

ENLIGHTENMENT TRAPS

Shortcuts to Enlightenment?



by Robert Sniadach

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Verum Loqui
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April, 2004

[Several edits and minor additions added over time]
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I'm told that 'real books' have a number of important sections in them. Here you go:

Dedication

To the real you. You'll know it when you become it.

Cover Photo

Heliamphora heterodoxa – [Carnivorous pitcher plant](#) from Venezuela. Attractive colors and shapes get your attention, enticing fragrances from the sweet nectar lure you in, slippery leaves assure your downfall into the liquid trap waiting below. Clever plants!

Foreword

"As far as I can tell, this guy knows what he is talking about." - Swami Pastrami

Preface

The contents of this booklet will probably provoke, irritate and offend you. Good. That will get you thinking.

Conversely, what you read here shouldn't irritate you, once you grasp what I am saying. It's actually a big relief.

It's a short booklet; basically a summary of my own experiences, insights and comprehension of the comedy-drama called Spirituality and Seeking Enlightenment. Perhaps some of my experiences will help shed some light on your own experiences. Then we can both laugh together, already secretly knowing what the punch line is.

Introduction

Why should you read this?

If you are a devoted spiritual seeker, you probably should not read it.

If you are getting *extremely frustrated* with your endless spiritual seeking and practices, you definitely should read it.

References

These are supposed to be at the end. So I'll put a few there.

Acknowledgments

Brahman, Shakti, Shiva and all the rest of The Gang – you guys and gals are the best. Impeccable hosts, always providing outstanding entertainment, and never a dull moment. I love how you hide seductive mysteries behind every obstacle. It's an endless treasure hunt.

OK, now it's a real book! Albeit a very short one. With that out of the way, let's get on with it.

What Is Enlightenment?

I can't really say what it is... Only what it is like. And what it is not. I can describe the effects, the feeling of it, the daily reality of living it.

Enlightenment has been portrayed as total awakening, liberation, the final truth, eternal bliss, perfect love, abiding non-dual awareness, permanent freedom from suffering, and the ultimate destination of all spiritual practice.

Sounds pretty impressive, yes?

My personal description and experience of the enlightened Natural State:

- Full sunlight shining through; gray clouds dispersing. Dim fogginess gone.
- Direct knowing occurs; ignorance gone.
- Simple unbound awareness exists; illusion gone.
- Unbroken wholeness exists; the feeling of separateness gone.
- Agape – abiding oneness filled with unconditional, impersonal love.
- Always being in The Natural State; clear, clean, unfettered, unencumbered, easy, simple.
- A profound experience of having awakened, as if I had been sleeping and dreaming all along and didn't know it. This new state of consciousness does continue to evolve in unexpected ways, but it does not disappear; it is not temporary.
- All desire to continue seeking for spiritual answers and altered state experiences completely ceases.

All questioning stops... the questions themselves have vanished. The seeker is gone.

- The voices inside my head disappeared permanently. I no longer hear any inner judging of my thoughts or actions; no inner congratulation or punishment for my choices; no more 'shoulds' or 'should nots.' Human-created, interpreted and dictated morality has disappeared. My consciousness is merged in the flow of a Far Greater Consciousness which has everything under control. I flow with it, automatically.
- Doubt no longer occurs about anything. My next step, next action, next 'choice' is automatic, without doubt.
- A million other free bonus prizes, such as the inability to worry about anything, anxiety is gone and does not reappear, inability to attach undue importance or seriousness to situations, my sense of personal motivation is gone but everything necessary gets done, no concern about goals or results and yet things work out just fine, continually present 'now' moment awareness and engagement, zero regret about the past and zero worry about the future, profound relaxation of the body, greatly improved well being, many health concerns eliminated or minimized, automatic ease with anyone at any time, and many more.

Sounds good? Interested?

Seriously interested???

(You may not realize what you are in for...)

"So," you ask, "Where can I get it? How can I get it? What must I do to awaken into enlightenment? Who can give it

to me?"

To achieve enlightenment, there are hundreds, maybe thousands of systems, practices, theories, disciplines, and rituals prescribed by an unending stream of gurus, masters, priests and shamans. All claim that they have got it, and that their method is your answer, guaranteed to make you enlightened. With all of these professionals available, sage advice offered, thousands of books and instruction manuals floating around, you would assume that spiritual enlightenment was happening all over the place, with millions of fully awake and aware people walking around the planet, creating a paradise on Earth.

A quick glance around, however, shows you that it just ain't happening.

Why not?

Very Good Question.

Seems that either the wisdom offered is flawed, no one has proofread the manuals, the practices are not quite accurate, or the teachers themselves are not really doing what they say they are doing.

In the final analysis it comes down to this: In the three-ring circus we call 'spirituality' at this moment in human (d)evolutionary history, there are hundreds of radically different paths you can take. How can you know which one is correct for you?

Perhaps you can imagine it as hundreds of different instruments being played, but the musicians are not aware of each other. There are brilliant, accomplished musicians, and beginners who are just learning how to play. You hear discordant melodies, bizarre harmonies,

strange counterpoint and conflicted rhythms happening simultaneously.

This mad soundscape is a cacophonous spiritual symphony orchestra overseen by no one; no conductor or musical director to be found. You enter the spiritual scene without any map or user guide – you are on your own and winging it, any way you can. You may feel it best to lock onto one particular spiritual path, led by an accomplished authority. Or you may jump from master to teacher to preacher to guru.

But no, the larger spiritual scene, the whole circus, is overseen by no one. Whether you haphazardly sample every musical chair and every instrument, or you stick with one of them for many years, in the end it always comes down to the Final Movement of your own Spiritual Opus; your own Final Awakening Process. That's where the real action is. Everything else, including every spiritual practice you have ever engaged in, is just warm-up. All along the way with every spiritual practice session, you have simply been learning your instrument, tuning it up and teaching yourself how to play simple songs.

If you are lucky, in this human lifetime, you may be destined for the grand finale of your own personal spiritual symphony. Your final spiritual movement, your final, permanent awakening and its climax is a rip-roaring, mind-blowing, utterly terrifying, self-consuming, self-destroying, yet completely natural process. It is, without a shred of doubt, the most difficult process a human being can go through. **You** – everything you **think** you are, **feel** you are, **believe** you are and **hope** to become – everything inside you that blocks you from experiencing your natural state of being, will be progressively extracted, identified,

dis-integrated and purged from your system. Permanently. Forever. 'You' are being eaten alive, from the inside out. What could be more terrifying than that?

Your **final** spiritual enlightening process cannot be artificially brought on or sped up by **anything** you do. It will commence **only** when the hidden Divine Maestro knows you are truly ripe and ready for it – at your soul level. Only then will He tap the podium, then raise His baton in a grand flourish, signaling the orchestra to pay attention and ready itself to roar into your Final Awakening Crescendo.

Your personal enlightening process happens when it is meant to happen; you cannot force it, no matter how hard you try. When it begins to occur, you cannot stop it, no matter how badly you may want it to stop. As it kicks in and plays out, it is not, **in any way**, under your control.

Reread the previous three paragraphs. Several times.

Got it?

Good.

OK, now we proceed...

The Path Rarely Taken

With that said and understood, let's be clear about this: Enlightenment is NOT the same as Sainthood. Working toward Sainthood IS under your control. I define Sainthood as the attempt to purify and perfect your sense of self identity; which is created, overseen and guarded oh so carefully by your ego. Think of seeking sainthood as turbo-charged self-improvement. The path to Sainthood includes an infinite variety of practices, beliefs, therapies and apprenticeships under presumed authorities. The is-

sue of Sainthood vs. Enlightenment is almost universally confused, so I discuss many of the issues below.

So, is sainthood, i.e. the perfection of the ego, possible?

No, but that doesn't matter. The whole point is the attempt. Have fun with all of the sights, sounds, thrills, chills and oddball characters you'll encounter along the way. Nearly everyone you see who is engaged in spiritual pursuits to become enlightened is actually working toward sainthood, whether they know it or not.

What is important is this: Seeking and working toward sainthood does not magically or automatically lead to enlightenment. They are not on the same time line, or even in the same dimension, though occasionally they may ride the same bus together.

Enlightenment can **seem** to require lots of self-improvement work. Indeed, most spiritual development programs, which are actually ego build-up and refinement programs may, by coincidence, accident or luck, launch you into the opposite process of ego breakdown.

Getting more and more perfected, more and more purified, evolved and refined, are not listed in the handbook of enlightenment requirements. There is no mandatory pre-enlightenment qualifying work of excavating and fixing every psychological trauma, weakness, split, shadow, stuck energy, distorted engram and odd personality quirk you hold inside yourself. Working on your issues is not the issue. Every human being has plenty of these mental/emotional traumatic defects in their ego structure. That's life. Every individual who has ever awakened into abiding enlightenment has entered their Final Awakening Process carrying at least a small backpack full of person-

ality defects with them. No worries. The Process itself will manage and transform these so-called defects exactly as is necessary to finish your enlightening work.

You don't emerge from the Awakening Process as a psychologically-perfected saint. You emerge Enlightened. If we see sainthood as the very hard work of perfecting egoic consciousness, then enlightenment is taking an involuntary 90° right turn into a completely unexpected direction.

If that is so, is improving one's 'ego-self' a worthwhile thing to do?

Sure. Always a good thing. Seeking self-improvement naturally implies that you recognize that the current state of 'You' has lots of room for improvement. We've all got areas of our life, personality, character, talents and abilities that can use some upgrade, improvement and refinement. The complete progression through the developmental stages from childhood into a fully-functioning, self-confident, self-reliant, self-determining adult should be what is normal for all human beings.

