



Waking Up... A Beginners Guide

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Preface...

The urge to wake up...

This development, the urge to wake up, is somewhat like the urge to go to the bathroom, it is not particularly holy or righteous but, when it appears, it can seem necessary to take action. We have this urge, but unlike the urge to relieve ourselves in the bathroom we may not be able to find any completely satisfactory logic for its appearance or discover any immediately satisfactory relief for it. This urge has implications that may be a threat to all our current ways of dealing with being human. But the felt need for relief, and the failure of the familiar forms we have become dependent on, can become burdensome and a need to go forward, even into unexplored regions of adaptation can be urgent. This urge may come and go, we may decide to develop it further or try to find a cure for it, or decide it is only a temporary glitch in our system of thinking, but what to do?... The unexplored regions are all right here, and the only place to go is also right here, so there is really only one thing to do, we only need to “look”...

Sooooo, in the interest of “looking”, there is this little “Guide” to help those who see the significance of this urge, and wish to further explore its implications. Perhaps to look and to avoid some of the pitfalls of the whole process. Not all pitfalls can be avoided and it is likely that some of them are even necessary... So, make of it whatever you will or can... The best of wishes to both those who decide to take a look and to those who decide not to...

Regards,

William...

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Introduction

What follows is **all** an introduction, although I will try, for the benefit of form, to say what this writing effort is all about, the best I may be able to say is, that it is an introduction to the possibility of freedom, beyond our ideas of freedom.

There has been for me, a sort of ongoing discovery, resulting from a lifelong effort to find some “truth” about being human that would magnetize me into a personal “waking up”. We have all heard the age-old quote “the truth will set you free” and that seems to be a truth in itself, but what is “truth” and what does it really mean to be “free”. Many of us are likely to have answers that may, at the very least, satisfy our own needs. But there are many like my-self who may wish to go further, when it is seen that what we have taken to be freedom is only a form of bondage in itself. It may sound radical, but if freedom is not free of self-deception, then it is bondage.

As beginners to the idea of “waking up” it seems necessary to connect with the innate clarity already in place:

First, we need to have an appreciation of what waking up may mean for us and if that is really our intent.

Second, we need to have a basic recognition of how we avoid waking up, so as to appreciate this avoidance as it arises.

Third, is finding an approach to waking-up that has some potential to actually wake us up, that is not just more dream material. No guarantee, but a very good potential.

Disclaimer:

There is no effort here to provide an ideology or suggest a need for one. There is only a suggestion of a way to bring an end to the search for certainty. As with all situations that involve exploration and discovery, we risk an inability to find a safe haven for what we wish to carry with us. If we are not ready to leave everything behind, then it is best to not go. For all exploring, from the perspective of an explorer, there are three things to consider, preparation, journey, and discovery. I will attempt to address these issues from the perspective of having worked through some of its challenges myself, but there the message ends.

“Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.” – Dante’s Inferno

The Upfront Glossary

There is a need for this seemingly out of place Glossary since there are a number of words whose definitions need to be adjusted or changed or at least made clear from my own perspective before I begin to use them. I have a message that is likely to be misunderstood or rejected in any case, but I wish to be as clear as language makes possible given my limited skills.

Consciousness: Whether we can agree on the details of its nature and the scope its activity, all creatures or life-forms seem to have some recognition or sensitivity to its environment of phenomena and in particularly those phenomena that sustain it and those that may be detrimental to its survival. We can, and often do, call this stimulus/response activity “Consciousness”. The potentials and limitations of a particular life form seem inseparable from the potentials and limitations of its consciousness. From our day to day experience of our efforts to share our experience of being human with others there is, for humans, also a commonly shared feeling of being or self-consciousness, the memory of our prior conscious activity. This fairly simple definition of consciousness will be that which I refer to when using the word...

Enlightenment, Realization, Waking Up: These words and any others that may seem to be synonymous all point to a condition prior to all words, definitions, descriptions and propositions. They point to the discovery of a freedom that cannot be captured by any thoughts, feelings or words what-so-ever.

Knowledge: Knowledge is often equated to truth (described below), but the word is also used to point to “knowledge of a thing” that is thought to exist, or that we have heard of, or that we recognize when it is referred to. Or, it could be used to mean knowledge in the sense of our being able to provide explanations or description of the nature of a thing, based on personal experience. There are, of course, many things that exist that we have no personal knowledge of, and there can be much knowledge that refers to things that only exist in an imaginary or illusory way.

