

AFTER AWAKENING

A GUIDE TO FURTHER EVOLUTION

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FIRST EDITION

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Part 1

THE ESSENTIAL AWAKENING

ESSENTIAL: *Absolutely necessary; extremely important. Fundamental or central to the nature of something or someone.*

AWAKENING: *An act or moment of becoming suddenly aware of something. The beginning or rousing of something.*

Disclaimer

The truth of what we are in our essence, and indeed what the Universe is in essence, naturally puts an end to that which is false. In the destruction of false beliefs and images created in our mental structures about ourselves and our worlds, one can enter into a period of confusion. This journey is not for the faint of heart or for an unsound mind.

Chapter I - How Minds Evolve; Types of Awakening

Evolution can be delayed but it cannot be avoided.

The premise is to ask and contemplate a few essential questions that can help unravel our primary essence from one's mind-made self. This seemingly simple task has large ramifications for the well-being of us and others in the world; it is the next step in human evolution.

Some historians suggest that the main reason why our branch of humanity rose up from the ranks of mediocrity and succeeded in dominating the natural world was down to the evolution of our minds, our psyches. Homo sapiens developed the capacity for abstract and symbolic thought, which allowed our ancestors to communicate and coordinate in large numbers.

This evolution into the dimension of psyche aided our ancestors and ultimately led us to this juncture of material advancement in this technological society that we experience and appreciate today.

Alas, our minds have grown compulsive and dominant. Almost like a virus we have lost ourselves in thought, in our opinions and in our beliefs, causing ourselves and others unnecessary suffering.

Our minds have become fragmented and in need of unification. Inside the average human mind is a host of separate identities and beliefs, many with an emotive and energetic root enmeshed within the body. What is required now is to evolve out of our mind-dominated lives and this mind-dominated world that we have found ourselves in. To begin that journey we must recognise our true essence, the source at the heart of all our experiences. You are not separate from that source. It is not confined to our human bodies; rather, that source contains and manifests itself as all that is.

Throughout our years we grow and evolve in a variety of ways. As infants and young children we are like sponges, soaking up our experiences. The world, our parents, family, friends, neighbours, teachers, religious groups, culture, society at large, the media, nature; every influence plays its part in creating impressions upon us, providing us with knowledge to survive and thrive, yet also conditioning our minds in ways that might cause us unnecessary suffering.

These experiences essentially program us, they condition us. These programs and conditionings can and do update and change as we move through life. Sometimes

these changes can be gradual or imperceptible, and at other times they happen suddenly or through trauma.

These may have been crude or violent experiences or simply receiving a new piece of information that challenged one's paradigm and beliefs. The way we thought about or saw the world changed and it was so jarring for a part of our mind that we had to rethink the way we imagined the world worked or appeared to be.

Our minds can cage us into a box. As we have evolved from baby to adult our mind has created a map of what it believes we are and how it believes the world works and what our place is within it. If and when this map gets challenged, the mind in question can awaken out of its idea of itself or its created reality. We then update our map with a new image and understanding.

Our world is made up from our perceptions and it is matrix like. A challenge to our perception of the world creates a ripple in that matrix reality. Minds can hold a false image of what they think they are and what they think this world is.

Essentially reality is what it is regardless of how our minds interpret it. Truth is Truth; our thoughts and beliefs are layers we build on top of reality to explain what it is and how to function effectively within it.

For some in life, moments of great change are moved through in a smooth, seamless way. 'Aha' moments may be precipitated by long periods of exploration or excitement, seclusion or contemplation. For others, profound change can activate addiction or destructive behaviours and, for some, mental disintegration and hospitalisation.

Howsoever each mind reacts to these life-changing events, they are an inevitable part of life and evolution. Fundamentally these events help us to grow, shift and evolve.

Indeed the world as a whole could be looked upon as a vast and intricate computer program that is designed through all of its unique and bewildering ways to mature and evolve the minds of those who interact with it. That's us. Humanity. Doomed to learn, grow and awaken, and continue to evolve. Sometimes joyously, often painfully.

Here are some examples of experiences that can cause these awakening and restructuring events:

A family member or close friend dies.

Your parents get divorced.

You get divorced.