Looking around, however, you can see that's not the case. The vast majority, about 98% of 'adult' humanity, is stuck at some incomplete level of development. In their early years, everyone started their climb up the maturity ladder. On their way up, most people stopped along the way to have a look around. And decided to stay. That's where they remain... at 50 years old, they are essentially a mental and emotional 10-year-old who has been refining that undeveloped state of consciousness for 40 years. Or he could be a 65 year old man who still looks, dresses, talks and acts like his previous teenage self. That's how he feels most comfortable. Voluntarily stuck in

place. You can see signs of this age/maturity incongruity in nearly everyone you meet, when you look carefully.

Nevertheless, you will encounter a few really good people along the way. Real adults who have smoothly grown into full maturity; who move with ease, quiet confidence and grace. They may not be enlightened, but they are true adults who have embodied the defining traits of maturity, and are thoroughly enjoying the experience.

Ready For Liftoff

For a few rare people, however, this is still not enough. A gnawing, grinding dissatisfaction and deep yearning inside keeps pushing them forward. This yearning does not cease. Ever. This spark of yearning is constantly pushing, always restless. It wants answers, it wants truth, it wants to know what in the hell is going on around here. It wants to get back to the Source. To go Home, where things are real, true and authentic. That spark inside grows brighter, gets wilder... seeking, pursuing... and its agitation grows exponentially worse with every frustrating dead end it encounters.

If it so happens that the Wild Spark inside you is aroused, belligerent and determined, this might be your destiny. You are primed and poised for your Final Awakening. For you, this spiritual craving inside totally dominates your life, and you know you cannot waste any more time.

If this sounds like you, then this little booklet will strike resonant notes inside you again and again. This is written for you. We'll have some fun with spiritual concepts, but no BS.

If you are someone deeply involved and committed to

your spiritual practices, but for some reason you are not yet quite ready for your Final Awakening, then what you read here is likely to irritate and rile you. Good. We are trying to get to the truth, after all. Every bit of spiritual irritation and frustration stokes the fire within.

Likewise, if you give this article to your favorite guru/teacher/holy man for their opinion and guidance, there's a good chance they will rip it in half, warning you of the dangers of reading subversive material like this.

The sobering truth is that there is no person, no thing, no practice and no knowledge that will **give** you enlightenment, no matter how hard you wish for it or work at it. And yet, everyone seeking spiritual enlightenment is **trying to get it** through some person, some thing, some practice or some knowledge. Usually all of the above.

With so many people trying so very hard to get enlightened, the failure rate remains right about 100%.

How can this be? With so many people, trying so hard, for so long, surely *someone* has figured out how to get it, right?

Short answer: No.

Since no one has figured out exactly how to get it, the next best thing we can do is to examine what has failed over and over again. Maybe we can learn something from that.

So, what are the practices that do not produce enlightenment?

Meditation Does Not Produce Enlightenment

Meditating for hours every day does not 'slowly but surely' morph into permanent awakening. There are plenty of long-term meditators, going at it for decades, who will attest to this. No matter which style of meditation you practice or how much you practice it, it will not result in enlightenment.

And this is the perfect place for me to restate the main point of this whole booklet: Meditation (and every other spiritual practice) will not **cause** enlightenment to happen. In regards to enlightenment, **the best that any practice can do is to help prepare you**, to some degree, in case your final awakening process kicks in. As I look back on all the spiritual practices that I engaged in pre-awakening, I can honestly say that some of them helped greatly, in some specific ways. But most of them didn't help me very much, if at all, to prepare for the Final Process itself. I say this because the Process itself was **way** beyond anything I thought it might be. Heck, I didn't even know there **was** a Process. More about this later.

So, returning to meditation... is there any benefit to it?

Meditation is an excellent practice to relax your body, balance your breathing and calm your mind. Deep and consistent meditation practice will allow you to slowly become a much better dispassionate observer of your thoughts, and cultivate a much better ability to detach your perceptual awareness from the content of your thoughts. IOW, far less stress. You will gain insight into the mechanics of how your mind works: how thoughts are produced, where they come from and how they function. As meditation deepens, you become aware of the Deep

Stillness and Peace that lies behind all thoughts.

This deep stillness and peaceful awareness is the marvelous jewel of meditation. A beautiful jewel it is, but in and of itself, it goes no further. *Meditation does not directly or permanently remove the obstacles that are causing ignorance and illusion inside you.* It merely allows you to bypass them temporarily, at least sometimes. Meditation practice does not accumulate, in the sense of gathering more merit points and getting you closer and closer to enlightenment. No permanent enlightening changes occur because of meditation. When your best meditation session is over, you re-engage with your ego-self and with the world, and that is what forces you to go further. And further you must go.

Regular meditation *does* give you a stronger foundation for weathering the storms that come up now and then in your life, which is very helpful. Also you may come to understand the difference between biological thought (necessary) and psychological thought (superfluous). These insights are indeed quite provocative and helpful. They are not, however, a goal in themselves.

Ultimately, meditation practice informs you that no practice is needed to be in a meditative state. That is how it is when you are in the Natural, Enlightened State. You are always *there*. The state of serene consciousness you seek to experience by meditating becomes your default normal state after full Awakening has occurred.

Marathon meditations may produce captivating altered states of consciousness and strange sensations in your body. These may be pleasant or painful, profound or just weird. All these experiences come and they go, which should immediately tell you something very important

about your quest.

These altered states are fascinating to experience and explore. But they have nothing directly to do with enlightenment and do not bring you any closer to it. Meditation greatly improves your overall mental health and well being, and that is a very good thing. However, from the getting-enlightened point of view, endless meditation sessions keep you idling in place, if not actively taking you further from it.

Chanting Does Not Generate Enlightenment

Toning, chanting, devotional kirtan singing, repeating a mantra, drumming, free-form dancing or speaking in tongues do not produce enlightenment, or move you closer to it. But they are a lot of fun!

Immersing yourself in these practices can produce sublime states of consciousness and even more strange and delightful sensations in your body. You can have feelings of being tuned in to a bigger flow of life; feelings of connection and rhythmic unity with All That Is. You get into the Groove and it is a Blast.

Awesome!

Then, in an hour or two, the buzz fades. Regular old you is back, along with your regular old reality.

Right at that moment when you notice you have fallen back into regular old reality, you may talk yourself into believing that Grooving like this is 'getting me out of myself,' helping me make spiritual progress towards lasting unity and permanent bliss.

But... you are not. All the old hidden, unexamined crap

still firmly resides inside you; you've just spent a little time pleasantly distracting yourself.

Use these practices for having fun and for experiencing very cool altered states of consciousness. But don't fool yourself into believing that they are transporting you on the soul train to enlightenment.

Religious Practice Does Not Bestow Enlightenment

Dozens, maybe hundreds of religious belief systems are on display for the happy shopper at the Religion Super Market. You can pick and choose from a wide assortment of beliefs, involving one god or many gods, the universe within or the universe without.

You may choose to worship saints or devils, mother nature, heavenly father, their sons or daughters, stars, constellations, archetypes, gurus, priests, statues, paintings, animals, philosophies, theories, your belly button, your heart, your mind, your third eye, sex, your body or the body of someone else. Pick one. Or several. Mix and match. Enjoy.

Highly Esteemed Tradition based upon Ancient Teachings spoken by various Prophets and Messiahs may be your calling. There are a few well-worn religions that have many centuries of thinking, tinkering, argument, elaboration and fine-tuning included in their history. All their believers and followers greatly revere the sacred books that contain many layers of translations and mistranslations of special words and chat sessions spoken by a guy who is believed to have lived way back when.

Very specific prayers, practices and rituals are pre-

scribed, others are forbidden, and diligent practice is mandatory if one is to progress up the ladder to final salvation. Lifetimes can be spent mastering all the details and intricacies. At the end of it all you may find yourself to be quite learned, pious, saintly, compassionate and kind. A highly evolved human being!

Enlightenment, however, is in the other direction.

Special Diets Do Not Fuel Enlightenment

There are countless diets advocated, physical exercises recommended, purification rituals encouraged, endurance trainings demanded and rejuvenation elixirs prescribed in order to help you to become the perfect vessel to receive and embody the highest of the secret teachings. Only by achieving the utmost fitness and purity can you become a Light Body: one who is worthy to be called Holy.

These physical states of being are indeed wonderful, and the powerful feelings of energy and aliveness are their magnificent rewards. But, like every other experience, they are temporary and fleeting. To try to maintain them permanently will keep all of your attention and efforts completely involved in them. Seeking body perfection is not seeking enlightenment. Seeking body perfection is seeking body perfection. Enlightenment does not require it. The awakened do not need to continually 'work and practice and purify' to maintain their enlightened state of being.

That said, is there merit to having a high level of health? Sure, why not? If you are going to live on this planet, you might as well have the health to fully enjoy it. But you must be careful where you place your energy and focus.

You can study and learn that your physical body has definite and specific biological needs that can be provided for in definite and specific ways, exactly as is true for every other living creature on Earth. You learn what you biologically need and why, and then you supply those needs in a most direct and simple manner. It's easy.

But that's not what we have been told. According to most of the so-called experts, achieving and maintaining high-level health seems to be quite difficult, complex and involved. As you run the obstacle course of seeking greater health and fitness, you will eventually realize... in the midst of all this complexity... for you and for most people... pretty much everything you currently believe in and do... to and for your body... to get it healthy and keep it healthy... is... wrong. Or at best, what you are doing every day for health reasons is far more complicated, expensive and difficult than it needs to be. Most people have beliefs, lifestyles and dietary habits that do not provide for their simple biological needs in the most appropriate, positive and natural manner. Learn the basics about your body and how to properly feed and care for it, and it will give you many years of trouble-free operation. An excellent bargain!

