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ADYASHANTI 3/7/99

A: So let me tell you this is highly funny to me.

Group: Great laughter

A: This is very strange. I would have never put myself in this position, but I guess that's part of the fun. And I can't decide where I should put my chair. Sometimes options are like the prescription for suffering. Okay. I guess I'll relax a little bit.

Group: Delight and laughter.

A: So, of course you all know by now what we are here for, or what I'm here for and you're silly enough to come listen to it. What I would hope to happen, it kind of be a little bit, not really satsang, because I'm not teaching, I'm trying to take that role off, so that's not really my intention, but I would hope for this to be other than just telling a story, which I don't think has too much use. Maybe together we can draw out what is important about it. And usually what's important about it, is what everybody else thinks is interesting or important, so without you asking certain clarifications and telling me what your interests are and questioning some things that I'll talk about that are interesting to you, then I'll have no way of really knowing what to talk about. Because like I say, just to tell the story isn't that meaningful to be. So with that, I thought where I would start is ? I'm going to skip over some of it because I can always go back with myself and Sandeep at another time go back into the details, but since it is sort of a biography, I'm going to go through some parts of it, the early part rather quickly and then when we get to what I think is the much more significant part, we will slow down some.

I think the part I want to go through is the really early stuff and a lot of people have asked

me and I think it is a curiosity with anybody that finds themselves in the position that I am in, a lot of people want to know, seemingly (chuckling) about the early years and people not believing me when I keep telling them that my early years were not very different than anybody else's. I guess all of our early years pretty much, have a lot of similarities and they also have a lot of differences, but this part that I hope to skip over really quickly, the only thing I'll say about it is the part that I was fortunate to have, which a lot of people don't have, or a number of people don't have, is ? I had a damn good childhood. I had a hell of a lot of fun. When I look back on it, I look back on it as just fun. A lot of fun. And I enjoyed myself tremendously. Of course, like everybody else, there were challenges and disappointments and hurts and all that kind of stuff, but overall, I guess from that perspective, I was very lucky. And it seemed overall a hell of a lot of fun.

I was also lucky in the regard that I was lucky enough to have parents that spent a hell of a lot of time with me too. A lot of time. (chuckle) We still do. Which continued well into and even still continues now as funny as it may seem, but continued well, well, well into my adult life and still continues where pretty much of everything I did was heartily supported. I thought that was normal. I found out that it is not necessarily everyone's experience.

Q: I was just wondering if your Mom was here.

A: She is in Oregon visiting my sister. So the only thing that leaps out of me of early years that really leaps out that is really significant to me, outside a nice story with some ups and downs to it, which everybody has ups and downs, but was an event when on was in 5th or 6th grade, standing out at recess on the blacktop, where the kids play and all that stuff, and

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as I was watching all these kids play; all of a sudden, its hard to remember even what happened, but I know it was really very, very significant at the time, but suddenly I felt completely apart from everything that was happening and there was sort of a kind of sense ? you know when you are a kid, you feel like a kid. You feel like it a lot of the time. You feel like a child and all of a sudden, I didn't feel like a child, neither did I feel like an adult, but I felt like something that was outside of time and here I was looking at all this happening and looking at myself and I also realized, none of the other kids at least as I could tell, were perceiving like this at that moment, so I knew something very different and special was happening and it was just sort of a timeless moment. A real timeless moment. And I can't really explain it more than that.

Q: Were there any spiritual or strong esthetic influences you remember ?

A: Strong religious or esthetic influences. See this is the kind of thing that unless it is asked, I'll skip right past.

Q: Do you want me to repeat that for the microphone ?

A: I just repeated it. This technology gets so embedded in you, after awhile you start doing it without thinking about it. No, not really, not really. I remember being hauled off to church a few times. Was that right ? I mean we went to church for a little bit.

Larry: Yeah, we used to a church.

A: Yeah, right down there.

L: But as soon as I found out that they were all on the opposite view of the Viet Nam war, that I was, I thought this is really weird. I'm coming to church and everyone is waving guns.

I thought, this is really change. So I stopped.

A: Yeah.

L: And you did and your Mom did.

A: What I do remember about it is going being thrown in Sunday school for a few times.

L: Thrown in huh ?

A: Well, because I just thought, even as a little kid, I thought this is absolutely ludicrous. Why would I want to be Crayola coloring pictures of Jesus ? You know, I want to know something about Jesus. I remember asking a few times, can I go, you know where the big kids go, because I knew that's where it was really going on. It wasn't going on here. We were coloring pictures of Jesus and they ?.

L: As a point of fact, it wasn't going on there either.

Everybody: Great laughter.

L: I was there.

A: So John to answer your question, not in the overt sense, I mean outside this short period of time, we didn't go to church much at all.

Q: What about art, literature and nature.

A: Literature ? Not really. I mean you know, nothing stands out. I loved to read Curious George, but I don't know if that gets in there.

Everybody: Much laughter.

A: Nature I always loved. As a young kid what I did do which we might think as a little strange, of course this group might not think its a little strange, but I would sit in the back yard, right back there and watch birds for hours on end; just hours and time would just disappear for me.

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So I found it very easy to spend a lot of time alone and looking back, that was just timeless moments and there was no sense of time passing but there was no real sort of, no influence as far as religion and a conscious exposure to literature and all that kind of stuff. But my grandfather on my mother's side, my grandfather Foster, was a tremendously religious man. He was Baptist right ?

L: Basically Baptist yes.

A: But he was, in fact his friends called him "the deacon" because he was a deacon, but he was a

L: Very fundamentalist.

A: Very fundamentalist. But in his own way, really pure heart. You know, not a perfect person, nobody is really perfect, but just really a beautiful person that changed innumerable number of lives, a lot. He lived what he talked about. He used to go to the prisons and stuff and he would bring anybody home and make my poor grandmother prepare dinners for God knows who at any particular time, so he was without knowing it, a tremendous influence. However, there was always moments of whether it was here or at grandfather's house in family meetings, there was always a lot, especially when I was young, a lot of talk about religion. A lot of talk about religion. And I found it highly interesting. I loved listening. I couldn't participate much, but to listen to it, was so interesting to me. The debate. Because there was a certain freedom of debate that went on, sometimes rather heated, but it was allowed.

But what I did have and I didn't notice this until many, you know, well into my late twenties, my childhood was actually, which I don't talk about because it puts, for some people it puts me in a special category and for other people,

a lot of them have had the same experiences, and some of them remember them and a lot of people don't remember them, but I had a lot of odd experiences, what we would call now, religious or spiritual experiences all from the time I can remember, that to me, did not seem particularly odd. I mean they seemed perfectly normal. You know ?. For a long period I had a nice big white light that hung out at the end of my bed at night and I didn't think anything of it. It was just nice and comforting. All sorts. I could go on and on and on. You know, but I had moments when I would sit and stare at my, where you keep your clothes, you drawers where clothes are kept and its wooden and I could stare at it and sometimes I could just disappear into the wood and feel like I was the wood and all sorts of sort of spiritual experiences.

Many, many dreams all through my childhood of being guided. As funny as it turned out, having gone through so much Buddhism, but before that I never heard of Buddhism or anything when I was young ? having had a lot of dreams of going underground somewhere, underground always into this same room and always meeting the same old Asian man who was a spiritual man and he would teach me and I would always remember them when I woke up. Just reams and reams of ? you know. So there was a lot of these kind of happenings, but to me, I didn't even remember them for, I kind of remembered them, but they were so normal, they were so not anything special that you know, when we talk about them, they seem extraordinary but at the time, it was like, of course, there is my little white light, and there is this and here is this and it was all just part of my world. I didn't think it was odd.

Probably the best gift that I did get, growing up was that I didn't have any sort of religious

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upbringing, which that can be okay too, but I didn't really have much, so that was nice. I had somewhat open ? can be open to it. Does that answer the question ? So after this recess event that I was talking about, the most interesting thing that occurred as a result of that was this really awakening of sort of this inner guide that always taught me that I could know anything I wanted to know, all I had to do was not try to know it and I was like out of 5th grade, you know in 5th grade. So I would have all these questions, like so many kids do - the meaning of life, and who am I and all these, but I think its not unusual for kids to have these questions and I found that simply by having the question and then not trying to answer it, but just keeping it in my mind, out of nowhere in a few days, sometimes a few weeks, the answer would just pop up. So I found something I could really trust in, that if I just held the question and didn't try to find the solution, that the solution always came. That was probably the biggest outcome of that sort of time.

Q: Do you remember any of the teachings from those dreams ?

A: No. uh, uh, not now. I did at the time. I have a terrible memory. But at the time, they were very profound for me because I very rarely remembered dreams then, and I almost never remember them now. I don't even know if I have them that often, but at the time I remember I always would remember those vividly. Yeah, really vividly.

Q: You felt guided by them ?

A: It wasn't so much guidance, you know in the sense of do this, don't do, you know. It wasn't so much that kind of guidance. It was more like we would sit and talk and it would change the way I saw things when I woke up. Yeah, it was more like that.

And I would remember it when I woke up but within a day or two, I would always forget what we talked about, but I would kind of have the change of perception, the change of perception would stick around. So.

Q: Did you share this with your parents or anybody or was ?

A: Did I share it with my parents. I don't remember, did I ? I don't remember sharing much of it.

Larry: I don't remember.

A: Yeah, I don't remember sharing it no, uh, uh. It just never occurred to me because it would have to seem out of the norm I think a lot, you know when you are a child you share things that aren't quite normal for you a lot of times and it was so normal, you know if you don't know anything else, it seems perfectly ? why would you share it ? You know, necessarily. Yeah, it never occurred to me to share those things. It was not until later, and even then, you know. Even now, when I look back at them, I feel very much the same way, like, well sure, it wasn't strange then and its not strange now. And I am convinced that many more people than think have the same kind of things going on. I have met a lot of people who remember them. I have met a lot of people who when we start to talk about them, remember them, and some don't. But the reason I almost never talk about them, but I have to talk about them here because its just part of the story and I have to be honest is because if I did talk about these things a lot, certain people would put me into some sort of special category. You know ? And what I found as a teacher, there really is no such thing as a special category. If you never had any of these odd little experiences or happenings that you can remember, it doesn't much matter. It really doesn't, you know in

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the end. But I know, even though I'll say that to people, they won't believe it. They'll say, well of course you can say that because you had ?. Right ? And yet from my point, you know, I have only done this for two and a half years, but having done it for as long as I have, just in that period of time, I have seen that it truly doesn't matter. It really doesn't matter because people have the same ability, the only thing they need is that yearning in their heart and that's a grace, either you have it or you don't have it and that's all that's there but usually people don't quite believe it. Especially when they hear, oh you had good parents, you were cared for and I had ? and then people had all these hardships when they were young. But boy, there is actually more really awake spiritual people who have had a lot of hardship in their life and in their childhood than not. So if anything, I'm the unusual one, not the normal one for people in my position. I'm different. Most people that do this are have had you know the same hardships that most people have.

Female voice: And those people who come to satsang, they are drawn to it.

A: Yeah. Yeah. So anyway you know.

Q: When do you remember the yearning starting ?

A: Well, let me back track and I'll get there because after this thing happened in grade school, then in junior high, three, four or five times a year, I would wake up in bed, I would wake up in the morning and my perception would be turned on its head from normal. And we would call it now, just waking up like in a very spiritual awake condition. And I would just wake up and I knew as soon as I opened my eyes, I'd just say to myself, this is one of those days. But I didn't know what it was. I didn't think

it was spiritual or religious. You know, it was just that, oh, oh, this is just one of those days that I am absolutely one with everything and at first I would like have to teach myself not to look at people, because I would love to do it because I was them. (laughter) and if you go to school and start looking at people like, they get a little weird. You know what I mean ? So it was this feeling of really no boundaries and I was very intrigued by it. It was so interesting. I didn't know what it was and I had this, "what is this" ? "what's happening" ? "what's going on" ? So there was always this, what is this which is always like this carrot just barely out of my reach, what is this ? and at the same time, what it was, was so obvious. It was just this really awake state and it would last anywhere from a day to three or four days and then it would go away and everything would be normal and then a few months later, I would wake up, here we would go again. But I would always have a sense if I could just figure out what this is, it would stay this way forever. It would just stay this way.

Q: Through all waking, dream and deep sleep states ? I mean you noted it in all states or just when you woke up in the morning ?

A: That's a good question. I think it actually was through all three. Yeah. If I think back, I would know that awakeness was there before I woke up. I never thought about it, but yeah. So it was very intriguing to me. So these would come up and they continued through junior high school and into high school and its nothing I ever mentioned to anybody and then into my early college until (and this is where I am getting to your question) What was your question again (chuckling).

Q: The yearning.

A: The yearning. Okay. Yes. So there was no

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yearning with any of this. Really. It was just something that would come up. If there was any yearning, it was yearning to know what was happening you know, at the time. But the yearning didn't come up until I got to be a smart person, you know, an adult (chuckling) and I read some book somewhere. I think one of the early Zen books or something talked about enlightenment. Oh! the lure had just been put out in the water. I had bitten, the hook had been set and I was on the enlightenment path (chuckling) and then, you know, very quickly I wasn't just yearning, I was going stark raving bananas. So I guess you could call that yearning. Yeah, it was a big yearning. When I just read about it, I never made a link until way after, the link between all those events and what I was yearning for, I never made that link, but when I heard about enlightenment, at that point it was mostly a lot of Zen, old Zen teachers and I would read and it would just come in ears, you know? I knew I had to have that. I had to. So I started to yearn tremendously at about 18 years old and of course all of those little experiences stopped flat. Just stopped and I was on the spiritual path (great laughter from Adyashanti and group). So I had begun.

Q: What did you go to college to become?

A: When I first started, I was interested in psychology and after about two years at De Anza, because I had a whole interest even younger than this, maybe starting at sixteen, maybe seventeen, of psychology and read all sorts of books on psychology and I was very interested and I thought maybe I'll be a psychologist and I got into college and once I had read the material, you know, I went through every sociology class that the college had to offer and about three quarters of the psychology classes and I quickly sort of sized up the material and realized that my interests were just right beyond

this. Which hence put the end to my college career; because I realized it just wasn't, the interest just fell flat on its face. That's where I started but it just fell flat. Once the spiritual yearning. Once that started, I knew that's where I wanted to go, that's where I had to go and the interest in anything else just started to fall away, at least for psychology. Yeah.

Q: I wanted to ask and actually I think its kind of being revealed in listening to you to some extent, but I'm still curious what you would say about, well my sense in listening to you is that the quality I am going to ask about is something you have always had, so I don't know if the question can actually be asked because of that in some way.

A: Well, you can ask it and we'll see what happens.

Q: What I wanted to ask was when you, or if you, or how you might have come upon whatever it is in you that allows you to trust the awareness and the insights, you know the experience of Truth and if and when other people come up and question or demean a perspective, you can stay trusting your experience. In listening to you so far, it almost sounds as though, I was trying to figure out, is this grace, does this also come from a healthy childhood and is it psychological and it really sounds like it was always integrated for you.

A: Not necessarily. You could assume that by from what I said, but somebody could have come up and asked me questions or challenged me and the trust could have just fallen on its face pretty easily; outside a few things like that early learning to just rest with a question. And if someone said, no that's not the way you do it, I just knew, oh that's just you being a stupid adult. You don't know any better. But its not, see, to me this just happened. It didn't have

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anything to do with trust. I never thought of trusting anything. In fact, by the time I was into my teens, I was, and I still continue to be highly you could say logical in the sense of wanting to know what's true. So wanting to know what's true meant that I couldn't trust anything, anything. Because it could all be wrong. So from that point on, you could say I didn't have any trust except in this desire to simply know what's true, but the trust to actually find what that was and then to trust it, was hard won. Very hard won an fought for like a dog.

Voice: Say more about that.

