

# Eternity Now

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This book is dedicated to all the beautiful beings who have made  
this publication possible through their labor of love.

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Temecula, California  
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# Foreword

We usually identify ourselves with a mixture of thoughts, perceptions, and feelings. This identification with a personal body-mind is deeply rooted in us. The people around us—our parents, teachers, friends, and so on—believed that they were personal entities, and we have found it quite natural to follow in their footsteps without challenging this belief, which, upon closer scrutiny, will be shown to be the origin of all our misery.

If the body-mind is an object, a personal and limited collection of mentations, there must be a witness to which it appears. This witness is usually referred to as consciousness or awareness. If we investigate what we are, it becomes clear that it is this awareness that is precisely what we call “I.” Most people identify this witnessing consciousness with the witnessed mind, and in doing so they superimpose the personal limitations of that mind onto consciousness, conceptualizing it as a personal entity.

When we make a deliberate attempt to observe this witness, we find an unusual situation: Our attempt seems to fail, due to the subjective nature of consciousness, and the inability of the mind to recognize something that is not objective; but mental activity, made up of the current train of thoughts and sensations, seems to stop for a moment. Although this “stop” doesn’t leave any memories at the level of the mind, this non-experience generates a strong feeling of identity and an ineffable certitude of being that we describe using the words, “I” or “I am.” After a while, the ego resurfaces with the thought, “I am this body-mind,” projecting once again the space-time limitations of the personal entity onto the limitless “I am.” The limitlessness of the “I am” can’t be

asserted from the level of the mind, but remains with us as an “aftertaste” when the objective world reappears.

Having been informed of the presence of this witnessing background, and having had a first glimpse of our real self, a powerful attraction, which brings us back again and again to this non-experience, is born. Every new glimpse reinforces the “perfume” of freedom and happiness that emanates from this new dimension. As our timeless presence becomes more and more tangible, our daily life takes a new turn. People, distractions, and activities that used to exert a strong appeal to us are now met with indifference. Our former ideological attachments become weaker for no apparent reason. Our focus on investigating our true nature intensifies without any effort on our part. Higher intelligence sets in, deepening our intellectual understanding of the truth and clarifying our ontological questioning. Many personal conflicts and antagonisms are reduced or resolved.

Then, at some point, the ego is reabsorbed into our witnessing presence, which reveals itself as the eternal beauty, absolute truth, and supreme bliss we were seeking. Instantaneously, we are established in the certitude of our primordial immortality. This sudden revelation of our non-dual nature can't be properly described through words to someone who is still under the illusion of the duality of subject and object. Such a person will understand those words in relative terms, as an objective experience. It is the only kind of experience he can conceive.

How is it possible to convey the feeling of absolute happiness to someone who only knows relative experiences? Given any relative experience, no matter its intensity, there is always the possibility of an even more intense experience. But this is not the case when we are referring to the bliss of our true nature. How is it possible for someone who knows happiness only in relation to objects to comprehend the autonomy, the causelessness, of this bliss? How is it possible to convey the non-localization and the timelessness of this unveiling to one who only knows events in space-time; its absolute certitude to one entangled in relative truths; its divine splendor to one for whom beauty is a relative concept?

If we say that our universe, with all its richness and diversity—the apples in the basket, the loved ones around us, the Beethoven quartet on the stereo, the stars in the nocturnal sky—at every instant emanates from, rests in, and is reabsorbed into our self-revealing presence, our words still fail to adequately describe the immediacy of this unveiling.

They fail to do so because they still convey the notion of a transcendental presence from which this universe emanates as a distinct entity, whereas such a distinction is nowhere to be found in this unveiling. Our self-luminous background, which is the common thread of the dialogues in this book, constitutes the sole reality of all that is.

# 1

## The Art of Not Expecting

*What can we expect from our meetings?*

Expect to learn not to expect. Not expecting is a great art. When we no longer live in expectation, we live in a new dimension. We are free. Our mind is free. Our body is free. Intellectually understanding that we are not a psycho-physical entity in the process of becoming is a necessary first step, but this understanding is not sufficient. The fact that we are not the body must become an actual experience that penetrates and liberates our muscles, our internal organs, and even the cells in our body. An intellectual understanding that corresponds to a sudden, fleeting recognition of our true nature brings us a flash of pure joy, but when we have full knowledge that we are not the body, we are that joy.

