

RANDALL FRIEND was seeking spiritual answers for 30 years until he read Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj's book, *I Am That*. He eventually encountered 'Sailor' Bob Adamson and Gilbert Schultz. In this simple and uncompromising pointing, the search ended.

Randall holds weekly meetings as the avatar Avastu Maruti in *Second Life*, a 3D virtual world, where seekers from many countries come to hear the simple message of non-duality. Randall is the author of the blog *You Are Dreaming* (<http://avastu0.blogspot.com>), and has been featured in several episodes of *The Urban Guru Café* (<http://urbanguru-cafe.com>).

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# **You Are No Thing**

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**Recognizing Your True Nature**

**RANDALL FRIEND**

**NON-DUALITY PRESS**

YOU ARE NO THING

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To the beautiful appearance of my teachers, 'Sailor' Bob  
Adamson and Gilbert Schultz, who are but brilliant  
manifestations of this embracing Heart.

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## Foreword

Throughout the dimensionless emptiness, throughout the timeless ages, Lights have appeared and continue to appear.

Lights attract moths, some from a great distance, some close by – some miss or do not recognize the Light at all and are attracted to reflections only and so keep on struggling...

Others basking in that Light are ignited by recognizing they are also and only that Light and rest as That. In resting, the steady Light, continually self-shining, cannot help but keep attracting effortlessly, and so it ever is.

Randall Friend is such a Light.

The beams or rays radiating from this book will reach vast distances, and bring those who have ears to hear and eyes to see – to recognize their true nature. As it was in the beginningless beginning is now and ever will be (now), One without a second.

Read Randall's book, contact him if necessary, and realize the Natural State that you always already are (that thou Art) – full stop.

'Sailor' Bob Adamson  
Melbourne  
September 2008



One Essence expresses itself as everything—there are no exceptions. Some expressions appear to be clearer than others.

This book has obviously been written spontaneously from an intimate knowing presence, that is, in this case, called Randall.

If you read and ponder over what is offered in these pages, I am sure it will call forth a resonance in being. Recognition arises, because we already know it, because ‘I am That—I am That by which I know I am’.

Understanding is silent—wordless.

Strangely enough, it seems that words themselves can reveal that silent understanding.

Gilbert Schultz  
Melbourne  
September 2008

## Preface

The book is written in four parts.

Part 1 is from the perspective of the seeker and discusses the typical spiritual search and the tools we have been given, as well as the environment or location within which we undertake the spiritual path.

Part 2 talks about the teaching of Advaita Vedanta and other aspects of non-duality, finding our way out of suffering, finding the self, self-discovery or the dispelling of ignorance.

Part 3 points out our true nature—the vast and empty knowingness which pervades all, sees all, cannot be separated from the totality of present appearance.

Part 4 is a record of dialogues with readers. Despite mental analysis and thorough intellectual understanding, questions still come.



This book is a simple repayment, a passing on of the courtesy, a manifestation of devotion, a compassion of sharing, an expression of the heart. This book is a container of worthless words acting only as a finger pointing to the moon.

This isn't a book about Advaita Vedanta or any of the other nondual traditions, as those are all only pointing to something beyond, something that a system or methodology or philosophy or religion could never contain.

Although some of the terms used may sound like spirituality, nothing could be farther from the truth. What-you-truly-are has nothing to do with spirituality, nothing to do with religion, nothing to do with any thing, yet many of these words point to the same no thing.

The seeking mind uses analysis and conceptualization, which is useful in maintaining the survival of the organism, yet helpless in understanding That which is beyond the mind.

Don't blindly accept anything that is contained in this or any other book. Don't add it to your already overloaded arsenal of beliefs. The point is that all beliefs are based on the false, they are only beliefs because we have no proof, no direct evidence to the contrary.

Heard through our ordinary framework of beliefs, this message is a paradox, fodder for endless argument.

Lay aside all preconceptions, beliefs, concepts. Don't take these words as any kind of gospel; sit back and see if they resonate, see if there might be some belief obscuring what's being said. Honestly look at what is being pointed to in this openness, let the message sink in without mental analysis. Don't try to figure it out.

The truth of what you are doesn't have to be figured out. You already are what you seek. We have to start from that fact. Nothing to find. Nothing to gain. No attaining or achieving, otherwise the mind is off on its path, off pursuing its goals.

The great spiritual search is nothing but a path leading away from this moment, from now, even if we hear that we are already That. We gloss over it, sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly, in an attempt to *become*.