A: (chuckles) Okay. Well relatively quickly when my spiritual life got going, was I decided that what I really wanted to know was what the truth was, the final truth in the end, which would be something like in the end, what ever the end was, but deepest core, is that ultimately something that is positive, you know that the world is peaceful, loving and good or is it something that is negative, that in the end its all terrible and its very much like it appears to be when you turn on TV, or is a combination of both? And I had this raging desire that turned from sort of desire from enlightenment to the desire to know what is true. Because I was terrified to find out what was true because I had to equally take the possibility that it could end up being a terrible disaster. It could. And I found eventually the strength to entertain that possibility just as much as I entertained the possibility that it could be good because I realized unless I did, I would never know. I would find what I wanted to find, rather than find what was true.

So from about twenty years old or so on, that was the tremendous fuel for my whole search, which was behind my whole search and of

course that kind of fuel can drive you crazy because you don't have a reference to gauge what is true even if you come upon it. You know, you don't have much gauge what is true and how do I know its true. The answer to this question is something that will probably become obvious with time. Its not something I can actually just (snaps finger) how did I get the trust. But it was just by being determined to find out what the truth was at all cost. All cost. It just didn't matter and what I found was a perspective. That's what the truth I finally found out was. Its not in something. Its in a perspective. Its a way of seeing what is, undistorted. That is what is called the truth. Which means its a way of seeing where it simply nothing to be interpreted or distorted by the mind and we call that the truth and it just so happens that truth is tremendously liberating. It just so happens that it is very, very liberating and it just so happens that what is revealed in that perspective, is that ultimately everything comes from an overwhelmingly good place.

Q: As a piece of this question I am still wondering what, I am having trouble formulating the question, but what inside of you enabled you to trust even that quest.

A: To trust the quest. The quest itself?

Q: Yeah, to trust whatever words you want to put on it. To trust you. To trust your sense of this direction, oh that now what I see is the truth is this perspective as you described it.

A: Oh, well a big part of that was ..

Q: Versus having somebody, you know, some authority figure or someone else say, this way, look here.

A: Well the big part of that was not trusting myself. Was coming to a complete, absolute and total mistrust of myself and realizing that

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any part of the mind or personality or emotions were completely absolutely untrustworthy as far as the truth goes, totally, untrustworthy and the wrong direction, couldn't be more wrong to look there. So that was very much part of the discovery of finding out what is not trustworthy to tell me what's the truth. That's the first step. Because when you find out what is not trust worthy, what is, just becomes obvious. You know I can't explain it any more than that. But that is what I meant it was hard fought and hard won because it was a long process of coming to find what I couldn't trust, what never was worthy of trust and being able to withstand that. Because when you find that, almost everything in your experience that you ever thought you were, is totally untrustworthy and that is quite a difficult thing to hold up under.

I think where your question is coming from elicits, then where do I go ? I don't know where to go from there. That is an incredibly insecure place when you find out that nothing you ever relied on to tell you what is true and to find trust in, is trustworthy. Nothing. And what I found that when I was able to sustain that, that knowing without collapsing, then that which was trustworthy became obvious. I can't put it any better. That's as good as I can put it.

Q: In my experience I developed an adaptive psyche that was very conditioned and I found one of the things that really broke it open was drugs. Was that an influence in your experience ?

A: No. Not that I didn't do a little experimentation but I quickly found with any experimentation, for me, it only took kind of once with any number of little experiments to find out that although that might have been nice, you know, it just wasn't my way. Nothing re-

ally broke through that big. I had already had all those experiences that people have on drugs when I was a kid. So any time they came along, I just kind of like ? big deal ! (chuckles). This isn't particularly unusual. Everybody else seems to think it is, but it doesn't seem so unusual to me. So for a lot of people I talk to, yeah, that can be the cracking of the egg. But it wasn't part of my cracking.

Q: In the past at different retreats and things, every once in awhile you allude to your past, so I have a real curiosity about some things that you have said. You at one time said that for a very long time you had not discussed your awakenings because you were waiting for the big one.

A: Right.

Q: But you also mentioned that you had a large awakening when you were a young man and that your teacher sat you down and said, "Now that this has happened to you at such a young age, this, this, this, and this will happen which will stop you along the path" and at the time you thought. Not me. Could you expand ?

A: It all happened. (burst of laughter).

Q: Yeah, that's what you said. Could you kind of do a quick review of what it was like to be going after I guess Zen at the time and ?. Thanks.

A: Sure. You asked all the questions that needed a good windup. A good lead in. So around age 19 or 20 I started to meditate and the funny thing about what I did it for, was ridiculous. I had a great-great aunt. Aunt Ethyl ? Was she great-great ? Two greats I think. Ancient. Aunt Ethyl was ancient from the time I was a little kid, Aunt Ethyl was ancient and Aunt Ethyl was highly spiritual, highly psychic and it was kind of a thing we all knew but didn't discuss that Aunt Ethyl was

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really good at astral projecting herself. She could kind of take off and fly everywhere and she kind of knew everything about everybody because of it and when I heard about this, I always knew that Aunt Ethyl was a very incredible being and everybody did. We would now call her in this modern spiritual climate, a very enlightened person to the extent when Aunt Ethyl was going to die, she ran out and found a wife for her 86 or 87-year-old husband, set him up, made sure they liked each other and fell in love and then she died. So he would have somebody to marry. So Aunt Ethyl was very awake and I could get in a big side track with her, but she was a wonderful being.

But this whole idea of astral projection. I thought, isn't that interesting. So I went out and I got how to astral project. This little pamphlet. Right (chuckles) and it had these steps, you know.

Q: How old were you ?

A: 18 or something like that. So you set up all these things and you go through all these motions. I can't even remember but it was this whole process. So I tried this whole process out and something wonderful was supposed to happen but nothing kept happening. But one of the things you had to do, you had to do some kind of meditation. I forgot what it was, but you are supposed to get really kind of quiet and as I was going through all of this and getting frustrated about the fact that I couldn't project myself out of my tennis shoes much less out of the room, I suddenly thought, well this meditation is really interesting. This is really interesting and so I stopped trying to astral project and I started to meditate and I didn't know what I was doing and I had some incredible meditations from the beginning. Of course before I learned how and screwed it all up, I had

these amazing ? and that's what really got me kind of hooked and then I learned about enlightenment — yatta yatta yatta. So we were off to the races.

And then I started to practice Zen. I met a Zen teacher in Los Gatos who was my teacher who eventually fifteen years later asked me to start teaching. Arvis. And Arvis is the one who trained with Mizumi Roshi and Yesutani and so on and some of the early Zen teachers in the early, early 60's while raising five kids and the whole bit and she used to have a lot of retreats at her house. The teacher would come to her house. There were no temples. There was none of this Zen everywhere like now. People would come to her house and she has a pretty big house, but they would have like 45 people doing week long retreats and they literally would be sleeping on the grass in the front yard and in the back yard and they were just everywhere and the toilets would constantly be clogging. It was just a mess. But they used to have these Zen retreats at her house and she trained for a long time. I think first Soan and then Yesutani who were just incredible Zen teachers and then later Mizumi and he used to come up and do lots of retreats and finally he said, "You start teaching" So she started to teach and she taught for the better part of 30 something years out of her home. I met her there and after a few years of meditating, (she was a non-teaching teacher). She didn't call herself a teacher. She didn't like it. We would do one period of meditation, do a little Kin Hin, walking meditation and sit down and she would read somebody else's teaching and then we would do another period of meditation and then we would have tea and go home. But once a month, we would do like a half day or all day sitting where we would see her in private, Doksan. That's where her magic really was. It wasn't in, she didn't do good in open forum, but in Doksan that's

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where her magic was. But I didn't appreciate it at the time because it didn't have robes and they didn't have shaved heads and there wasn't big bells and there wasn't incense all over the place. You know, there was something way to normal.

But after I got into this for awhile (I am leading up to something), I had this knowing which somehow started to creep up on me that at 25 years old I was going to die and it wasn't in the slightest bit disconcerting oddly enough it was like ?. Well you have about three years, you damn well better hurry up. And so I had a certain sense of urgency. I could see no reason why I was going to perish. None at all. But it just seemed to be a fact and I didn't even particularly care. I just thought, well isn't that interesting. But it was serious. I didn't doubt it. It seemed so obvious that I just took it as the truth. So there I was being with her and then occasionally I went up to Sonoma Mountain Zen Center with my other teacher, Kwon Roshi, who was a wonderful human being, which was my true luck of my lifetime. My true luck was having two teachers that were wonderful human beings, way before they were wonderful teachers. Neither one of them were great teachers in the sense of pointers and helping make the path quicker. But they were incredible human beings and their human beingness, the way they acted, was the teaching. That is a very subtle teaching, especially for people who were so ordinary, I missed it for a long, long, long time, but they were both extraordinarily ordinary, but had this sense of something incredibly profound is there. Why can't I just get to it ? Why doesn't it talk ? Why doesn't it ? You know, it just walks around. So I would do retreats up there.

So I started to get upset at this quest. Why do I want enlightenment ? My quest went

from wanting to know enlightenment or wanting know what's true temporarily, to why me ? Why me ? And what is this ? Because I started to be able to localize it. It seemed to come from somewhere in here but what is this ? that is sort of driving me in this crazy direction, that when I started to realize that it was just going to be there and it was going to drive me crazy until I found out what the hell it was. I wanted to know what that was so badly because I was a little or lot upset with it because it wasn't in my control. I didn't own it and it got more and more and more and more intense and I would meditate more and more and more and like I said, sometimes I would sit out in that little zendo in the corner in the back yard for periods of 45 minutes each before going to work just to find this out. At work I literally would without doing it mechanically, but it would just run in my head; what is this ? What is this ? What is this ? It would just drive me crazy. It literally was driving me crazy for a certain period.

I literally had moments of thinking, if this goes on I will go crazy. Literally. It is just too much of you could say strain. It was a tremendous strain. Well I did my first retreat up at Sonoma. It was awful, terrible, hideous, horrible, drudgery, just the hardest thing I had ever done in my life and I was used to suffering because during a lot of this period of time, I was a competitive bicycle racer and I was at a pretty high level, so I was used to a lot of pain for a long time and I could put up with a lot of pain. I was particularly good at putting up with a lot of pain and here I found myself in this retreat and this was different. This was hell. I wanted to be there so bad, all the myth about it, finally I am going to Mecca and I sat myself down on the cushion on the first night, it started about 7 or 8 o'clock at night. My butt hit the cushion and something exploded and said, you have got

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to get the hell out of here. And this anxiety, not fear but anxiety that just almost would shake me off the cushion. I mean internally it was just like this never ending explosion of anxiety and about the second day I was sure I was going to leave. Sure. Positive. And when I was sure I was going to leave, something else came up and said, if you leave, this is it. If you leave, this is a turning away from that, whatever that annoying little thing is, that's it if you leave. It's all over. You won't get it this life. So me and that knowing did battle. And I mean battle. I mean each meditation period was an eternity of just hellish eternity and there was fifteen of them a day. And it went on and on and on and on. And the only way I really got through was two things. I prayed like the dickens. I prayed and prayed and prayed and one time I went in and I asked Roshi. I said, you know I'm only getting through this because I'm really praying and I said, Is that okay ? Because Buddhists don't pray right ? They chant and they sit around meditating but they don't do any praying and I was just, I was praying with everything I had. Transcription note: Much laughter by Adyashanti and group. I was just saying, the only thing I could come up with was ? thy will be done, because mine ain't good enough. Thy will be done, thy will be done and everything inside me was screaming, the hell with thy will, screw it and you know.

So anyway I asked him about this and when he found out how I was praying, he said, (I am trying to remember his words). It was very useful. He said, "That prayer comes from Buddha, it is not yours" So he said, "That's good" And later that day he gave a talk and his talk started to talk about prayer and he never talked about prayer and about the right way to pray and the wrong way to pray and it was everything we had talked about in our private meeting and it made me feel good. I thought, "Oh God, cool".

So anyway when I knew that I had to make it through, I did. But any moment was like. Do you ever have those moments where you know you are like on this tight rope that is thin as a hair and any second you could go either way ? It was like that the whole retreat and for five nights I didn't sleep a wink ?

Voice: Oh God !

A: That's what I said, "Oh my God" ! Not a wink because as soon as I lay down to go to sleep, just the same sort of overwhelming energy was there. To make it worse on the last night we meditated and we knew this going in, which was knowing it was way worse than it actually happened, we sat thirty minute periods up until 11:30 after we had dinner and then we took a half hour off and then we had one continuous period to dedicate Suzuki Roshi who started San Francisco Zen Center, a dedication for him. It was a memorial for him. We would sit from 12 midnight until 4 a.m. in the morning and there were a few rules; you couldn't get up and you couldn't lay down. Anything else goes. You could change your position a hundred times, but you couldn't get up and you couldn't lay down. Once that bell rang at 12 you were there until 4 o'clock. Of course, nobody was going to kill you if you left, but that was the agreement, that you just wouldn't. Knowing this was coming, made the hell even worse, because I knew that was coming. So anyway we go through all that night and I survived it and we get up the next morning and we do this beautiful ceremony for Suzuki Roshi and as we were doing the ceremony, (part of it was all in a big circle, sort of like we do at the end of ours) in this ceremony, because it was dedicated to Suzuki Roshi, you would go up and offer a little incense and bow and you would say whatever you wanted to say ? to the altar. A lot of people just bowed and a lot

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of people said something. I was watching. I was very happy that it was all over and after about three or four people, somebody bowed and as they were bowing, I could feel their love and when I could feel their love, this incredible rush like energy and light just flooded, flooded me. This incredible release and flood and first it was internal and it made me really woozy but it was highly enjoyable and then it went out into the room and pretty soon I couldn't see the room, it was just this incredible like golden white light and when each person would bow, it would be like they had turned up the volume and it get going and going and the volume every time somebody would and I was sure boy, I'm going to pass out, but I didn't care. It was beautiful. It was just this experience of overwhelming love and I just wanted to throw myself at anybody's feet and prostrate ? you know ? people have had that experience and just this gratitude. So I guess the five days wasn't for nothing.

Q: Was the .....besides prayer.....

A: Well the prayer and just the knowing that if I turned away from it this time, that would be it. I don't know if it actually would have been, but there was an intuitive knowing. It was like this is a crucial moment in my life. I knew it. And I knew it if I backed down, I would be so incredibly defeated, I would never be able to go back. I would never be able to get there again. It would be too much of a defeat. I couldn't have taken that. So there was intuitive knowing that this is it. Everything is on the line.

And that more than any thing else is what convinced me just to purely gut it out. Just hold on and survive and those were the two things. That knowingness. So this event at the end was something that really spurred me to keep going. As you can imagine. So fast forward two years,

a couple of more years and this same "what is this ?" is back. You know, really, really intensely; tremendously intensely - "what is this inside me ?".

Q: A voice asks a question on top of Adyashanti's voice which is not able to be deciphered.

A: Oh yeah, growing more and more and more and more and more. So I get up one day and I go out to my zendo, which was right out here. The same zendo I told a lot of you that I would be so frustrated that I would literally be sitting in lotus and beating my head on the wall (chuckles). Right out there, I would get so frustrated. I went out there that day and I was in this state of mind that I just had to find out and I had been there for quite some time, just going bananas and there I was and within just a minute or two I got so incredibly frustrated. So just, "here we go again" and so I literally said, "screw it, I give up" and as soon as I said, "I give up", there was this I guess what they would call it now, was some sort of kundalini experience. But it was this incredible onrush of energy just like from down in my spine and just overwhelming, overwhelming to such an extent that my heart started to race and my breathing was like I was running the hundred yard dash. I was just laboring in breathing and my heart - having been a high level athlete, I knew what maximum heart rate was; I knew my heart rate maxed at at about 210 beats a minute and I knew what it felt like and I knew I was way beyond that. The whole body was completely out of control and again these internal energies and lights and just this incredible happening that intensified to the point that I was quite certain, absolutely sure that I wouldn't survive it, because I knew what the body could take, and it couldn't take this very long. At that moment, I knew I was going to die. And the

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question kind of ?. And all I said when I knew I was going to die, I said, “If this is what it takes to be free, okay”. So as soon as I said that, its like something just let loose. Just “shwoo” and I just found myself, everything became (snaps finger) like that, absolutely pristinely quiet and just this vast emptiness opened up and my awareness just went, it didn’t just expand, it just disappeared. The boundaries just completely, they weren’t just expanded, they went so far, they just disappeared and it was just absolutely stillness and insights rushed in at I can’t even, I have no idea what the rate was, but literally hundreds came in, in just a matter of a few minutes. One, like simultaneously. Not just one after another, but just these groups and it was all flashing, flashing, flashing and so this went on for awhile and then the insights kind of disappeared into that vastness and then there was just this incredible nothing and after awhile I got up and as I always would do, I had a little Buddha figure there, the incense and everything and I bowed down to it and when I hit bottom on the bow, I just started to laugh hysterically, because I looked at this Buddha (snaps finger) that’s what I was all along. (chuckles) I have been chasing myself all these years. What an idiot you know and it was tremendously funny. (giggles) Just tremendously funny and so this was a really deep spiritual awakening and it also happened in my 25th year. So there went that life ! See you later.

