



## UNIQUE SELF EMERGENCE

WEEK OF MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

### *Awakening to True Self Exploration*

According to the mystics East and West the spiritual journey begins with a transformative experience that serves to awaken us to the reality that we are not separate, “skin encapsulated egos.” These experiences vary greatly . . . some painful, some ecstatic, some powerful, some subtle, some gradual and some sudden. No matter, the importance of the experience lies in its power to awaken us to a new reality – the reality that we are not separate selves. Take some time to consider your own awakening – yes, you’ve had such experiences. On the following page you will find a list of ways people have historically received a glimpse of True Self. Read them to spark your thinking before you write. Then use these questions as a guide but write whatever arises as you consider the experience.

- Describe the experience(s) . . . even if you’re not sure about them.
- How old were you?
- Describe how you felt and thought . . .
- Was there a physical component to the experience?
- Did you resist the experience or surrender to it?
- How did you make sense of the experience at the time?
- How do you make sense of the experience now?
- In what ways did it change you?
- Looking back were there other experiences that you would now call awakening experiences?
- What practices, if any, do you currently use to help you remember that you are part of the whole rather than simply a Separate Self?



## *Fourteen Core Paths to True Self (Marc Gafni)*

1. Contemplation of the reality of the world
2. Meditation
3. Chanting
4. Dance
5. Pointing out instructions that lead beyond thoughts, feelings, sensation
6. Ecstatic Prayer
7. Outrageous love as part of evolutionary unfolding
8. Outrageous pain that breaks the heart open which opens to deeper reality
9. Sacred moments (time of transition, birth) where you sense the larger field of meaning and you can actually feel the invisible lines of connection that are holding you in every moment
10. Nature mysticism
11. Music
12. The experience of sacred community where the intimacy of the evolutionary we space reveals the true self.
13. Sex
14. The testimonies of trusted friends/teachers who reveal the experience of True Self. In the same way that we trust people that tell us the advance structures in calculus, we can trust the mystics, saints and sages.

Comments on #14:

It is the testimony of these saints and sages over time and space, who did not know each other that allows us to say that spiritual traditions have the same or similar depth structures though their surface structures (ritual, prayers, dogma) differ. The shared depth structures are the core of what has become known as the perennial philosophy. Here are the seven core ideas that every great traditions share, not dogma but what we call dharma, meaning a direct experience of truth. This direct experience is open to everyone who engages in the sustained intimacy of practice. You can actually

participate in the infinity of intimacy that is Essence or True Self. These are what Huston Smith famously called in his book of the same name, the Forgotten Truths . . .

1. Spirit is utterly real.
2. To find spirit you go within to engage in an interior search necessary because we live in a world of separation, the world of duality in which we are contracted.
3. This is not an accident, a problem or a tragedy. It is not bad. It is the nature of reality to fall away from/contract from the conscious realization of spirit.
4. There is a way out of this contraction as you expand (let go of contraction) which is called the path of return or liberation.
5. In order to journey this path of liberation you have to practice, as it is by engaging with direct practice in the world of the interior that you find your way out, to liberation, to rebirth, to enlightenment. Enlightenment is the utterly direct experience of yourself, the supreme liberation.
6. Liberation puts an end of unnecessary suffering/contraction and moves us to the new reality where we can actually move to the self that is at home in the cosmos and access all the flow of love that lives in us, through us and as us.
7. You become an outrageous lover!

These are the seven core truths shared, in one language or another, by every subtle and speculative mind that has ever lived. Why would you want to walk in the world and not know this?!



BEGIN THE DAY AFTER YOU'VE COMPLETED THE AWAKENING TO TRUE SELF EXPLORATION  
(Continue until March 28<sup>th</sup>.)

### *Awakening to Your True Self Practice*

Trance-end your personality and identify with your essence; you are part of an infinitely larger context; you are part of the seamless coat of the Universe. You are One with the larger field of love, intelligence, and creativity underlying All-That-Is.

Your Unique Self: The Radical Path to Personal

This practice's objective is to awaken you to who you really are, beyond the stage of development called your Separate Self that shows up as your False Self Pattern. This is called your True Self or Essence. Engaging in this practice will allow you to cultivate a felt sense and a living memory of who you truly are, such that you can return to it, anytime, anyplace.

There are many ways and paths that lead to the experience of True Self; yet, the common denominator to all realization of True Self is the awareness that there is never anything between who you think you are and the ever-present Suchness of True Self. Right now, in this very moment, True Self is present and complete; no further away than your own present boundless awareness.

