

1. How would you answer the question, 'Who are you?'

I am the totality of what arises, the substance and the experiencing of it.

Also, I'm Yasmin, hi. :)

~ Yasmin C.

I am that which asked the question.

~ Bob Harwood

I am all that arises in the present moment.

~ J.K.

Response: Not who, what. And what am I? Everything.

~ Filo King

"Who" I am is the conscious entity, which comes and goes, that you and I experience.

"What" I am is unchanging, nonindividual is-ness.

~ Art Ticknor

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2. What would an individual who claim they are Self-Realized or enlightened explain (or discuss) to a skeptic, layman, or curious to further their interest, understanding, or knowledge?

I would add that the explanation attempts to quench their epistemological and ontological thirst or interest.

Who knows. It's just theoretical speculation without a person in front of you. You have to feel your way into it, there's no formula.

You can feel by a person's energy whether they are open to this stuff. I wouldn't talk about self-realization to people who aren't interested or who have strong resistance. That covers most people, even people who are into spirituality.

If someone is open and interested, I might encourage them to get curious about their own immediate experience without getting tangled up in concepts about it. I'd try to let them know that it is entirely possible to get free of angst and existential suffering, and that this has been the case in my own experience. Beyond that it really would depend on the person and the situation.

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I certainly can't "quench [anyone's] epistemological and ontological thirst or interest". I can't hand anyone the answers. They have to get to the end of their own questions.

~ Yasmin C.

There is little to discuss with a skeptic. The deeper question is: *Why do they seek understanding?* Is it for entertainment, comfort, relief from suffering, or from a genuine commitment to awakening to Truth and becoming fully present to what is?

Any sincere explanation ultimately points toward quenching an epistemological and ontological thirst the longing to know what is true and what we truly are.

~ J.K.

What do you believe?

~ Filo King

Could be anything or nothing.

~ Art Ticknor

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3. Are there any real final answers?

Just one. But questions and answers are a function of language, and the "final answer" can't be said. :)

~ Yasmin C.

Yes. Two of the most important are (1) Reality is NOT what people think it is, and (2) humans are NOT who they think they are.

~ Bob Harwood

Yes and no.

~ Filo King (same response to the following sub-questions as well)

Yes.

~ Art Ticknor

a. Is there any place to land?

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In mental representations, no. What do you know that is not a mental representation? ~

Yasmin

Yes, but it's not really a landing as much as discovering that what we already are, and always have been, is THIS, the unified infinite field of all being. ~ Bob H.

Only the present moment standing in sober contact with reality. ~ J.K.

Yes. ~ Art

b. Is there anything to hold onto?

No, and no one to hold onto it. ~ Yasmin

Only the present moment. ~ J.K.

Conviction (which can be challenged). ~ Art

c. Can one stay open?

No, and no one to hold onto it. ~ Yasmin

Yes, to whatever is arising now. ~ J.K.

Things change. Nothingness doesn't. ~ Art

d. Is there any real permanence?

"Permanent" relies on the idea of time. What's beyond these concepts? ~ Yasmin

Only what is arising in immediate experience. ~ J.K.

Yes. ~ Art

e. Are the past and the future all happening at the same "time?"

Where else can they occur but now? ~ Yasmin

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Yes. ~ J.K.

No. ~ Art

f. Are form and emptiness different?

Form arises within immediate experience. ~ J.K.

Yes. ~ Art

g. Is one more real than the other?

No. ~ Art

h. Does emptiness come before form or do they co-arise?

What do you mean by form and emptiness? Is water form or is it emptiness? What about when it's water vapor in a cloud? What about when it's ice?

Further: where do these concepts of form and emptiness, real and unreal occur? Where do your perceptions of water, cloud and ice occur? Can you separate your knowing of these concepts/objects from the objects, do they exist independently of your perception? How could you verify whether they do or not? ~ Yasmin

They coexist in what is arising now. I experience emptiness, and I experience form, such as the keyboard I am typing on. Both are simply happening in this moment. ~ J.K.

Nothingness is anterior to thingness. ~ Art

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4. It is a question of self-definition: What Are You?

I am THIS/Reality/The Infinite Field of all Being momentarily manifesting as a body/mind organism.

~ Bob Harwood

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For much of my spiritual search, I explored and wrote about my self-definition. I noticed what I was writing was constantly changing, and I realized that whatever changes cannot be ultimate truth. This revealed how distorted and unstable my sense of self had been.

That inquiry became deeply valuable because it showed me where my attention was focused throughout the process of seeking.

Now my self-definition is simply: I am.

~ J.K.

Silence

~ Filo King

“What” I am is the absolute state of is-ness at the center of being, which is unchanging, that is not seen out/down here.

~ Art Ticknor

There's a feeling of certainty that doesn't go away. A grokking of the big picture.

~ Dave Weimer

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5. Has your realization permanently answered all questions and resolved all desires? Do you feel any sense of lack at all?

Yes. (Do you feel any sense of lack at all?) No.

~ Bob Harwood

The person goes on functioning, she has her daily concerns and desires. They are small and functional – they're just concerned with keeping this organism going. It's no big deal, even stressful circumstances are no big deal, they are just stressful circumstances. There's no more existential angst or overarching sense of lack. Everything's enough.

~ Yasmin C.

I have no more existential questions. The seeker in me has died.

Desires still arises, but no longer defines my happiness. For example, I may desire to go into the ocean, but if it does not happen, it doesn't matter.

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There is no longer any sense of lack. Even if I experience something uncomfortable in the moment there will be a momentary contraction that arises as a physical sensation in the body and it will express itself energetically but there isn't a programme running that it sticks to.

~ J.K.

Silence.

~ Filo King

Realization answers the questions of what we are, have always been, and always will be ... unchanging ... complete. Fears and desires don't operate at the core

~ Art Ticknor

In the existential sense, I don't feel a sense of lack. I used to. Permanently? So far. Thirty years.

~ Dave Weimer

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6. Did you expect realization to unfold the way it did? How did it differ from what you imagined?

Nothing about the process was predictable or expected, but the conceptual mind with its expectations/comparisons was not active by the time it really got underway. I wasn't thinking about what was happening or questioning it, however weird things got (and things got weird). There was a surrender into whatever was arising in the moment, a lack of resistance – so I couldn't stand apart and have opinions about it. It was like the distinction between the inner life and outer world dissolved and it was all one flowering.

I think this surrender into the moment and sidelining of the conceptual mind is probably a condition for realization, but I didn't make it happen. Once the process is underway you're just in it and it has its own momentum.

I did hear a lot of awakening stories as a seeker. What they impressed on me was that this unfolds in a completely individual way for everyone, so you have to drop your expectations. And that it can look like psychosis.