*How can I perceive in a sensory fashion that I am not the body?*

We all experience moments of happiness which are accompanied by a perception of expansion and relaxation. Before this body perception, we were in a state of timelessness, an unadulterated, causeless joy, of which the physical sensation was simply the ultimate consequence. This joy perceives itself. At that moment, we were not a limited body in space, not a person. We knew ourselves in the immediacy of the moment. We all know this felicity without

cause. When we explore deeply what we call our body, we discover that its very substance is this joy. We no longer have the need nor the taste nor even the possibility of finding happiness in external objects.

*How is this deep exploration accomplished?*

Don't reject the body sensations and emotions that present themselves to you. Let them blossom fully in your awareness without any goal or any interference from the will. Progressively, the potential energy imprisoned in muscular tensions liberates itself; the dynamism of the psychosomatic structure exhausts itself; and the return to fundamental stability takes place. This purification of body sensation is a great art. It requires patience, determination, and courage. It finds its expression at the level of sensation through a gradual expansion of the body into the surrounding space, and a simultaneous penetration of the somatic structure by that space. That space is not experienced as a simple absence of objects. When the attention frees itself from perceptions that hold it in thrall, it discovers itself as that self-luminous space which is the true substance of the body. At this moment, the duality between body and space is abolished. The body is expanded to the size of the universe and contains all things tangible and intangible in its heart. Nothing is external to it. We all have this body of joy, this awakened body, this body of universal welcoming. We are all complete, with no missing parts. Just explore your kingdom and take possession of it knowingly. Do not live any longer in that wretched shack of a limited body.

*I have brief glimpses of this realm in moments of stillness. Then I go to work and find myself in an environment which is neither royal nor peaceful, and my serenity immediately disappears. How can I keep my equanimity permanently?*

Everything that appears in awareness is nothing other than awareness: co-workers, clients, superiors, absolutely everything, including the premises, the furniture, and the equipment. First understand this intellectually, then verify that this is so. There comes a moment where this feeling of intimacy, this benevolent space around you, no longer goes away; you find yourself at home everywhere, even in the packed waiting room of a train station. You only leave it when you go into the past or future. Don't stay in that hovel. This immensity awaits you right here, at this very moment. Being already acquainted

with its presence, and once having tasted the harmony underlying appearances, let the perceptions of the external world and your body sensations unfold freely in your welcoming awareness, until the moment that the background of plenitude reveals itself spontaneously.

This reversal of perspective is analogous to that which allows the sudden recognition of an angel's face in a tree, in one of those early twentieth century prints that so delight children. At first we only see the tree. Then, informed by a caption under the picture that an angel is hiding there, we begin a meticulous examination of the foliage until we finally see the angel. What is important is to know that there is an angel, where it is hiding, and to have once experienced the tree change its form and turn into the angel's face, as the image recomposes to confide the secret of the picture to us. Once the way is paved, subsequent reversals of perspective are easier and easier until we see the angel and the tree simultaneously, so to speak. In the same way, once we have recognized our true nature, the remaining distinctions between ignorance and awakening become progressively blurred and yield to the fundamental "suchness" of being.

*I am beginning to realize that I am all gummed up in my body. My sensations and my impressions are of being a separate individual.*

How does this gummed up feeling manifest?

*I feel as if I were hypnotized by my pride and emotions, especially my anger, and by the agitation in my body.*

Right. As soon as you become aware that you are hypnotized, the hypnosis ceases.

*How is that? This is unclear to me.*

Ask yourself who is hypnotized. Inquire deeply. Who is it? Where is it? You will discover that it isn't possible to find such an entity. If you explore your mind and your body, you will find a few concepts that you identify with, like: "I am a woman," "I am a human being," "I am a lawyer." You can also find certain sensations in your body, certain areas that are more opaque, more solid, that you identify with as well. But, when you look more closely, it becomes obvious that you are not

this sensation in your chest, nor this thought of being a woman, since feelings and thoughts come and go, and what you really are is permanent. At this very moment, the hypnosis ends. The occurrence of these thoughts and feelings is less of a problem than your identification with them. As soon as you become aware of them, you distance yourself. You are free. In this freedom, you do not locate yourself anywhere. It is important to stay in this non-localization, and not follow the normal tendency to take a new identity as soon as you let go of the old one, like a monkey who doesn't let go of a branch before latching onto another.

