

# THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

Issue 10 February 2006

## **Bow To It Until There Is Only Bowing**

Dreamstuff we seem to be  
Mushrooming from starry mystery  
Weaving a self from bits of history  
Swallowing certainty infusions  
Nostalgic for tomorrow and other illusions

When our dreams are emptied of us  
We're all that we see, free of all the fuss  
What needs doing is done best  
When in utter mystery we rest  
Settle thus in undressed being  
Until the dreamer of dreamers is seen

Eternity's offspring we seem to be  
Playing hide-and-peek with our history  
With more than enough time  
To show up as every possible design  
If appearing as all things is our destiny  
Being awakened by all things is how we're set free

Where we are is sacred, sacred is the ground  
Feel the holy inside and all around  
Bow to it until there is only bowing  
Only something beyond knowing  
Calling us to its great heart  
Its untranslatable presence  
Its endless art  
Its absolute silence

## Being Messed-Up Doesn't Have to Mess Us Up

It's not necessarily an easy admission, nor a misanthropic one, nor one that downplays its rare exceptions, making its presence known throughout most of our moments, whether we're busy conversing with ourselves behind our foreheads, or navigating the ever-shifting waters of relatedness, or pretending that we're not pretending. But the admission's there, everywhere we go, like a limp that our every move highlights, revealing our crippledness even in our greatest moments, in similar fashion to those uncertain glances that for a microsecond or so zigzag across our smiling countenance. We may think that others don't notice, but they — we — do, and can't do otherwise. It's part of our wiring. So we might as well admit it, and admit it without shoving our good points down questioning throats...

We are messed-up.

Otherwise we wouldn't, for starters, be dreaming that we are not dreaming. The good news is that we are not totally messed-up. Still, we are so busy colonizing ourselves with proof that we are not messed-up, or are not that messed-up, that we remain messed-up about being messed-up.

More good news: Being messed-up is not a error, not a glitch in the System. It comes with birth. Not knowing what we truly are sets us up — mostly through the inevitable pain it generates — to remember what we truly are, and as we eventually do, we become so damned grateful for simply existing, for being here in this marvellously unfathomable place, that we at last stop pretending to be a somebody independent of the rest of it, stop overpersonifying the centralizing tendency of subjectivity, stop indulging the severe case of mistaken identity that plagues us, and stop acting as if we are not acting. In short, we blow our cover.

And as we thus get out of our own way, we can — in the clearing created by our absence — not only consciously and totally be that which is at the heart of all our seeking, but also consciously be it making an appearance as us. Divine theatrics. Zeroing in on the immeasurable openness that holds and is all. Disappearing only to reappear as what cannot disappear.

Of course, the more spiritually ambitious of us get very messed-up trying to attain Enlightenment, not realizing we've made an object out of what is not an object. The trouble is, we depend on objects, both externally and internally, to

provide us with our ongoing sense of identity, our apparent somebody-ness. This dependency (which is a developmental given), if not handled properly, keeps us divided, split, fragmented, doing time in dreamland, occupying ourselves with compensatory addictions. We even let our habits refer to themselves as us. Talk about an alien takeover!

Essential to cutting through this is to release everything — *everything* — from the obligation to make us feel better, safer, cosier, more secure. This is renunciation that transcends repression. To end our suffering, we must enter our pain, and enter it so fully that we become intimate with it. Not so easy, but after a certain point, what else is there to do? There is profound freedom in letting all things awaken us. Freedom not from limitation, but freedom *through* limitation.

Real security begins with embracing the inherent insecurity of Life.

The act of identifying oneself only as a somebody — the embodiment of personalized separateness — is the ground zero of messed-up-ness. Nevertheless, to cut through being messed-up generally requires quality time spent in the trenches and payoffs of somebody-ness. Psychospiritual bootcamp. Sometimes being on the path means being off the path. The way is generally far from straight; we both step into it and create it as we go, tying bows and meandering loops and sudden slides in it, more often than not losing touch with our deeper purpose.

To be messed-up is simply the result of forgetting, and continuing to forget, what we really are. And yet it is our very messed-up-ness that — through the inevitable suffering it engenders — has the power and intensity to shake us up enough to remind us of what we really are. A cosmic two-by-four battering and shattering our density. Not only does shit happen, but shit also — if well worked with — gives us fertile ground for growing the reach we need, the reach into which we need to deepen. Holy shit.

