

Right Here, Right Now

Right Here, Right Now:

Seeing Your True Nature as Present Awareness

John Wheeler

NON-DUALITY PRESS

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Preface

Is it possible to clearly point to something that cannot be seen? From John Wheeler comes the remarkable gift of beating the same drum at the same tempo with a fresh look at every concern. From the first word, it is clear that the author is speaking from direct honest experience and with the pure intent of bringing the reader to resolution. Because of this, the reader quickly gains confidence that the uncompromising message delivered in these pages is not just the opinion, concept, or belief of the author.

The drum that John beats so well is conveying the message that what you seek you already are. You will find many of your own questions in this book followed by answers that effortlessly remove the misconceptions that have been carried, perhaps for a lifetime. In coming to see what the author is pointing to, further questions and doubts will dissolve into the natural state of peace and completeness that is beyond words.

In a world where it appears that there is a you and a me, it is with lasting gratitude and without reservation that I say with absolute finality, that in the straightforward answers of this book is the key to end your search.

John Greven
Enid, Oklahoma
February, 2006

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Let the Mind Be

Question: Things are unfolding nicely here ...

John: What is knowing that? In what is it all unfolding? Come back to that. Unfolding is in time. Reality is ever-present and timeless. Hone in on the core of timeless presence-awareness. Everything else comes and goes. This does not.

Q: It is relatively effortless.

John: Awareness is one hundred percent natural and effortless. When, in your experience, is it not shining? The fact of being present and aware is totally effortless. That is what you are, and it is already present. We overlooked it because we were looking for something exotic, but it has been right here all along!

Q: I recall reading about the mind dropping into an open state. Right now, the mind is very active, and it seems as though it still believes it is running the show.

John: You are still giving a bit of emphasis to the mind. The answer is not there! Let it be as it will. Are you controlling it? Do you have any power over it? No! Let it go. The golden gate of freedom lies in another direction. That in you which is present and aware is always free of the mind, just like the sun shining above the clouds. The sun never worries about clouds. Awareness is never bothered by thoughts. It is only interest in thoughts that binds us to them. There is no freedom or happiness available through looking to the mind.

The direct recognition of light and love is in the non-conceptual, non-mental apprehension of awareness. Thoughts form no barrier to this. Thoughts cannot be there without awareness, can they? So awareness is here. It is also presence, openness and love. Just turn to that. It is right there, always in you.

Q: There is a real desire here for it to settle down.

John: This will hang you up. It is a concept and puts the mind in conflict with itself. It is a sign that we are still looking to the mind for what is real. We put that expectation on the mind and it cannot deliver. What does love have to do with the mind? Let the mind be. It can be there or do anything. That is not a problem. Keep looking at that which is present and clear, not back at the mind. Do not renounce it, judge it or do anything with it. It is just a few passing clouds floating across a clear blue sky. What is seeing them? Who are you in relation to those thoughts?

Q: Is that openness something that will eventually occur?

John: No, because it is already present. We are just overlooking it. See if you can find the already present spaciousness in you.

Q: I suppose that is just another pointer, and I do not need to expect any further developments?

John: Drop the expectation of anything special happening in the future. That will keep you on the wheel. Your true nature is always in the present.

Q: I know what I am, but there is still a lot of wanting things to be a certain way. I think I still have some sense of being an

individual. Do you have any suggestions for clearing this up? I think I have been over it every which way.

John: It is just some residual habits. They will take care of themselves as you settle in with the recognition of your true nature. There may still be a few concepts floating around like old cobwebs, just some subtle beliefs in the future, some residual tendency to look to the mind for a state that you do not have. You will eventually come to see those are false concepts, and then they will not trouble you any longer.

Just Keep It Simple

Q: I have been both fascinated and perplexed by non-duality for over a year now. I have tried to do the crucial self analysis of finding out who I am and where I exist. I realize that I am not my thoughts since I am still aware even when I have no thoughts. But I cannot say that I am not my body because my body is always here, it never disappears. Apparently, the conclusion I should have reached was that I am not the thoughts, I am not the body. Therefore, I am the underlying awareness. But I cannot arrive at this conclusion. What am I doing wrong? I hope you can help me.

John: Just keep it simple. Stop right now and notice the fact of your presence, which exists and is aware right now. Is there any difficulty in recognizing that fact? That is what you are. It is clear and present at all times and can never be doubted. Seeing this is not a conclusion of the mind. There is no need for a conclusion.

The recognition of the fact of presence-awareness is not done through the mind or the senses. When you ask yourself if you exist and if you are aware, the answer that comes is not a product of a chain of reasoning, but a direct, non-conceptual recognition. That is why they say 'non-conceptual awareness'. You cannot use the mind to recognize what is being pointed out. Yet it is easy to see, once you catch the pointer. The simplicity is the key.