You will discover how wonderful it is to live in the air in this way, without hanging on, unattached. In the beginning, it seems a bit strange, although your new attitude doesn't constitute an obstacle to anything. You can still fulfill your functions as a mother or as a lawyer, feel your body, and so forth. In fact, to be nothing, in the air, nowhere, is very practical. It simplifies life a great deal. Don't be content to merely understand. Put your understanding into practice. Try being nobody. Let go of the branches.

*Isn't it hard after that to come back into your body and live daily life?*

You never were in your body, so the question of coming back into it doesn't come up. Your body is in you. You are not in it. Your body appears to you as a series of sensory perceptions and concepts. You know you have a body when you feel it or when you think of it. These perceptions and thoughts appear in you, pure conscious attention. You don't appear in them, contrary to what your parents, your teachers, and nearly the whole of the society in which you live has taught you. In contradiction to your actual experience, they have taught you that you, consciousness, are in your body and that consciousness is a function emerging from the brain, an organ of your body. I suggest that you question these beliefs and that you inquire into the raw data of your own experience. Recall the recipes for happiness that were given to you by these same people when you were a child: study hard, get a good job, marry the right man, etc. If these recipes worked, you wouldn't be here asking all these questions. They don't work because they are based on a false perspective of reality, a perspective that I am suggesting you question.

See for yourself, then, if you appear in your body or your mind, or if, on the contrary, they appear in you. It is a reversal of perspective analogous to the discovery of the angel in the tree. Even though this change seems minimal at first, it is a revolution with unimaginable and infinite consequences. If you honestly accept the possibility that the tree might actually be an angel, the angel will reveal itself to you and your life will become magical.

*Can you speak about living intuitively from the heart?*

Don't be a person. Don't be anything. Having understood that you are no one, live according to this knowledge. When the idea or sensation of being a person no longer deceives you, whether you are thinking or not, whether you are acting or not, you live the truth from the fullness of the heart.

*At this point, am I in right relationship with myself and with the world?*

Oh, yes. You are in right relationship which is that of inclusion. The world as well as your body and your mind are included in your true self. Love is inclusion. Understanding is an intermediate step, but the final destination, the true center, is the heart.

*Is the heart the place between this branch and the next, to use the analogy of the monkey?*

If you let go of the branch to which you are clinging without catching hold of another, you fall into the heart. You have to be willing to die. Let everything you know slip away, everything you have been taught, everything you possess, including your life, or at least everything that you think at this stage is your life. This requires courage. It is a kind of suicide.

*Is it really like that? For example, do you remember the moments that preceded your recognition?*

Yes.

*Was it like that?*

Yes.

*Thank you. Before that did you have any idea what was going to happen?*

Yes and no. Yes, because I felt the invitation. No, because, up until that point, I had only known relative happiness, relative truth, relative knowledge, and I could not have imagined the absolute, the ineffable. The Self is beyond all concept, all projection. That is why we can't steer ourselves to it under our own steam, and must wait for it to solicit us. But, when it invites us, we must say yes joyfully, without hesitation. The decision belongs to us. It is the only decision in which we truly have a free choice.

*One of the reasons I postpone making myself available to the invitation is that I fear my life will be radically changed.*

Oh, yes. It will be.

*My family, as well?*

Your family, too. Everything will be changed.

*I am afraid that people will leave me.*

I can assure you that you will regret nothing.

*Is it possible to have received the invitation and to have refused it?*

Yes. You are free.

*Will I be invited again?*

Yes. Be ready. Be available. You are available when you understand that there is nothing that you can do on your own to get to the King. When you acknowledge your total powerlessness, you become an empty room. As soon as you become an empty room, you are a sanctuary. So the King can enter, take the throne, and grace you with immortal presence.

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*You have said that there is nothing I can do to get rid of this ego that sticks to me.*

There is nothing that the person, that fragmentary entity you believe yourself to be, can do.

