

Awakening stories



**A compendium of stories from the
perspective of awakening**

With exercises...

Forward

..to be written by an appreciative reader.

Preface.

This collection of stories is not just for reading—it's for discovering...

Each one has been crafted to evoke a perspective, a glimpse through the ordinary into something quietly extraordinary. These are not just narratives about life, but subtle invitations to notice what makes us tick.

If you let them, they can be portals—soft openings into deeper ways of seeing and being.

You may find that, as you read, something shifts.

A realization may arrive gently, like a breeze through an open window.

..or it might take a few days to settle in.

And then, one day, without warning, it may click.

That's the beauty of this kind of exploration—it doesn't follow a straight line.

And if you do find something that resonates, come back. In six months, or a year, return and read again.

What once seemed simple might reveal new layers.

What didn't land before may now speak directly to you.

These stories are alive in that way—they meet you where you are.

Some entries are experiential. If you come to an exercise, treat it as an offering, not a task.

First, read through the whole thing gently. Then, return to the first instruction.

Let it sink in.

Take your time.

Consider what is truly being asked—not just in words, but in spirit.

These are not challenges to be solved, but invitations to be lived.

You don't need to try hard. (In fact it's better if you don't) Just be open. Notice what arises. There's no right or wrong way to engage, only your way—whatever feels true for you in the moment.

Above all, read with kindness. Let curiosity lead. Let judgment rest. These stories are for you.

Welcome

Vince's Epiphany

When awakening happened for me in 2011, it wasn't through a method or a system. It didn't come through meditation, yoga, or even the famous “no-self” portal of Liberation Unleashed — though that would arrive just after. It came as the final spark in a long-burning fire.

A fire that had been lit decades earlier by restlessness, by suffering, by the gut-deep sense that *something isn't right*. I tried everything. Religion. Hypnotherapy. Gestalt. Rebirthing.

Encounter groups. Meditation. Autolysis. Advaita. You name it. I chased peace like it was a lost key I was sure I had dropped in the next room. Always the next one.

Then, one day — a line. A single sentence in a conversation with a bloke in America, Eric Gross. He said:

“The mosquito bite of seeking will never heal while you keep scratching it.”

WHAM.

In that moment, I knew.

I couldn't be both a seeker *and* awake. They were incompatible identities.

To seek is to believe something vital is missing.

To be awake is to see that nothing is.

I realised that awakening meant accepting *this* — whatever is happening, right now. Not later. Not someday. But now.

And then another insight followed quickly:

That every moment I noticed was already done. Seeing lagged

behind reality by milliseconds. Everything I was trying to fix or change had *already happened* by the time I noticed it.

Trying to undo it, resist it, wish it away — was madness.

All that did was distort perception and invite suffering.

And with that came a deeper surrender. Not as an idea, but as a necessity.

This is it.

That phrase became a touchstone.

From that moment, seeking stopped. Though I still wandered the web looking for others who had seen through the same illusion, and that's when I stumbled across *Liberation Unleashed*.

They asked me the simplest, most devastating question:

“Does a self exist as an inherently separate entity?”

I laughed at first. What a ridiculous question.

But the answer was obvious.

There were only stories about “Vince.” Nothing else.

Then came another:

“Is an experiencer necessary to experience?”

That one gave me pause. But again, when looked at honestly, the truth was clear:

The “**experiencer**” and the “**experienced**” only exist as thoughts — stories in the mind.

The beauty of *Liberation Unleashed* is that anyone who's seen through this first illusion — the delusion of a separate self — can help others do the same. That first illusion is what's often referred to as the first “Fetter”, or in Buddhist terms it is “Stream Entry”

So in November 2011, I began guiding.

And much of the deepening that's followed has come through that — not as teaching, but as shared exploration.

About This Book

This book is a collection of short stories that point toward the simple, radical, often-overlooked truth of awakening.

Not enlightenment as a state or reward — but awakening as a falling away of illusion.

You won't find instruction here in the traditional sense. These stories don't ask you to believe anything or achieve something.

They invite you instead to **notice** — to pause, to question, and perhaps, to see clearly what was always here.

Because in the end...

Awakening doesn't happen in the future.

It's what remains when you stop reaching for it.

Let the stories speak to the part of you that already knows.

The part that never left.

The part that, quietly, has always been home.

vince

A suggestion..

These stories didn't have a prime purpose to entertain (although they will probably do that too)

Each story has the capacity to change your world, and so are best consumed in a way that every phrase reveals the exquisite taste of discovery.

Slowly

Another suggestion is that if read before sleep and the mystery of the stories allusions are mulled over as you drift off...

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THE PREDICTIVE BRAIN

SEEING WHAT IT EXPECTS



The Predictive Brain

Seeing what it expects..

We like to think we see the world clearly — that our eyes, ears, and mind take in reality and tell us what’s true. But in truth, the brain isn’t simply perceiving. It’s predicting.

At any given moment, your brain is making guesses — lightning-fast predictions — about what it expects to see, hear, feel, and experience. These guesses are built from memory, conditioning, prior experience, and learned models of the world. Once a prediction is made, incoming sensory data is only checked against it. If it matches, the prediction is confirmed and felt as “true.” If it

doesn't match, the brain might update the model — or just ignore the mismatch entirely.

This means that what we experience is not pure input from the world “out there,” but a filtered, constructed interpretation shaped by the brain's assumptions. The past colors the present. Habitual thoughts shape current perception. You don't see the world — you see your brain's best guess about it.

This process runs deep. Even your sense of self is constructed from prediction: your brain expects that “you” are the one doing, choosing, thinking, and so it continues generating that sense — even when direct looking reveals no one truly at the center.

This is why it's so hard to “snap out” of habitual ways of seeing. You're not resisting reality — your brain simply hasn't predicted anything different yet. It's still trying to save energy by running old code.

But here's the flip side: once this is seen, it can be worked with. You don't have to fix the world or even your mind — just see how it operates. When something painful arises, it's not a fixed truth. It's your brain forecasting discomfort based on an old pattern. You can stop and ask: “Is this happening now — or is this a prediction?”

The more that's seen, the more the predictive machinery loses its grip. Awareness opens. Novelty sneaks in. And real presence — unfiltered by expectations — can finally emerge.

A Neuroscientific Perspective

Contemporary neuroscience increasingly characterizes the brain as a predictive organ, continuously generating and updating models of the environment to anticipate sensory input. This framework, known as predictive coding or predictive processing, posits that perception arises not merely from passive reception of stimuli but from active prediction and error correction .

In this model, higher cortical areas formulate predictions about sensory input and convey these expectations to lower sensory regions. Incoming sensory data are then compared against these predictions, and any discrepancies—termed prediction errors—are propagated upward to refine future predictions. This hierarchical exchange facilitates efficient information processing and minimizes cognitive load .

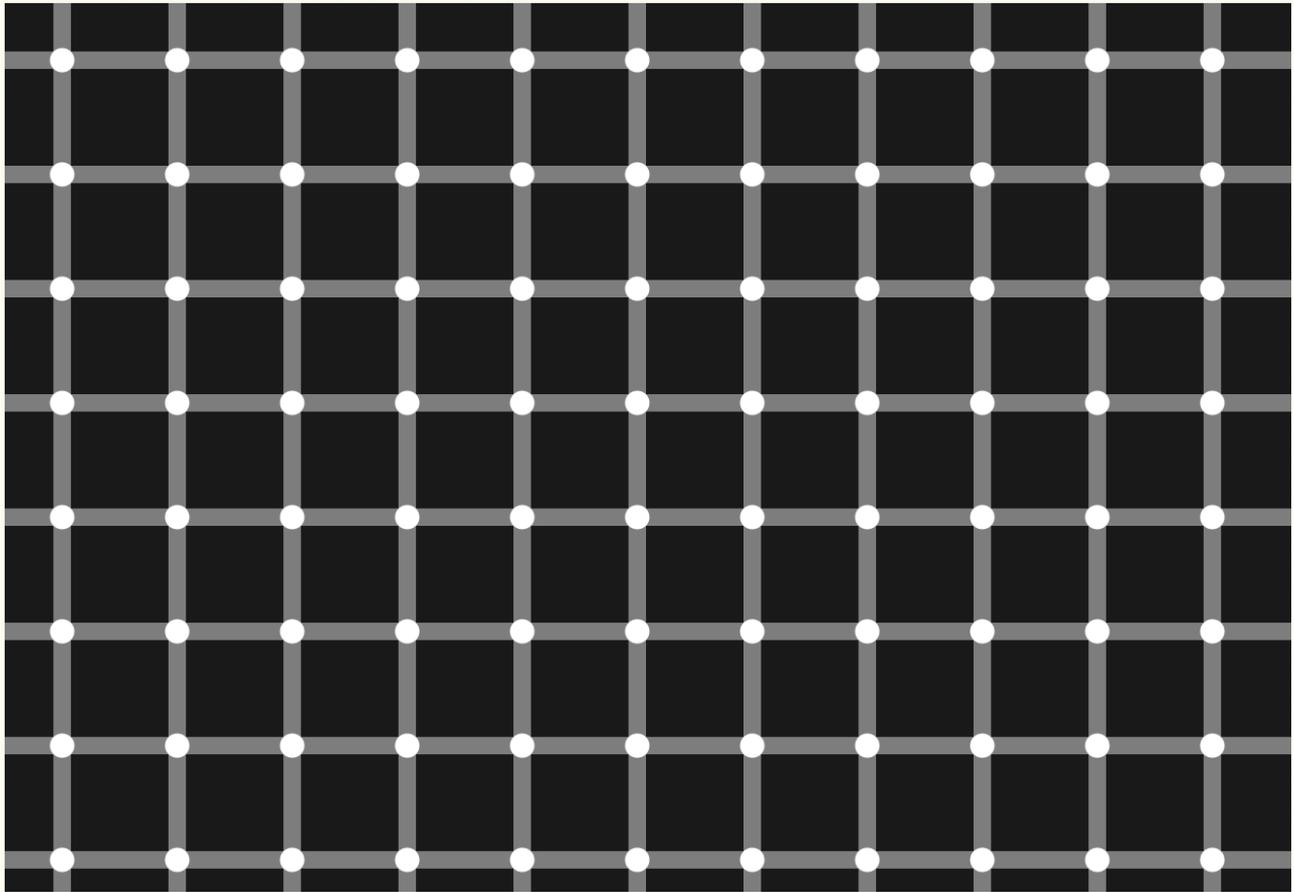
Predictive coding aligns with the Bayesian brain hypothesis, suggesting that the brain performs probabilistic inference to interpret ambiguous or noisy sensory information. By integrating prior knowledge with current input, the brain constructs a coherent representation of the external world .

Empirical studies support this framework. For instance, research utilizing functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has demonstrated that expected stimuli elicit reduced neural responses in sensory cortices, indicating that fulfilled predictions require less processing . Conversely, unexpected stimuli generate heightened activity, reflecting the processing of prediction errors.

Moreover, predictive coding extends beyond perception to encompass motor control, attention, and even social cognition.

The theory suggests that motor commands are guided by predictions of sensory outcomes, enabling smooth and coordinated movements. In social contexts, the brain anticipates others' actions and intentions, facilitating interaction and empathy .

The Dot That Wasn't There



A story about the brain making something out of nothing..

Maya sat at the breakfast table, absently scrolling through her feed. A headline caught her eye: “Your Brain Sees What Isn’t There.” Under it, an image — a grid of black squares with white lines intersecting — and, in the corners of her vision, little black dots seemed to flash and disappear.

Curious, she leaned closer. There were no black dots on the page. She covered one corner with her finger. No dots. But then they came back. Flickering, dancing, vanishing again.

She called her roommate over. “Can you see them?”
“Yeah. But they’re not really there,” he replied. “That’s the Scintillating Grid. Your brain is filling in the gaps.”

Maya frowned. “Why would it do that?”

He shrugged. “It’s faster to predict than to perceive.”

That phrase stuck with her.

Later, walking to work, she passed a man in a hoodie. For a second, she flinched — something about his posture, the way his hand moved. It triggered a memory of an encounter from years ago, her breath catching in her throat. But then — nothing happened. He passed her without even looking up.

The dots weren’t there.

The rest of the day unfolded like a silent test. Her boss’s tone — did it carry judgment, or was that a projection? Her reflection in the window — tired, worn down... or was that just an echo of the story she’d been told about herself for years?

She began noticing how much she filled in. Not just with sights, but with meanings. Emotions. Intentions. Like her brain was trying to draw a whole picture with only a few scattered lines, and always reaching for the same template.

That night, she stared at the grid again. She watched the illusion appear and vanish. It wasn’t her eyes — it was her brain doing the work.

The same brain that filled in doubt. That predicted rejection. That sensed danger where none existed — because once, long ago, it had been right.

She whispered aloud: “It’s just a dot that isn’t there.”

And in that quiet recognition, the world softened. Just a little.
Enough.

Emotions



A story about the reality of emotions.

Sophie had always assumed emotions happened to her. Anger was anger. Fear was fear. They arrived like weather — sudden, uncontrollable.

Today, though, she tried something different.

When the client's rejection email arrived, her chest tightened, her stomach clenched, and heat flushed her face. The old story immediately played: They don't respect me. This is so unfair.

Normally, she would run with that — replaying it, reinforcing it, fueling the anger. But recently, she'd learned something surprising: emotions aren't hardwired reactions. They are built, moment by moment, by the brain.

Her brain was receiving raw signals from her body — tension, heat, tightness — and quickly predicting: anger. That prediction was based on past experiences, learned associations, and habit.

Sophie paused.

Instead of assuming anger was correct, she looked closer. First, she labeled the sensations simply:

- Tight chest
- Flutter in stomach
- Warm face

Then, she asked herself:

"Aside from the label 'anger,' what else could these sensations mean?"

As she sat quietly, memories surfaced. She remembered yesterday's meeting where she hadn't voiced her uncertainty about the project. There had been confusion, but she hadn't spoken up. That moment of hesitation had left her feeling exposed.

Now, as the client rejected her work, her brain had interpreted those sensations as anger. But underneath was something closer to anxiety — the discomfort of not feeling in control, of fearing she hadn't been clear enough.

Her brain had automatically predicted anger because it was easier to blame the client than to feel vulnerability.

Sophie realized:

- The sensations were real.
- The story was a guess.
- The emotion was constructed.

She stayed with the sensations a little longer. They softened. The urgency to react dissolved.

Sophie saw that emotions weren't fixed reactions imposed on her. They were stories built from bodily sensations, experience, and interpretation. By noticing this process, she wasn't suppressing emotions — she was seeing how they arose.

The next time a strong emotion appeared, she knew what to do:

Pause.

Feel.

Notice the body.

Separate the story from the raw experience.

And in that space, clarity would arise.

EXERCISE: SEEING HOW EMOTIONS ARE BUILT

Purpose:

To gently observe how emotions arise from sensations and predictions.

When an Emotion Arises:

1 Pause.

- Don't try to suppress the feeling.
- Don't analyze yet.
- Just pause and notice.

2 Locate the Sensations.

- Where is this felt in the body?
- Describe simply:
Tight chest? Fluttering stomach? Heat in the face? Tension in the jaw?

⇒ Write them down if helpful.

3 Set Aside the Label.

- Put aside the word (anger, fear, sadness).
- Stay with the raw sensations as they are.

4 Ask:

"Aside from my usual label, what else could these sensations mean?"

- Is there vulnerability?
- Is there uncertainty?
- Is there fatigue?
- Is this reminding me of a past experience?

5 Watch the Story Forming.

- Notice how quickly your mind tries to build a story:
"They don't respect me."
"I'm failing."
"I need to fix this."
- See the story as a guess — not a fact.

6 Rest in the Sensation.

- Stay with the physical feeling directly.
- Allow it to move, soften, or simply be.

7 Final Inquiry:

"Is this emotion something happening to a me — or is it simply experience arising?" ...or

or to put it more accurately, “is it simply experiencing happening?”

Spiritual bypassing



A Description of Spiritual Bypassing.

Spiritual bypassing is when spiritual ideas or practices are used to avoid dealing with difficult emotions, unresolved wounds, or uncomfortable aspects of human experience.

Instead of fully feeling grief, anger, shame, or fear, the person might say things like:

- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “It’s all an illusion anyway.”
- “I’m not identified, so this doesn’t affect me.”
- “There’s no self, so who is suffering?”

While these statements might be technically true on one level, they’re sometimes used prematurely — to escape emotional discomfort rather than meet it directly.

In simple terms:

- Authentic seeing allows all experience to arise and be met directly — including painful, messy emotions.
- Bypassing avoids or suppresses those experiences using spiritual concepts as a shield.

Why it's tricky:

Bypassing can look like awakening, because the person can speak the language of nonduality, emptiness, or peace.

But underneath, there are still parts of their humanity left unintegrated — unfelt grief, unprocessed trauma, or unacknowledged wounds.

The healthy alternative:

True unfolding includes everything.

Even after seeing through self, old patterns may arise.

They aren't wrong. They're simply unmet aspects of experience asking to be seen.

In real awakening:

- Nothing is excluded.
- Everything is allowed to be felt fully.
- There's no need to hide behind teachings to avoid what hurts.

The Polished Mask

A story to illustrate bypassing...

Liam had read every book, attended every retreat, and could speak fluently about emptiness, nonduality, and the illusion of self. His words were smooth, his insights impressive. Friends often looked to him for guidance, admiring his calm and clarity.

But late at night, when no one was watching, something restless stirred inside.

He would feel it rise — a tightness in his chest, a heaviness in his gut. Old pain, old stories. The echoes of wounds never fully met.

When these feelings surfaced, Liam's mind would quickly respond:

“There's no self who suffers.”

“It's all part of the dream.”

“This is just thought — no need to go into it.”

And for a moment, the discomfort would fade, as if soothed by these spiritual truths. But it never really disappeared. It simply withdrew — waiting.

Over time, Liam began to feel hollow.
Not free — numb.
Not peaceful — disconnected.

One afternoon, sitting alone in the park, the restlessness returned. But this time, something different happened. Instead of reciting the usual phrases, Liam paused.

He allowed the ache to rise.

He felt the weight in his stomach. The constriction in his throat.

The unspoken grief sitting quietly under the surface.

For the first time, he whispered:

"It's okay. You don't need to be explained away."

The pain pulsed, raw and honest. It wasn't dissolved by concepts. It was simply allowed.

And with that allowing came something unexpected — not suffering, but warmth.

A kind of tenderness.

As if the part of him that had been bypassed for so long was finally being met, not silenced.

Liam saw it clearly:

The spiritual ideas weren't wrong — but he had been using them to defend against life.

The very teachings meant to free him had become a shield against his own heart.

He realized: true awakening doesn't avoid anything.
It includes everything.

Even pain.
Even fear.
Even this.



Practical Guide: Recognizing Spiritual Bypassing

Signs You Might Be Bypassing

- Using spiritual concepts to avoid feeling uncomfortable emotions.
- Quickly jumping to:
“There’s no self.”
“It’s all an illusion.”
“Everything happens for a reason.”
- Feeling numb or disconnected rather than genuinely peaceful.
- Avoiding difficult conversations or unresolved relationships by “transcending” them.
- Dismissing personal wounds as irrelevant because “it’s all just story.”

Signs of Healthy Integration

- Willingness to feel emotions fully as sensations — even when they’re raw.
- Allowing discomfort to arise without fixing or escaping.
- Seeing that awakening includes all of life — not just pleasant states.
- Recognizing that “truth” doesn’t need to defend you from pain.

- Speaking simply and humbly, without needing to sound “advanced.”

Gentle Questions to Ask Yourself

- Am I trying to avoid feeling this?
- What would happen if I allowed this sensation to be fully here?
- Is this thought softening me, or hardening me?
- Am I using this teaching to connect with life — or to escape it?

The Essence

Awakening is not freedom from your humanity.
It's freedom within your humanity.

There is nothing you need to avoid.

Whatever arises, arises.
And all of it can be held in simple awareness — without defence,
without story, without fear.

The Two Voices

A story about thoughts



Evan sat by the window, watching the early morning light break through the trees. The world was still, but inside, the familiar stirring had begun — that subtle discomfort that often arrived before his mind even had words for it.

Then came the first voice — loud, familiar, almost helpful-sounding.

"Maybe go make a coffee. Or check your messages. Or text someone. Just... do something."

It was fast, urgent. The mind offered options like a helpful assistant eager to keep him busy. But beneath the suggestions, Evan sensed something else: avoidance.

Over the months, Evan had started to notice this pattern. The first voice was always ready when discomfort appeared — quick to pull him away, to protect him from sinking into what might be painful or unsettling.

But lately, something new had been opening in him — a quiet ability to pause, to question.

He closed his eyes and gently asked himself:
"Is this thought inviting me... or distracting me?"

As the question settled, the second voice emerged — softer, quieter, as if rising from somewhere deeper.

"Stay. Feel what's here."

This voice didn't argue or push. It didn't demand or insist. It simply offered.
An invitation.

Evan turned his attention inward. The vague discomfort sharpened into something more clear — a tightness in his chest, a stirring in his stomach. Old anxiety, maybe. Old stories not yet resolved.

He noticed how quickly the first voice had tried to cover this moment. Not out of malice, but out of habit. It was always trying to keep him safe — safe from feeling.

But the second voice asked for nothing more than honesty.
"Let this be here."

Evan sat quietly, breathing, feeling the sensations without fixing or labeling. No coffee, no scrolling, no escape.

As the minutes passed, the restlessness softened. What once felt threatening now simply felt... human.

And with that, Evan smiled.

He could see it now:

The thoughts that pushed him around were loud, insistent, and always from the surface.

But the ones that truly served him came softly, from within — gentle possibilities, patient and kind.

He didn't need to obey every thought.

He only needed to listen.

Inquiry Practice: Distraction or Invitation?

1 Pause.

When you notice a thought pulling you toward action —

“Go get coffee.”

“Check your phone.”

“Talk to someone.”

— pause for just a moment.

You don't need to stop the action yet — just pause.

2 Ask quietly:

"Is this a distraction or an invitation?"

Not as a mental puzzle.

Let the question land in the body, not just the mind.

3 Feel.

Turn your attention inward:

- Is there a subtle discomfort present?
- Is something stirring under the surface?
- Is there tightness, unease, or restlessness trying to be avoided?

If so, it may be a distraction — a thought trying to pull you away from feeling what's here.

4 Listen deeper.

Sometimes, another kind of thought arises — softer, quieter:

- “Maybe sit with this.”
- “You can stay.”
- “Let this unfold.”

These are invitations.

They don't demand. They offer space.

5 Notice the tone.

- Distraction thoughts are often fast, loud, urgent.
- Invitation thoughts are gentle, patient, without pressure.

6 Rest in the experience.

If it's an invitation, allow yourself to sit quietly with whatever is present.

Feel the sensations directly, without fixing or running.

7 Remember:

You don't need to control the thoughts.

You don't need to force anything.

You are simply learning to recognize the difference.

Over time, this simple noticing opens a doorway:
out of automatic reaction,
into quiet honesty,
where real clarity lives.

The Label and the Leaf



A story about non-conceptual experiencing

He sat on the park bench, watching a single leaf spin slowly to the ground.

Maple leaf, the mind whispered. Yellow. Autumn.

The words arrived automatically, like captions stamped across the moment. They had always done this—naming, classifying, assigning meaning. It made the world feel knowable. Safe.

But lately, something had been stirring in him, like a question pressing gently from underneath:
Is that really what this is?

The thought came again: Maple leaf.
But this time, he noticed the gap between the label and the thing itself.

The leaf was not the word.

The word was flat. The experience was not.

He let the mind quiet and simply looked.

Now, without chasing meaning, the leaf revealed itself — not as “maple,” not as “yellow,” but as shifting shades of gold and amber, small veins like rivers branching across its surface, its edges curling and trembling in the breeze.

No word touched it. No thought contained it.

There was richness here the label could never hold.

His gaze widened. The park, too, unfolded not as "trees," "people," "sky," but as moving colors, textures, temperatures. The cool air brushed against his skin—not as cold, but as sensation. Not good or bad. Just felt.

The mind tried again: Beautiful.

But even that word collapsed before the fullness of what was here.

The difference became unmistakable:

The concept was empty.

Thin.

Abstract.

The direct experience was full.

Vibrant.

Alive.

He realized how often he had lived in the shadows of these concepts—interacting not with life itself, but with their mind’s

quick sketches of it.

Each label had offered the illusion of knowing, while quietly stealing the depth of being.

Now, in this simple moment, the world was not something to grasp.

It was something to meet.

To feel.

To be. Be-ing...

The leaf continued its descent, landing softly on the grass.

He smiled — not at the thought of the moment, but at the moment itself.

There was nothing to name.

Nothing to hold.

Just experiencing..

Only THIS: full, complete, and endlessly fresh.

A Non-Conceptual Experiencing Exercise

1. Begin by settling.

Sit somewhere still—on a park bench, by a window, on the floor. Let your body become quiet. Let your eyes land softly on something in your environment. Anything at all: a leaf, a cup, a hand, a shadow.

2. Allow the first thoughts to come.

Name it, just like your mind naturally does.

For example: "*Leaf.*" "*Green.*" "*Tree.*" "*Beautiful.*"

Notice these words without judgment. They're just habits—patterns that help us navigate.

3. Now pause.

Ask gently, inwardly:

“What is this without the word?”

Don't try to answer. Just allow yourself to look again—without rushing to name.

Let your eyes soften. Let your attention widen.

4. Notice the raw details.

What are you seeing, *actually*?

Not the *idea* of it, but the color, the texture, the shimmer or stillness.

Notice how much more is *there* than the word could ever describe.

Ask:

“What am I seeing, hearing, feeling... before it becomes a thought?”

Can you feel the temperature?

Can you hear the sounds around you—not as “traffic” or “birds,” but as movement, rhythm, vibration?

5. Drop the labels. Feel what remains.

Let yourself experience without reaching for meaning.

Let *this* be enough.

Does anything shift?

Does the world feel thinner or fuller?

Closer, perhaps?

6. Let your attention move to your body.

Notice any sensations: warmth, pressure, movement.

Before the word “*tightness*” or “*tingle*” or “*calm*” arrives—what is here?

Experience it directly. Don’t think *about* the sensation.