And if this is merely a passing interest, there is no compelling reason really to lay aside the concepts and beliefs through which we see the world. And filtered through concepts and beliefs, anything that is read or heard will be immediately analyzed within that framework, using that foundation.

But if there is a sincere and intense desire or earnestness to really know your true nature, the Oneness or true Self or God or whatever label you want to put on it, then an openness will arise. A helplessness in the face of hopelessness. An unlearning, a not-knowing.



Much has been made of the differences in approaches within non-duality. Some say that nothing is necessary, that you are already That and no effort can ever make any difference, because the one who makes the effort is an illusion. Others say that effort is definitely required, that teachings must be applied and the student must be qualified by being open to seeing through beliefs.

My perspective is that both sides are correct. The first side takes an absolute stance, a hard-core stake-in-the-ground approach which, while being correct, can also be seen as not helpful. The other side takes the relative approach that as long as there is the appearance and belief that you are a human being and a seeker there is effort or investigation to be done.

It is clear that there is an appearance of a *me* that is suffering and seeking, looking for a way out, wanting a

liberation or freedom that is, of course, already present. But until that is seen, the apparent seeker must do something and definitely appears to do something. This activity might include meditation or inquiry or a thousand other things. Something appears to take place.

We start with the idea of a *me* that is suffering and needs to find liberation, yet this liberation is not something we don't already have, not something we need to become.

In all of these seemingly split methodologies or non-methodologies it is clear that you are already That; you are already free now.

That is where we must start. Your true nature is already attained. You are no thing.

And this is the theme of this book.

*Randall Friend*

Louisville, Kentucky

September 2008

**You Are No Thing**

## **Part 1 – The Search**

*Bondage is when the mind longs for something, grieves about something, rejects something, holds on to something, is pleased about something or displeased about something.*

- Ashtavakra Gita

## A Summary of a Spiritual Search

How did Randall 'get' this? How did he realize this? How did he do this?

These questions are fundamentally meaningless, because they deal with a 'someone' who was never there, someone who never, for one moment, existed. They refer to a story and have nothing at all to do with finding out what you are.

They deal with a dream character, a fiction. They tell a story about 'getting' something, which is very clearly not the case. Nothing was seen, nothing was attained, nothing was achieved, nothing was added, nothing was changed.

It is simply a clear recognition of That which was already the case, already present, already fully and completely attained, which is to say that nothing at all was attained. It was clearly seen that the identification with Randall was an illusion, a mistaken identity, a belief in a dream.

The unmistakable truth about enlightenment is that there is no one there. There is no one who gets it, no one who could become it, no one who could ever reach it, find it, stumble upon it, realize it, attain it. There is no one there to be bathed in the light of God.

What you are is beyond even any idea of enlightenment.

This story isn't about someone gaining enlightenment or liberation. It's a story about the realization that there never was anyone, never was a person; not for one moment was there ever a Randall who was seeking or who could ever become enlightened.

Yet if this story points out the bumps in the road, if it resonates with familiarity, if it helps to weed out the contradictory myth of specialness, then it is appropriate.



Once upon a time, 'Randall' was born into Christianity, dragged along to Sunday services and Vacation Bible School. It was the typical Christian upbringing, sipping and nibbling on the sacraments because lunch had been delayed, playing in the holy water, dreaming of sailboats and seagulls, wondering why everyone was so serious and uncomfortable in their Sunday best.

Yet this system of beliefs expected adherence, demanded faith, to the extent that anyone not exposed to its unquestionable truth was surely to burn in everlasting hell. To a young mind, this didn't make much sense.

At the time, alternative religions were seeping into the culture, hidden amongst the other taboos like his father's dirty magazines and stashed cans of beer. Meditation was also surfacing into public awareness, yet it originated from a foreign and far away place, the domain of the Devil and pot smokers, and definitely something a good Christian boy didn't want to take part in.

Maybe because of the disillusionment with Christianity, maybe just because it was taboo, Randall researched everything he could about meditation. Yet trying to sit still and still the mind was hard work.

Randall was fascinated by Buddhism, particularly the idea that a man could reach a state of enlightenment

through meditation. Randall's young and fertile mind somehow equated this state with God

Many, many years seemed to pass; Randall found Buddhism a constant reading buddy, a way to take his mind off constant pressures and stress, an outlet for the suffering of a failed marriage and financial hardship.