~ Yasmin C.

Not at all. I never imagined it would be so simple so ordinary.

For days afterward, I could not stop laughing because I felt like a small child rediscovering something I had always known. A sentence kept repeating in my mind:

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"I know this place. I have always known this place."

The seeker in me had overcomplicated and mystified everything. When realization occurred, the absurdity of all that striving became obvious.

~ J.K.

I didn't have any idea about how it would unfold. The only conviction I had was that it wouldn't occur when other people were around ... which turned out to be the case.

~ Art Ticknor

No. It differed in every way from what I imagined. It doesn't matter what I imagined. A personal experience is unrelated to imagining what something would be like.

~ Dave Weimer

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7. Do you now live, function, or observe from a different place or point of view than before realization?

Absolutely!

~ Bob Harwood

On the one hand, nothing has changed. The seeking ends but life for the person goes on.

There are changes to the functioning of the organism – like there's no sense of being a detached observer of life, it is all very immediate. There's no inner life vs outer world, it's all the one thing. There is a sense of flow that has just become normal, nothing special. (Actually these can't really be called changes, they are ordinary perception. The sense of separation was an add-on.)

Emotions can't be repressed anymore, but there's not much emotion coming up. What does arise is felt and dissipates quickly. I used to be inclined to brood on some issue for weeks, but that process seems short-circuited now. My sense of time is really wonky and my memory is shot, but so far it hasn't been a problem. The capacity for conceptual thought is reduced, my mind is just not inclined toward the abstract. The thoughts are functional and there are no social anxieties or worrying about what others might think of me – that kind of self-referential thought is absent now. The identification as the person is absent.

I find I avoid social stuff even more than I did before. I was always a hermit, but the organism's social battery gets drained faster now, and most group situations get exhausting quicker.

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Loneliness went away a few years before the realization, and it doesn't come up at all now – it doesn't make sense without the identification as a separate entity.

The body seems to be more sensitive – or maybe the body was always sensitive but I was dissociating before. It can pick up on other people's energy in a very direct way. This used to happen before, but there would have been a confusion about what was mine and what theirs.

I used to assume that if I became “enlightened” I would be able to fix difficult relationship dynamics, I'd know the right thing to say to magically transform the interaction. Or I'd be able to accept the other person with equanimity/compassion/love and that would fix things. What I've found instead is that toxicity and dysfunction are laid bare as toxicity and dysfunction. The body makes its boundaries very clear and it reacts to boundary violations as if it has been poisoned or injured. I was a great people-pleaser before, but I have had to walk away from some relationships and have better boundaries around others in order to preserve my health. This can be hard, especially if it's family. It seems like anything inauthentic in the life is no longer tolerated, and this manifests physically for me.

The body is really the driver now. Before realization I was kinda neurotic about food and exercise, but there's no question of forcing the body to get up and go running now like before, or to fast if it doesn't feel like it. It eats what it feels like eating and it stops when it has had enough. It exercises when and how it feels like exercising – it does what it needs to do to keep itself in balance, and it can do this better without the mind's involvement. I am definitely a lot less active, and if there's nothing to be done I just do nothing. This freedom and faith in the body's own rhythms and intelligence has been nice to discover.

There has also been a clearing-out process in the life. Things I had built an identity around have been removed, sometimes abruptly or in a way that feels synchronistic/magical. So not only am I a lot less active, I have a lot less to do.

~ Yasmin C.

Yes. Everything that arises in the moment is all there is.

~ J.K.

Yes, there is the understanding that nothing is really separate or isolated from anything else.

~ Filo King

Living/existence is something that comes and goes, which is captured by the Latin etymology of exist: *ex-* plus *sistere*, to stand outside of [the center]. Art's consciousness returned here from its source after Realization.

~ Art Ticknor

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Yes. In one big, basic, simple, profound, changeless way.

~ Dave Weimer

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8. Looking back, what would you say to your former seeker self?

“Keep going, you're on the right track!” maybe. :)

~ Yasmin C.

Seek and keep seeking until you find what you're looking for because what you're looking for is worth more than anything else in life.

~ Bob Harwood

Relax. Surrender. Allow everything as it is. Practice self-compassion. There is no perfection, no fixing, no ultimate right or wrong, only what is. Return repeatedly to the observing position. Notice thoughts and emotions without becoming entangled in them. Meet everything with complete acceptance. Stop feeding the conditioned mind. It is insatiable and will keep you trapped in endless loops as long as you continue identifying with it.

~ J.K.

You are loved.

~ Filo King

Probably nothing unless it asked something.

~ Art Ticknor

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9. Do you feel one must first build a healthy sense of self before seeking genuine realization? What role do emotional maturity, personal development, and relationship to others play in it?

Psychological work was important for me and I did a lot of it as a young person, because I was a mess. I had anorexia as an adolescent and then I was in a lot of psychological misery up until my early 30s. My path involved a lot of learning about my own patterns and family/societal conditioning. So yes, in my experience it was necessary to get stable and functional first.

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There was a clear point, though, where I knew I had reached the end of the psychological work – I wasn't "perfect" but I was OK enough, I had developed a stable center of gravity and I was no longer miserable. Life was pretty good, I was able to support myself, and my relationships with others were mostly fine. My house was pretty much in order per Rose. That's when the spiritual seeking started to open up for me as the way forward.

It does seem to go the other way around for some people, with realization first, then the psychological work. I think there's a greater danger of spiritual bypassing that way: using spirituality to avoid dealing with your problems. There's also the danger of getting really ungrounded, because the awakening process is inherently destabilizing. Also, while it might be easier to do shadow work post-realization, because emotions aren't suppressed – the impetus to work on your behaviour with others might be gone. Maybe this is what happens to the people who become abusive guru types. I really don't know.

I would advise seekers not to avoid the psychological work, because you're probably going to have to do it anyway. "Becoming the truth" means anything inauthentic in your life will have to change or end. You might as well be living as authentically as possible beforehand, because realization is not going to magically fix your life as a person. You will still have to live that life.

That said, you can use psychology as an avoidance tactic. You are never going to perfect the personality – you can spend the rest of your life polishing that turd (per Rose). The purpose of psychological work is to build authenticity and better functioning in the life, not to make an identity out of your issues. There's a point where you're OK enough.

~ Yasmin C.

Radical honesty is essential. Examine everything carefully. Allow yourself to feel fully. Live from the heart. Emotional stability matters greatly. Every disturbance can become an invitation to deeper inquiry: "What am I not seeing?"

Difficult experiences reveal hidden beliefs and patterns that keep consciousness contracted.

~ J.K.

Yes, it's helpful to be emotionally mature.