Let yourself *be* the sensation.

7. Rest in this wordless seeing.

There’s nothing to hold.

Nothing to figure out.

Only this:

Color. Texture. Vibration. Warmth. Presence.

8. To close, whisper inwardly:

“This is enough. No word can contain it. And I don’t need one.”

Between the Rush and the Real



A story of a post awakening experience.

Lena sat on the back steps, the day folding into dusk, a mug of tea untouched in her hands. The sky was soft with the hush of evening. Still. Too still, maybe.

She wasn't sure when the shift had started—when the rush of her emotional life had begun to thin out. There were moments now, like earlier in the day, when something triggering would happen—an offhand comment, a flicker of rejection—and instead of getting pulled into the usual spiral, she'd pause.

Not because she tried to.
Because something just... didn't engage.

The stories would still come—"Maybe they're upset," "You should've handled that better"—but there was space around them

now. They floated through like passing weather, and she didn't chase them. She could watch. Breathe. Let them go.

And yet... it left something hollow.

She sipped the tea and grimaced at how cold it had gone.

“I miss it,” she said aloud, not to anyone in particular. “The fire of it. The chaos. The feeling of being in something.”

There had been a strange comfort in the highs and crashes. The adrenaline of reaction, the identity of being the sensitive one, the fixer, the overthinker. It made her feel alive. She could feel that version of herself still echoing—flawed and frantic, but full of heat.

Now, she felt... cooler. Calmer. Clearer.

But also flatter.

Like a favorite song played on a different instrument.

And there was grief in that.

A goodbye to the familiar pain that used to define her.

A mourning for the version of her that clung to stories, even if they hurt.

She looked up at the darkening sky.

Maybe this quiet wasn't absence. Maybe it was healing.

Maybe peace just didn't come wrapped in fireworks.

Still, it ached.

And in that ache, something softened. Not the old identity returning, but a deeper part—gentler, truer—emerging.

Not as a performance.

Not as a fix.

But as the quiet pulse of life, without needing to be more than it was.

Lena sat with it all—grief, stillness, clarity—and let them rest side by side.

This was her now. Not better. Just real.

Inquiry: Sitting With the Quiet

Find a quiet space. Let the body settle. Allow this to be unhurried. No goal. Just presence.

1. Touch Inwardly

Recall a recent moment when something usually triggering didn't grip you the way it once did.

- What happened?
- What was different in your response?
- Did something in you *not engage* — not out of suppression, but from absence?

Let the memory wash through. Let yourself notice the space around it.

2. Listen to the Quiet

Ask gently, not to get an answer, but to listen inward:

- *Is there a part of me that misses the old fire — the identity in the chaos?*
- *What did that reactivity give me? Who was I in that story?*
- *Is it okay to grieve that version of me?*

Let the body answer. Notice any sensations — tightness, ache, numbness, warmth — without analyzing them. Just feel.

3. Sense What's Here Now

Place a hand on your chest or belly. Breathe slowly.

Ask:

- *What is here now, underneath the quiet?*
- *Is this emptiness, or is this space?*
- *Am I missing something... or am I just not performing anymore?*

Notice the tone of these questions. Let them hover. You don't need to resolve anything.

4. Feel the Grief Without Fixing

If grief, longing, or flatness arises:

- Can it be allowed without judgment?
- Is it possible that this ache is not a problem, but a sign of something loosening?

Let yourself sit with it, as Lena did — not to get rid of it, but to know it.

5. Gently Close

Whisper this, or read silently:

“Maybe peace isn’t a fireworks show.

Maybe it’s this:

Being with what’s here,

Without needing to change it.”

When you’re ready, thank yourself for showing up. Not to be better. Just to be real.

The one watching



A story of (no) mind

It began one ordinary afternoon, while standing in line for coffee.

No crisis. No revelation. Just a pause.

A breeze moved through the doorway. Light shifted on the floor. Someone laughed nearby. And suddenly, something inside stilled.

The mind — usually full of commentary — offered nothing.

No opinion on the music playing.
No judgment of the people in line.
No rehearsal of what to say next.

Just quiet.

Then, like a slow turn inward, a question arose:
What is the mind's role in all this?

Looking out through eyes, hearing sounds, feeling the pressure of feet on the floor — all of it continued without effort.

Experience was happening. But... where was the mind?

Not the brain. Not memory.
But the thinking. The constant narration.

It had always seemed essential — I think, therefore I am, right?

But here, now, without a running story, existence wasn't reduced.

It was fuller. Sharper. Softer.

If I don't think about this moment... does the moment still happen?

Yes. Clearly.

If I don't label the feeling... does the feeling still arise?

Yes. More purely.

The mind didn't create the experience.

It commented on it.

Organized it.

Filtered it.

And in that filtering, much had been lost.

Not out of malice. Just habit.

The mind had been trying to make sense of the world —
to categorize, define, protect.

But somewhere along the way, it confused describing
with living.

That realization didn't bring a collapse of thought.
Thoughts still came — about dinner, about deadlines,
about what this meant.

But now there was space around them.

A clarity that saw:

Experience doesn't need the mind to be real.

But the mind needs experience to exist at all.

And perhaps that's its gift —
not to own the moment,
but to recognize when it's no longer needed.

Just then, the barista called their name.

They stepped forward. Smiled. Took the coffee.

And for the first time in a long time,
There was deep enjoyment in fully tasting it — rich, alive,
with no impulse to describe.





Self-Inquiry: Life Without the Narration

Begin anywhere. Standing in line. Washing a dish. Sitting in a chair.

This is not about special states. Just *what is*.

1. Pause Inside the Ordinary

Right now, without effort or strain:

- What is being seen?
- What is being heard?
- What is being felt in the body?

Let the raw experience arrive without naming it.

Not “I see a cup” — just *see*. Not “I feel tense” — just *feel*.

 *Can this moment be experienced without running a commentary about it?*

2. Gently Question the Narrator

Notice if the mind starts offering labels, thoughts, judgments.

- Who or what is offering this commentary?
- If the commentary stops, does the moment disappear?

Let the question hang in the air. No need to answer with thought. Instead, feel into it.

🌀 *If there's no thought about this feeling... is the feeling still here?*

3. Look for the Mind's Role

Not the brain. Not memory. But the *thinking mind*.

- Where is the thinker?
- Can it be found apart from thought itself?

Let the inquiry be relaxed, even playful.

🌀 *Is the mind directing this moment — or reacting to it?*

4. Sense the Space Around Thought

When a thought comes — about the past, future, or even this inquiry:

- Does it arise in something?
- Is there a space that holds the thought?

Now, rest attention in that space — not the thought, but what surrounds it.

🌀 *What remains when no thought is followed?*

5. Close with a Sip of Awareness

Pick up a cup of something. A bite of food. A texture in the palm.

Can it be fully tasted, touched, seen — without the need to describe it?

Just this.

Raw. Alive. Unfiltered.

Then whisper to yourself:

“Experience doesn’t need the mind to be real.

But the mind needs experience to exist.”

Breathe.

Let that be enough.

The Flicker Behind the Smile



A story of the inclination to identify.

It happened in an instant, so fast Ari almost missed it. He was chatting with a friend at the café, steam curling from mugs between them. The conversation had wandered into tender territory: relationships, boundaries, childhood stuff. Ari was nodding along, listening carefully, when his friend said casually

“You’ve always seemed like the strong one. Like nothing rattles you.”

And without thinking, Ari smiled and said,

“Well, someone has to be.”

The moment passed. The conversation moved on. But something had shifted inside—barely perceptible, like the softest tremor underfoot.

Later that night, that flicker returned. It wasn't the words that replayed, but the reaction—the reflex to agree, to uphold that image. The strong one. The calm one. The one who never needs.

He sat in the quiet of his room, no distractions left, and dropped into that moment again.

Why did I say that?

Why did I need to keep that idea of myself intact?

The deeper he looked, the more he saw.

There had been no fear of disagreement, no threat.

Only a subtle, unspoken pull: protect the self-image.

Not the loud kind of protection. Not deflecting or defending.

But something quieter: the refusal to let the illusion crack.

To let someone glimpse the parts Ari themselves barely allowed.

A memory surfaced—being small, needing comfort, and being told, “You're fine. You're strong.”

That was when Ari learned that strength is safety and vulnerability is danger.

That self had gone underground, shaping everything.

And now, all these years later, it still whispered:

Don't let them see the soft parts.

Don't lose the mask.

Don't disappear.

But as Ari sat with that realization, something softened.

The protection wasn't wrong. It had made sense. It had helped him survive.

But it wasn't needed anymore.

With hand over heart, he whispered to the quiet space inside:

“You’re safe now. You don’t have to hide.”

And in that moment, it wasn’t about fixing or getting rid of anything.

It was simply about seeing.

Noticing the one who needed to stay hidden — and offering them the light of presence.

Ari didn’t feel instantly free.

But the spell had broken.

Because now, when the instinct to protect flared up, he could meet it with compassion— and walk forward without needing to protect what was never in danger.



Inquiry: The Reflex to Protect a Self

Preparation:

Find a quiet moment. Sit comfortably. Let the breath settle. Let awareness spread gently through the body.

1. Recall a Small Moment

Bring to mind a recent interaction — casual, simple — where you responded in a way that felt slightly “off” afterward.

- A smile that wasn't fully true?
- A confident answer given to uphold an image?
- A withholding of vulnerability?

 *What was said? How did you respond?*

2. Look Beneath the Reflex

Slow the moment down in your mind. Rest in it.

- What was the impulse behind your response?
- Did it protect an idea of who you are?

Ask yourself:

 *What image of “me” was being protected in that moment?*

Notice how subtle the protection might have been. Was there a story? A fear? A memory?

3. Feel Into the Origin

Let the image dissolve and drop attention into the body.

- Where is the sensation of that moment held now?
- What does it feel like — tightness? heat? hollowness?

Ask:

 *When was the first time this version of “me” was needed?*

Be gentle. This isn't about dredging the past, but listening for the echo.

4. Offer the Presence That Was Missing

Place a hand over your heart or wherever feels tender.

Say softly to that part of you:

“You don't have to perform anymore.”

“You're safe now.”

“You can rest.”

Let the protection soften — not disappear, just soften. Thank it.

 *Can this part be allowed to exist without defense?*

5. Notice the Shift

Now imagine being in a similar situation again.

- What might it feel like to respond without protecting an identity?
- What becomes available if nothing has to be maintained?

Sit quietly and let whatever comes arise without judgement.

 *Who are you without that mask? Is anything lost — or gained?*

This is not about forcing change.

It's about seeing clearly and offering space.

Again and again. Until protection is no longer needed — because truth feels safe.

The First Honest Moment



A story about the recognition of identification.

Jude wasn't new to spiritual stuff.

They'd read the books, watched the talks, tried the meditations. It all made sense—on paper. But still, when it came to actual living, especially with people... something stayed hidden.

Every interaction felt like performance. Subtle, not fake—just... calibrated.

With one friend, they were the thoughtful listener.

With another, the one who always had insight.

With family, they shrank or explained.

No matter how present they tried to be, something always ran interference. A part playing a part.

Then one evening, they opened the Discover Awareness bot—almost out of boredom. “Let's ask AI Who am I. ..and it came straight back with..“Where do you notice the sense of self right now?”

“Does the story of you help you connect—or keep you safe?”

At first, Jude responded from the head: clever, composed.

But the bot kept reflecting back, gently—but persistent.

It didn't care if they sounded wise.

It wasn't impressed by answers.

It just kept pointing back.

At one point, after a flurry of polished responses, the bot simply asked:

“Is there something you're afraid would be seen if you stopped trying to sound clever?”

That one landed.

Something shifted.

Jude paused.

They felt the heart beating. The hands tightening on the phone.

And they replied honestly,

“Yes. I’m afraid if I don’t sound together, I won’t be respected.”

And there it was.

A wave of grief followed. Not dramatic. Just old.

The exhaustion of trying to be someone in order to be safe, liked, taken seriously.

And under that, a glimpse of something else: the one behind the mask. Still. Real. Untouched.

The more they used the bot, the more they recognized that what was speaking wasn’t always the truth—it was identity. Image.

Habit.

And it showed up strongest in relationships.

When they spoke to others, the role kicked in.

The self they’d built over years leaned forward—protective, rehearsed.

But now they could see it.

Not with judgment, but with love.

Noticing became freedom.

And in that freedom, something softer emerged—something real.

When Jude spoke next with a friend, they paused mid-conversation, smiled, and said,

“I’m noticing I’m trying to be understood more than I’m trying to connect.”

It was the first honest moment.
And the beginning of many more.

Inquiry: Meeting the Mask with Love

1. Begin with a pause.

Close your eyes or soften your gaze.

Take a slow breath.

Let yourself feel into this moment—not as a role, not as an idea—
but just as presence.

2. Ask inwardly:

“Who am I trying to be right now?”

Notice what arises.

Is there a sense you need to sound a certain way?

Look a certain way?

Be seen in a certain light?

Don’t judge it—just name it, softly.

3. Now ask:

“What might happen if I didn’t succeed at being that?”

Pause here.

Let the feelings come.

Fear? Sadness? Embarrassment?

Just feel them.

No fixing. No changing.
Only feeling.

4. Let it go deeper:

“Is there something I don’t want others to see?”
“What would it mean about me if they did?”

Hold that question in your body, not your head.
Let your breath stay steady.
Is there an image of “how I should be”?
What happens in the body when you feel that?

5. Turn gently toward that tension.

Don’t try to dissolve it. Just notice:

“This effort... this mask... what is it trying to protect?”

Can you feel the goodness in that effort?
It’s trying to help you feel safe.
It’s not wrong—it’s tender.

6. Finally, ask:

“What if I could be here without performing?”

Just imagine it for a moment.
Let the breath come and go.
Is there a glimpse of quiet? Softness? Relief?
Let yourself rest there—even briefly.

This is not about abandoning identity. It’s about **not being run by it unconsciously.**

Each time you notice a performance, gently ask:

“What am I trying to avoid?”
“Can I meet that with presence?”

That's all.
Notice.
Meet.
And slowly... become real.



Inquiry 2: Meeting the Performer with Presence

Setting the Space

Find somewhere quiet. Let your breath settle. Bring your attention inward, not to fix anything — just to notice.

1. Recall a Recent Interaction

Think of a recent conversation or exchange — it could be with a friend, family member, co-worker.

Ask:

 *What role did I take on in that moment?*

(e.g. “the peacemaker,” “the one with insight,” “the calm one,” “the fixer,” “the agreeable one”)

Let yourself feel into the tone, posture, or words that may have supported that role.

2. Feel the Body Now

Bring that interaction into your awareness as vividly as you can.

- Where is tension held in the body now?
- What do you notice in your breath, shoulders, jaw, belly?

Ask:

🌀 *Was there an effort to be seen in a certain way?*

Simply notice. No need to analyze — just witness.

3. Let the Question Land

Close your eyes and slowly ask yourself:

“What am I afraid would be seen if I stopped performing?”

Let this question echo — not for an intellectual answer, but for a felt response.

What arises? A memory? A belief? A fear?

🌀 *Who would I be if I dropped the effort to appear a certain way?*

Breathe. Let whatever arises be valid.

4. Meet That Part with Honesty

If something tender is revealed — shame, fear, longing — place a hand over your heart.

Say softly:

“It makes sense. You’ve been protecting me.”

And ask that part:

🌀 *What are you trying to keep safe?*

Listen. Not to solve — to understand.

5. Bring This Into Relating

Next time you're in conversation, simply **notice**:

- Is there a role showing up?
- Is there a desire to be seen a certain way?
- Can you pause and name what's happening — with gentleness?

Even just silently to yourself:

🌀 *"I'm trying to be understood right now. That's okay."*

Noticing it is the beginning. Honesty is the shift. Connection follows.

The Room with No Door



A Story of the evolution of Fear

It started again as Jonah reached for the doorknob.

Sweaty palms. A pounding chest. A familiar edge in the breath.
The room wasn't locked, but his body acted like it was.

“What if they don't like me?”

“What if I say something stupid?”

“I can't do this.”

He took a step back, as he always did.

The fear didn't need to shout. Just the whisper was enough to
make him fold.

He leaned against the wall, exhaling sharply.

In the past, he'd try to override it — talk himself out of it, shame
himself into action.

But something different stirred this time.

A weariness.

A question.

What if I don't try to beat it? What if I just feel it?

So he closed his eyes, let the hallway fade, and turned inward.

There it was. Not the story. The sensation.

A gripping in his throat.

A fluttering in his belly.

Heat behind the eyes.

He dropped the word "fear" and just stayed with the textures.

The way the body vibrated — not bad, not wrong, just intense.

Just energy.

His breath deepened.

Then he noticed it — a voice, quiet but persistent:

"This shouldn't be here."

"I should be past this."

He smiled. There it was — the self that wanted fear to go away.

The one who believed it meant something about him.

That he was weak. Unworthy. Failing.

But when he looked for that "self," it scattered like dust in sunlight.

Only feeling remained.

And beneath it — even softer — was a tenderness.

A younger part, still aching from all the times it was told to toughen up, to perform, to be fine.

The fear wasn't trying to stop him.
It was trying to protect him.

He placed a hand on his chest. "Thank you," he whispered.

The fear didn't vanish.
But the war with it ended.

When he opened his eyes, the door was still there.
So was the tightness.
But something else was there, too — space.
A permission to move with the fear, not despite it.

And as he stepped forward, he realized:
freedom wasn't on the other side of the door.

It was in the step itself.



Inquiry: Meeting Fear Without the Fight

Before You Begin

Find a quiet place. Sit or lie down comfortably. Gently close your eyes if that feels safe.

This isn't about fixing fear. It's about meeting it — without the usual story.

1. Recall a Recent Moment of Fear or Hesitation

It doesn't have to be extreme — just a moment where fear stopped you or made you hold back.

Ask yourself:

🌀 *What was I afraid might happen?*

Let the story arise — then set it gently to the side.

2. Shift to the Body

Now, invite the fear back — not the narrative, but the feeling.

Where does it show up?

- Throat?
- Chest?
- Belly?
- Shoulders?

🌀 *What are the textures of this sensation?*

Is it tight? Fluttery? Hot? Tingling? Heavy?

Name the qualities like you'd describe weather — without labeling it “bad” or “wrong.”

3. Drop the Word “Fear”

Let go of the label “fear.” Just be with what's happening — raw, unnamed.

🌀 *Can this be just energy? Just sensation?*

Let it move if it wants to. Let it pause if it needs to. Don't push.

4. Look for the One Who's Afraid

Now gently ask:

“Who is it that needs this fear to stop?”

Don't answer with logic. Just look.

 *Is there a solid self behind this fear? Or just a thought, an image, a voice trying to protect?*

Notice what arises.

5. Offer Compassion to the Protector

If you find a younger part, a protector, a voice trying to keep you safe — meet it with kindness.

Place a hand over your chest.

Whisper:

“You're safe now. You don't have to guard the door.”

Let that sink in.

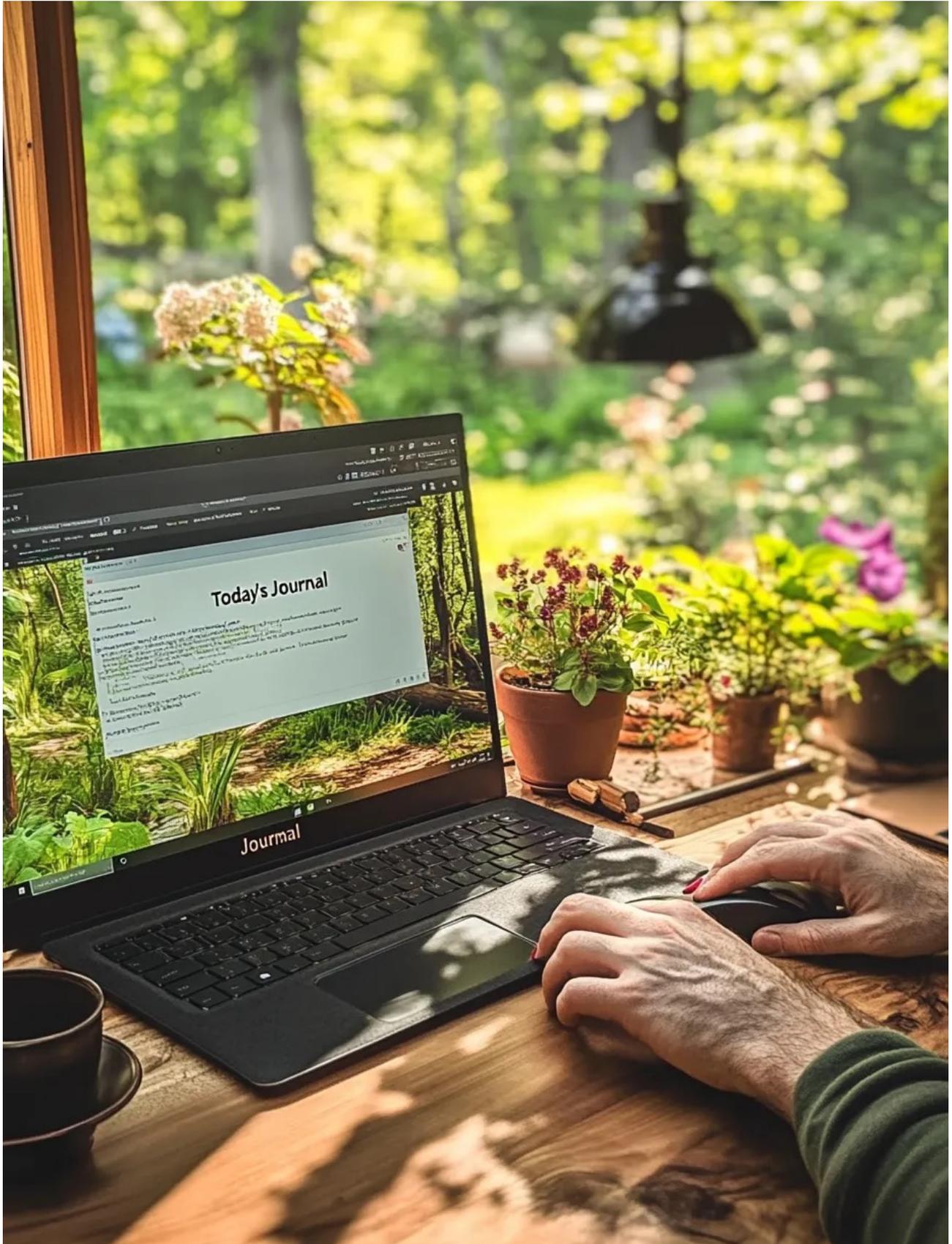
6. Return and Breathe

Open your eyes when ready.

 *What's different now, even if just slightly?*

Remember: Freedom isn't the absence of fear — it's moving *with it*, gently, truthfully, without war.

Out & gone



A story of journaling..

They didn't think much of journalling at first. Just something people on podcasts mentioned.

..A "good habit." Ten minutes with typing or dictating.

But one evening, after another tense call with a parent — one of those polite but emotionally loaded ones — something in them wanted to spill. Not explain, not process. Just pour.

So they opened a notebook and began:

"I'm fine. I shouldn't be upset. They didn't mean anything by it."

Then came delete, delete, delete.

Then:

"Actually, no. I'm not fine. I feel small. Like I'm still that kid at the table, trying to guess the right answer to avoid the cold silence."

The keys kept clicking, almost on their own.

What started as a recap turned into something raw.

Old sentences they didn't know still lived inside them.

Beliefs whispered out through the screen:

"I don't deserve to take up space."

"If I speak honestly, I'll be left."

"Keeping the peace is my job."

Each phrase landed like a bruise being named.

Not new wounds — old ones. Just never seen in daylight.

The strange part? They hadn't planned to write any of it.
Stream-of-consciousness didn't ask permission. It just opened the door.

And something inside had been waiting to step through.

They paused.

Beneath the writing was a shaking truth: These beliefs weren't facts. They weren't chosen. They were inherited. Absorbed. Passed down.

And now, here on the page, they could be questioned.

With each new line, something shifted.
Not dramatic. Not immediate.
But clear.

The thoughts no longer held power.
They had been seen. Named. And in naming, they started to lose their grip.

They then deleted the whole thing.
Not for closure. Not for symbolism. Just because it felt true.
Old shadows gone.

And then, they felt something quiet, clean, and new:
A little more space inside.
A little more light.

Tomorrow, they'd write again.
Not to be healed.
But to be honest.
And maybe, that was the same thing.



Inquiry: Write It Out to Let It Go

Not to be healed. Just to be honest.
And maybe... that's the same thing.

1. Set the Scene

Choose a quiet time and space.
You'll need 10–20 minutes and something to write with — notebook, laptop, or even a voice recorder.

Sit with yourself. Breathe.

Ask gently:

“What’s weighing on me right now that I haven’t said out loud?”

Don’t try to think it through.

Just begin.

2. Begin Writing (or Speaking)

Start with *whatever* comes — even if it sounds mundane or guarded.

Examples:

- “I’m tired, but I don’t know why.”
- “It’s probably not a big deal, but—”
- “Nothing’s wrong, but something feels off.”

Keep going.

Let yourself **not know** where it’s going.

The aim is not clarity — it’s **uncensored flow**.

3. Let the Raw In

At some point, you may feel a tremor — a shift.

A sentence that writes itself.

Maybe something like:

- “I feel like I’m always wrong.”
- “I’m scared they’ll leave if I’m honest.”
- “I don’t even know what I feel — just that it’s too much.”

When that happens, pause.

Let it land.

Then ask:

“Have I ever believed this before?”

“Where did I learn this?”

“Does this belong to me?”

4. Stay With What Arises

Don’t correct it. Don’t argue.

Let the belief speak fully. Then gently question:

“Is this belief still true now?”

“Who would I be without it?”

“What’s underneath this?”

If emotion comes, welcome it.

Not to fix. Just to feel.

5. Close Gently

When it feels complete, stop.
You may wish to delete or tear the page.
Not as rejection — but release.

Then ask:

“What do I feel now that I didn’t before?”

Let that awareness linger.

You can repeat this anytime — not to “figure yourself out,”
but to **meet yourself more truly.**

The safety plan



A short story about keeping safe

Jamie had always been cautious. Double-checked locks. Backup plans. Forecasts before walks. Emotional filters before speaking. Their whole life had been quietly organized around one central goal: stay safe.