Look or To Look: This a way to refer to the allowing of the very simplest functioning of consciousness, an awareness of the body/mind, its perceptions and its response or reaction to them, in this particular moment. Eric Baret calls it “listening”, it is free from judgement...

Reality: We would perhaps all agree that when we use the word, we feel that we are referring to some reliable basis for our thoughts, feelings and perceptions. The word is also often used to refer to a specific example of something felt to be a legitimate example of, or a reality in itself. The second usage is much like the word “truth” since it is based on conviction and convention and has no basis except as a provisional symbolic description or explanation or interpretation of phenomena

True and Truth: We can say that both of these things exist, but there is a difference in them as they are used here. For something to be True means that it is not dependent on any logical proposition(s) at all, it is said to be a “Brute fact” or is just the case, but Truths are derived from what is true and are dependent on their acceptance as accurate expressions of what is True. An important difference since it means that Truths are conventional and provisional, and that which is true cannot be brought forward with truths, but only expressed by them.

A NOTE: There will no doubt be criticisms of my extensive use of quotes to bring to your attention that a word or phrase in quotes is used as a linguistic convention to point to a possible but unverified or even unverifiable truth...

-oOo-

Truth and Knowledge

Even as I write there is a knowing that what is true will not and cannot appear here. It cannot appear here since what is true is ineffable, beyond words and their meanings. Words and their meanings are conditional and cannot stand alone, one word calls for many and the many call for more. But words come forth in any case, and we can just let the words be words, even as they evoke feelings and thoughts or become songs or poems or words of wisdom.

We can let the feelings be felt, the thoughts be thought, the songs be sung, the poems be written, and the words of wisdom be spoken without our becoming enslaved to them. These symbolic activities might be expressions of our own personal recognition of what is true or even evoke this recognition in others, but cannot be true in themselves. “Truth” for our purposes here means those propositions which we assign to “consciousness and/or its contents”. We often call these propositions, truths or knowledge. Although it is within our potential to recognize that which is true, it is not within our potential or possibility to conceptualize it. Our efforts to bring what is true forth in the forms of “truths” or “knowledge” is futile.

We may believe and say that words are the basis for, or are no different from what is true, and that if we are able to bring forth the words then they must arise from what is true. But most of the things we refer to as being true are only learned concepts or symbolic representations of human perception. In order for us to share conceptual “knowledge” and our “truth(s)” it is necessary for us to become skilled in one or more of the various symbolic systems such as language, logic and mathematics or even art. Then, in addition, to learn their legitimate or accepted forms in order to use them in ways that will communicate our intended message.

The efforts to say “reality” or to say what is “true” using any symbolic system is like trying to paint a picture of ourselves and our world, painting a picture of ourselves and our world. An

interesting exercise but not really possible, not unlike the famous “Drawing Hands” by M.C. Escher.

There are many forms of media that have been developed to communicate or share the details of our experience (consciousness and its content) with others, that have become embedded in our various cultures. Their success in expressing our dualistic interpretations of our world have led us to believe that these abstract models are worthy of being considered truth or knowledge and therefore only need to be shared and understood to gain benefit. But it can be seen that all of these interpretations or abstractions are more like artwork that may be useful as a temporary model or rendering of appearances. But, when we become addicted or bound to a particular model or rendering, and are unable to acknowledge its temporary or provisional nature, then we lose our freedom to un-cloak and take part in the endless mystery of our world.

Our Stories

We have and love our ability to use language in creative ways, to imagine and write and read or just tell stories of all kinds. Language has become our primary means of recording and sharing our experience, communicating, and creating endless entertainment and deceptions. Over the centuries we have used our various technologies to expand and enhance our storytelling abilities and provide for their maintenance. But with all their glitz they are still just stories.

This is a story about us and our stories and how we may discover freedom from both ourselves and our stories by simply seeing that the self and all of our stories are only memories we have collected and strung together in a way to form a useful but mostly fictional narrative. Freedom is discovered when we allow these fictions to fall away in the light of our seeing through them. There are more possible stories than there are humans and as many ways of taking a closer look at them, so if we really intend to be free of them, we need to focus on a way that does not just become another chapter in our storybook or become a completely new one. As the stories grow, the maintenance grows and can become an endlessly deceptive and painful job.