Anything above and beyond this, however, is ego obsession. The desire for body perfection often morphs into cult-like attachment to whatever fad diet or lifestyle happens to be popular in the moment. And when it comes to achieving a sexually desirable appearance... oh my. Face, body and fashion obsession is a multi-billion if not trillion dollar industry the world over. There is no shortage of people who are **very** concerned about how they look. Ego self-identity wears infinite costumes... whatever turns you on!

If enlightenment is what you want, then your body should be kept in good condition – good enough to keep your mind sharp and focused, and your desire strong and penetrating. Do not get distracted by detouring all your attention into total purification of the body, ultra-fitness of the body, perfect health of the body, immortality of the body, or any other perfection of the body.

Remember: you will die. Your body will return to dust. Intense contemplation of death, **your** death, is the best hard-core, life-focusing practice available.

While we are on the topic of purification, it should be noted that the natural, organic and healthful practice of periodic water fasting is somewhat analogous to the ego deconstruction that the enlightening process takes you through. With fasting, your body and mind is in a very accelerated state of toxin and obstruction removal, repair of damage, and overall rejuvenation of your system. Your body is cleaning house and fixing things using every bit of intelligently-directed energy its got.

Likewise with the ‘cleansing’ process of enlightenment. Your conscious, infinitely-intelligent life force energy – aka Kundalini - will take charge and conduct a manic, yet exquisite and precisely controlled demolition and rebuilding of your body and mind. It is a revolutionary cleansing and detoxification process like no other. The end result is your healthy, natural enlightened state... far beyond compare to any state of being you have ever known before.

So remember, all obsessive body perfection practices have little to do with enlightenment. Get your body and mind into good shape by learning and regularly doing the things necessary to get it there – simply and easily - and then don't give the subject any more attention.

Sex Does Not Seduce Enlightenment

Intense sexual desire, passionate sexual activity and exquisite sexual orgasms are powerful experiences. You can pretend to be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transsexual, metrosexual, antisexual, celibate or androgynous. Perhaps you are involved in sex with a partner or sex with yourself; group sex, casual sex, or sex only to make a baby. Sex can be focused on shallow physical pleasure and kinky fantasy satisfaction, or can be infused with deep love, caring, devotion and tenderness. There is no end to the variety of sexual experience available.

Every critter, from amoeba to zebra, seeks to reproduce. To insure that happens, the urge to merge is hard-wired into the most primitive parts of the brain, and a mighty powerful urge it is. Going as far as killing a rival challenger in order to copulate with a desirable female is no problem for the males of many species.

And the actual release of sexual tension – orgasm – is likewise an extremely powerful altered state of consciousness. Pleasure beyond measure.

Sexual activity can simultaneously connect us to our most primal instincts and to a most sublime transcendental state of bliss. So, naturally, after the bliss wore off, someone thought, 'Why not conjure this up to be a secret system of sacred sexual practices that will catapult the devotee into spiritual enlightenment?'

Along came the sexual rules, regulations, correct acceptable practices, incorrect forbidden practices (some of which eventually became acceptable), from the inner circle of tantric masters who come from long lineages stretching way back before written history. The tantric

melody has tickled the ears of countless eager disciples who show up with an erotic gleam in their eye, ready to get to work. The more work the better.

There is no doubt that sexual activity can and does launch you right out of your mind, and for most people, going out of their mind is a wonderful thing. Normally the mind is so full of stress, worry, anxiety and conflicted crap that silencing it, even for only a few minutes, feels reeeeeeally good. The experience of a silenced, blissed-out mind, coupled with a wonderfully relaxed body from orgasmically spent sexual energy is right near the top of the list of peak human experiences. And not only is it free of charge, it is available at any time.

The enlightenment angle falls along the lines of carefully working with sexual tension to try to keep the blissed-out-mind thing happening for as long as possible, 'letting go' of oneself as completely as possible, and delaying as long as possible, or eliminating entirely the actual ejaculation of orgasm (if you are male). If you are female, then riding continuous waves of orgasmic delight for hours sounds about right. If you get good enough at all of this, maybe, just maybe you can get yourself so maxed out in pleasure for so long that the silenced mind and abandoned ego can sort of flip over (flip out?) into permanently enlightened bliss.

Ohhhh Yeahhhh...

Maybe you can see the hormone-juiced, teenage fantasy of it all?

Focusing your mind, sensations and awareness ever more carefully on the feelings and states of consciousness that sex can provide will give you pleasure you can

scarcely imagine. It is amazing, wonderful and beautiful. Enjoy it.

If you want enlightenment, you have other work to do.

And by the way, the Celibate thing won't go there either. There are times when spontaneous periods of celibacy will occur in your enlightening journey. But long-term enforced celibacy is exactly that – enforced. The battle between your enforcing celibate willpower vs. your innate biological sex drive will not end well. Celibacy practice will teach you some very interesting things about how strong your built-in reproductive urge is, how intensely, dominantly and thoroughly it can mess with your mind, and what happens physically when you suppress it. And if you are really into this, you can attempt to redirect this primal urge upward, inward, or whichever way you like. Interesting experiences to be sure, but ultimately you are fighting and mucking with your most fundamental biological sex drive... kinda like trying to limit your breathing or enforced dehydration. Bad idea.

Your creative sexual drive is closely tied to the seat of your conscious biological life force, your Kundalini. But sexual energy is a *byproduct* of intelligent life force energy; it is *not* the source of it. The Source of your primal life force energy is infinitely greater than your tiny reproductive urge.

A quick shower and moving right along...

Acquiring Special Powers Is Not Enlightening

Whether you have special powers, or you are inquiring of others who have them, these powers will not help you toward enlightenment. If you have the ability to see the fu-

ture, find hidden objects, channel the presence of discarnate entities, penetrate the hidden meanings of esoteric knowledge, read the thoughts of others, diagnose hidden diseases, manifest material objects, see auras, control your dreams, exude charisma, hypnotize crowds, make other people nervous and lovers swoon, then you may be quite special and talented.

But not enlightened.

And even if you are just a regular guy or gal seeking answers to the biggest questions of Life, you will get no permanent, lasting help from psychics, astrologers, numerologists, tarot readers, prophets, priests, shamans, channelers, gurus or wise men. The most helpful thing they can do is to hasten the day that you finally get sufficiently irritated and frustrated with all of them that you stop asking for their help.

So, chuck the Ouiji board, burn the Tarot cards, and keep moving...

Holy Status is a Different Destination

Are you seeking sainthood, guruhood, priesthood, pundithood, any other 'hood, or highly evolved state? Then you need more and more knowledge, more and more practice, more and more wisdom, more and more questions answered, more and more discipline, more and more purification, etc., etc.

All of these things are wonderful, of course, and highly treasured for their benefits. Supposedly, once perfected enough, whatever *enough* actually is, then you are formally ordained to be a high-ranking member of the 'hood.

It is graduation day, and now your friends can help you

prepare for your grand initiation ceremony. That is when you get to wear the cool new outfit. Maybe a cool new hat, too. Now you are the Guru, the Master, the Swami, the Avatar, the Learned One, His Holiness, Her Highness. Such an exalted status!

And such high responsibility. Now you've got standards to uphold, appearances to maintain, rituals to preserve, lineages to honor, and statues to revere. And don't forget the swarms of disciples running around, begging for your answers to all of their questions, desperate for your daily presence, your touch, your command and control. It's all quite detailed and involved. Rules and regulations and traditions and disciplines and meetings and speeches and teachings, and, and...

Does that sound free and liberating?

You may suddenly realize that many years ago when you took the road toward high-ranking spiritual status, you missed the right turn toward enlightenment.

Throw away the fancy hat, get out your compass and re-direct.

Drugs Do Not Stimulate Enlightenment

Human beings have been ingesting every imaginable substance since long, long ago. When trying to find food, everything is up for grabs. Now and then someone ate a new flower, root or mushroom and Boom! Off they went to places unknown. Afterwards, they told everyone in the tribe about their trip to the Magical Place, and they told it over and over and over again. Each retelling got more and more complicated, exaggerated and absurd.

But that didn't stop their tribe-mates from believing it. Be-

fore long the story became Sacred Oral Tradition, the storyteller became a Prophet, and everyone wanted to join the Party. Elaborate rituals and secret ceremonies sprung up, wild new artwork, dance, music, jewelry and attire soon followed. Human beings are most certainly wired to experiment with anything that alters consciousness and provides a buzz. We love our altered states, and the fads that spring from them.

Some say that the evolution of the brains of our distant ancestors was shifted into overdrive due to the effects of mind-expanding, naturally-occurring psychedelic chemical compounds. In fact, it is more likely true that the use of available psychedelic substances serve to trigger and re-awaken a semblance of the balanced states of consciousness that once were our normal, daily state of being.

In other words, modern day psychedelics are simply facilitating our ability to re-experience the advanced, organic, balanced, serene and amazing states of consciousness that the more sophisticated brains of our distant ancestors experienced all the time. (I will elaborate about this in another essay.)

There is no doubt that prehistoric humans regularly ate an incredibly diverse smorgasbord of nutrients compared to what we eat today. Our distant forest and tree-dwelling ancestors ate everything they could get their hands on, most especially a wide variety of naturally delicious fruits and flowers.

This constant flood of complex and potent nutrients throughout their bodies significantly altered their evolutionary trajectory, promoting the development of significantly larger and more complex brain structures. The

larger and more complex brains of our distant ancestors enabled them to perceive life in radically different, holistic ways than the average person perceives life today.

