

CONNECTING WITH THE PRESENT MOMENT

How to Integrate Awareness
into Daily Living



By *Catherine G. Allen*

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How to Integrate Awareness in your
Daily Life

By

Catherine G Allon

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Dedication

To my Family - my parents, my children and my grandchildren and Blair, my partner without whom this book would not have been written!

To all those wise men and women practicing Advaita or non-duality may you live long and joyfully!

Your Awakening

Q: How can I attain self-realization?

RM: Realization is nothing to be gained afresh; It is already there. All that is necessary is to get rid of the thought “I have not realized”.

- Ramana Maharshi (who awakened himself by asking, “Who am I?”)

Chapter 1.

The Dolphin and the Goldfish - a parable

“What happened to Jack?” asked Rose, one of the five remaining goldfish in the fishbowl. “Beats me; he’s unpredictable! I knew it when we first met,” replied Janie, a beautiful, youthful and bubbly female goldfish in the same tiny fishbowl.

The goldfish they were talking about, Jack, had just jumped out of the fishbowl sitting on the window ledge of a bay window on the beaches of San Francisco Bay. It was a beautiful sunshiny kind of day and Jack the goldfish had been feeling ready to bounce. He didn’t like being in a fish bowl. He wanted to be free.

Jack had come from a huge aquarium at a lively pet shop. He was born free and felt pent up when Melissa and her dad had picked him up along with the other goldfish. It was kind of like a choking feeling that

he remembered when the pet shop owner yanked him out of the giant glass aquarium. For a second he couldn't breathe and thought he'd never come to. But next thing he knew he was in this tiny plastic bag along with five of his goldfish friends driving through the countryside in a Volkswagen.

"Where are they taking me?" he thought, "Surely back home?" But no way would he see home again; not that home anyway. The road was rough, and each time they hit a bump the plastic bag flew up into the air, giving Jack a view of the landscapes and the waves along the ocean.

"Hmm," thought Jack, "what is that? Sure looks like water and has waves like our giant aquarium. But somehow it's bigger, much bigger!"

The Volkswagen swerved off the road and stopped. The young girl, Melissa, and her dad decided to stop and have a little look at the seaside. Melissa's dad said, "Look,

Melissa, there's the ocean, and if we were to jump in, we'd see hundreds of fish. We might even spot a dolphin today!"

"Really!" said Melissa, "wow, let's have a closer look." Melissa and her dad walked over to the sandy shore and admired the beautiful, deep blue sea. It was a pleasant day. The sun was shining and the sea gulls were chattering gleefully. Each time one noticed a fish swim by he swooped down and caught it in his beak, swallowed his prize, and squealed with delight.

Melissa was first to spot the dolphin who leapt into the air about two yards from shore. "Hey! Dad, did you see that dolphin?!" "Yes!" Dad said and he even had his digital camera out now, poised for the next leap. But no such luck.

About ten minutes later, Melissa and her dad got back into the car and started for home. Jack the goldfish and his friends were in the back seat wondering if they would ever see

their friends in the pet shop again. Relieved to see Melissa and her dad, they knew they were on the move.

An hour later, they reached Melissa's home and their new place. Melissa quickly yanked the plastic bag out of the back seat of the car, and ran upstairs to her room. There in her large bay window in a country house on the sea two hours from San Francisco Bay, sat a small fishbowl, now to be their new home.

Melissa took a pair of scissors, cut open the top of the bag and dropped Jack and his friends into the bowl.

“Oh, my,” said Jack, “now what?! Where is she going to take us from here?” But as it turned out, Melissa did not take them anywhere else. They remained in that fishbowl, much smaller than their original home, with absolutely no waves and very little scenery - just the six of them with

nowhere to go. Prisoners of Melissa, that's what they felt like.

Sure, they had fresh algae flakes each day and the sun sometimes shone in through the window. But ultimately they were pent up, their freedom taken away from them.