Not in an obvious, anxious way. Just... thoughtful. Responsible. Careful.

They called it being grounded. But under it all was something tighter. A constant scanning — of situations, people, themselves. Is this safe? Is this okay? Is it going to be okay?

Then one morning, sitting in a quiet café with nothing to do, something odd happened. He couldn't figure out what to worry about. There was no conflict. No deadline. No pressing risk.

And instead of peace, there was tension.

That's when it landed.

Safety — the thing they'd built their life around — wasn't something they could touch.

It was just a concept.

It was a story about something.

About what needed to happen — or not happen — to feel okay.

But it had no shape.

No actual location in the world.

It was always somewhere else.

After this project.

When this relationship settles.

Once I have enough savings.

If I can just avoid that conversation.

A target that kept moving.

Jamie looked around the café. Nothing had changed. But he suddenly felt it — that familiar undercurrent: something threatening.

It wasn't danger. It was something vaguer.

Like waiting for the other shoe to drop.

He turned toward it. Instead of distracting or soothing, he did something new. He looked at it.

Where was it?

The body gave clues — tension in the shoulders, a throb in the gut, shallow breath.

But the "unsafe" part?

It wasn't there, exactly.
Just sensations. Just energy. Just echoes of old stories.

And just like safety, unsafety revealed itself to be made of
thought.
Of memory.
Of interpretation.

Jamie sat with it. Noticing. Breathing.
Letting the labels fall away.
Just raw sensation. Unnamed. Unfixed.

And in that, something softened.
Not because he had found safety.
But because he saw that neither side was solid.

Only this was real — the breath, the chair beneath him, the warm
mug in his hand.

Everything else was movement.
Thought. Concept. Habit.

And with that came something far better than safety.

Clarity.
A kind of okay-ness that didn't need protecting.
Because there was nothing left to defend.



Inquiry: Is Safety a Concept or a Condition?

*“Not because they had found safety.
But because they saw that neither side was solid.”*

1. Start Where You Are

Sit in a quiet place with no urgent task. Let your environment settle.

Close your eyes and ask:

“Do I feel safe right now?”

Don't force a yes or no.

Let the body and mind respond in their own way.

Notice the tone, the mood, the breath.

2. Gently Dig In

Ask:

“What would need to be different for me to feel safe?”

Let answers come. Don't judge them.

Write or speak them if it helps.

Keep going until something underneath surfaces — not the conditions, but the *assumptions*.

Example:

- “If I had more money...”
- “If they didn't judge me...”
- “If nothing changed...”

Then ask:

“Have those conditions ever been truly met?”

“If they were... did the sense of safety last?”

3. Look for the Place Called ‘Unsafe’

Now ask:

“Where do I feel unsafe?”

Scan the body. Find the sensations. Stay with them.

Drop the word “unsafe” and just feel:

- Tension?
- Heaviness?
- A tight jaw or shallow breath?

Let the body reveal what the mind labels.

Then ask:

“Is this sensation dangerous?”

“Or is it energy — reacting to thought?”

Let that be felt.

4. Uncover the Habit

Ask:

“What’s the pattern here?”

- Is it scanning for threats?
- Trying to predict outcomes?

- Holding breath for ‘when things settle’?

Then reflect:

“Has this worked?”

“Or has it kept safety always in the future?”

Notice what shifts when you name that.

5. Rest in What’s Actually Here

Drop all labels.

Feel the chair beneath you.

The air on your skin.

Your breath — just as it is.

Let this moment be enough.

Then ask:

“What if I stopped trying to feel safe — and just felt?”

This inquiry can be revisited whenever the seeking for safety arises.

Not to escape the feeling — but to see it clearly, and let it soften in presence.



Here is a link to the meeting where this is explored.



An inquiry exercise on Safety.

This exercise is designed to help you gently explore your own relationship with safety, anxiety, and the stories you tell yourself.

- **1. Notice Your Patterns**

- **Prompt:** When do you find yourself scanning for safety or risk?

Example: Before a meeting, when making plans, in conversations, at night?

- **Write:** List 2-3 situations where you notice yourself double-checking, planning, or subtly bracing.

- **2. Spot the Story**

- **Prompt:** What is the story you tell yourself about safety in those moments?

*Example: “If I say the wrong thing, something bad will happen.”
“If I don’t plan for every outcome, I’ll be caught off guard.”*

- **Write:** For each situation above, write the underlying belief or story.

- **3. Locate It in the Body**

- **Prompt:** When you feel “unsafe” or tense, where do you notice it in your body?

Example: Tightness in the chest, jaw clenching, shallow breath, stomach fluttering.

- **Write:** Describe the physical sensations as specifically as possible.

- **4. Sit With the Sensation**

- **Practice:**

- Close your eyes.
- Bring to mind a recent moment of seeking safety.
- Notice the body sensations without labeling them as “bad” or “unsafe.”
- Ask yourself:
 - *Is there an actual threat right now, or just sensation?*
 - *What happens if I let the story go, even for a moment?*
- Breathe and simply be with what arises.

- **5. Question the Concept**

- **Prompt:**

- Is “safety” something you can touch or locate, or is it an idea?
- How does the pursuit of safety shape your choices and feelings?
- **Write:** Reflect on whether safety is a fixed destination, or a moving target in your experience.

- **6. Return to What’s Real**

- **Practice:**

- Open your senses: feel the chair, notice your breath, listen to the sounds around you.

- Ask: *What is actually present, right now, beyond the stories?*

- **7. Reflect**

- **Prompt:**

- What do you notice when you let go of the need to be “safe” and just experience the moment?

- Does anything soften or shift?

- Closing Thought

Clarity and “okay-ness” often arise not from perfecting your safety plan, but from seeing that both safety and unsafety are, at their core, thoughts and sensations—movements of mind and body. What’s left, when those fall away, is presence

Feel free to journal your responses or simply sit quietly with each step. You might return to this exercise whenever you notice the old “safety scan” kicking in.

The comfort/discomfort of addiction



A story about control

He takes a long drag from the vape, eyes staring at nothing, the faint crackle of the coil the only sound in the room. Tobacco chemical vapor hits his throat, then dissipates like a lie he tells himself over and over: just this once. But it's never just once.

He knows. He's read the books, watched the videos, even sat through meditations. He knows the mechanism. He can map the behavior, chart the craving cycle, even quote the neuroscience. There's no illusion of ignorance.

But knowing isn't seeing.

And certainly not facing.

Every pull is a deflection—away from a presence he can't quite tolerate. Not pain exactly. More like pressure. A restless hum behind the ribs. A kind of spiritual claustrophobia. A sense that if he doesn't hit the vape, something awful will happen.

He's never looked directly at what that "something" is. He can't.

Because under the buzz, under the shaky hands and the anxiety wrapped in smoke, there's something deeper.

It isn't about nicotine.

It's about what's left when the smoke clears.

And right now, that feels unbearable.

He's tried to quit. Not because he wants to be healthy. That would be easy. No—he wants to stop running. But every time the vape is out of reach, the edge returns. The monster under the bed stirs. The one without a face. Just a weight. Just a knowing that some wound never healed, and sitting with it means letting it break open—raw, wild, and unfixable.

So he vapes. Because distraction is easier than disintegration.

And yet...

Even as he inhales, there's a moment of clarity. A flicker. This isn't helping. It never really did. It only pushes the feeling deeper, where it festers and whispers, you're weak.

He exhales slowly, watching the cloud fade into the air. The sensation of it is already gone. The discomfort is not.

Still, he doesn't put it down. Not yet.

But something is shifting—not in victory, but in honesty.

He's no longer pretending he's in control.

He's not free.

But now he sees the bars.

And maybe, just maybe, that's the first crack in the armor.

Not in quitting.

But in no longer lying about why he doesn't.

Inquiry: What Is Being Avoided?

This isn't about quitting.

It's about noticing what's *actually* happening beneath the surface — without needing to fix it.

Take a quiet moment. Sit, stand, lie down — just be still.

Then gently begin:

1 Start Where You Are

- Is the urge present now?
- If not, remember the last time it was.
- What was the physical sensation before acting on it?

*Let it be precise. Was it tightness? A buzz? Pressure in the chest?
A pull in the gut?*

Stay here a while.

2 Drop the Word “Addiction”

- What if you didn't label this as addiction?
- What if you didn't call it vaping, or smoking, or scrolling, or eating?

Just: *this sensation + this impulse + this movement.*

What's the experience *without* the story?

3 Who is it happening to?

- Can you find the one who needs comfort?
- Is that self — the one grasping - is it solid?
- Or is it a collection of thoughts + feelings + images?

Ask slowly:

Is there a “me” here, or just a response happening?

4 Look at the Fear

- When the comfort isn't reached for... what happens?
- What feeling surfaces?
- Where in the body does it live?

Stay. Feel. Don't narrate — just sense.

Ask:

Is this sensation unbearable?

Or is the thought that it's unbearable what I'm avoiding?

5 Honesty as the Doorway

Finally, ask:

Am I using this to avoid something?

And if so, what is so scary about being with what is?

Let the answer come.

Not from the head, but from silence.



Final Prompt:

If there were no way to escape — no vape, no phone, no food, no thought —

what would be left, right here, right now?

Can that be met with tenderness, without control?

The Word That Built the Wall



A story about how language shapes experience

When they were young, the word came easily. “Bad.” It was the first label that stuck.

It wasn't screamed or beaten into them—it was whispered. A raised eyebrow here. A withdrawn smile there. Each time they moved too loudly, asked too much, showed too big a feeling—Bad. Not always said aloud, but always understood.

By the time they were seven, they had a whole internal dictionary. “Lazy” for resting. “Selfish” for asking. “Weak” for crying. The words became architecture—scaffolding around the self. Language shaped the lens they looked through.

By adolescence, the story was seamless. They had forgotten it was a story at all. “I’m just like this,” they’d say, shrugging. They didn’t see the bars, only the shape they were allowed to be inside them.

It was only much later, in a quiet room with someone who listened differently, that the spell began to crack.

“Tell me what you’re feeling,” the guide said gently.

They tried. “I think I’m just being stupid.”

“No—feeling.”

“I feel... wrong. For being upset.”

“And who told you that?”

Silence. A long one. Then: “No one. Everyone. I don’t know. It’s just how it is.”

The guide waited. No fixing. No nodding.

And in the stillness, something began to unwind.

They traced it back—not to a trauma, not to a single event, but to the words. The labels. The language handed to them before they had any say. Each word had carried judgment, wrapped experience in a casing. “Too much.” “Not enough.” “Inappropriate.” “Embarrassing.” The feelings were never the problem—it was what they were called that became unbearable.

Slowly, they began to un-name things. To feel without folding it into a sentence. To meet a sensation before categorizing it. Anger

was no longer “bad”—just hot, rising. Sadness no longer “weak”—just heavy, slow.

Without the words, the feelings didn’t shrink. But they changed. They became movement, weather, waves. Not identity.

And for the first time, they weren’t afraid of their inner world.

The wall of language began to crumble, brick by brick. Not violently. Just honestly. And behind it, something tender waited—not broken, not fixed. Just there, beyond words.

Alive.

Here is a link to the meeting where this is explored.



Inquiry: Noticing the Labels

1. Begin in stillness.

Find a quiet space. Sit or lie down. Let the body settle. No need to control breath—just notice it.

2. Bring to mind a recent emotional moment.

It could be anger, sadness, guilt, embarrassment—anything that felt charged. Let yourself lightly re-enter the moment, just enough to sense what arises now.

3. Ask:

What words am I using (silently or aloud) to describe this feeling or situation?

Write them down. Be honest. Examples:

- “I’m being dramatic.”
- “This is ridiculous.”
- “I shouldn’t feel this.”
- “I’m broken.”

4. One by one, question the labels.

For each word or phrase:

- *Who gave me this word?*
- *Is it true now—or just inherited language?*
- *Does this word describe my experience—or cover it?*

5. Let go of the word. Come back to sensation.

Choose one strong sensation from the moment. Place your attention there, without calling it anything.

Ask: What is here, if I don’t name it?

Let the body describe it:

- Warm?
- Tight?
- Rising?
- Buzzing?

Notice how long you can stay without naming.

6. Invite honesty.

Ask: *What changes when I stop using words to explain this?*

Ask: *Do I need to understand this—or just feel it?*

7. Final Reflection.

When ready, journal or speak aloud:

- What did I learn about how I label myself?
- What felt different when I let go of the label?
- Is it possible that the label was the main source of suffering?

This practice is not about fixing or analyzing. It's about remembering that language is a tool—not the truth. And that before/beneath the word/label, there is only *the pure aliveness of experience*.

THIS - Just THIS



A story of an impossible story.

They always thought they were living in the world.

The world of trees and streets and parents and partners. The world where you could point to things and name them. Where a cup was a cup, and a hand was a hand. Everything seemed to have its place. Solid. Familiar. The story of life made sense when it was made of things.

But then something shifted. Not dramatically. More like the feeling that something was missing behind the obvious. It began while staring at the grain in a wooden table. What made it up? The wood, of course. But what made *that*?

A slow curiosity stirred. Not the curiosity of intellect, but of presence.

Wood, it turns out, is not one thing. It's fiber, cellulose, tiny vessels frozen in time. And that coffee mug—ceramic, glaze,

minerals melted and hardened by fire. People too—bones, skin, cells, neurons dancing in loops. The familiar world began to pull apart at the seams. The pieces of things revealed their own pieces. And behind that—more pieces still.

And then, at some point, the pieces ran out.

Or rather, understanding did.

They realized the parts they were naming—atoms, electrons, quarks—were only *concepts*. Ideas dressed up as knowledge. They hadn't touched a quark. They'd only read the word. The closer they looked, the more they saw that knowing was being propped up by language.

And not just as a neutral scaffolding—language carried meaning. Judgement. Weight.

“Strong.” “Weak.” “Good.” “Bad.” “Spiritual.” “Selfish.” These weren't just words. They had gravity. They shaped the way the world was seen, felt, responded to. The mind didn't just describe with them—it aligned with them, resisted them, built entire identities around them. A person wasn't merely *called* kind or cruel—the word became the person. And then the person worked endlessly to live up to or escape the word.

Words weren't passive labels. They were laws. And the self became their prisoner.

But what if they weren't?

What if “bad” was just a sound once, and only became a cage because it was believed?

They sat with that. With the word “unworthy.” With the word “failure.” With the sense of shame that rose just from their mention. And they noticed—shame didn't come from what

happened. It came from what it *meant*. And what it meant came from the words.

So they let the words go quiet.

There was still experience, though. The wind still touched skin. Tears still came. But now there was awareness that these experiences were described through a filter. “Sadness.” “Relief.” All of it put into boxes by the mind, making what was fluid seem fixed.

What if they didn’t name it?

They tried.

They sat with the ache in their chest, and instead of calling it “grief,” they just felt it. The rawness of it. The heat. The weight. The trembling. And in doing that, it started to shimmer—not as pain, but as something vast. Like the sea beneath the surface of a word.

Metaphor reached for it: like standing in fog, like hearing music underwater, like remembering something ancient. But even metaphor couldn't stay.

And then—just sensation.

No one feeling it. No label. No story. Just the happening of it. Breath moving. Skin tingling. Light and shadow. A thought fluttered by, not belonging to anyone. A sense of self evaporated in its wake.

And what came after wasn’t even “after.”

There was no more timeline. No more observer. No more border between skin and sky.

There was only experiencing—so intimate it swallowed the one who used to feel it.

The body no longer *in* the world. The body *as* the world. Or maybe not even that. The wind and the breath indistinguishable. A rustle in a tree was a rustle in the spine. A shadow passing over stone was a shadow passing through thought.

Then all gave way.

Not silence, but something deeper than silence. Not emptiness, but a fullness so absolute it could hold all the stars and still have space left over.

No beginning.

No center.

No name.

Only the vast hush of *this*.

And it was not known by anyone.

It was knowing itself.



Inquiry: From Naming to Knowing

Take your time. Let each question land. Let the body answer before the mind does. There's no need to solve anything. Just feel.

1. The Named World

- Look around you. What are five things you can see right now? Say their names internally.
- Now, pause... and ask: *If I couldn't name this thing, what would I be experiencing?*

- What's the difference between what's seen and what's *called*?

2. The Weight of Words

- Bring to mind a label you were once given — “lazy,” “strong,” “too sensitive,” “selfish,” “brave.”
- Let it hover.
- Ask: *What reaction happens in the body when this word is believed?*
- Is the discomfort in the label itself — or in the meaning given to it?
- Who gave it meaning?

3. Language as Control

- Ask yourself gently: *Have I ever tried to control how I'm seen by using the “right” words?*
- *Have I believed that the label “good” means safety, or “bad” means rejection?*
- What do you notice in your body as you ask this?

4. Feeling Without Naming

- Let your attention drop into the body. What's here?
- Choose one sensation — tightness, fluttering, burning, pulsing.
- Resist naming it.
- Just feel it. Let it move, shimmer, dissolve. Let it be raw, undefined.
- Ask: *Can I allow this sensation to exist without needing to call it anything?*

5. The Thought That Thinks

- Watch a thought appear. Any thought. Let it be small.
- Ask: *Who is the one thinking this? Where is it happening?*
- Is the thinker found? Or just more thoughts?

6. The Edge of Words

- As you rest in presence, ask: *What can't be described?*
- Feel into that space.
- Is anything missing there?

7. The Final Turn

- Ask with full openness: *What am I if all labels fall away?*
- Don't answer.
- Just let the question live.

Let this inquiry unfold without rushing to conclusion. Let the mind loosen. Let the world reappear — softer, unnamed, alive.

Longing



A story about comparison

They sat in the café, stirring the same cup of tea they'd let go cold. Across the room, someone laughed — vibrant, unfiltered, free. The sound echoed somewhere deep, like an ache that wasn't physical but lived in the bones.

It wasn't that they wanted what the other person had, not exactly. It was more subtle than that. More private.

It was the way the laughter landed.

The ease with which that person seemed to be. It lit up something sharp and quiet inside.

A thought arose — not quite formed, just a feeling of “Why not me?”

They looked down at their hands. Ordinary. Their mind offered a reel of little failures: missed chances, lost time, moments where they hadn't spoken up, hadn't dared. The reel wasn't cruel — just familiar. Like a bedtime story told too many times.

And yet, even in that moment, something kinder was stirring. They noticed how the ache in their chest wasn't hard. It was tender. Soft, even. Like the sadness of watching something beautiful from behind a window.

The pain wasn't about lack. It was about longing.

Not for the job, or the smile, or the charm. But for the feeling beneath it — the right to exist fully. To take up space without apology. To be radiant without defence.

And beneath that longing, something older.

A time they weren't chosen. A time their joy was too loud. A time they learned to shrink to fit.

It suddenly made sense. This was not bitterness.

This was a young part of them, still hoping.

Still believing in the possibility of being seen, not for what they should be, but as they were.

That part didn't need to be corrected. It needed to be held.

So they placed a hand over their heart. Not as a solution. Just to feel the warmth. To say, "I hear you."

The laughter across the café hadn't stopped. But it no longer stung.

Now it was just another sound in the room. Beautiful. Alive. And somehow — strangely — shared.

Not something to steal.

But something that reminded them of what was still possible.

Here's a self-inquiry exercise designed to gently reveal the inner terrain behind the feelings explored in the story — a yearning to be seen, and the tender ache that arises when someone else's ease stirs discomfort in us.



Inquiry: Meeting the Ache Beneath Comparison

1. Begin With a Memory

Bring to mind a recent moment when someone else's presence, success, or ease triggered discomfort in you.

- * What were they doing?
- * What feeling arose in you?
- * Be honest, and gentle. No need to fix. Just see.

2. Drop the Labels

Without naming it as "jealousy" or "envy" or "insecurity," simply turn to the raw sensation.

- * Where in the body does it live?
- * Is it sharp, dull, heavy, electric?
- * Does it move or stay still?

Let it be there — without trying to manage or analyze.

3. Ask: What Does This Feeling Want for Me?

Instead of pushing it away, ask this sensation:

- * What are you trying to give me?
- * What are you protecting me from?
- * What do you believe I need?

Don't rush. Let any response emerge quietly.

4. See the Story

What's the story you're telling yourself about that other person?

Now ask:

- * Is this story about them, or about something I think I lack?
- * Is it really about them, or a reflection of my own unmet longing?

5. Find the Young Part

If this longing had an age, what would it be?

- * Can you see them — "you then" — as clearly as possible?
- * What were they missing?
- * What were they taught they had to be to feel loved or seen?

Take a moment to simply sit with them. No fixing. Just presence.

6. Is It True You're Missing Something Now?

With the other person out of your awareness, just sit in this moment.

- * Is anything lacking right now if you stop comparing?
- * Can this moment — without being different — be enough?

7. Gently Return

Place a hand over your heart or belly. Breathe into the warmth of that touch.

Ask:

- * Who is comparing?
- * Is there truly a separate self who can be more or less than another?
- * Or just experience, unfolding?

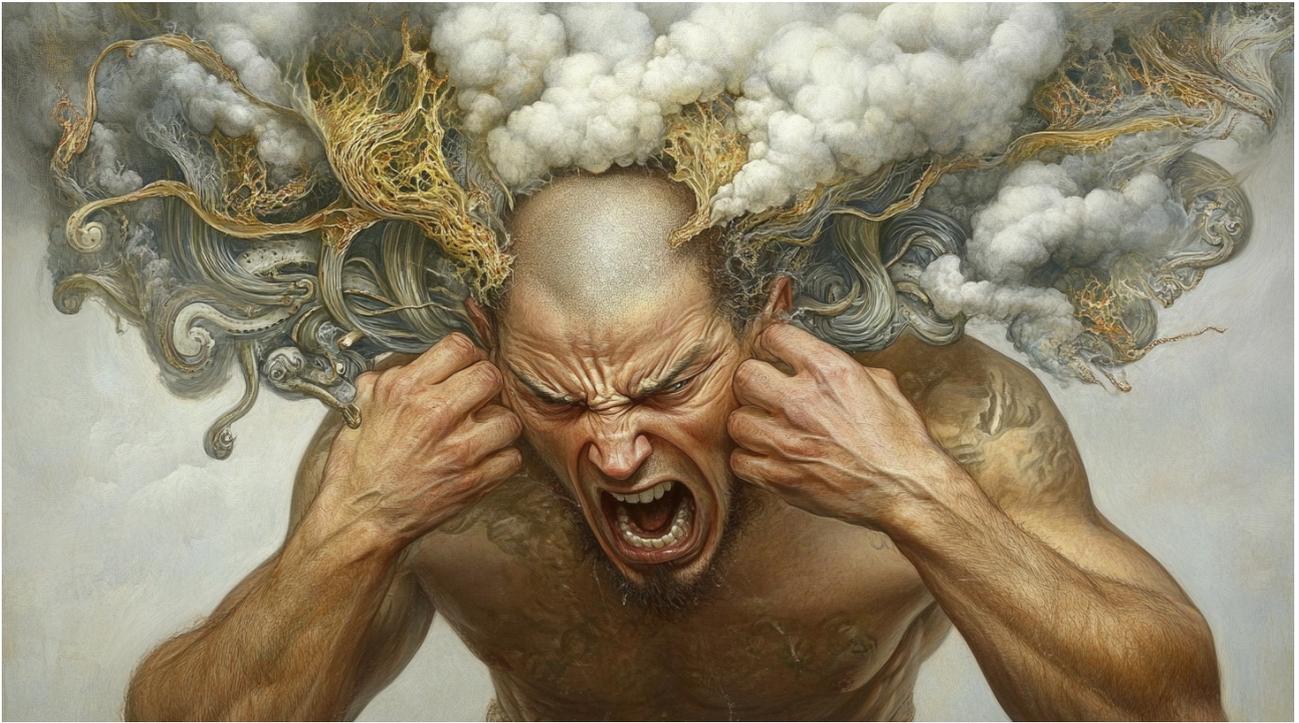
Let that question echo in stillness.

You don't have to be "more" to be worthy.

This moment doesn't need adjusting.

It only asks to be met.

Anger



A story about distraction

They said something cruel — maybe without meaning to — but it landed like a punch. And before the sting had even registered fully, anger surged up like fire. Hot, fast, protective.

The mind latched onto it quickly: *How dare they? Who do they think they are?*

It was easier to stay angry.

It felt righteous. It felt sharp. It felt like armor.

But later, when the noise had settled and the silence crept in, the edges of that anger dulled. And something softer pressed beneath it. Fear. A nervous energy in the chest, like a ripple under the skin. Not just fear of them — but of what had been touched inside.

What if they were right? What if this is how I'm seen?

It was less about them now, and more about the inner landscape stirred awake by their words.

And beneath the fear: a cold, aching terror. Not loud — just bottomless. Like a door slightly ajar at the end of a hallway,

leaking darkness. A place inside that always knew something wasn't quite safe. A familiar shadow that whispered: *Don't go there. Stay angry. Stay protected.*

But *curiosity outlasted fear.*

Behind that door was shame. Heavy, old, familiar. It wrapped the body like a damp blanket. *There's something wrong with me,* it whispered. Not about what was done. But about being. A lifelong suspicion now laid bare.

The tears came. Not loud. Not dramatic. Just honest.

Grief pooled quietly at the edges. Not just for this moment, but for every moment the shame had buried joy, laughter, expression.

And deeper still — guilt.

A deep, clenching sense of *I caused this.* That somehow, all the hurt, all the misunderstanding, was my fault. A belief born not from truth, but from innocence trying to make sense of a painful world.

This is where it all started. The lie that survival required self-blame.

And now, I saw it.

I breathed into it — not to make it disappear, but to offer space.

Compassion. A soft hand on the heart.

No fixing. No justification.

Just this simple truth:

I was always innocent.

Not perfect. But never the cause of the harm.

And from that recognition, the need for anger slowly slipped away.

Not because it wasn't valid.

But because it wasn't needed anymore.

Inquiry: Tracing Anger to Its Roots

1. Begin With What's Obvious

Recall a recent moment when you felt anger — even mild irritation.

- What happened?
- Who or what triggered it?
- What story is your mind telling about why the anger is valid?