Modern day humanity has lost its connection with these far more advanced states of being. That is why, deep inside ourselves, we all have a strong yet vague craving to reunite with something larger than ourselves, something much greater and more fulfilling than our current daily experience of life. And that is why we ingest psychedelics: to experience that greater, far more expansive state of being again, at least for a few minutes or hours.

Some of these ancient mind-blowing practices of psychedelic stimulation survive today, if they have not been beaten into submission, or even extinction, by the too-tightly-wound self-righteous control freaks among us. But hey, that's pretty much the endlessly recycled story of human history – insecure control freaks mucking things up for the rest of us. Sacred today, illegal tomorrow.

Nevertheless, people keep doing it anyway, no matter the risk. The partaking and experimenting with mind-altering substances continues onward. The clever chemists have created synthetic hallucinogenic compounds that are even more powerful.

While the experiences triggered by psychedelics is an inherently amazing phenomenon, and the insights provided may indeed give a glimpse of the boundless infinity that everyone's consciousness is capable of experiencing, the final bummer is that the drug wears off and one comes back down to regular old reality. And regular old egoic me.

But! That temporary glimpse may provide such a reality-

exploding experience that the user is catapulted into seeker mode. By that I mean that the psychedelic experience can temporarily dissolve ego boundaries, touch on essential truths of existence, and permanently alter one's inner sense of what is possible in this lifetime. A Spark may ignite deep inside you.

Temporarily blowing out our self-imposed boundaries is a Very Good Thing. After the intense trip, with the lingering aftertaste of the infinite slipping away, the user may begin serious spiritual seeking to try to re-ignite that experience once more.

Of course, one can simply take the drug again. And again. But eventually it is seen that this will go no further, as you inevitably come back down... again. Not to mention the damage that may be occurring in your body and brain due to this artificial hyperstimulation. With luck, the frustration with drugs might lead to more intense seeking; a spiritual seeking for a natural and permanent feeling of peace and bliss. And if luckier still, years of frustration with *that* spiritual seeking will force you to go even deeper...

Guru Juice Does Not Rub Off As Enlightenment

Joining the clique and becoming another Bliss Bunny at the Love Lounge, with Baba Bananaji presiding, will not rub off as enlightenment. Enlightenment is not contagious. Passively acquired enlightenment and collective group ascension sure sound lovely, and being a member of the inner circle vibe can be very addictive. But like any addiction that tantalizingly teases with its blasts of bliss, the guru setup becomes a merry-go-round that never ends.

Whatever your endeavor, it is true that the company you keep will make a huge difference in the quality of your life. Depending on your own degree of development, level of consciousness, maturity or whatever you want to call it, hanging out with others of a similar vibe can be great fun and the best support when you need it. And when it comes to spiritual seeking, having others around who sing the same song with you in the choir is delightful and fun.

The guru thing actually has some gray area to it, meaning that there is some real benefit possible. More often than not, the true guru will have a significant degree of spiritual wisdom at his or her disposal. They can see deeply into you, more clearly than most, and can more accurately 'point a finger toward the moon' for you (i.e. advise you toward your most fruitful next step in your path).

Even more mystical and enchanting is when the guru has the Guru Juice. This is what I call the mysterious entraining spiritual energy that the guru seems to be able to unconsciously emanate, or directly transmit to those nearby. The intentional transmission of this energy, usually by touch, is called shaktipat, and many seekers swear by it. Depending on the readiness of the recipient, this transmission of energy can trigger stunning experiences of spiritual bliss and mystical union. For a lucky few, shaktipat may even temporarily spark the stirrings of Kundalini Awakening, which is the actual and only real spiritual transformer that lies dormant within you. Guru Juice can pack a big wallop, far better than any drug. If you experience it, you will immediately know how powerful it is.

[hit the Pause button]

Kundalini

At this point, it is necessary to pause for a few moments and talk about Kundalini.

From my personal experience and point of view, Kundalini is not some esoteric, inscrutable and mysterious power that only a lucky few get to experience. Kundalini is simply the active, alive, animating and infinitely intelligent **life energy** operating within you. And within everyone else, too. Don't get hung up on the word Kundalini or all the fantastical beliefs and cartoonish images that surround it in books and traditions. If you allow yourself to get caught up in the desperate search for 'Kundalini awakening,' you'll find yourself on another spiritual merry-go-round, stuck again in another spiritual enlightenment trap. Like the above-mentioned spiritual belief traps, the perfectly natural Kundalini awakening process has been hijacked, marketed and turned into its own 'secret program for enlightenment,' a program that requires teachers and gurus and practices and postures and purifications and diets and chants and meditations, and, and, and...

Kundalini is simply another word for your innate life force energy. This same energy is animating, supporting and moving within all living things. Kundalini life force energy has been highly active in you from the moment you were conceived.

Kundalini is the life force energy that guided and built you from a microscopic fertilized egg in your mother's womb into a fully grown adult human being. Every moment of your life Kundalini is active inside you, guiding, repairing,

rebuilding and sustaining you, always pushing you to grow and evolve further.

Imagine Kundalini (your bioenergetic life force) as water flowing through a faucet, like the one on your kitchen sink. In 99.9% of your normal daily life, your Kundalini faucet is very slightly open... its energy flows at a mild rate and pressure; let's say 5-10%, which is sufficient to sustain you in your usual daily activities. Profound insights, intense efforts, joyous experiences, moments of deep love and gratitude... or those moments when a serious emergency occurs, you or someone else is severely injured, a death occurs, a sudden emotional shock to your nervous system... whenever these intense experiences occur, good or bad, the intensity of the Kundalini life force energy inside you will increase significantly, perhaps briefly hitting 25-30%. Kundalini has 'opened its faucet' a little more, instantly amplifying your normal conscious awareness into a temporary state of extra-ordinary superconsciousness. In this enhanced super-conscious state, if in response to positive experiences, you may feel enhanced awareness, keen insight, animated excitement and euphoria. You feel wonderful! If it is a profoundly negative experience, though your feelings about the situation may be shock, trauma, dark or depressing, there is the extra Kundalini life force in action, helping you to cope with the situation.

In your personal soul's evolution, all Kundalini-driven superconscious moments – positive or negative - progressively evolve you into an overall state of greater spiritual readiness. ***Spiritual readiness*** is the accumulated sum of sufficient life experiences, sufficiently deep insight gained, and sufficient wisdom attained over many lifetimes. It is a matter of soul development. When your soul

is ready, then 'you' are ready.

When your spiritual time is right, life will conspire to provide the circumstances and environment necessary that are perfectly suited to **your** full awakening. Kundalini will naturally and spontaneously 'awaken' within you in a big way. Your conscious life force energy faucet opens to 50%, 75%, maybe even bursts of 100%. These radical states of superconsciousness are literally **awesome** and unprecedented in your life. You have never felt anything like this before, and this massive increase in pure consciousness energy flowing within you stays at this high volume for hours, days, maybe weeks, months or years without ceasing. It cycles up and down, stronger or softer within you, as is necessary in the moment. The Process occurring in your body is fully governed by the supreme intelligence of Kundalini. Massive blasts of altered states of consciousness - incredible mystical experiences, amazing insights, indescribable joy – any or all may appear at any time. Remember, Kundalini is not, *in any way*, under your conscious mental control by your ego. Throughout your amplified Kundalini-driven awakening process, if you remain open, attentive, committed and surrendered to it, your whole life will be radically changed, permanently, in completely unimaginable and wonderful ways.

Kundalini, which is the core driving energy of the enlightening process, **already resides within you**, waiting for the correct and appropriate moment to fully engage. Kundalini is **the one and only** organically integrated intelligence capable of properly initiating and conducting your own process of awakening from your ego-identified dreamstate. Kundalini is not something you need to obtain from somewhere else, or someone else. You have al-

ready got it... but it awakens and carries out its operations of its own accord, in its own time, on its own schedule. You cannot turn it on or off, or direct it in any way.

Remember, Kundalini is the conscious life force that created you, that sustains you every day, that already knows everything about you, because it **is** you. It is the spark of Divine enlivening energy that acts as the conduit for your soul's power to express itself within you. It is what makes you **alive**.

Only Kundalini is capable of safely conducting the complete, insanely intricate and exquisitely precise process of surgically extracting your deeply-rooted egoic blocks. Kundalini progressively seeks out your blockages, engages them, discharges them of stuck emotional energy, dissects them and permanently eliminates them. **Nothing else** can do this work... not self-improvement practices, not psychological therapy, not trauma remediation, not regression, hypnosis or any other such therapy. Indeed, when involved in any of these treatments or therapies, it is your life-force Kundalini that is actually doing whatever minor inner work is being accomplished. And it is Kundalini, alone, that decides when the totality of your transformational work is finished, revealing your permanent establishment in the enlightened, natural state.

**

[Hit the Resume button]

So yes, time spent with a spiritual guru can have its place in your preparatory journey. Couple that with any number of other practices and daily routines that may be happening in the ashram (meditation, chanting, selfless service, better diet and exercise, etc.) and you are in for an excit-

ing time of it. The helpful guidance and reality-exploding mystical experiences can strongly compel you into intense and focused spiritual work.

But the bottom line, as always, is that the final transformative work is only done within you, for you, and by you. Others can sometimes help a bit along the way, but the time will come when you must say goodbye to the guru. After you have spent considerable time and effort seeking other-and-outer-focused help with spiritual awakening, when you are truly and finally ripe, your next step will be to spiritually individuate fully... to go forth by yourself... companion-less, guru-less, savior-less.

That's when you know you realize you are walking near the edge. You are now far enough along your own Path that you find yourself being prodded to trust, surrender, and jump off the cliff.