A dark secret is brought to your attention.

Debilitating health issues affect you or a loved one.

A life-threatening accident befalls you or a loved one.

A religious or mystical experience.

A 'near death' experience.

An experience during meditation.

A drug experience.

An experience or 'aha' moment precipitated through learning new information, be it religious, scientific, political or otherwise.

A collapsing of a strong inherited belief or paradigm shift.

Being persecuted and lied to relentlessly for a sustained period of time.

Such moments, events or periods in our lives can occur gradually or unexpectedly.

That is, they can be a shock to the system and to the mental map that the mind has created of its reality about itself and the world. Sometimes these events bring about the Essential Awakening shift, although this is rare.

For the vast majority of humanity these important events in our lives cause our minds to take stock, create new maps, and mature.

Most humans have lived their whole lives in ignorance of the essential truth about what they are in essence. Evolution can be delayed but it cannot be avoided indefinitely.

Every human, every mind, knowingly or unknowingly, is searching for this essential truth. So far we have been looking in the wrong places.

For instance:

Some scientists in their field of study find something new and talk about 'awakening' to this new truth.

Others might talk about 'awakening' with regards to the planet and the human impact on the environment.

Some also talk about 'awakening' in a sociopolitical context related to the deceitful activities of their governments, media or powerful corporations.

Many also may talk of 'awakening' in the context of their cultural religious language.

All new insights that cause a person to have a paradigm shift in their belief system are valuable and might cause a profound change in the person and in their choices and lifestyle.

However, none of these things have anything to do with the essential awakening.

The essential awakening has nothing to do with the outside world of people and things.

It has everything to do with you; what you are and what reality is in its essence.

Chapter II - Background and Questions to Contemplate

***Minds learn as they evolve. They change and grow with experiences.
But what knows the Mind?***

Science can now tell us a lot of strange sounding and wonderful things about what we are, how we function, how the brain and other organs work in relation to the world, and what they think reality is and isn't. Science is really an evolving system for understanding ourselves and our reality.

So from this perspective, these chapters are guiding you to undertake a scientific exploration of your true essence. Some may describe the process of exploring our true essence as 'spiritual'; however, it can be approached logically and scientifically.

Modern scientists occasionally come out with statements such as:

- 'When we examine what matter inherently is, we only find empty space.'
- '99.99999% of your body is empty space.'
- 'Your brain interprets the world. Your brain only ever sees your interpretation of objects, never the actual object.'
- 'Your brain makes decisions up to seven seconds before you consciously realise it in your mind.'
- 'We don't know what consciousness is. It cannot be found in the brain or as a by-product of the brain. The subject that looks for consciousness cannot be separated from that consciousness.'
- 'We might be living in a computer simulation.'

Such quotes highlight that some scientists are saying that the world and our perception of it is not what we think it is. The world is a projection. Our stories about it are just that, stories in our minds.

Some neuroscientists even suggest the 'I' of the mind is a construct, a narrative add-on. Like a PR specialist the mind announces after the brain has made its decisions, 'I did this', 'I did that', 'I'm going to do this'. We also hear from those around us, 'You did this or that', 'You're good at this', 'You're bad at that'. Our minds take all of this feedback and create a sense of self within; it is a mind-made sense of self. This mind-made self uses the conglomeration of voices and opinions and beliefs to embolden itself. Crucially it feels real, our thoughts appear to be truth, but in reality our thoughts about ourselves are not absolute truth.

The mind-made self thinks we are our thoughts and feelings.

In essence we are that which is *aware* of our thoughts and feelings.

The mind-made self is often a mixture of many different parts, often the strongest parts of the mind, like the inner critic or the judge or the pleaser or the inner perfectionist or the pusher. These parts mould together appearing as a 'me'.

We become programmed to look to our thoughts for answers, even for an answer to the question 'What am I?'

Some scientists will also now tell us that the universe is one organic whole; that all life, although appearing as a multitude of separate things, has at its core an essence that is one and the same.

As opposed to a world of human beings who feel somewhat isolated from one another and apart from the natural world, we are moving towards a knowing of that inherent essence that unites all beings and all things.

The next stage in our human evolution is to awaken out of our mind-made selves. This process is revolutionising people's lives and world.