So there was some kind of knowing that there was something coming. It wasn’t the death I thought. It wasn’t the one I expected, but it was the one I got, so that’s how the whole ? So, I rushed back and it didn’t happen in a retreat, because outside of the first retreat, no insight, no anything ever came from any retreat. Anything outside that first little, beautiful moment of love at the first retreat, everything happened

by myself. Always by myself, which always make my Zen teachers go (transcription note: A probably made a facial expression), because it never happened at the retreat or with other people. In fact Kwong Roshi used to say, “You are very different” “Your way is very strange” and then he would kind of pause, because he was very traditional, very traditional and he would kind of pause and he ? “but it works”. So he had an openness about it.

I went back and I told him about this, what had happened and there were lots of other insights in between the time that I got to meet him. I meet him for a few months after that. And I didn’t tell anybody. I never thought to tell anybody. Really at the time. I was still going to Arvis, never even thought that I might mention it. I don’t know why. It just never even occurred to me that it might be a good idea.

Q: Would it have been ?

A: Oh, I don’t know. She probably would have said, “wonderful, good, okay, now let’s get on with it”. Sort of the Zen way. But I never, never thought of it. So when I did tell him this and he asked a number of questions, like good Zen teachers do to see how deep is it ? Because what happens, happens but there is a vast degree in how deep it went and so he was probing to see how deep it went and then when he was satisfied, of course he didn’t tell me this, but I know now and when he understood how deep it was, and there was just a wonderful moment as meeting as many people in here have experienced, this beautiful moment of meeting and he looked at me again with this very quizzical look and he said, “How old are you ?” and I said “twenty-five”. He looks up (audience laughter) I can’t remember quite what he said, but it was still like “You are unusual” (much laughter in

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room) and then came what your question was asking, and then came this whole talk which is this is what tends to happen when this happens. And I can't remember at all but he went down and he said, "You might go off on a long trip and sort of leave everything behind, a lot of people do that, and then you might be involved with, be really careful getting involved with women right now because very likely you will make some really dumb mistakes".

A: Asks Annie, "do you remember any ?"

Annie: There was like ?.

A: There was like 4 or 5 things that were all these ridiculous, complete idiotic blunders, you know that you tend to make when this happens to you. And I thought when I was listening to him, it kind of like (quizzical look on face) "what are you talking about" "I'm free of all that" What ? I didn't say that, but it just seemed ? Suddenly I sort of saw him like this old man, you know, kind of ? you know ? who just wasn't quite hip and with it. (laughter in room). So I listened but I didn't really listen and lo and behold, I could go by every single thing he warned me of and I did every damn one of them and I did them really good. Really stupid. Really big. All of them. Every single one. In all of those areas he mentioned, I made a complete and utter ass of myself. That was a very good learning experience as well.

But you know I didn't start making an ass out of myself for a couple of years.

Q: May I ask how you made an ass of yourself ?

A: Yeah ? I'm not going to go into a lot of detail, mostly because.

Someone offers microphone to the person asking the question.

A: Its okay. Okay, how did I make an ass of myself, is what she asked. (room laughter) Why don't other teachers get these questions (hilarious laughter in room) I never heard Gangaji get this question. (uproarious laughter in room)

Voice: You're different.

A: But two of them were, I did meet a woman that I had no right being with. I don't want to go into that because I don't like dragging other people along unless it could say nothing but good things about them and this person was very good but they were very disturbed as well and I got involved with somebody I shouldn't have been involved with and I did go on a long trip with that person and both things were absolutely utterly crazy, literally crazy and it led to another hellish nightmare that is not worth going into because its just an old drama, but I did it all. I did it all. I jumped off the cliff and wily coyote and the boulder fell right on top of me and it was out of this ? which we have talked about in a little bit other way, and its something I learned later and which in Zen, because Zen does have a lot of useful parts of the old traditional teaching, which was spiritual drunkenness. That you can get so drunk in the absolute confidence of yourself, because you literally discover this, this, whether its yourself or you discover it inside you, but you discover that which is untouched and which can't be touched and can't be harmed and when you find that, especially as a young male, its highly likely that because now you know you can't be harmed and you don't have any fear, but you don't have wisdom yet either, because wisdom usually takes time and when you have no fear and you know you can't be touched but you don't have the wisdom yet, you are liable to do really dumb things because you start to live with sort of abandon to throw yourself into all sorts of situations. Why ? Because I can't be

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hurt. So it comes from a place in Zen which is called spiritual drunkenness. It doesn't come from a place that means harm or that is the result of any ill will. It comes from just being drunk on your own, you could say your own enlightenment and if you get too drunk, your perspective gets distorted and you find yourself doing things that aren't particularly wise, and I did a number of them, but it comes from a very innocent place. Very innocent, well-meaning place where nothing, at least in my case, was ever meant to harm anybody and fortunately, I didn't really harm anybody, but I was really glad that I could go through that where I wasn't in a position that I could harm anybody. Because people can go through that position as teachers and then as we all know, its hell on wheels for them and for everyone around them. But I don't want to get into that story.

So a lot of these mistakes were made and it brought me to an incredible place of profound humility which was sorely lacking in the drunkenness. A place of that finds being a human being, one can make mistakes at any place along the way, no matter how far you go, mistakes can be made and it also ended up being profoundly liberating, even more liberating than it started out to be because so much of the karma of the personality, which caused all these ridiculous things to happen and after I got myself out of them, extricated myself, it was as if this incredible load of karma had sort of been ? as we say in Buddhism, cleansed. I had gone through all at once, sort of and I came out on the other side and it was just like literally being a completely new being, because I wasn't who I had been before, at all. It was so liberating. I literally said, "I'm starting from scratch now" Because the karma of the personality, the negative stuff, the stuff that causes distortion had kind of been, really to a large extent, washed away and it was tremendously liberating to start fresh and

not even know where the first step was going to be or how to take it, but it felt so good to be nobody. To truly be nobody and not to know anything and all of that was just wonderful and I am convinced to this day that this came out of prayer that I had said, many years ago, before that, which was, now backing up a little bit, but it came out of prayer that I actually said at Bishop, California, in the eastern Sierras. Is that what you are bringing up ? Okay, because she knows this.

Annie: When you tell the story about the prayer in Bishop, can you relate it all to your teachings on taking a stand ?

A: Oh yeah, sure, all of this. Okay, yeah. The prayer that I made some years before in Bishop, since I don't have much of a memory, I can't tell you exactly when and what dates but it was a number of years before when I was going to go backpacking over in the eastern Sierras and they shipped off all my gear to Independence, Missouri instead of Independence, California. And there I was in Bishop, waiting for my backpack to be found, which wasn't found for like a month and I was on this bench, just having eaten an ice- cream cone and watching everything and for no, you know, I was a serious spiritual seeker, but for no real reason, I wasn't feeling like bad or anything, but I found myself on this bus bench outside of 31 Flavors making this prayer and the prayer was "I want to know what's true" And I want to be able to come to that truth in this lifetime as quickly as humanly possible and I'm willing to go through anything to get there as fast. If that means that my life goes on easy street to get me there, great. If it means that I have to go through a hellish nightmare that I could never dream of, okay too.

But that prayer was sort of this, it was terribly

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frightening to make it, because I meant it. If I hadn't meant it, then it wouldn't have been frightening, but I knew I meant it and I really did mean it and it was kind of like saying, "okay, give me everything you've got if that needs to happen". I'll go through anything. Absolutely anything. And I sure did. I went through a lot. I mean, you know. No more than the average ridiculousness, actually but I went through it and when I did go through it, I think of what I did go through during the time I'm talking to you, was really, was a real direct consequence of that prayer because I do believe, if you do pray for something and you mean it, (and that's pretty rare that we really mean it at the core of our being) then you're going to get it and you damn well better be ready for it because when you get it, you can't bargain with it. You just got it. You know so if you do say, "No matter what" and you mean it. The Divine takes that as a green light and goes, okay, no matter what, remember, you said it, you know and so after that went through, I knew coming out of that, I said, that was, I knew, I just knew that was the result of that prayer. That's what that was; because I asked for it. I wanted the gas pedal to go to the floor to get this over with and that's exact, there was an absolute perfection of everything that I went through hit perfectly on the head like as we say in Zen, like two arrows meeting in midair. Hit it right on the head of any issue, any sort of karmic issue that I had not resolved, I got a living situation where it hit right on the head and it hit right on the head and it caused an explosion but coming out of that explosion, it was like a fire that burned pure and there is no ash left. So it was wonderful coming out. Thank you.

Q: I am curious what age, roughly what age was this when you did the prayer in Bishop.

A: I'm just guessing. Because the prayer was actually after this awakening because you know, that didn't, for me at that time it didn't settle everything that's for sure. Probably 26, 27.

Q: So it was after ?..

A: That's right and I came out of all this mess at about 30, at about 30 I came out of all this mess and then had another awakening which we will come to later, but it was. You know having come from sort of, I don't want, its not, having come from sort of a "leave it to Beaver" beginning, which it really wasn't, there were some troubling times in that period too, but having come from with all those very still good, a very positive past, to have this ridiculousness that I understand hence looking back that a lot of people live this a good part of their lives but having this really condensed into a short period of time ? a real ridiculousness, but it was a real blessing to have it all thrown at once and I found after the fact, that this is pretty well-known. At least in Buddhist circles. Kenet Roshi from Shasta Abby had talked about, because I visited that monastery too, and she had talked about the fact when a person has a real awakening, she says its very likely that these people at some point after that, especially the ones that are really good. I was a pretty good person. You know I was a devious little bastard, as my Dad calls me sometimes in the sense that I played good boy but I always knew exactly what was going on because I would listen at any door I could get my ear to, so there was a deviousness behind all the good stuff, but relatively I think okay person and she had said that sometime after awakening, its very common for someone who seems to be rather karmatically pure to be hit as if out of left field and completely knocked off their feet, by some piece of karma from the past or if you want to

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go into past lives which aren't that big a deal for me, but it just comes out of the blue and sort of hits and it's so sudden and so out of nowhere in the midst of this sort of pure thing, it just surprises the heck out of them and that sure happened to me. It's kind of like taking the lid off the jar and whatever is in the core of that jar, the more that lid is off, it's going to come out if you're lucky, if you don't hold it in.

Q: During this period of time, I understand that it had to be a bit confusing to you. Did you have any contact with your teachers? Was there any sense that there was an intelligence to this, even I understand.

A: In a very, very vague sense.

Q: Okay.

A: In a very vague way because through this, my spiritual life was kind of like this and it would get really hot for 6, 8, 9, 10 months, really hot, where I would really be at it and it's like something in me that would fatigue and my intensity, although I'd usually keep it up to some extent, keep up a little meditation, but the intensity would really dip down for several months and during these dips sometimes I wouldn't see my teachers for months. And of course, I never thought to just call them that I wasn't around. I just left it for them to think about. Which I realize when I became a teacher, was a tremendous discourtesy. I didn't realize it until I started to teach and realize that you get very, very close with somebody and then that person just goes "poof" and that's okay, you have to become okay with that as a teacher and that is okay but when I started to experience that in people, it didn't bother me, it made me reflect on what I had done and I saw that I had not had any thought whatsoever about my teachers when I did this. None. And that was very unawake. It was. It

was just where I was but it was very unawake. So at times during a lot of this turmoil time. You know there were times when I was with my teachers and sometimes I wasn't? both. But I didn't talk to them about it much. I didn't talk to my teachers much about anything. It never really occurred to me. It really didn't. It's the strangest thing for me now and especially people that I talk to, when I talk to? I really didn't divulge much. I really didn't talk that much about that much. Not because I was holding it back, it never occurred to me. I would have these amazing things happen and it just never occurred to me, I might want to share this with my teacher. I have no idea why. None. But it never did. Most of the time it never occurred to me. Yes. Can you pass the mike back? Oh, did you want to say something? Oh, how about here. Can you hold on to it? Okay, she can't. Give it back to her. She's had it up for awhile. I don't want her to miss it. Oh boy, what have I created. (chuckling) Don't fight.

Voice: Now I feel bad here.

Another Voice: Go for it.

A: Go ahead. My decision.

Voice: Really? Yeah, I'm just feeling some like anxiety in my body listening to the story and I'm not sure where it comes from, maybe it's even jealousy. Because you know, you're talking about this turmoil. I know you said you went through a hard time, but for me it's kind of like, "give me a break" I mean I can't believe how easy you have had it. (room laughter). Really. Extraordinarily easy and extraordinarily little amounts of karma that you have had to work through. And I just want to say that's what is striking me most about your story. I mean you have gone on quite a bit about the turmoil and this difficult time, but for me it's

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like, I mean come on ! I mean its like you know what I've been through, like twenty years, makes that look like nothing.

A: Uh hmm. But you don't know that.

Voice: Well it feels like it.

A: Because you hear the story, but you don't know what was going on internally.

Voice: Yeah. Right. But I know the intensity that I have been through and its sort of like for such a long time, its seems like you had so little to work through and so just that you had it so easy is what it seems like to me.

A: I know. It seems that way.

Voice: Yeah.

A: It wasn't.

Voice: It wasn't easy ?

A: No. It was anything but easy.

Voice: Well, I know it wasn't easy, I mean you are describing very well a period of time that was anything but easy.

A: And overall, the journey from 19 to 31 was overall, outside of moments of revelation, was pretty damn, very unpleasant. I'm just not boring you with endless details of playing my violin for you, but it was, you know, I'm not comparing stories, because you know its very likely that yours have been much more difficult than mine. Its very likely. But you know in the end ? It doesn't mean anything.

Voice: Yeah, what's the difference.

A: It doesn't mean anything.

Voice: It doesn't matter but it was just what was striking me.

Different voice: The easiness doesn't undermine an ounce of what you're going through.

A: No, it really doesn't. I mean because we all. We all go through what we go through. We all go through what we go through. And there is a perfection to it. There is a perfection to it. And sure. Maybe it was a little easy.

Voice: I mean to be done with all that by 31, you know that's really good.

A: Well, who knows ? You know, I have a long way to go.

Male voice: We all go through what we go through.

Another male voice: It only one anyway.

Female voice: Right and that's this life time for him.

A: But I hear what you are saying. I know what you are saying and I felt it myself in relation to other people and what you are saying is valid. I'm not discounting what you are saying at all. But you know, I have to be honest. I didn't invite anyone here to make us all feel good. Just to tell the story. That's all.

Voice (inaudible).

A: Yes, I understand, but you know, maybe you could have been you know. Papaji did religious practices for six hours a day before he went to work everyday for like forty years. So who is fortunate ? Who is unfortunate ? What does it really mean in the end ? Whatever we are going to go through, we are going to go through.

Voice: (inaudible).

A: Yes, can you pass it ?

Q: I'm very interested in how it was with, you have two sisters right ?

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A: Uh hmm.

Q: How it was with your two sisters and the rest of the family.

A: They didn't know much of any of this. I mean.

Q: But you were the son, you know.

A: Except for some of the relation with the ridiculousness. There was of course spill over with that but most of what I am talking about, I don't think they ?. Did you ? I don't think they ever knew. I never talked about it.

Q: But you had a zendo here in the backyard.

A: Yeah, everyone left me alone.

Larry: We just ignored him.