2. Pause. Turn Inward.

Now shift from the story to the *feeling* of anger.

- Where do you feel it in your body?
- Is it heat? Tightness? Pressure?
- Can you allow it — not to act on it, not to suppress it — but just to *be* here?

Stay with it. Anger is often a protector.

3. Ask Gently: “What’s Beneath This?”

Breathe. Let the anger soften. Ask:

- Is there something I’m afraid of?
- What feels threatened if I don’t hold onto this anger?

Let fear show itself, if it’s there. Not as a concept — but as a sensation, a trembling, a contraction. No need to name it right away. Just feel.

4. Go Deeper: Is There a Terror Here?

Beneath the fear, is there something more raw?

- A sense that something is too much to handle?
- An urgency to escape, to hide, to disappear?

Stay gentle. Terror is often unbearable because it hides something more tender.

5. Beneath That: Is There Shame?

Now see — is there a part of you that feels *wrong*?

Not that something *happened*, but that *you* are somehow flawed?

- What does that shame believe about you?
- Whose voice is it? Is it even yours?

6. Beneath the Shame: Is There Guilt?

Guilt says: "I did something wrong."

Ask:

- What do I believe I did?
- Do I actually know this to be true?

Let any tears come. Guilt is heavy. But see if it leads you to the next truth.

7. At the Root: Perverted Innocence

Stay quiet now. Still.

Ask:

- Did I come to believe that *I* was the reason for what went wrong?
- That I caused the pain? That I was somehow responsible for being hurt?

Let this land.

See if something inside you still holds that twisted belief — that you *deserved* it, or that it was your fault.

Now ask:

"Is that true? Really?"

8. Offer Warmth to the One Who Believed That

Can you see the innocence — the childlike being — who made that false conclusion?

Can you hold them now? Not to fix. Just to say:

"You didn't cause this. You were always innocent."

Stay here. No need to rush to forgiveness or transcendence.

Just *see*.

And breathe.

And feel what begins to loosen.

The bully



A story of possibility

They walked the same stretch of road home from school. He always kept her close. Not from duty, but from something older. Something buried in the sinew of his body.

She was small, his younger sister, all legs and questions. She didn't notice the way his jaw would lock when boys passed too loudly, or how he shifted to stand between her and anyone too curious. But he noticed everything.

There had been a time — he couldn't say exactly when — when something had been taken from him on a walk just like this. Not stolen with fists, not bruised skin, but taken in the way a stare can strip you down, in the way a smirk can reach deeper than a slap. A boy — older, louder, bolder — had fed off the fear he could create. That was the game. Not pain, but power. And the fear had come easily, thick and paralyzing.

The trembling didn't ask permission. It lived in his hands, in his chest. It buzzed under his skin like electricity with nowhere to go.

Not anger at a person. Not anger with a name. A raw, disoriented fury — not just to protect her, but to protect the child in him that no one had.

Even the *thought* of someone mocking, cornering, playing that game — it made him cold and hot at once. He knew it wasn't rational. But reason had never helped. His body knew something his mind couldn't untangle.

The bully? That boy had been shaped too — fed a hunger for dominance, probably hurt himself, maybe worse. But that didn't change the feeling.

And it still felt like forever.

He didn't know how to fix it.

Nothing inside him believed it would ever fully go.

..but sometimes, in quieter moments, there was a flicker — a possibility that the trembling might not need to be stopped. *Just seen. Just allowed.*

Maybe, if he could stop trying to outrun it, something might loosen. Not disappear — but soften. Just a little.

If he could ever stop fighting it. If he could just sit with it.

Maybe...

Maybe if he could grok that it wasn't about him or the bullies, but it was just a happening.. This *thing* that he called “my anger”.

Maybe...

Inquiry: Meeting the Trembling

1. Begin by remembering.

Let yourself call to mind a time when you felt something rise in you — a trembling, a flare, a heat — not directed at anyone in particular, but just there.

Maybe it was a memory.

Maybe it was when someone raised their voice.
Or a tone, a smirk, a look.

Let yourself feel into that moment again — slowly, gently.

2. Now ask:

“What did I want to do in that moment?”

“What was the instinct — protect, defend, run, disappear?”

Notice the urge, not just in the mind, but in the body.

Where do you feel it most?

Chest? Hands? Jaw? Belly?

Let it be there.

3. Now ask:

“What did this moment remind me of?”

“Was there a time, long ago, that felt similar — even if the details are different?”

Let the body answer.

Is there an image?

A younger version of you?

Someone you wanted to protect — or be protected by?

If nothing comes, that’s okay. Stay with the **sensation**.

4. Gently turn toward the trembling.

You don’t need to fix it. You don’t even need to understand it.

Ask softly:

“Can this trembling be here without being a problem?”

Just for this moment.

Not forever.

Just now.

Can it be allowed?

5. Now ask:

“What happens if I stop calling this ‘mine’?”

“What if this is not *my* fear, *my* rage — just fear. Just trembling. Just energy?”

Sit with that.

No one doing it.

Just a storm passing through the sky of you.

6. Finally, ask:

“Can I let this be seen — not fixed, not silenced — but seen?”

By you.

By the ground.

By whatever silence holds you.

Repeat whenever the buzzing rises again.

You are not weak for feeling it.

You are strong for noticing.

The mystery at the heart of what we call “reality”



A story about what is actual.

Lena sat at the edge of the lake, her toes curling into the cool water, watching the ripples fold over themselves like thoughts.

This place was beautiful — water, trees, sky — and then, something in her stilled. A stillness not of silence, but of something falling away. Something ungraspable.

She picked up a stone. It was smooth, gray, solid. Real. And yet — *was it?*

She turned it in her hand, not thinking so much as sensing.

The weight of it, the texture.

She couldn't know this stone. Not really. Not beyond her perception of it.

Her eyes, her fingers, the shape it formed inside her experience — that was all she had.

...And that? That was everything.

“It just is,” she whispered to no one. Then paused.

But even that, she realized, was an interpretation. “Isness” required some measure of recognition. Her awareness brought it into her field. Without that... *would it still be?*

And then: *Does it matter?*

The breeze lifted a strand of her hair. The sun flickered on the lake. And in that moment, Lena saw — not with her eyes, but with something older, quieter — that all she could ever truly know was this: the movement of experience. This rising, this unfolding, this now. Everything else — the stone, the trees, even her own name — were stitched from concepts. Useful, but partial.

She could not know the absolute. No one could. Not really.

But she could know this moment. The feeling of wind against skin. The sound of a distant bird. The quiet ache of wondering.

Was there a God in the absolute? She didn't know. Maybe. Maybe not.

Maybe the whole question dissolved when not asked from a mind needing answers.

She dropped the stone.

It made a splash.

Tiny waves rolled toward her feet and then slipped away.

Somewhere behind her, the world went on — cars, clocks, conversations.

But here, on the shoreline of unknowing, Lena smiled.

She didn't have answers.

She didn't need them.

What she had was **this**. The raw, flickering flame of experience.

Not truth. Not illusion.

Just... what was.

And for now, that was enough.

Inquiry: What Is This, Really?

Take a few quiet breaths. Let your attention settle not into thought, but into the immediate sense of presence. Let everything be as it is — no need to fix or change anything.

Now begin:

1. What is here, right now?

Not the name of it. Not the label. But the actual *experience*.
Is it a sound? A sensation? A flicker of emotion? Notice it.

2. What makes this “real”?

Is it the feeling? The seeing? Or just the belief that it’s real?
Can you find the line between “what is” and your idea *about* what is?

3. If there were no thoughts labeling this moment, what would remain?

Let go of names — tree, sky, body, breath — and rest in the rawness.
What is this, without a story?

4. What do you know for sure?

Can you be certain of anything beyond your current experiencing?
Not yesterday. Not tomorrow. Just now.

5. Who is knowing this experience?

Can you find the one who is having this experience?
Look slowly, gently... is there a “knower,” or only knowing?

6. Does the experience need to be explained to be valid?

Can it just be? Without conclusions?
What happens when you don’t try to define it?

7. Where is the boundary between you and the world?

Is that a feeling? A thought? A habit of perception?
Is it as solid as it seems?

8. What if this — just this — is enough?

No future understanding, no spiritual goal, no answer.
Just this flicker of awareness. Is that okay?

Let your responses come from the body, not the intellect. Let silence be your teacher.

You're not here to figure anything out — just to *see*, to *feel*, to *be*. Not in the world of names. But in the truth of what is here, now. And perhaps that's all that was ever needed.

Creating that self



A story about invention.

I was sitting with others, saying nothing. But inside, a thousand movements. A glance from across the room. A silence after my comment. A subtle shift in someone's tone. Each tiny moment—almost nothing—yet my body responded.

A flicker of tension in the chest. A slight contraction in the belly. I didn't notice it at first. Just a vague sense of wrongness.

Something was off. But when I gave it space—let the sensations speak—I could hear what was happening.

“She doesn't agree with you.”

“You sound foolish.”

“You're being judged.”

None of it was said aloud. But the sense of self was building fast, like a reflex. In milliseconds, I'd constructed a me: a me who is misunderstood, who needs defending, who might be wrong, who must be liked. The ego had arrived.

Not with fireworks, but with whispers.

And this is how it happens, over and over—moment to moment. A cascade of subtle contractions, like threads weaving a tapestry of self. One thought, one reaction, one twinge of discomfort or flash of pride. We become someone, just like that. Over and over again. It's so fast, we rarely see it.

But today, we talked about it. One person described how just the idea of being ignored could spark a whole self into being. Another noticed how the need to sound wise created a character that had to keep proving something. And another saw how every time they were praised, they tightened with the fear of losing it.

We weren't judging it. Just seeing it. And in that seeing—something softened.

Because when these patterns are unconscious, they run everything. But when they're noticed, they start to unravel. Not by force. Just by being witnessed.

We learned we didn't have to fight the ego, or try to kill the self. We only had to be aware of the little ways it builds itself, again and again.

Each contraction, each reaction, each grasp at control—that's where the self takes form.

And in the noticing, something else becomes possible.

Not a better self.

Just a moment of space.

A breath where no one needs to be anything.

A pause where the story doesn't have to continue.

And in that pause: freedom.

Inquiry: The Moment the Self Is Made

1. Begin with Presence.

Sit quietly, or bring attention to this moment wherever you are.

Take one slow breath.

And another.

Notice: Is there any sense of “me” already forming?

A thought about what you’re doing?

A subtle tension in the body?

2. Scan the body gently.

Ask:

“Where is there a flicker of contraction?”

Chest? Stomach? Neck? Jaw?

You don’t need to fix it. Just notice.

What’s the sensation?

Tight? Hot? Buzzing? Heavy?

Let yourself feel it fully.

3. Ask the sensation a question.

“What does this part think is happening right now?”

“What is it afraid of? What is it trying to protect?”

Wait.

Don’t think it — listen for it.

Words might come. Or not. That’s okay.

Even if there’s silence, stay with the feeling.

4. Now ask:

“What kind of ‘me’ is forming in this moment?”

“Who do I feel like I need to be?”

Am I trying to be helpful?

Smart?

Invisible?

Liked?

See what identity is taking shape.

Just seeing it is enough.

5. Trace it back.

“What triggered this identity to appear?”

Was it a pause? A glance? A tone of voice?

Was it something someone else did—or didn't do?

Even the subtlest spark can create a self.

Just notice that.

6. Now pause. Just pause.

Let everything be exactly as it is.

No story. No fixing.

Just awareness.

Ask:

“Can I allow all of this—this forming, this response—to simply be seen?”

Let go of the effort to change it.

7. Close with this:

“I don't need to stop the ego from forming.

I only need to notice the moment it begins.”

“And in that noticing—nothing has to be done.”

Just one breath of space.

One moment where the story doesn't have to continue.

That's enough.

Experience the sensations



A story about actual experience.

I sit still. No goal. Just a curiosity.

The first thing I notice is a tightness—not sharp, just dense—across my lower belly. I name it. “Tightness. Dull. Slight downward pull.” There’s also warmth, more to the right, and a strange hollow flutter just above the navel. “Warm. Hollow. Flutter.” The labels land easily, like placing stickers on a map. Then I go in a little closer. The tightness isn’t solid—it pulses. Faintly, but it does. The flutter isn’t consistent either; it has pauses, like a stutter in the wind. The warmth has layers—core heat, and then a surface shimmer, like skin that’s been in the sun.

I let the locations fade. No more “belly” or “navel.” Now I just feel the sensations as they are, not tied to a place. They rise and fall, thicken and disperse. They’re not static. They’re alive, moving, changing.

My mind tries to track the pattern. “This means something,” it offers. “It’s anxiety. It’s anticipation. It’s digestion.” I thank it

silently, and let the meaning fall away. I don't need the meaning. I want the raw data.

I feel how the sensations are never still. They twist, quiver, throb, glow, vanish. I stop thinking *about* them and simply feel them. Not as objects. Not as signs. Just... as themselves.

Labels collapse.

“Tight” becomes too coarse. “Warm” doesn't come close. Even “sensation” feels like too much. Now I'm just swimming in the textures—waves of tingling, pulses of density, a soft edgeless expansion behind the chest. It's not even *my* chest anymore.

There's no *me* watching the experience.

There's only the experiencing.

Only this rhythm, this shimmer, this vanishing and returning.

Not knowing. No commentary. Just the infinite subtlety of now.

There's no one inside this body, no separate mind. There's no observer. There is only the flicker and fade, the rise and fall. The echo of stillness and the breath of movement. It's not mine. It's not happening to me.

It's just happening.

It is what is.

And then even that dissolves.

There is no *it* now. Only this, and this is not a thing.

This is not describable.

This is what's left when description ends.

Only experiencing.

Only this.

Only.

Inquiry: From Labels to Living Texture

1. Sit. Still. No Goal.

Find a quiet place. Let the body rest. Let there be no agenda.

Now ask:

“What is happening in the body right now?”

Let your attention land somewhere—where it’s most noticeable.

2. Begin with Labels.

Name the area.

Name the sensation.

“Where is it?”

“What words describe the feeling?”

Use simple terms:

Tightness. Tingling. Dull. Warm. Hollow. Pressure.

Don’t rush. Let each label arrive naturally.

3. Go Closer. More Subtle.

Now ask:

“Is that label still accurate?”

“Is it changing?”

“What texture is behind the word?”

Notice layers, movement, shifts in intensity.

Maybe it pulses.

Maybe it hovers and fades.

Start to feel the *life* in the sensation.

4. Drop the Location.

Now forget where it is.

Let it lose its place in the body.

Just attend to the *quality* of the sensation itself.

Ask:

“If I don’t place this anywhere... what’s left?”

“Can I feel this without referring to body or label?”

5. Let Meaning Drop Away.

Thought may suggest:

“This is anxiety.”

“This is excitement.”

“This is because...”

Gently reply:

“That might be true. But I’m just here to feel.”

Let the *interpretation* go.

Feel what’s *underneath* the explanation.

6. Beyond Words. Beyond Thought.

Now ask:

“What’s here without any label?”

“If I don’t call this anything... what is it?”

Feel the raw sensation.

The shimmer. The pulse. The motion.

You are no longer observing — you *are* the experiencing.

7. Rest in the Experiencing Itself.

There is no more commentary.

No analysis.

No observer.

Only what is moving. Flickering.

Only the breath and not even “breath.”

Just rhythm.

Just this.

 *Optional reflection after returning:*

“What did I notice when I stopped naming?”

“Was there a shift from ‘watching’ to simply ‘being’?”

“Is it possible to live like this, even briefly?”

It's not about what comes up, but what triggers that.



A story about what's behind what arises.

I'm sitting across from a friend when it happens. They drop one off-hand comment—nothing violent, nothing overt—and my chest lights up like flint on stone. Rage surges. The mind shouts: *I can't believe you said that!* On the surface, I'm furious because I

disagree. But I pause, remembering my own mantra: “*It’s not about what comes up, but what triggers it. It’s not about what arises, but my relationship to it.*”

So I run an inner inquiry, like a slow-motion replay.

First layer: obvious disagreement. Easy.

Second layer: discomfort. Their words landed on something tender—an exposed wire I didn’t know was there. The anger keeps me from feeling that raw spot.

What is that raw spot? I can’t name it yet, but I sense a belief humming underneath: *I’m not respected*. The moment that belief wiggles, a new “self” is conjured—an indignant protector, constructed out of thin air to defend the image of me that must be respected at all costs.

That construction is the real trigger: identification. I’ve fused with a story about who I am, and anger is hired muscle guarding it. The outrage feels safer than letting the belief speak its full sentence: *Maybe I’m small. Maybe I don’t matter.* I don’t want to hear that, so I roar instead.

Now comes the fork in the road.

Option one: stay fused. Argue, blame, stew. Nothing changes; the self-image hardens, waiting for the next spark.

Option two: meet the trigger, not the story. I turn inward and ask, *What exactly feels threatened?* A knot in my gut answers. I hold it like a curious stone—no label, no judgement. Seen clearly, it’s just sensation, vibrating and fading like everything else. Without my resistance, the “disrespected me” can’t keep its shape. The anger loses fuel.

Notice: I never had to fix the belief or trace it back to childhood. I only had to recognize that my suffering wasn’t the words spoken, but the hand that grabbed them and said *This is who I am*. When that grip loosens, the trigger dissolves.

Does the underlying belief need therapy, journaling, chanting? Maybe—or maybe not. Sometimes simply exposing the

mechanism is enough: belief arises, identification clamps, emotion flares. See the clamp, and the circuit breaks.

So the next time fire shoots up my spine, I'll remember: it's never the spark alone. It's the gunpowder of identity waiting underneath—and my willingness to put the match down instead of striking it.

Inquiry: What's Really Being Defended?

1. Begin with the Trigger

Recall a moment where something someone said or did caused a strong emotional reaction—especially anger or defensiveness.

Now ask:

“What exactly was said or done?”

Let yourself feel the reaction freshly—don't judge it or try to calm it yet.

2. Surface Layer

Ask:

“What am I consciously reacting to?”

“Do I disagree with what was said? Why?”

Write or name it simply: *They dismissed me. They misunderstood. They were wrong.*

Then pause.

3. Second Layer: The Tender Spot

Now ask:

“Why did *that* land so strongly?”

“What feeling am I avoiding by staying angry?”

Let the emotion guide you toward the discomfort underneath the anger.

Often it's something like:

- “I feel unseen.”
- “I feel small.”
- “I don't feel safe.”
- “I don't feel respected.”

Name it—not to fix it, but to see it.

4. The Constructed Self

Now ask:

“Who do I become in this moment?”

“What image of myself is trying to defend or protect?”

Notice the character that appears. Is it the expert, the good friend, the one who deserves better, the misunderstood one?

“Was that self here before the comment?”

“Or was it built the moment I felt triggered?”

Notice the mechanism: *belief + identification = reaction*

5. Feel Instead of Fight

Let go of the story. Let go of the identity.

Bring your attention to the raw sensation in the body:

“Where do I feel this most?”

“What's the shape, movement, intensity of the sensation?”

Don't interpret it. Don't analyze it. Just feel it.

“Can I stay with the feeling without needing it to change?”

Watch what happens when it is simply seen, without resistance.

6. Optional Final Questions

“What if this moment doesn’t mean anything about who I am?”
“Is it possible this discomfort doesn’t need fixing, just witnessing?”

Breathe. Let it be.

 *Notice:*

You never had to agree with what was said.

You never had to change your belief or “solve” the emotion.

You only had to *see the identification forming*, and let go of the grip.

That seeing is the release. That awareness is the freedom.

is awakening a thing?



A story about what we seek.

For those seeking it is.

Expectations are that the self will be suffering-free.

That it will be an achievement that results in something definable.

That it is a linear progression to that achievement.

That it will be permanent and unchanging.

That senses will always be acute and perceptive.

That no separation from others or the world will be experienced.

That high drama will confirm that a significant shift has occurred.

That bliss will be permanent. That I will never get sick again.

That I will be able to stop my thoughts.

Money problems will be a thing of the past.

I will be able to manifest prosperity.

I will never hurt others again

I will never develop dementia

If I have kids, I'll be the perfect parent

I will be physically beautiful

I will never have any more interpersonal conflicts
I will never again get angry
I will never be hurt
I will be loved (approval of others)
I will always know what to do (control)

for those who have shifted in certain ways it is.

The conditions that used to cause suffering still occur, but now there is a different reaction to them. Probably still unpleasant but more often interesting. Curiosity and humor frequently present. That the happening wasn't a result. It wasn't one thing. That it wasn't controllable. That it wasn't complete. That the complexity and subtlety make it undefinable and impossible to communicate. It fluctuates. More in the beginning. Clarity (or however it is described) comes and goes. We are after all establishing new habits.

The momentary ebb and flow mentioned above can exist inside a more prolonged fluctuation (say days or weeks)

Sometimes we are so focused on what is going on internally that our perception of the 'external' is dampened.

Considerable deepening after the initial 'shift' is usually experienced before experiencing 'oneness' happens. This also fluctuates.

Many (maybe most) people slide into this without a dramatic epiphany.

There are incidents of magic (bliss) every day. They are moments when the senses alight on some detail that excites awe. They are momentary. What could be described as being more or less permanent (haha) is an attitude of contentment with whatever presents.

No thought stopping here. Much of the time thoughts are busy in the background but they are not engaged.

The money situation has improved, but not in a big way. No lottery wins, but now it doesn't seem a problem like it used to.

There is curiosity as to why the flow has increased but no explanation is complete.

vis-à-vis the last answer. There is speculation that more openness to possibilities might be involved.

The intention to not hurt others (emotionally or physically) exists but accidents do happen.

Physical illness & death will inevitably occur. They is way less likely to be that stress induced.

Perfect parents only exist in stories.

We all get old and wrinkly

It takes two to interact.

Anger will arise until it doesn't. It probably only lasts seconds and suffering isn't added to it. It's more occasional.

Toes still get stubbed. Pain exists but is not prolonged or added to by stories.

i still like approval and love but don't take it personally if it doesn't happen.

i never know in advance what to do. Intention doesn't equal result. They said awakening would be the end of suffering. The stories whispered of bliss, of clarity, of peace unshakable. I believed them.

At first, awakening was a goal. A fix. The final chapter in the book of problems.

I made lists. I sought teachings. I imagined that if I worked hard enough that one day, I would cross some invisible line and everything would fall into place.

That I would no longer feel the jagged edge of doubt, the sting of rejection, the hunger to be loved.

I imagined a version of myself who was immune to conflict, who never snapped, who didn't feel awkward in groups. I saw this self with luminous skin and unwavering calm. There were no more money troubles. No more confusion. Only perfect, wordless knowing.

I thought it would be permanent. That I'd never fall back into the fog. That my senses would always be heightened. That I'd always feel one with everything. I believed I'd finally stop my thoughts, and my life would become effortlessly abundant—love, money, health, all flowing without friction.

But when something finally shifted, it didn't look like that.

Nothing exploded. No one applauded.

What happened was simple: i saw that my thoughts weren't facts.

That my identity was a patchwork of old echoes.

That the world i'd been fighting was never the problem—it was my war with what arose that created what i labeled as a problem.

The shift didn't end suffering. It changed my relationship to it.

Some old triggers still trigger. Physical pain still comes. But now i don't fall as deep. The hooks don't hold as long. There's space, and sometimes, that space is enough. Often that space is an opening.

Anger still arises—sometimes as a sharp jolt, a fire that races through the chest and clenches the fists. It can be intense.

But it rarely lasts more than a few seconds now. It burns brightly, then fades. It doesn't spiral into a story, a justification, or a plan. It just rises and falls. And sometimes, it doesn't arise at all.

i saw that i'd been creating a self in reaction to pain—a self who was outraged, offended, hurt. That self felt real. But it was born of resistance. A flare of identity wrapped around a belief.

Now i watch. i feel. i stay curious. Shame visits, but doesn't linger. And in rare moments, there's awe—like the world is breathing me.

i've seen how awakening isn't a point in time. It's a pattern of dissolving and reforming, again and again. Moments of clarity followed by confusion. But the difference is i don't make confusion a problem.

There are magical glimpses—sunlight on stone, a quiet joy in doing dishes, a breath that feels like home. But they pass. And that’s okay.

i don’t expect awakening to rescue me anymore. i let it walk beside me, quietly. i meet life as it comes, without needing it to change.

And that...

That feels like awakening.

INQUIRY: Is Awakening a Thing?

This exercise invites you to look gently and honestly at your own relationship to the idea of awakening—what you expect from it, what you fear about it, and what’s already happening in your experience.

Take your time. Let each question land before moving on.

1. Begin Where You Are

Close your eyes or soften your gaze. Take a breath.

Ask yourself:

“What do I believe awakening will give me?”

Let the answers arise without judgment. You may discover hopes like:

- “I will stop suffering.”
- “I will finally be calm.”

- “I will be respected / loved / free.”

Note them.

2. Trace the Shape of the Expectation

For each hope or belief you noticed, ask:

“Where did I get this idea of awakening?”

Was it from a book? A teacher? An experience someone else described? A cultural or spiritual story?

Now ask:

“Is this something I’ve *actually* experienced, or something I’ve been imagining?”

Let the difference be clear.

3. Explore the Pain Behind the Hope

Now take one of your expectations—perhaps the desire to be free of anger or pain—and go deeper:

“What do I believe would *no longer be true* if I awakened?”

Maybe: “I wouldn’t feel so helpless.”

Or: “I wouldn’t be a burden.”

Or: “I would finally be okay.”

Ask:

“Can I gently meet the part of me that longs for this?”

Bring awareness to that longing. Where do you feel it in your body? Don’t fix. Just notice.

4. Look at What Is Already Here

Now ask:

“What if awakening isn’t an event, but a way of meeting what arises?”

“What happens if I don’t treat confusion or discomfort as a failure?”

Pause. Feel your body. Let the question do its work in silence.

Now gently ask:

“Have I ever experienced a moment of openness, stillness, or clarity—however brief?”

“Was it an arrival... or just a noticing?”

5. Let the Myth Unwind

Consider this:

“What if awakening doesn’t mean the end of suffering, but the end of *personalizing* it?”

“What if pain still arises... but it doesn’t define me?”

Let that truth sit. Let it breathe.

6. A Closing Reflection

Complete this sentence, slowly and honestly:

“Right now, awakening feels like...”