*Does this imply that all spiritual practice is useless as long as I believe in that?*

Exactly. A practice that comes out of the idea of being a physical or mental being can't be called spiritual. It is a process of acquisition that takes you away from the real. What you really are can't be acquired because you already are it. The ego is impermanent. It is a repetitive thought associated with emotions, body sensations, and reactions. When you are moved by the beauty of a piece of music, by the splendor of a sunset, or by the delicacy of an act of love, the ego leaves you. In that moment you are open and complete. If you try to improve your ego by practicing various disciplines, like a collector incessantly increasing the value of his collection with new and more sublime acquisitions, you will become more and more attached to it, and end up dissatisfied and living in isolation.

*Is this disappearance of the ego gradual or sudden?*

You already know who you are. Even someone in whom interest in the deepest reality has not yet awakened knows moments of joy. During these moments, the ego is not present. They emanate from our true being, which is joy itself. Everyone recognizes joy directly. That by which the Self knows the Self is the Self itself. Only being has access to being. Only joy has access to joy, eternity to eternity. What exiles us from the Garden of Eden and plunges us into a frantic search is the erroneous idea that this true being, this joy, and this eternity are not present. The reabsorption of the ego into beingness, which appears, from the temporal point of view, like a letting go followed by a sudden illumination, puts an end to this search and this frenzy.

*What brings about this reabsorption?*

There is no answer to this question on the level on which it is asked, since the effect is already in the cause and the cause is still in the effect. Like the beggar in the fairy tale and the magician from whom he learns that he is the king's son, certain apparently fortuitous meetings can acquaint us with our true identity. At the announcement of this good news, this gospel, in the proper sense of the word, a profound instinct rumbles at the depth of our being and puts us on the trail which leads to the ultimate. This inner movement corresponds to a veiled recognition of our true being, and the promise of joyous serenity that accompanies it channels desire into an unknown direction. This recognition does not refer to an objective and temporal reality. It is not located at the level of memory or of time. Thus, this grace can't be forgotten. It solicits us more and more often, and each new recognition increases our desire for the divine. Like the wanderer lost on a cold winter's night who, detecting from the red glow through the window of an inn the presence of a fire within, pushes open the door and warms himself for a few moments by the hearth, we enter the sanctuary and rest for a moment in the warmth of the sacred light before setting off again into the night. Finally, when our desire for the absolute overcomes our fear of death, we offer the pretense of our personal existence to the sacrificial fire of infinite consciousness. Henceforth, nothing stands in the way of awakening any longer and it progressively unfolds its splendor on all the planes of phenomenal existence, which, little by little, reveal their underlying non-temporal reality, like the gaze of Shams of Tabriz that, "was never cast upon some fleeting object without rendering it eternal."

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*How can I overcome my fear of seeing the truth, which is an obstacle to knowing my true nature?*

In the first place, be happy that you are aware of this visceral fear, since most people repress and avoid it. As soon as it begins to show its face in a moment of solitude or inactivity, they turn on the television, go see a friend, or throw themselves into some kind of activity. Discovering your fear is, therefore, a crucial first step.

*I don't know if I discovered it. Perhaps I simply sense its presence.*

Live with it, be interested in it, don't repress it. Adopt a benevolent attitude toward it, an attitude of letting it come, letting it go. Take it for what it is, an amalgam of thoughts and body sensations. Ask yourself, "Who is afraid?" and you will see the fear-thought depart, leaving only some residues of localized anxiety, the fear-sensation at the somatic level. Basically, all of that is just a show of which you are the spectator. Contemplate that, and contemplate your own reactions, your flight, and your denial. The recognition of your denial is the beginning of acceptance, come what may. In this way, you take the stance of the contemplator, which is your natural stance anyway.

