



# AWAKEN THE WORLD

Video Transcriptions

## Inner Worlds, Outer Worlds

### Part 4: Beyond Thinking



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Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We live our lives pursuing happiness "out there" as if it is a commodity. We have become slaves to our own desires and craving. Happiness isn't something that can be pursued or purchased like a cheap suit. This is Maya, illusion, the endless play of form.

In the Buddhist tradition, Samsara, or the endless cycle of suffering is perpetuated by the craving of pleasure and aversion to pain. Freud referred to this as the "pleasure principle." Everything we do is an attempt to create pleasure, to gain something that we want, or to push away something that is undesirable that we don't want. Even a simple organism like the paramecium does this. It is called response to stimulus. Unlike a paramecium, humans have more choice. We are free to think, and that is the heart of the problem. It is the thinking about what we want that has gotten out of control. The dilemma of modern society is that we seek understand the world, not in terms of archaic inner consciousness, but by quantifying and qualifying what we perceive to be the external world by using scientific means and thought.

Thinking has only led to more thinking and more questions. We seek to know the innermost forces which create the world and guide its course. But we conceive of this essence as outside of ourselves, not as a living thing, intrinsic to our own nature. It was the famous psychiatrist Carl Jung who said, "one who looks outside dreams, one who looks inside awakes." It is not wrong to desire to be awake, to be happy. What is wrong is to look for happiness outside when it can only be found inside.

On August 4th, 2010 at the Techonomy conference in Lake Tahoe, California, Eric Schmidt-CEO of Google, mentioned an astounding statistic. Every two days now we create as much information as we did from the dawn of civilization up until 2003, according to Schmidt. That's something like 5 exabytes of data. Never in human history has there been so much thinking and never has there been so much turmoil on the planet. Could it be that every time we think of a solution to one problem, we create two more problems? What good is all this thinking if it doesn't lead to greater happiness? Are we happier? More equanimous? More joyful as a result of all this thinking? Or does it isolate us, disconnect us from a deeper and more meaningful experience of life? Thinking, acting and doing, must be brought into balance with being. After all, we are human beings, not human doings.

We want change and we want stability at the same time. Our hearts have become disconnected from the spiral of life, the law of change, as our thinking minds drive us towards stability, security and pacification of the senses. With a morbid fascination we watch killings, tsunamis, earthquakes and wars. We constantly try to occupy our mind, fill it with information. TV shows streaming from every conceivable device. Games and puzzles. Text messaging. And every possible trivial thing. We let ourselves become mesmerized with the endless stream of new images, new information, new ways to tantalize and pacify the senses. At times of quiet inner reflection our hearts may tell us that there is more to life than our present reality, that we live in a world of hungry ghosts. Endlessly craving and never satisfied. We have created a maelstrom of data flying around the planet to facilitate more thinking, more ideas about how to fix the world, to fix the problems that only exist because the mind has created them. Thinking has created the whole big mess we're in right now. We wage wars against diseases, enemies and problems.

The paradox is that whatever you resist persists. The more you resist something, the stronger it gets. Like exercising a muscle, you are actually strengthening the very thing you want to rid yourself of. So then, what is the alternative to thinking? What other mechanism can humans use to exist on this planet? While Western culture in recent centuries

has focused on exploring the physical by using thought and analysis, other ancient cultures have developed equally sophisticated technologies for exploring inner space. It is the loss of our connection to our inner worlds that has created imbalance on our planet.

The ancient tenant "know thyself" has been replaced by a desire to experience the outer world of form. Answering the question "who am I?" is not simply a matter of describing what is on your business card. In Buddhism, you are not the content of your consciousness. You are not merely a collection of thoughts or ideas because behind the thoughts is the one who is witnessing the thoughts. The imperative "know thyself" is a Zen koan, an unanswerable riddle. Eventually the mind will become exhausted in trying to find an answer. Like a dog chasing its tail, it is only the ego identity that wants to find an answer, a purpose. The truth of who you are does not need an answer because all questions are created by the egoic mind. You are not your mind. The truth lies not in more answers, but in less questions. As Joseph Campbell said, "I don't believe people are looking for the meaning of life, as much as they are looking for the experience of being alive."

When the Buddha was asked, "what are you?" he said simply, "I am awake." What does this mean, to be awake? The Buddha does not say exactly, because of the flowering of each individual life is different. But he does say one thing; it is the end of suffering. Every major religious tradition has a name or the state of being awake. Heaven, Nirvana, or Moksha. A quiet mind is all you need to realize the nature of the stream All else will happen once your mind is quiet. In that stillness, inner energies wake up and work without effort on your part. As the Taoists say, "Chi follows consciousness." By being still one begins to hear the wisdom of the plants and animals. The quiet whispers in dreams, and one learns the subtle mechanism by which those dreams come into material form. In the Tao te Ching, this kind of living is called "wei wu wei" "Doing, not doing."

The Buddha spoke of the "middle way" as the path that leads to enlightenment. Aristotle described the Golden Mean - the middle between two extremes, as the path of beauty. Not too much effort, but not too little either. Yin and yang in perfect balance. Vedanta's notion of Maya or illusion, is that we do not experience the environment itself, but rather a projection of it created by thoughts. Of course your thoughts let you experience the vibratory world in a certain way, but our inner equanimity need not be contingent on external happenings. The belief in an external world independent of the perceiving subject is fundamental to science. But our senses only give us indirect information. Our notions about this mind-made physical world are always filtered through the senses and therefore always incomplete. There is one field of vibration underlying all of the senses. People with a condition called "synesthesia" sometimes experience this vibratory field in different ways. Synesthetes can see sounds as colors or shapes or associate qualities of one sense with another. Synesthesia refers to a synthesis or intermingling of the senses. The chakras and the senses are like a prism filtering a continuum of vibration. All things in the universe are vibrating but at different rates and frequencies.

