

CHAPTER ONE



BEING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

There is an eternal, ever-present One Life beyond the myriad forms of life that are subject to birth and death. Many people use the word God to describe it; I often call it Being. The word Being explains nothing, but nor does God. Being, however, has the advantage that it is an open concept. It does not reduce the infinite invisible to a finite entity. It is impossible to form a mental image of it. Nobody can claim exclusive possession of Being. It is your very presence, and it is immediately accessible to you as the feeling of your own presence. So it is only a small step from the word Being to the experience of Being.

BEING IS NOT ONLY BEYOND BUT ALSO DEEP WITHIN every form as its innermost invisible and indestructible essence. This means that it is accessible to you now as your own deepest self, your true nature. But don't seek to grasp it with your mind. Don't try to understand it.

You can know it only when the mind is still. When you are present, when your attention is fully and intensely in the Now, Being can be felt, but it can never be understood mentally.

To regain awareness of Being and to abide in that state of "feeling-realization" is enlightenment.

The word *enlightenment* conjures up the idea of some superhuman accomplishment, and the ego likes to keep it that way, but it is simply your natural state of felt oneness with Being. It is a state of connectedness with something immeasurable and indestructible, something that, almost paradoxically, is essentially you and yet is much greater than you. It is finding your true nature beyond name and form.

The inability to feel this connectedness gives rise to the illusion of separation, from yourself and from the world around you. You then perceive yourself, consciously or unconsciously, as an isolated fragment. Fear arises, and conflicts within and without become the norm.

The greatest obstacle to experiencing the reality of your connectedness is identification with your mind, which causes thought to become compulsive. Not to be able to stop thinking is a dreadful affliction, but we don't realize this because almost everybody is suffering from it, so it is considered normal. This incessant mental noise prevents you from finding that realm of inner stillness that is inseparable from Being. It also creates a false mind-made self that casts a shadow of fear and suffering.

Identification with your mind creates an opaque screen of concepts, labels, images, words, judgments, and definitions that blocks all true relationship. It comes between you and yourself, between you and your fellow man and woman, between you and nature, between you and God. It is this screen of thought that creates the illusion of separateness, the illusion that there is you and a totally separate "other." You then forget the essential fact that, underneath the level of physical appearances and separate forms, you are one with all that is.

The mind is a superb instrument if used rightly. Used wrongly, however, it becomes very destructive. To put it more accurately, it is not so much that you use your mind wrongly — you usually don't use it at all. It uses you. This is the disease. You believe that you are your mind. This is the delusion. The instrument has taken you over.

It's almost as if you were possessed without knowing it, and so you take the possessing entity to be yourself.

THE BEGINNING OF FREEDOM is the realization that you are not the possessing entity — the thinker. Knowing this enables you to observe the entity. The moment you start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated.

You then begin to realize that there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence. You also realize that all the things that truly matter — beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace — arise from beyond the mind.

You begin to awaken.



FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND

The good news is that you can free yourself from your mind. This is the only true liberation. You can take the first step right now.

START LISTENING TO THE VOICE IN YOUR HEAD as often as you can. Pay particular attention to any repetitive thought patterns, those old audiotapes that have been playing in your head

perhaps for many years.

This is what I mean by “watching the thinker,” which is another way of saying: Listen to the voice in your head, be there as the witnessing presence.

When you listen to that voice, listen to it impartially. That is to say, do not judge. Do not judge or condemn what you hear, for doing so would mean that the same voice has come in again through the back door. You’ll soon realize: There is the voice, and here I am listening to it, watching it. This *I am* realization, this sense of your own presence, is not a thought. It arises from beyond the mind.

So when you listen to a thought, you are aware not only of the thought but also of yourself as the witness of the thought. A new dimension of consciousness has come in.

AS YOU LISTEN TO THE THOUGHT, you feel a conscious presence — your deeper self — behind or underneath the thought, as it were. The thought then loses its power over you and quickly subsides, because you are no longer energizing the mind through identification with it. This is the beginning of the end of involuntary and compulsive thinking.

When a thought subsides, you experience a

discontinuity in the mental stream — a gap of “no-mind.” At first, the gaps will be short, a few seconds perhaps, but gradually they will become longer. When these gaps occur, you feel a certain stillness and peace inside you. This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness with Being, which is usually obscured by the mind.

With practice, the sense of stillness and peace will deepen. In fact, there is no end to its depth. You will also feel a subtle emanation of joy arising from deep within: the joy of Being.

In this state of inner connectedness, you are much more alert, more awake than in the mind-identified state. You are fully present. It also raises the vibrational frequency of the energy field that gives life to the physical body.

As you go more deeply into this realm of no-mind, as it is sometimes called in the East, you realize the state of pure consciousness. In that state, you feel your own presence with such intensity and such joy that all thinking, all emotions, your physical body, as well as the whole external world become relatively insignificant in comparison to it. And yet this is not a selfish but a selfless state. It takes you beyond what you previously thought of as “your self.” That pres-

and so on.

Or when you get into your car, after you close the door, pause for a few seconds and observe the flow of your breath. Become aware of a silent but powerful sense of presence.

There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice: the degree of peace that you feel within.

The single most vital step on your journey toward enlightenment is this: Learn to disidentify from your mind. Every time you create a gap in the stream of mind, the light of your consciousness grows stronger.

One day you may catch yourself smiling at the voice in your head, as you would smile at the antics of a child. This means that you no longer take the content of your mind all that seriously, as your sense of self does not depend on it.