It's so, so easy to get messed-up about being messed-up. A great breeding ground for shame and guilt. Being messed-up may be part of our condition (as laid out in the operating manual for incarnation), but is it our destiny? That's up to us.

For example, we don't have to put off being loving (especially when we're not being loved) until we're no longer messed-up; instead, we can choose to love so big and so deep that our love burns and shines through our messed-up-ness.

## The Crucible of Awakening

Then we're not busy trying to get rid of our messed-up-ness, but instead are keeping it transparently peripheral to love. Right placement. Having a bad time well. Keeping our heart open in hell. Being with our pain instead of avoiding it. Turning toward what we've turned away from, even if it breaks our heart. Permitting, but not indulging in, the inherent messiness of relationship, while recognizing that everything exists through relatedness.

If we think that our personality is going to become a thing of beauty or sublime instruction after we've significantly freed ourselves from our entrapping dreams, we are in for a rude awakening.

And the ruder, the better.

Self-transcendence is necessary, but it isn't what we think it is. It is not some sort of transpersonal or mystical getaway or escape, but is about as far away from escape as you can get. Self-transcendence requires complete nonavoidance of our messed-up-ness.

And it is here, precisely here, that Being and individuality most nakedly meet. It is at the intersection of the immortal and the mortal, the messy and the perfected, the manifest and the unmanifest, that we are most alive, most real, most authentically human, most capable of living a truly sane life.

Self-transcendence, if it is real, is none other than intimacy with all things. Radical intimacy. Room for all.

So let us more deeply and more tenderly encounter our messed-up-ness, equipped with nothing except the torchlight of compassionate exploration. Let's go in and further in, letting our problematic orientation to our messed-up-ness thin to nothing, letting our heart pour into every crevice and corner, knowing right to our core that whatever we meet is but us. Divinity in drag.

Permit it its messiness. Keep your missionaries out of its wilderness. And remember:

To transcend yourself, be yourself.

## When Cracks Appear In Reality

When cracks appear in reality  
Admitting slivers of another locality  
Injecting you with dark unfamiliarity  
And reaching for another drink  
Or changing how you think  
Doesn't help to get you back  
You've a chance to ride a truer track  
If you don't get so zealous  
Behind the wheel of ambition's bus  
That you run over what's already here  
Already more electrifying than fear

So let the cracks widen, let them spread  
Let curiosity get the better of dread  
Let the unknown dissolve in a deeper unknown  
Let yourself see more than what is shown  
The undoing you fear is already here  
The mystery of mysteries is closer than near  
Beyond all familiarity we eventually must go  
This we fight, and this we know

When cracks appear in reality  
You may seem to be near insanity  
But the light that streams through  
The light that holds every view  
Is none other than you

## Spiritual Shortcuts

We are in such a hurry to get it, whatever it may be. Gone into go. Greed for speed — fast food, fast money, fast relationships, fast spirituality. Drive-through divinity with fries and easy-to-swallow highs. Who wants to spend years doing spiritual practices when the same results apparently can — given a sufficiently open mind and wallet — be gained in just a weekend? We may even be told that all that can stop such a weekend from giving us the desired results is our belief that it cannot. And so the shearing of the sheep goes. Business as usual.

But the greater our hurry to arrive where we want to be spiritually, the longer it will take. What is spiritually greedy in us — if permitted to masquerade as us — weights us down as much as it revs us up, leaving us doing little more than spinning our wheels while we look around for better deals. But in true spiritual hunger, there is little or no wasting of time, which simultaneously means no hurry and no delay.

Spiritual shortcuts, like all shortcuts, are time-defined. But authentic spiritual practice does not primarily take place in time; if we say it takes a long time or a short time, we are only looking at it from the outside, tacking it down onto a straight time-calibrated measuring stick. When we are immersed in spirituality for real, we are not time-bound, even though we take care of business in a timely fashion.

The only spiritual shortcut is letting go of having any shortcut.

When we are sharing deep love with another, where does the time go? When we are really happy, where does the time go? It doesn't go anywhere. Why? Because in such conditions it simply does not exist, except perhaps in a purely peripheral sense, and thus has nowhere to go. As we become more intimate with the Holy Deep, time — past, present, and future — becomes space, and space become Being.

Some may confuse Buddhism's Sudden School, as opposed to its Gradual School, of Enlightenment with a spiritual shortcut, but the Sudden School actually involves plenty of preparation for the "jump" — hence its symbiotic link with the Gradual School.