Group laughter.

A: Pretty much. I mean, I was supported in the sense that it was okay and it seemed like my mother and father supported that and they encouraged it without being overly encouraging, but just kind of let it happen. But there wasn't a lot of involvement.

Q: But did you feel different than your two sisters ? Or just, I don't know.

A: You are going to meet my two sisters. Sure. They are as different from me as night is from day, pretty much. I mean they are both wonderful. But you know. My older sister is an aerobics teaching, body building, highest energy person you could ever meet on this earth probably and has a memory that never fails. So if that gives you any clue. (people laugh). The whole journey was very much alone. It really was alone. I would meet with teachers but I didn't relate with any sangha. You know at my teachers, there was never a lot of people and they were always much older than I was

and they were always much older than I was when I would do retreats and when I was done with a retreat or the end of the day, I left. It was for the most part completely solitary for the better part of thirteen years. Totally, outside of brief moments and I never sought out a sangha. I somehow, just from my path, was ? its me and its all up to me and that's just the way it is. I didn't seek comfort in the sangha. Since I began teaching, I learned the beauty of that, the real beauty of community.

Q: Because its interesting when you speak, many times I see this picture in front of me, you had those, I think in Tibet in Buddhism where monks are locked up in these one person rooms and there is only a little door where they get their food and that's many times I get the sense when you speak (many times is too much of a word) but I get a sense of that, without good or bad, but ?

A: That is very much what it was like. I mean in some sense. Because even my relationship with my teachers, I never really thought I was going to get any thing from them. I never really overtly asked them, outside the very first time I met my first teacher, I never really asked too much for guidance. I mean, it would have helped if I had. I'm not saying this is a positive thing. It's just the way it was and I didn't do it and I just kind of struggled through completely alone for the most part.

Q: How about outside interests ? Did you, I mean you were going to work during this period, I know you were bicycling, I mean did you have other friends that you used to hang out with ?

A: I had some. Mostly when I was racing, it had to do with bicycle racing but that sort of died out by the time I was 23 or so and I didn't have any spiritual friends at all. Really. None.

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Until I started to teach.

Q: Did you do outside entertainment like just hand out at the movies or

A: Oh sure.

Q: Go dancing or

A: No.

(much room laughter with such an emphatic no)

A: From the time I got the spiritual bug, from 20 to well, you know, up to the present, but say from 20 to 29 for the most part I didn't go out dancing, I didn't party, I didn't drink. It didn't interest me; not because I thought it was a bad thing to do and I didn't date. I was absorbed. I didn't have the time, energy or interest. It was something that was really consuming. Totally consuming. And everything went on the back burner. Everything. School. Work. I worked in bike shops until I was 32 years old probably. You know just because I never pursued any of those interests. Not that, I don't want to give the impression that I just put it all behind and never thought about it again, it was always a conflict. There was fear around it, that I didn't have a lot of the support structure I think that many people look for through those twenties, which is finding a nice relationship and securing your future employment and job skills and schooling and there was anxiety about not pursuing any of that, but every time I would try, I literally just couldn't come up with any interest to do it because it was always in this other place and there was nothing I could do about it.

So its not like it was, you know, I don't want to paint a big spiritual that it was cleaner than it was. There was a lot of turmoil about the fact that I couldn't find come up with interest to

do anything else and you know, what was going to happen later in life and all that kind of stuff, because I neglected everything that I was supposed to pay attention to through that really developmentally very important time and I didn't do that.

Voice: The culture expects that kind of thing so in some ways what you were doing was at odds with everything that you see around you.

A: Yeah it was. So there was definitely a sense of feeling of certain isolation and tremendous aloneness. At times, tremendous aloneness and then at times, that aloneness would open up and I would also feel like ?. There were long chunks of time when I felt not alone in the slightest, just enveloped in this overwhelming love and beauty and I could just do anything, it just didn't matter. And that would faze out and I would go into my "what am I going to do and what ? " You know ? And then this sort even intensified when its that time of your life when you are supposed to be getting all that stuff together and I wasn't. At all.

Q: I want to hear more about what you said you were going to do, which was talk about how your teachings were influenced.

A: Good. Good. Now we are ready to get to where I wanted to get. I hope your butts are holding up. We can take a break. Maybe 15 or 20 minutes. By the way, nobody has to stay. If you get tired, if you want to go home, you're not going to insult me, that's for sure. Okay. We'll go for a little bit. So by the time I was 32ish, 31, 32 my teacher Arvis, she had been doing this so long, teaching herself and she came to me once and she said, "You know when I'm ready to give this up, I think I'm going to hand it off to you" And I was surprised of course by this and "What ?" And I kind of said "Why ?" "Why would you hand this off to me"

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? And she says, “Because you’ve got it in your blood” And in 30 years of teaching, she hadn’t really found anybody that she thought had it in their blood enough to go on and so this idea that this was going to come, who knew when ? A year ? Ten years ? Who knew ? But just knowing this really, really changed everything for me. Because when I knew this, I probably took it much more seriously than she intended me to. But I thought if this happens then I have to be absolutely clear. Totally clear. I’ve got to have this all taken care of, tied up and done and all of a sudden which this is part what came out later in some of my teaching which was I stopped waiting. Completely stopped waiting. And everything became now. Now. Now. Everything was just right now.

An interesting thing happened when that attitude came to me and it was for me, it was for everybody else. If I wasn’t clear on this, I didn’t have a snow ball’s chance in hell of helping people and so I got tremendously serious. And every hidden issue, contradiction, question came just rushing up to the forefront but unlike before where it would cause anxiety and “I really don’t know” and you know all this unresolved stuff would throw me into some very uncomfortable state, the realization that there was no time; there was no time. With everything that came up, I just dove, really dove right into and because there was no time, there wasn’t even time to feel anxious. There just was no time, so I just dove right into everything that was kind of unresolved inside of myself with this total abandon that was fueled by “I have to do it for everybody else. Because there is no time not to do it. So this was a really, really an incredibly spiritually productive time. I found myself writing a lot and looking into everything with this incredible intensity and it was beautiful because I was suddenly free of all anxiety which was really different for me. To-

tally free of anxiety because there was just no time for it. And it was almost like “Everybody is relying on me” who I ever will see in the future and I can’t sit around and feel anxious, there is no time for that nonsense. So I started doing some writings and I shared a few with my teacher Arvis and she said, “God, these are great, you’ve got to give these” “You’ve got to”. “You’ve got to give these talks”.

So I started to come to her group and instead of her giving the talks, I was starting to give the talks and the talks came out of any issue that was unresolved, I would just dive into it with just this incredible intensity and I would always come up against the brick wall, what I didn’t know. Where the exact point was that I went from what I knew to what I didn’t know and I would get real crystal clear clarity and then I would just hold my attention right there. Just hold it, like an arrow. Just holding it right there. No pushing it, just ?..

Voice: Just like you did when you were a kid.

A: Yeah. Unrelenting, just hold it. And I noticed that when I would do that, I would just start to go through everything. This barrier would just start to melt and all these insights would come and it just kept coming, and kept coming and I would give these talks and Arvis would keep giving me wonderful and eventually there were talks that I had written and

TRANSCRIPTION NOTE: Audio tape ended abruptly.

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## Audio tape II

And turn them upside down and wouldn't look at them at all, but they were just sort of my safety net, just in case I got really confused and embarrassed and pretty soon I would just go and start talking without anything. It was a development which she encouraged quite a bit.

And I found myself coming into this perspective where I could access anything I wanted to know at will and then when I would give talks, I would come into that place that now I call the place of true not knowing - of really unknowing and that's outside of the when you run out of time and when there is no time, that tremendous seriousness that is not heavy but its so serious that it becomes light because there is not even time for it to become heavy. There is no room for that because its that serious. And when its that serious it becomes very light. And that is what has come into my teaching that I really encourage in people and I know they tend tight, but its sort of you really have to go so deeply into there that you bump into there a place, its really a timeless experience when you go deep enough into it.

And then by giving these talks, I also learned to trust in the unknown. That I would literally. I started to discipline myself in my meditation before the talk. At first I would have this tremendous urge to sort of rehearse it and what am I going to talk about and all this and then I started to trust more and I disciplined myself to not think about the talk, that was what my whole meditation was about before the talk?. "I'm not going to think about it, not, not, not" and any time an urge would come in to do that, I would just put it out of my mind and I found that I could sit down. Everyone would sit down, all the eyes you know all would come on to me and I would have no idea what I was going to say. And if I just stayed in that place of

unknowing, out of no where it started to come.

Voice: Is that true now ? (inaudible words could not transcribe).

A: For the most part. Not always, but for the most part. A lot of times I'll even ask Annie on the way to the satsang, "What do you think I should talk about tonight ?" Because I like to give some sort of talk before we start and a lot of times before satsang, its not that I really decide what I'm going to talk about but it always seems this magical half hour before satsang ? sometime in there, something comes and just goes ? you're going to talk about this !

And then I learn; okay, that's what I'm going to talk about and I will put it out of my mind because I won't know what I'm going to say or where I'm going to go with it but I go back to that unknown place that I learned some years back in that house in Los Gatos, giving talks, where I just go right back there and trust it implicitly And I don't mean, at first it wasn't a trusting without fear.

There was fear. There was anxiety. There was, am I going to make a fool of myself, but I did it anyway. That's part of what came out in my teaching later in a lot of forms, which is don't let fear and anxiety ? don't let it stop you. Befriend it. Welcome it in and go on anyway. It doesn't have to be a barrier. Its only a barrier if you react to it but if you welcome it and go anyway and quit using that as a gauge to tell you if everything is okay and you might make a fool of yourself, so what ? trust anyway. Trust in what ?

Just trust. Don't trust in anything. Just trust. And I found that's what I mean now when I talk about to rest in the unknown in the completely unknown. Not a good feeling. Not a good state. No where. Just rest in trust itself.

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And that's where something magical happens. You really open the way for something truly magical to happen. So that became a big part of what I teach too ?is the unknown. Is having no fixed reference point for who you are, where you are, or what you are going to do, what you are going to say. Its a trust that is tremendously austere and naked because you are not even trusting in feelings, emotions or thoughts. You are just trusting in The Mystery and when you trust in the Mystery, something beautiful is allowed to happen and it doesn't really open up until you trust in The Mystery and I found that we keep waiting to feel a certain way in order to trust. And like I say, as long as we wait to feel a certain way in order to trust, we will wait forever. You trust anyway, you trust regardless. You trust in spite of and see what happens.

And that's how, when I did start, I was surprised, so as this was going on and I was giving these talks and everything, and diving into things with a real abandon, that's what I really what I kind of call (which is very misleading) because it implies a stopping point, but what I still call it my real final awakening which I have described before of when I sat down one morning and heard the sound the a bird and I sat down to meditate and I heard the sound of the bird and a spontaneous question arose "who hears this sound?"

And with that question consciousness just turned inside out on itself.

Let me see, I might have brought it. I wrote something that morning. The very morning that it happened because I was on my way to go to Arvis' house and I hopped up and I wrote something. Okay I'll try. I don't know if I'll get through this (giggles) but I'll try. This isn't the poem yet but this is a letter that I wrote

to Kwong Roshi and then I'll get to the poem. I'll go past some pleasantries. This was two months after Annie and I were married by the way. And I should add, although I really hesitate to add this and I never have, but since I'm trying to be very honest today (giggles) that the fact that Annie and I met and then we did get married, I think, I hesitate to say this because then everyone rushes out to try to find a great relationship but I've got to say it, that was when we came together and we got married, that there was this place, this stability that was behind everything that I knew I could trust absolutely. There was this one absolute trust and it was the relationship that we had and we have that was this foundation which really I think allowed my being to sort of relax, because at least there was now something to relax into. And I think that helped tremendously for me at that time and the other beautiful thing I realized was that having what I considered and still consider to be as close to (now I know I am going back into Leave It To Beaverville again) but as close to a perfect relationship as I defined it and could ever experience it as I think could possibly exist, having had that and having that, what I did realize was something that was quite liberating and quite shocking, I had everything in a relationship I could ever want, I mean ever want because it was completely effortless and it is and completely beautiful and what I realized in spite of having everything I wanted, I had the relationship, I had a secure job at that time, all the things I didn't have, I now had and yet, and yet, the yearning for something even more final than I had experienced, was still there and that was like kind of an eye opener. I have everything at this moment and you mean this isn't satisfied ? This doesn't go anywhere ? That's kind of shocking. It was for me. I've got everything at this particular moment and still this is

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still here. You know ? So that, combined with the stability was important so I wrote:

Roshi, today was a very special day. I woke up at 5:30 a.m. as usual to sit for a few hours (which I was doing at that time, I would get up and sit for a few hours before I would sit with my teacher) before going to Los Gatos. I lit a candle, offered incense and bows and sat on my cushion. Suddenly I heard a bird chirping away outside. The sound entered me in a way it had never before and a voice within spontaneously asked "Who hears the sound" ?

Instantly the whole world, my perception of it flipped 180 degrees. Everything dropped away. Everything. I was the hearing. I was the bird. I was everything and I was nothing at all. It's just like waking up from sleep. Nothing special at all. No excitement. No thrills. Nothing like I thought it would be like. Its like going home. Finding home. Being home. So very ordinary and yet so new. Like being born for the very first time. Every breath, every step, every thought, every perception is new. The Self returns to the Self, actually the Self realized the Self, but its so ordinary, so natural. Who would have thought there was a common belief that there is going to be a lot of fireworks, lots of emotion, lots of dazzle, but this waking up is so silent, so quiet, so profound, so present in everything, has everything. I felt something coming on for months. During the day I would be constantly laughing to myself because everything seemed to be transparent, so impermanent. Everything seemed to be falling away in front of my eyes. A huge void was looming in the background, swallowing everything up, every moment, every perception, almost as soon as it appeared, but I was not afraid at all. In fact, I was excited at watching it all happen. Energy and conviction grew more day by day. Inside it felt as though all my old ways of

perceiving the world and myself were just dissolving into nothing, into nothing. I kept investigating this nothing and this dissolving more and more deeply. Eventually even my questioning was dissolving as soon as it arose. In some ways I felt dead, but joyously so. On and on it went for weeks, months and then last night the last thought I had was "I'm ready". The words just spontaneously came to mind, not as anything special, more like a simple fact. I thought nothing of it and went to sleep. The next morning when I heard the bird, everything dropped away and the next thing I knew I was the bird. I was the listening. I was everything. Everything and Nothing. So ordinary.

And I'll try to read you this poem I wrote the same morning:

Today I awoke, finally I see the Self has returned to the Self.

The Self is none other than the Self.

I am deathless. I am endless. I am free.

The birds outside sing ..

(at this point someone weeps and Adyashanti interrupts the poem to laughingly say, you can't start, cuz then I will).

(Yes you can).

The birds outside sing and there am I.

The seeing of leaves on the trees, that seeing am I.

The body breathes, breathing am I.

I am awake and I know that I am awake.

Seen from the old eyes, everything is asleep, a game, a delusion.

But now I am awake. I am the play. I am the game. I am the delusion.

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I am the enlightenment I sought, looking everywhere.

Nothing is separate, nothing is alone.

I am all that I see. All that I smell, taste, touch, feel, think and know.

I am awake and this awakesness is the same as Shyakyamuni Buddha's

Today the leaf has returned to the root.

I am all name and form and beyond all name and form.

I am Spirit, no longer trapped in a body.

I am free. I am free because I am awake.

So ordinary. Who would have thought ? Who could have guessed ?

I am home. I am really home. Ten thousand life times.

Transcription note: (Beautiful moving tears in the silence)

Ten thousand life times but today I am home.

Ten thousand life times but today I am home.

This is not an experience. This is me.

I am awake. Finally, I am awake.

Nothing has changed, but I am awake.

Before I tasted the root many times and felt? how delicious.

Today I became the root. How ordinary.

So that was it.