So, everything unfolds spontaneously. Fear is your ego; the monster you cart along in your thoughts and body sensations; the usurper that keeps you apart from the joyous realm that belongs to you. See it in its totality. Don't be afraid of it, even if its features are terrifying. Draw the strength to look at it from your thirst for the absolute, for freedom. When you begin to feel it, think, "Come here, fear. Show yourself to me. Make yourself at home. I am out of your reach." The effectiveness of this method derives from the fact that fear is something perceived, therefore limited. The longest snake in the world ends somewhere. Once it is entirely out of the tall grass, seen in its entirety, you are out of danger because it can no longer attack you by surprise. Likewise, when you see before you the entirety of your fear, when there is no part of it that is hidden from you, there is no part of you that can identify with it. It is an object that has become unglued from you. The umbilical cord of ignorance by which the ego is nourished is no longer operational. This phantom "I," no longer being fed, can't continue to maintain itself. It dies in the explosion of your eternal freedom.



*Once we have recognized our deepest reality, a memory of that recognition remains with us permanently. We begin to be aware when the ego intervenes and we can train it to keep itself at a distance to allow us to be more and more open to what we are. Could you comment about this?*

It is useless to try to train or eliminate it. When you train or eliminate it, who is the agent of this activity?

*The ego eliminates itself.*

How could that be possible? This attempt, on the contrary, perpetuates it. The ego is an obstacle only insofar as we pay attention to it. Rather than address this search from the negative side, the ego and its elimination, start from the positive side. The recognition of which you were speaking leaves a memory of fullness in you. This memory refers to a non-mental experience. It does not come from the memory that can only record objective elements. If you allow yourself to be guided by it, if you respond by allowing your whole being to be absorbed by its call, the sacred emotion that it arouses in you will lead you directly to the threshold of your timeless presence. Live with this remembrance. Forget the objective circumstances that preceded or followed this recognition and stay with the remembering itself. Love it as your most precious possession and remember that the source from which it emanates is always present, here and now. It is the only place to find it, here and now: not in thought, before thought, before thinking of it. Don't even think of it . . .

*Simply let what is be . . .*

Don't speak of it. Don't formulate it. Don't evaluate it; the intervention of thought distances you from it. Don't even try. You are still making too much effort. It is useless. Surrender and be what you already are, absolute stillness.



*I want to be here today, and I have chosen to be here, but what can I learn in the presence of a master that I can't learn by myself?*

Everything you learn, you learn by yourself. I can't learn for you. Every circumstance, every event in your life teaches you. What you can learn by asking this question is that there is no master in the personal sense to which you are referring. On that level, I am not your master. I am simply happy to be your friend. The true master isn't a person. It is our Self, the Self of all beings. Surrender to it, love only it, be interested in nothing but it. I feel its presence vibrating in those who come to me with the pure intention of knowing it, and they recognize this presence in me. One could say that this presence recognizes itself in the apparent other by a kind of sympathetic resonance. The divine in me recognizes the divine in you in the same instant and by the same movement through which the divine in you recognizes the divine in me. Under these conditions, who is the master and who is the disciple? Who is you and who is me?

*I am not sure if this is a question. I was sitting here methodically trying to be calm. As soon as you came in, everything suddenly became very still. I felt like a dying person desperately trying to catch my last breath. My first thought was a marvelous feeling of astonishment. Then, I had the impression that each subsequent thought was an effort to escape the silence that was spontaneously invading me . . .*

When you are invited like that, you should surrender completely. Don't try to know where you are in all of this. Don't try to control the situation. It can't be done. Even the first thought that takes note of this experience is already too much. It prevents a complete letting go. It is not enough to receive the royal invitation; you still have to go to the palace and taste the banquet that is your destiny. The truth-seeker in you is continuously involved in controlling your thoughts, feelings, and actions. At a certain point, even he will disappear, since he is only a concept, a thought. He isn't you. You are that freedom, that immensity in which the seeker appears and disappears. You are what you are looking for, or, more precisely, that immensity looks for itself in you. Abandon yourself to it without reservation.

*To what extent are we free to determine our lives?*

As individuals or as what we truly are?

*As individuals.*

In that case, we are entirely conditioned. Therefore, there is no free will. It appears as though we exercise free choice, but we are only reacting like automatons, running through the same patterns of our bio-sociological heritage without respite, and invariably having the same old reactions, like a vending machine dispensing soft drinks in a train station. As individuals, our freedom is illusory.

On the other hand, at the level of our deepest being, everything flows out of our freedom. Every thought and perception appears because we want it. We can't understand this at the level of thought, but we can experience it. When we are totally open to the unknown, the personal entity is absent. We then realize that the tangible and intelligible universe arises out of this openness in the eternal present. We want, create, and are at every moment, everything in the unity of awareness.