~ Filo King

I think what's critical is getting a clear conviction of what's most important to you and then establishing habits that remind you every day.

~ Art Ticknor

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10. Is there a relationship between becoming Truth/Love, “growing up” (developmental maturity), and “cleaning up” (shadow work)?

Yes, I think so. It's all about getting real with yourself, in every aspect of your life. The outer and inner life are actually the one thing, and they have to come into alignment.

~ Yasmin C.

Yes. In my experience, awakening is a maturation into one's natural adult being.

Shadow work can help illuminate the unconscious patterns and identifications that keeps one trapped. It supports radical honesty about where attention is fixated and how that fixation obstructs spiritual unfolding.

~ J.K.

They are the same.

~ Filo King

My feeling: what it takes is sufficient life-experience to weaken the arch of our faulty self-beliefs / identity and then a final experience that drops the keystone in the arch, giving the conscious ray a break from being hypnotized by the spacetime cosmos.

~ Art Ticknor

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11. Do you still experience fears and desires?

As physical sensations in the moment yes. I feel a flash of fear as I trip and catch myself from falling. I desire a peanut butter sandwich. Fear and desire are signals the body uses to regulate itself, they exist for the maintenance of the body.

It's not experienced as any kind of problem, just a signaling mechanism. It's simple and natural, there is no sense of being in conflict with fear or desire.

There are no more overarching existential fears (like fear of death) or grand desires (like spiritual seeking). Things just get very basic, no abstraction.

~ Yasmin C.

No.

~ Bob Harwood

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Yes, but they no longer matter. Preferences still exist, but joy is no longer dependent upon whether those preferences are fulfilled. Fear may arise briefly, like an animal startled by a sudden sound but it passes quickly. Overwhelm may arise at times, yet it moves through the system without becoming identity.

When conditioning appears, there is mostly curiosity: "Oh, look at that." It is immediate and so obvious. The personality still responds as the unique expression of this organism.

~ J.K.

These can still arise but there is 'no one' there to cling to them.

~ Filo King

Yes.

~ Art Ticknor

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12. Before realization, did you love Truth/Freedom/God/Absolute more than anything else? If so, how do you love what you do not yet know?

I wouldn't use the word "love" but I had a sense that I was missing or overlooking something fundamental about existence – there was something hidden from me, and I was driven to find it.

I did have to exhaust different avenues of possible fulfillment in the "outer" world before getting serious with the search for Truth. I had to find out that my desire was not going to be satisfied by anything external. And near the end of the search, there was a sense of falling in love or enchantment with the flow of life, the beauty of it.

~ Yasmin C.

Yes. I desperately wanted an end to suffering and longed to awaken.

I could feel the peace, joy, and emptiness radiating from those who were already awake, and I wanted to know the truth they were living from more than anything.

~ J.K.

These were 'loved' as concepts to be understood.

~ Filo King

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I most loved comfort and my children. I was committed to becoming the Truth, which I had seen / intuited as what I wanted most from life.

~ Art Ticknor

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13. What would you say your purpose in life was before realization? What is it now?

Before realization my purpose was realization. Now I don't have a purpose, thank goodness. What a relief to be free of that bullshit. Life as it presents itself is enough, life as it flows through this organism is enough.

~ Yasmin C.

Finding answers to all of my existential questions. Writing answers to these questions.

~ Bob Harwood

Before realization, my purpose was awakening and freedom from existential suffering.

Now there is no fixed meaning or purpose only living fully, openly, and wholeheartedly in each moment as it unfolds. Responding to everything as it is.

~ J.K.

The purpose is the same; to live life.

~ Filo King

To become the Truth and work with others who have a similar direction.

~ Art Ticknor

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14. Does self-compassion or childlike curiosity play a role in the search, alongside trauma and suffering?

I don't really know what is meant by self-compassion or compassion in general, unless it's just the acceptance of things are they are, accepting the self as it is, feeling what you feel, behaving with ordinary kindness and decency toward yourself and others. That seems so basic to me that it's not worth making a big deal out of it.

If you have a harsh inner critic, that's obviously some programming that is worth looking at. You didn't come into the world like that, it was added on to you somewhere. If how you relate to

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yourself is cruel and punitive, the opposite of how you would treat a pet or a child – that is also worth looking at.

Childlike openness or beginner's mind is very important, yes. You have to be able to look at your immediate experience without conceptualizations. So much of what we see is not what's actually in front of us, but our conditioning around it – it's nuts.

Suffering is important, yes. It drives the search for an end to suffering. I found out that my resistance to suffering – my sense that things should not be as they are – was the greater part of my suffering

Re. trauma: I'm no expert in psychology, but it seems what is meant by trauma is a somatic reaction to overwhelming abuse or shock. It's a dissociative response that gets stuck in the body and reemerges at inappropriate times. It's not the same as the suffering following the normal upsets and losses people have, it's much more disabling. I don't feel I'm qualified to talk about trauma. I don't know how effective spirituality is at addressing it, because it seems to be really easy for traumatized people to use spiritual practices to dissociate. There are targeted therapies for it. It seems like one of those things where professional help is needed.

~ Yasmin C.

Yes.

~ J.K.

Trauma is not required. But everything plays a role.

~ Filo King

All life-experience arguably plays a helper role.

~ Art Ticknor

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15. I sometimes lose my sense of “I” in moments of surprise, beauty, shock, or deep absorption—where experience unfolds but the thought “I” has not yet appeared. Is this similar to your experience some, most, or all of the time?

Yes, that's how it is. I used to have that experience when playing music, it seemed like a special, remarkable state. Now it's just normal. It doesn't feel special anymore and it's no longer remarked on.

There was a “high” or bliss state for a few weeks/months post-realization, after the seeing through/dropping away of the “I”. But then things got very simple and ordinary. It's clear that

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"I" was always just a thought. It can still arise but it has no juice – there's no buy-in. It's just another thought arising, it's functional, and it doesn't arise much.

~ Yasmin C.

The sense of being a separate volitional entity (SVE), or being "a little person inside the head" controlling what the body does, completely ended 26 years ago, and it never came back. Afterwards, the sense of "me" was of a body/mind organism that lives in what some of us call "the natural state"—a state of being and feeling one with what is.

~ Bob Harwood

All of the time. For me there is no separate I, only Being.

~ Filo King

The sense of self or "I" is an experience, something that comes and goes. What we are doesn't.

~ Art Ticknor

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16. How would you describe what happened to you to a child, a teenager, and an adult?