The thing about this that was so surprising to me and this is really reflected a few times in this ?. The root came back in this little poem a few times and having tasted a lot in awaken-

ing, and the experience the beauty and the joy and the emotion, having tasted the root many times and thought how delicious, how wonderful this is ?. But this was a different awakening. This was awakening where you become the root. Where you realize you are the root, which was before all the experiences and all the experiences are an outgrowth of that. They are beautiful, they are enjoyable, one should let them be enjoyable but there is something more ordinary and more simple from which they come, the ultimate source which is un-touchable by any experience. That is what was so surprising to me. So terribly surprising, having had any number of powerful experiences, but this was not an experience. Its very emotional to read it, but at the time ?. (it was emotional afterwards) but at the time, it was not. And it was just this undeniable knowing of just being awake and having a sense ? this has always been here, but this has been hidden for innumerable life times and I just couldn't believe it, although it was true and I did believe it, but I just couldn't believe it in this life time, right now ? Ten thousand life times and this one ? How could that be ? How could that be ? How could I be so lucky and then I thought, "well it has to happen some time" "Why not now ?". I mean anytime it happens is going to feel like ?. How could this be possible ? There wouldn't be a time when there wouldn't be a feeling of how could this be possible. And this awakening to the root. When the leaf returns to the root has really and then just interestingly enough, maybe 6 or 8 months after this, then I started to teach. Arvis said, "Okay, go do it"

And it was I mean when I say to people that even though awakening is awakening is awakening, that awakening is not just awakening, is not awakening, is not awakening and there are different sort of depths to that awakening

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and I learned that through my own experience because there was awakening before and yet it was this awakening, the same thing had happened before but the focus went on more on to the sense of being free, the experience of it, the fearlessness and all these by products of it and that's where the awareness went just because it was so beautiful and so wonderful and it always missed where it came from before and this time, the emotional by product for some reason of grace wasn't in the forefront. It was the simple ordinariness and for the first time I could see it. I could see where it had always come from. And I said "Oh, I ?. It had always been here. It had been the source of every revelation, but I had been sort of drunk with it and I couldn't see it and now for some reason, that curtain was pushed aside and I was in a position of complete ordinariness and I could see it and I knew at that time that this couldn't be lost because its not something that came into being. Its not an experience and it really became the foundation of what I teach. Everything I teach came out of this. Not from that moment because I

I'll guarantee you tremendous insights have come from that moment on and they continue to come. So there is no end point where the insights don't come any more fortunately. And that even that moment was the beginning. That was the beginning of seeing something much ?. That was actually the beginning of where I wished we had started 2-1/2 hours ago (laughingly)

Because its what I am interested in. But all the teaching in one way or another came out of that. And after that I could see that this that had happened, had nothing to do with me and I didn't possess it and I didn't own it and it was the birth of what I really call a real absolute (and I don't mean to say I'm perfect be-

cause I'm not) but a real birth of a real absolute integrity and something that became the most important thing to me as a teacher was integrity. If I had the choice between having someone being awake and an ass and asleep and really with deep integrity (because you can be by the way) I would always pick the integrity. I prefer both. But the integrity I think is important from the beginning and what I realized (which I haven't emphasized at all, which I have left out) was from a very early point on, what I realized I wasn't doing this just for myself. In fact at one point, very early on I went into my teacher and I said, "Wouldn't it be (to Kwong Roshi) during a retreat) I said, "God this would be so beautiful, if I can do it, if I can realize what the Buddha did, wouldn't this be beautiful, wouldn't this be wonderful because think of all the people's excuses that I could take away. Wouldn't that be beautiful to have ?. You know a person like (not withstanding what Lynn Marie thinks), like anybody else (and I don't mean to pick on you, I know what you mean) but truly much like anybody else, an un-extraordinary person and a person to this day obviously people keep telling me that you don't come off extraordinary as a teacher (laughing) that does not exude great charisma and all this kind of stuff, but somebody like that, it seems that people can identify and go "well, okay I can walk in those shoes, those shoes don't seem to be too high off the ground" But going backwards, I said to him, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could do it ? Because if I could do it, think of what I could tell other people" And when I realized that at that retreat, it is something that never left me and that was in my early 20's. It never left me that wouldn't this be wonderful. I didn't even know if it was possible, it was very much an open question, but at least I had the willingness to keep it open. Just to keep it open that wouldn't

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this be incredible because if I could to it, that would mean that at least, you know at the time I said, “If I could do it, that anybody could do it” “That means that anybody can do it” And that part of it that ?? I have to go to the bathroom so I’ll wrap it up quick (much satsan laughter) Speaking of an ordinary human being, but that part of that that fueled, that was natural to me and which I can’t possess and think, “Oh what a good person I was because I was concerned about other people” I think its part of the urge if we are listening carefully for everybody, I think its in there, that for me that was the thing that ultimately I think enabled me to and continues in me to push into places I never thought I could push because I could never find the motivation to do it for me. It wasn’t enough. The personal motivation just wasn’t enough, even though it was extreme, but it took this final push of truly caring when Arvis said, “I’m going to put this on your shoulders at some time”. And then I realized that this wasn’t about me. It wasn’t about me any more. It wasn’t. It was about everybody else and that was this incredible push that I had to do it. I HAD to. And I think, put anybody else in the same position and a lot of people would come up with the same feeling. I don’t think I was special in that regard. And maybe we can go into it in a little bit but it became the foundation of what I call impersonal enlightenment. Which isn’t something you get at the end, its something that starts at the beginning which is for the sake of the whole. Which you are included in the whole. The personal motivation is very important also, but when you start to see that this is much more than about you, much more. You are included but it is something so much bigger than you could, that I had ever dreamed. And to start there and to ultimately, its that same concern that ultimately allows you to give up any sense of personal free-

dom. Personal space. Which is really to me, in the way I teach, which we might hit upon a little later, is really my whole message is all about in the end. Because if you really want to ?.. because I am about taking this really all the way and to me all the way is much more than a nice awakening experience. That’s the foot in the door and that’s beautiful and there is so much more. There is so much inside of that door. Of course, there is an endless amount inside that door. So its not that there is an end point. But to go in there very very deeply and you ultimately find you get this personal sense of liberation, that I can’t be harmed and I’m free and all the stuff you have already heard, and to me that knowing-ness can become the spring board for a letting go of grasping on to your own freedom that takes you into a truly impersonal realm, to where you really start to live for the sake of the whole. Where you are not living for yourself anymore. Not because you want to do it, or because you think you are a good person. Actually as long as you think you are a good person, you can’t do it. It keeps holding you back. But because it is the natural expression of the awakesness that everybody has inside them. We are all the same.

The awakesness always seeks this if we let it go that far and when you literally let go of your own freedom, you come into an impersonal freedom. You are not holding on to your own anymore. You have no interest in it. You see how truly insignificant it is and its about everybody else, its not about you. Its about everybody else and then you are liberated from having to be liberated. Then you are free of having to feel free and then to me, the project truly dies. Truly dies. And to me, thats what ?. You know we have talked about these sort of different depths and where I put liberation is that place when somebody really moves into that place, they are liberated from what ?

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From themselves. That's what they are liberated from. They are even liberated from their own liberation. They are free of it. They are done with it and that's to me what the Buddha talked about and what all the spiritual, the deepest spiritual teachers that I know, have really talked about that place where you are done with self concern and there is no sense of doing it for the right reasons. Its just a natural outcome of taking this to its logical conclusion. And then you are liberated from yourself. You have completed sort of your personal, personal mission as a human being and then because that is done, you have unknowingly surrendered yourself to the movement of life. Or we could say the Self. I like Life, is a little simpler. You have given yourself to it and then its just going to take you in any way it wants to take you. You know, the body is going to do and it can do something extraordinary or very ordinary, it doesn't much matter. But its going to do with you what it wants and you are willing to do it. And its just the beginning. That is what I keep finding. That's why there is no where to rest and become arrogant and proud and "look what I've done" because there is no where to rest because even that liberation is each way, its just the beginning. Its just the beginning of an ongoing, ever new revelation. Over and over and over. And in that sense we are all the same, whether we are at the very beginning or we are passed some non-existent door call liberation (that I just put up) we are all in the same place of ?. A place where insights just continue to come and the revelation continues to grow and it never ends. And in that sense everybody is in the same boat. It's just that some people are in the boat without suffering and some people are in the boat with suffering, but it doesn't much matter.

So that impersonal side of what I think is true liberation is really what its all about. Because

if its just about us, its just limited. It's about the whole. It doesn't stop. There is no stopping.

Do you want to take a little break ? Lets take a little break. Okay. Are we set ? Everybody ready for round two ? I don't know if I am. (laughter). This personal stuff is exhausting.

Voice: Okay are you ready ?

Adyashanti: Okay. Okay, so we are at the point that I get interested personally. And that is right when I started to teach and when I started to teach I did something really rather silly for me, I started to teach, after I warmed up to it about a month or so, I started to really start to teach that awakening is available to everybody and to all of you who are in this room who have come from sort of Advaita circles, you might be going, "Well of course, big deal" (laughter) "Big revelation" But understand from me, coming from Zen where its not spoken overtly, but its an almost an

uncommon assumption, is that awakening, much less liberation, awakening is something that happens to relatively few. Very few and they are right ! When they get around to sitting in corners and looking at walls, and if it does happen, they don't even know what happened a lot of times. So I started to teach and when I taught, my teacher gave me one of the best blessings I had ever gotten from anybody which was first of all we had been together for gosh fifteen years and she knew me pretty well. She had seen me through all sorts of stuff and after fifteen years, she said, "Okay, go do it" and she said two things. She said, "I trust you" and she said, "Only teach according to your own experience" "Don't teach anything you haven't experienced" "So always be honest" And those two things that seemed simple at the time, have become increasingly, you

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know ?.. I really realize she just completely threw open the gate wide open. You know, with I trust you and then teach according to your own experience only.

So the trust part allowed me, when I started to teach, to me, I started to teach in a way that when I knew I was going to teach, before I actually did, but when we had this discussion, I again found myself thrown into yet another really intensive investigation which was “This doesn’t work” “The spiritual path that most people are on, doesn’t work” And certainly you know and Zen was unlike any other path. In fact, Zen tends to work a lot better than a lot of paths. But if the measuring stick for some amount of success is a true awakening to who and what you are and to actually be free, just like the Buddha said, then the failure rate is not only terrible, its just horrendous. Horrendous.

So when I started to look at this, the first thing I had to do was look back at my own tradition and look at it with some very objective eyes and I found myself, when I knew I had to teach, I found sort of the where with all and the strength to find those objective eyes, to really look beyond all the assumptions I had about it and to look at it in a very stark way and start to see what worked and what didn’t. What was valid and wasn’t valid. And the first thing I noticed is that the teaching implies without saying so, but there is a hidden implication, and something implied that it is for the few. And I found out that this belief was probably **THEE biggest barrier** that anybody comes up against; bigger than emotions and your childhood and your mommy and your daddy and everything put together is this either conscious or unconscious belief that it only happens to the few and the lucky and certainly not me. And I had a hunch that that was the case because I found in my own case, when I started to believe it

could happen; it did.

So I started teaching that with sort of a fervency that having come from the tradition I came from, I hadn’t heard before ?. That it was possible and that more than that, it was your responsibility.? I just threw that in for good measure, that it was possible and I started to tell people, all you have to do is truly want it and not even believe it, just want it. Just want it. That’s the most important thing.

When I started teaching I did a lot of talking of course, here we are again, I’m talking on and on and on and on. But I started to shift relatively quickly after a few months into what we now know is satsang. Dialogue. Not just dialogue for the sake of dialogue but a directed dialogue which I started to, it just came. I don’t know where it came from because at this time I had never heard of Advaita and I had never heard the word satsang - two and a half years ago. But I found that just through this investigation, I started to experiment and I found that by taking someone’s question, if they were really open, that I could use that question and turn it around like the question comes out of them like this and all I had to do was turn it around and follow it backwards and the more I experimented, the more I found how to turn it around and follow it backwards and so instead of answering people’s questions directly, when I saw that the openness was there, I would answer it by trying to get them to experience the answer to whatever they were asking about. And I found that if I gave the intellectual answer too quickly, they would accept that and close down upon it. But if I withheld the intellectual answer and instead insisted that they endeavor, at least try to experience the answer, I was amazed at how often people were able to do it, or were willing to do it. And so of course I did that more and more and more and more.

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And when I saw how well that worked, coupled with my insistence (which was much stronger then than it is now) that anybody can do it. Anybody can do it. Lo and behold, it started to happen. People started to wake up quickly. And it amazed me. It amazed me. I didn't. I preached it you know, I told it, I said it's possible, right now tonight ?.. and somewhere, I don't know why, because it wasn't my experience, but somehow I knew it was true and it started to actually be true. It started to happen.

And so I found myself out in this place where its kind of silly at this point, but at that time, I felt not lonely but very alone. Very, very, very alone because teaching in this way and teaching the message I was teaching, I didn't know anybody else, I had never heard it anywhere. I didn't know of anybody else that was doing it, and so because of it, I felt really out on a real limb ?..way out on a limb. But somehow, I had already found that place of trust. That place of trust. So I trusted it. But I did keep scurrying back to my teacher every few weeks and saying "Arvis you don't know what I'm doing, you don't understand" (giggles) And she kept saying, "I trust you, just do it". And I would come back a few weeks later; "You really don't understand" I said, "You know if other Zen teachers get a whiff of this, they're not going to like it" And she says, "Don't you give a second thought as to what other Zen teachers think. Because she was very unimpressed by a lot of the current Zen teachers.

Because she knew a lot of them pretty well. She knew them when they started and she knew them in the present tense. So this encouragement from her to keep going out in that direction was ?. I would have done it anyway, but it was tremendously useful. Very, very useful. Because I had come from a tradition, you

know ? and you are supposed to stay within the bounds of the tradition. Its an unspoken rule. And here I was, I wasn't and yet it was working, so of course I had to do it that way. And I really realized I was kind of alone in this sense when I went up to Sonoma Mountain and I had an interview with Kwong Roshi and I told him you know that I was teaching, that Arvis had asked me to teach and we had a long discussion and my teacher never received which in Zen is called Dharma Transmission, which is this big elaborate ceremony when you become an official teacher and because Maezumi Roshi knew she wasn't going to teach in temples and she didn't go for the robes and she didn't go for the whole Zen thing, but she had the realization, so he said, (as she said to me) "just go teach". Because he knew she wasn't going to be in the whole tradition and be an upholder of the tradition, that she was simply an upholder of realization itself.

Voice: Simple.

Adyashanti: Yeah, but when you receive Dharma Transmission, its assumed that you are upholding the tradition as well as trying to transmit the realization. So they are both equally important. So I was in the same position she was and I went to see my other teacher, Kwong Roshi and we had this interview, this discussion and he never said "good" and he never said "bad". Never gave his blessing and never didn't give it and never said,

"You know this shouldn't be happening" His biggest concern was this whole idea of transmission and his concern was that the students that came to me, this was going to make things much more difficult for them. Because of course if I was in the real Zen tradition, it could, in the sense that they could all be concerned about it and all sorts of things. And I realized that it

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was a real concern for him. Not the kind of concern that said you shouldn't do this. Not that kind of a concern. Just a concern. Because he was a very traditional Zen teacher. Except that is he very un-traditional I think in the sense of his down-to-earthness and his humanity, it was just incredible and I just have always respected him tremendously because of that and it just so happens he works through the tradition and I don't. But when he talked about this as a concern, the concern would be for people, for my students, I really, after that, I realized, I really am out on a limb, way out on a limb now. Not on a bad limb but just out on a limb. I really moved into a place where I had no where to stand. No where to stand except what I knew in my own heart and this is the first part of one of the teachings that I do teach in a different way, which I call the part of it is "Stand Alone. Standing Alone" is because when you go far enough into your own realization, you really do

come to this place where you realize you are really alone, that nobody is really standing there with you and nobody ever can stand there with you. That you truly have stepped out of the human condition. You have stepped out of all traditions and all teachings and everything and there is no concept and there is nothing you can rely on and you are alone. And I found that this place of being truly alone (which means 100realized when I started, for some reason, because not all people who teach go about it this way, but I realized there was no going back. There was never being a student of anything anymore. Everything from that point on, that I wanted to know, I was going to find in myself, because now I had stopped out of a certain relationship in terms of spirituality that I had left that place and so that's the aloneness. There is nobody to turn to anymore, ever again and you realize its all up to you in that sense, you feel very alone.