ENLIGHTENMENT: RISING ABOVE THOUGHT

As you grow up, you form a mental image of who you are, based on your personal and cultural conditioning. We may call this phantom self the ego. It consists of mind activity and can only be kept going through constant thinking. The term *ego* means different things

to different people, but when I use it here it means a false self, created by unconscious identification with the mind.

To the ego, the present moment hardly exists. Only past and future are considered important. This total reversal of the truth accounts for the fact that in the ego mode the mind is so dysfunctional. It is always concerned with keeping the past alive, because without it — who are you? It constantly projects itself into the future to ensure its continued survival and to seek some kind of release or fulfillment there. It says: “One day, when this, that, or the other happens, I am going to be okay, happy, at peace.”

Even when the ego seems to be concerned with the present, it is not the present that it sees: It misperceives it completely because it looks at it through the eyes of the past. Or it reduces the present to a means to an end, an end that always lies in the mind-projected future. Observe your mind and you’ll see that this is how it works.

The present moment holds the key to liberation. But you cannot find the present moment as long as you are your mind.

Enlightenment means rising above thought. In the enlightened state, you still use your thinking mind when needed, but in a much more focused and effective way

than before. You use it mostly for practical purposes, but you are free of the involuntary internal dialogue, and there is inner stillness.

When you do use your mind, and particularly when a creative solution is needed, you oscillate every few minutes or so between thought and stillness, between mind and no-mind. No-mind is consciousness without thought. Only in that way is it possible to think creatively, because only in that way does thought have any real power. Thought alone, when it is no longer connected with the much vaster realm of consciousness quickly becomes barren, insane, destructive.



EMOTION: THE BODY'S REACTION TO YOUR MIND

Mind, in the way I use the word, is not just thought. It includes your emotions as well as all unconscious mental-emotional reactive patterns. Emotion arises at the place where mind and body meet. It is the body's reaction to your mind — or you might say a reflection of your mind in the body.

The more you are identified with your thinking, your likes and dislikes, judgments and interpretations, which is to say the less present you are as the watching consciousness, the stronger the emotional energy charge

will be, whether you are aware of it or not. If you cannot feel your emotions, if you are cut off from them, you will eventually experience them on a purely physical level, as a physical problem or symptom.

IF YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY FEELING YOUR EMOTIONS, start by focusing attention on the inner energy field of your body. Feel the body from within. This will also put you in touch with your emotions.

If you really want to know your mind, the body will always give you a truthful reflection, so look at the emotion, or rather feel it in your body. If there is an apparent conflict between them, the thought will be the lie, the emotion will be the truth. Not the ultimate truth of who you are, but the relative truth of your state of mind at that time.

You may not yet be able to bring your unconscious mind activity into awareness as thoughts, but it will always be reflected in the body as an emotion, and of this you can become aware.

To watch an emotion in this way is basically the same as listening to or watching a thought, which I described earlier. The only difference is that, while a thought is in your head, an emotion

has a strong physical component and so is primarily felt in the body. You can then allow the emotion to be there without being controlled by it. You no longer are the emotion; you are the watcher, the observing presence.

If you practice this, all that is unconscious in you will be brought into the light of consciousness.

MAKE IT A HABIT TO ASK YOURSELF: What's going on inside me at this moment? That question will point you in the right direction. But don't analyze, just watch. Focus your attention within. Feel the energy of the emotion.

If there is no emotion present, take your attention more deeply into the inner energy field of your body. It is the doorway into Being.

Moreover, as long as you are identified with your mind, the ego runs your life. Because of its phantom nature, and despite elaborate defense mechanisms, the ego is very vulnerable and insecure, and it sees itself as constantly under threat. This, by the way, is the case even if the ego is outwardly very confident. Now remember that an emotion is the body's reaction to your mind. What message is the body receiving continuously from the ego, the false, mind-made self? Danger, I am under threat. And what is the emotion generated by this continuous message? Fear, of course.

Fear seems to have many causes. Fear of loss, fear of failure, fear of being hurt, and so on, but ultimately all fear is the ego's fear of death, of annihilation. To the ego, death is always just around the corner. In this mind-identified state, fear of death affects every aspect of your life.

For example, even such a seemingly trivial and "normal" thing as the compulsive need to be right in an argument and make the other person wrong — defending the mental position with which you have identified — is due to the fear of death. If you identify with a mental position, then if you are wrong, your mind-based sense of self is seriously threatened with annihilation. So you as the ego cannot afford to be wrong. To

(gap)

To be identified with your mind is to be trapped in time: the compulsion to live almost exclusively through memory and anticipation. This creates an endless pre-occupation with past and future and an unwillingness to honor and acknowledge the present moment and allow it to be. The compulsion arises because the past gives you an identity and the future holds the promise of salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. Both are illusions.

The more you are focused on time — past and future — the more you miss the Now, the most precious thing there is.

Why is it the most precious thing? Firstly, because it is the only thing. It's all there is. The eternal present is the space within which your whole life unfolds, the one factor that remains constant. Life is now. There was never a time when your life was not now, nor will there ever be.

Secondly, the Now is the only point that can take you beyond the limited confines of the mind. It is your only point of access into the timeless and formless realm of Being.

Have you ever experienced, done, thought, or felt anything outside the Now? Do you think you ever will? Is it possible for anything to happen or be outside the Now? The answer is obvious, is it not?

Nothing ever happened in the past; it happened in

the Now. Nothing will ever happen in the future; it will happen in the Now.

The essence of what I am saying here cannot be understood by the mind. The moment you grasp it, there is a shift in consciousness from mind to Being, from time to presence. Suddenly, everything feels alive, radiates energy, emanates Being.

(Read the complete book [here](#))