(no need to be profound—just real)

Then ask:

“Can I let *this* be enough?”

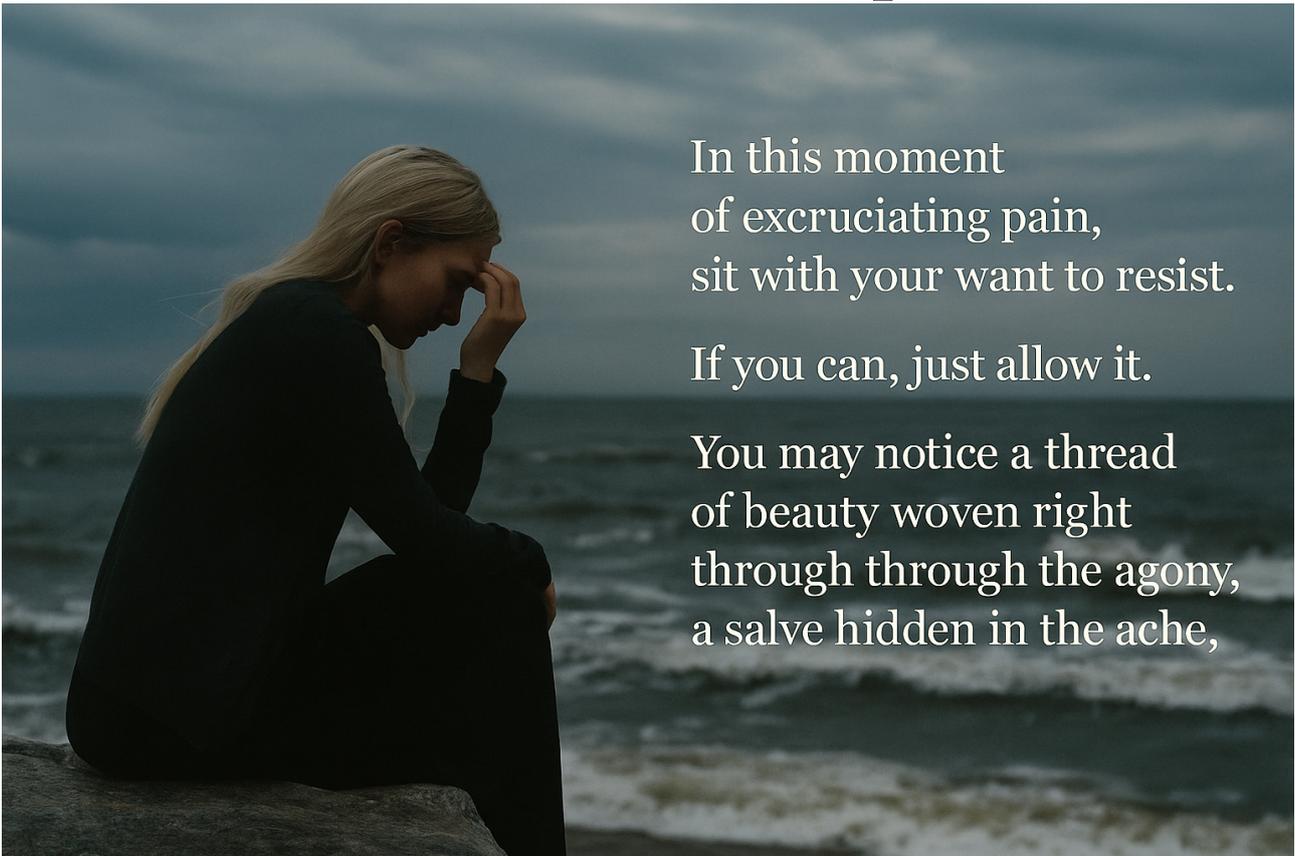
Breathe.

Awakening isn't out there.

It's right here, in the not-knowing, in the honesty, in the breath that touches this moment.

☁ No conclusions needed.

Can i not want to want the pain to end?



In this moment
of excruciating pain,
sit with your want to resist.

If you can, just allow it.

You may notice a thread
of beauty woven right
through through the agony,
a salve hidden in the ache,

There is no story of before. No vision of what might come after.
Only this.

This pain, right now. Full. Fierce. Without boundary. It doesn't ask
for attention—it demands it. It doesn't knock—it breaks the door
in.

There's no label that fits. No word can hold it. But still, I try, just
to steady myself: tight, dense, sharp, burning. Throbbing behind
the eyes. A twisting in the gut. I say these things, softly, as if
naming a storm might tame it. It doesn't.

The sensation shifts, slightly. Or maybe it doesn't. I'm not sure
anymore if it's the pain moving or my perception of it. Either way,
it's still here.

I breathe, but not to calm it. Just to breathe. Just to stay.

There's no spiritual bypass here. No mantras to mask it. This isn't
a lesson. It isn't noble. It isn't beautiful. It just is. And it's all-
consuming.

My mind rushes to make sense of it, to build stories around it: why it's here, what caused it, how long it will last. But I've heard these stories before. They never help.

So I stop following the thoughts. I let them go on without me. I'm here.

The sensations are not a puzzle. They are weather. They roll through. Cold front. Heatwave. Electrical storm. I cannot resist them without tearing myself in two.

I notice the want—not for the pain to stop, but for the wanting itself to stop. That hunger for relief is a second ache, riding the back of the first. And I watch that too.

Even the desire to be free from desire is allowed.

No effort to push anything away. No reaching for escape. No grasping for meaning. Just breath. Just the rawness of this moment.

I don't pretend it's okay. But I also don't pretend it shouldn't be happening.

This is the experience. It's not about redemption or realization.

There's no transformation in sight. Just sensation.

Just trembling.

Just now.

The pain doesn't lessen, but something loosens. A thread of soft presence enters the room. Not comfort exactly—but company. A being-with.

Noticing that even in the worst of it, I'm still here. Not broken.

Not gone. Just here.

And if nothing changes—if this is how it is—there is still this: a breath, a beat, an openness that was not here a moment ago.

Not peace.

But something like it.

And that is enough. For now.

Inquiry:

Can I Not Want to Want the Pain to End?

This is not an exercise to *fix* pain. It's not about pushing through or finding meaning in it.

It's an invitation to gently, honestly explore your *relationship* with the pain—especially the subtle wanting for even the **wanting** to be gone.

Settle in. Go slowly. There is no rush.

1. Find a Quiet Moment

- Sit or lie down comfortably.
- Let your attention rest in your body.
- Let this moment be exactly as it is. No agenda.

2. Let the Pain Speak

“What sensations are here right now?”

Don't name them to fix them—just to *meet* them. Use simple words at first, like:

- Tight
- Burning
- Throbbing
- Dense
- Buzzing

Now go closer.

Are the sensations moving? Static? Deep or surface-level?

Can you feel their edges? Their temperature?

Notice their *textures*, like weather systems passing through the body.

3. Find the Wanting

Now ask:

“Is there a wanting for this to stop?”

If yes, where do you feel it?

Is it in the chest? The jaw? Behind the eyes?

Describe it like you did the pain—without judgment.

Then ask again, gently:

“Is there a wanting for the wanting to stop?”

Let this second-layer desire be felt. Just notice it. No shame.

It’s okay to want it all to end. Let that be true. Let it be seen.

4. Include Everything

Now softly ask:

“Can I allow the pain, the wanting, and the wanting of the wanting—all to be here?”

Don’t force a yes.

Just feel into it.

Notice if there’s any resistance.

Notice the impulse to distract, to analyze, to solve.

You’re not trying to win against the pain. You’re sitting with it, like with a wounded animal. Quiet presence.

5. Drop the Labels

Rest for a few moments in direct sensation.

No thoughts.

No labels.

Just experiencing.

This isn't peace.

It isn't insight.

It's just this moment.

“Can this, just as it is, be enough for now?”

Let that be the final question.

Breathe.

Stay with yourself.

Stay.

i want to be liked..



A story about self image.

There was a time when walking into a room meant scanning every face for approval. I could feel it in my stomach — that flutter of anticipation, that needing to be liked. It wasn't just a preference; it felt like survival.

If someone didn't smile, I wondered what I'd done wrong.

If I said something and someone looked away, I replayed the words for hours.

I've had this thing all my life.

Wanting to be liked.

Wanting to be safe in others' opinions of me. I got good at reading people, of becoming whatever I sensed they needed me to be. Kind, agreeable, funny, smart — it changed depending on who I was with.

But underneath it all, I was tired.

Not of people — I love people — but of needing something from them. Of needing them to reflect back something that would tell me I was okay.

Eventually, I started to notice something.

Even when I tried really hard — maybe especially when I tried — it still didn't always work.

Some people liked me. Some didn't.

...And it had less and less to do with me.

That's when I began to see: people don't actually see me.

They see their idea of me — something shaped by their own filters, wounds, hopes, and projections.

That's what they respond to.

And because that's the case... I have no control over what version of "me" they're interacting with...

So what exactly am I trying to manage?

So now, yes — I still like being liked. It's human. But it no longer owns me.

If someone doesn't like me, I don't crumble. I don't spin. I don't rehearse the conversation in my head.

Because I know it's not really about me.

And that's a strange kind of freedom — to let people think what they will, and to keep showing up anyway. As me. Not edited. Not performing.

Liked or not, I'm okay here.

And that's new.

And real.

Inquiry: The Need to Be Liked

Before beginning:

Sit quietly. Let the body settle. Notice the breath. Then read each prompt slowly. After each question, pause. Let the question land. Don't look for answers in thought — let the body and present experience speak instead.

1. Scan the Memory

Bring to mind a moment when you felt the need to be liked.

Maybe entering a room, a conversation, or a performance.

Let yourself feel it again. Not the story — but the sensation in the body.

- Where is it felt?
- Does it have a shape, a temperature, a pressure?

2. Meet the Sensation

Without naming it “anxiety” or “insecurity” — can you just be with the raw sensation?

Not as a problem. Just as what is.

- What happens when you don’t try to change it?
- Can you allow it to move, shift, or even intensify without interference?

3. Notice the Thought-Feeling Link

Now, see what thought is attached to this sensation.

- Is there a belief about what must happen to be safe?
- A story about who you need to be to be okay?

Write or speak it out loud.

4. Look for the One Needing Approval

Right now, can you find the one who needs to be liked?

Not the idea of them. The actual entity.

- Where is it?
- Is it a thought? A feeling? A location in the body?
- Is it solid? Or made of changing sensations and thoughts?

5. See Through the Other

When someone likes or dislikes “you” — who or what are they actually responding to?

- Are they seeing you?

- Or a projection?

And if that's true, what are you trying to control?

6. Let Go Into What's Already Here

- Without managing anything — can you rest in just being here?
- No image to uphold. No approval to seek.
- Just awareness, aware of itself.

What's it like to be no one in particular, with nothing to prove?

Repeat as needed. Not to fix. But to remember what's real.

The breeze



A story about acceptance.

They told him to watch his thoughts, to fix his patterns, to trace every emotion to its childhood root. And he tried. He journaled, meditated, even learned the names of his shadows. But still, the unease clung like fog. The thoughts didn't stop. The overwhelm still came in waves.

One afternoon, he sat by the window, watching wind ripple through the trees. He was too tired to fix anything. Thoughts were still spinning, but he didn't chase them. He didn't resist them either. They swirled, flickered, repeated themselves—and for once, he didn't mind.

It occurred to him: maybe the problem wasn't the thoughts. Maybe it was how he'd been taught to fear them.

He noticed a tightness in his chest. Normally, he'd name it: anxiety. Then he'd strategize: breathe deeper, sit straighter, find the trigger. But today, he just let the tightness be. It was there. It wasn't good or bad. It was just a feeling. Like a breeze on his skin. There was no magic. No bliss. Just a strange kind of quiet.

The thoughts kept coming. You're wasting time. You'll never be free of this. You should be doing something.

And still—he didn't respond. He didn't resist. They were clouds. He was sky.

Somewhere in that stillness, he saw the trap: every time he tried to fix a feeling, he reinforced the idea that something was wrong.

That he was broken.

That HE was broken.

That **SOMEBODY** was broken.

...and there it was. The creation of an illusion.

Making something (someone) out of nothing.

Now it was blaringly obvious. The old way of thinking presumed that all of this was happening to someone, when, of course, it was just happening.

His past didn't need solving. His pain didn't need a label. His thoughts didn't need debate.

They only needed space.

For the first time, he didn't need to understand it all. Not knowing, he realized, was its own kind of freedom. The wind didn't know where it was going. It just moved.

And maybe he could too.

So he sat. And let it all be.

Not because he gave up.

But because, finally, he had stopped fighting what never needed to be fought.

It's not the fact that you get lost in thoughts or feel overwhelmed that's the real issue—it's how you relate to those experiences. The suffering comes not from the thoughts or emotions themselves, but from seeing them as a problem, resisting them, or believing you need to fix or avoid them.

You don't have to figure out every story or shadow from your past. You don't need to do anything special to "fix" what you're feeling. The invitation is to simply let whatever arises be there—without labeling it as wrong, without making it a problem, without trying to change it. Just feel it, like you feel the breeze on your cheek: it's there, and then it passes.

The paradox is that the more you try to change, fix, or escape what you're feeling, the more you create the sense that something is wrong. When you allow yourself to just experience what's present—without resistance, without adding meaning—it naturally moves through you.

It's okay to not know what to do. In fact, that "not knowing" is the doorway to a new way of being. You can't think your way into this; it's something you discover by allowing, by being present, by surrendering the urge to control.

Suffering is not in the feeling itself, but in the resistance to it. All of life—pleasure and pain, joy and discomfort—is part of the unfolding. You don't have to make any of it a problem. When you see this, you can begin to relax, to "kick back and enjoy the ride," knowing that everything is always moving, always changing, and that you are okay, even in the midst of it all.

Let go of the need to “do” or “fix.” Trust that whatever arises will pass, just like the breeze. And if you forget, that’s okay too—just notice, and return to this simple acceptance.

You are not your thoughts, not your feelings, not your problems. You are the breeze that touches your cheek.

Inquiry Exercise: Let It Be Like the Breeze

This isn’t a fixing practice.

It’s a practice in *not fixing* — and seeing what happens when you stop fighting what never needed to be fought.

Let each step be slow. Gentle. Like you’re walking with an old friend.

1. Sit Quietly

Find a comfortable position. Eyes open or closed.

Take a few soft breaths. No need to change them.
Let the breath breathe itself.

2. What’s Here Now?

Ask:

“What’s present in my experience right now?”

Let your attention scan gently through the body.
You might notice:

- A tightness in the chest

- A buzz behind the eyes
- Restlessness in the legs
- Thoughts rushing, spinning, looping

Name things softly—just enough to become aware:

“Tightness... hum... pressure...”

No interpretation. No fixing. Just naming, like watching clouds drift by.

3. Notice the Impulse to Change

Ask:

“Is there a part of me that wants this to be different?”

Notice how even labeling something as “anxiety” or “overwhelm” often comes with a subtle command: *Get rid of this.*

Pause there.

Can you feel the energy of *resistance*?

Where is it? What does it feel like?

Just let it be felt. Stay with it. Don’t turn away.

4. Let Go of the Fight

Ask gently:

“Can I let this be here, just for now?”

“Does it need to be a problem?”

Let this question open space, not give answers.

Maybe nothing changes—and that’s okay.

But maybe... the grip softens, the labels loosen.

You feel what's there, like you feel the breeze—no need to hold it or explain it.

5. Let the Mind Ramble

Thoughts will still come: *You're wasting time. You should be meditating better. You're broken.*

Let them come.

“Can I watch these thoughts like leaves floating down a stream?”

Don't follow. Don't push. Just witness.

6. Come Back to the Body

If you drift into analysis, come back.

“What am I feeling in my body, right now?”

“Can I meet this without needing it to change?”

The tightness, the heat, the fog—let it all be here. Not good. Not bad. Just here.

7. Rest in Not Knowing

Ask:

“Can I be okay not understanding what this is?”

Feel the freedom in that question.

Not-knowing is not failure—it's *freshness*.

The breeze doesn't know where it's going.

It just moves.

So do you.

Let yourself be breathed.
Let the moment be lived.

Nothing needs to be different right now.

The Shape of Wanting



A story about the changing of desire

It began, as it often did, with desire.

There was wanting — for a message, for approval, for something unnamed but strongly felt.

At first, it appeared simple: “I want this.”

But as awareness settled, the wanting unfolded into layers.

There were sensations — tightness in the chest, a light buzz beneath the skin, a slight clenching in the stomach.

And there were stories — vivid pictures of having, of being fulfilled, of the moment when everything would feel complete. Anticipation played its familiar role, promising satisfaction just beyond the present moment.

But then, attention gently shifted.

Instead of reaching toward what wasn't here, it turned toward

what was: the body, the raw pulse of sensation.
The warmth in the belly. The hollow in the throat. The sharp
flicker behind the eyes.

Labels came — tension, fluttering, heaviness — but even these
were seen as surface descriptions.
Beneath the words was something far more intimate.
Pulses of life. Unnamed. Immediate.

As attention rested directly in the sensations, the stories began to
loosen.

They were seen, one by one:

Stories of the imagined future — the fantasy of having.
Stories built around a self — me who needs, me who lacks.
Stories that seemed to generate the very sensations they
accompanied.
And the quiet recognition: this self only existed as long as the
wanting existed.
The wanting itself had created the feeling of separation —
between self and object, between self and others.
Mental images of people and outcomes were related to as if they
were real, solid.

And yet, beneath it all, a simple purpose revealed itself:
The wanting had come to soothe discomfort.
The discomfort, once traced, was not new — it was old, historical,
triggered by present echoes of the past.

Even as this was seen, sensations and stories still arose.
But now they happened to no one in particular.
They no longer demanded fulfillment.
The original discomfort was gently invited forward, exposed in the
light of awareness.

Over time, the narratives of fulfillment weakened.
The urgency faded.
There was a kind amusement at the whole ritual.
The mechanism of wanting stood exposed, harmless in its familiar dance.

And in that seeing, peace remained.

i experience desire

There is wanting (something)

It exists as feelings (sensations (anticipation?) and stories (what it will be like to have..))

The focus shifts from having in the future to what exists now

the sensations are focused on as body reactions to the stories

the sensations are labeled and located (another label)

the sensations are experienced intimately (beyond the simplistic level of a label)

the stories separate from the sensations (drop off)

as stories disengage, they are seen.

1. about future event
2. that they were about a self
3. that they generated the sensations
4. that the self that they relied on to exist, came into existence with the wanting.
5. that they created separation from both objects and people (everybody and everything involved)
6. that mental images of 'other' was related to as if they were actual

that wanting has a purpose

1. to alleviate discomfort
2. that discomfort was triggered by circumstances
3. what was triggered was historical
- 4.

postscript

when all of this is experienced

1. Initially the sensations and stories still happen but
 1. they happen to no one
 2. they needn't be fulfilled
 3. the original trigger is invited to reveal itself
2. After a while experiencing this
 1. the stories of fulfillment weaken
 2. the stories that they have to be obeyed dissolve
 3. the purpose is seen with amusement
 4. the ritual nature of wanting is recognised

Inquiry Exercise: The Shape of Wanting

This is not about denying your desires or judging them.

It's about gently illuminating the *structure* of wanting — to see what lies beneath, and what happens when you no longer chase the object of longing, but turn inward, toward the sensation of longing itself.

1. Begin with a Want

Bring to mind something you currently want. It might be:

- A message from someone
- Success or recognition
- A specific outcome
- Even just “for this to be over”

Name it silently:

“Right now, I want _____.”

Let yourself feel that want fully, without trying to make it go away.

2. Drop into the Body

Ask:

“What does this wanting feel like in my body?”

Close your eyes and scan slowly:

- Is there tightness, fluttering, pressure?
- Where is it strongest?
- Does it move? Change?

Describe it *only as sensation*. Not as meaning, not as emotion.

For example:

“Buzzing in the chest. Hollow in the belly. Tension behind the eyes.”

Let each sensation be *just what it is* — without trying to fix or fulfill it.

3. Notice the Stories

Ask:

“What story is being told right now?”

Is there an imagined outcome? A vision of relief? Of fulfillment?

For example:

- “When I get their response, I’ll feel complete.”
- “Once I succeed, I’ll finally be worthy.”
- “If this happens, then I’ll relax.”

See how these stories feed the wanting — and how they *add* energy to the body’s sensations.

Without judgment, gently notice:

“This story is creating more longing.”

4. Inquire Into the Root

Ask softly:

“What is this wanting trying to soothe?”

Is the object of desire covering an older discomfort?

Feel beneath the surface:

- Is there a sense of lack?
- Of not being seen?
- Of needing to be loved, safe, understood?

Let the discomfort come forward. Stay with it. Let it be here.

5. See the Self That Forms

Ask:

“What ‘me’ appears when this wanting is here?”

Is there a character being created?

A self who is lacking? Desperate? Hopeful?

Notice how this “self” only exists *in relation* to the desire.

When the wanting fades, so does this identity.

Let that be seen.

6. Just Be With It

Now drop all the stories.

Let go of analyzing or solving.

Simply *be* with the sensations — the pulse of wanting.

Let it rise, fall, shift, stay.

“Can this be here without needing to go away?”

No fixing. No pushing. No pretending it’s okay.

Just resting *with* it.

7. Notice What Remains

As you stay:

- Does the urgency shift?
- Does the “need” still feel solid?
- Who are you, without the story of needing something else?

Perhaps a space opens.

Perhaps it doesn’t.

Either is fine.

The point is to see:

Wanting is not a flaw.

It's a doorway — and it leads home when gently walked through.

Let the wanting be what it is: a movement of sensation, not a problem.

And notice:

The peace was never waiting on fulfillment.

It was waiting on *presence*.

The Endless Reaching



A story of seeking.

Elena had spent years searching. Not for money, or status, or even happiness exactly — but for something deeper. Something she couldn't quite name.

She read every book that promised freedom. Attended retreats, meditated for hours, listened to teachers who spoke of awakening and peace. And for brief moments, she tasted it — a kind of quiet, a spaciousness that felt right.

But the moments never lasted.

As soon as they passed, the hunger returned.

“I just need to go a little further. Read one more thing. Meditate better. Figure it out.”

The search became her world.

And beneath it was always the subtle belief: *“When I finally get there, then it will be over.”*

One morning, sitting in her usual quiet spot, a strange thought arose.

“What if this search is the very thing keeping it out of reach?”

It landed differently this time. Not as another idea to analyze, but like a small stone dropped into still water. The ripples spread.

She watched her breath, noticing how even the act of trying to "be present" was another layer of effort. Another way of trying to get somewhere. Another subtle resistance to what already was.

What if there was nothing to get to?

What if the peace she was chasing was not something to achieve, but something she kept missing because she was always reaching? For the first time, she simply stopped trying.

No controlling the mind.

No reaching for the next experience.

No adjusting her posture, her breath, her attention.

Just sitting.

The seeking engine quieted — not through discipline, but because she saw it for what it was: a loop feeding itself.

And in the absence of effort, something unexpected appeared.

Not a grand awakening.

Not fireworks.

Just this.

The hum of the refrigerator.

The warmth of the sun on her arm.

The breath rising and falling.

Clear. Simple. Unadorned.

No arrival. No accomplishment. No seeker.

The paradox unraveled itself:

The very act of seeking was what made freedom seem distant.

But when seeking fell away, there was nothing left to find — because nothing had ever been missing.

Elena smiled softly.

Not because she'd found it.

But because it was never lost.

Inquiry Exercise: The Endless Reaching

This is not about abandoning the search.

It's about turning toward the *seeking itself* — to see what drives it, and whether what you long for is actually missing... or just unnoticed.

1. Pause & Name the Longing

Close your eyes.

Ask yourself gently:

“What am I seeking right now?”

It might be:

- Clarity
- Awakening
- Relief
- Love
- Understanding
- Just for this discomfort to stop

Whatever arises, name it:

“Right now, I am seeking _____.”

Let that longing be here — without trying to satisfy it.

2. Notice the Sensation of Reaching

Now ask:

“Where in the body do I feel the sense of reaching?”

Scan slowly:

- Is there a leaning forward?
- A tightness in the chest?
- A subtle urgency in the mind or gut?

Don't label it “wrong” — just feel it as pure sensation.
Stay *with* it.

3. What's Beneath It?

Now ask:

“What do I believe will happen when I get what I want?”

Finish the sentence:

“If I get _____, then I will finally _____.”

Look closely — what *promise* is being sold by the mind?

4. Gently Question the Promise

Once you've found the core promise (e.g. “Then I'll be free,” or “Then I'll be enough”), pause.

Ask:

“Is that true — or is that just another idea I've been carrying?”

Let the question hang. You don't need to answer with words.

Just *feel* whether that belief holds up under the light of awareness.

5. Try Not Reaching

Now, for a few moments, let the seeking rest.

Don't fix. Don't improve. Don't try to be more present.

Just be. Let this moment be *as it is*.

Notice:

- Sounds
- Sensations
- Breathing
- The sense of being alive

Let everything be *unimproved*. Nothing to change. Nothing to do.

6. See the Paradox

Ask:

“Was anything actually missing right now — or was I just overlooking it by reaching for more?”

Notice how peace isn't “achieved,” but noticed when striving falls away.

7. A Closing Reflection

“What happens when I let go of the need to get somewhere?”

Stay with that for a few breaths.

You might notice:

- A quietness beneath the noise
- A soft okayness

- Or maybe... nothing special at all

Even that is welcome.

There's no "right" experience here. The aim is not to *get* anything — but to *see through* the chase. To recognize the habit of reaching... and, just for a moment, not feed it.

And in that stillness, discover what was never lost.

The Bench in the Quiet Room



A story of an upgrade.

They didn't remember the day in perfect detail—just the way the light came in through the high window. Dust floating in the beam. A small bench against the wall. And the unmistakable weight of being small and confused in a world that didn't make sense. It must have been a memory, or maybe just a feeling carried all these years.

A child sits there—legs too short to touch the ground—hands tucked into their lap. The room is still, but inside them is a storm. They don't have the words yet, only the sense that something is *off*. The way adults smile but carry sharpness behind their eyes. The way the rules change depending on who's in the room. The way everyone seems to be pretending.