When we finally decide to examine the collective content of our stories in earnest, we can begin to appreciate that although we may think they provide appreciable meaning to our lives, they are more like old trunks full of stuff that we aren't sure how it got there or where it came from or how to dispose of it. All stories are all a kind of artwork in progress, that collectively represent the embellished or revised memories that we have woven into the stories we believe to be valuable and love to tell. But they are all weak, full of holes, and subject to fading (as memories do) and if not frequently fed or refurbished, finally fall apart and disappear and are often felt to be in need of replacement or improvement.

I am not interested in, or capable of, providing an extended discourse on linguistics, but it seems necessary to delve into some of our patterns of self-expression if we wish to see how

these patterns affect us. The way we use language reveals more of our personal psychology, and the philosophies and mythologies of our respective cultures than we may think, and often find that we are bound to whatever interpretations of experience that they may provide.

We could say that we have all become artists, art lovers, and critics of all kinds of symbolic expression, all the way from the finger-painting level up to whatever skills we can develop over the course of a lifetime. These skills have become both a blessing and a curse in the sense that we have the benefits of their utility, but we are also bound to their inability to express what is true or even fully express or to provide a useful understanding of our day to day experience. We have the mistaken idea that given the most rigorous use of our symbolic forms and the use of the available technology to enhance the perceptual processes, that we can explore our world and discover its facts and that those facts can express the truth of its nature. Then, for us to share these facts, and their truths, it is considered to be only a matter of correctly selecting and arranging words and symbols in such a way that we are able to express those truths and reveal them to anyone with the ability to understand and/or comprehend the symbolic expressions chosen. There is such a completely pervasive assumption that language and other symbolic systems can provide maps of experience that correspond to reality in some absolute way, that we hardly consider its failure to do so and think that perhaps we should just keep trying. Thus, we deceive ourselves and others into thinking we have knowledge when actually, all we have are perceptions, descriptions, and our efforts to explain them.

The only thing we can really say we know for sure is that we are conscious and that the patterns of perception that flicker across the screen of consciousness tell us enough to allow us to survive the vicissitudes of our experience with a modicum of success, but our human sense perceptions actually do not provide any more than a very human portal into the nature of our world of phenomena.

So, then, our only choice is really a non-choice: it is the possibility of allowing the activity of our own intelligence to discover the complete transparency of the illusory formations of self-deception and discover that waking up has always been available to us, veiled to us only by the taking of our creative interpretations as a replacement for them. An author using the pseudonym of "Jed McKenna" calls this process "Spiritual Autolysis". To "do" spiritual autolysis is not really "doing" anything at all, but just allowing our consciousness to come to rest on what we are already "doing" (as in meditation), once this happens, self-deceptions become a little like unnecessary decorations. If you happen to take an interest in this particular practice, my best advice is to actually give it a try. It is a fairly original (to my knowledge) way of seeing the inevitable limits of conceptual systems, for yourself, by yourself. When we personally see through our self-deceptions it becomes impossible to continue them.

My intention is to call your attention to the truth of our consciousness and how it can either be reined in to serve our self-deceptions or allowed to fully express its true nature. It is a little like

trying to tame a wild horse, and at some point, discovering we are both the horse and the rider. Then...no horse, no rider.

More on Stories

When we are born into our human situation, we have no story that we are aware of. Our memories of any of the experiences prior to birth are at least temporarily overwhelmed by the sudden perceptual flood experienced as we are ejected from the relative comfort of the womb. At that point, our mechanisms for the development and maintenance of our stories are only beginning to take form and need nourishment and growth to begin to function. Although there may be considerable genetic and prenatal influences in our developmental process, they only become a part of our stories as their effects begin to play out in our later behavior patterns.

The major contributors to the development of our stories are the *brain*, *memory* and *experience*. The italicized words are to call attention to the fact that they are linguistic conventions, not necessarily distinct things that we may feel we know and completely understand. As our memories of the flow of change begin to form, a sense of continuity, existence, and separation and/or being, begins to develop. Without a minimal memory of prior experience, we would fail to be, and perhaps be unable to become, fully functional humans. So, as we gain experience, our memories and our efforts to describe them and explain them, become the resource materials for our stories.