Not lonely. Not isolated. Not separate. But alone. Because its all on your shoulders now and you are never going to turn anywhere else but to your own heart and this is a place that I found that many spiritual people don't want to go. It's very scary for them to go into that placed, to really take everything upon themselves, total responsibility and never look back.

(Second side of same tape)

Adyashanti: That is where everybody is trying to do that sort of prematurely or a lot of people are trying to do that prematurely before they are really ready to do it. And then quite interestingly, as many of those who are ready to do it, won't actually do it. Because sometimes we want to step out completely on our own into this place I'm talking about to avoid something. To not be challenged. To not have to ?? to have a sort of independence which is mine and isolating and I know everything and the ego sort of gets a hold and hoists its flat of I've made it. This is very subtle now of course, but that's not the kind that I am talking about. There is a lot of that going on. I don't mean in this room but there is a lot of that going on. Well intentioned, but it still goes on. So there is a timing to all this which is really vitally important.

So as I went on, what I realized (by the way chime in anytime you want, clarification on anything) was as I was working with people, what I realized, I didn't realize it at the time until I looked back on it, but I was developing my own teaching. Now I know in Advaita, no one is supposed to have a teaching, but I have a teaching. And that teaching was being developed in relationship with the people who were coming to see me. So what that means, people would come to see me and they would have questions and they would be in certain condi-

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tions and I found that in order to help them, I would have to take on their condition as if it was my own.

Which means a willingness to literally put yourself where they are. If its in total confusion, you go down anywhere to find out where they are. And you do that and you do that because you want to be able to be of some use to them. Consciousness just sort of naturally seeks that place out and what I found is that going down to where they are, I could keep my eyes open. I could go down there without losing anything, without losing any sense of

the freedom or what I call the enlightened perspective and having the enlightened perspective down where they are, was a perfect place to find out about it ! I couldn't do it from outside, sort of being the holy guy on the mountain, because none of us, although all of our journey when we look back, there are so many similarities, so many and within those similarities there are so many differences, so many different turns for every person and I found as a teacher, I had to be willing to go right into any twist or turn on a dime, instantly and go in there with them. Almost like take their hand and drag them even deeper into that experience with them and to discover with them at the moment what was going on and how to take them through it. And most everything that I now teach and my teaching that developed, came out of doing this. Because what happened to me, was a lot of it was largely unconscious. I just went through it. I just did it. It wasn't so conscious.

And most people are like that. But I realized to be a good teacher, that's not enough. You have to go back into all those areas that you kind of went through without a lot of clarity but enough to get through and be free of, but

you have to be willing to go back through there with the mind. Because the mind is the instrument that is going, the mind isn't going to understand, but its going to record the understanding and you have got to be, I found I had to be willing to go back into any experience of my past or somebody else's present with the mind, because that's where the understanding could be acknowledged, that the wisdom could sort of be imprinted there and I found that to be tremendously tricky business. Tremendously tricky business to go into deep experience with the mind, to not leave it behind. And to endeavor not to just transcend but to truly understand. To truly understand. And I found that you can be completely free and enlightened and not understand much. You know and that's not a problem particularly unless you are trying to help people.

So some of the things I started to understand which really became the foundation of my teaching, and its not something I knew before I started to teach, but that I saw was so important afterwards, which was the purity of your intention, which was "what do you want"? "What does your heart yearn for more than anything else ?" Because what I saw, and I didn't know before. When I looked backwards over my journey, I saw that there was this intention. This wanting to know what's true and I knew what I wanted.

I knew it from the ? almost from the beginning. Not in the absolute beginning but it became clear relatively quickly and that was always like an arrow which directed me unknowingly through everything. It enabled the cutting through to happen and what I found is that one of the differences between me and a lot of people on the spiritual path, that most spiritual people did not know what their true yearning was. It was something sort of vague. It was

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there but it was a cloudy feeling or sensation and there wasn't much clarity about it. Most people really don't have much clarity about it. People can meditate for 20, 30 years and not really know what the hell they are doing and why they are doing it.

In fact, I met a lot of them that do that. And some of them think that's really good. A lot of them think that's good. Like, "you know I just meditate for no reason anymore" And that's fine if you are free. But if you're not free, that doesn't work. "You know, whatever man" "You know, I feel great when I meditate" Yeah, well how is your life? "Well its sucks and its screwed up and I'm confused and miserable, but you know, as long as I am in this room by myself, its okay. So this purity or clarity of your intention, I found that the more that that's focused, then you know where you are going and I found that this is actually in the heart of every single person. They will put in different words, but ultimately, but if you follow it backwards, follow your yearning backwards into yourself, far enough, you come into something that is common to everybody; from the junkie on the street putting heroin in his arm because he wants to be free of his mind and his turmoil, from the spiritual practitioner who is sitting and meditating for exactly the same reason and there is no difference in the reason, because they want to be free of the turmoil. Now the spiritual person may or may not have a little more clarity about what they are doing, but its still the same thing. And I found if you following any desire backwards, back to its source, there is this tremendous yearning to know what is true, to know God, to be free, however it speaks in your own being, but its something that is very common and once you know that, to come to know it, you have to allow yourself to experience it. And I also found by working with people, was that most spiritual

people were afraid to experience it because intuitively, somewhere in the back of their mind, they knew that if they let themselves experience it, it was going to be something very powerful. Now they don't know this consciously, but there are all these barriers because they know if they go back far enough, this is something that they might just tap into that is not in their control and most spiritual people (like everybody else) above and beyond everything else, they want to remain in control and the yearning is there and they don't want to go some place where they suddenly find that its out of control.

Like it was for me when I was sitting around, wandering the streets, wondering, "what is this?" "What is this yearning?" "What is this?"

"What is this?" "What is it?" It was out of control and most people don't let it get that far because they are afraid, what will it do to me? Where will it take my life. You know will I have crazed? You know?

So I found unless this is there, not that they have to be half crazed, but there has to be some clarity that nine times out of ten, not much is going to happen that is truly profound. It doesn't have to be that way, but if we are playing the odds, which a good teacher plays the odds; these are the odds. You've got to know. The odds are much better if you know.

And the other part after that, that I came upon, which was also very challenging to people, maybe not challenging to the people in this room but which was the part of my teaching that I call "let everything end". Because this also came out of my own experience, that I spent a few hours describing, which was the true liberation came and the depth of it depended, depended entirely on how much I was willing to let go of my ideas and my beliefs

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and my concepts and my hopes ?.. all of that. Ideas, beliefs, hopes, concepts. So you come into a place when you do that. And I know this is sort of traditional isn't it ? Doesn't sound like anything new and its not, but to me it was new because I was learning it as I was doing it. I was going back and seeing what worked. But what I found was the visceral part, the human experience of when someone actually does this, they actually pull it off, they go into a willingness to really go beyond anything they have ever believed and they come to this place of "not knowing", which is another place that we as human beings we seek to avoid at all cost ?. To not know and to admit to ourselves that we do not know. Instead of admitting that we don't know, we just search to find, to cover it up as quickly as possible, the fact that I don't know. I have to find out and we are scraping to know, to find and I found out that the ability to rest in not knowing, to let go of everything and just admit the obvious fact of not knowing anything, then anything is possible when you don't know. Anything is possible when you don't know and when you do know, nothing is possible because you know. There is no possibility of anything new coming in when you are sure that you know. And when you are sure that you don't know, all of a sudden the entire world is open to you. All possibilities can happen and when all possibilities can happen, spiritual awakening is something that is very simple and very easy.

Of course, I see this in satsangs over and over and over and over and when somebody gets to that magical place where they let go in that sense of not knowing and they sink into the unknown, the Mystery, that they can be guided right back into their self, The Self easily and quickly. There is no difficulty with it. And so this became a really big part of what I saw and what I started to teach you've got to know what

you want, what your yearning is (that's a little different than what you want I suppose), but what your yearning is and you've got to be willing to let go of everything that you think you know and entertain the idea that everything you think you know might be wrong and its that space that opens up with "I don't know" All of a sudden you are in a very vast place. Very vast place.

And when your mind gets done panicking about how vast it is, and how unknown it is, you can start to explore that space, that unknown. And through these two things and these two things alone, I found to be the only really two elements that is necessary for someone to awaken. If those two are in place, the rest is easy. Like I tell people, "its a guarantee" If you can sustain those two places; its a guarantee. Its not will it ? or will I get grace or will I be lucky ? If you can sustain that intention and then not knowing, not knowing who you are rather than trying to find out who you are, but simply not knowing, then you are in the perfect place where grace will happen. Grace is not a chance event. So this was something that developed as I went along.

You know around this time, after six or eight months if something like that. . . . I was teaching, I had a first retreat we did up at Jikoji and there was, . . . . I don't know 13, 14 people and maybe 15, I don't know and I was talking about this constantly. These two things were much more like a mantra than they are now. Just unrelentingly every night and then we went to this retreat and it got really unrelenting and the first retreat was very special for me because way over three-quarters of the people that attended that retreat had some really very powerful awakenings. And it was something that I had never experienced before. All the retreats that I did and here were all these

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people, some of which were long time spiritual practitioners and some were very new, I mean just green. And I found it didn't matter. That was another revelation. It truly didn't matter in the slightest whether you were brand new or you had sat for forty years. All that mattered was this purity or clarity of your intention and your willingness to let go of everything you knew just for a second. Just for a split second. And when you were ready to do that, then so much became possible. And it surprised me ! I was stunned by it. Just stunned ! Because here I was talking about this for months, not even knowing, I mean knowing in my intuitive heart that it was true, but no really having any objective proof that it was true, and then here it came. The fruition started to really unfold itself and it was tremendously exciting time.

Now around that same period of time, so there is lots of this going on with the teaching and working with other people and as it was developing and at the same time simultaneously, there was of course, especially after the event that I read to you, there was now an almost effortless ability to almost go into anything and find out what's true relatively quickly and so that didn't only happen exteriorly with other people in trying to do all this, but it was happen interiorly as well. Everything that would come up, I found myself willing to continually dive inside and there was a lot that at the time it seems funny now, but at the time, was very new to me, when I was teaching I found that the words were just a reason to keep people engaged. Or even better than that, to keep the mind distracted. Because while the mind was distracted,

there was something much more profound going on that could go on if the mind was distracted. Like you know, it was a very sneaky way about going about it. (laughs). And what I found is

that if the mind is distracted, there was this I would say an intensification of awareness, but its an intensity that I really, this is before the retreat, (during and after of course) but very soon after I began teaching, I found this intensity that was coming through (the vehicle) was coming through it and at times my experience of it was tremendously powerful. Sometimes almost painfully so and I could see if I could keep someone's mind distracted enough, or focused enough, that whatever this was (which of course what I was really clear on was that it didn't and it doesn't belong to me) and its not something that happens from any intention to make it happen. It wasn't like "well, now I am going to zap you and you are going to wake up" (laughingly) but it was something that wholly had a wisdom and a movement all its own. Completely all its own and I found the more I trusted it, the more that mysterious intensification of the Mystery, that's what did the real work. That was what did the real work.

Male voice: Were you aware of it when it occurred ?

Adyashanti: I became aware of it, yeah.

Male voice: Subsequently.

Adyashanti: Yeah, yeah. Yeah I did, very much so. And like I said, it had a real mind of its own you might say and it was very interesting that it would and it still does, when there is (not always, not always) but often when there is someone that is really ready and the readiness cannot be seen, I don't know when they are ready. You know, I can't look at you and say "you are ready (laughingly) to awaken today" There is not this omnipotent sense at all. That's not what I'm talking about, but very often the people that do have the awakenings at a satsang or at a retreat or something, or

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glimpses, it can be mild to deep, but a lot of times when they first start talking, its literally, not really a voice, but almost like a voice that said, “He/she they are ready” And when there is a knowing that they are ready, this intensification of awareness gets very intense, my experience of it gets very, very intense and something in them responds to it. Its not that I am giving it. It’s sort of like call and response. Right ? And this gets very, very ? this intensity and of course at first I used to kind of get lost with it, because it can be so strong, but later I learned how to keep the intellectual part engaged with some precision because I found if I can move the mind in the right direction, it enables us to really meet. And so there was this part that didn’t belong to me, that for some reason seemed to be really using this body or whatever it was using this and there was also a part that was an intellectual part that had to do with wisdom where I could consciously re-focus the mind and if I could re-focus it in the right place, then this had a much better chance of a true meeting and awakening and a lot of times there was and continues to be a knowing when its time and when that little voice says, “this one is ready” I don’t do anything different than I do with anybody else. There is no difference. In fact, if I did anything different, I know that would be getting in the way. Because I realized that this is a very impersonal event and it doesn’t have to do with me. Its just that consciousness is using the vehicle and consciousness is here and its playing this game and you know the job of the teacher at that point is to get out of the way and let it happen and not take ownership of ?. Look what’s happening through me ?. Because we see what happens when somebody takes ownership.

Yeah, sometimes there is a knowing and sometimes there is just a ? sometimes its just a complete surprise. You never know. You never

know.

But it was shocking to me when it first started to happen because I didn’t know what it was and I didn’t understand it. I really didn’t. And yet a lot of times when I would sit down and I continue when I sit down to give a satsang is this that I have just been speaking about, THAT is what gives the satsang. That’s what does it. That’s what does it. And of course I know that’s my own Self, but its not in any selfish sense, its not in any sense of ownership. Its just something ? its intelligence is truly ungraspable.

Male voice: When did you go to satsangs, find out about other satsangs ?

A: I went to another satsang a few months after I started to teach. You know, here I thought I was alone. I thought I was. I thought I was way out on a branch. All that stuff and then I saw a video or read a book of Gangaji’s and I suddenly I saw it and I thought, “Oh my God,” not this is somebody that is doing what I’m doing, but “this is me”. Because that essence ?. This is the same thing and its not just happening here, its happening there. And so of course the first thing I had to do is rush up and Annie and I rushed up and saw her within (what ?) a few days. A week. The next week. Because you know it just had to be seen. Oh, you mean I’m not alone and it was just this incredible WOW revelation in and of itself. So I ran up there and sat in the crowd of 400 people and all I could think of on my way up, is how do I make damn sure that I get to go up there and talk. Because I was so certain, you know 400 people. As soon as she says, “is there any questions” everybody is going to raise there hand, because otherwise, why are they all there. So I was, you know and I was, I was primed. I was ready to do the tango (everyone laughs)

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to meet this being that there was such a resonance with and a few people raised their hand and she talked to a few people. I was very surprised, “What the hell are you all doing here ? No one is raising their hand” (hearty laughter) “Why did you come ?” Of course I continue to ask that in my own satsangs, when I say is there any questions and you know you can hear the crickets. And I always wonder, “Why did you come ?” But anyway, I went up and we talked and we met. And it was just a beautiful, mutual recognition. And I also went up for another important reason because I had a belief that really came from Zen in which I really treasure to this day, which was really important to me at that time which was this realization, if its true, its noticeable. Not, not that you walk around and everybody goes, “Wow, a realized person” but to somebody else who is realized, its got to be noticeable and its got to be the same thing because if its the truth, the truth isn’t different. So I had the blessing of my own teacher and so I saw Gangaji and I knew that I had to meet her (one) and also, I had to put my own realization on the line. Test it to see if its true. And of course, that’s always taking a pretty big risk and anyway it was affirmed to make the story short.