*You speak of being totally open to our thoughts and perceptions. How can we receive everything that presents itself to us in the midst of the frantic rhythm of modern life? Is it possible?*

Actually, you haven't the choice, because whatever you think, perceive, or do, you are open to it moment by moment. For example, when a thought arises, this thought is spontaneous, isn't it?

*I don't see what you are getting at.*

You didn't take any action in order to make the thought appear. Even if you made such an effort, this action itself would be another spontaneous thought. In fact, all things appear by themselves in consciousness, which is always in total openness. Consciousness never says, "I want this" or "I don't want that." It doesn't say anything because it continuously receives everything that arises in its field. When you say, "I want this" or "I don't want that" it is not consciousness that is talking, it is simply a thought arising from within itself. Then you say, "I wasn't open" and that is an upwelling of a new thought. The background of all this mental agitation is consciousness, always open, always welcoming. From the moment

you are alive, you are open. Openness is your nature. This is why it is so pleasant to find it; one feels at home, at ease, natural. You don't have to do anything to find yourself in openness, aside from understanding that it is your true nature, that you already are there. As soon as you establish yourself in witnessing consciousness, mundane agitation no longer has a hold on you. You understand the process by which it takes over, and through that understanding, you escape it.

You leap into another dimension. Familiarize yourself with it. See the impact of it on your mind and on your body. My words may seem to you mere ideas at the moment, but the day will come when they dissolve in you, and become a living understanding. The question of how to meditate, be open, or be happy will no longer come up because you will realize that you already are meditation, openness, and happiness.

*But we aren't aware of it!*

Inquire, find out for yourself. See if it is true that you are continuously aware. See if it is true that what you know yourself to be, fundamentally, is awareness. Don't take my assertions as established facts. Question them, and question your own beliefs as well. Also question the notion of a limited, personal consciousness. Live with these questions, and above all, live in the silent openness that follows each question, in the creative "I don't know." Into this openness come answers that modify and refine the initial questions little by little, making them more and more subtle, until they are cannot be formulated any longer. Let this residual dynamism exhaust itself in your welcoming attention, until the ultimate answer suddenly springs forth in you in all its splendor.



*Last night you used the adjective “uncolored” to qualify awareness. Where does love and compassion appear in this picture?*

The words we use to describe the indescribable have to be absorbed on the spot. If we use them out of context, they lose their flavor and we end up in apparent contradictions. A story regarding this comes to mind. A Ch'an master contradicted himself (seemingly) a good twelve times in the space of an hour. Exasperated, a disciple laid bare the succession of contradictions before the amused and benevolent gaze of the master, whose entire response, simply said, without trying to justify himself in any way, was, “Really, how strange and marvelous! I'll never understand why the truth is always contradicting itself!”

*I agree. Awareness is inexpressible. Is compassion equally beyond words?*

My remark concerned the first part of your question. First we have to find in ourselves the uncolored center that is perfect freedom and absolute autonomy. When, from that center, from that knowing, we cast our gaze toward the beings that surround us, not only do we see their bodies and perceive their minds, but we fly beyond psychosomatic boundaries directly to that uncolored, limitless place that is our common essence; there, where there is no other. From this uncolored center, action can unfold or not, depending upon circumstances. Action that follows from the understanding that we are, fundamentally, one being is full of compassion, beauty, and intelligence. It can manifest other qualities, but it can, when circumstances require, also don the color of compassion. Always in harmony with the current situation, it leaves no traces and frees those it touches. True compassion defies the preconceived ideas we have of it. It can seem strange, inappropriate, even brutal, but it is free, and that is its beauty. It is a tornado of freedom that blows where it will, erasing in its passage ephemeral attachments and false ideas, until only the indestructible remains: the true, the eternal.



*What can you tell us about intelligence?*

Ordinary intelligence is a cerebral function. It appears as the faculty of adaptation and organization. It allows complex problems to be handled by bringing into play a large quantity of givens. Linked to heredity and to acquired conditioning of the brain, it operates sequentially, in time. This kind of intelligence is responsible for performing math calculations, formulating logical arguments, or playing tennis. Operating like a super-computer, it excels in accomplishing repetitive tasks and may one day be surpassed by machines. Its source is memory, the known.

