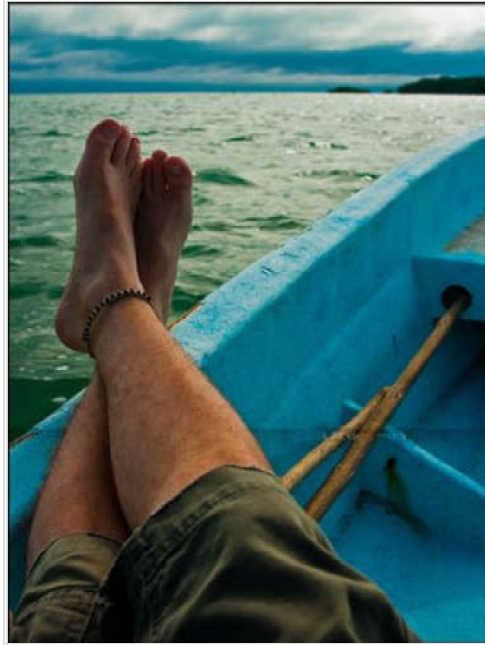


Kick Back, Relax and Enjoy the Show!

Jay: I do get it—in my mind anyway, intellectually—I do get that my ego is not going to get rid of itself. My sense of self is not going to do anything about my sense of self. I get it in my mind, but I am so attached to trying various techniques to get rid of my sense of self, as you were describing. But it is hard to just let it be, you know? The first step is *be aware*; how to be aware more frequently? How to learn to *let it be*?



In my mind, I get that coming from awareness is different than coming from a sense of self. But my sense of self is so strong, I guess, it runs me so much that there are not many gaps for the, "Oh, now I am aware of what's going on," instead of being caught up in what's going on. And so, the sense of self does not want to die—it is not going to help me out. So should I just wait to see if it happens? And ultimately I will become more aware? How do you get in there—to wake up more often or wake up ultimately? And if it is not my sense of self trying to be aware and let it be, trying to change myself, how does the opening come?

Stephen: How do you experience the sense of self? What does it feel like? What thoughts are happening and what feelings are happening? When you experience the sense of self, how do you feel it in the body? What is the experience of the sense of self to you?

Jay: Usually I feel stressed—my body is stressed. Usually I am busy and I am addicted to being busy and doing and helping. I keep trying to change, but I keep getting swept up in stuff—stressed.

Stephen: Stressed?

Jay: Yes.

Stephen: So stress is a characteristic of the sense of self you are referring to? Do you feel stress in your body; in your chest; in your stomach; in your neck? When you are experiencing being caught up in the ego-self, do you notice a very busy thinking mind?

Jay: Yes, also I feel it emotionally. I feel impatient that I am caught up in this whirlwind. It feels like I am compelled, you know, that kind of stuff.

Stephen: So you experience the sense of ego-self mentally and emotionally?

Jay: Yes.

Stephen: You experience a very active mind, and emotionally you feel those feelings?

Jay: Yes.

Stephen: So there is a thought story and an emotional story playing in your head when you feel that sense of ego-self? And you are aware of that?

Jay: When I am caught up in it, I am *not* aware of it—I guess.

Stephen: Sometimes you are aware of it.

Jay: Sometimes, yes.

Stephen: So you are aware of the mental and emotional experience of ego-self, and you are aware occasionally when it is happening.

Jay: Right.

Stephen: And that is how you experience the ego-self; you experience a lot of mental and emotional activity—mental and emotional ‘stirring.’

Jay: Yes.

Stephen: And you are aware of that experience from time to time.

Jay: Yes.



Stephen: Now, you can let your eyes rest on anything on the table—the candle, the bottle, the jar or anything on the table. Pick an object and be aware of it. Notice the color; notice the shape. And you can imagine the weight of it, if you could pick it up; and feel the temperature of it. You can see the colors and the shape, you can imagine how it feels, and you can feel the weight of it. And if it is edible you can imagine the taste of it—or even if it is not. You can see the colors, you can see the shape and you can feel the weight of it—holding it in your hand. You can imagine the temperature of it—is it warm

or cold? And maybe even the taste, or the sound if you were to strike it on the table—how would it sound?