Female voice: What happened (inaudible)

A: You know I can’t remember that much of it, I don’t remember the part where ?. The affirmation was more heart to heart. Rather than what was spoken. It was just a mutual knowing and we knew that we knew that we knew that we knew. The part that was also helpful that she said was (I came there with a nice little story line, that wasn’t even true, but I realized because other people do it to me, that its a nice way of introducing ourselves ?to pretend like there’s a problem) and I so I thought that I had to pretend like there was a problem

to talk to her and so the problem I pretended to have was ? I told her that I had recently been teaching and my teacher kind of really kicked me out of the nest, you know, I’m outside of the tradition, I’m outside of everything and she just says go and out of lips came this thing that wasn’t really true (heh-heh) and I said, “You know its kind of difficult to be completely set free” and she said something to the effect, “No freedom is never, never difficult, its the mind trying to back and sew it all back together, that’s difficult” And it was nice to be caught because I had to admit, “Yeah, you’re right, its not really difficult, its really not difficult” Its just the mind occasionally wanting to go back for some sense of security, am I okay ? do I have everyone’s approval ? ?.You know ? That. Which is difficult. The freedom ? No, no, that’s not difficult. So its a nice thing because it kind of was another affirmation that said ?. No step out, just step beyond. You don’t need to sew anything up anymore, just step out. And then she, the last thing she did is she praised my own teacher. She said, what a truly wise teacher to actually cut the strings as she said, cut the strings completely because most teachers don’t cut the strings, they kind of keep one. You’re still mine, you know ?

Annie: Do you remember after you told the story about the lie that came out of your mouth and you did say what your actual experience was ?

A: Yeah.

Annie: And there were just a couple lines, I just remember one of them,

A: Oh yeah, now I remember. I forget.

Annie: And you said, this is the part I remember anyway is you said,

“I’m all out” and

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Male Voice: All out ?

Annie: "I'm all out" and she in addition to praising your teacher for cutting the strings, she also kind of launched a talk from there about how most people think "its all in".

A: She said, "Everybody wants to be all in and she said when you can I'm all out, that's bliss itself".

Male Voice: That's what ?

A: Bliss itself. So that was nice. And I think if you try to relate to what I was talking about in the last half hour before we took a break of being all out, that's what I meant. And I also, yes (just) no, no reference anymore, just out. And the other thing I remember now that you said that, is that I had told her that for a long time I had thought there was going to be some ground, some landing, because I would land and I would say, "Now I've got, no I'm free" and I would find some ground and I realized that there is no ground and there never could be a ground and I guess she liked that too.

So subsequently you know, I probably have seen or five or six times over the next six or seven months actually.

Female voice: Privately or again in the company of satsang ?

A: Public satsang three or four times and then I also saw her in Stinson twice where there was about fifteen people. Stinson Beach.

Female voice: How was that ?

A: It was just fun. It was just a lot of fun. It was very, very nice. Not that I really didn't go there for any particular reason really,

Annie: I wanted to go.

A: Annie wanted to go too. Annie had a good challenge too. So anyway and then since then, we have gone back to one other satsang she did, again another smaller one in Marin but then she kind of, then we talked shop now. How's it going ? How's the teaching ? yatta yatta you know that kind of stuff. But we just did that dance for whatever reason. There was just a little bit of a dance to be done for some reason and then the dance was done and I haven't seen her for quite a long time now. Because I think that really solidified the knowing of ?. Yeah, in a sense you are not alone because there are lots of people doing this, but in another sense, you are alone and alone is the most comfortable place to be; not lonely but alone meaning you don't depend on anything. You don't look for any ground and you are all out. You are alone and the mind can make its own interpretation but actually its the only place to be, its the only place you have ever been. So since then, there has been no going back for anything. No more confirmations.

Dawn: What I wanted to ask about if this ever does become a book, I think its important to put on here, you talked about when you finally decided to accept a new name to represent who you were as a teacher rather than who you had been prior to that. And what happened with the students, you know that came in afterwards ? how things changed.

A: Okay, to me it was very interesting. I'll lead up to that too, a little bit. After I had been teaching for some time, maybe a year or something like that, I'm not quite sure. At first on the flyers it would say Zen Open Gate Sangha and at the very bottom it would say (you know my given name is Steve Gray) and it would say you know a little bit about me, but the sangha was emphasized, Zen was emphasized you know and a lot of people came expecting

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Zen and Buddhism and mediation was kind of emphasized, so people expected mediation and we were meditating but there was less and less and less emphasis on the discipline of that. Even though we were doing it, it wasn't an emphasized part of my teaching. I became increasingly uncomfortable with what (without knowing it) it seemed like what was being said and what was actually happening. Zen was being said, but what had evolved was my own teaching and I didn't want. A point came where I felt to continue in integrity, I couldn't pretend like I was passing on a tradition that I wasn't and that I increasingly had less and less interest in passing on a tradition or a teaching and more and more interested in the dynamic, ever-

moving, ever-evolving process of teaching presenting itself in a new and fresh way and it was constantly evolving and moving and even though I say I have a teaching, its not something static, which people like and it annoys some people, because its not something they can really put their hand on because when they do, I've moved here with it, I've gone deeper with it or something.

This was an interesting process. I'm leading up to your answer, but I got to go through this before I do. The interesting part of this process was that there was a time when one of the people in the sangha, a wonderful man, one of my most ardent supporters, loved my teaching, had come from a long background and all of that, and he kept putting this thing out "Why don't you start a website?" He's into websites and "Come on, lets do a website"

You know and in about six to eight months after he had first suggested it, we finally decided, Okay, we'll put a website up. So we all got together in this room, chose about five or six people and we all came right here and we started

to talk about this website, what was going to be on it and all this kind of stuff. And this was about the same time when I also had decided (just before this) that I was going to stop pretending like this was Zen and I was just going to say the way it was). That you know what I'm teaching is my teaching, is what has developed and I was kind of sort of just step up into the forefront and not hide behind something so nobody would be upset; you know, hide behind Zen or the word or anything like that to stay in integrity. Well, to me it was all about integrity and just honesty. And we had this gathering in this room and we are talking about all of this and this man

who is a wonderful man, he really, truly (I can still see his little smile) but as I was emphasizing this and on the website of course this emphasis continued, I said, what I want emphasized is not me or the sangha, I want the teaching to be emphasized, that's the only thing I have to offer. At least on a website you know, that's what's important to me and that's what I want on it.

Well this other man had a different idea about emphasis on the sangha and emphasis on my background, because he liked the fact that I was normal like him, you know and he wanted all that emphasized so this sort of coming together as a normal, everyday human being and this equality and you know? Laudable intentions and I understood why he had the vision that he did. But I thought that's not giving the right message either. That's not true either because this is not a sangha you know where everybody has equal voice. That's not the way it is folks. If you come here, you're coming here to hear this teaching and this teacher; good, bad or indifferent, but that's what its about.

And to make a longer story short, I became, I

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was first seat witness to

how some people, the interpretation that they took of that desire to remain

in integrity and just tell the truth about it, this particular person got extremely upset. Not in front of me, but I knew he was upset when he left after this meeting and I might have seen him once after that, I'm not even sure, but literally within the snap of a finger, I went from being a saintly

person in his eyes with a teaching that was wise and everybody in the world should hear, to Satan. To an ego-inflated maniac. Literally overnight. I mean boom like this. And there was one other person, maybe a couple of other people that didn't have that same reaction, but it put doubt into their minds. Doubt. Doubt was because even though the shift, what was happening was the same, but now that I was putting it up front of what actually was and not just advertising that, it was interpreted as maybe ego. Maybe ego. Which of course made me have to reflect very deeply, very, very deeply to look inside to see if it was.

Because of course I couldn't just brush it right off. I had to really do some introspecting and came to the conclusion that I was talking about, that this is just the way it is. I'm a teacher and this is the teaching and this is what you get when you come and there was nothing more to it than that. Well it was really interesting to be hated by someone who was one of the closest to me and how fast that could happen and how a couple of the other people, how they were really close and some of them even had awakening experience, who in the snap of a finger could come into incredible doubt. You know ? Anyway, it was just a real learning experience. Yeah, can you pass it back ?

Voice: Wait. I want to hear you ?

A: I'll continue. I'm not done.

Larry: Just for the record he also wanted the password to the website so he could make editorial changes in the teachings.

A: Yeah.

Female voice: Wow !

Larry: And to me that was the ego which was totally manifest and it was a good lesson for me to see how that worked. That was the point that we seized control of the website

(Group laughter).

A: So there was this process of deep introspection on my part because I'm not immune any more than anybody else is, as soon as you go, "I could never do that", of course you have already started doing just that. You know ? As soon as you think, "I can never make a mistake", you have just made your first mistake. As soon as you think the ego could never sprout a "me", its already just sprouted. So I used this to really introspect and its not the first time I have introspected. But the event was very, very saddening to me. Very saddening and very interesting because the sad part. Well the interesting part was before that I had learned in the midst of great praise that teachers tend to get, I was I wouldn't say amazed, but it was just interesting to have this great praise come in and have none of it stick and you know when that first starts to happen it kind of makes you look again, to make sure you are still there. Because we are used to, when somebody says "I love you, you are the best thing in the world" and you know they in essence bow at your feet, we are used to sticking and feeling good about it and when it wasn't happening, it was like where to go ? I mean, it was nice, I'm glad you

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feel that way, but it didn't stick.

And the interesting thing was when this reaction of the opposite, the negative, I had the same experience like ?. Where to go ? I feel it coming in but its not sticking because really there is no one there for it to stick to. So that was the interesting part. The part that made me very sad was already (having only taught a year or a year and a half) already I had met many, many people. In fact most all my closest students actually had come from teachers ?. Either they had a long relationship or very short relationship with that they felt like they were really burned by it. Whether they actually were burned, or they interpreted it as a burn, was neither here nor there. They thought they had been and they were damaged by it. They thought they were. They were wounded by it. They had a heart that was really fearful and closed and when they started to trust me as a person, of course, the heart could open, could open so much that they could actually have awakening experiences in that trust. But I saw how damaging that was, their perception of what had happened and it made me sad, very sad, to see this one person in particular that I knew was going to hold on to this incredible anger and resentment and how difficult this was going to be for him. The other part of me knew there was a perfection to it and was okay with it, but there was another part that really was sad that this human being was going to really suffer for this. Really suffer. Because he had already felt like he had been burned. I don't know whether he had burned himself. But you know what I mean ? and that was sad to me and to know that there was nothing I could do about it. Nothing. I couldn't talk to him about it. Any communication, a peep out of my mouth, was just like pouring gas on the flame. There was no talking about it at all from that overnight flip. There was just no discus-

sion. Couldn't be. When I tried a couple times, I mean it was just ?. It wasn't like talking to a wall, it was like talking to a fire and I was throwing gas on it. So that made me very sad. I got over it but it was sad. It taught me however, that (luckily I haven't had to go through that again) I'm sure there are people who have gone their other ways and thought whatever they thought, but I have never had that happen again. There were other situations where I had made little changes in the style of presentation and anytime you make a change, it always upsets somebody. So I've learned over that, that change is the last thing people want. When you change; again, that's going into the unknown. As soon as there is change, they go from something they know and depend on and can find security in and become fixed in, to whoop, you just moved over here and my security blanket is gone and some people love that, because that's kind of the way I am, I'm just intuitive and I move and the teaching is always evolving and there is nothing static about it. And some people love that because it has a certain aliveness I think for them and a real dynamic quality. It does for me anyway and some people find that very difficult because they want to plant their feet, stop, become fixed and any time there is change, a certain type of person is going to become very uncomfortable.

But I have noticed ever since I have sort of really took that step, out from hiding behind anything to ?.this is what you get, like it or not, this is the way it is, I have never had that problem again. Only because, it hasn't changed. It hasn't changed. Because of course, there is no where else to go in that one narrow area, because that hasn't changed. But that whole event was very interesting. To get to your question. Pardon me. Sorry. I'm very

long winded. Which was about the name.

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After this point, or around this point, actually very close to this point in time, the intuition of having a spiritual name, and I didn't like it. It went against everything that I thought about what I was doing. It didn't click in my mind with it which was: We are all the same. If I can you can. That whole integral what was so important to me as a teacher and which was so powerful, I found, that I don't look like a guru and I don't exude overwhelming charisma, made this thing called awakening very accessible. Of course, charisma can make it accessible too. So this thing kept coming up about a name and I kept, "no, no, no, no" This not where we are going to go. And I kept pushing it out, month after month I kept pushing it out and I truly did not want it. I kept looking back to see, "Do I really want this somewhere?" "Is this something I really want?" And every time I thought about it, I didn't like it. To make a long story short, after about a year of this, it kept revisiting me every few weeks and it was coming from this place that I have learned, that everything comes from that is trustworthy.

End of tape II

Tape III-A

Adyashanti: Maybe, just maybe, I would consider it. Just because it seemed to come from this place and it was very unrelenting. So I started to entertain the possibility and one day I was flipping through some books or something and I came across the word Adya and ?. What does that mean? I looked it up. Oh, primordial. Hmm. And with that there was just "ah" there's the name, Adyashanti. And I thought, well, my God, that's a mouthful, that's very Indian. That's very guru-ish (much laughter) Oh boy, now I'm in trouble. What are they going to say about this if they didn't like the website?

So I hung out with it for a good while more. I hung out with it and it just became obvious for some reason that I couldn't understand, that this name seemed to want to be "the front". And so I eventually thought, the only way you are going to know is to find out, to do it and this seems to be coming from that place that everything that's truly trustworthy comes from, and nobody said that you're going to like what it had to spit up all the time and nobody said that its going to conform to the way you would like it to be. So I thought, well I better practice what I preach and do something that I found a little distasteful. But in my heart is was also very tasteful. It felt right also at a very deep level. So I did it. I wrote this little letter that had among other things announcing all sorts of things and ?. Ah, there's a name change, and put it out there and waited you know for the onslaught. And I was surprised that I didn't really get any onslaught. I got lots of questions, lots of curiosity. Behind my back I got a little more than questions and curiosity, from other people came "Why did he do this?" You know, this kind of stuff. But overall after the curiosity died down, there wasn't really much of a negative backlash that I was really sure there probably would be. But the interesting thing that happened literally, when I took that name, and people said, "which one do you want to be called"? Well, if I'm going to take one, I'm going to take it. So this is what my name is going to be. Literally overnight, which has to do with almost everybody in this room, overnight the type of people that came to see me (snaps fingers) like that, changed. From one satsang to the next. All of a sudden, all these people started to come that had already been to other teachers, had heard lots of other teachings, had been on spiritual paths for a long time and a good lot of them had already had awakenings of some sort, a very high percentage of them

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and they were all confused, even though the so-called grand experience had happened, there was something that wasn't complete and the message they were getting was "just go back there, just go back there, just go" You know what I mean ? This kind of message and it was confusing to them because the teaching was that that's all there is to it and in the absolute sense, that is all there is to it. But in a more relative sense, they knew somewhere that that's not all there is to it to me. There is more to it and so I started to find a lot of people that were confused to varying degrees along this line. All at once and a lot of them. And this was a tremendous shift from relatively young people age-wise who were really wanting to get the enlightenment experience to you (group laughter) A bunch of old folks (more laughter), not all of you. But not only did the median age go up overnight by like an average of twenty years.

Female voice: How did the shanti get added ?

A: That just came when the Adya came, the shanti somehow.

Annie: Its the only Indian word he knows. (lots of group laughter).

A: It's the only Indian word I know she says (uproarious group laughter).

That had a ring of truth to it. Maybe that's why they came up together.

I don't know. It sounded pretty good. Oh, so. And that opened up. When the new people came, there was a new demand. Because I had a lot of, what I'm teaching to you and the embodiment satsangs and all this, and its funny that my embodiment satsangs have spilled out into all my other satsangs. They are really focused on that but when somebody has not awoken and they are ready, I go right back to that older focus, but its no longer the focus really.

I'm always talking 80people who have had some experience. I don't know why, it just happened.

So when all this came in, again, like had always been the case, there was a new challenge. A new demand for a teaching that addressed all this and even though I had been through what these people had been through, I had been through this phase and had come out the other side of it, there was a certain unconsciousness about how did it all work ? It happened, but when you go to break it all down into its incredible subtlety and complexity and tremendous ease of going astray, I had to just go right back into it, but this time with the mind and consciously. To go back into the experience, you know, go back into a dark room that you ran through really quickly, but this time with a really powerful light and get to know it really well. And so the teaching that we are all engaged in here has come out of that and continues to kind of be birthed out of that all the time. All the time, something more comes up that I knew without knowing what I know ? But it comes up in response to having to know because the questions are there. That's where people are, so I've got to understand with a precision that I never would have understood with in order to be of use. So I found myself always having to go back in with the mind, which like I said, at this point its not tricky, but in the beginning it was very tricky because its very easy to get lost when you go back in with the mind and try, not only to just experience but to truly understand, is very delicate and usually people go in and try to understand way to soon. Way to quick. The experience has to be really settled and deep and its got to be an anchor so you can never be pushed off your balance, because when you go back into these incredible subtleties, these areas of incredible subtlety, its very easy to get swept.