I was a happy child and my first memory is of lying peacefully in my crib, morning sunlight on the ceiling and birds singing outside. By my teenage years I had acquired a lot of conditioning and I was all contorted: miserable, driven, self-hating and anorexic. I had a breakdown at 18 and a cancer diagnosis at 19, everything I'd been suppressing really came to a head for me around this time. Gradually through my 20s I learned to live in my body and in the world, and to be the person I was instead of the person I'd been expected to be. I moved abroad and did a lot of internal work, became a musician, made good friends, traveled, worked lots of different jobs.

In my 30s I got more comfortable in my own skin and started to feel stable and content in my life, despite sporadic misery around romantic relationships. The spiritual path opened up in my mid 30s. I tried to avoid it for a good few years, and made a final push to have a more "normal" sort of worldly life, which mercifully failed. I was drawn back onto the path in earnest at 42; realization came at 49. Now I sit on the couch, trees shining out the window and the birds singing. Life goes on.

That's a rough outline of the story of Yasmin. It has been circular I guess – from simplicity and contentment, through complexity and misery, back to simplicity and contentment.

~ Yasmin C.

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Life is simply. Life is as it is (as a child, as a teenager or adult) there is no meaning to any of it.
Just life expressing itself.

~ J.K.

'Enlightenment' happened as a child. It took most of the rest of this life to acknowledge.

~ Filo King

My life before meeting Richard Rose at age 33 was one of unconscious seeking; afterward, it led to 26 years of conscious seeking: about 10 hopeful years followed by half a dozen hopeless ones then another 10 of "neutral" ones (neither hopeful or hopeless).

~ Art Ticknor

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17. Is boredom a part of your life? Or is the absence of doing / Silence a ground state of Being, never not there?

I don't find myself bored but I sure have become very boring. And yes, silence is the ground state. Beautiful streaming forever silence, every possibility is contained in it. I don't have a meditation practice anymore, but often the silence gets very strong and I drop into it.

~ Yasmin C.

Definitely not.

~ Bob Harwood

Boredom still arises, but it no longer matters. It is amusing.

Silence is beautiful. I loved silence as a seeker. Before awakening, doing was often a way of avoiding. Now doing simply happens as needed.

~ J.K.

Boredom is absent. Everything else arises and falls naturally.

~ Filo King

My post-realization existence would look much like pre-realization from a 3rd-person view. I'd say that my initial reactions are pretty much the same as before, but secondary reactions to the primary reactions don't have as much emotional-cramp activity. A great difference is the conviction now that what I experience has no effect on what I am.

~ Art Ticknor

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18. If there was the opportunity of asking a single question, I can't imagine any other except for "what should I do"?

The person who asked the question didn't explain how they would recognize an enlightened person if they met one, and in whom they could place their trust to ask that question. Hopefully it would be some deep intuitive recognition and not blind belief based merely on reputation or hearsay, or at worst based on some cliché checklist of attributes an enlightened person must manifest, and certain crowd-pleasing language softly spoken and/or in a peacefully passive manner.

The fact is that an unenlightened person is in a very poor position to ascertain whether another person is enlightened. Furthermore, the enlightened status of another person is irrelevant to a seeker unless that seeker intuits the person can help them somehow with their seeking.

Descriptions from self-realized individuals of their realization and attendant experience vary significantly, as does the language they use to convey it, along with any advice on how to find such a final answer. Yet still, I can recognize a common thread, some deeper recognition comes through in how they say what they say. For me an excellent example of that is Bernadette Roberts, author of many books such as *The Experience of No Self*. She was a Catholic Carmelite nun and insists on framing her realization in a Christian context and her advice in terms of Catholic dogma. She also claims she had, and has, zero knowledge or understanding of eastern religions and philosophy. Yet the profundity of her deep realization is apparent, befitting of any Eastern philosophy, and certainly not specific to Christianity.

We are all products of our genetics and circumstances, and we think and formulate language within the unique confines of that. Without exception, our interactions and communications with others conveys in varying measure our state of mind. This includes unconscious fears and desires, and our hidden agendas – hidden even from ourselves. An enlightened person brings to the interaction an X-factor rooted in deep, essential, direct knowledge and awareness of theirs and your common Source. This doesn't guarantee a meaningful rapport or useful communication for the reasons already stated. But if rapport exists, then some degree of transmission is possible.

This is why I must agree with the person who asked the question that it is the only, or at least the single most important question to ask. But the answer to that question has two parts. One is highly specific to the individual asking, the other is generic to all seekers. Richard Rose spoke and wrote publicly about the latter, and the former only in group work with those near him, and in one-on-one individual interactions, both in-person and through correspondence. Rose's

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public teachings are evident throughout TAT's web site and at TAT events. His private teachings are also evident through his students who found answers and have published extensively in the *TAT Forum* and participated in TAT's in-person and online meetings.

"What should I do?"

Make a commitment to find the Truth. Make it your top priority. Act on that commitment. Put your house in order (your life), to position yourself favorably towards keeping that commitment and taking such action, and minimizing obstacles to it. Determine for yourself what are the ways and means to optimally pursue your spiritual path. For sure, that will include daily meditational practice and working with others in a group of like-minded seekers. Help others as you expect to receive help. Don't postulate the truth, abandon untruths. Practice discernment when reading books or listening to others, and most especially when looking at yourself. Develop your intuition through living an energy-conserving lifestyle with your commitment to finding the truth as the center of gravity. Go within. Know yourself. Be true to yourself. Challenge yourself and avoid practices that lull you to sleep. This may all sound generic, even a little clichéd, but doing all of this requires true commitment and acting on that commitment with urgency. Your life will become a vector away from un-truth, away from false self, and make you vulnerable to the Grace that emanates from your Source and you will be guided home. I have no doubt about it.

~ Bob Cergol

Attend to your experience right now. Be with whatever is arising in perception, without conceptualizing about it. What you're seeking is right here in present experience, unfiltered by thought. It can be nowhere else.

~ Yasmin C.

(1) Whatever you are doing now is what THIS is doing, so just watch what's happening, (2) Seek until you find THIS, and (3) You can't make a mistake because who you think you are is NOT who you are, and what you are is THIS unfolding perfectly in accordance with divine Will.

~ Bob Harwood

Allow everything that arises in each moment with full attention, acceptance, and permission.

~ J.K.

Just continue to Be.

~ Filo King

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“Shoulds” are an iffy game. Doing comes from wanting. A primary question is “What do I want?” *The* primary question is “What do I want most?”

~ Art Ticknor

Keep asking things that matter as much as that. Ask them of yourself, as earnestly and questioningly as you can. Pursue, strain, meditate upon, return to, pray, despair over, yearn. In your life, your earnest efforts are most important.

~ Dave Weimer

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19. What did you discover?

I discovered that I am what I was seeking. Which was something I'd already heard a thousand times on this path and thought I understood, but I didn't.