Now you can be aware and imagine what it is like to experience that object completely. And now you can be aware—of *that which is aware* of the object. You are aware of that object now—aware of how it looks; aware of the colors, the shape, the weight, the temperature, and the taste. You are aware of that object. Now notice the fact that you are aware right now. There is awareness of that object isn't there?

Jay: Yes.

Stephen: So, notice this awareness now. Awareness is aware of an object. You know all about the object, now notice the awareness. You can also notice how this

awareness is fully aware—in addition to the object, you are also aware of the sensations of your body now. You see the object, you can imagine the object, and also you are aware now of the sensations of your body. You can feel the energy of your body now—there is awareness of the sensations of your body now.

You can notice this awareness that is aware now. You can continue to notice this awareness. You are aware now, aren't you? There is awareness here now. And now you are aware of being aware. There is awareness here now, and you are aware of being aware. The attention of awareness can go back onto itself and realize, "Yes, there is awareness here now." And you may notice a natural relaxation response—being aware.

The objects of awareness are dependent on awareness being aware. Now this ego experience that you were referring to is like the object on the table that you chose. The ego experience that you were referring to is like the object on the table. The sense of 'me', the sense of ego that we all know so well, that we are aware of, is another object that we are aware of. Even the most contracted sense of ego, the most contracted sense of 'me', the feeling of 'me', is another object that happens in awareness—the same as the object on the table.

One object seems personal—the ego experience seems personal. It is a personal experience that I am aware of, that you are aware of. And the object on the table seems impersonal. But notice how the awareness that is here now is neither personal nor impersonal. It is simply present and aware. As you let the object on the table *be*, you can let the ego sense *be*. Initially it may be easier to let an impersonal object be as it is, but you may notice that it becomes easier and easier to let the ego sense be; that personal sense of 'me'. You may notice that it gets easier and easier to let that ego sense be. You may realize that even the most contracted sense of 'me', the most contracted sense of ego, is an impersonal experience that is happening in consciousness—and no one has an ego. An ego is an impersonal object that happens in awareness.

This is the power of *letting it be*. You are no longer fooled—no matter how seductive, no matter how convincing the ego may appear. You may notice it gets easier and easier to let the ego experience be as it is, as you realize even the most personal sense of ego is as equally *impersonal* as the object on the table. No one owns that sense of 'me'. There are not two egos—one ego who owns an ego—there is one ego experience. And there is one awareness, that you are, being aware of all objects. Some objects appear to be personal, some objects appear impersonal. But you may notice that all objects of experience are happening naturally and spontaneously—by no one and to no one. And the common ground of all experience is this aware presence that I am. Both the personal ego experience and the impersonal objects are happening naturally and spontaneously in this aware presence that I am.

And this may become more and more obvious to you as the old habit of contracting around objects and personalizing them, dies. The ego experience has happened in the human experience. No one created an ego experience—the ego experience happens, like everything else. So as you come back to this present moment of awareness more and more, the ego experience is naturally released—the same as the object on the table is naturally released. All objects of experience are appearing and disappearing naturally and spontaneously, and the common ground of all experience is this aware presence that I am, that you are.

As the old habit of grasping onto the personal experiences is released, a new habit

naturally forms. This new habit is to simply be as you are, present and aware. And it becomes more and more obvious to you, that simply being as you are, present and aware, you notice a natural relaxation response in the mind and body. You may feel comfortable saying that you know *yourself* as this aware presence. And you know *yourself* as the love you were seeking. It becomes more and more obvious to you that this aware presence that you are is everything you were seeking by trying to manipulate and control the objects of experience. So as the objects of experience naturally release; both personal and impersonal objects of experience are naturally released, you let them be as they are.

This aware presence becomes more and more obvious in your own direct experience, even now. There is awareness here now, it is absolutely complete. And knowing yourself *as* this awareness, you may notice a natural relaxation response of the mind and body—because the mind has found what it was seeking. The mind was seeking for peace, love, contentment, and well-being. That is why the mind was trying to control and manipulate the objects of experience; it wanted to deliver peace, love and contentment to you.