You are present and aware. That is what you are. Everything else simply arises and sets in this presence, which is ever-present and clear as that knowingness that knows and, therefore, transcends all appearances. That is it in a nutshell.

Q: Thank you for your patient reply to my question. John, does it matter that much what my motivation is for wanting to awaken? My feeling is that I am partly motivated by the wish to truly know myself, but also partly motivated by my ego, which desires to be superior to ordinary, unawakened people.

John: Basically, everyone wants to be free and be happy. Everyone wants to know what is real. There is no need to second guess your motivation. This is just the mind coming in to evaluate things. Just follow your heart. The focus naturally falls off of the mind and its worries and concerns. What is coming up is just a little residue of the past conditioning. There is no harm. There is no need to worry too much about it. The ideas of 'superior' and 'ordinary' people are just some old concepts. You exist and are aware right now. It has nothing to do with superior or ordinary. It is a simple fact and transcends all such mental labels and categories.

Q: I go through periods (sometimes minutes, sometimes hours) of feeling a deep stillness and peace, and then I am straight back into strong thoughts and feelings about my life situation, all the bad things that have happened in my life and all the people that have wronged me. Do these strong thoughts and feelings slowly subside as one rests more and more in awareness? It is a bit of a roller coaster ride.

John: Yes. The focus on thoughts subsides. Continue to notice the fact of being or presence-awareness—whatever you want to call it. Thoughts come and go but you remain—clear, present and solid as a rock. We pay attention to thoughts because we think they say something about who we are, but they do not. We have been looking in the wrong direction. Once this confusion is cleared up the focus returns to what we really are.

Q: Is it really true that there is nothing I can do to awaken, because there is no 'I' there? If this is so, then is the process of awakening simply your awareness triggering a resonance in my awareness? I feel as if I am running around like a headless chicken seeking that which I can never find.

John: No. I do not agree that there is nothing you can do. Just investigate what you are. Have a look to verify the pointers. If there is nothing you can do, there is no use talking about this. The investigation does reveal that what we took ourselves to be is not true. It also clarifies what we are. In the light of clear seeing, the separate doer is seen to be false. But you need to look and see this for yourself. It sounds like a paradox, but it really is not. We just clear up the doubts and come back to a recognition of what is true. Nothing is really changed but the confusion is removed.

Q: Sorry for these questions. I know that I could probably ask you questions for the next decade and it probably would not get me any closer to what I seek, because ultimately there is no magic formula for awakening.

John: Do not hold too tightly to the concept of awakening. It is tantalizing, but it is still only a concept. Whatever you are, you are even now. It is just seeing what is present. There is no need for awakening or any event or attainment. That is a concept which keeps you looking in the wrong direction.

We Must Look for Ourselves

Question: Your response to my last email about not expecting fireworks clarified things wonderfully. All that is left now is just looking, a relaxing back into this awareness that contains everything, a process of allowing this simple, absolutely constant, unchanging and utterly simple feeling of being to become foreground, while allowing the contents of awareness to come and go. It can be done at any time, while at work or play, while walking along a street or sitting with a cup of coffee, while talking with a friend. No lotus postures are needed, no quiet place, no special practice.

Now I know, really know, what you and others have been saying about thoughts and concepts and about authority. There can be no authority when it comes to this. There is no teaching we can accept unchecked and untested. We must look for ourselves, see by direct looking to find out whether or not what you or any other teacher has been saying is true or not. And that looking cannot be with the mind, since the mind cannot know this.

During my first meeting with Bob Adamson, I mentioned that, when reading Krishnamurti many years ago, I experienced what can only be described as a wall, as concept after concept, belief after belief, was torn down until there was nowhere left to look. I experienced it again during the meeting with Bob as a sense of frustration, an exasperation that I now recognize as the mind banging into the limits of what it can know. How obvious it turned out to be once it was pointed out, a simple 180-degree turn of attention inward to what is doing the looking.

John: Nice to hear from you. All this is resonating wonderfully for you and the seeing is clear. You met Bob Adamson, so there is precious little I can add! I like your statements about authority. No authority, teacher or sage can give us what we already are. Still the simple pointing back to the ever-present is greatly appreciated! You are doing a pretty good job of it yourself!

Shining in Plain View

Question: I would like to share some thoughts and perhaps hear your input. Many moments when suffering is observed there is a recognition of its illusoriness. So there are no questions. It seems like you have said all that can be said about who I am. Not only that, but the direct experience has occurred. So, the pendulum of experience goes on and 'I' do not care for it so much anymore. I suffer the bad moments and enjoy the good ones. And I keep asking who is there to suffer or enjoy.