I could also say, I didn't find anything, nothing was ever hidden. The restless energy of seeking (which I thought was me, but was actually an avoidance of the present moment) ended.

~ Yasmin C.

"I" never discovered anything. THIS, in the form of a particular human, discovered ITSELF.

~ Bob Harwood

Life is a dream. Nothing ever actually happened.

~ Filo King

What I am.

~ Art Ticknor

a. How do you know you're enlightened?

I'm not a fan of the word “enlightened” as it sounds grandiose, like you have a halo or something. I believe the Buddha just said he was awake, that seems a lot more realistic. You could also call it “remembering”, because it's what we all knew as children and it has never left us, only been obscured by our conditioning.

Whatever you want to call it, before the shift I knew clearly that I was not enlightened. I knew I was seeking, that there was something about life that I was just not understanding. There was a sense of something incomplete. I would not have claimed to be enlightened because it was obvious to me that I wasn't.

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Afterwards, even if I can't adequately articulate what has happened, I know it has happened. Something has changed fundamentally; something has died. Further seeking would be absurd because there's nothing to seek. The seeking and dissatisfaction are done, the existential drama of Yasmin is done.

When you're done you know you're done. I don't understand it but that's how it is. There's no need for anyone to confirm it for you, it's obvious.

And there's no point being falsely humble about it, because I didn't attain anything. In fact I can't believe how dumb I was with all the seeking, how long it took me to see the obvious. It's a total joke. ~ Yasmin

The best way I can describe it is this: what I experienced as the “observer” and the “third eye” integrated completely. I can no longer “pull back” into observation because life is now experienced directly *as* the observer itself.

The existential contraction is gone. The sense of being a broken, separate self that needed fixing has dissolved. There is love for everything that arises. Life is experienced from the heart, in direct communion with the immediacy of Now. Good, bad, indifferent they are all the same.

There is no sense of an inside or outside, just open expansion. Everything is beautifully imperfect including this organism and deeply loved as it is. ~ J.K.

There is no enlightenment for a ‘you’. ~ Filo

Conviction in the memory of seeing and recognizing my true identity and in the change it caused to my state of mind. ~ Art

b. What was helpful to you on your spiritual path? What was harmful to you?

I was helped a lot by TAT and the resources TAT has made available to seekers. Through TAT I met my friend and teacher Tess Hughes, and then my friend and teacher Jane Kellaghan. I was helped so much by both of them, and I'm very grateful. I'm also grateful to the TAT teachers who I didn't work with much personally, but whose teachings I've benefited from. Also to the other seekers in the groups I dipped in and out of, it was nice to have that feedback and friendship.

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Doing psychedelics in my 20s helped me a lot. LSD in particular broke through my rigid mental defenses. An ayahuasca trip in my mid 30s led to my discovery of TAT and the spiritual path.

(I wasn't doing anything like that near the end though, as it had long since become unnecessary. I also stopped drinking alcohol altogether the year before realization, because I didn't like how it felt anymore. You need to have a clear mind and alcohol made that harder for me.)

Woo woo stuff like the *I Ching* and tarot and astrology helped to widen the aperture of intuition. I didn't know that's what I was doing with all my obsessive consulting of that stuff, but it was useful.

I was also helped by having a meditation practice, making music, reading poetry, dancing, going on long walks in nature, staring at moving water for hours, backpacking trips abroad, and hanging out with cats and other animals.

Writing in journals since my 20s helped, and also paying attention to dreams and synchronicities.

Having a decent bullshit detector helped, and an obsessive nature.

I don't feel I was harmed on the path. I had so much help and whatever I needed for the next step often seemed to come along serendipitously. I was very lucky.

Silence and solitude were essential. I was lucky to have that kind of space in my life.

Some of the things that helped most seemed the most harmful: psychological breakdowns, heartbreaks, toxic relationships, illness, loss, suffering in general. I guess it all broke down my notions about myself and how my life was supposed to be. ~ Yasmin

Stability

Honest self-inquiry

The generosity of awakened teachers

Vulnerability

Emotional openness

Noticing how ego reasserts itself repeatedly

Remaining in the observing position

Meeting all experience with integrity and acceptance ~ J.K.

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Friends were very helpful. Negativity was detrimental. ~ Filo

Many suggestions from Richard Rose and two suggestions in particular from Douglas Harding stand out. Life-experience in general, but interpretations of any experience in particular are questionable. ~ Art

c. Sincere spiritual seekers have a deep longing for enlightenment. What do you feel are the 3 most important tips that will help them and/or expedite their search?

1. Have some way to quiet the mind. This is about looking carefully at your own direct experience, right now. The mind has to get pretty quiet before you can start to attend to the nature of thought, sensation, subject/object and attention in the moment. I was not a great meditator, but I did have a practice for years. If you watch your thoughts arising and dissipating without getting caught by their content and you do it persistently, they do slow down over time. It's a great relief to have a break from that hamster wheel and it allows you to attend to the here and now.

2. Be honest and brave. Get real with yourself in every aspect of your life, and learn to face into difficulty. Understand that this path is all about you, nobody else, and no one is ultimately gonna hold your hand or take responsibility – it's all you. You will have to face your death, that's where this leads, and no comforting narrative is going to save you. There's no point in lying to yourself or whitewashing what you actually feel with affirmations or trying to uphold some idealized image of yourself. Practice facing into things that you find uncomfortable, especially your own emotions. Allow them to come up and be felt, they are just energy in the body and they need to flow. It's good practice for dying.

3. Shake things up. Try approaches that are the opposite of what you'd normally do, especially ones that you have an automatic resistance to. If you live up in your head, you might need to do somatic or emotional work. If you are very body and emotion-focused, you might need to try a more logical, analytical approach. If you're grimly focused on realization, you might need to go on a holiday or do things that bring joy and fun into your life.

I was quite intellectual, but near the end of the seeking I saw that I'd gone as far as I could with the mind, and the rest had to come via the body. The breakthrough came after doing energy/somatic work with my friend Jane Kellaghan. This was something I'd really not looked into or considered as relevant, but it turned out to be very important.

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And also I normally shied away from in-person retreats and group energy, but the breakthrough came during a retreat with a small group. It seems like shaking things up helped me. ~ Yasmin C.

Do not endlessly repeat practices that are no longer effective.

Allow everything exactly as it is.

Strengthen the observing position.

Be radically honest about egoic tendencies.

Take nothing personally.

Listen to the body.

Spend time alone and in silence.

Quiet the compulsive doer.

Find trustworthy spiritual guidance.

Preserve your energy.

Make Truth your highest priority.

Be discerning and become your own authority.

Love all your imperfections.