Pretending You Are Already Enlightened

A fairly recent fad has arisen in Western spiritual circles, loosely based on the original Hindu system called Advaita Vedanta: You are already enlightened and there is nothing you need to do! Every one of us is already enlightened... we just do not realize it. So all you have got to do to get enlightened is... well... nothing at all. Just realize it. Realize it now. Understand. Believe. Have faith. You are already enlightened. Stop pretending you are not enlightened, and you can start enjoying your enlightened state right now.

Cool! Just *beeee-leevee*... and so it is.
Amen.

Most people, actually every single one of us, believes all

kinds of crazy things. Beliefs become extremely important to most people, and they cling to their beliefs very, very strongly. They have to, because beliefs tend to be slippery and are inherently impermanent. To hold onto their beliefs, people must reinforce them over and over again.

And it can work! Try it for yourself. Pick out something to believe about yourself... for example, 'I am a very wealthy person, I am rich, loved and admired by everyone.'

Now keep thinking that thought every day, many times a day. Look into a mirror and affirm out loud to yourself as often as you can, 'I am rich! I am loved! I am admired!' Study rich people and how they achieved their wealth. Find some of them and ask them how they did it. Attend seminars, read books, watch instructional videos. Manifestation in action. Put it all into practice every single day, and never stop your affirmations.

Then comes that morning when you add up your bank account, your investment portfolio and the stash under your mattress, and viola! Your net worth is now \$1,000,003. A millionaire! You are now rich! A very satisfied smile creeps across your face.

Now that you see how it works, simply apply the same technique to spirituality: 'I am already enlightened!' Affirm it day in and day out. Read about it, study about it, ask about it and practice it every moment of every day. Reframe all your old experiences and every new experience to fit into your new belief system.

Or, forget about all that hard work and just take the Direct Path–No Work Necessary™ approach and drop everything right now. Announce to everyone (and command even more strongly to yourself), 'I Am Enlightened!!!'

That's it.
You're done.

Right?

Well?

Nothing to do anymore, no need to work at it, so you can just sit here groovin' on your new-found enlightenment. Whenever any random thought pops in about enlightenment, such as, 'Is this really all there is to it?' ... or, 'How should I look and act now that I am enlightened?'... or, 'I don't really feel very enlightened; how am I supposed to feel?' ... or, 'Honestly, nothing actually seems any different than it was yesterday, so maybe something is wrong here...?'

Be honest. It's just another belief, like all the other ones you've carried around your entire life. You exchange your previous belief, 'I am a seeker of enlightenment' for the new belief, 'I am now enlightened.'

This advaita-based belief trap is mostly a mental game. The essence of it is to use mental logic and reasoning to drill your way down to the final, absolute 'truth' (i.e. to logically determine what actually exists, what is real or not real, what is true or false). The methodology is to 'negate' (make false) anything that is not absolute truth, which includes pretty much everything. Once you have reached the point of mentally negating everything that is untrue, then whatever remains must be true.

You have found truth! You are finished. Enlightened!

Your mind latches onto the advaita concepts, bounces them around tens of thousands of times inside your head, debates them endlessly with others, and the whole para-

digm slowly gets cemented in as your new identity. You have found the answer! Now you know!

Your ego feels quite proud of itself, as this new identity feels unassailable. Facing life, you've got a negating response always at your ready. The Negator Gun, loaded and waiting in your hip holster, can shoot down any question or opposing point of view that pops up. You are certain of your superior philosophy, ready to take on anyone and anything. Your rational mind is unconquerable.

In fact, IMO, Advaita Vedanta *is* true, correct, and accurate. You will clearly see that the essence of Advaita Vedanta is accurate and makes perfect sense ***when you experience it for yourself after awakening.***

And there's the rub: **before** the awakening process has cleared the way within you, should you happen to take interest in the concepts of Advaita and really get into it... studying it, believing it, comprehending it, defending it, absolutely and completely grokking it... none of it really gets you anywhere. You have simply bought into and mastered a new mental philosophy. That's all. And you've mastered it so well that you have thoroughly identified with it.

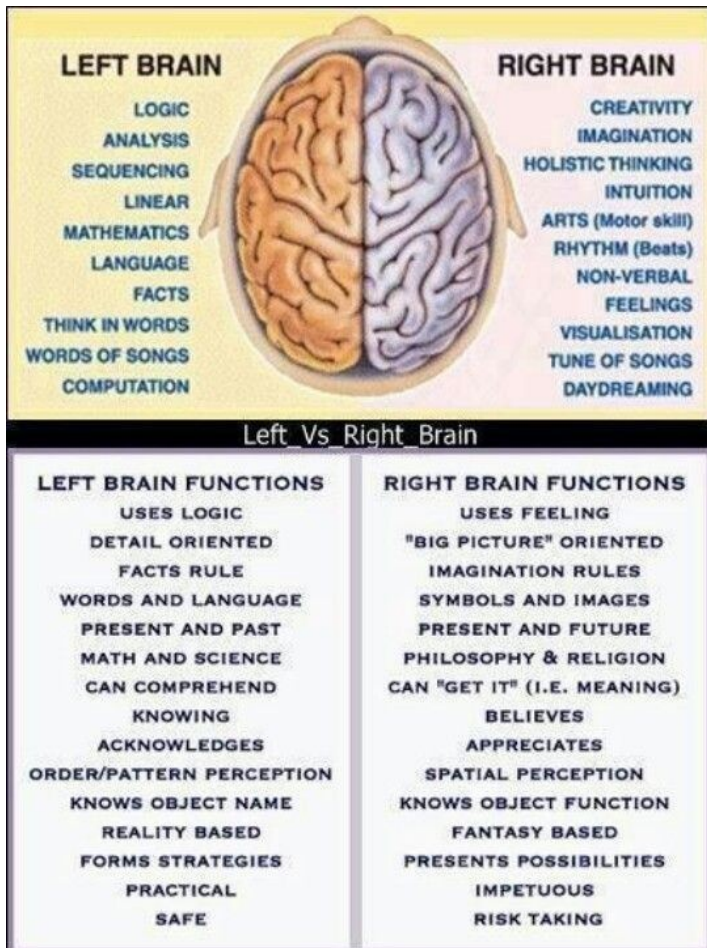
To be sure, Advaita Vedanta is a very high level, trippy philosophy, but when all is said and done, it's only a bunch of words. To know it because you **are** it is a completely different reality.

Privately, deep inside your own mind, you know that this is just another belief system. You don't become it because you believe it. You are not enlightened by pretending or convincing yourself that you are... logically or otherwise. 'Fake it 'til you make it' doesn't apply here.

Time to stop childishly fantasizing and lying to yourself. Close your eyes, shake your head rapidly back and forth a few times, and snap out of it.

Why Have I Been Doing All of This?

Questions may arise at this point, "Why have I been doing all of this, all these spiritual practices? Why am I so drawn to them? Where did I learn about them? Why do I trust the person who told me to do them? Why do I believe in the practices themselves? Do I really know if they will give me the results I want? Are any of the personal success stories I see posted on the testimonial web pages actually true, or just slick marketing?"



A very large part of the answer is this: With all the practices described above, you are trying to experience, at least temporarily, a much stronger activation, synchronization and integration of the both sides of your brain. With full, balanced, synchronized and coherent whole brain function, a new and higher reality spontaneously and naturally emerges in your awareness.

In other words, as significantly higher-level communication between left and right hemispheres occur, the frontal lobes of the brain are also highly energized and more active. According to insightful researcher Tony Wright(1), such practices help to shift from grossly imbalanced left brain dominance to full brain coherence and overall balance. This shift, even if only temporary, has **huge** positive effects on one's overall state of being and potential spiritual growth.

In the human species, certainly for nearly all of us currently alive, the characteristics and operations of the left brain have become waaaaay over-dominant. Though the actual ratio of left-handed to right-handed dominant people is about 40:60, nearly everyone is force-trained to be right-handed, in order to conform with left-brained society. Up to 95% of people appear to be right-handed, which generally demonstrates left-brained dominance.

Much of the world has largely accepted and adopted this point of view. For example, all of the current scientific, legal, medical and technological realms rely solely on left-brain interpretations of reality to exist and to function... which then forces the rest of us to tag along, whether we like it or not.

With this extreme overemphasis on left-brained activity, the left brain is not only dominant, but it is also over-

worked, damaged and impaired. This could be due to many biological and psychological reasons which we won't go into here. With the left brain having become dominant, and thereby dismissive and repressive of our right hemisphere reality, the left brain's specific functions have become greatly exaggerated in importance, overwrought and strung out to ridiculous proportions. Your left brain has become your very own ruthless dictator.

The left side of your brain can be viewed as the seat of your domineering ego self. The clever, tricky and very deceptive ego has figured out that left brain functions are very useful for its purposes. Right brain processes can always be brought in when needed, but Ego decided to place its throne in the left side of your head.

Your left brain does not directly experience, convey and then act on reality. Your left brain interprets, categorizes and judges actual reality. It literally cannot deal with raw reality; it's too overwhelming. Instead, it randomly assembles bits and pieces, and then makes up stories about reality and calls them facts. It creates categories by arbitrarily breaking up real life continuity into discreet pieces, often labeling them opposites (duality). For example, hot and cold. Temperature is a continuum; there are no breaks between so-called 'hot and cold'. These are merely interpretations of the left brain. Once ego (left brain) creates its own interpretation (left brain) and opinion (left brain) of temperature (it's too hot), it will latch onto that point of view over all others, declaring its chosen point of view proper, correct and true. Your left brain is constantly making heavily biased judgments about its own manufactured reality, spinning an unbelievable 3-D web of confabulation (lies, half-truths and random, cherry-picked justifications).