Some cul-de-sac concepts keep popping up though. One of them is that the experience of seeing my true nature, a month ago, was very intense and emotionally charged. It was like I was a shining star in an infinite, loving and tranquil heart, accompanied by the clear view of the absence of 'me'. Now, there is no such experience in this moment. And there is a seeking of that experience, which traps the mind into seeking an imaginary moment based on memory. It feels like a 'catch 22', like I will be happy only if those experiences occur. At the same time, when my true nature of happiness or awareness reveals itself, even for a split second, the feeling of love and certainty is there.

Another concern is about the times when the mind is either engrossed in some activity, like playing the cello, tennis or at the computer, or else completely lost in some pleasant or unpleasant imaginary sequence of events. There is no possibility of self-inquiry at those times. It seems obvious that nothing can be done about that, but the frustration arising from perceiving such an amount of 'lost time' keeps recurring. I cannot quite pinpoint the relation of these experiences to the belief of being a separate entity.

Apart from that, at times there is a fluidity, effortlessness and formlessness to life which is new. And freedom and gratitude seem to breeze in and out effortlessly. The thought and feeling often arises, 'Look, all is quiet and perfect! Where are you and all the suffering?'

John: Continue to come back to the recognition of your true nature. It is not an experience or moment of clarity that comes and goes. We are looking for something constant and always available. It does not depend on moments of seeing or things dropping away. For even through those changing states, you cannot deny your presence, which exists and is aware. Coming back to that, you settle down with the understanding that there is something clear, bright and steady right within you at all times. Can you truly say that what you are comes and goes or is not present now or at any moment?

That flower is constant and ever-present in the heart. It is truly what you are. There may appear to be a wavering between recognizing that clear presence and the residual interest or belief in the self-centered thoughts and feelings due to old habits of the mind. This gives the appearance that the clarity is coming and going. It is something of an illusion, like feeling that the train is motionless and the world outside is moving. When you explore it a bit, you see this is not really true.

Suffering and doubts are only thoughts. The simplicity of this is breathtaking and its implications are immense. Those thoughts generally revolve around some view or notion of ourselves as being limited and apart from the deeper truth. But is it really true? Are we really apart from what is being pointed out as the reality? Looking a bit into this question with curiosity and interest exposes the beliefs and continues to lay bare the immediate availability of clarity.

These are just some reflections that came up to share, based on my experience. I had the exact same experience

that you are sharing, so I know it is possible to resolve these doubts.

Q: Thank you for your message. It is so beautiful how deeply and clearly your words ring. If I may, I would like to discuss these and other issues more, even though all these questions do not feel really serious anymore, in a way. There is an underlying understanding that it is all conceptual. It is like everything is a passing movie, including the senses and the world which the mind creates from their input. Nevertheless, it feels good and right to somehow neutralize the questions and doubts by seeing them against the mirror of your responses. There is gratitude for being able to do this at this time.

John: Have no doubt. All of this is settling in quite well. It is like a flower—it just unfolds and reveals itself. Once you get a clear pointing to the heart of the matter and there is a resonance with it, the rest just blossoms. You see more and more clearly the simplicity of what is present and (as is happening) the conceptual ideas that we used to take for granted start to stand out as artificial and unnecessary. Talking about this is good. It is just a temporary reminder until the understanding settles in. Then you need no pointers or guidance. What you are seeking to know is shining in plain view.

The Suffering of Others

Question: I feel stuck. I am concerned about the suffering of others. I have talked to some teachers about this and received some pointers, but they feel like temporary fixes. I do not seem to see past all of the suffering I perceive around me. Maybe it is just an appearance, but I do not seem to be able to divorce myself from the seeming reality of the appearance. I feel overwhelmed at times by what I experience personally within my own family. The suffering is unabated. I somehow thought that getting an understanding of my true nature would alleviate the suffering or put it in a different light in a way that I could understand it.

Even in the few days since we met my outlook on the world has changed. Yes, I do realize that the awareness has not changed. I do not know what more I need to understand, or how to apply it. I am not a dummy, and yet I do not seem to be catching on to what others have realized. What can I do about the suffering?

John: The urge to alleviate our own or others' suffering is a worthwhile effort, but we need to lay the groundwork first. To truly be free of suffering requires that we thoroughly understand it. Whatever we understand, we are free of. So, I would suggest looking deeply into suffering to understand what it is. Where does it come from? How is it created? How is it sustained? What is its relation to who we truly are? In seeing this clearly, the proper response will be clear.