The ego can enter through every possible back doorway. Every individual must examine their own blind spots carefully. Be alert. ~ J.K.

Do everything for love. ~ Filo

The commitment that derives from seeing clearly what they want most from life. Daily effort. Working for an ideal, not for their personality or individuality. ~ Art

d. What would you say to seekers that might inspire and/or irritate them?

To inspire: *What you are looking for is so ridiculously simple. It's not only possible for you to find it, it's inevitable.*

To irritate: *What you are looking for is so ridiculously simple, if you have spent years or even decades seeking and not finding, it's because you don't actually want to find. You want your*

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identity as a spiritual seeker, you want to debate how many angels can dance on the head of a pin with other seekers and to be seen as some kind of expert, you want the intelligent and supportive fellowship of your spiritual community, you want a lifestyle of going to retreats and feeling inspiring feelings and collecting amazing experiences. The last thing you actually want is to die into the truth. There's nothing wrong with this, but at least be honest with yourself about it.

(I would only say the latter if I were deliberately trying to irritate or shock. But I also believe that there is a ton of conditioning and personal will that has to be worn away before the person is emptied-out enough for realization, and this takes the time it takes. Things happen when they're ready to happen, there's no set time.) ~ Yasmin

You are already that which you seek. ~ Filo

Lots of questioning; sparse praise. ~ Art

e. What do you feel is counterproductive or destructive to seekers?

-I'm so grateful for Richard Rose's work, and for his no-bullshit communication style. I would question his stance on celibacy though. I am celibate by temperament and stage of life, but I can see how it could turn into something very punishing for the body if I were not. I feel that encouraging young people to forego relationships and sex in favor of spiritual development is wrong-headed, it can encourage avoidant behavior and spiritual bypassing. Punitive, controlling attitudes toward the body just seem pathological – the body is not some mad dog that needs to be chained up, it is a miracle.

It seems this advice was directed mostly to young men, and I don't have a male physiology, so I might not really get what this is about.

-I also think Rose telling young people that they had to attain realization before they hit 30 or whatever was silly. I understand he was trying to motivate people, but the process takes the time it takes. The living of a normal life can wear away a lot of ego without any spiritual practice at all.

-Related, the “storming heaven” endurance-athlete approach to spirituality does not jibe with my experience. For me it has not been about conquering some mountain peak through sheer will, but learning to dance with life and allowing life to lead. It's about surrendering into the flow. My definition of ego is mental/physical resistance to the flow, and I think it is only strengthened by all this grim effortful striving.

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(But maybe the point of this approach is that it necessarily fails and exhausts the seeker, I guess it's very clever and useful in that case.)

I think the notion that enlightenment is the only important thing in life and the answer to all problems is harmful. People should understand that it will not fix a bad marriage or hating your job and it may make things worse. It will not cure your psychological or physical issues. You still have to live your human life in the world, there's no escape.

I think putting “enlightened people” on pedestals is harmful and can open seekers up to abuse. Enlightened people are still just people, and the person isn't what wakes up. The person is only a bundle of conditioning – the realization might have knocked away a lot of that conditioning so the mechanism runs with less friction, but it's still just a mechanism of cause and effect. (“Enlightened person” is an oxymoron IMO, as “enlightenment” is prior to the person – the original face before you were born, or “before Abraham was, I am”.)

Enlightened people don't have anything you lack. It's more like they've lost some things you still have. They're not superior to you or a better authority on your own life than you – you have to become your own authority, per Rose. It's great to have people who've reached the end of the path to talk to, great to have their friendship and support, but don't project some superhuman omniscience onto them. They're just people and they can be dumb or wrong just like anyone else.

(This was so hard for me to understand as a seeker. The distinction between the realization and the person was very confusing.) ~ Yasmin

Endless intellectualizing

Over-analysis

Repetitive mental looping

Identification with victimhood

Attachment to spiritual identity

A useful question is: “Am I polishing the turd?” ~ J.K.

Strong beliefs can be counter productive. ~ Filo

Adopting beliefs from authority figures/sources, peer pressure, etc. ~ Art

=====

20. Are you sure it's not another trick of the mind? Another compensation to turn from the truth?

Is enlightenment just another trick of the mind? No.

~ J.K.

The mind is also truth.

~ Filo King

I'm open to challenges from life-experience.

~ Art Ticknor

Pretty sure. A trick of the mind? It doesn't feel related to the mind.

~ Dave Weimer

a. How does the mind know of a Self? How does the information get to the mind?

It's outside of the mind altogether, so it can't be a trick of the mind. The mind can't know it. All the mind is, is thoughts – reflections, like reflections in water. A reflection can't "know" anything, it can only reflect. ~ Yasmin

A mind, as intellect, never knows anything important until something deeper than the intellect reveals the truth. Realizations from that deeper level of How does a mind know of a mind inform the intellect about what is NOT so (false ideas ABOUT reality), and kensho events (CC's) can result in a direct apprehension of the Infinite. Only in those ways does the intellect ever know anything about the absolute. Only the Absolute can know the Absolute, so a human must cease to be separate from the Absolute to know the Absolute. ~ Bob H.

Is there a self? There is no permanent self, only conditioned habits, beliefs, and behavioural patterns. ~ J.K.

Through disappearance of mind, mind knows. ~ Filo

The conscious ray of manifestation somehow bends back to its source. ~ Art

b. How come we have individual views? How come you Realizing doesn't also make me Realized?

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Are you sure we have individual views? What in your immediate experience do you base that belief on?

Where do I occur, and my big Realization that you think you lack? Where is all that happening for you right now? ~ Yasmin

Can one live without a sense of being a separate volitional entity? Yes, and without the conventional sense of "me," life is enormously more enjoyable because there is no suffering, no desires, and no expectations coupled with tremendous gratitude for the gift of life. It is like falling in love with the Absolute. ~ Bob H.

Why do individuals appear separate? Each person is a unique expression of life. Many people may not truly want Truth as much as they believe they do. The ego often prefers familiarity over surrender. ~ J.K.

Noticed how you are the only person who enters and wakes up from your dreams at night. ~ Filo

Possibly explained by the difference between Newtonian physics and quantum physics; also by the Indra's Net metaphor. ~ Art

c. Is there any truth about experience that's important to learn? Or does none of it matter vs. knowing the experiencer?

These questions rely on assumptions that the questioner could examine. (Experience vs experiencer might be a start.) ~ Yasmin

What matters most? Only this present moment, met with full acceptance. ~ J.K.

Experience is both separate from and the same as the experiencer. ~ Filo

Experience provides the data that the mind works with. ~ Art

d. Does this experience make God happy?

Ditto. ~ Yasmin

Does it make you happy? ~ Filo

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No. ~ Art

e. Did you learn, is love stronger than death? Why does love allow ignorance?