To do this you can begin by contemplating the questions below.

There is a general theme that unites almost all of humanity; a need for happiness, wellness, peace, love, and a sense of fulfilment.

However that desire or goal is described, the pursuit of it is often, if not always, in the wrong direction.

People look for it in relationships, in their love partnership, with their children or parents or friends, in substances, in states of mind, from activities, in holidays, new experiences, in accumulating more wealth or in accomplishments, in ideas, institutions or in material possessions.

Some of these things are important, yet at best they will prove to be a shadow of the true goal.

All of these things are objects, objects that can be known, attained, loved, created, owned, or experienced, but objects all the same.

For now we are more interested in the subject of experience. The knower of our experience.

That subject, that knower, is of course you.

The true you. Not the idea of what you are. Not your appearance, gender, names, roles, opinions, likes or dislikes. Nothing to do with the concept of who you are as a personality. Nothing physical or mental.

I'm pointing you towards the true essence of what you are. That which you have always been and always will be. From before the birth of your human body until the death of the human body and beyond.

The purest truth, the purest gift is to be in touch with and to know one's true essence. To knowingly know it. This is the Essential Awakening.

Through knowing our true essence, we will know the essence of all other people and all other things.

It is the golden key, the gemstone at the heart of all mystery. It is the principal essential 'aha'.

So now ask yourself seriously these following questions and carefully contemplate the answers.

Contemplate the questions experientially.

Only one of these questions needs work for you. So if any particular question strikes you or moves you deeply then stay with it for a while.

Take time with the questions. Mull them gently, slowly, deeply, seriously, experientially.

Now ask yourself:

Am I conscious?

Am I aware?

Am I aware that I am aware?

Am I here now?

Is what I am always present?

Is my awareness of this moment continuous?

Is the past or future just a thought, an image or an emotion, experienced now in the present moment?

What is it about me, beyond my name and form, that has continuously remained the same from birth until this moment?

Do I exist?

What exists?

Whatever it is I truly am, must I be present here and now?

Am I aware, the knower of this moment however it appears?

What is this knowing substance of experience made out of?

What is me and what is my mind?

Do I know my mind or does my mind know me?

What am I exactly?

What is the I that knows my thoughts?

Where do my thoughts appear?

How is thinking known?

Where is my mind situated?

Am I this body or more than just this body?

Am I this personality or the one that knows this personality?

Am I my changing emotions or sensations?

Rather than say, 'I have consciousness', is it not truer to say, 'I am consciousness, always present, always aware'?

What am I in experience now, without looking to the mind or to thought for an answer?

What am I in experience right now, without vocalising an answer or thinking an answer?

Am I aware of my awareness?

Absorb my mind.

I am here.

I am now.

I am.

These questions can be pondered anytime anywhere.

Keep returning and asking yourself these questions until recognition dawns.

Chapter III – Further Questions and Experiments

Love is knowing the truth of what I, others, and all things are.

Contemplating these questions inevitably connects us to essence. Signs to observe are a calmness and peace in the mind, a heightened perception of the moment, a sense of wonder, a physical relaxation or expansion in our chest.

What we can all say with certainty is, 'I exist. Something exists. I may not know what I am exactly, but I exist. Existence is'.

If you are in doubt as to what you are, then that is a good place to be. It is good to have moved from a certainty about who you are to a new understanding that, in actuality, 'I'm not sure what I am in essence'. A part of your mind might recognise what you are and other parts might doubt what you are. A thought of doubt is just a thought, albeit it a powerful one.

Also notice that when you ask yourself these contemplative questions your attention might move to your memory bank for an answer. Notice that process if it is happening. If you ask, 'What Am I?' does your attention now look towards your thinking mind for an answer? Is it looking for a word or name or phrase? Acknowledge this process is happening, and acknowledge also that you are the knower, aware of what word or words the mind is thinking.

For these investigations we are not principally interested in coming up with a name for 'who I am'. You are interested in *being* who you are, knowingly. Being the presence that you are, the knower, Awareness itself.

Ask yourself these questions. If some of them become too cerebral then move on to another question that inspires you to notice the quiet space in your mind and a feeling of presence or a tingling sensation within your awareness:

Is there anything about me that is unchanging and constant?