One possible pitfall is trying to divorce oneself from the appearance. This is too much of a duality and is not natural. Another pitfall is believing that others have something we do

not. This is not really true, but the concept generates mental doubt and additional suffering.

The motto seems to be 'Physician, heal thyself!' You must first find the freedom from suffering within yourself. This will have profound effects on your view about the suffering of others. It is not 'my' suffering and 'their' suffering. It is one movement, one mechanism at work, whether here or there. So make sure your understanding of suffering is clear. Then you will be in a much better position to respond to the perceived suffering of others.

Appearances Can Take Care of Themselves

Question: Recently a friend sent me your book *Awakening to the Natural State* and besides starting to read it, I also took a look at your web site. Four or five years of non-duality lectures and visiting some teachers put me on this road. Before that, I spent sixteen years studying the teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. I do admire your simplicity and how you go straight to the point.

I have an issue that has been occupying some psychological space these days. I am hoping to hear your view on this. I am a father of three children. I have to maintain two families, keep up with child support and so on. Reading your material I encountered something you wrote to one of your correspondents:

'Imagine your current life with all mental problems and confusing emotions removed'.

My observations prove me that my psycho-physical organism has been programmed since childhood with an exaggerated sense of responsibility from my parents. I would say it is almost within my muscles! And this of course provokes a lot of unnecessary thinking in relation to many functional tasks that I need to perform in order to keep the whole thing going, especially in these times of financial and health pressures. The understanding that all thoughts, emotions and feelings appear within and from the whole is deeply embedded after some years of reading about non-duality and meetings with various teachers. Still, the question remains—what is the role of the body or the body-mind organism, since all these tendencies were created since infancy and are part of the cellular tissue?

In your experience, does the understanding of who we are dissolve these cellular-muscular imprints that are part of our programming? Or is it more that the understanding shifts the sense of identity and these phenomena, while still occurring because of our programming, no longer feed the illusion of being separate and unique? Or is both? I am asking these questions because reading your (beautifully put) description of peace, there arose in me the sense that ‘in the future’—if I am lucky and make efforts to ‘be’ the understanding—I will reach this state.

John: What you find is that with the dawning of the recognition of your nature as the already-free presence-awareness itself, there is little concern for the configuration of the content in the appearance (body, mind, conditioning and so on). The main thing is to know what you are. The appearances can take care of themselves quite nicely. The habit to reference the appearance and ask about what will happen in the future is still missing the ever-present and obvious fact of your innate present freedom. Your being is now. It is not a future event or realization. All looking to the future is a false concept. If you are waiting for the future to know who you are, you will wait forever.

Q: Thank you for your reply. There are still some questions unresolved, but I know, by their very nature, that they will not be resolved ever! Your words sound as if they are coming directly from the center of the understanding and that is what makes them powerful. For me, the understanding seems to be clouded by dark clouds and makes me feel as if I am living in two worlds at the same time, one pure and radiant and untouched and the other somber, grave and complex. Perhaps this is the nature of duality.

John: Just keep the focus on the bright and clear presence of

your true nature. That is always available and right within as that simple sense of knowing, existence and peace. It is so clear and present that we overlook it. It is the light of awareness illuminating all thoughts, the existence supporting all appearances and the light of love and peace behind all feelings. That is you, even now. Have faith in that. That is what it comes down to. That is all that is being pointed to.

Q: Thank you again for these words that came just at the right time, when they were most needed.

The Cessation of Seeking

Question: I have left things to settle for a while. In the last contact, I asked about omnipresence. You responded with questions like, ‘Does it have limits or location?’ and so on. I think this and other difficulties came from old concepts and a long-term search for—and an expectation of—something exotic. Seeing that I am awareness brought the cessation of seeking. I had found what I was looking for (what was never lost but simply overlooked). What a relief! Then there was the realization that there is not and never has been an individual in here.

This all happened while reading your site several weeks ago. Some old tendencies continued for a while, but now I am pleased to say that it is clear that I am awareness (just as I saw), that all else is an appearance and that it is the nature of the human mind to look for patterns and tell stories. I see that all appears in awareness and that awareness is looking out through these eyes, too. I continue to read my favorite subject (non-duality) but without trying to gain something. It is great to finally read with understanding instead of confusion. There has, as you said, been an unfolding. After about a month, I looked back over my life and could see it as one long dream. That has now ended. Clarity is the great prize, if I can use such terminology.

Once more I would like to thank you for your part in this—even if you had no choice, as I do not in typing this!

John: I am glad to get your e-mail and hear how the recognition of what is clear and present in you has been recognized. The dream of separation ends with a little bit of looking to

see if it ever occurred. As you find, it did not! That recognition pretty well winds up the show. I am happy to hear the good news.