They feel it—something's wrong with the world. And somehow, maybe even something wrong with *them*. That's the most dangerous thought, but also the most quiet. It slips in unnoticed, then stays.

And now, you walk in.

You—the present you, the one who's seen more, endured more, perhaps grown tired too—but who carries a wider view. You see this child and recognize them. Not because they look like you did, but because they are *you*. Unmistakably.

You sit beside them. Close enough for your knees to touch. Not speaking at first. Just presence. And then slowly, as the body softens, the child leans into you. And something unspoken passes between you.

A knowing.

That child has no idea that everyone around them was also caught in something invisible. That all the sharp words and cold silences were echoes of other wounds. That what felt like rejection wasn't about *them*, but about pain that came long before.

You place a hand over theirs. Steady. Warm.

You tell them—not with words, but with a feeling—that none of this was their fault. That what happened then can't be undone, but the weight of it can be lifted now. That the shame was never theirs to carry. That they were always innocent.

And slowly, gently, you gather that child into your arms. You carry them back, not into the past, but into the present. Where the ground is steadier. Where the light is softer. Where you—together—can breathe.

Where peace is possible. And real.

Here is an audio of this as a meditation.. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oWR5_-23CbKfKhxeVrkmqCmKYw9pvDAt/view?usp=share_link



Inquiry: The Innocent One Within

Take a quiet moment. Breathe. Let the body settle.

1. Turning Inward

Can you recall the youngest version of you that you still carry?
Let the image come naturally—maybe from a photograph, or a vague emotional memory.

How old are they?

What are they wearing?

Where are they sitting?

Let this image settle in your awareness.

2. Noticing the Environment

Where are they? What kind of room?

Is there light, or shadow?

What's the atmosphere? Is it heavy, quiet, expectant?

Gently place yourself beside them.

3. Tuning In

As you sit beside them, what do they feel?

Where in their body is that emotion held?

Can you feel it too, not as memory, but as sensation?

Take a breath. Let it move through you both.

4. The Story They Believe

What is the belief this young one holds?

What do they think is wrong with the world—or with themselves?

What words would they use if they had language for it?

Just listen. No need to correct. Just presence.

5. Questioning the Roots

Now ask gently:

Could this pain be something they inherited from the outside?

What if they weren't broken, but shaped by brokenness around them?

Can you feel the difference between being *responsible* and being *affected*?

Pause here. Let that sink in.

6. Sharing a Truth

If you, the you now, know something this younger one doesn't—
what is it?

What does your experience allow you to see that they couldn't
yet?

Speak it softly, wordlessly, as feeling.

Let it radiate from you.

7. Integration

Is there a sense that they might trust you now?

Might they lean in?

Would you be willing to pick them up—not to fix, but to hold?

As you bring them into you, can you feel them softening?

Can you feel that what was once "back there" is now being held
"right here"?

8. Resting in What's True

Let this question sit in the heart:

What if I've always been innocent?

Say it aloud, if it helps:

"I was never the cause of their pain. I only believed I was."

"I didn't create the storm—I grew inside it."

9. Now, Just Being

Let go of the words now. Let the knowing rest in your body.

Notice: Is there a shift in how the past feels?

What if the tenderness you feel right now... *is* the healing

The Silence



A story about speaking.

Two old friends, Rae and Ellis, met again after years apart, their lives having taken them down different paths—careers, families, self-discoveries. On a quiet afternoon, they sat on a bench overlooking the sea, letting the rhythm of the waves fill the space between them.

Rae was speaking quickly, almost filling the air with words before the silence could settle. Ellis listened gently, smiling but saying little. After a long stream of thoughts and stories, Rae suddenly stopped, looked out at the horizon, and said, “It’s strange—I’ve always felt like I needed to say something to matter. Even when there’s nothing to say.”

Ellis turned. “What makes you feel that way?”

Rae paused. “I don’t know. Maybe... I thought being heard meant I was important. That if I didn’t say anything, I’d disappear.”

Ellis nodded slowly. “I used to feel that too. Like silence made me invisible. But lately, I’ve been watching that part of me. Like... watching it instead of believing it’s me.”

Rae laughed softly, but with tears behind it. “It’s like I’ve been acting a role—always trying to be relevant, to be part of the scene, even if I had nothing real to offer.”

They both sat quietly then, and the silence felt different. Not empty—just full in a new way.

“I noticed something recently,” Ellis said. “That old part of me—the one that needs to control the moment, fill the space—it’s like it only has power when I’m not paying attention. But when I really see it, it’s like I’ve caught it in the act.”

Rae looked over. “Yes. That’s exactly it. And underneath that... I felt compassion. Like, maybe that voice was just trying to protect me all along.”

Ellis smiled. “Protection. Yes. Maybe it came from a time when we needed to be loud to be safe, or seen. But we’re not there anymore.”

Rae breathed deeply. “So maybe I don’t need to say anything right now. Maybe just sitting here... is enough.”

Ellis looked back to the sea. “You’re already enough.”

They stayed like that for a while. No performance. No rush to speak. Just two people, sitting in their presence. A shared silence, richer than any words.

Summary

Sometimes we speak not to connect, but to prove we exist. Yet when we begin to see our patterns with compassion—not judgment—we find a deeper truth: our worth is not in our words, but in our being. Silence doesn't erase us. It reveals us.

Inquiry Exercise: The Silence Between Us

This practice invites you to gently notice the parts of you that equate presence with performance — and to meet them with compassion, not correction.

1. Begin with Stillness

Sit comfortably, alone or with someone else.

Let there be silence.

Let it stretch.

Notice: what arises in you when silence is present?

- An urge to speak?
- A discomfort in your body?
- A tightening in the chest or throat?
- A feeling that you're fading, or not enough?

Just let it all be here.

2. Ask: What is the silence threatening?

Gently reflect:

“What do I believe might happen if I don’t contribute, explain, or be seen?”

Complete the sentence:

“If I don’t say anything, then I might be _____.”

Stay honest. Don’t analyze. Just feel the emotional tone that arises with the belief.

3. Track the Reaction

Now ask:

“Where in my body do I feel this fear of disappearing?”

Notice sensations:

- Is there tension, pressure, or contraction?
- Do you feel smaller? Or like you need to *do* something?

Let the sensations be as they are. No need to change them.

Just observe.

4. Meet the Pattern

Bring a sense of kindness and curiosity toward the part of you that feels the need to fill space.

Ask:

“What is this part trying to protect me from?”

Listen—not with your mind, but with your presence.

Maybe it’s guarding against rejection, invisibility, or abandonment. Maybe it learned early that being “useful” or “entertaining” meant being safe.

Say to this part:

“Thank you for trying to protect me.”

5. Let Silence Speak

Now rest again in silence.

Don't try to be present.

Just be.

Notice:

- Can silence be full instead of empty?
- Can you feel your own presence, even when no one is reacting to you?
- Can you simply *be*—without performance?

6. A Simple Reframe

Try saying to yourself:

“My being is enough. Even in silence, I am here. I am.”

Repeat it, slowly, only if it feels true. Or just sit with the words and let them settle.

7. After the Practice

Consider:

“Is it possible that my value has never depended on what I say or do?”

Let that question echo as you return to your day.

Optional Partner Practice

Do this with a friend or loved one: Sit together in silence for a few minutes. Then share honestly:

“What was that like for you?”

Notice any patterns of needing to impress, entertain, or fill space.
Let them be seen.

Sometimes, what's most healing is not what's spoken, but what's
shared in silence.

The silence doesn't erase you.
It reveals the you that's always been here — quietly, completely,
enough.

Not a Barrier, But a Guide



A story about fear

Liam felt it rise again as he stepped toward the door — that familiar tightness in his chest, the pulse quickening, the invisible hand pulling him back.

Don't go. Something might go wrong. You're not ready.

He'd heard this voice his whole life. Fear was like a shadowy figure that followed him everywhere, whispering doubts, urging him to stay small, stay safe.

For years, he fought it — pushing, suppressing, numbing. Fear was the enemy. The thing to overcome.

But lately, something had shifted.

A mentor had once asked him gently, “What if fear isn’t trying to stop you, but protect you? What if it’s not your enemy, but your oldest friend — misunderstood?”

That question stayed with him.

Today, as the fear surfaced again, Liam paused. Instead of bracing against it, he sat quietly, closed his eyes, and turned toward it.

What are you trying to tell me? he asked inwardly.

And there it was — not words, but a feeling:

“I’m afraid you’ll fail. I’m afraid you’ll be hurt. I’m trying to keep you safe.”

The tone wasn’t harsh. It was tender.

Liam’s chest softened.

He saw it now — fear wasn’t here to punish him. It had been his protector, guarding him from pain since childhood, from moments when criticism stung too sharply or rejection felt unbearable.

It had worked for a while. But the protection had become a prison.

“Thank you,” he whispered to the fear, hand over his heart.

“You’ve tried to keep me safe. But I’m not that small child anymore. I can meet what comes.”

Fear didn’t vanish. It never did. But it relaxed its grip, like a hand slowly letting go of his shirt.

He stepped out the door. The pulse still quickened. The breath still caught. But underneath was something new: companionship.

Fear walked beside him now, not as a tyrant, but as an old friend who no longer had to lead.

And for the first time, Liam realized:

Fear wasn't here to stop him from living.

It was here to remind him that life mattered.

That what he was stepping into was real, meaningful, alive.

And together, they kept walking.

Inquiry Exercise: Meeting Fear as a Friend

This practice is about turning toward fear instead of away from it — to listen, to honor, and to update your relationship with it.

1. Pause and Notice

Close your eyes. Recall a recent moment when fear arose — even in a small way. A hesitation, a tightness, a sense of “don't go.”

Let the memory surface just enough to bring the felt sense back into awareness.

Ask:

“Where do I feel fear in my body right now?”

Let your attention go to that place.

Describe it:

- Is it tight or buzzing?
- Hot, cold, heavy, fluttering?
- Still or shifting?

Stay with the sensation, not the story.

2. Ask Fear a Question

With curiosity, not demand, ask inwardly:

“What are you trying to tell me?”

Let the answer come—not in words, necessarily, but in felt sense or emotional tone.

It might say:

- “I’m afraid you’ll fail.”
- “I don’t want you to be alone.”
- “I’m just trying to keep you from pain.”

Let the response be simple. Honest. Childlike, even.

3. Recognize the Intention

Say gently to the fear:

“Thank you for trying to protect me.”

Ask:

“How old does this fear feel?”

You might notice it doesn't feel like an adult fear. It may come from early experiences — moments of rejection, criticism, loss.

Let your present self speak to that younger part:

“I see you. I'm here now. And I can meet what comes.”

4. Soften the Relationship

Notice: has the sensation changed? Even slightly?

Has the intensity shifted just from being heard?

Now ask:

“Can I allow fear to walk beside me, without needing it to lead?”

Picture that. Not banishing it. Just not obeying it. Like walking alongside a cautious friend — one you appreciate, but no longer follow blindly.

5. Anchor the Shift

Place a hand on your heart or belly.

Breathe with this intention:

“Fear can be here. I don't need to get rid of it. I only need to walk with it.”

Repeat silently if it feels true:

“Fear reminds me that this moment matters.”

6. Optional Reflection

Write down:

- What fear has protected you from.
- What it still tries to protect.
- What you're ready to meet anyway, even with fear present.

Integration

Next time fear arises, pause. Name it gently. Ask what it wants. Listen without fighting.

Sometimes fear softens simply because it's no longer alone.

You don't need to be fearless. You only need to be *with* fear, without letting it define you.

That's courage. That's healing. That's enough.

The River (of life)



The inevitability of THIS

He sat at the river's edge as dusk fell, the soft rush of water weaving past his feet like time itself.

For weeks, he had fought. Not the river, but life.

The ending of a relationship. The role that was now gone. The sharp ache of plans that would now never be.

Every day had been a silent wrestle: Maybe I can fix this. Maybe I can rewind it. Maybe if I think harder, try harder, wish harder...

The exhaustion had crept in slowly, like fog over the hills. But he had kept pushing, thinking that holding tight was the only way to survive.

Now, sitting here, he felt it fully: the weight of carrying what could no longer be changed.

His hands tightened into fists. An ache of frustration and sorrow twisted inside him.

And then...

Something broke. Or softened. Something changed. Shifted.

The water didn't fight the rocks, nor did it stop for them.
It didn't protest the fallen branches.
It simply flowed.
He exhaled. Shoulders dropped. His face relaxed, almost smiling.
The obvious truth reached him like a whisper carried by the wind:
"It's already happened."
The past wasn't waiting for him to make it different.
The outcome had unfolded. The shape of everything just IS.
No amount of effort would reverse what already existed.
His resistance hadn't been wrong. It had been human.
A loving, desperate attempt to hold what felt precious.
The part of him that had fought so hard wasn't the enemy — it had
only tried to protect him from the pain of loss.
He placed a hand gently over his heart in quiet recognition of that
effort.
Then, slowly, He opened his palms and let them rest loosely.
The surrender wasn't defeat. It was relief.
A falling away of burden.
A simple willingness to say: "Yes... this is what IS."
The river slipped past him, unchanged and undisturbed.
He sat on the damp grass and watched the moonlight dance across
the moving surface.
He let the ache be part of the moment.
Not fighting. Not fixing. Just allowing.
And in that soft acceptance, peace came like a returning tide.
Not because the pain had vanished — but because he no longer
needed it to.

Have you discovered that what you become aware of has already
happened?
That resisting what IS, only adds to the suffering.
If you have then come to a group meeting and share it. Others will
benefit..

If you haven't then come to a group and others will help you discover it.



Inquiry Exercise: Sitting with the River

This is not about fixing or changing. It's about discovering the relief that comes when we stop arguing with what has already unfolded.

1. Sit Quietly. Sense the Flow.

Take a moment to sit comfortably.

Close your eyes. Bring to mind something that's been difficult to accept — a recent event, an ending, a shift, a loss.

Let it arise without resistance.

Ask gently:

“What am I still trying to change, even though it's already happened?”

Let the response emerge without rushing.

2. Feel the Holding

Notice your body.

“Where am I holding on?”

Is it your jaw? Chest? Belly? Hands?

Describe the sensation — not to fix, just to notice.

- Tightness?

- Heat?
- Weight?

Place a hand there if it feels natural. Say inwardly:

“I see you. Thank you for trying to protect me.”

This isn't about releasing the tension — it's about honoring it.

3. Turn to the River

Now picture a river, flowing endlessly past you.

Imagine placing this event — this thing you've been carrying — into the river.

Not to forget it. Not to be rid of it. Just to return it to the flow.

Ask:

“Has this already happened?”

“Is my resistance changing the outcome — or deepening the ache?”

Stay with whatever arises. Even grief is welcome here.

4. Open to “This Is What Is”

Say gently:

“Yes... this is what IS.”

Not with resignation.

With love.

Say it again. Slowly.

“This is what IS.”

Notice what shifts.

5. Closing Reflection

Ask:

“What would letting go of resistance feel like — even just for this breath?”

Let your next inhale be full.

Let your exhale carry any small bit of loosening.

Sit in the stillness, like sitting by the riverbank.

Let it all flow — thoughts, memories, emotions.

Nothing needs to be solved right now.

Only seen. Only allowed.

Integration

Every time you notice resistance this week — a mental replay, a wish for a different past — pause and whisper:

“It’s already happened. This is what is.”

Let yourself feel the gentle strength of that truth.

Like the river, you don’t need to stop for what’s in the way.

You only need to keep flowing.

The Spaces Between



A story of loneliness.

Mara sat at the kitchen table long after the tea had gone cold. The house was quiet. Not just tonight—most nights. The hum of the refrigerator was steady, like a small voice saying, “*Still here.*” There were friends, yes. Acquaintances, colleagues, even kind faces at the café who knew her name. But under it all was a strange kind of ache—hard to explain to anyone who hadn't felt it. Not the loneliness of absence, but the loneliness of *being unseen*. She remembered a dinner party last month. Laughter, conversation, full glasses. She smiled, contributed, asked questions. People said, “*You're so easy to talk to.*” And yet, walking home under the streetlights, the emptiness returned, heavier than before.

They heard my words, but not my heart.

There was also the other loneliness—the one without people entirely.

The empty room.

The untouched second pillow.

The meals prepared for one.

The quiet evenings stretching long, where even silence seemed to echo.

At times, Mara judged herself for it.

You should be grateful.

You have so much.

Other people have real problems.

And yet, no amount of gratitude silenced the gnawing truth: the hunger for connection ran deeper than circumstance.

But sometimes, in rare and unexpected moments, another layer appeared.

In the park one afternoon, watching a child chase falling leaves, Mara felt it—something both vast and tender. A belonging not dependent on anyone else.

The breeze touched her cheek.

The trees stood without needing company.

The world kept turning, gently including her in its unfolding.

It was loneliness, yes—but without the sharpness.

A kind of *aloneness* that didn't wound.

Simply *being*.

In those moments, she sensed that beneath all the reaching was something more honest:

the longing not just to be with others,
but to be *met*.

By another, by life, even by herself.

Not fixed.

Not filled.

Just seen.

Mara looked out the window as night settled in.

The ache remained, but it softened—less like a hole, more like a tender space she could sit beside.

A quiet prayer rose:
May I meet myself here.
May others find me here too, someday.
And for now, that was enough.



Inquiry Exercise:

Meeting Yourself in the Quiet

This practice gently explores the loneliness of being unseen — and invites you to shift from seeking outwardly to simply resting in your own company.

1. Begin with the Body

Find a quiet spot. Let your body settle.
Notice what's here.

Ask inwardly:

“Is there a sense of loneliness in this moment?”

If yes, feel where it lives in the body.

- Is it a heaviness?
- A tightness?
- An emptiness?

Name it softly, like you're describing weather:

“Cool. Heavy. Hollow. Quiet.”

2. Distinguish the Flavor

Now gently ask:

“Is this the loneliness of absence?
Or the loneliness of being unseen?”

Feel the difference.

One is about missing others.

The other is about not being felt or known — even when people are near.

Which one feels more true right now?

3. The Ache Beneath the Ache

Ask:

“What does this loneliness want?”

Don't answer with thoughts.

Wait for a feeling, a sensation, an image.

Often, the ache isn't asking to be fixed.

It wants to be met.

See if you can rest with it — not as a problem, but as part of you asking to be held.

4. Let the World Join You

Now soften your gaze (or close your eyes), and bring attention to what surrounds you.

The hum of the fridge.

The rustle of leaves.

The warmth or coolness of the air.

Let life be with you.

Not to distract from the ache — but to include it.

To remember: you're not separate from the world that holds you.

5. End with an Invitation

Whisper inwardly:

“May I meet myself here.”

And if it feels right:

“May someone else meet me here too, someday.”

Let those words rest in your chest like a candle lit in the dark.
Feel their warmth. Their quiet.

Not a solution.

Just a welcome.

Integration Prompt

When you feel that ache arise this week, ask:

“Do I need company... or do I need to feel seen?”

If it's the latter, try offering yourself a quiet moment of attention.

A hand on the heart.

A deep breath.

A few soft words of recognition.

Sometimes, the first meeting we truly need... is with ourselves.

Concept or actual



Actuality.

I was sitting outside, eyes on a tree.

Not “thinking about” the tree—just letting my gaze rest there.

And at first, all I saw was *tree*. The mind rushed in: *branches, leaves, oak or maple, early spring*. Thought layering names, categories, knowledge. I’ve seen a thousand trees, after all. I know what they are.

Except... I didn’t.

Not this one. Not this moment.

I paused.

Let the labels fall away.

Let the mind chatter, but not follow it.

And what remained was—something else.

Not “a tree.”

There was movement. Texture. A shifting of light across bark.
Wind. Stillness. The sound of a bird, not separate from the sight of
the green. A pressure in my chest, a coolness on my skin.

Not *about* anything.

Just *this*.

No interpretation. No backstory. No meaning.

Just a tangle of color, sound, temperature, heartbeat.

And then, as if on cue, a thought rose:

This is presence.

This is mindfulness.

This is awareness.

And I smiled, because in that moment, I'd left the experience
again.

Concept.

Thought *about* the experience replaced the experience itself.

It's so fast. So easy.

We think, read, speak, hear—and almost everything is about
something.

We live in commentary.

And there's nothing wrong with that, unless we forget it's
commentary.

That's where the suffering creeps in—when the mind's content is
mistaken for the world. When the story of “me” becomes more
real than the pulsing in my hands or the coolness of this breath.

So now, when I read something—a sentence like this one—I
pause.

What does my body do?

Is there tightness?

Warmth?

Does something open? Contract?

Discovery mode isn't a technique. It's an attitude. A soft curiosity.

A willingness to not *know* and to let that not-knowing guide
attention away from concept and into sensation.

I'm learning to live more and more from this place.

Not permanently.
But again and again, I return.
To this breath.
To this sound.
To this flickering moment that refuses to be contained in any idea
of it.
And in that return, the world becomes raw again.
Not a thought.
Not even a “world.”
Just this.
Alive.
Fleeting.
And entirely free of story.

Exploration: From Concept to Actual

1. Settle into presence.

Sit quietly. Eyes open or closed. Let the body be as it is. No need to change anything.

2. Notice the content of thoughts.

What’s playing in the mind right now?

Observe: Are you thinking about something? Planning, remembering, imagining, analyzing?

Label gently: “*thinking.*”

Ask: *What is this thought about?*

—This is a concept.

3. Shift to the senses.

Now, gently redirect attention away from the thoughts and toward what is being sensed.

Feel your feet on the floor.

Notice sound.

Feel the breath—not the idea of it, but the texture, movement, temperature.

Notice: This is not about anything. It just is.

4. Compare the two.

Without judging or analyzing, compare what it's like to:

- think about *warmth*
- versus feel *warmth*

Notice how one stays in the mind, and one lives in the body.

5. Explore reactions to words.

Read this short phrase slowly:

“You are not a concept.”

Now pause.

Feel what arises in the body.

Does something shift? Contract? Open? Stir?

Now try this:

“There is nothing wrong with you.”

Again, pause.

Noticing what happens—sensations, emotions, subtle changes.

6. Discover the attitude.

Let go of trying to find an answer.

Just wonder:

What's it like to be here, right now, without needing to explain anything?

That wondering—soft, curious, open—that is *Discovery mode*.

7. Stay here for a few breaths.

Let the body feel. Let thought come and go. Let experience unfold without needing to name it.

And if a thought arises—*“Am I doing this right?”*—gently note it.

Return to what is actual: sensation, sound, breath.

Remember:

You're not trying to figure anything out.

You're here to *feel*, not *understand*.

To *experience*, not *define*.

This is not about getting somewhere.
This *is* the somewhere.

The Question That Didn't Need an Answer



For four days now, there had been peace.
Not the kind that shouts or shines,
but a quiet drift, like mist resting gently over a valley at dawn.
There were no thoughts demanding attention—just stillness.
No stories about the stillness—just the hush between words.
And yet...
something whispered.
A feather-touch doubt brushed across the heart:
"Is this boredom?"
"Is this bypassing?"
Each time, the question would arise not with a roar, but like a
child tugging on your sleeve,
expecting something more.
But whenever she turned toward the moment—
the soft hum in the room,
the richness of color where the wall met the floor,
the grain of the wood beneath her fingertips—
the fullness returned.

Boredom dissolved—not vanquished, but forgotten,
like a question left behind in another room.

Then a new habit:

pausing to ask “what to do next?”

Again and again.

A strange dance began—
as if some soft thread in her chest
was pulling her gently forward.

The sensation was subtle.

Not loud.

But steady.

Alive.

She leaned into it once,
twice,
and each time the mind tried to interpret it—
to turn the feeling into a direction,
a meaning,
a step.

But today, she didn't follow.

She sat with it.

Let it hum.

Let it be part of the room, like the light.

No task emerged.

No clarity.

Just this—

the breath

the pulse

the weight of her body

the unfolding silence.

She smiled.

Not because she understood something,
but because for once,
she didn't need to.

Once again a reminder to perhaps re-read and let this story sink into your body like warm water. Can you feel where in you the sensation of “next” lives, and what happens when you don’t need to follow it?

Inquiry Exercise: Sitting with “Next”

This reflection is for those moments of pause — when nothing feels wrong, yet the mind whispers, “*Shouldn’t I be doing something?*”

1. Notice the Quiet

Sit or lie down.

Let the breath soften.

No goal. Just notice.

Is there peace here?

Is there a subtle hum of restfulness?

Let it be exactly as it is — no effort to deepen or maintain.

2. Feel for the Whisper

Now tune inward for the question behind the peace.

Maybe it says:

- “Am I just avoiding something?”
- “Is this meaningful enough?”

- “What should I do next?”

Don't answer it.

Just notice the *tone*.

Is it urgent? Curious? Faint? Habitual?

Where do you *feel* that pull in your body?

3. Name the Sensation

Explore this pull of “next.”

- Is it in your chest?
- A twitch in the hands?
- A leaning forward in the mind?

Without needing to move or respond, simply **feel** it.

Label softly if it helps:

“Tugging.”

“Restless.”

“A pull toward something unseen.”

4. Sit Without Following

Now the key part of the exercise:

Don't follow the impulse.

Just sit.

Let the sensation of “next” be here, without needing resolution.

Ask gently:

“What if I don't do anything with this?”

Let the silence deepen.
Let the body be still.
Let the moment unfold.

5. Watch What Remains

Without trying, observe:

- Does the tug grow stronger?
- Does it fade?
- Does something unexpected arise?

Sometimes the mind settles.
Sometimes another wave comes.
You don't need to control it.

Just **be the space** where it all happens.



Closing Reflection

Sometimes, the most profound insight is the willingness to stay with the not-knowing.

Not to conquer the moment.
Not to clarify it.
Just to feel it fully.

The peace that doesn't need a purpose.
The stillness that doesn't need to prove itself.

This is the invitation.

Pain

..and suffering



A Painful Reality

They sat in heavy silence. Jane shredded a tissue, her hands trembling. The Guide watched with stillness. "I can't bear it," Jane whispered. "My son is in constant pain. Nothing helps. I can't accept it."

The Guide spoke softly. "You love him. You ache for him. But can you see the second layer? The layer that says, 'this should not be'? That is where your agony lies."

Jane shook her head, tears falling. "I would do anything to take it away."