So, it seems from this perspective, that the development of stories and our ongoing interpretations of them are an essential part of human development and existence. Yet, for us to mature and fully appreciate and enjoy the fruition of human potential, it is also necessary for us to allow our stories to fall away or become transparent for the long-term benefit of ourselves, our communities, cultures and our species. Otherwise we become locked into our stories as in some never-ending dream. We become convinced that we have a destiny to fulfill our lives by the living-out and completion of some story or set of stories, but regardless of their appeal to us, they all eventually lead to feelings of separation and imprisonment, and become sources of despair, conflict and aggression. We can choose to see differently, but it seems that the only imperative for choosing to see differently, is for the delight of it.

Although there are always, even in each moment, potentials for a fresh start, we often opt out. Out of fear of the unknown, we choose frivolity or defense or attack. We are frequently reminded of our folly by the difficulty that arises from the maintenance of our stories, and the missed opportunities to drop them altogether in the moments of their failures that arise in our day to day activities. These reminders can take the form of the trivial up to catastrophic, but to see them as a jostling, to wake us up, takes personal courage, and intent. As with all creatures our continued

development toward maturity, or the taking on of reality must (at some point) become the result of personal effort and responsibility.

The World of Memory and Time

It is interesting and a little disturbing when we begin to see that what we “know” about what we call our “world” is a sort of patchwork of memories and perceptions that may have little or nothing to do with truth or reality. Many of us would take issue with such a statement, saying “of course the world is real” followed by some personal logic or scientific support for their perspective. But there is considerable evidence that what we call the “world” was here long before humans appeared and thus what is here to be called a world is prior to and independent of our perception and interpretation of it. Our perceptual mechanisms and resulting consciousness of the phenomenal world have arisen out of the nature of the phenomenal world itself and yet has some serious limits to their ability to allow us to “know” very much about the nature of its nature.

We cannot completely dismiss or either completely understand either our own world or the worlds of others. All human worlds are constructs of unique interpretations of completely different sets of experiences and memories. We may feel that having Science, Mathematics and Logic on our side, or perhaps Religion, Intuition, and Psychic Powers, or some part or all of the above, that we can be sure that our worldview is based on the most accurate and reliable understanding that is possible. And of course, as a result, we may think that any other world view is simply an ignorant myth that can be easily dispelled within the light of our infinite wisdom and knowledge. But the road to self-deception is paved with misleading ideas that suggest we can escape to a world of bliss and perfection if only we do the right thing(s).

All of the ways of trying to find a comprehensible and safe haven from the vicissitudes of human experience, have their roots in the endless hopes and fears that develop in the course of our efforts to survive and protect our interpretation or story of it. Many of our efforts may provide us with feelings of being on the right track or moving toward the solid ground that we are looking for. But they cannot, in any case, wake us up from our dream or provide the freedom that is our potential... so how to proceed? It can be helpful to explore our worlds of “memory and time.”

So how does memory enter into the process of perception? We need some recollection or memory of how things were, in order to recognize change, since it is the noticed differences that tell us that change is taking (or has taken) place. Everything is in a constant flux, from the sub-microscopic to the super-cosmic and yet we are seldom cognizant of any but those most relevant to our immediate needs. We also know from current neurological investigations that we do not recognize all (even obvious) perceptual data, due to the specific interests and bias of our

cognitive apparatus. What we call “experience” is not a given by virtue of human sense perceptions alone but involves memory of prior experience and anticipation of what may come next, and the filters needed to protect our story.

The idea that there is some characteristic of our world that can be referred to as “time” is pervasive. Time (if we need to call it that) is an effort to measure the duration or “speed” of change. Change itself is the essence of the existence of anything at all and so the speed of change and how it affects our lives is of great interest to us. We detect, or believe and possibly have a memory of, things being different than they are now, which results in the knowledge that change is happening and inherent in the phenomena of our world. Thus, phenomena have an apparent history that we extrapolate as meaning that there were previous conditions that gave birth to our current situation and likely that new conditions will develop as a result of our current situation. This observation has led many of us to believe that what we call “past” and “future” are truly existent and therefore potentially accessible. But really it is only this moment contrasted with our memory of prior or the imagined moments to come, that we can be conscious of.

We can say with conviction that “we are conscious and therefore we exist”, and that everything else is speculation. We have become addicted to speculation as a means to feel we understand our world since it reflects a working knowledge of cause and effect and provides us with a provisional but *highly unreliable* (we soon forget this part) basis for planning our activities.