Ditto. ~ Yasmin

Love is unconditional. ~ Filo

Love is a variety of experiences. I haven't yet experienced physical death. ~ Art

f. What should I have asked you?

"Does realization help you to answer questions based on abstractions?"

Answer: Apparently not.

-Look, this is not about replacing your notions about life with better notions. It's about having the notions stripped away. ~ Yasmin

What you asked. ~ Filo

Anything you want to hide. ~ Art

Ask every single relevant question that comes to mind. Don't stop until you've come to the end of things coming up. Ask for help. Ask for tips. Do this to every single "realized" person you encounter. This is more important than being polite.

~ Dave Weimer

=====

21. If I met a person who said they are enlightened, i would try to avoid asking about their current state. As, I won't be able to relate to it and it has no use for me. So, I would then ask a series of questions (given that I have already provided information about my current state of mind) about my psychological self and thoughts, like my relationship to this being. Can this being live without me permanently? Because I believe suffering is mutual, do I (psychological self) have to self-annihilate or does this being have to see the mutual suffering and release me? Although, I hardly believe any quick answer will give me anything that will alter my perspective on these things.

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I'm confused about who is relating to what here - "psychological self" vs. "this being" - what are you trying to say?

It reads like mental contortion based on beliefs and assumptions which you are seemingly unwilling to examine: "I hardly believe any quick answer will give me anything that will alter my perspective on these things". OK, but I don't see much clarity around what your perspective actually is. And why should I engage with you if you already think you know better?

~ Yasmin C.

Being, which we don't experience until we find ourselves back at the source, is permanent. Life is impermanent.

~ Art Ticknor

- **Moreover, I feel two-way conversation is more suitable than me dumping questions. Discussion I think will help me explore myself in real time. Discussion also invites the person to ask me questions, which can be crucial for me. In my opinion a little nudge is more helpful than giving answers.**

Here it sounds like you're dictating what way you want the other to respond, what kind of interaction will be acceptable and useful to you. I'm not here to serve your ego.

My unsolicited advice to you would be to find a way to quiet your thinking mind, because it is running the show and it sounds pretty chaotic to me. Are you using thought to dissociate from your physical reality? What's going on with the body, underneath the mental abstractions?

Also, are you aware of your need for control? You could look into that.

If you feel some indignation at my response, that's a goldmine – that resistance is protecting something important. Find out what it is. ~ Yasmin

Silence.

~ Filo King

The commentator who wrote, "I feel two-way conversation is more suitable than me dumping questions." Yes! My question to them: have you availed yourself of the opportunity for two-way conversation which TAT creates? They further commented: "In my opinion a little nudge is more helpful than giving answers." Yes! Answers are rarely heard, in part because the questions are rarely asked with openness (meaning I am open to hearing something contrary to what I already think I know, meaning the questioner has a moment of

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honest desperation). Generally, a little nudge is the best that any of us can do for one another.

~ Shawn Nevins

=====

22. I've heard more than one enlightened person say that their psychological / emotion issues and suffering was resolved before their final enlightenment experience. Richard Rose spoke about an "egoless vector" which I understand to mean a point in a spiritual search where the seeker is no longer seeking for personal concern.

Yes, that was true for me. I was no longer suffering or having to exert discipline, the path was just doing itself. It felt like a flowering. It's like the ox herding picture "riding the ox home".

~ Yasmin C.

Someone's life shortly before Self-Realization could be more or less traumatic ... earthquakes versus erosions.

~ Art Ticknor

a. So my question to the enlightened people is: What actually changes after, if anything?

I hope I've answered this in the other responses. It's easy to answer with a standard non-dual cliché, like "nothing and everything changes". And that cliché is accurate! But I did try to describe changes I've noticed personally. I can only talk about my own experience. ~ Yasmin

What actually changes after realizing what's going on? An end to seeking and too many other things to list. ~ Bob H.

Everything and nothing. Life goes on with all its up's and down's but there is just an experience of what is happening in each moment with full acceptance of all that is as it is. All is welcome.

~ J.K.

Nothing and everything changes.

~ Filo King

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Self-Realization changes the conscious ray's state of mind. Some convictions will change, and weightings of the various fears and desires will change. ~ Art

This, here, at home, is changed.

What in my life changed? I don't know why, but the immediate aftermath was that the structure of my life avalanched. Everything crumbled. I stumbled, numb, through the rubble. Everyone's life is unique. I would guess that a major change in anyone would contrast starkly with the life structure that was created and maintained by the earlier, still hungry, version of that person.

~ Dave Weimer

=====

23. Questions I would ask:

a. Is your innermost angst satisfied? Do you feel settled in your soul?

Yes.

~ Yasmin C.

Yes.

~ J.K.

Silence. (same response for all three questions)

~ Filo King

Definitely. Definitely. ~ Art

b. Do you have unanswered questions that are important to you?

No. ~ Yasmin

No. ~ J.K.

I have questions that are important to me (like how can I help X with Y, how can I minimize the risk of hurting vs. helping, and how does associative memory work), but none that bother me. ~ Art

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c. Do desires or fears still drive your life?

No. ~ Yasmin

No. either may arise, but it doesn't matter, no meaning is attached to either. ~ J.K.

Fears and desires are participants in all decisions that precede action (all except autonomic actions, maybe). I also suspect that many of my actions are based on memories of past decision-making ... like looking for traffic before crossing a street. ~ Art

=====

24. I am not sure the answering of my questions by an enlightened person would help because there are so many good answers to my questions from TAT Foundation books and other books, etc.

I have read for the last 30 plus years. It's not so much answers I need.....it is practice.

Practice is no guarantee. Be open to whatever arises whether it's a question or a book, or something else.

~ Filo King

Yes, but... I maintain the practice would come naturally if you were in connection with your deepest desire. If I am drowning, I will try with all my heart to swim, but if I am thinking from the comfort of my living room that going to the pool would be a nice form of exercise, but it's cold, or the pool is going to be crowded, blah, blah, then swimming doesn't happen.

~ Shawn Nevins

One question I would ask is: Would you spend a night with me looking at the stars from the Nullarbor Plain in the middle of Australia?

Sounds lovely. :)

~ Yasmin C.

Depends on circumstances. ~ Filo

I love it. See #26 below, "live the darkness." Let us relax and rise-fall into the night sky. ~ Shawn N.

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Possibly, but it's not something I'd plan. I feel that the most productive life-experience is that which challenges the seeker's certainties (assumption/beliefs/conclusions) about what they are.