The Eye of Horus is made up of six symbols, each representing one of the senses. Like the ancient Vedic system, thought is considered to be a sense. Thoughts are received simultaneously as sensations are experienced on the body. They arise from the same vibratory source. Thinking is simply a tool. One of six senses. But we have elevated it to such a high status that we identify ourselves with our thoughts. The fact that we do not identify thinking as one of the six senses is very significant. We are so immersed in thought that trying to explain thought as a sense is like telling a fish about water. Water, what water? In the Upanishads it is said: Not that which the eye can see, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that to be Brahma the eternal and not what people here adore. Not that which the ear can hear, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that to be Brahma the eternal and not what people here adore. Not that which speech can illuminate, but that by which speech can be illuminated. Know that to be Brahma the eternal and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind can think, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that to be Brahma the eternal and not what people here adore.

In the last decade, great advances have taken place in the area of brain research. Scientists have discovered neuroplasticity - a term which conveys the idea that the physical wiring of the brain changes according to the thoughts moving through it. As Canadian psychologist Donald Hebb put it, "neurons that fire together, wire together." Neurons wire together most when a person is in a state of sustained attention. What this means is that it is possible to direct your own subjective experience of reality. Literally, if your thoughts are ones of fear, worry, anxiety and negativity then you grow the wiring for more of those thoughts to flourish. If you direct your thoughts to be ones of love, compassion, gratitude and joy, you create the wiring for repeating those experiences. But how do

we do that if we are surrounded by violence and suffering? Isn't this some kind of delusion or wishful thinking? Neuroplasticity isn't the same as the new age notion that you create your reality by positive thinking. It is actually the same thing that the Buddha taught 2500 years ago.

Vipassana Meditation or insight meditation could be described as self-directed neuroplasticity. You accept your reality exactly as it is - as it ACTUALLY is. But you experience it at the root level of sensation, at the vibratory or energetic level without the prejudice or influence of thought. Through sustained attention at the root level of consciousness the wiring for an entirely different perception of reality is created. We have got it backwards most of the time. We constantly let ideas about the outer world shape our neural networks, but our inner equanimity need not be contingent on external happenings. Circumstances don't matter. Only my state of consciousness matters. Meditation in Sanskrit means to be free of measurement. Free of all comparison. To be free of all becoming. You are not trying to become something else. You are okay with what is. The way to rise above the suffering of the physical realm is to totally embrace it. To say yes to it. So it becomes something within you, rather than you being something within it. How does one live in such a way that consciousness is no longer in conflict with its content? How does one empty the heart of petty ambitions?

There must be a total revolution in consciousness. A radical shift in orientation from the outer world to the inner. It is not a revolution brought about by will or effort alone. But also by surrender. Acceptance of reality as it is. The image of Christ's open heart powerfully conveys the idea that one must open to all pain. One must accept ALL if one is to remain open to the evolutionary source. This doesn't mean you become a masochist, you don't look for pain, but when pain comes, which it inevitably does, you simply accept reality AS IT IS, instead of craving some other reality. The Hawaiians have long believed that it is through the heart that we learn truth. The heart has its own intelligence as distinctly as the brain does. The Egyptians believed that the heart, not the brain, was the source of human wisdom. The heart was considered to be the center of the soul and the personality. It was through the heart that the divine spoke, giving ancient Egyptians knowledge of their true path. This papyrus depicts the "weighing of the heart". It was considered a good thing to go into the afterlife with a light heart. It meant that you had lived well. One universal or archetypal stage that people experience in the process of awakening the heart center is the experience of one's own energy as the energy of the universe. When you allow yourself to feel this love, to be this love, when you connect your inner world with the outer world, then all is one.

How does one experience the music of the spheres? How does a heart open? Sri Ramana Maharshi said, "God dwells in you, as you, and you don't have to do anything to be God-realized or self-realized. It is already your true and natural state. Just drop all seeking, turn your attention inward and sacrifice your mind to the one self, radiating in the heart of your very being. For this to be your own presently lived experience, self-inquiry is the one direct and immediate way." When you meditate and observe sensations within, our inner aliveness, you are actually observing change. This force of change is the arising and passing away as energy changes form. The degree to which a person has evolved or become enlightened, is the degree to which one has gained the ability to adapt to each moment, or to transmute the constantly changing human stream of circumstances, pain and pleasure into bliss. Leo Tolstoy, author of "War and Peace", said "everyone thinks of changing the world, but nobody thinks of changing him or herself." Darwin said the most important characteristic for the survival of the species is not strength or intelligence, but adaptability to change. One must become adept at adapting.

This is the Buddhist teaching of "annica" - everything is arising and passing away, changing. Constantly changing. Suffering exists only because we become attached to a particular form. When you connect to the witnessing part of yourself, with the understanding of annica, bliss arises in the heart. Saints, sages and yogis throughout history unanimously describe one sacred union that occurs in the heart. Whether it is the writings of St. John of the Cross, Rumi's poetry, or the tantric teachings of India, all of these different teachings try to express the subtle mystery of the heart. In the heart is the union of Shiva and Shakti. Masculine penetration into the spiral of life and feminine surrender to change. Witnessing and unconditional acceptance of all that is. In order to open your heart, you must open yourself to change. To live in the seemingly solid world, Dance with it, Engage with it, Live fully, Love fully, but yet know that it is impermanent and that ultimately all forms dissolve and change. Bliss is the energy that responds to stillness. It comes from emptying consciousness of all content. The content of this bliss energy born of stillness IS consciousness. A new consciousness of the heart. A consciousness that is connected to ALL that IS.