What is thinking my thoughts?

What is a thought?

Where exactly are these thoughts arising?

What is the space between thoughts?

Do I still exist when my thoughts are silent?

What is the timeless eternal knowing presence that I am?

When you ask 'What am I?' need you look to your thoughts for an answer or can you simply be the answer?

Am I a memory or the one who knows my memories?

What is primary, my essence or my given birth name?

I am not my thoughts.

I am not my feelings.

Can I stop thinking?

How long can I stop thinking for?

Am I comfortable being here now with nothing to do?

What is feeling the body sensations?

What is looking through these eyes?

What is beyond my heart, knowing my heart?

If the past is memory, and the future is imagination, what is this present moment I am in now?

Essence is silently knowing this moment, present and aware.

‘Who knows this?’ You are that knower, the primary subject of all experience.

Objects like a thought, a body, a personality or a feeling are all secondary to your essential unchanging knowing presence.

You are like an unchanging, unbroken beam of light, always and constantly present.

Like a vast open space allowing any and all experience to arise within you.

I generally use the name Awareness, or Consciousness, to point to what I am in essence. I am not these words or names, but they are useful to use to communicate with. Other people use different names for what they are; some say, ‘I am Life’, ‘I am Experience’, ‘I am Light’, ‘I am Love’, ‘I am the Self’, ‘I am Nothing’, ‘I am Everything’. It doesn’t matter what name we give to our true essence, but it does matter that we knowingly recognise it for what it is.

It is important to realise that we are not looking for a particular state of mind, such as a thoughtless place or an ecstatic experience. Knowing our true essence will not permanently eradicate mental suffering from our mind, yet it can make it easier to accept and process.

Remind yourself that no matter where else one looks in the world we will not find our true self. No matter what we achieve, the possessions we own, or the relationships we have.

True satisfaction can only be found within—within the peace that resides as our true essence and from living as that knowingly in the world.

So we owe it to ourselves and owe it to others to awaken out of the narrative mind and wake up to our essential Self.

Make a firm decision to continue to contemplate the questions in this transcript until recognition is knowingly known.

Those questions are known by some as ‘Self-Enquiry’ techniques. For those who are confused by them or have not gained recognition through them, below are four further exercises that are designed to help one awaken to one’s essential essence.

Exercise 1) Examining Awareness

Take 10 minutes or more out of your schedule to explore this exercise:

Sit comfortably, keep your eyes open and be with your perceptions.

Awareness is one name I use to describe our knowing essence. The objective is to describe the features of Awareness. Begin by saying out loud, 'Awareness Is...' and then speak a word that best describes what it is.

You can repeat the same words over and over if you wish. Try to space out the gaps between what you say so that you can contemplate the experience. Put your mind on holiday and observe the moment, try to sink in deeply. Give this exploration some time—preferably half an hour or more. If you find your mind quietens and you feel a growing sense of peace in the moment, sit with that and enjoy the experience.

Here are some examples to start:

Awareness Is... Present

Awareness Is... Here and Now

Awareness Is... Aware

Awareness Is... Open and Vast

Awareness Is... This Moment

Awareness Is... Here and Now (It's okay to repeat previous expressions)

Awareness Contains Everything and Is Everything

Awareness Is... Love

Awareness Is... Open and Aware

Awareness Is... Silent

Awareness Is... Unlimited and Timeless

Awareness Is... This

Awareness Is...

Exercise 2) 'Neti Neti'; Not This, Not That

Take 10 minutes or more out of your schedule to explore this exercise:

I invite you to sit comfortably, keep your eyes open and notice what appears to your attention. Whatever you notice say out loud or silently, 'I am not this'.

If, for instance, an object appears in your vision, say, 'I am not this'. If a sound appears, 'I am not that'. An image appears, 'I am not that'. A thought appears in your attention, 'I am not this'. If your attention gets pulled into an energy or feeling, 'I am not this'.

Keep noticing that you are not what appears to your attention. Rather, you are the eternal subject of experience.

One may find that one's mind becomes calm.

Allow the experience to unfold and sink into it. Contemplate being the knower of your experience.