We'll pay so damned much for what we don't really need, and so little for what we really need. We want Freedom for free. A man once asked the Dalai Lama how he could more quickly get to Enlightenment, and the Dalai Lama reportedly wept for him, recognizing how much pain he must be in to want to get to the big E faster. We think that getting it spiritually will give us immunity from pain and all the troublesome stuff of life — what a fantasy! Spirituality ultimately means no escape, no need for escape, and utter freedom *through* limitation and every sort of difficulty.

Shortcuts are time-framed. Short time, long time, etcetera. But Awakening is not time-framed. Being exists not in time, but in Timelessness. So even to want a spiritual shortcut is but a confession of estrangement from Being.

When the desire to access such a shortcut arises, enter the very feeling of the desire, bypassing its mental dimensions, until you are at its core, pressed against its primal pulse. Then let your attention pass through that core-feeling, that primordial ache, until it rests in the feeling of Being. Do so, and notice how your flesh becomes but patterned energy, wearing nothing but the attention given it. No wristwatch. No clock on the wall — and not just because there's no wall, but also because there's no one needing there to be a clock. That in us which functions through time can, of course, continue, but it cannot now masquerade as us. In fact, nothing can.

Gotta run. Busy day ahead. A pain in the ass, but kind of intoxicating, isn't it, keeping us so damned busy that the mysteries of the obvious go all but unnoticed. But still something gets through the cracks in our amphetamine days, making light of our dreams, asking only for our undivided attention, our time. The door is, as always, already open, even as we do battle over who has the right key.

Awakening, we smile with huge compassion upon what we've done with our time. The hourglass catches our glance, spinning into a flaming mandala of spilling forms, leaving a timeless clearing that is everywhere at once, inhabited by a gratitude of which these words are but the feeblest echo.

## Forever's Gypsies

Travellers are we, forever's gypsies  
Roaming through dreamlands  
Unsettled hungry for home  
Doing time in seductive zones  
Losing too much in the details  
Haunted by disappearing trails  
We arrive and depart, stop and start  
Coming and going, playing our part

When we from a dream awaken,  
What distance have we crossed?  
When we awaken, what is lost?  
The deathbed is a cradle  
Babes gumming at the edge  
Starmakers and mudmen alike  
Dying to live are we  
So much to do, so much to be  
If it seems we've been here before  
It's because there's nowhere else

Forever's gypsies are we  
Drunk on amnesia's anaesthesia  
A lifetime held in a crystallized moment  
Suspended in a droplet of forever  
Ambered epiphanies eluding memory  
Hinting at a mind-shattering enormity  
We arrive and depart, stop and start  
Coming and going, playing our part  
Playing peekaboo with the Great Unknowing  
The unmoving Mystery that's everflowing

# *Letting Go*

## **A DAY OF DEEP HEALING**

**March 18th, 2006 in Ojai, California**

**with Robert Masters  
(assisted by Diane Bardwell)**

Real happiness takes root when our longing to be truly free is stronger — or permitted to be more central — than our longing to be distracted from our pain.

In this group we'll face, move toward, and learn to make wise use of our difficulties, through a dynamic, intuitively structured mix of spiritual practices, bodywork, dream exploration, conscious movement, and psychotherapy.

**TUITION:** \$275. \$100 deposit required.

**LOGISTICS:** Ojai, California, 10am to 6pm. Limited to 8 participants only (so early registration is recommended).

Diane is an intuitive energy healer and Reiki master, using sound to deepen healing and well-being. She is a songwriter and professional singer, with a gift for accessing the Sacred through sound. See [www.dianebardwell.com](http://www.dianebardwell.com).

**For more information or to register,  
contact [diane@dianebardwell.com](mailto:diane@dianebardwell.com)  
or [info@robertmasters.com](mailto:info@robertmasters.com)**

# **FREEDOM THROUGH INTIMACY**

## **A Weekend Intensive For Couples**

**March 25th & 26th, 2006, in White Rock, BC**

**with Robert Masters, assisted by Diane Bardwell**

Intimate relationship has immense transformational possibility, especially when we approach its difficulties as opportunities instead of as problems. Opportunities for what? To know ourselves more deeply, to love and live more fully, to become intimate with *all* that we are — in short, to be freed from our suffering.

In the liberating bondage of committed intimacy, we enter the One through the two, finding the Beloved in both depth and surface, so that the very details of daily life become a potent awakening path. Freedom through intimacy.