This amazing 3-D web of BS is, in fact, fully, thoroughly and absolutely believed by the imaginary entity who owns that left brain... the ego entity that each of us calls 'me'.

As the left brain processes 'reality' (a reality that it has stitched together from its own confabulating, faulty, limited perceptions), it naturally only trusts itself as the final arbiter of that reality. Its cognitive biases, its moral and ethical structures; along with all its cherry-picked supporting evidence... all of this plays perfectly into a nice and tidy self-reinforcing reality (albeit a VERY limited, fake reality).

The left brain considers right brain experience as not being equal, trustworthy or dependable... and certainly not allowed to be in charge of anything.

You know this because you can feel it. You feel the constant yet vague sense of incompleteness and imbalance that exists inside you. This incompleteness triggers a deep longing for wholeness, for internal balance, for freedom from the tyranny of the constantly chattering, overbearing and judgmental left brain. When you have experienced your right brain being engaged, free and expressive, even for only brief periods, those are the times you felt connected, expanded, joyful, creative and in the natural rightness of the Natural State.

These right brain perceptions, feelings and processing should be occurring continuously along with the left brain, uniting in full coherence within the frontal cortex. This optimal functioning should be fully integrated within all adults. But the reality is that right brain functions are so severely repressed nearly all of the time that we strongly desire to reunite with them... we crave the sense of Whole Self that all of humanity has lost. All of the 'spiri-

tual' practices mentioned above are ways we try to reactivate and reconnect to our right brain, while simultaneously reducing or even shutting down the left side altogether.

For those very few of you who already live in your right brain reality, at least some of the time, you almost certainly feel yourself to be an alien on this planet. You never fit into this world. The only people you can hang out with are other strongly right-brained people. The same question for you, of course, is how right and left brain-**balanced** are you? Very few of us ever inhabit that sweet spot of balance at all, much less full time.

We try our best to get that balance back, to find that sweet spot, using one or more of the practices I have discussed above. The problem is that the tyrannical yet impaired and pernicious left brain always retakes its egoic throne, every time. Your tilted, lopsided brain always falls back into ego; mostly because the left-brain-driven world all around you constantly demands that you engage it.

You cannot conquer this warped situation of hyper-left-brain dominance; you cannot force its correction by willing it into submission, consciously suppressing it, or beating it down until it stops happening. This brain impairment is something you cannot forcefully fix, though you can temporarily minimize the imbalance somewhat by indulging the practices above. Self improvement, psychological, and spiritual practices **do** have their effects, and sometimes those effects are quite helpful... if for nothing else than to actually experience for yourself what we are all truly capable of. Our strong craving to fix what is broken inside our heads will compel us to try everything available to restart our right brain, even if we have no

idea of what we are doing, or why. We latch onto one spiritual practice after another, convincing ourselves (or at least hoping) that we are doing the right thing, and we continue to believe it as we go. This convincing-and-believing-routine is what keeps us on the merry-go-round.

Remember, your ego is your dictator and chief executive officer. Left-brained Ego runs your show. *Your ego cannot repair or remove your ego.* But you can tilt the playing field such that your devious little ego is exposed to the light and arrayed against itself as much and as often as possible. That is why I do encourage some of the above practices (especially meditation, biologically sound nutrition, spending lots of time in pristine Nature, and other practices that strongly attempt to reawaken right brain-related functions) for those who are seriously seeking to get their act together... depending on where you are in your spiritual path, and your current level of progress.

Do you see what I am trying to say?

I am not advocating spiritual practices as a way to **get** enlightened. Spiritual practices cannot **give** you enlightenment.

I am advocating spiritual practices as effective ways to **freak out** your rigid left-brained ego by turning on and cranking up the volume of your right brain. Strongly activating your right brain and allowing it onto the throne of dominance serves to 'blow your mind'... temporarily breaking habitual left-brained patterns of perception and thinking.

Doing this is *profoundly* humbling to left brain reality and dominance. It halts and destabilizes the power-happy left brain routine of domineering authority. With left-brained

ego thoroughly silenced for seconds, minutes or hours, an **amazing** new world opens up within you. A whole new way of seeing, perceiving, feeling and imagining is suddenly awakened. You are literally stunned by the color, depth, expanse and profound beauty of your new world, inside and out.

Though right brain-dominant reality will eventually recede and again be suppressed as left brain dominance retakes the throne, a glitch has appeared in the Matrix; a splinter has lodged itself in your mind. You will never be the same.

Add

If you *believe* that spiritual practices are what will give you enlightenment, that belief, itself, is 'self'-centered. In other words, your belief in spiritual practices as your ticket to enlightenment becomes a critical part of your ego-self identity: which is your egoic belief structure that defines and determines who you are and what you do. Every subsequent and future thought about who you think you are as a 'spiritual person' refers back to your ego-self as its baseline reference. Every future 'spiritual' thought is created by your ego, consults with your ego-self along the way, strengthens the ego-self with every step, and in the end reinforces the ego-self, making it stronger and more in control. This seems paradoxical, but it is essentially true. You have turned your regular old ego into a new spiritual ego... just another false ego-self.

All of these approaches to spirituality and enlightenment are about trying to improve and perfect the ego by **adding** new beliefs, knowledge and experiences to it. You say to yourself, "Just a few more years of diligently

working at my practice of ____ (fill in the blank), and I will be enlightened.”

And to lock it in permanently, you must practice again and again, habituating your mind and ego to act in this preferred new way. You are trying to erase old habitual mental grooves and replace them with new and improved habitual mental grooves; new beliefs to replace the old beliefs. New identity to replace the old identity. New morality, new rules, new 'shoulds and should nots' to replace the old ones. In the end you've still got beliefs, rules and pretend morality, and these are the very things that obscure reality, creating illusion, keeping you feeling separate from your Natural State.

Beliefs

What are beliefs? Beliefs are untested assumptions, unproven opinions, unverified points of view. Beliefs are not true, they are only believed to be true. Indeed, they are only temporary mental constructs, with no certain truth to them whatsoever. Like pixie dust, they appear, they dazzle, they are believed in and identified with, and then they fade away. Eventually.

Remember your belief in Santa Claus? The Tooth Fairy? True Love?

You can easily verify this for yourself: Are the beliefs you hold today the same beliefs you held 1 year ago... 3 years ago... 10 years... 20 years... 50 years ago? Things have changed, yes? If those old beliefs you had were that flimsy and impermanent, why do you believe that your new ones are any better? What will you believe 10 years from now? And most importantly, how will you know that your new beliefs are actually true, or not?

Do you seek Truth? Or do you just seek new and more exciting beliefs to replace the old ones when you get tired of them?

For most people, beliefs are the Stuff of Life; they become the foundation from which we live out all of our days. They are our islands of stability, or so we hope. Religious beliefs, personal beliefs, career beliefs, political beliefs, social beliefs. And the most important belief of all – what we each believe about ourselves. Tons of beliefs, all weighing us down, fogging up actual reality so that we can no longer see it or feel it directly. Too many beliefs in the way.

Do you actually need beliefs to survive? Can you live without beliefs? Are you afraid that if suddenly all your beliefs were gone, you would go insane or become an unhinged, evil person?

Since your beliefs are not really known to be true, only secretly and desperately believed to be true, you can never have total trust in them; you never have completely solid footing with them. To deal with this nagging unsure feeling deep down inside, you command yourself to pretend very, very strongly, “My beliefs are true!”

When you do that, you feel better. Your **faith** has been restored. Do that long enough and hard enough and eventually you'll cement your beliefs into place permanently. You'll make yourself literally incapable of believing otherwise; indeed, now you are willing to die for your beliefs. And perhaps you will even go so far as to kill other people for not believing the same as you do.

Notice: The full inventory of all your beliefs, haphazardly knitted together, **are** you. What you believe in is what

makes you *you*; **your beliefs are how you define yourself**. They are your identity. **They** are who **you** are.

Try a belief on for size:

Male, female, black, white, yellow, brown.

Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, Muslim, Jew, Atheist, Agnostic.

Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Greenie, Socialist, Nationalist, Anarchist.

Biker, gangster, thug, juvenile delinquent, bad ass, desperado.

Law abider, taxpayer, model citizen, loyalist, patriot.

Doctor, teacher, plumber, farmer, scientist, athlete.

Meditator, vegetarian, eco-crusader, animal rights activist.

Smoker, drinker, gambler, druggie, Anonymous member.

Straight, gay, lesbian, metrosexual, asexual, ad infinitum.

Rich, poor, player, pretender.

Hip, cool, nerd, dimwit.

Bum, hillbilly, sophisticate, oddball.

Pick one from column A, another from column B; or perhaps just pick a few at random. There you go!

New beliefs = new identity = new pretend reality.

After you take on a new belief, having added it to your collection, you tend to forget about it after awhile. Before you realize it, old, crusty beliefs have gradually cemented

themselves into your identity. Your current amalgamated identity contains many different beliefs cemented into place. The whole edifice called 'me' gets stronger with every new belief added to it.

Now, it is true that you can change your beliefs, or at least modify them. I suppose it's best to say that if you are going to continue to carry your treasured identity around with you every day, it's a good idea to periodically update, modify and change your beliefs.

Some major beliefs, you'll notice, seem unchangeable, while other smaller ones can be tweaked around the edges. A few minor beliefs can be discarded completely. Rarely, a big, important belief gets knocked off its pedestal, and that's a major upset in your life.

This identity thing is kind of like wearing clothes. With thousands of different styles of clothes available to you, it is likely that by now, you have settled on a certain style that you like to wear. You feel that your style of clothes reflects your inner identity. You can change the colors or fabrics of your superficial outfit from day to day, and yet the major core beliefs that create and establish most of your sense of identity remain solid within you.