Try it now:

- Stop whatever you are doing; relax into your own presence as you have been practicing with your previous practices and let everything be as it is.
- Become aware of your body and the space it occupies wherever you are.
- Become aware of the aspects of the space around you.
- Hear the sounds, feel the air coming in and out of your nostrils, become aware of your own breathing and feel the energy circulating in your body.
- Ask yourself: "Who is it that's breathing?"

- Become aware of the stream of thoughts that occupy your mind, letting them come and go; whenever you get carried away with a thought, see that you got carried away and bring your attention back to awareness of "what is."
- Ask yourself: "Who is it that is having these thoughts?" • Become aware of your emotions and physical sensations.
- Ask yourself: "Who is it that is being aware of these emotions and sensations?"
- Become aware of your own awareness.
- Ask yourself: "Who is it that is being aware?"
- Now, rest into the boundless awareness.
- Ask yourself: Does this awareness have any limits? Does it have a beginning? Does it have an end?
- While resting in boundless awareness, relax back and allow everything to be as it is. See that you are always already resting in "what is", even when you are not aware of it.

Resting in boundless awareness can last a few seconds, or much longer, however, you can always go back to it anytime you realize that it has slipped out of your awareness. In fact, returning to this Being-ness, what the Buddhists have called "One Taste," again and again and again, IS one of the ways to experience True Self.

This practice has two parts:

1. Daily, you will engage in the above process for 15 minutes or more. (use self-guided meditation above)
2. In addition, please take one minute 5 times each day to drop into the True Self space. Use an app on your phone or your computer, or your daily routine as a reminder (for example, each time you go the bathroom during your working day!) It is the repetition that supports you to become familiar with the "taste" of Being. Whenever your timer reminds you, stop whatever you are doing and step back from all you are experiencing by asking yourself, "Who is it that is being aware right now?" Rest in boundless awareness for a few moments and then return to whatever you are doing.

Daily Reflection:

Remember the One Taste of True Self you had during the day. Feel the aftertaste right now reinfuse your cells, body, mind spirit with its unique energy and light. Feel that your whole consciousness is taking it in and imprinting its memory into your being. Cultivating True Self is "Being Faithful to Your Own Memory."

- What is the “taste” of True Self like for you?
- How did you experience the “aftertaste” as you did the self-guided meditation and/or the one-minute practice today?
- What supports you to hold the aftertaste?

Weekly reflection:

- What does remembering that you are part of the seamless Oneness of the Universe allow for in your life, as the habit of returning to your True Self many times each day builds up with the practice?



## UNIQUE SELF EMERGENCE

WEEK OF MARCH 21<sup>ST</sup>

### *Detours and Destinations Exploration<sup>3</sup>*

Most, if not all, of us have chapters in our lives that feel like detours, or worse. A bad job, a nightmare relationship, a bout with drink, a regrettable move -- sometimes all at once! Such times are characterized by anguish, or anger, or shame, or desperation -- again, sometimes all at once. Perhaps now is one such time. Perhaps a dominant thought these days is "How do I get out of this and move on to a better place?"

Perhaps not. Maybe this is a good time, with only an occasional look back at a particularly bad detour, a reminiscence tinged with shame or remorse. If we can tell the story of such a time, we tell it with justifiable anger or sadness.

Either way, whether the detours are in the rear view mirror or squarely in the here and now, our common reaction is to push them away from our experience. Life would be, or would have been, better without the detour.

But that's just one level of understanding, and not necessarily the only one, or the "true" one. On one level of consciousness, at the level of separate self, it's true. On a higher level of consciousness, you can hold the story differently. At this higher level of consciousness, you can behold the amazing realization that each such detour, no matter how painful, is or was essential to the unfolding, the realization, of your Unique Self. In a non-dual understanding, everything is as it needs to be.

Marc Gafni illustrates this realization beautifully in his book, *Soul Prints* . . .

Every morning, the water carrier of Stanislav would walk from the well at the edge of town through the same shtetl streets, toting his two buckets of water to his customers.

Day in and day out, he performed his routine with a simple joy.

One day he was particularly joyous and burst out in song along the way. But his song was interrupted by the sound of weeping from one of his buckets. The bucket called up to him, "How can you sing so joyously? Are you blind? Don't you realize what a bum bucket you've got in your hand? Don't you realize that for years now I've been leaking?"

---

<sup>3</sup> This exploration is adapted from an assignment created by Marc Gafni and Tom Goddard, and used in Week 3 of the Awakening Your Unique Self course.