So noticing yourself *as* the source of peace, love and contentment—this aware presence here and now—there is a natural relaxation response of the mind, because the mind has found what it was seeking. And it is *yourself*.

And this happens naturally and spontaneously—as you naturally reach for water when thirst arises. When the desire for love, peace and contentment arises in you, you naturally turn to yourself—this aware presence that is with you, *as you*, right now.

So this happens naturally and spontaneously with no effort of your own. As you feel any desire to take action or to create effort, you may notice that by simply being aware of that desire to take action and create effort, it releases on its own. And it becomes more and more obvious to you that no effort or action is required to live in peace.

You experience a natural relaxation response of the mind and body—and you can feel it now.

(Long pause)

Jay: One of the things you said that really struck me is that we did not create the ego. Somehow I felt it was my fault that I had an ego. As if I made this suffering ego, and it is up to me to get rid of it.

Stephen: It is quite a relief for you to realize that the ego experience—probably the most contracted human experience—is happening naturally and spontaneously by no ego and to no ego. There is no one who has an ego. There is no separate ego who has an ego. That was a false division of mind—the mind says, “/...have an ego.”

Jay: (Laughing) Right.

Stephen: Now we see the insanity of this false division of mind and realize that even the most contracted sense of personal ego is happening naturally and spontaneously as an impersonal object in this aware presence that I am. This aware presence that I am is not an ego—this aware presence that I am is simply present and aware. The contracted sense of ego is happening in this awareness that I am. I am *that which is aware*. And *that which is aware* is aware of everything equally. I

am aware of a simple, impersonal object on the table; and I am aware of the personal sense of ego.

The sense of ego is more complex because it involves thoughts, emotions, and sensations—the ego sense is multi-dimensional in terms of experience. A simple object is much easier to categorize in terms of experience than the ego experience. However, you may notice that *that which is aware* of a simple, impersonal object is the same presence of awareness that is aware of the sense of personal ego. The sense of personal ego is happening in this aware presence that I am. This aware presence that I am is not an ego. There is something aware of the personal ego experience, and there is something aware of an impersonal object. The common ground of both experiences is this aware space that I am; this consciousness that I am.

What I am is *aware* of the ego sense, and the ego sense is an experience that happens in me. And an impersonal object is an experience that happens in me. I am that which is aware. You can see why the fundamental truth is that awareness is what I am—consciousness is what I am. Consciousness is what I am, and consciousness is all there is. And knowing myself as this fundamental truth, this aware presence, all objects of experience are experienced in a new light.

All objects of experience are happening to this consciousness that I am. I am aware of all experiences—both personal and impersonal objects of experience. I am beyond both. All experience is dependent on *me*—I am aware, I am present and aware. This is the fundamental truth of what I am. You know it experientially now because you are present and aware *here* and *now*—always now. All objects of experience arise in you—they come and they go. The ego experience comes and goes, just as impersonal objects come and go, and they are always changing. The objects of experience are always changing, but *you*, when you say "I", "I" refers to this aware presence that I am.

Now notice this aware presence that you are, and there is a new perspective on all of the objects of experience. There is a new perspective when emotions arise, when sensations arise, and the ego experience arises—even when the contracted sense of ego arises—there is a new perspective on all of it. There is no longer a false division. There is no longer the idea that "I am an ego, and I have to get rid of my ego"—that is a false division of mind. There is no "I" who *has* an ego; there are not *two*. There is this aware presence that I am that is experiencing the contracted ego experience. I am aware of that ego experience—it comes and goes—but I am always the same. The objects come and go, the personal and impersonal—but I am always the same.

Now this is quite a relief for you to realize that even the most contracted sense of personal ego is an *impersonal* object happening in this aware presence that I am. There is no ego who created an ego. There is no ego who needs to get rid of an ego. The ego experience *happens* in the human experience. And it becomes more obvious when this false division is seen through—"I... have an ego"—you see that it is impossible. "I... have to get rid of *my* ego, I... have to get rid of *my* ego..." Do you see how this process keeps the ego experience going?