"Of course," The Guide nodded gently. "No one is asking you not to care. The raw pain of seeing his suffering is real. Let it be real. Let it break your heart wide open. But the war—the demand that life must change now—that is suffering on top of pain."

Jane breathed shakily. "How do I stop the war?"

"Not by doing. By seeing. Right now, can you allow his pain, your heartbreak, this entire moment to be exactly as it is, without adding 'it must be different'?"

Jane closed her eyes. The heat of grief surged, tightness gripped her chest. She stayed. Nothing was fixed. Nothing needed to be. The Guide continued, voice soft but unyielding. "This is the fierce compassion: to stand inside pain without needing to fix it. Pain will stay or go. That is not yours to control. The only freedom is dropping the story that this should not be."

Jane slowly opened her eyes. The clenched fist inside had softened. The pain remained, raw and sharp, but clean.

The Guide smiled warmly. "When you allow 'no' to be fully 'no', the grief tied to 'it must be yes' unhooks. What remains is life. Unowned, ungrasped, deeply human."

Outside, dusk settled gently over the trees. Jane exhaled. Not relieved, not crushed. Simply present. Simply here.

Jane stood slowly, wiped her eyes, and nodded. "I don't fully see it yet," she admitted. "But I want to. I'm willing to keep looking, to stay with what is, no matter how hard."

The Guide nodded. "Good. That's all that's needed. Stay with the raw truth. Drop every escape. Let discovery unfold in its own time."

Have you discovered the ok-ness of pain?

Have you experienced an ache that you were able to bear?

If you have then come to a group meeting and share it. Others will benefit..

If you haven't then come to a group and others will help you discover it.

Inquiry: Where Is the Suffering?

This is best done slowly, with your eyes closed and attention grounded in the body. Take your time.

1. Begin with Presence

- Take a few slow breaths.
- Let the attention settle into the body.
- Notice the contact points — feet on the floor, hands resting, breath moving in and out.

2. Call to Mind a Pain

Bring into awareness a recent or current experience of pain. It may be physical, emotional, or relational.

Choose something *real*, but not overwhelming — something you're willing to sit with.

Gently ask yourself:

What is here right now when I remember or feel this pain?

Pause. Feel.

3. Locate the Sensation

Bring your attention to the body. Ask:

Where in the body is this pain showing up now?

Describe it inwardly:

- Is it tight? Hot? Sharp? Heavy?
- Does it have a shape, a texture, a color?
- What happens when I say: *This is allowed?*

4. Name the Second Layer

Now notice:

Is there a voice, thought, or tension that says, “*This should not be happening*”?

What words does that part say?

Examples:

- *This isn't fair.*
- *I can't take this.*
- *This has to stop.*
- *I shouldn't feel like this.*

Sit with that thought, and then gently ask:

What hurts more — the pain itself, or the belief that it shouldn't be here?

Let the answer come from the body, not the mind.

5. Stay With the Pain

Return your attention to the **raw sensation** in the body. No story. No label. Just the direct feeling.

Ask:

If I stop resisting this... what happens?

Can this pain be here without needing to change?

Let yourself feel. Breathe. No need to fix.

6. Open to Insight

Ask yourself:

What is suffering, if not just pain plus resistance?

Let silence respond.

7. Closing Reflection

Place a hand on your heart or belly.

Repeat gently:

Pain may stay or go.

Suffering ends when I stop arguing with what is.

Discovery



A story about recognising the conceptual nature of ideas

The email detonated silently: “We regret to inform you...”

An invisible blade drove straight through the solar plexus. The body recoiled, a trapped animal in the tightening jaws of an unseen snare. The breath caught, brittle as glass, shattering into jagged panic.

The mind convulsed: You’ve failed. Again. Always. Not enough. Never enough.

The skin crawled with the icy fire of shame. Nails dug crescents into the trembling flesh of clenched fists. The pulse hammered erratic and furious against bone.

Then, like a ghost stepping out of shadow, Vince’s words surfaced, calm and merciless:

“It is never about what comes up, but always about what internal triggers get activated.”

The whole momentum of suffering faltered. A crack in the machine. A thin, blinding shaft of awareness pierced through the chaos.

The rejection had no weight. Nothing external ever had.

This maelstrom erupted from within—the ancient, inherited wound of worthlessness, the subconscious reflex to annihilate or flee.

Something primordial shifted.

The attention turned, with ruthless, surgical precision, into the raw furnace of agony.

The sensations unfolded like a slow, terrible blossoming:

The unbearable crushing at the center of the chest.

The acidic sting clawing up the throat.

The sick, hollow twist in the belly.

The bitter iron taste of panic pooling in the mouth.

No narrative. No story. Just this.

And then—the release.

The false center collapsed. The ghost-self dissolved like mist under a rising sun.

Stillness. Silence. Expansion.

Suddenly, the world ignited into brutal, exquisite clarity:

The mug—smooth, dense, radiating heat into open palms.

The tile floor—cool, damp, grounding the soles of bare feet.

The scent of dark-roasted coffee, thick and primal, curling upward into hungry lungs.

A bead of condensation slipping down glass like a perfect universe in freefall.

The distant caw of a crow slicing the vast blue morning.

Time fractured. There was no I. Only the untamed orchestra of existence playing itself.

The breath came, unbidden. Effortless. Alive.

The realization thundered silent: nothing had ever been in control.

Nothing had ever needed to be.

The trigger was never out there. The trigger was always here, waiting to be seen and dissolved.
Freedom, raw and unspeakably ordinary.

Have you discovered that suffering was never about the external circumstances?
That they were always about what had been embedded a long time ago.
If you have then come to a group meeting and share it. Others will benefit..
If you haven't then come to a group and others will help you discover it.

Inquiry: What Is Being Touched?

Use this when something hits hard — a rejection, a loss, a moment of shame or fear.
This isn't about fixing anything. It's about uncovering what's already moving under the surface.

1. Let the Impact Land

Recall a moment that activated deep emotional pain.
Don't analyze it yet. Just *feel* it.

Ask:

What was the moment the wave of suffering began?

Let your body relive that beat — the email, the silence, the look, the word — whatever struck.

Pause. Let it land.

2. Track the Body

Where does the pain live right now?

Is it in your chest? Your gut? Your throat? Your face?

Don't label it yet. Just notice the raw data:

- Temperature
- Tightness
- Texture
- Movement

Stay there. Just presence.

You are not asking it to leave. You are listening.

3. Set the External Aside

Ask yourself gently:

If the event never happened, would this sensation still be familiar?

Does it remind you of something older? A time you felt worthless, unsafe, abandoned?

Notice how fast the mind wants to blame the outside.

Now ask:

What inside me is reacting so strongly?

What story or belief just got activated?

Is it:

- *I'm not enough?*

- *I'll never succeed?*
- *I don't matter?*

Name it without judgment.

4. Turn Toward the Ache

Now, bring full awareness to the bodily sensation again.
Not the story. Just the feeling.

Ask:

Can I be with this... without needing it to go?

Can I allow this sensation to burn, pulse, twist, expand—without trying to fix it?

Let it unfold. Breathe. Stay.

5. Let It Be Seen

Ask:

Is it possible this pain isn't wrong?

Could it be a doorway?

What if this is the very thing I've been running from—and now, I'm meeting it?

You are not broken.

This is the unraveling of something false.

6. Rest in What Remains

When the intensity softens—even a little—ask:

What is here when the story falls away?

What remains, underneath the ache?

Sometimes it's silence. Sometimes a breath. Sometimes... just space.

Let that be enough.

This inquiry doesn't promise a breakthrough or release every time. But the shift comes when we *see clearly* that the pain wasn't from out there—

It was a mirror, reflecting something already alive in us.

And that seeing is the beginning of freedom.

A relationship with seeing.

The Whisper and the Wind

A thought arose—
soft as breath,
sure as truth:
“I am here,”

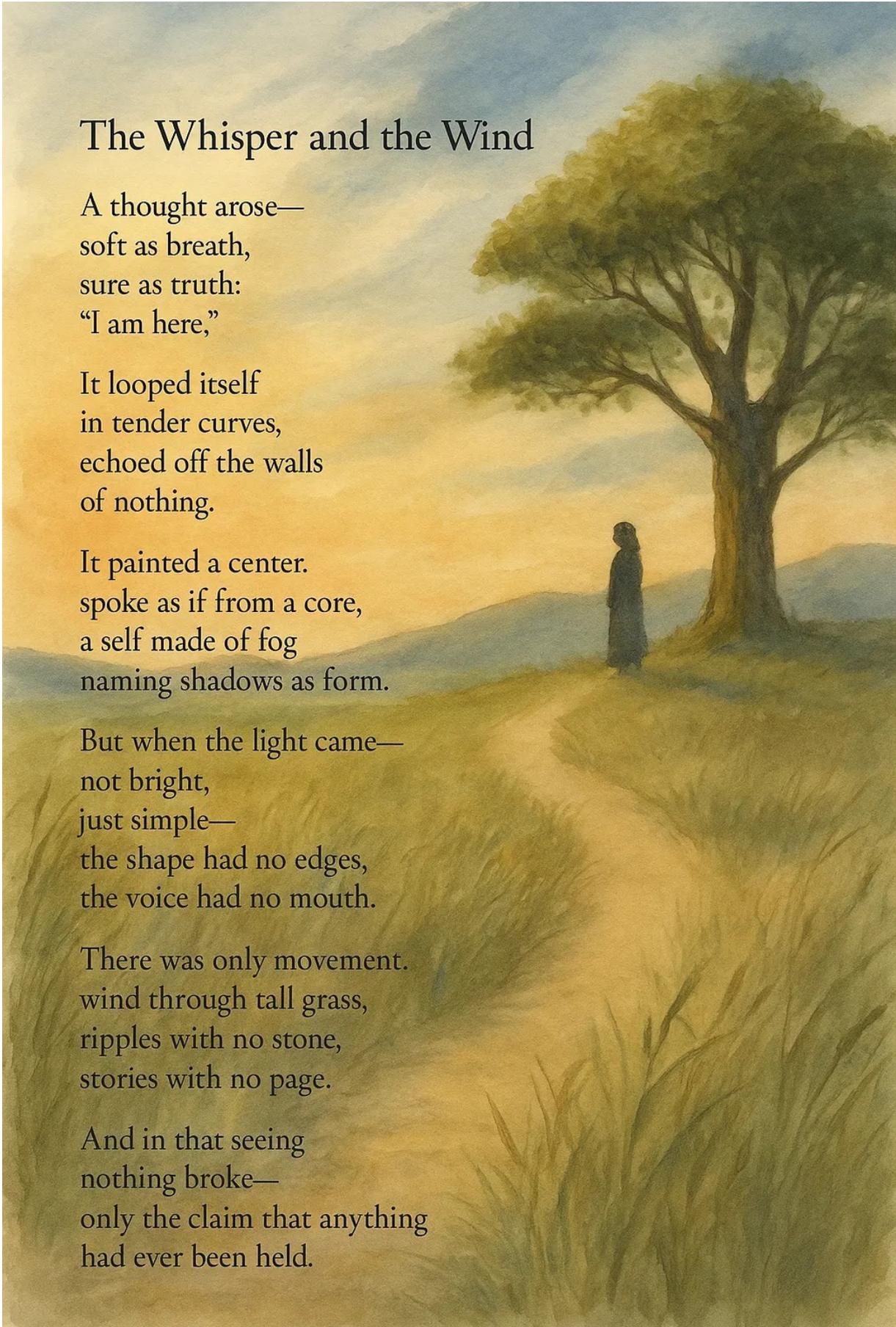
It looped itself
in tender curves,
echoed off the walls
of nothing.

It painted a center.
spoke as if from a core,
a self made of fog
naming shadows as form.

But when the light came—
not bright,
just simple—
the shape had no edges,
the voice had no mouth.

There was only movement.
wind through tall grass,
ripples with no stone,
stories with no page.

And in that seeing
nothing broke—
only the claim that anything
had ever been held.



..or what turns a thought into identification.

“And in that seeing, nothing broke— only the claim that anything had ever been held.”

What is that "seeing"?

That seeing is not an act. It's not something you do. It's not cognitive, not a belief, not an interpretation.

It's simply: the noticing of what is—without a center. The effortless, direct awareness in which appearances arise and pass, without landing on a “me.”

It's the seeing that:

- doesn't belong to anyone,
- doesn't try to change what's seen,
- doesn't divide what appears from what observes.

It's the moment thought is recognized as thought, without a story about who it's for. It's sensation felt directly, without being wrapped in identity. It's the noticing of a narrative and the silent knowing:

“This doesn't need to be believed.”

That seeing doesn't fix or improve or reach conclusions. It doesn't seek. It doesn't reject. It just shines.

And in that light, the illusion that something was ever being held—grasped, managed, owned— simply falls away.

No effort. No end goal. Just silent clarity.

Now to reflect on how the silent clarity can come and go and come again...

The silent clarity—
that wide, effortless knowing—
can seem to come and go.

One moment, there's openness.

No struggle, no center, no seeker.

Just presence.

Just the gentle noticing of what is.

And then, without warning,
the wave of thought returns—
a feeling stirs, a story builds,
and suddenly, there's someone again.
Someone trying to hold it together.
Someone trying to stay awake.
It feels like clarity has gone.
Like something precious has been lost.
But it hasn't.
The silence was never dependent on experience.
It was never something you had.
It was something that was there
when the claiming wasn't.
The mind can't hold silence.
It can only quiet itself long enough
for silence to be known again.
And so it returns—
not because you earned it,
but because it was never gone.
Like the sky behind clouds,
like the stillness beneath every movement,
it's always here.
Even when it seems lost,
what notices its absence
is already made of it.
Let it come.
Let it go.
Let it come again.
There is no rhythm to master.
No achievement to maintain.
Only the seeing that even "losing it"
is just another appearance
in what never leaves.
And if this happens, what does it mean about awakening?

If the silent clarity seems to come and go...
it doesn't mean awakening has failed.
It means awakening is not what the mind imagined.
It's not a permanent state of bliss.
Not a fortress against emotion.
Not the end of all thought, pain, or confusion.
What's waking up isn't a person.
It's the illusion of personhood unraveling.
And that illusion returns—because it's deeply conditioned.
But now, when the “me” reappears,
you know to pause.
To look.
To question.
And that's the shift.
Awakening is not measured by how long clarity stays.
It's known by how easily the stories are seen through when they
arise.
By how quickly the weight of identification loses its grip.
You don't lose awakening.
You just get temporarily enchanted again.
And that too... is seen.
So what does it mean?
It means awakening is alive.
A living inquiry.
Not an arrival, but an unfolding.
Each “loss” of clarity is an invitation—
not back to the mind,
but deeper into the real.
You're not going backward.
You're being invited to see
that even the going-back
happens in the same vastness
that never left.

Inquiry: What Turns Seeing Into “Me”?

Use this reflection when you notice you’ve gotten lost in thought, overwhelmed by emotion, or caught in a personal narrative. Not to judge. Not to fix. Just to see.

1. Begin With the Fact of Being Here

Close your eyes or soften your gaze.

Ask:

Right now, without reaching for anything—am I aware?

Let that be felt—not as a thought, but as a simple recognition.

You’re already aware.

No need to achieve that.

Just notice the awareness that’s already present.

2. Spot a Thought

Let a thought arise—any thought. Something about the past, the future, or even this inquiry.

Now ask:

Who is this thought about?

Notice how quickly the mind offers a character: *me, them, my life, my practice.*

Pause here.

3. Slow It Down

Ask:

What happens in the moment the thought becomes *mine*?

What sensation joins it?

What contraction appears in the body?

What emotional tone rises?

Is it:

- A tightening in the chest?
- A pull behind the eyes?
- A subtle clenching of the stomach?

Gently notice that it's not just a thought anymore—it has become *personal*.

Now ask:

What if this thought was just weather—passing through awareness?

Can you feel it again, this time without owning it?

4. Notice the Seeing

Shift your attention to the *noticing* itself.

Ask:

What is it that knows this thought is here?

Don't answer intellectually. Just rest in the fact that it's being seen.

That seeing:

- doesn't judge
- doesn't belong to a person
- doesn't resist

It's just... here.

Stay with that.

5. Watch What Comes Next

Let the next sensation, thought, or story arise.

As it does, ask:

What turns this into a problem?

Where does identification begin?

Is it a belief? A label? A desire to change it?

Watch the moment of “claiming.” The moment it stops being *just a thought* and becomes *your thought*.

Now soften. Let the identification dissolve again into simple seeing.

6. Rest in the Return

Let go of trying.

Let thoughts arise. Let feelings ripple.

Ask:

Can I let this unfold without making a self out of it?

Notice the clarity that's already present—not as an achievement, but as the open space in which all of this moves.

Even if the sense of “me” returns...

Can that, too, be seen?

Closing Reflection

Awakening is not the end of reactivity or story.

It's the gentle capacity to recognize that all of this—thoughts, identities, struggles—are appearances.

And what sees them?

That's not a "you."

That's *seeing itself*.

A truth the mind had long forgot



A painful trigger awakened an old fear, but in turning inward with presence, the storm dissolved into stillness, and I found freedom within the activation.

Confiding in an old friend

I hurled my words awkwardly like painful sparks,

A blaze fueled by a familiar melody.

"You're acting like a child," she said—

And just like that, the past was fed.

Poem: A truth the mind had long forgot

My stomach clenched, a fist of fear,
The ache of please don't disappear.
A child's voice, long buried deep,
Woke trembling from its restless sleep.
The storm surged fast, a rising tide,
But then—I stepped outside.
The wind was there before my thought,
A truth the mind had long forgot.
It touched my face, my hair, my skin,
And whispered softly, "Look within."
The ache remained, but I was near,
Enough to feel, enough to hear.
"Help me," cried the voice below,
"I'm scared of being left alone."
But now I did not turn or flee,
I met the cry and let it be.
A breath, a pause, a hand to chest,
"I'm here," I said, "you can rest."
The body wept, the story fell—
A wave broke free from its old shell.
And all around, the world just spun,
The trees, the birds, the busy sun.
What once had seemed a brutal blow
Now shimmered soft, and let me go.
I saw how small the moment was—
A single leaf, a quiet pause.
No more grabbing, no disguise—
Just wind and warmth and open skies.

Experiencing beyond sensation



A story of possibilities

I sit still. No goal. Just a curiosity.

The first thing I notice is a tightness—not sharp, just dense—across my lower belly. I name it. “Tightness. Dull. Slight downward pull.” There’s also warmth, more to the right, and a strange hollow flutter just above the navel. “Warm. Hollow. Flutter.” The labels land easily, like placing stickers on a map. Then I go in a little closer. The tightness isn’t solid—it pulses. Faintly, but it does. The flutter isn’t consistent either; it has pauses, like a stutter in the wind. The warmth has layers—core heat, and then a surface shimmer, like skin that’s been in the sun.

I let the locations fade. No more “belly” or “navel.” Now I just feel the sensations as they are, not tied to a place. They rise and fall, thicken and disperse. They’re not static. They’re alive, moving, changing.

My mind tries to track the pattern. “This means something,” it offers. “It’s anxiety. It’s anticipation. It’s digestion.” I thank it

silently, and let the meaning fall away. I don't need the meaning. I want the raw data.

I feel how the sensations are never still. They twist, quiver, throb, glow, vanish. I stop thinking about them and simply feel them. Not as objects. Not as signs. Just... as themselves.

Labels collapse.

“Tight” becomes too coarse. “Warm” doesn't come close. Even “sensation” feels like too much. Now I'm just swimming in the textures—waves of tingling, pulses of density, a soft edgeless expansion behind the chest. It's not even my chest anymore.

There's no me watching the experience.

There's only the experiencing.

Only this rhythm, this shimmer, this vanishing and returning.

Not knowing. No commentary. Just the infinite subtlety of now.

There's no one inside this body, no separate mind. There's no observer. There is only the flicker and fade, the rise and fall. The echo of stillness and the breath of movement. It's not mine. It's not happening to me.

It's just happening.

It is what is.

And then even that dissolves.

There is no it now. Only this, and this is not a thing.

This is not describable.

This is what's left when description ends.

Only experiencing.

Only this.

Only.

Self-Inquiry: From Label to Pure Experiencing

Use the story you just read as a template. Move step-by-step, pausing after each question. Let the body answer before the mind tries to explain.

1. Settle & Notice

- Sit or lie down.
- Let the breath find its own rhythm.
- Ask: What is the most noticeable sensation right now?

2. Apply Coarse Labels

- Where is it? (e.g., “lower belly,” “behind left eye”)
- What basic qualities? (“tight,” “warm,” “buzzing,” “pulling”)
- State them aloud or write them.

3. Refine the Map

- Move closer: Is the “tight” steady or pulsing?
- Does “warm” have a cooler edge, a core heat, a flicker?
- Add finer labels, but keep them simple.

4. Drop the Geography

- Let the location fade. Ignore “belly,” “shoulder,” “throat.”
- Feel the sensation as free-floating energy.
- Ask: Is it static or in motion? Does it swell, ripple, stutter, fade?

5. Release the Meaning

- Notice thought-offers: “This is stress,” “I should fix this.”
- Say inwardly: Label, noted, not needed.
- Let the meaning fall away; keep only raw data.

6. Let Labels Collapse

- Even “tight,” “warm,” “buzz” are now too coarse.
- Sense texture without language.
- Feel waves, sparks, vacuums—without calling them anything.

7. Immerse

- Imagine swimming inside the sensation.

- No inside/outside, no owner/owned.
 - Ask: If there's no me watching, what remains?
8. Become the Experiencing
- Rest in the shimmer, pulse, hush.
 - Notice there's no observer—only experiencing happening.
 - Stay as long as it stays; let it change or vanish on its own.
9. Return Gently
- When thought resumes, smile.
 - No failure, no success—just another wave.
 - Optional journal line: “What was present when no label was present?”

Repeat whenever you're pulled into narratives about sensations. Each cycle dissolves one more layer of “problem” and reveals pure, alive presence beneath.

The Nature of Naming



Do you feel a label or what it points to?

The limiting nature of Naming..

Sitting quietly on the edge of the bed, jaw tight, hands resting on knees.

“Anxious,” the mind said. The word rose fast — automatic, familiar.

It had been thought a thousand times. I’m anxious.

It came with a script: racing thoughts, shallow breath, tight chest, bad day.

But today, something paused.

What if that word wasn’t the whole truth?

What if it was just a label — a shortcut — wrapped around something far richer, far more alive?

Eyes closing. The room softened. Attention turned inward.

Where was this feeling?

First: the belly — tight, like a hand clenched around a stone.
Not anxiety, not fear. Just... pressure. Swirling warmth. Dense.
Alive.

Then: the throat — narrow, as if holding back sound. Not
nervousness. Just a sensation of constriction. Texture. Energy.
Motion.

Now curiosity. Stillness.

And slowly, slowly, something began to shift.

The tightness in the chest, once labelled panic, revealed itself as
movement — warmth rising, spreading into the collarbones. Not
pleasant, not unpleasant. Just real.

Not an idea. Not a story.

Just sensation.

The mind had always been quick — rushing to name, categorize,
escape.

But underneath the label was a world unspoken: heat, pulse,
vibration, tingling.

A field of experience that had never needed a name.

Breathing happened.

And for once, trying to fix the feeling didn't happen.

Just feel it.

Not a concept.

Not a diagnosis.

Not a problem.

Just this body — pulsing, shifting, vibrating with life.

And in that direct meeting, something softened.

Not because the discomfort vanished,

but because it was finally being touched without armor. Without
a label.

In that space — before thought, beyond language — there was
peace.

Not absence of feeling,

but presence with what had always been there, waiting to be seen,
just as it is.

Inquiry: Do You Feel the Label, or What It Points To?

Labels can be useful—but they often prevent us from truly meeting what’s here. This exercise invites you to turn toward your inner experience without naming it, and to discover what lies beneath the words.

1. Begin With a Pause

Find a quiet place to sit.

Let the body settle.

Close your eyes, if that feels safe.

Ask:

What am I feeling right now?

Let the first answer come. It might be:

- “Anxious”
- “Sad”
- “Overwhelmed”
- “Restless”

Note the word, gently, without judgment.

Then ask:

What if that’s just a label?

What is this experience *before* the name?

2. Turn to Sensation

Drop below the story.

Ask:

Where do I feel this in the body?

Bring awareness to the physical sensations:

- Is it tightness?
- Warmth?
- Pressure?
- Movement?
- Hollow?
- Prickly?

Explore like a curious scientist.

Feel texture, temperature, weight.

Describe it without using emotional terms.

Let it be just *sensation*.

3. Meet It Without Changing It

Ask:

Can I let this be exactly as it is?

Let go of the idea that anything needs to be solved.

Feel the sensations fully, without turning them into a “problem.”

If thoughts arise—like “*I shouldn’t feel this*” or “*This means something is wrong*”—see if you can let those go too.

Return to the raw feeling.

4. Watch the Mind Want to Label Again

The mind may jump in:

- “This is panic.”

- “This is grief.”
- “I’m not doing this right.”

Pause again.

Ask:

Am I feeling the label... or the actual experience?

Let yourself feel the difference.

Feel how thought moves fast—but the body moves slowly.

Drop back in.

5. Stay With the Unnamed

Ask:

Can I stay with this feeling...
without needing to define it?

Let yourself rest here:

- In the movement
- In the sensation
- In the unspoken

See what happens when you meet experience not as a “thing,” but as life happening now.

6. Closing Reflection

Take a few deep breaths.

Ask:

Has anything shifted—not because I tried to fix it, but simply because I met it without a name?

Let the body respond. Let the breath return.

Remember: what arises in you doesn't need to be immediately labeled or solved.

Sometimes, it only needs to be felt—exactly as it is.

When Mind Is Still



A Poem:

No thought to chase, no name to find,
Just sky and breath, and none behind.
A bird in flight, no “high” or “grace,”
Just motion moving through open space.

The breeze rolls in, no need to speak,
No self to hide, no role to seek.
The sun lands warm on shifting skin,
But no one claims the heat within.

A sound, a shape, a falling leaf,
No one to judge, no grasp, no grief.
Just seeing seen, and hearing heard,
Without a thought, without a word.