~ Art Ticknor

=====

26. Why do we often hear about tension being a prerequisite of, or at least strongly correlated with, Realization?

What role does tension play, how does it work, and why is it sometimes elevated above something like "relaxing into one's being" as a method for finding Truth?

I guess different things work for different people, and tension worked for Rose. I doubt he built up tension as a seeker on purpose – he was probably just intense, as many of us are who get into this stuff. Then maybe he saw it as crucial afterwards. I don't know.

Some people talk about contraction, I think it's the same thing. Realization is the end of that tension/contraction. You just can't clench up like that again, physically or mentally.

You can't have tension without relaxation, one means nothing without the other. You can't have contraction without release. You can't have seeking without finding. It seems to me that Rose's approach leaned more toward ramping up the tension, ramping up the contraction, ramping up the seeking – leading to a big failure and release, like what happened to him. The purpose of building tension is to exhaust that tension, the way a koan exhausts the conceptual mind.

I see it as a very male warrior approach, and hard on the organism. Basically pushing yourself to breaking point to get a breakthrough. Maybe this is why Rose encouraged celibacy – more buildup of internal tension, so you can have a big explosive head orgasm.

It might work for others but it wasn't right for me. But looking back, I guess I built and exhausted a great deal of tension via rigidity and then mental/physical collapse as a young person. I wasn't physically able to ramp up tension after that.

~ Yasmin C.

Why is tension often associated with realization? Because intense tension can shock a person out of deeply conditioned patterns and identifications. Truth is not found as an object, one becomes Truth by surrendering fully to immediate experience.

~ J.K.

Tension can play a role as can relaxation.

~ Filo King

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See: "The tension between being and non-being results in Enlightenment" (p. 66, [Energy Transmutation, Between-ness and Transmission](#) by Richard Rose). Further, Zen speaks of the red hot cannonball that you can neither spit out nor swallow. Then, John of the Cross says, "To arrive at being all, desire to be nothing." These quotes all point to tension. Compare that to Rose poetically writing, "Relax ye and die and live the darkness, and enter the impassive pool of the Unknowing...." Rose is speaking of "relaxing into one's being," but relaxing into death is not what most people mean when they refer to that phrase. We are already THAT, but there is a barrier to feeling/knowing THAT, and the guardian of the gate is fear, tension, or myriad other rumblings of self that tell us not to go there.

~ Shawn Nevins

I think of tension as a tug of war between opposing forces. And I lean strongly toward the bias that a loosening of certainties (which may or may not produce more tension) is what moves the seeker toward final resolution. ~ Art Ticknor

=====

27. What would you say that you've found?

What it was never possible to lose.

~ Yasmin C.

What everyone and everything is--THIS/Self/The Absolute.

~ Bob Harwood

Nothing and everything. There is nothing to acquire. One simply returns to one's natural state, prior to distortion and identification.

~ J.K.

Reality. Certainty. Truth. Self.

~ Art Ticknor

a. What's your level of certainty about it?

Complete. ~ Yasmin

100%. ~ Bob H.

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Completely. ~ J.K.

Because I have not found anything other than what is already here, certainty is not necessary.

~ Filo King

Absolute. ~ Art

b. Why are you that certain?

Fucked if I know! :) ~ Yasmin

The truth, when discovered, is self-validating and beyond doubt. ~ Bob H.

Because: "I am." ~ J.K.

Memory that hasn't been challenged. (BTW, I had provided these three questions :-) ~ Art

=====

28. I would like to ask self-realized people what they really want from working with seekers.

That's a good question. I don't have any delusion that I can rescue anybody from their suffering, but the orientation toward being helpful is still there. I was helped a great deal along the way, and I made a promise before realization that I would help others along the path as much as I could. It makes sense to pay it back.

There's no inclination to put myself out there as a teacher though. Life will use me as it sees fit.

Jane K. said to me once that maybe the reason there are so many non-duality teachers online now (aside from there's money in it) is that teaching and engagement help them to feel something. They get to re-live the initial bliss of the realization through talking about it or seeing their students have breakthroughs. Otherwise life gets very matter-of-fact and ordinary – she called it “emotional flatline”.

That makes sense to me. I mean, I am so boring now. I can actually sit on the couch all day. I'm less than 2 years post-realization and I barely think about any of it, and when an emotion comes up it's like seeing a rare bird. My inclination is to engage less and less with others.

But writing responses to these questions has been very intellectually engaging – I found it fun. I talk to so few people about this stuff. It has been really interesting finding out what I have to say

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– obviously a LOT! So thank you guys for the questions. I hope others find something useful in all this verbiage.

~ Yasmin C.

Nothing at all. After finding a priceless treasure, it's fun helping other people find that same treasure.

~ Bob Harwood.

Many seekers unconsciously love being seekers. They become attached to spiritual identity, complexity, and suffering because these feel familiar and safe. The real question is:

“Do you truly want to wake up?”

Sometimes working with a seeker that is open and has genuine hunger for truth beyond all else and has the courage to face everything head on can give rise to a feeling of bliss, expansion and pure love in me. Equally working with a person who is cemented and has concrete ideas and fixation about life, themselves and have everything figured out with an ego that is hard to shift gives rise to a feeling of pulling teeth. There is no ‘want’ in either example.

~ J.K.

Mutual happiness.

~ Filo King

I guess it's the way to keep serving the “master” ideal I intuited that I was here for.

~ Art Ticknor

a. Have they noticed any disadvantages in their life to being self-realized?

There are changes but you adapt. There's no way I would go back. ~ Yasmin

None whatsoever. ~~ Bob H.

No. ~ J.K.

Yes, the lack of any filters makes one more ‘vulnerable’ to life's ups and downs. ~ Filo

No. ~ Art

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b. Did they ever have any doubts about the authenticity of their self-realization?

No, it's interesting, considering how skeptical my mind can be.
Doubting it would be a mental thing. But the realization isn't mental, it isn't about thought.
So if doubtful thoughts were arising I would know them to be only thoughts, and of no
relevance. But as it happens, they do not arise. ~ Yasmin

No. ~ J.K.

It's a bit like asking whether there are any doubts I am alive. ~ Filo

Not yet. ~ Art

What I really want, if possible, is to help someone who is like I used to be.

Disadvantages in my life? Probably. Being not as attached on a superficial level probably
seems like uncaring to someone close to me. Just a guess.

Any doubts about the "authenticity" of my self-realization? No. It took a long time to
assimilate.

Isolated in a cabin for three months, after the avalanche following my change, when re-
reading books with descriptions of things and comments by spiritual authorities, I snorted.
"I don't know anything, but I know THAT."

There are no doubts about what I feel, here. There is recognition when I encounter
someone who has been beyond themselves. It's obvious when someone hasn't been there.
~ Dave Weimer

=====