Intuitive intelligence appears as understanding and clarity. It is responsible for seeing simplicity in apparent complexity. It strikes directly, in the moment. Always creative, free of the known, it is at the heart of all scientific discoveries and great works of art. Its source is the supreme intelligence of timeless awareness.

When intuitive intelligence turns upon itself, trying to grasp its source, it loses itself in the instantaneous apperception of supreme intelligence. The recognition of that higher intelligence is an implosion that destroys the illusion that we are a personal entity.

*Does this recognition occur independently of someone's level of general intelligence?*

Yes. The presence of an intense desire for awakening is a sure sign that this recognition has taken place.

*Is the destruction of the ego induced by a gradual or a sudden awakening?*

The first moment of recognition already contains in it the germ of its fulfillment, in the same way that the seed already contains the flower, the tree, and the fruit. For a little while, the ego, stricken by the still partial vision of this intelligence, retains a semblance of life. At this stage, habit still maintains its old identifications, but an irreparable breach has slipped into the belief in our separate existence. One's heart is no longer in it, one could say, in all senses of the word. Intermittent recurrences of this recognition widen this gap even further until the moment when the ego, which is a perceived object, becomes completely objective, prior to dissolving before our very eyes, making way for the invasion of the ineffable.

Following this awakening, we find ourselves free of fear and desire. Free of fear because, having reintegrated our immortal self, the specter of death leaves us forever. Free of desire because, knowing the absolute fullness of being, the old attraction objects held for us ceases spontaneously. Old physical and mental habits that derived from the former belief in a personal existence can manifest for yet a while, but all identification with objects perceived or thought is impossible henceforth.

When contemplated in the amazing neutrality of awareness, these habits die, one by one, without their occasional recurrence triggering a return of the illusion of the ego.

*What are the signs by which we can recognize higher intelligence?*

Thoughts, feelings, and actions that flow from higher intelligence refer to their source, the self. As they fade out back into their source, they leave us on the shore of the absolute, like the foam that a wave deposits on the sand. The thought that thinks truth proceeds from truth, and brings us back to truth. This thought has many different facets. It poses apparently diverse questions like: What is happiness? What is God? Who am I? All these questions originate from a common source: from eternal joy, from the divine, from our self.

When these questions, permeated by the fragrance of truth, invite you, make room for them, make time for them, surrender to them, let yourself be carried by them. These thoughts are like the footprint of God in your soul. Let it proceed where it will. The one in whom these thoughts have awakened is very fortunate. No obstacle can prevent him access to the truth. Once the desire for the ultimate has grasped you, the entire universe cooperates in the fulfillment of this desire.

*Are you in this state of fulfillment at this moment?*

There is no one in that state. This non-state is the absence of the person.

*Do you go in and out?*

It isn't a state.

*Are you awake in that state?*

This non-state is awake to itself. It is awareness. I am awareness, you are awareness.

*In that case, you are aware that everything is in its place?*

From the point of view of awareness, everything is awareness, thus everything is in its place. Nothing is tragic. All is light, all is presence.

*Given that we are light and that the things around us are also that light, do you see things differently from us?*

No. I see everything exactly the way you do, but there are things you believe you see that I don't see. I don't see a personal entity in the picture. Even if an old habit arising from memory comes up, it is totally objectivized. It is simply part of the picture. It is not what I am. I don't take myself as something thought of or perceived. That is all. You can do the same thing. You are free. It is enough to just try. Do it! Right now!

*How do I go about it?*

Each time you take yourself to be an object, for example, a body or a man with a certain profession, be aware of it.

*So there is a self at a higher level that observes the situation. Is that the perspective?*

That is the intellectual understanding of the perspective, not its reality. The reality is your welcoming attention, not the concept of your welcoming attention, or the concept of yourself as welcoming attention. It is simply your luminous presence, without tension or resistance, welcoming moment by moment the thought or sensation that is coming into being, letting it unfold freely, and letting it reabsorb into itself without leaving any traces. This original light is not an absence but a fullness. Surrender yourself to it. Let yourself be overcome by it.