

# THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

Issue 27 July 2007

## DEEPENING TRUST

For me to trust you means that I, having consistently witnessed your integrity and reliability, have an abiding confidence that you will continue to manifest such qualities. Trust as such is not an a priori stance, but a *result*.

The deeper our mutual trust, the deeper our relationship can go, so long as that trust is rooted not in naiveté — naive or blind trust is not really trust, but just a cocktail of foolhardiness and hope — but in a mutuality which is anchored in transparency, integrity, and love.

Trust should not be automatically given; it must be earned.

In the beginning, we may be enamored by another's better qualities, and want to give that one our trust — especially if there's an intoxicatingly romantic infusion of hope and lust — but we'd do best to withhold giving our *full* trust until enough time has passed to see the other in action in a variety of circumstances.

If our bullshit detector is turned down to too low a volume — perhaps because we don't want our romantic trance to be interrupted — we will probably get sloppy in giving our trust, selling it for a few baubles of feel-good attention.

## The Crucible of Awakening

Seeing how our partner operates when things get rough provides a clear indicator of their trustworthiness. Are they worthy of our trust? We need to find this out, rather than just believing it from the start, out of some naive or romantic notion that we should thus believe.

Without strongly anchored mutual trust, intimate relationship remains stranded in the shallows, regardless of its excursions to deeper territory. When I ask most couples if they trust each other, there is usually some hesitation before they say yes — that is, if they even say yes. A hesitant yes is not a full yes; we may be saying yes because we want to trust our partner, or think that we should. But a yes that is animated by any form of “should” is not a full yes.

Part of building trust is an honest, in-depth sharing of how we have been less than trustworthy in our past. This is not about re-shaming ourselves for old transgressions and stupidities, but rather about sharing what’s happened openly, vulnerably, and in the spirit of establishing a healthy foundation with our partner. No secrets.

This can be a painful process, but it is necessary. Not every detail is needed, but enough need to be provided so as to provide a sufficiently clear picture and sense of what happened.

As we do this, it is crucial that we uncover — perhaps with our partner’s assistance — the prevailing patterns underlying our past behavior. Some of these patterns may truly be things of the past, but others may still be very much present, however much they may be under wraps. These must be revealed so that they can be worked with; this is not about shaming each other, but rather is about not keeping anything from each other. Doing so is an act of deep trust.

Another part of building trust is to openly share our *mistrust*.

We might be tempted to act as if we trust our partner with something or someone, but if we don’t, to whatever degree, we need to share *that*.

To thus share our mistrust is actually an act of trust. If we are on the receiving end of this, we need to remain as open as possible; if we shame our partner for daring to mistrust us, they will be less likely to want to share their mistrust with us in the future.

Without mutual trust, there will not be enough safety in the relationship to go truly deep.

For example, a couple may, regardless of their love for each other, get sloppy when anger arises — becoming hostile, sarcastic, passive aggressive, blaming, and so on — thereby becoming less than a safe space for each other; they may still open to each other, but it will only go so far, simply because there's not enough safety, or well-rooted trust, to go further.

We don't want to be at a relational edge, and not know if our partner can be trusted to hold the line secure. This is why it is so crucial to identify any cracks in the container of the relationship. Even occasional sarcasm can generate such cracks, however thin or slight they may be. Aggression cracks the container, as does contempt and a lack of integrity. Infidelity all but destroys the container, as does violence.

Mature couples are deeply and consistently committed to keeping their relational container free from cracks. The container can be transparent, permeable, infinitely expansive, but it is nonetheless still a container, a protected space wherein freedom is found not through escaping the container, but rather through viewing and treating it as a sanctuary of love, awakening, and transformation.

If I am untrustworthy in certain areas, do not override your concerns just because I am so wonderful in other ways; that is, do not let my good points obscure or marginalize my not-so-good points. Relate to me as I am, rather than having a relationship with — or being seduced by — my trustworthiness potential.

The better the relationship, the deeper the trust, and vice versa. When I trust you fully, I can open with you until I am but openness, sentient openness. When I trust you fully, then our relationship becomes a dynamic crucible for healing, awakening, and relational deepening, so that no matter what arises, it is workable. When I trust you fully, I become more alive, more fleshed-out, more conscious, more brave, more curious and caring, letting our relationship carry me beyond what I have taken myself to be.

When we are truly connected, even the arising of disconnection is okay. In fact, trusting each other with our disconnectedness only deepens our mutual trust. The deepest trust of all is but lucid opening to reality in the raw, at once rooted in and generating a sublimely solid faith, a faith that holds steady in even the stormiest relational times.

When it is clearly time to trust — as when our partner has consistently demonstrated his or her trustworthiness — do so even if you are afraid to do so. Better at such times to have trusted and gotten hurt, than not to have trusted.

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# UPCOMING GROUPS

## *AN OVERVIEW*

### **The Situation:**

You've done some work on yourself and have opened and benefited (and want to maintain that openness), but find certain issues surfacing again and again — relationship difficulties, insecurities, emotional inhibitions, and so on. Now, more than ever, these are in your face — perhaps because you're now ready to fully face them — asking for your undivided attention. And, quite possibly, also for a suitable setting,

featuring both highly skilled, cutting-edge guidance and the company of others who are as committed as you to healing and awakening.