Yet through these years, he had no real understanding, nothing came of it. Meditation was only a fascination, a way to calm down.

Randall's spiritual search continued, although it was little more than a bathing in alien words, reading a language which was not understood, pondering paradox with a keen intellect.

He explored many traditions: Zen, Taoism, Dzogchen. The idea that this was non-duality never once came to mind. Then Advaita Vedanta appeared.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj gave the first taste of Advaita Vedanta. Reading his book wasn't the typical spiritual fare, not the soft and fluffy new age hugs and flowers type of banter. Nisargadatta's message was like slamming your head into a brick wall as hard as you can. And once you got up, bleeding and semi-conscious, slamming it again and again.

All the trinkets and toys of the generic spiritual practice were shaken loose, called into question. The root of the great spiritual search was clearly, yet somehow obscenely, uncovered in all its glory and shame.

The Great Spiritual Search was really about becoming something different, something better. It was clearly understood that the lifetime of seeking was looking to the future, seeking a change, searching for something special.

This once-young man found that the internet had

become a reality, a far cry from the little available information on foreign philosophies from the library, or magazine subscriptions. Now Randall found ‘Sailor’ Bob Adamson and Gilbert Schultz available and present in cyberspace.

Randall exchanged emails with Gilbert, mostly with Randall expounding his vast intellectual abilities and skill at discernment. Gilbert repeatedly rejected even the most logical arguments with one recurring, uncompromising and annoying theme: ‘Seeing is happening.’

Randall called on ‘Sailor’ Bob Adamson and found that Bob was as dear and kind as any human ever encountered. His message was clear: ‘What you are seeking, you already are. You are no thing.’

After months of conversation with Gilbert and calls to Bob, Randall echoed many of the typical discourses of seeking. He had a clear intellectual understanding, but just wasn’t there yet, hadn’t seen This, was still missing a piece of the puzzle, needed something else. Then Randall found a talk by Bob on Gilbert’s website:

*‘Well “knowing” is what I call intelligence. Not your intellect. Intelligence. That is the activity of knowing—intelligence energy. Knowing is an activity—of something that is going on in the immediacy of the moment. Any activity is a movement of energy. Not the content of knowing, I know this or I know that, that is all acquired, all conceptualized, all word stuff. The basic activity of knowing. You are not knowing a moment ago. You are not knowing a moment in the future either. It is going on in the immediacy of the moment, so it’s an activity—something is happening now. It is this energy or life force or whatever label you want to put on it. It is functioning there in the immediacy of the moment. That is what you are.’*

Something seemed to happen, fall apart, fall away. Nothing actually happened yet the identification as Randall was seen very clearly as false. The identification with the body-mind was seen to be a false assumption.

The belief in a person, a separate entity, a *me* bound and imprisoned in a body-mind was clearly recognized as merely belief, seen without the clouded filter of assumptions. The recognition was an opening, an allowing of truth to shine through. The overlay of belief fell apart in openness.

That clear, always and ever-present presence of knowing was recognized, realized to have always been there, noticed to be what *I am* and had always been.

Yes, seeing is happening. Without exception.

I really am no thing; not a thing, not an appearance, not the name and form, not a separate part, not a limited being. What-I-am is all of it, all that appears, all that comes and goes, all that arises and the open and spacious space in which it appears.

And in that, it is clear that it was never about achieving anything, never about becoming, never about 'only an intellectual understanding', never about 'almost there', never ever about 'I'm not there yet.' Only ever about recognizing That which was always there.

Recognizing the true nature as no thing.

That very freedom, that liberation, that peace, that love that was being sought, was already attained, always there. It was seemingly hidden but completely in full view, always.

The search was clearly and unmistakably over, not because all the answers were found or figured out but because the seeker, the person, was seen to be false, a fiction, non-existent.

*RANDALL FRIEND*

*I* was no thing. Not a thing, not an appearance. Yet clearly this was already the case and had always been so.

The endless end of a beginningless beginning.

## Our World

We have a shared view of the world. This view includes the commonly-held and scientifically proven belief in the big bang. And before that big bang there was apparently pure nothingness, nothing in existence, pure formless void.

Then the big bang happened—boom! Nothingness exploded into something; particles spread into this void, creating space, creating form, slowly spinning, creating gravitational pull, and gathering other particles together to form larger masses, asteroids, planets, suns and galaxies.