Anything that *I* do to get rid of *my* ego—it is impossible! "*I* have to get rid of my ego, *I* have to get rid of my ego, *I* have to get rid..."

SO WE PULL THE PLUG!

We pull the plug on the ego who has to get rid of itself.

NO MORE!

NO MORE dividing myself internally. *NO MORE* going to war with myself—trying to kill my ego. This is the power of *LET IT BE!* The ego experience is happening by no one and to no one. Now you know yourself as this aware presence. This aware presence, you will notice, has all the attributes that you wanted. If you are able to get rid of the ego— "Why do I want to get rid of my ego?" Because I want to live in peace!

Now you notice the plug is pulled on the egoic mind by *letting it be*. The plug is pulled on the idea that "I have to get rid of my ego... I have to.." *NO!* No more false division. No more internal war. No more going to war with myself—against myself! You were going to war with yourself! The mind meant well. It wanted to bring love and peace to itself and to the world. This is why the ego wanted to get rid of itself. But do you see that trying to kill the ego keeps the war going?

Complete *surrender*, let it be, pulls the plug on the ego. And now you know yourself *as* this aware presence. It may become more and more obvious to you, and you feel comfortable saying, "What I am, this aware presence, *is* love, it *is* peace, it *is* contentment!" You may notice this. And the false division naturally releases. "I have to get rid of *my* ego?" Who has to get rid of what? Now there is no ego trying to get rid of itself. Now there is a natural relaxation response of the mind and body. And this unconditional love that I am, *loves even* the ego sense!

This aware presence that we are is simply present and aware—it does not have the capacity to go to war with itself. So there is a natural relaxation of the ego sense. The ego sense becomes another impersonal object in awareness that is happening naturally and spontaneously. The ego sense happens naturally and spontaneously, and it releases naturally and spontaneously. This becomes more and more obvious to you—there is no independent 'me' who is doing *anything*, and *everything* is happening naturally and spontaneously.

Even the sense that there *is* an independent me is happening naturally and spontaneously. You may say, "Well, I feel as if there *is* an independent me who is doing everything!" Even the sense of being an independent person who is doing everything—even *that* is happening naturally and spontaneously, by no one and to no one. There is no separate me who is creating the sense of a separate me. There is the *experience* of a separate me that happens naturally and spontaneously in this aware presence that I am.

So I realize that anything I do to get rid of *my* ego is keeping it in place. It is an impossible venture. Even if the ego says, "Well, I am successful—I got rid of my ego!"—now there is an ego who got rid of its ego! "*I did it!*" Who did what? So this false division of mind becomes more and more comical as you step back and be aware of everything that is happening. And now notice yourself as *that which is aware*. Now the attention goes on that which is aware, and letting the objects *be*. It becomes more and more comical how the mind had divided itself into separate egos and was going to war with itself—all a false division of mind.

Meanwhile, you have always been aware, watching the whole show—as you are aware right now. And now you know the fundamental truth about yourself—this aware presence is what I am, present and aware. You have seen the false ego-

sense—you have seen through it. And you notice a palpable change in your experience. There is a natural relaxation response when the mind is no longer going to war with itself internally.

Do you realize the degree to which your own mind was at war with itself? Can you imagine the peace you feel now that this mental and emotional war is over? And there is surrender. Surrender happens because the mind realizes its own mistake. The mind realizes it was searching for peace, love and contentment in the *objects* of experience, and *for* the ego. Now the peace, love and contentment, you may notice, are naturally occurring phenomena that require no effort.

Now the thoughts and emotions naturally relax on their own because you have discovered what you were seeking. The intention of the mind was good; it wanted to bring love, peace and contentment to you, and it wanted to share love, peace and contentment with others. Now this mind realizes that *that which is aware* here and now, always with you *as* you, *is* the source of love, peace and contentment—now the mind naturally relaxes. Now there is a natural relaxation response of the mind, emotions and the body—because you have found what you were seeking!

Now there is a natural release—and you kick back, relax and enjoy the show.