self-Realization and Other Awakenings* found on my website: <http://wearesentience.com> as a downloadable e-book.

To me this was the foremost reality which was a vast emptiness which contained in permeated all things, and an awareness of both the emptiness container, and the objects within, as well as awareness of the coming and going of various states of consciousness, such as deep sleep and dream. I was separate and an observer but my own self was not visible or experience. All experiences and discoveries happened in consciousness and in mind, but not to me who was watching all this.

Later, much later, I was to make another discovery even more potent and compelling than that original discovery of the nature of emptiness and awareness, and that is what I called my awakening to myself, as the totality of the Manifest Self, which was purely an energy state, also described in the book mentioned above.

This discovery is much closer to the process described by Massaro, in that it was very immediate, impactful, energetic, and filled with love/bliss. Also this experience was “relational,” as in this awakening experience, the other was seen as divine energy, the life force permeating and directing each of our individual lives. In an explosion of light and infinite energy, Shakti exploded from my gut, upwards into my heart, and through my brain into the world is an infinite white light that expanded and embraced everything within the best void nature of my experience.

I felt infinite power, and total grace wash over me, cleansing me of all guilt and sin. I became clean and pure, and eligible as a vessel for the divine as the life force to work through me, and also I was aware of the Lifeforce in relation to me here and now on earth, and also as an observer of both. Thus, I was aware both of my body mind/personal self,

Shakti or the life force, the divine within me, as well as the emptiness in the void all at once from a perspective beyond all of it.

My most profound experience after that was a profound sense of presence as a consciousness/energy that permeated my body centered in my gut and heart which energize my body, from the inside, it permeated, and extended beyond it a few inches or feet into the physical space around me. It felt like an energy field or capacitance field that was directly interacting with the consciousness outside in the form of objects as substance. This sense of energetic being, of presence, is always with me, even if I am not focused on it. It makes of my basic sense of self as an incarnation in this world, even while it is part of the totality of consciousness, the universal consciousness as suggested by Nisargadatta, and itself as a transient, existential, quasi-physical being-ness.

Thus I began to intuit as beyond all of experience, beyond consciousness, as pure awareness lying at the portal between existence and nonexistence, between consciousness and nothingness, and as such I lay prior to and beyond both is the ultimate witness of the comings and goings of consciousness and its relationship with nothingness.

Now, from this perspective and sequence and evolution of my self-awareness, there has never been much emphasis on the felt sense of presence energy until after I experienced the presence in myself as being part of my embodied self. Before that there was only emptiness, and all things were empty and without substantial self maintaining quality. All things were transient except the emptiness which contained all of the processes of being this. But at that time, there was no being this for me, not until the experience of the divine coming inside of me and awakening me to my human existence as an energy sense, as a presence, acting hand-in-hand with Shakti, with the divine, acting and living through me.

So now I look at Massaro's work through this lens, through my own progression of experiences and understanding, look at it is if it can be an aid for others, mostly beginners, mostly those who are not ready to throw themselves into spirituality hook line and sinker, and instead want to do

it on a very gradual, guided meditation status. From this point of view, I think his teachings can be of remarkable assistance to the beginning seeker of knowledge of the self. However, if one becomes captured by Massaro's viewpoint of higher and lower selves, life plans and intentionality, of infinite alternative realities, and expansion of one's identification through multiple explorations of what could be, of realizing abundance all around you and infinite worlds, you will become trapped in this fantasy structure, which has its own strong experiential existence, but will become an infinitely distracting play world, which distracts you from the fact you have not attained real peace, or true realization, by entering a play world of astral harmonies, vibration rates, harmonization, resonance, etc.

But, I am relatively certain that his methodology up to that point of divergence into a self-actualization spiel, can be of value as the beginning meditator contemplates is this our anonymous in order to get "underneath" their mind, to get to a position which he calls clarity, before the thinking mind arises, and therefore gets to know emptiness, the interspace, and how awareness permeates and penetrates all objects of consciousness and consciousness itself as a totality, and one can reach a recognition Of Oneself Is the Ultimate Observer, the Absolute, or what Nisargadatta called Para-Brahman, a place of infinite peace and rest.