If you like maintaining your identity, from time to time it's a good idea to change the clothes that you like to wear. You may want to buy a new outfit that is very similar to the old one you are throwing away, or perhaps you are going in for a totally new look and appearance. Whatever your choice, please make it a habit to wash your clothes often! Otherwise they will become very stinky, as the sweat of your core identity seeps into them over time.

If you don't change your clothes, or wash them regularly, you are going to begin to repel people and opportunities. People may be too polite to tell you that your beliefs stink, but many fascinating, interesting and helpful people will avoid you because you've got the funk.

And then we have the issue of belief self-defense. If someone challenges your beliefs (i.e. challenges you and your pretend reality), then you strongly feel that you must defend yourself. The only reason you need to defend your identity and beliefs is because you have powerful attachments to them.

Attachments are beliefs with **very** strong emotions tied to them. Your emotional energy keeps your beliefs alive, thereby keeping your ego alive, which keeps 'you' - your identity - alive. This is your script; this is the role you play, every day. You are living 24/7 through your beliefs.

Likewise, everyone you see around you is expending nearly all their life energy keeping their own beliefs and scripts energized, acted out and defended every moment of every day.

Phew! Exhausting. Imagine how much left-brain-ego-directed human life energy goes into this identity maintenance business. Everyone's doing it, all day, every day. Everyone keeping their egos alive, wearing their costumes, playing their roles, completely in character.

Every person unconditionally believes in their own character and script. Everyone also believes that everyone else's character and script is real and authentic, and the Grand Illusion is complete. Everyone validating and reinforcing each others' pretend reality.

BS-Generating Machines

For the most part, human minds are bullshit-generating machines. We *like* living with mountains of BS inside our heads. We *like* to believe in outrageous and absurd spiritual stories, and we *want* to wrap our identity around them, for three main reasons:

- 1) The story often has a solid beginning, reasonable middle and happy ending, which can fit the bill as a believable 'how-to' guide for dealing with life;
- 2) The story usually has the assertion of a divine seal of approval; and
- 3) A whole lot of other people believe the same story, and we like to hang out with other people who sing the same song that we do.

Mixed together and gently stirred (not shaken), these three makes us feel more secure and stable inside. Feeling secure feels good. Put a bunch of believers together, and everyone will feel even better. More secure. More self-righteous. More deluded and stuck in place.

The true spiritual quest begins when you realize that you simply cannot pretend to believe any of your own BS any longer. You know there is something more, something bigger than this small thing you currently call your life, which is ruthlessly ruled over by your beliefs. You can no longer stand it. Going along to get along has run its course and is finished. You realize that the belief box you voluntarily (but unconsciously) agreed to live inside is now far too cramped.

Distressed, you suddenly realize that going along and getting along, living the beliefs, opinions and dictates

passed down to you from others, is what you have been doing your whole life. Constantly told what to do, how to do it; what to think, how to look, how to dress, how to act, what to believe... you have had enough of this. Your own unique and bold creative abilities now pretty much snuffed out of existence, you realize you have not had an original, creative thought of your own for a very long time... if ever.

To break out of this box, what is required is to go it alone, to summon up the strength of conviction to break free of what you have always done, what you have always thought, what you have always believed. You have to want it, and **want it bad**. You have to want it so bad you are willing to drop everything else in your life. Time to turn off the television and computer, throw away your books, trash your trinkets and say "Adios!" To your teachers. Time to sharpen your machete and get on with making your own rules and cutting your own path.

When it is time for you to do this, time to remove your perfectly tailored and beautifully accessorized ego strait-jacket, no matter what it takes, then all sorts of things may partially or completely disappear from your life: your career, your marriage, your friends, your money, your health. In other words, all your attachments, everything you believe is important to you. Remember, all your beliefs, lumped together, equals your identity, and **your identity is your most precious possession**. Everything in your present life revolves around and supports your identity. Therefore everything that helps to define, support and maintain this oh-so-carefully constructed persona must go... if you are to wake up from your dream state.

Make no mistake: **this is no trivial matter**. In absolute

fact, it is the most daunting, terrifying and difficult series of personal battles you will ever take on in your whole life. Breaking through your own egoic BS is muddy, bloody, grueling and exhilarating... permanent self-destruction at its finest. Nothing compares to it, nothing else comes close. Running an ultra-mega-giga marathon, scaling Mt. Everest, overcoming terminal cancer... all are great achievements, but peanuts compared to this.

And when your time does come, when you are ripe for it, you are now clear that this is exactly what you are here to do, exactly what you are made to do, and the only thing remaining to do. Boom! Your Kundalini-driven awakening process spontaneously begins.

Your personal, unique awakening process will require courage you do not think you have. Time after time it will require a paradoxical courage-to-fight and letting-go-into-surrender that you cannot begin to understand. All your friends worry about you; they will think you have gone insane. This is the culmination. The bell has rung for your Final Round. It is truly the only game in town.

If you *really* want to break out of this incredible, wonderful and bizarre ego-saturated game we are all playing with ourselves and with each other, the answer is not to add to the character, not to add to the script. Not to add more new-and-improved beliefs, knowledge, practices, purity, or anything else.

Subtract

The answer is to subtract. Subtract everything. Question, examine, scrutinize, test, remove, burn away, jettison, detoxify, eradicate, dis-integrate and eliminate both your pretend character and your script, and *all the beliefs*

that created them. Powerful All-Knowing Kundalini will drive this process, in the precisely correct sequence and intensity necessary to do the job right. As this happens, beliefs falling away one by one, or even whole chunks at a time, all your emotional circuits firmly attached to them will release their stuck, pent-up energy which will quickly flow through and out of your body. You will literally feel this happening within you.

Simultaneously, as beliefs are dissolving and their pent-up emotional energies purged, a rewiring, rejuvenating and strengthening process occurs in your nervous system, hormonal system and other major body systems. Your subtle bodies will be re-worked in ways you can barely perceive. All this is done so that the new, refined and much stronger energies you will soon experience within can be conducted and channeled without frying your circuits.

The awakening process is an unimaginably amazing process – extremely challenging, unstoppable, and, in the end, totally liberating. Once you are free of all these internal encumbrances, you shall see clearly, and live an ongoing life of clarity:

La Vida Clara. The Clear Life.

Bottom line: *You do not believe, try, hope or expect to get enlightened by doing spiritual practices, purifications or anything else. The practices and purifications are meant to accomplish two things: 1. improve many aspects of your body and mind, and 2. Prepare you for the extremely intense Awakening Process when it spontaneously begins inside you.*

So no, practices do not eventually give you enlighten-

*ment. Instead, you examine and strip away every obstacle (belief) you carry around within you that blocks reality... that creates illusion. **Once you are done with that, enlightened awareness is what remains.***

Truth alone is. As you truly are. As you always have been, but previously you could not see it or feel it.

How does this happen?

Do It

When it comes to waking up and staying awake, how successful you will be *directly depends* on how willing you are to face the truth about yourself; to never quit, to not distract yourself, to not run away. You must show up for the Process, every day, every time, without fail. You must stay with it, no matter what. You must utterly surrender your believed self to That which is far bigger and greater than you. And you must clean up your mess after every battle and every successful breakthrough.

Directed by the Kundalini life force power within you, you use your mind and your inner conviction ruthlessly, like an ultra-sharp knife, to slice and dice every single belief you hold to be true. Challenge every single belief, opinion and assumption that makes you who you think you are. Challenge what you call yourself - doctor, teacher, athlete, artist; catholic, protestant, muslim, jew; believer, agnostic, atheist - and the assigned, believed and accepted roles you play as these characters.

What roles are you playing today? **Why** do you play them?

Whose rules are you following anyway? **Your own** chosen rules and chosen roles, or someone else's pre-

scribed rules and roles? Does following the rules and roles that other people demand of you make you feel good inside? Do you feel real, do you feel authentic? Are you... the real you?

Challenge your secretly cherished beliefs about the kind of person you believe you are. Do you consider yourself a nice guy, a sweet gal? Think you are smart and beautiful? Think you are ugly and sickly; wild and crazy; cultured, refined, or obnoxious? Who says so? Who told you these things? What sales pitch sold you on these beliefs? How did you sell yourself?

Do you look into the mirror and tell yourself these things? Why do you believe them?

Why do other people and their opinions matter? Why does **your** opinion matter? Your opinion is based on what, another belief?

What is all of this? Where is it all coming from? Why do you believe any of this, talk to yourself like this, and act out these contrived beliefs every day?

Peeled Away

Take away your name, your career, your relationships, your smart phone, your bank accounts, investment portfolio and your credit cards. What remains? Who are you without these identifiers, these crutches?

Let's take it to the limit. Imagine you've just gotten bonked on the head real hard and now have total amnesia – you don't remember *anything* about your past. Now here you are, a week later, a healthy functioning adult human being with a big bump on your head and zero past history. No name. No job. No family. No address. No

identity.

No nothing. You don't remember a thing. Don't know who you are, what you are, where you are, when you are, why you are or even how you are.

Nevertheless, here you are! Aliveness is happening... Awareness Exists. But, do **you** still exist? What happened to the old 'me'? Does your previously treasured ego-self identity still exist? How does it feel to not have it?

Who do you think you are? What does it feel like to have zero identity, in the midst of surroundings that are strangely familiar yet disconnected? How does it feel to be 'no one'?

Now what? What do you know for sure? What remains? What is your identity? Who am I? What, exactly, is this thing called 'me'?

Afraid

When you finally come to intensely examine your own self, your own beliefs, the way you see things and the reason you do things, you realize it is all vanity, all pretend, all fake, all BS. You make it all up about yourself as you go along. Or perhaps you glom on to a ready-made identity, following the lead and instruction of some 'authority', group identity or fad... and now you are paralyzed as you realize that all of it is pointless posturing.