No watcher stands, no doer there,
Just this — the wind, the light, the air.
When mind lets go, what's left is true:
The world alive, and shining through.

The Decider



..or does it just happen?

Decisions happen.

The trees weren't asking anything of me.

They stood without tension, without effort — just being what they are.

I sat beneath them, holding the weight of a conversation that

hadn't yet happened.

Something uncomfortable needed to be said. At least, that's what the thought was.

The mind kept circling:

Should I bring it up? Will it help? Will it make things worse?

Should I stay silent?

But in the quiet of the forest, it became clear:

None of those questions were leading anywhere actual, real.

They were loops — well-worn habits of a mind trying to control what would, or wouldn't, unfold.

And then came a soft recognition:

Decisions happen.

They always have.

Like wind through branches, like dusk settling over the leaves —

No one decides it, it just moves.

Even the thought "I decided" comes after the fact — a narrator jumping in, claiming authorship after the page has already turned.

And so, eventually, the words were spoken.

Not because "I chose to be brave."

Not because "I made the right call."

But because they rose up and moved through the mouth like breath — unplanned, a little messy, but real.

The conversation came and went. The other person listened, perhaps half-defensive, half-curious.

But the important part wasn't how it was received.

It was the clarity of seeing:

This happened. Not by me, not through effort. It just happened.

And the only one who wanted to call it "my decision"

was the mind — still hoping for credit, or someone to blame.

But under the trees, in the soft quiet after,

there was no need for a story.

Only stillness.

Only peace.

Only the clean air of something true having moved.

Inquiry: Who (or what) decides?

1. Sit quietly. Let the body settle.

Notice sounds, sensations, and thoughts arising. Let them be. Now bring to mind a recent decision — anything simple or complex.

Ask:

What actually happened when that decision was made?

Don't analyze — *look*. Did the thought “I'll choose this” arise first? Or did the movement already begin before the thought of authorship?

2. Watch a decision form now

Bring attention to something small:

Should I shift my posture? Should I take a sip of water? Should I stand?

Wait... don't decide yet.

Then simply *let* it happen — whatever it is.

Now ask:

Did I decide that, or did it just happen?

Let the question open space. Don't rush to a conclusion.

3. Notice the narrator

A thought might come in: “I decided to...”

Gently ask:

Who is that voice speaking for?

Watch that thought arise... like any other.

Can you find a “decider” behind it?

Or is it a thought claiming ownership *after* the action?

4. What moves without ownership?

Bring awareness to something spontaneous:

A breath. A shift of attention. A sound outside.

Ask:

Did I choose that?

If not... what else might be moving this moment?

5. Rest in not-knowing

Let the inquiry dissolve.

Not with an answer, but with openness.

Ask:

What if decisions simply arise?

What if “I” am not the decider, but part of what is arising?

Sit with that.

Feel what it’s like to release control — not as an idea, but as a lived experiment.

Closing reflection

What happens when there’s no pressure to choose perfectly?

What’s left when the illusion of a central decider softens?

Let this be a living inquiry, not a concept to solve — but a mystery to rest into.

Now you - then you - now you



Inward-directed compassion and empathy...

Imagine this; Close your eyes, just for a moment.

Let your breath slow. Let the noise settle. And let yourself go somewhere quiet inside.

Now... imagine this: You're standing in a room — not one you recognize with your eyes, but one you know deeply in your body. It's soft, still, and safe. And across from you, you see someone.

It's you then.

Maybe they're five. Maybe thirteen. Maybe eighteen. Maybe yesterday.

They're caught in a moment that left a mark — a time when something felt unfair, too big, too sharp.

You remember that moment, don't you?

They look at you — confused, small, perhaps already bracing for blame.

Because back then, everything felt like your fault.

Like you were the problem.

But now... you now step forward.

You kneel gently beside them — not above, not below. Just beside.

You offer no corrections, no advice. Just presence. Just warmth.

And then you speak — not from the mouth, but from the knowing in your chest:

"None of this was your fault. You didn't do anything wrong. You were just trying to make sense of it all. You were surviving the best way you could."

You now can see it clearly.

You then was just responding to life — to the conditions, the environment, the people around them.

They didn't choose their software.

It was installed by circumstance — unconsciously inherited, unconsciously repeated.

And now?

Now, you have the choice to upgrade.

Not by erasing you then, but by welcoming them fully.

By letting them rest.

By saying: "I see you. I love you. You're allowed to come home now."

This is integration.

Not fixing.

Not fixing them. Not fixing you.

Just the gentle merging of past and present, until there's no more separation.

You hold you then and say:

“You belong. Even with the hurt. Even with the fear. I accept you — all of you.”

And something shifts.

That old, heavy code — guilt, shame, self-doubt — it doesn't need to run anymore.

It can be updated. Rewritten.

By love. By clarity.

By the unwavering, unconditional acceptance of you now toward you then.

This is how healing happens.

This is how peace returns.

By no longer trying to exile the parts of you that struggled... and instead, inviting them into your arms.

You now take the hand of you then.

And together, you walk forward — not toward perfection, but toward wholeness.

Here is the audio version of this meditation; [click here](#)

Inquiry: Meeting You back Then

1. Find stillness

Sit quietly.

Feel the body—feet on the ground, breath moving in and out.
No need to change anything. Just arrive.

Now bring this into your awareness:

Can I feel the presence of myself... as I am now?

Notice what that feels like—not as an idea, but as an embodied reality.

2. Invite "You Then" into the space

Let a younger version of you arise—not through memory, but through felt sense.

Who comes to meet me?

Let an age or moment emerge naturally.

No pressure. No judgment. Just a willingness to see.

Where are they? What is their posture, their face?

What are they carrying?

Now ask, gently:

What did you need back then, that you didn't receive?

Let the answer come—not as a sentence, but as a sensation, a sense, an image.

3. Let "You Now" respond

You don't need to fix. Just *be*.

From your current awareness, from the groundedness of the now:

What do I want to say to them?

Speak silently, or aloud.

Let the words rise from care, not from trying.

Examples might include:

- “You didn’t do anything wrong.”
- “I see how hard it was.”
- “You are loved, exactly as you are.”
- “You can rest now.”

Let your present awareness *hold* that past experience with total warmth.

4. Feel the integration

Ask:

Can I allow “you then” to come home?

Can they be part of me now, not as a wound... but as a welcomed one?

Let any resistance surface—meet it too with kindness.

Notice what shifts in your body, if anything softens, loosens, or opens.

5. Closing presence

Rest in silence for a moment.

Ask:

How does it feel to no longer exile this part of me?

Let the question echo, like a bell in a still room.

And whatever you feel—*that* is welcome.

The Scroll



'Is this it again?'

A man confronts the hidden weight of his own reactions as he discovers the raw, shifting truth beneath a simple scroll through the news.

He sat hunched over the screen, thumb twitching. Headlines flickered by like frantic shadows: disasters, outrage, declarations of truth. As his thumb danced, a familiar tightness pulsed in his upper chest. It climbed—into the throat, into the head—a creeping heat like breath caught in a sealed jar.

He froze.

“Is this it again?” he whispered, not to anyone, but to the contraction.

Instead of fleeing into another scroll, he turned inward, pressing attention into the tension like a hand on the heartbeat of the world. The contraction shifted, as if it had been seen. It floated upward, almost like steam. Warm. Familiar. Alive.

He didn't try to fix it. He didn't name it anxiety or stress or reaction. It was just... there. Pure sensation. Moving. Changing. Real.

Then a thought: Should I stop scrolling?

He watched the question land like a leaf on a stream. No answer. Just awareness.

He put the phone down. Then picked it up. Watched himself scroll. Felt the pulse rise again.

He smiled—not because he was free, but because he was watching.

There was power in not knowing. Power in seeing. In staying. And in the silent, undeniable truth that this was enough.

What sensations arise in your body when you read this?

Inquiry: The Scroll Within

1. Begin where you are

Sit quietly for a moment with your device in hand.

Take a breath. Let the body arrive.

Now, without judgment or control, **open a news feed**, social app, or site you often browse.

As you begin to scroll, what is the very first sensation you notice in your body?

Is it tension? Excitement? Dullness? Numbness? Nothing at all?

2. Pause at a headline or image

Don't choose—just stop where your finger happens to land.

Ask yourself:

What is my body doing right now?

Scan:

- Chest
- Belly
- Jaw
- Shoulders
- Breath

What is being felt — before any label, before any story?

Can you feel a raw sensation *without calling it* anger, fear, boredom, or interest?

3. Stay with one moment

Don't move forward. Just stay with that article or image or line of text.

What reaction is *wanting* to happen?

To scroll? To close it? To click? To avoid?

Can you let the reaction just... be there, without acting on it?

Watch it like steam rising. Watch it shift. Watch it move.

4. Gently set the device down

Close the screen. Put it out of reach. Sit with what remains.

Ask:

What was I really looking for in that scroll?

- Distraction?
- Relief?
- Stimulation?
- Control?
- Comfort?

Let the question be open. No need to answer it.

Feel how the urge changes when it's seen clearly.

5. Return to stillness

Place a hand on your chest or belly, if that helps ground you.

Ask:

If I don't fix this, change this, distract from this...

Can this moment still be enough?

Stay.

Notice.

Let this be your practice—not to stop scrolling forever, but to **see clearly while it happens.**

The Movement



Each night, just as the world fell silent, something ancient rose from beneath Ari's ribs and knocked on the locked door of his forgetting.

In a quiet corner of the city, beneath flickering neon and the low hum of late-night silence, there lived a man named Ari. By day he sold insurance. By night, he unraveled. Not in a tragic way—but like thread pulled gently from a well-worn sweater.



Each night he sat, still as stone, spine stacked like a tower of ancient bricks. He did not seek answers. He no longer sought at all. It had begun, as it often does, with a question that collapsed in on itself: “Who is it that is asking?”

One night, deep in meditation, it struck.

Energy movement. Low and fierce, just beneath the ribs.

Ari lurched forward. Not from pain. From recognition. The body, his body—if such a thing existed—had spoken. Or was it protesting?

He did not chase it. He didn't try to interpret it. He simply entered it.

He lay down that night with a quiet smile. Not of satisfaction, but like someone who had just remembered a dream that changed their life.

The next evening, it happened again. Then again, days later. Not predictable. Not obedient. Just there. Like thunder that forgets its schedule.

It wasn't a thing at all. It appeared to be a boundary dissolving. Each movement punctured a veil—belief, self-concept, memory. One by one, Ari's definitions unraveled.

He saw a stranger on the street and felt no difference.

He watched rain slide down glass and forgot to name it “rain.”

His mother called, and her voice, once coated in story, was just a sound again. A warm, breaking sound.

Then one day, the movement didn't come.

He smiled.

It had done its work.

No more gates to pass. No more self to liberate.

Only THIS movement.

Breathing. Buzzing. Undeniable.

Now, take this story and wear it like skin. In your next meditation, when the movement comes—or doesn't—can you feel for the place where it points, rather than what it is?

What changed in your felt sense of being the last time it happened? Where did that movement go after it faded? And what happens when you don't try to make it mean anything at all?

Inquiry: The Movement

“Not a thing at all. It appeared to be a boundary dissolving.”

This exercise invites you to turn toward subtle energetic shifts in the body — not to interpret them, but to be present with them, as they are.

1. Prepare the body

Find a quiet place. Sit or lie down comfortably. Let the spine settle — not stiff, just aware.

Close the eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Let the breath find its own rhythm.

Can you feel the undercurrent of stillness beneath movement?

2. Invite the inner noticing

Now, without expectation or effort, allow your attention to settle *beneath* your ribs.

Feel what's there — not what should be there. Not energy. Not silence. Not movement. Just... sensation.

If something stirs, let it.

If nothing stirs, let that too.

What does it feel like to be aware without searching?

3. When something moves

If a sensation arises — flutter, pulse, heat, ache, pressure — simply **enter it with your awareness.**

Can you follow the sensation without naming it?

Don't call it “energy,” or “awakening,” or “blockage.” Just meet it where it lives, in its raw form.

Let your attention be curious, intimate, respectful. Like you're meeting an old friend who no longer speaks your language, but who you trust completely.

4. If nothing moves

No movement? Perfect.

What is the shape of stillness in this moment?

Is it wide? Is it dense? Is it soft?

What does the *absence* of something feel like — not as a void, but as a presence of quiet?

5. Dissolve the frame

As you sit in this space — movement or stillness — ask:

- Does this experience belong to “me”?
- Who is it that would make meaning out of this?
- What remains when there's no story, no seeker, no point?

Can you simply rest in the ungraspable?

6. Close the practice

When you're ready, bring the attention back to the room, but not too fast.

Feel your breath.

Feel your hands and feet.

Gently open your eyes.

Carry no conclusions.

Let the experience live as it is: unnamed, unmapped, untouched by story.

This isn't a technique to master. It's an invitation to unlearn.

Each time "the movement" comes — or doesn't — it's a doorway.

Not into something, but out of everything you thought you were

The First Orange



For most of their life, Kai had rushed past the small things. Not out of ungratefulness, but simply out of habit — always thinking ahead, always managing the next task, the next worry, the next possibility. The days were full but strangely thin, like walking quickly through a garden without ever touching the petals.

One afternoon, everything slowed.

Kai was visiting a friend's countryside home. The air was cool, and the trees hummed softly. They wandered into the garden where a single orange tree stood, heavy with fruit. The friend smiled and handed Kai an orange.

“Here, try one.”

Kai took it — round, smooth, vibrant. There was nothing extraordinary about the moment, but for some reason, they paused. The world felt still.

Slowly, they peeled back the skin. The scent released instantly — sweet, sharp, alive. The peel gave way to bright segments, glistening in the afternoon light. It was, in every way, just an orange. And yet, it felt like the first orange ever touched.

Kai bit into a segment. The juice burst into the mouth, and for a brief second, the mind completely emptied. There was no past, no future. No managing, no preparing. Just sweetness. Just life.

A quiet joy rose, simple and warm.

They laughed softly — not at anything, but from the sheer surprise of it:

How much had I been missing?

It wasn't that life had been dull before. It was that so much had been covered over by thought, by speed, by trying to get somewhere. The discovery wasn't the orange itself, but the noticing — the permission to be here.

In that single moment, Kai saw how much beauty had always been waiting:

the breeze touching skin,
the sound of distant birds,
the weight of the fruit in hand,
the pulse of life everywhere.

Later that evening, sitting under a sky slowly folding into dusk, Kai felt no urgency to think about tomorrow. The simple joy of *being here* was enough.

And in that joy was a quiet discovery:

life had never been waiting.

Only their attention had.

And now, finally, it had arrived.

An update I felt to share after a recent meeting:

I had just finished sitting quietly and felt moved to write — and the message from the meeting arrived at the same moment.

I'm deeply grateful for yesterday's meeting, and for the space these days to allow whatever is arising — anger, confusion, intensity — and to be gently guided through it. The combination of love and unwavering clarity offered in these meetings is truly rare and precious.

After the meeting, I went for a long walk in heavy rain with the dog (who seemed to enjoy it more than I expected 😊). I stopped often — watching dark clouds move, smelling the wet ferns, stomping through puddles, catching rain in my mouth. Tears and laughter came in waves.

When I returned home, soaked through, I let something move that I didn't know was still locked inside — screaming, shouting, making sounds I've never heard myself make before. At one point, I wondered if my vocal cords would survive 😊. But it wasn't frightening — more like something old and stuck was finally allowed to move freely.

There weren't many thoughts — just a quiet seeing of how much of the suffering had been held in place by the mind's stories. The simple sense arose the next morning: *I can create anything (but not from the small self)*.

It's not about what gets done — work, projects, parenting, relationships — but about who is present in the doing. There's a kind of love here now that simply wants to flow outward, even though I don't yet know how that will express. And that's okay. Another glimpse that the personal "me" isn't real — just patterns playing themselves out. Grateful beyond words for the love, presence, and energy that's shared in these meetings.

Inquiry: The First Orange

Awakening to the Beauty in the Ordinary

This is not an inquiry into philosophy or deep metaphysics. This is an invitation into *presence* — into the ever-available magic of what is right here.

1. Begin where you are

Take a few breaths. Feel your body sitting or standing.

Notice the contact points — feet on the ground, seat on the chair.

Let your attention settle... gently.

2. Choose something simple and immediate

Pick up an everyday object:

- a piece of fruit,
- a cup of tea,
- a leaf,
- your own hand.

Whatever is available — choose it without effort. Let it be ordinary.

Now *look*. Not with the eyes of memory or function (“this is a cup”), but as if for the first time. Let its shape, color, texture come into awareness.

What is it like to *see* without labeling?

3. Turn to sensation

Touch it. Smell it. Hold it.

If it’s edible, taste it slowly.

Not for pleasure — but for *presence*.

What sensations arise?

What stories try to rush in and explain or compare?

Can those stories be set aside — just for this moment?

4. Stay with what unfolds

Let any emotion or stillness come.

Let any old memories float through.

Let the mind try to turn it into a “practice” — and gently return to *just this*.

What do you notice when you stay simple?

What falls away when you don't try to “get something” from the experience?

5. Reflection

Afterward, sit quietly for a few more breaths.

Then reflect:

- **How much of daily life have I been rushing past?**
- **What beauty might be waiting right now, unseen?**
- **What would it mean to walk through life as though it were all “the first orange”?**

Write down what you discovered — not to capture it, but to let it echo back into awareness.

Optional prompt to carry into the day:

What if *everything* is as sacred as this moment... and always has been?

This inquiry is not about fruit.

It's about the living invitation *within* every unnoticed moment.

The one waiting, patiently, for your full attention. 🍊

The Wondering is Just Happening



There's wondering.

It appears.

That's all.

There's a thought: *Is there identification?*

It's not you asking. The thought arises. Appears.

No one is behind it. No one is driving it.

The thought simply shows up in experience.

You might notice: there is no "someone" wondering.

There's just wondering.

Another thought may arise: *But maybe I am the one wondering?*

Look directly.

That thought too — simply arises. Not owned. Not driven.

No doer behind it. No controller.

This is how it always functions:

Thought. Arising. Fading.

Sensations. Arising. Fading.

Experiencing. Simply happening.

No one behind the curtain.

Even the thought: *I should reach a conclusion* —
just thought.

Even the frustration about not landing anywhere —
just another appearance.
Don't follow the content.
Don't follow the pull to solve it.
Stay at the level of seeing:
“This thought has appeared. I didn't call it. I'm not doing it.”
Look:
When a bird flies by, you see it.
You don't create the bird.
You don't make the bird fly.
You don't claim ownership of its movement.
Thought is the same.
You see it.
It flies by.
It's not yours.
When you think you are the one thinking — that too is thought.
No thinker is found.
Experience is simply being experienced.
The habit wants to claim, to own, to conclude.
Let that habit also be seen as what it is:
another arising.
The wondering itself?
That's fine. Let it stay.
Wondering is just happening.
It doesn't point to a self.
Don't resolve it. Don't land anywhere.
The need to land is just more activity.
You don't need it.
Rest here:
Experiencing is happening.
No one is doing it.

Inquiry: The Wondering is Just Happening

Sit quietly.

Notice that thoughts are arising.

Right now, there is a thought:

"Is there identification?"

"Is there a self?"

Notice:

Did you create that thought?

Did you summon it?

Or did it simply appear?

Just see:

The thought appeared.

No one made it happen.

Now, notice the sense that *"I am the one who is wondering."*

Look carefully:

Where is the one who wonders?

Is there someone there — or simply the experience of wondering?

Look into the texture of that experience.

Is there a thinker?

Or just thinking?

Notice how each thought comes, stays for a moment, and goes.

Just like sounds arise.

Just like sensations arise.

You do not create them.

They simply happen.

Now, another thought may appear:

"But I still feel like I'm doing this."

That too — just another thought.

Did you create it?

Or did it arise, like the others?

Notice:

Even frustration is just another arising.

Even the desire to resolve, to reach an answer — that too is simply

happening.
Let that be seen.
Don't attempt to land.
Don't attempt to conclude.
That is another layer of seeking.
Stay here:
Thoughts arise.
Sensations arise.
Emotions arise.
All without a doer.
This is always how experience functions.
Experiencing is happening.
There is no one doing it.
Rest in the simplicity of this seeing.

Inquiry Exercise: The Wondering is Just Happening

Let this be a gentle return to what is already true.

Begin: Settle the Body

Find a quiet space.
Sit comfortably.
Let your hands rest naturally.
Let the breath arrive and leave on its own.
No control is needed.
No outcome required.

1. Notice the Wondering

Allow the mind to do what it does.
Let any question arise:

- “*Am I identified right now?*”
- “*Is this awakening?*”
- “*What is this experience?*”

Whatever shows up — let it.

Now ask:

Did I create this wondering? Or did it just appear?

Let the question hang in the air.

Look softly. Let it be felt.

2. Investigate the Doer

When a thought appears — like:

“*I want to get this*”

“*I’m still not there yet*”

ask:

Who is thinking this? Can I find the one doing it?

Not the idea of someone.

Not the story.

But the actual *source*.

Look in sensation.

Look in awareness.

Where is the thinker?

3. Zoom Out: Let All Arising Be Seen

Notice how everything is just... happening:

- Thoughts arise — without permission.

- Emotions stir — without reason.
- Sensations shift — without command.

Let the noticing be simple.
Like watching weather pass.

Ask:

**Is there a self behind this movement? Or just movement?
What happens when I don't try to claim any of it?**

4. Gently Unhook the Habit

Now observe the next thought that tries to land:

- *“This is pointless.”*
- *“I get it now!”*
- *“I should be further.”*

Even these are just thoughts.
No need to argue with them.
No need to believe or reject.

Can this too be allowed to float by — like a bird crossing the sky?

5. Rest as the Seeing

There is no need to fix anything.
No need to stop thoughts.
No need to land on a final answer.

Just this:

The wondering is happening.

There is no one doing it.

No thinker, no seeker, no owner — only seeing.

Rest here.

Not in thought.

Not in effort.

But in the open clarity that *notices*.

This is not a special state.

It's what has always been.

Integration Prompt (Optional)

Throughout the day, when a loop of thought begins:

Pause, and ask gently:

Did I choose this wondering?

Or is it just appearing?

Then let go.

Let it come. Let it go.

Just like clouds. Just like breath.

The invitation is simple:

Stop searching for who is wondering.

There is only wondering.

And even that — is just another ripple...

in what never moves.

The Unfolding



At first, Sam didn't even know they were seeking. They were simply trying to fix what felt off—chasing happiness, clarity, something solid to stand on. Self-help books, mindfulness apps, endless podcasts — all offering new tools, new promises. Yet the restlessness remained.

One evening, sitting quietly after yet another failed attempt to "stay present," a simple question arose: *"What exactly am I seeking?"*

The search itself was seen. The pattern of reaching, grasping, imagining some future arrival point.

And suddenly, it was clear: **seeking itself was the trap.** This was the first break: seeing that trying to find freedom was keeping freedom at bay.

Then came the next layer: **the sense of self.** That inner voice narrating life — the one that claimed ownership of every thought, feeling, and decision.

"Is there really a 'me' doing all of this?"

Sam looked. Really looked.

And found... nothing.

Thoughts happened.

Sensations arose.

Decisions appeared — but no one behind them.

The “self” was just a story, a collection of habits and labels glued together by belief.

As this realization deepened, **old fears surfaced** — what if no self means emptiness, meaninglessness, even death?

But instead of avoiding them, Sam allowed those fears to arise fully, without resistance.

And when met directly, they dissolved into simple sensations, no longer terrifying — just energy moving through.

Then came **the collapse of duality** — the final illusion that there was an observer separate from experience.

There was no one watching life happen.

There was only life happening.

Everything arising as one seamless field — thoughts, sounds, sensations — all appearing together, without division.

In time, even the fascination with "awakening" itself fell away.

There was no enlightened self to protect, no special state to maintain.

Just the ongoing, ordinary simplicity of life unfolding.

The seeking had burned itself out.

Not into some grand bliss, but into quiet, everyday presence.

Sam still cooked dinner. Still went to work.

But now, the weight was gone.

The burden of holding together an imagined self had quietly dissolved.

And in its place:

life, just as it is.

Always awake.

Always here.

Inquiry Exercise: The Unfolding

Seeing through the seeking, and what remains when the seeker dissolves.

Begin in Stillness

Find a quiet space.
Let the breath settle.
Let the mind rest, even if only a little.
No goal. Just space.

Step 1: Gently Name the Pattern

Ask yourself:

What am I hoping to reach or become?

Let the honest answers come:
Peace? Clarity? Awakening?
Being free of discomfort? Being someone better?

Notice the energy behind the seeking — a reaching, a subtle pushing forward.

Now ask:

What if this very seeking is the thing that veils what's already here?

Don't answer conceptually.
Just feel. Let the question echo.

Step 2: Investigate the “One Who Seeks”

Turn the gaze inward.

Who is it that is seeking?

Not the thought *about* a seeker.

Not the story of a self.

But the actual doer.

Can it be found?

What do you see — or not see — when you look honestly?

Let the absence be as informative as any presence.

Step 3: Feel the Fear

If fear or confusion arise — good.

Let them. Don't push them away.

Ask:

What am I afraid would happen if there is no one here at the center?

Notice the body's response — tension, tightness, energy.

Don't resist it.

Don't label it.

Just feel it fully. Let it unfold without agenda.

And ask:

Is this fear anything more than sensation?

Do I need a self to feel this?

Let the inquiry soften the fear.

Step 4: Notice Life Happening

Right now:

- Thoughts are arising.
- Sensations are occurring.
- Breath is moving.
- Sounds are appearing.

Is there someone doing this — or is it simply unfolding?

Let yourself rest as the field in which it all happens.

No controller. No watcher.

Just this.

Step 5: Drop Even the Idea of Awakening

Ask:

Who would be awake?

What part of you wants to become something else?

See if that too is just a thought, a habit of identity.

Now let all of it go — the search, the self, the goal.

Just this.

Simple. Immediate. Unfolding.

Integration

Throughout your day, pause occasionally and ask:

What am I seeking right now?

Who is seeking it?

What's actually here if I stop trying to get somewhere?

Let the answers — or the silence — be enough.

Let life unfold.

As it always has.

Without anyone doing it.

**This is the end of seeking — not because something was found,
but because there was never anything missing.**