I am afraid that readers of and followers of Bentinho Massaro will be so captivated by the concepts of alternative realities, ultimate creation, intentionality affecting creation, and working wonders in one's life by fulfilling dreams, desires, and a so-called alignment with your true self, that the epic possibility of obtaining real enlightenment will be missed through redirection towards fulfillment.

With this warning, I would tell an absolute beginner, that Massaro's approach probably has a great deal of value for them as an entire beginner. It provides a step-by-step approach to investigate the nature of your own consciousness, but within an overall path that relies on speculation and tales derived from New Age philosophy as well as with Eastern concepts such as reincarnation, to create a worldview of

endlessly creating happiness for yourself, rather than penetrating deeper and deeper into the reality of yourself.

Bentinho is so very popular because he appeals to people who are susceptible to the promises of magic, and that is what he is offering: and ability to become a supreme warlock, as opposed to realization of yourself as Para-Brahman, infinite peace and rest, that which has no need for existence or consciousness and is beyond both.

However, Massaro's later work where he introduces Nisargadatta the concept of the Absolute, as the ultimate witness, as Nothingness, does have very real value, and clearly lays fourth the distinctions that Nisargadatta raises, but which I would interpret differently.

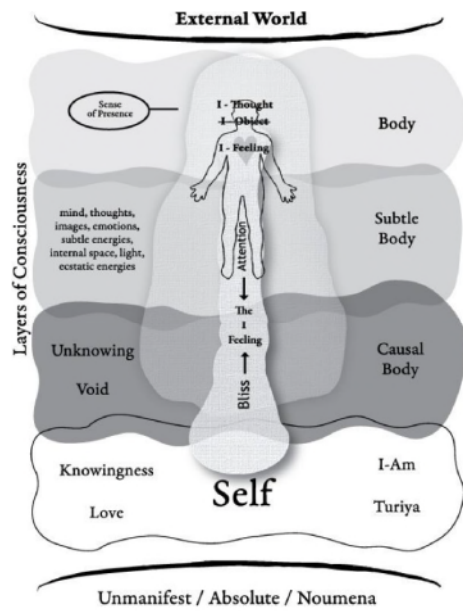
You can follow me on my blog at: <http://itisnotreal.blogspot.com>, or on Facebook on my page <https://www.facebook.com/edwardmuzika>

Or on my teaching page there <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1020223968048490/>, where I talk about the teachings of my teacher, Robert Adams, and my other teacher, Nisargadatta Maharaj. One can also find my downloadable book Self-Realization and Other Awakenings at: <http://wearesentience.com>. My email is satsang(dot)online(at)gmail.com

But I am not trying to besmirch Massaro's work. It is a work of genius for the beginner to learn the essentials of self-realization onto the way of realizing oneself at all levels as he puts in his diagram, at least if the beginner does not get distracted by his self-actualization teachings, which can lead to a life of fantasizing fulfillment. Instead, just direct yourself to realizing yourself, what you truly are at all levels, as consciousness, as a human being, and also that which lies beyond consciousness or before consciousness, for that allows for true total fulfillment and peace, rather than following the antics of self actualization which embeds you into a fantasy of self-fulfillment.

To read Massaro's orininal works go to <http://trinfinityacademy.com>.

MUZIKA'S DIAGRAM OF SELF, 2012



MASSARO'S DIAGRAM ON CONSCIOUSNESS 2016?

<https://www.trinfinityacademy.com/essentials/trinfinity-self-realization-map/>

We use different phenomenological approaches, and alternative models of what exists, therefore the diagrams differ. I base mine on traditional Advaita Vedanta concepts while Massaro's is kind of a hybrid Advaita/New Age. I show the phenomenological approach of diving downwards into one's own sense of Self b following the I sensation. His goes from presence energy, to awareness, to the Absolute. The difference is that I fill in the area of the map that Massaro calls awareness with levels of self proposed by Nisargadatta's teacher, Siddharameshwar.