It is said (and is observable) that: All things are impermanent, All things are imperfect, And all things are incomplete.

Patience, courage and the intent to be free of self-deception, can make these insights both workable and appreciable.

Self-Deception

We all are likely to have some ideas about what “self-deception” means and it is likely that we all (or most of us) are involved in an addiction to one false or improbable view or another. So what? Do we really care? If we all do it, then it must be, at the very least, a necessary evil. So, let’s consider the following (my definition) and then see what we think.

Self-Deception: Any unmitigated interpretation of one’s experience. Although we may need various forms of knowledge to provide a working basis for human activities, knowledge is of no benefit to waking up. If we explore the various efforts to provide such knowledge, we may find some philosophical, spiritual, or scientific candy, but if we adopt any these explanations, descriptions, and meanings in an effort to bring closure to the need for personal investigation or exploration, then we are asking for “self-deception” and all of its difficulties.

We have made both the ideas of self-deception and self-realization into oxymorons since the idea of a self and its realization is itself a self-deception. Who is it that is deceived and what can be realized that is not just part of the dream? This question cannot really be answered in any satisfactory way. But it is possible to see through both the question and any possible answer. "Seeing through" is only the result of looking, at our interpretations, at our stories, at our self-deceptions until (through our own investigations) they become transparent, fail to make sense, fail to be useful. Our addiction to Self-Deception can last a lifetime and when passed on from generation to generation, propagated for centuries. This indulgence often results from simple ignorance, all the way, to determined indifference, but in the long-term it is both dangerous and destructive. Self-Deception is not wrong, but more like a self-limiting adaptation. For us to transcend illusions they first have to recognize them, recognition takes inspiration and personal intent and personal action.

Appearances

We are obsessed with appearances, personal appearance, the appearance of other humans, the appearance of phenomena. Aside from consciousness and its content, we cannot really do more than speculate about the nature of our world...but it is our speculative interpretations of that content and its appearances that receives most of our attention.

What is consciousness? What is it that is conscious? We have never known the answers to such questions, do not know them now, and may never know them with any certainty. It is easy to see that once we divide experience into consciousness and its content or its owner or haver of consciousness, then we have the potential and resources for endless questions and endless answers and endless stories to support our speculations.

We have become preoccupied and fascinated by appearances, since we find we have some potential to be involved with or engaged with appearances and to validate or assuage the hopes and fears of their possible influences. We live our lives as if appearances or how we engage appearances is the critical issue of our lives and that when we feel uncomfortable with our situation, that it may be a failure of this engagement. Perhaps, we need to upgrade or modify appearances, or work on our techniques of appearances or our strategies of engagement with them. But, we have yet to discover who or what this "we", this "I" that wants to benefit from these interests, actually is? How can we pacify this interest in appearances for that which seems to have no appearance?

Identity

The feeling and conviction of "Identity" and its importance is also pervasive among us. We are often involved in some effort to shore it up, validate it, improve it, or even to destroy it, whoever, or whatever we think "it" may be. We want "it" to be happy or at least to be content with who or what we and others think we are. In any case, we are likely to feel that we are that which we

appear to be to others or ourselves and if what we say and how we say it confirms what we wish to be, then we have accomplished an acceptable identity. The costumes and roles of identity may be useful in finding a place in our various cultural activities but it is a source of suffering and bondage when we cannot see through its lack of substance or necessity.

Reality

As our sense perceptions begin to develop, we begin to develop a personal model of what we eventually call the “world”. We think that this model is one that we share with all of the many sentient beings that we discover populating this “world” and that whatever characteristics we are able to discern are available to them as well and constitutes a shared reality. This is a somewhat naïve approach but one that is a reasonable outcome of our first experiences of “other.”

Given a little more exploration of the matter we must admit that there are many experiences and interpretations of the “world” that are particular to individuals and their various cultures. In any case we may be convinced that there must be something that serves as a common basis for our various experiences and our interpretations of them, something that can be called a real “reality”, something reliable and true and is there for our eventual discovery and utilization. But what do we really “know” for sure? We have learned quite a bit about how to use or manipulate our shared and conventional reality to provide the resources for technological developments, but much to the surprise of many of us this does not equate to any understanding of its nature or a basis for awakening.