This group is for couples who want a more conscious, loving, and liberating relationship with each other, and are ready to cut through whatever's in the way. Even if you already have a good relationship, consider coming, and taking your relationship from good to great to what it really can be.

Individual work will be given as much emphasis as couple work, using a spontaneously structured approach that creatively mixes psychotherapy, bodywork, dream exploration, spiritual practices, and dyadic deepenings.

**Logistics:** March 25th & 26th, 2006, 10am to 6pm. Limited to 5 couples.  
\$1250 plus GST per couple. \$300 deposit required.

**Diane**, who is in a deeply committed relationship with Robert, is an intuitive energy healer and Reiki master, using sound to deepen healing and well-being. She is a songwriter and professional singer, with a gift for accessing the Sacred through sound and song. See [www.dianebardwell.com](http://www.dianebardwell.com).

***For more information or to register, contact:  
info@RobertMasters.com***

***An opportunity to learn (1) unique and exceptionally effective psychotherapeutic, spiritual, and bodywork skills; and (2) how to combine these in counselling work.***

## **Psychospiritual Counselling Practicum 2006/2007 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

The purpose of this training is to deepen the capacity of participants to effectively counsel others through a dynamic, intuitively structured approach that integrates body, mind, emotion, and spirit.

To this end, the training will blend deep work on oneself and equally deep work with others, in personal, social, and spiritual contexts. Healing will be the primary intention and activity. Approaches that are taught and practised will be held, as much as possible, in a perspective that transcends them.

You'll learn to not rely upon nor necessarily impose structure, but rather to let it naturally arise from your relationship and interaction with those you're counselling. Working this way weans us from the security — the eventually deadening security — of operating from behind a preset structure or methodology, leaving us in a position that requires an appropriately creative response from us. Such creativity keeps us fresh, open, and alert.

A passion for working with others is necessary, but it must be a passion infused with healthy detachment, a passion as free as possible from self-serving agendas or ego-based programs. For example, if we “need” a client to have a particular breakthrough so that we can feel better about ourselves, then we are doing that person a disservice. For this and related reasons, the training will include a thorough investigation of whatever might obstruct each participant's ability to work effectively and cleanly with others.

Throughout the training we will be working with body, mind, emotion, and spirit. Love, integrity, and presence will be the cornerstones of our practice.

The training will take place over 6 three-day weekends, beginning the fourth weekend of June, 2006.

## The Crucible of Awakening

Tuition is \$5300 plus GST. A deposit of \$750 is required.

The training will be limited to 10 participants only, so early registration is recommended (there are currently 5 spaces left).

The training is a prerequisite for further trainings, including the Bodywork Apprenticeship and Working With Couples Apprenticeship programs planned for 2007.

### **Practicum Schedule**

June 23-25, 2006

Sept. 15-17, 2006

Nov. 3-5, 2006

Jan. 5-7, 2007

Mar. 2-4, 2007

May 4-6, 2007

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## Robert's Work Schedule for 2006

March 3, 4,	2005/2006 Practicum, Whistler, BC
March 18	Letting Go in Ojai, California
March 25 & 26	Freedom Through Intimacy in White Rock, BC
April 8	Letting Go in White Rock, BC
April 22	Letting Go in Ojai, California
May 5, 6, 7	2005/2006 Practicum, White Rock, BC
May 20 & 21	Freedom Through Intimacy in White Rock, BC
May 27	Letting Go in White Rock, BC
June 3	Letting Go in Ojai, California
June 10	Integral Naked Breakthrough in White Rock, BC
June 17 & 18	Radical Opening in Calgary or Edmonton
June 23, 24, 25	2006/2007 Practicum, White Rock, BC
July 8 & 9	Freedom Through Intimacy in White Rock, BC
July 15	Letting Go in White Rock, BC
July 22, 23, 24	2005/2006 Practicum, White Rock, BC
July 29 & 30	Radical Opening in Ojai, California
August 26	Letting Go in White Rock, BC
Sept. 8, 9, 10	2005/2006 Practicum, White Rock, BC
Sept. 15, 16, 17	2006/2007 Practicum, White Rock, BC
Sept. 30-Oct. 1	Freedom Through Intimacy in White Rock, BC
October 14	Letting Go in Ojai, California
October 21	Letting Go in White Rock, BC
Nov. 3, 4, 5	2006/2007 Practicum, White Rock, BC
Nov. 18 & 19	Freedom Through Intimacy in White Rock, BC
December 2	Letting Go in Ojai, California
December 9	Letting Go in White Rock, BC