Exercise 3) 'I Am Everything'

Take 10 minutes or more out of your schedule to explore this exercise:

The formless unchanging essence that we are manifests itself as all that is. So this world, our perceptions and all our mind content and feelings are ultimately also made up of this same one essence.

Awareness is ultimately the subject and the object of experience.

One can equally and sometimes more easily approach awareness from this more embracing angle; 'I am everything'.

Sit quietly, with eyes open, and begin to say, 'I am everything'. Pause and explore the moment. Whatever your attention settles on, recognise that this is also a part of you. 'I am this also', 'I am this too', 'I am everything', 'I am all things'.

Allow the mind to settle into this reality and perhaps become absorbed in this moment, calmly, quietly.

Continue to observe and when necessary repeat the statements, 'I am everything,' 'All is me', 'I am this moment and all it contains', 'There is nothing that I am not'.

Exercise 4) 'I Am Aware'

Throughout our day, whenever we remember it, we can stop and reflect upon being 'Aware'.

When you wake up in the morning. When you get out of bed. When you go to the bathroom. Whilst you get something to eat. During your meal time. Before travelling. When you arrive somewhere. Before, during and after exercise. During meditation or prayer. Before going to sleep.

Stop, reflect and say:

'I Am Aware', or 'I Am Awareness', 'I Am Consciousness Itself', 'I Am This Moment'.

Alternatively you may prefer to pose a question such as:

'What is Aware?' or 'Am I Aware of Awareness?', 'Am I conscious of my Consciousness?'

The more we can break up our day with this contemplation the better. Find the phrase or question that works effectively for you.

Observe your mind and your perceptions of the world as you state these words. Savour the pause and silence that may arise as the moment enlivens.

Comments and Recommendations

There is only one truth, all else is belief and conjecture.

As discussed in previous chapters, I have suggested that the world is not the world we think it is; that our mind, in its attempt to create meaning, establishes an imagined sense of self. The key to life and true wisdom is to awaken out of our mind-made self and realise our true essence.

Continue to contemplate the questions in parts I and II for some time and experiment with the exercises in part III.

I recommend meditation. For those looking for a comprehensive guide to meditation, read and practice Culadasa's book *The Mind Illuminated; the ten stages of meditation*. For an alternative and short guide to learning a mantra meditation see *Effortless Deep Meditation* by Joanie Higgs. For the brave, I recommend a 10-day Vipassana meditation retreat (dhamma.org).

There are various non-duality spiritual teachers that specialise in Essential Awakening. I can recommend the work of Rupert Spira, Eckhart Tolle and Adyashanti if you have that particular goal. There are also many other awakening teachers on YouTube. A great resource is Rick Archer's interviews at batgap.com. A further option is 'The Finders Course' by Jeffrey Martin or his '45days.one' course. Another exercise which purports good results is Douglas Harding's 'The Headless Way'. Finally there are spiritual masters such as David Spero, Jan Esmann, Tim Freke, Mother Meera, and Amma, whose spiritual transmission is so profound that the Essential Awakening shift can occur in their presence.

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Further Reading for Essential Awakening:

The Power of Now and ***Oneness with all Life*** – Eckhart Tolle. Popular and famous books to inspire essential awakening.

Transparency of Mind – Rupert Spira. An intellectual and poetic analysis of awareness. Guides the reader into a deeper understanding of their true essence.

The Untethered Soul – Michael Singer. Another engaging and well-rounded introduction to awakening.

The Mind Illuminated – Culadasa (John Yates PhD). It maps, explains and guides you through the 10 stages of meditation along with scientific explanations of how the mind works in relation to awareness, attention and intention along with many other gems. (Be warned, it's a huge tome of a book.)

Effortless Deep Meditation – Joanie Higgs. Short, effective Mantra Meditation.

Finders – Dr Jeffrey Martin. He has interviewed a large cross section of spiritual teachers and practitioners and the results are explained and analysed in this book. A short but insightful book about the locations in consciousness as experienced after awakening. Helpful for those who have recognised essential awakening.

Three Classics from the Eastern masters of Self-Inquiry:

The Truth Is – W H Poonja (Papaji).

I Am That – Nisagadatta Maharaj.

Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi – Ramana Maharshi.