We can be completely delighted, all the way to, completely shattered by our personal interpretation of “reality”, and we have discovered that however we may feel about it, it does not really exist in the way that we think. It is a sort of tactile illusion, tactile in the sense that it seems real from the point of view of human sense perceptions, an illusion from the point of view that appearances are conditional and perceptions are limited and unreliable and our interpretations are mostly creative fictions.

We have developed a pattern of wishful thinking that goes something like this: We can figure out being human, we can figure out our world, we can then respond to our situation (having figured everything out) to our satisfaction.

What does it mean that we inhabit a “Dream-World” anyhow?

The simplest definition for “Dream-World” (that works for me) is: A make-believe or pretend to be world based on self-deception...

This kind of worldview pervades our modern world. It could be said to be the default world view for most of us. Although there are links and similarities between dream-worlds and some that are shared or attempted to be shared, for the most part they are personal constructions... They are called “dream” worlds since it is possible, in some sense, to be “awakened” from these dreams into a recognition that they are only, perhaps useful but, imaginary constructs of the creative human mind...

Not many of us would agree, without some reservations, with this definition, since we may have huge investments (psychological, philosophical, cultural, social, and scientific) in whatever world we think we have, or may exist... We feel that the “meanings” and potentials of our lives are inherently based on the imaginary worlds we have created to protect us from our fears and fulfill our hopes. So freedom from our “dream-worlds”, for various reasons, is not what is actually sought by seekers, but to continue the attempt to find fulfillment in, or further elaboration of our dreams or dream-worlds. Even the possibility of self-deception is denied...forget about the “dream” or “dream-world”, let's call it “reality” or “truth”, anything but a “dream” or “make believe” or an “illusory” world...

Awakening

“Awakening” is not about some fantastic culminating event as much as it is about an endless “dawning”. It is odd when you consider it, that when we are most interested in what we might call “spiritual enlightenment”, we commonly feel that there is some “lack” or “need” that when filled, then this fantastic fulfilling event will surely resolve all our difficulties for all time. But truth is always the present case, we cannot obtain it, but only allow it, or recognize it. For us to gain possession of its inexplicable and inexpressible nature in any symbolic or conceptual form what-so-ever can never happen.

The intent to grow up and wake-up, does not need a strategy or expectation, only an intent to be free from self-deception. Self-deception consumes itself and its origin as it evaporates in the flame of inquiry, this process is called by some, “spiritual autolysis.”

Being Human

If we can read these words and decide that they might be of some interest to us, then we probably qualify as being “human” enough to feel like we know what “Being Human” may mean. We could say “well sure, I am one, it is like being a me...”, or we could point to others of our species and say “those are humans, I look a little like some of them, so I must be one too...”, or we might say “that’s a silly question, what else could I possibly be?”

If we are into considering human nature, then a first consideration might be that, as far as we know, humans are the only species that has this ability to both consider our own nature and to create symbolic representations of our efforts. When we do this we seem to believe that we will

(at some point) be able to look upon our work and say “yep that’s us, this is what we are, this is what we should be, now we just need to do it!”

Although we may never feel challenged by a question of our humanity, we may have felt quite challenged by the experience of our efforts to fulfill the role of being human that has developed for us. Just from doing the best we can, without much guidance at all, this role has developed and been impressed upon us by our day to day engagement with the demands of what we call “life” and more particularly “human” life. These experiences and demands are substantially different for each of us, so, in a very definite way (at this point in time) there are nearly eight billion human perspectives on what “being human” may be.

We have much in common with each other, but much of what we have in common is more based on biology and genetics than a common or shared experience or a shared perspective. So, is there some adaptation to being human that is genuine, authentic, free of foolishness and therefore represents “being human” at its very best? It may seem like an odd question for us to ask, but there are many answers that lack consensus among those who dare to answer. The answer is certainly “no”, it is “no” since all answers are some sort of symbolic speculation, or artwork that can never be equivalent to our perceptual experience or the reality of it, but just the personal artwork of the content of consciousness, whatever that may be.

It seems that all of those things that form the basis of each of our personal interpretations of being human, can be seen as influences, some more influential than others, some that fail to be seen, some that seem dominate, some necessary for our existence, some perhaps not necessary at all, but all of them conditional none of them that can be absolutely depended on to be present or effective in the manifestation of our personal human development...not even our felt needs for life itself.