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But you probably have noticed that in my teaching, I am emphasizing more and more and more all the time for all of you, to not just experience The Self, or aware space or consciousness or whatever you want to call it; not just experience that, that's nice but now that it is experienced, endeavor to go inside that experience and look out of it. Look through the consciousness. Don't just experience consciousness but be it, go inside of it and look out through those eyes, through the eyes of love, through the eyes of peace, through the eyes of whatever ?. Bliss. Don't just experience it. That's not even half the story. That's a little teeny part. It's the perspective that holds almost everything. Its the perspective, its the ability to see What Is. That's what is liberating, to see What Is. To truly see What Is. That's what is liberating. And some people do that much more naturally than others. I won't embarrass you too much Hamsa, but I have to embarrass you a little bit maybe. And Hamsa had a wonderful awakening recently and the beautiful part, and I was even going to ask to read her letters, but I don't have them and I haven't asked her in private, so I won't do it now, but she sent me these letters very shortly afterwards that floored me. That really floored me because most of the time, we are so carried away by the emotion, that the wisdom and the clarity and the perspective is almost not emphasized at all. It's just the bliss and I'm swept away in love and that's beautiful. Nothing wrong with that. But the true liberation is found in the clarity and being able to see simply What Is. And what floored me when I got these letters from you Hamsa, was the emotion was all there, all the beautiful emotions of the first kiss of awakening where we are in full flower, but there was this incredible precision of insight that was very unusual to see in an opening that's new. And its that clarity of insight which you know with everyone here,

which embodiment is really the emphasis of everything that I do, because I saw that awakening is much more than an experience and most people who have had that awakening, view it as an experience. And it is that. But its much, much more. Much more than an experience and to really move from an experience to living the perspective of The Self, the perspective of The Self is where that ultimate liberation is found and its not found anywhere else. That's where its found which is a nice way of saying the ability to simply do nothing but see What Is, instead of seeing What Isn't. When you can see What Is, you are liberated from all confusion about What Isn't.

And that's what is so key, especially right now. That's what is so key is the ability to do that and to get the emphasis away from "I've got to get back to a nice comfortable experience" to move away from that security blanket into a place of true unknowing which means not holding on to that security and to realize that when you stop panicking about getting back somewhere or being somewhere or are you awake ? or are you not awake ? and all that nonsense, when you stop panicking about that, you come into something that your eyes start to open into a perspective and an ability to simply see What Is and seeing What Is, is always liberating .

And that's you know, if you look back at the true realizers, this is always a vital component from Buddha where he talks about his realization and then he has this incredible realization that is under the experience, this incredible unloading of insight that came to him, of the cause of suffering, you know ? the cause of birth. Its just this incredible amount of insight came to him. Ramana, although he looks like he is always just out there in The Self, but you listen to him dialog with people and there is this pristine clarity and sharpness of someone who has truly

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gone in and understands. They don't just experience, they know that territory. There is an ability to put the mind on anything and in that moment to instantly see what's true and all the true realizers have had that ability and that's where the real liberation lies, in that ability to nothing but see What Is.

Male voice: Can I ask you something.

A: Yes, could you send the mike back ? Air mail the mike.

Male voice: What I'm understanding you saying, is the ability to see What Is from What Is.

A: Yes. Right. Not from the mind.

Male voice: Its not just having a view of it, like a view of emptiness or a view but its actually from here where there is nothing ?..

A: Yes. Yes.

Male voice: Both seeing the nothing and the something there.

A: Yes. Yes. Because that nothing has eyes and

Male Voice: That nothing is aware.

A: Absolutely. Right.

Male Voice: Here.

A: Yes. Right there.

Male Voice: Wherever that may be.

A: That's right.

Male voice: Yeah.

A: And when that nothing is aware, and we quit looking for experiences, because once we have had experience, we keep seeking

refuge in the experience. And its not a trick, but the trick is to start to see that liberation is not to be found in any experience. They are all beautiful and they will come, they will come to greet you when they want to, throughout your whole life and they will exit you when they want to throughout your life. But the view. To perceive from emptiness is the true liberation because it never comes and it never goes.

Male Voice: Its like there has been a shift since I last saw you actually, in the last two weeks to where the content of my experience is irrelevant.

A: What a blessing. What a blessing.

Male Voice: And I don't know how to say this, its like I'm all the way ?. You were saying you are all out ? I understand that but its like I'm all the way back. There is no place back further to go.

A: That's the same as all out.

Male Voice: And this all the way back is actually no where.

A: Yes. Yes.

Male Voice: Its non-locatable.

A: Right.

Male Voice: But its conscious, its aware of whatever the content happens to be and it doesn't matter what the content is.

A: And it can see, if you have noticed, I'm sure you have, that it can see the content with an incredible clarity simply because its not identified or caught in it.

Male Voice: It sees it two ways; its sees with a clarity, yes as whatever it appears to be.

A: Yes.

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Male Voice: Okay ? But it also sees it as, its like it also sees through it.

A: Yes. Good, good, good.

Male Voice: Through the nothing its made out of.

A: Good, good, good. Wonderful. Now you are really preaching.

Female Voice: Teaching.

A: Teaching. More than preaching, you're teaching.

Male Voice: Laughs.

A: That's right. Good. Good. That's so wonderful. Yeah. Thank you. That is exactly what I'm talking about. That is the true place of being free because of course what are you free from ? You are free from all that content.

Male Voice: I'm free from the content and I am also free from the supposed container that I thought I was.

A: Yes. Good. Oh, beautiful.

Female Voice: What I want to say is kind of along the same lines, when you said you said to Gangaji that you were all out. It brought to mind something I wanted to share and see if it was your experience too, which is not that different from what John was saying because what comes to mind is a time when I was playing with and seeing clearly the simultaneity of form and formlessness. And at first it was like everything was out and it seemed as though I was everything and everything was me, but then it also came and it seems like it goes as far in. Like the distance of infinity is as far in as it as out.

A: Yeah. Yeah. I'll go with that. Yes. That is true emptiness. Yes and the knowingness is nei-

ther emptiness nor form. It can't be contained there can it ? Neither one.

Female voice: They are both there. They have to be.

A: Yeah. Wonderful. Thank you.

Dawn: I have a question for your book.

A: Oh yeah, that's why we are here.

Dawn: Is there any place sitting where you are now that you have the sense or see all of this teaching going ?

A: No.

Male Voice: What was your question ?

Dawn: I wanted to know if he had any sense or feeling where this teaching was going.

A: None. This is as much a mystery to me as it is to you. Because you see, my experience of it is very hard to really explain in words is that whatever the teaching is, the teaching comes from the Mystery. That's where it comes from and this

body/mind is for now, its vehicle, is its voice box, for whoever wants to listen but that's the voice box it is using for its particular brand of teaching. Its not the only one that is important and I realize that, but its just the one that wants to manifest through here and where that's going to go, I don't know. I just have no idea because I really do, I live in the same unknown that I'm inviting everybody to, which is, I don't know. You know ? We're not talking about psychic abilities and ?.. and

known, I don't know and to me that's the thrill because when you don't know each moment is new and fresh and you know in each moment, in each moment you know, but you don't know what the next moment it is and you don't know

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where you came from behind you because it just disappears behind you and so each moment is the knowing, but that knowing only happens by not knowing, by never fixating and its new and its new and its new and its new you know ? It comes out of nowhere.

Dawn: Well there is probably even the desire not to know right ?

A: I don't know.

Dawn: Because to always be fresh and new.

A: Its just that I don't know.

Dawn: I wondered if you had a sense of any kind of destiny or anything ? Okay.

A: Yeah, I really don't. I found senses of destiny almost always are wrong and they always almost contaminate what is happening because there is an unconscious desire to steer it in a particular way. Yeah. And the Mystery is so unfathomable, its intelligence is unfathomable, which is your own intelligence, The Self's intelligence which we are. The Self doesn't understand its own intelligence. It IS its own intelligence, but it can't look over its shoulder and go "Wow, look what I'm going to come up with tomorrow, holy smoke" (group laughter) You know ? So and that's part of the fun. That's why its always new. You know to me its always new. Hmm.

A: Lynn Marie, did you want to say ?. I know your hand was up awhile ago and

Lynn Marie: I just had some kind of a question. That seeing through the eyes of

(I don't know the word you give) ? to see through the eyes of the awareness ?

A: Yes.

Lynn Marie: And this kind of seeing that I am

experiencing is very similar to what John described, if not the same, I don't know. It just popped into my head, what is the difference between, is there any difference between that and what is called the Witness because you hear so much about the Witness and witnessing and people do that in all sorts of practices and in therapy, you know witnessing.

A: Yes. It is you know I think what the true spiritual teachers talked about as the Witness. Its a Witness that at the same time completely and wholly detached and at the same time totally and intimately involved, but it is a sense of witnessing and it is a sense of where that witnessing chooses to put its emphasis.

Lynn Marie: Is there a way in which the mind can witness. Is there a mind version of that ?

A: No.

Lynn: No. So the witnessing is always coming from the Self ?

A: Yes.

Lynn: Oh, that's what I was wondering about.

A: Yes because the witness is always witnessing the mind. Always witnessing the mind and of course everything else.

Lynn: I thought there was some like meta mind, you know higher mind way that it could kind of witness itself.

A: Oh no.

Lynn: Its always coming from the Self.

A: Right. Right. Always coming from the Self. Always. That's the only place it can come from and when that Witness needs to become something incredibly now and intimate, it sort of comes in ? boom ? you don't have a sense of a witness out here but sort of inside and

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its really involved and then at other times its, funny, I don't know because its automatic and also at this point I can do it at will depending on what I want to do. The other part is like I can speak right now and the awareness is completely outside of the speaking, you know ? and its not coming from thought or anything. Everything that is happening, whether its thought or speaking or feeling or movement or everything, is there an easy awareness of being completely outside of it, but at the same time very engaged inside it. Its both.

Lynn: Yeah, and even an ordinary person that doesn't have this awakening not to that extent, but they are aware of what there (inaudible).....they couldn't report it.

A: Oh, absolutely.

Lynn: Its such an obvious, ordinary thing that ?.

A: Yes.

Lynn: That it just gets completely overlooked, that there was something that was aware of what happened.

A: Yes. Right. Yeah, that's the secret isn't it ? That its not a secret. That's the secret.

Lynn: Open secret.

A: Right. The open secret.

A: What do I not want to miss ? (speaking as if to self) Oh, I can never get to all

that (inaudible).

Annie: There is like a ton of things I want to talk about but I'll pick one. I think I have had a little bit of insight maybe talking to you a little about this but it would be nice to share more and I would like to hear more how your experience differs, you have talked about com-

ing to satsang and just completely not knowing and even having a discipline of not going into any sort of preparation, but just sitting in the unknowing and the depth of that and how does that differ in satsang versus when satsang is over ? And I mean satsang in a way, never ends but I mean formal

satsang like this ? Do you know what I'm saying ? How does your experience of

life or maybe that depth of being in the unknown I don't know how you might describe it, change in different venues ?

A: I don't think it does. I don't know. That's the only honest way I can answer.

Annie: Just maybe by virtue of the experience of the by products of that or the content ?

A: Well, there is always the place of unknowing but? Boy, it gets really dicey doesn't it ? (chuckle) Now in a satsang, lets just say in a satsang and I am engaged. There is no time to think. There is no time to really consciously take the mind in. Its all got to be automatic and in the moment and spontaneous. Because there is just no time for anything else. After satsang, its the same place of unknowing, but its what I've talked about where there will be places that I want to look into more, a lot of time in response to what's happening in satsang and then I'll take the mind into those places. I can't really explain what that means or how its done and I don't know if that speaks to what you are talking about, but ?

Male Voice: It sounds more contemplative than satsang.

A: Right. At the time you don't have time to let the question rest, but afterwards, it can rest and where does it rest ? It rests in not knowing and as it rests in unknowing, then knowing

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comes out of that. So in that sense, I guess there is a difference, but ultimately at the bottom, there is not a difference.

Annie: I guess part of my question relates to its not so much your perspective but it seems to me that when you are in satsang, there is a certain kind of energy that is present.

A: Yes. Yes.

Annie: That is present that is conducive for certain type of interactions to occur.

A: Oh, sure.

Annie: That when you are not in satsang, I think many people (I don't know about in this room) but in general might have the illusion that that's your experience of life constantly.

A: Oh, no. No for Pete's sake. No. Right. I'm glad you mentioned that.

Annie: (inaudible) and energy and everything, I mean, how does that ? Even though your perspective may not change, how does sort of the content or the feel change ?

A: What happens in satsang is a result of the situation, so the result of a situation calls for a certain direction, focusing of consciousness, it calls for that and it just spontaneously happens, if you really let it happen, but it doesn't mean that I live

with that intensity of satsang. No. Because you know, as you know me very well, outside of satsangs, you know, I spend a good portion of my time playing. (chuckles) Right ? Just playing. Just enjoying myself as we, you know, like a kid. (chuckles) as you well know.

Female Voice: Playing how ? What do you mean ?

A: You can answer that.

Annie: Being playful in general. Not like going out playing ?

A: Just playing. Not like going out and doing anything, but just playing. Like kids play ?

Annie: Joking and just kidding and teasing?

A: Kidding around. Playing. Yeah, all that. And that's not the same as satsang. That's not the same intensity. Its another intensity though. Its more an intensity of enjoyment rather than an intensity of one-pointedness or something. So all that changes. Yeah, things focus and let go of the focus and intensify and then relax and all this goes on, but of course its all coming from That which doesn't change. Its all coming from that and that's what its all about is have your feet rooted there and that Mystery, that's, you know its called enlightened action but that's such a big word that I don't really want to use it. Some traditions call it that. But its that when you are rooted there, then life lives you. The Self lives you. Or its been called in very dry presentation, there is doing that happens but there is no doer. So your sense is that you're not really doing anything, its just all happening and in every

body/mind its different. When I'm not in satsang, you know, the doing of this body and mind is you know, I'm kind of back to five years old having a good time, joking, just enjoying myself a lot.

Annie: Resting.

A: And resting. Right. Resting. You got to rest a lot to do the amount of satsangs I do (laughs). But that's just what it does. Different people have different expression. This is an unusual expression. Not better or worse, just different and that's the problem with teachers is that very, very, very few really liberated people are going to teach and ever have taught.

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Most of the liberated people haven't taught. They have just gone and done what the Self is moving them to do, whether its taking care of their kids or loving this person or that or doing nothing or sitting in a cave or working at IBM, this is unusual and the problem is, a lot of spiritual people look towards the teacher as that's the way its going to look when I get enlightened. I'm going to be you know giving these wonderful talks. And if that is what The Self wants out of you, that's what you'll do, but that's one thing out of an infinite number of things that you could be doing and if you limit it to that, you are limiting the expression of consciousness itself and if you happen to be called to teach, that's what you'll do and if you're not called to teach or to express itself that way and you keep insisting that thats what liberated do, you see, you never find your own uniqueness and that is what is so important is to discover your own uniqueness, what consciousness wants to do through you and don't make it look any particular way and certainly don't make it look extraordinary, don't insist that it be something earth-shattering, because it just pulls you there and you will find yourself doing it.

he was thanking the group.

You are all getting tired. Okay. Do you want to stop ? We'll stop. I'm just getting rolling now (group laughter)

Female voice: Maybe we could continue.

Another voice: Yeah, maybe we could do another ?.

A: Okay. We'll stop.

Male voice: To be continued.

A: I want to thank everybody ?..

Transcription note: Tape ended while Adyashanti was talking, but essentially