### **The Context:**

You might think that these issues are blocking your path, but in reality they are *part* of your path, and need to be treated as such. All you have to do is stop turning away from them, stop trying to rise above them, and make the journey into them, with awareness, compassion, and curiosity. This is not necessarily easy — for if it was, you probably would have already done it — but it can be done, leaving you more whole, more alive and present, more functional in every aspect of your life, allowing you to live a life that is as practical as it is liberating.

### **Who It's For:**

My groups are for those who want to make wise use of their difficulties and who are ready to work through whatever is obstructing their well-being. Such work is especially suited for those whose longing to be truly free is stronger — or allowed to be more central — than their longing to continue distracting themselves from their suffering.

### **About the Work:**

My groups are small and intimate, being limited from 8 to 14 participants only (depending on the length of the group), so that there is enough time for everyone to receive in-depth high quality attention.

The groups involve psychotherapy (in their focus on personal history), and also involve much, much more than psychotherapy, given their integral nature. Deep catharsis, psychodrama, and spiritual breakthroughs flow in and out of each other during the groups, in spontaneously apt ways.

All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — are dealt with, through a dynamic, creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices (improvised and otherwise).

## The Crucible of Awakening

The atmosphere is one of deep trust. The groups are safe places to let go of playing it safe, providing a crucible not only for personal healing, but also for awakening from all of our entrapping dreams.

Participants learn, at the optimal pace, to become more intimate with *all* that they are — dark and light, high and low, shallow and deep, neurotic and transcendent, dying and undying.

The structuring of the groups is not preset, but instead arises in fitting accord with both group and individual needs. Each participant has an opportunity to work, in relevant detail and in sufficient depth, with his or her particular concerns, and not necessarily just once in the group.

In every group (except for the Men's groups), I am assisted by my wife and spiritual partner, Diane, whose presence, insight, and deep heart add immeasurably to each group.

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

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# A Deeper Life

**A FIVE DAY RETREAT**

**DEVOTED TO DEEP HEALING & AWAKENING**

**January 25th-29th, 2008, in Hawaii**

**Location:**

Yoga Oasis, a beautiful, secluded retreat center on the eastern tip of the Big Island of Hawaii, 5 miles from the village of Pahoa and 2 miles from the ocean. Located on 26 acres in lush rainforest, Yoga Oasis is a short drive to

surfing, geo-thermal warm springs, tide pools, snorkeling, kayaking, natural underground saunas, and a black sand beach. For more information, visit **www.YogaOasis.org** (check out the video showing the retreat). The Big Island itself, which you'll likely want to spend some time on after the group, is a marvelous place to explore and relax, with its otherworldly volcanic park and astonishingly varied terrain.

**Tuition, Lodging, & Meals:** US\$1895, or CDN\$2195 (includes GST).

Rooms will be assigned according to the date of registration; the earlier you register, the more room choices you'll have. We are only taking **14** participants. A deposit (nonrefundable after September 1st, 2007) of \$400 is required. Full payment is required by November 1, 2007. The group is now half full.

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# Breakthrough

## A THREE DAY RETREAT

### DEVOTED TO DEEP HEALING & AWAKENING

**September 7th-9th, 2007, in Calgary, Alberta**

**September 21st-23rd, 2007, in Ojai, California**

**November 16th-18th, 2007, in Scottsdale, AZ**

**Tuition:** US\$795 (or CDN\$875, plus GST). A nonrefundable deposit of \$400 is required. Full tuition due one month before group begins.

**Lodging & Meals:** US\$250 for Ojai group (which will be held on a private hot springs property on the shores of the pristine Matilija River).

Maximum number of participants: **12**.

# **Embodying the Deep Masculine**

## **A TWO-DAY GROUP FOR MEN**

**July 14th-15th, 2007, in White Rock, BC**

**Embodying the Deep Masculine** is about doing what's necessary to reclaim our balls without armoring or numbing ourselves, becoming warriors who, finding a source of strength in their vulnerability, can take needed stands with both heart and full-blooded power.

To enter our true manhood, we need to stop turning away from the wounded boy in us, both protecting him and giving him what he needs to heal. We also need to become more emotionally literate, not turning our anger into aggression, nor our shame into guilt, nor our hurt into an excuse to shut down or get heady.

As we assume our real power, we must at the same time step more fully into our heart; otherwise, we won't be capable of real intimacy. No more hiding out in cognitive strongholds, no more avoidance of our raw strength, no more bypassing of our wounds, no more avoidance of the Deep Feminine.

**TUITION:** US\$550 or CDN\$595 plus GST. Limited to **10** men only.

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# ***Woman Unbound***

## **A TWO-DAY GROUP FOR WOMEN**

**August 18th-19th, 2007, in White Rock, BC**

**with Diane & Robert**

An increase in power does not have to mean a decrease in femininity.