Now you starkly see it for yourself: ***I am an imposter.***

When you grab hold and violently shake the walls of your rickety house of ego, it is all gonna start falling down on your head. And when that happens you will feel fear, and

feel it hard. It will grab you and shake you right back. It will stun you, shock you and overwhelm you; it'll knock you to your knees. You have never known such terror. Abject fear and intense panic is what happens when you feel you cannot handle this stark, truthful realization about yourself. You are afraid that you cannot make it through this mental breakdown... and the truth is, you might not.

But if you have come this far, your chances are good. You now know what your beliefs really are: made-up illusions. And fear of failure is just another belief.

Your unique, personal, natural, majestic, Grand Intelligence-guided Kundalini awakening process carefully and relentlessly strips away all of this belief and identity crap. It will take time – maybe years. You fully let go of control, and Divine Intelligence takes the wheel. **It** is now in charge, and **It** is what runs this show. While still bundled in your ego straitjacket, do your best to stay with The Process and surrender to it, especially in the early stages, when the whole Awakening Process is severely freaking you out.

If it is truly the right time for you, for this Process to run its Course through you, then you really have no choice; there is no backing out. In fact, deep down, you welcome it, you crave it.

Along the way through the process, more and more, you notice the little voice of authenticity deep inside you is now strong, fierce and unwavering. It is raising hell! Now is the time. Latch onto that voice, merge with it, act on it. With its help, the way through, battle after personal battle, always becomes clear when you need it.

Days, weeks, months, and many more months are spent in this process: facing yourself, facing your beliefs, your assumptions, your loves, hates, prejudices, judgments, opinions and all the rest, one after another after another. Relentlessly the hidden pieces of your false persona come up for examination, judgment and final execution. You will celebrate victories, grieve losses, recover from nuclear explosions of personal annihilation. Small pieces of you... maybe big chunks of you breaking off, burning up, disintegrating into nothingness. After each personal battle, each enemy vanquished, you stop, turn around to see what remains, and there's nothing there. Mountains of beliefs and BS inside you simply evaporate, permanently... they were never real to begin with.

On and on it goes. You are exhilarated, exhausted; awe-struck, amazed, spent. You feel ripped apart inside. Time and time again you feel you cannot go on. You summon up the courage to take another step forward. Your resolve is strong; damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.

Then comes that one fine day when, totally unexpectedly, it all stops. The final smothering, obstructing layer of your believed identity detaches, falls down, crashes and burns. Stunned silence and perfect clarity instantly take over.

The Process is complete. It is done. It is finished. What seemed like a personal war that would never end; what pushed you past your known limits time after time; what you firmly committed to take on and see through to the end, even if it literally kills you... is now complete and it all suddenly just stops.

The Other Side

Now standing on the other side, you look back across and realize... there is no other side. Where you came from is... gone. All that you thought you were is... gone. Where you are now is... unknown and uncharted territory.

Everything is new again. You stand, awestruck, and breathe it all in.

Now you begin a new life. Now you explore a new world. Now you feel utterly open, hollow, without substance... yet expanded beyond all boundary, fully merged and fused with all that is. You cannot explain it, you cannot wrap your brain around it, but you have never been more certain of anything in your entire life: You are home. And you are free.

On Good Authority

Enlightenment requires no special knowledge, requires no esoteric practices, requires no bizarre beliefs. It only requires ridding yourself of that which obscures clear perception, that which blocks clear seeing and understanding. If the time is right for you, the immense power and intelligence of your full Kundalini life force will ignite. Under its insistence and its guidance, as you begin to intensely challenge yourself, soon you will see how *you* created your filters and limitations, *you* created your illusions, *you* created your beliefs about who you think you are and who you hoped to become.

Subtract all of this and what remains is what you truly are.

Enlightenment is utterly and completely about asking yourself your own questions and getting your own answers, for yourself, by yourself. Ultimately, ***you must be***

your own authority in all things spiritual.

There is no group awakening or collective awakening. It is always and only a solo, individual undertaking. As the false 'you' dies (the only death there really is), you become your own undertaker.

In preparation for this process, you may need to spend considerable time, maybe lifetimes, seeking outside 'authorities and experts' for help. You will have a million spiritual questions, and so you look to exalted masters and their teachings for spiritual answers. Soon enough, however, you'll come to realize that what you now have is an even bigger head-full of second-hand information, opinion and advice; aka: More Beliefs.

Also along the way, you may feel the deep need to give yourself over to some cause, some faith, some guru, or some practice. In other words, you are so overwhelmed, confused and unsure of things that you feel the only way out is to stop trusting yourself, and place your full trust in someone or something else.

You may feel a desperate need to experience the bliss and love of the guru, the wisdom and certainty of the sage, the ecstasy and connection of the twin soul.

These interactions and experiences are all wonderful, they serve a necessary purpose, and give you exciting glimpses of what lies ahead, but they are all temporary stops along the way.

Eventually you will get severely frustrated with all of them. Your frustration will hit the breaking point; at that precise moment you will cancel and nullify everyone and everything 'out there' and make the Grand U-Turn back

into yourself. It is now time to directly confront yourself – head-on, full speed, no brakes.

So-called ‘authorities’ be gone. So-called experts disposed of. Trusted confidants have faded away, because you have arrived at the stage where you must go it alone. Sans guru, what you now seek is That which is Permanent, Unmovable, Unshakable.

No One Else

In this very personal and very critical quest, the bottom line is that you can rely on no one else. **You** must make the decisions. **You** must make the choices. **You** must summon the courage. **You** must let go and surrender. Above it all **you** must remain resolute. There is no other option, no other way. Ultimately, every other road is a left turn to nowhere; every practice, book, religious figure and guru a dead end street.

At this critical stage in the Process, seeking and accepting answers from anyone else makes you lazy, causes you to abdicate your own required accountability and response-ability. Accepting answers from anyone else weakens your own ability to find your own answers. Re-asserting your own power, you find yourself casting aside all books, beliefs, theories, practices, scholars, priests, gurus and deities... and 100% commit to finding your own answers from within.

Believe nothing just because a so-called wise person said it.

Believe nothing just because a belief is generally held.

Believe nothing just because it is said in ancient books.

Believe nothing just because it is said to be of divine origin.

*Believe nothing just because someone else believes it.
Believe only what you yourself test and judge to be true.*
- Buddha

In the final analysis, your mind, your heart and your desire are all you need for this journey. No other person, thing or practice is required.

Never forget: The power, ability and resolve to begin, carry through and complete the Awakening Process is already inside you. It is the vast intelligence and wisdom of your Innate Life Force. This same Life Force is inside every one of us.

This incredible power, your Kundalini, is what created you. Kundalini also created the false self, your ego-self, for purposes you do not yet understand.

When you are ready, meaning that the illusion of ego-self has fully served its soul-evolving purpose over countless lifetimes, Kundalini will then very carefully and surgically remove layer upon layer of your false self, escorting you home.

At the very end of the Awakening Process, the actual 'attachment mechanism' itself, whose purpose was to instill and continually reactivate the desperate desire for constructing and maintaining the false ego-self, is switched off, dissolved and rendered inert within your Being.

The Grand Awakening Process occurs when you are ripe, your soul is ripe and the time is right. You cannot force this magnificent process. But when it occurs, Trust It. Totally. Implicitly.

You **can** do this. You **will** do this. If every Enlightened One throughout history did it, then you can do it. If it is

truly time for you, then you can be assured that you are sufficiently prepared, ready, willing and able... even if you find yourself wide-eyed, freaked out and shaking in your boots. You cannot see what lies ahead, yet you summon up the courage and walk boldly forward anyway.

If you are **not** ready for this, you will find endless fault with what I have written above. That is good, and necessary. Pick at it, examine it, tear it apart. Prove to yourself that I am wrong. Prove it to me. Let me know what you find.

If you **are** ready for this, then you will know it because everything stated above rings true, even if some parts of you may still strongly resist.

My call to you is to keep going. At this stage of your journey **nothing else** in this world matters compared to this. And nothing in this Earthly reality will ever make sense until this is done. After **it** is done, and **you** are done, you will see. And you will know.

Sharpen your blade. Lock and load. Saddle up, jump on your horse and ride. Ride straight and ride hard. Keep going. Always further. Stop for nothing, burn your bridges, take no prisoners and never look back.

You literally cannot imagine what awaits you.

References

1. Very fascinating and profound insights about the human brain, with its aberrant imbalances and malfunctioning can be seen in the work of Graham Gynn and Tony Wright in their book: Return to the Brain of Eden: Restoring the Connection between Neurochemistry and Consciousness (Previously titled: Left in the Dark: The Biological Origins of the Fall from Grace; an Investigation into the Evolution of the Human Brain; A Journey to the Edge of the Human Mind):

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Also Tony's video channel here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsALCqjX38PD_7koh7WwKQ

Another fascinating experience involving whole brain functioning is recounted in Jill Bolte Taylor's book and video: My Stroke of Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey

And her video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyyjU8fzEYU>

A short quote from Jill, as she describe the essence of her awakened right-brain reality: "...[I am] open to the eternal flow whereby I exist at one with the universe. It is the seat of my divine mind, the knower, the wise woman, and the observer. It is my intuition and higher consciousness."

About the Author



Robert Sniadach, this time around, is a former chiropractor, musician, and electro-mechanical designer. His specialty as a doctor was fasting supervision and detoxification programs for clients. Nowadays he's what you might call a 'gentleman farmer,' helping out on the farm, while writing educational courses and supervising his online school, Transformation Institute.

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