In this story of the big bang, the universe and all its content was created. And from those foundational substances all the rest was formed; the elements, compounds and molecules which led to the formation of cells. Eventually life sprang up, some sort of separate existence, the capacity for consciousness and the ability to know our existence.

With the coming of consciousness came the ability to know ourselves, to experience our existence. This means that we know that *we* are. Yet it seems that a false assumption has been made so that the story of creation is somehow backwards.

How can the universe, which wasn't originally endowed with the quality of knowing itself, suddenly create within itself, out of all these parts, the ability to look, to see? How can consciousness, a piece of the universe, suddenly be gifted with the ability to look up and know its origin, when that very universe has no ability to know?

That universe itself, which forms its parts from the whole, the totality of itself, must have the ability inherently to know its own creation, must contain this background of knowing for it to impart that to its creation.

That knowing of our existence hasn't sprung into being billions of years after the creation; that knowing is an inherent quality of the universe itself.

The universe is this very consciousness.

It seems that consciousness has a wonderful imagination.



From this story we have our common view. We agree to believe it. We have no way of knowing for sure, outside of science's explanations and continual effort to prove that theory, to prove the truth of the story.

And here we live, on this planet, formed from the remnants of that booming beginning, springing up in different life forms, wandering in a world of separate beings.

And as a separate being, we're known as a person, a *someone* who somehow exists in this body, a finite existence, which itself was formed from the very elements of this original boom.

If we happen to be born into Christianity we are told that our essence is soul and that God caused this big bang or created the world for us, as separate beings, apart from Him yet created in His image. Our goal is to reach Him, to be like Him, so that we may, after the death of the body, be with Him, go to heaven, live in everlasting peace and paradise.

If we don't live up to the morals and regulations set down in this religion, we are doomed to hell, a place or condition which is so hideous, so awful, that we are totally scared into conforming, frightened into behavior of which God approves.

Here is this person, doing its best to live the right way, yet somehow not sure what exactly that means. We're not sure exactly what lies on the other side of death. We're constantly scared because we never really know if we're doing it right.

Yet this story holds a pointer to truth. It's the story of an original essence, a God, which has been seemingly broken up for the world to appear. It is a nothingness, a nothing-ness, a void or original emptiness, out of which an explosion happened and then the appearance of the world was formed from various parts and pieces.

We might say that God or oneness had to be the same essence, had to be present, at that moment of universal conception. Whatever God or oneness is, whatever truth or reality is, it must have also been there for that event, long ago.

The common belief is that God is sitting outside of this creation, this universal space, this infinite playground; that He is somehow apart from, yet controlling every aspect, with power over all, seeing all, knowing all, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent.

It seems we conveniently ignore the omnipresent part.

Advaita Vedanta, and most religions (if we boil out the political and self-serving impurities added both in scripture and culture), point out that God is not somewhere outside, sitting on some golden throne, writing down each and every deed to be judged in a later day of reckoning.

God is omnipresent, present everywhere, present in everything. God can indeed be seen to be playing the world from inside, *as* the world, the very suchness or is-ness of the universe itself.

God is omnipotent, the very power or energy or activity of this world, this appearance, this universal substance. God or oneness or the Self is the very movement of the atom, the electron, the spinning of the planets, the pull of gravitation, the nuclear fields of the body, the DNA manifesting like the tree in the acorn.

God is omniscient, all knowing. The universe itself is suffused with the capacity to know itself, look at itself, appear to itself, through a million billion points of reference. Relativity is only an aspect of the absolute, only a seeing of itself like light broken up in a prism.



Without the distractions of thought, without the distractions of body, without the distractions of planets and stars and pieces of this and that which came out of pure nothing, formed from emptiness; without these distractions we have an utter simplicity, an infinite potentiality of creation, of forms, of bodies and thoughts. An emptiness so full of potentiality that it burst in explosion with form, exploding an entire universe into being.

Whatever truth or reality is, it must have been there, before that big bang, the very essence of that boom, the very container and content of that original conception of the world we see and know and take to be made up of separate parts.

*YOU ARE NO THING*

That very truth or reality must be here and now, must be the essence of what appears to be. That essence, that is-ness, that intelligence energy or formless void of infinite fullness, that must *be* the very essence of that body-mind that we've identified with.

Yet in identifying as a small, relative piece of this totality, of this infinite void of fullness, by identifying as a separate person, we've overlooked our infinite and eternal presence *as* the totality itself, as spaceless space, as formless form.

We've created a little character and a world to play in.

We couldn't have imagined a more believable story.