So, we come into the world already a product of many influences and begin an adaptive process that is never free from them. But, to say we are never free from influences does not mean that we are necessarily bound to them. Where our freedom comes into play in the way we respond to influences. In all the situations we find ourselves in, we have no choice but to be engaged with our world and its weather of influences. These influences are often referred to as karma or conditioning and may be unavoidable, or necessary, or even valuable but constitute our challenge of the moment. When we find that the efforts based only on our own personal conditioning bring conflict and painful outcomes, then we have an opportunity to rediscover being human.

For us to attempt to master the conditioning of a lifetime in the interest of getting a better deal, is just trying to out-influence influences and often the only result is a necessary adaptation to new influences. When we release our fixation on fixing our situation it allows our basic nature an opportunity to manifest freely.

Karma or Cause and Effect

In spite of our felt need to continue our story and maintain our Dream-World, there are failures or gaps, a falling apart of it, that we find unsettling. We would like to be able to find some words or a theory or a belief that will become (or we can make) our focus, that will provide a starting place for all our feelings, thoughts, and activities that will allow us to get everything “right” or know why not and make any necessary adjustments. Of course, each moment has potentials, limitations and consequences that we are involved in, but if we focus on trying to manage the whole thing for best “results” or “outcomes” then we become both the producer and cast of a dream-world.

Both “Karma” and “Cause and Effect” at best provide us a way to see or describe the way the world works so we can find the appropriate rhythm and step for our dance. We could say that the very essence of existence is “Karma”, the activity of the cosmos, the dance of reality.

The Middle Way

Among the Buddhist teachings and perhaps one of its most important ones, for us who wish to find some balance or stability in our day to day life are those that have become known as “The Middle Way”. If you have already taken, or feel inclined to take, a look into what they may have to say for you, then you may feel challenged by what you find. But it is not “rocket science” for us to see that extreme behavior patterns result in extreme repercussions. There may be situations in which for us to act extremely is necessary, but for us to adopt this pattern as a response to our experiences in an ongoing way is destructive and unnecessary.

Passing into Realization

If you think this is an odd way to say something about “realization” then you might just stay with the feeling for a moment, while I say a little more along the same vein.

Realization can be a little like the passing away or death of a dream and its dreamer, the only difference for the individual might be the duration of the process. It can take years, or months, or days, on down to instantly, but the result (if genuine) is the same...there is a falling away or the beginning of the end to the “dream-world” whatever the dream may be, and eventually the “dreamer” becomes redundant. In its place is something that could be called “suchness”.

There is no real need for a detailed accounting of a particular dream-world, they are all different with endless variations. We often feel that whatever our dream, that it is worthy of some specialness and requires its own treatment as such. But even such words as “Suchness”,

“Realization”, “Enlightenment”, and “Freedom” are only words that refer to an instance of “consciousness” that has awakened from its fascination with them.

Those who have found the courage to abide in “suchness” discover that they cannot really reflect on this situation in a way to provide a value of it to those who abide in the “dream”. There are not two different worlds, the “dream” and the “awakened” worlds, there is only what is... what we dream or imagine it to be does not really exist. To realize “suchness” is a transition, or a transcendence, or a waking up, from a kind of fabricated dream-world, not an extension or better version of it. It can be a daunting process but one that could be said to result in an appreciable development of personal human potential, to say more is misleading.

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The selections below and their order are only a matter of a personal choosing and the coming to mind of those things that have been helpful for an old radical such as myself. They do not necessarily reflect any source material for my writing so you may be completely surprised by anything you may find in them ...

Suggested Reading and Websites

“Let the Moon be free” Conversations on Kashmiri Tantra by Eric Baret

“The Reality Sutras” Seeking the Heart of Trika Shaivism by Shambhavi Sarasvati

Any of the material of Jed Mckenna

The various writings of U.G. Krishnamurti

The books of Karl Renz

There is also a website at autolyse.nl that may be helpful

Another is enlightenmentmyth.com

Or take a look at <https://www.lifewithoutacentre.com/writings/the-myth-of-enlightenment/> one of Jeff Fosters best

My apologies if I was unable to help you find a sense of your own direction to a fresh human adaptation, but hang in there, if it is possible for me, it must be possible for others.

If anyone would like to discuss this stuff on a more personal basis I can be reached at wwwaters@protonmail.com