Being fully alive — passionately and deeply embodied — is every woman's birthright. Such aliveness requires embodying real power, so that what needs to be done and said gets done with maximum effectiveness.

But many women, however loving they may be, don't have full access to their true power and voice, and as a result have not sufficiently represented themselves, attracting situations and relationships that have only reinforced their inability to truly speak up and stand up for themselves.

**This group is about taking back the power that originally was given away in order to survive difficult conditions, and taking it back not just mentally, but also physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.**

**Doing so involves expressing, fully expressing, what's been held back because of fear, insecurity, and social pressures. Sometimes this is gentle and flowing, and other times it is necessarily fierce — whatever helps the passion flow.**

Part of what is needed is a reclaiming of anger (plus a clear differentiation between anger and aggression), so that it becomes a resource, a guardian of boundaries, a potent catalyst for needed change.

This group will involve deep letting go and opening, through a creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, sound-healing, group exercises, and spiritual deepening practices.

The maximum number of participants will be 10, so there is plenty of time for each woman to receive in-depth high quality attention.

**TUITION:** US\$550 or CDN\$595 plus GST.

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# **FREEDOM THROUGH INTIMACY**

## **A Weekend Intensive For Couples**

**September 15th-16th, 2007,**

**in White Rock, BC**

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

## The Crucible of Awakening

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 couples work, using a spontaneously structured approach that creatively mixes psychotherapy, bodywork, dream exploration, spiritual practices, and dyadic deepenings.

**TUITION & LOGISTICS:** 10am to 6pm both days. Limited to **5** couples only. US\$1200 or CDN\$1250 plus GST per couple. \$300 deposit required. Full payment required one month before group begins.

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# **Integral Psychotherapy Practicum**

## **2007/2008 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

### **in White Rock, BC**

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

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.

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 November 2nd, 2007. Tuition is CDN\$5900 plus GST. A deposit of \$750 is required. The training is limited to **10** participants. Previous work with Robert required.

**Note:** The Practicum is not just for therapists who want to learn a more intuitive, integral, and bodywork-including approach to their practice, nor just for those who are wanting to work in the counselling/psychotherapy field, but also for those who want to participate with kindred spirits in a year of exceptionally deep personal work, during which they will learn skills that will serve them in every area of their life.

Graduates of previous practicums have not only found themselves at home with new skills (sufficient enough to begin working as an integral counsellor), but have also done work of such depth — and not just a few times, but many times — during the practicum that they invariably emerge more grounded, open, intuitive, and confident about both themselves and their ability to effectively guide others.

Much of the depth and quality of the work done has to do with being with a group of individuals who are all deeply committed to their own healing and awakening. In such an environment, there is not only more than enough safety and trust, but also a rare intimacy, generated by sharing such deep work both as a participant and as a counsellor-to-be.

## The Crucible of Awakening

This will be the fifth such Practicum that I've done; I expect that there will be many more. It is a prerequisite for further trainings with me, such as the advanced bodywork/energy-work modules (integrating bodywork, energy-work, and psychotherapy) in the Summer and Fall of 2007, as well as not-yet scheduled modules in Gestalt, Couples Work, Sexuality, and Leading Groups.

### **Practicum Schedule**

Nov. 2-4, 2007; Jan. 4-6, Mar. 7-9, May 2-4, July 11-13, and Sept. 5-7, 2008

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***For more information regarding groups and trainings, or to register for them, contact [info@RobertMasters.com](mailto:info@RobertMasters.com).***

***All cheques, deposit and otherwise, should be mailed to Robert Masters, 16133 9th Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1A5.***

***To view previous newsletters, click on the Newsletter button at [www.RobertMasters.com](http://www.RobertMasters.com).***

***To check out Robert's blog, click on the Blog button at [www.RobertMasters.com](http://www.RobertMasters.com). Comments on the blogs are welcome; send them to [info@RobertMasters.com](mailto:info@RobertMasters.com).***

## **Robert's 2007 Work Schedule**

June 30-July 1	Freedom Through Intimacy: White Rock, BC
July 7	Letting Go: White Rock, BC
July 14-15	Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC
July 27-29	2007 Practicum: Bowen Island, BC
August 18-19	Woman Unbound: White Rock, BC
August 25	Letting Go: White Rock, BC

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- September 7-9 Breakthrough: Calgary  
September 15-16 Freedom Through Intimacy: White Rock, BC  
September 21-23 Breakthrough: Ojai, California  
September 29-30 Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC  
October 5-7 2007 Practicum: White Rock, BC  
October 13-16 Bodywork-in-Psychotherapy Practicum: Langley, BC  
October 20 Letting Go: White Rock, BC  
October 27 Woman Unbound: White Rock, BC  
November 3 2007/2008 Practicum: White Rock, BC  
November 10-11 Freedom Through Intimacy: White Rock, BC  
November 16-18 Breakthrough: Scottsdale, Arizona  
Nov. 30-Dec. 2 Practicum Graduates Group: TBA  
December 7-9 2007 Practicum: White Rock, BC

**For additional information,  
visit [www.RobertMasters.com](http://www.RobertMasters.com)**