Jack knew that he could not stay there, from the first day Melissa had dropped them into the fishbowl. "I must escape," he thought. "Or maybe someone will rescue me."

The only advantage of his new home was that he could see the deep blue sea each time Melissa opened the window. In fact, the ocean was so close that if their goldfish bowl were to get knocked over and fall off the ledge, they would all plunge into the water! But having been there a whole year now, Jack realized he couldn't count on that. He must do something himself.

He was tired of complaining to the other goldfish and tired of hearing their complaints.

It was time to act *now*. And so he did.

One beautiful sunny morning, Melissa rose from her bed and opened their bay window before heading off to the bathroom to wash her face. Jack took the opportunity. He jumped! He jumped up, and dove into the sea.

Rose and Molly couldn't believe it. "Where is he?" Rose said. "Is he really gone? Is he gone for good?" And gone he was. For good or worse they didn't know, but they never saw him again.

And Jack? Well, he was in no way the same again. He landed in the ocean. He felt exhilarated and free.

He swam and swam and swam until he could swim no more and then he stopped. Coincidentally, he stopped right at the place where Melissa and her dad had seen the dolphin on that one sunshiny day a full year ago.

And lo and behold, there was the dolphin! Jack noticed him immediately but having never seen anything like him before, he thought he must be an archangel fish and that they were in Heaven. Well, this dolphin was wearing a beautiful smile from ear to ear and was jumping in and out of the water. Each time he jumped in he was displacing as much water as his size!

Jack was feeling quite overwhelmed just watching him, and decided to take a rest under a piece of coral. Soon hungry, he noticed some algae and quickly swallowed some, taking small bites as he was sooo excited.

“Wow, what a day!” he thought, “And what will Molly and Rose say when I tell them about my journey?” Then tired and contented, he fell asleep.

When he awoke, he was back in the fishbowl. No longer was he in the sea - no longer free. He swam over to Rose and told her about

his dream. By the end of the week all five fish had heard Jack's story. They were all ready to jump. If only Melissa would open the bay window!

Whether Melissa opened the bay window or not, and if he never swam in the sea again, Jack would always remember. That memory not only kept him in awe and joyful each day but his taste for freedom never left him!

Chapter 2.

Attaining the Present Moment

What about *your* yearning for freedom? Have you ever had a peak experience like Jack's and then later wondered if you'd ever feel freedom again? And what story of your life did you return to instead? Is your life story filled with freedom, love and joy, peace and wholeness? Or is it bursting with neediness, pain and suffering, guilt and fear?

How often do you smile in a day or allow yourself some pleasure? And when do you savor a joyful act, the natural kind that's free, that springs forth at a moment's notice and is available to all? Walking in nature, singing a heartfelt song at the top of your lungs or letting it all hang out at the piano or on canvas is freeing. Even painting a wall, day-dreaming, or roaming on a mountain top or in the woods can feel expansive.

It can feel like letting go and being in the

moment - like diving into the deep blue sea! Let's try it right now. Let's allow ourselves to be completely relaxed while asking the question, "Who am I?" The response to that question can be freeing itself. Just relax now and let yourself go completely. Breathe deeply. Breathe and relax and let yourself go some more. How do you feel? Just keep allowing yourself to open, let go and just be... as you continue to ask yourself, "Who am I?" See if you can allow yourself to let go more each day.

The more you let go, the more likely your body is to expand and just feel 'who you are' in the present moment. When you are in the moment, you are more likely to be living from your heart rather than your head. In that way, we can be guided from within rather than allowing ourselves to react with our egos to external cues and situations. Living from our hearts we respond with loving kindness. Yes, that means with intelligence as well. In fact, we are accessing Universal Intelligence. Our hearts tap into the source

of 'All That Is' and lead us to unfold as nature does, gently, with ease.

There is no struggle, no fear, no pain, and no regrets. Although we do acknowledge these emotions in ourselves and others, we respond compassionately, knowingly and lovingly - because we are love. Love is our core, and it supports our intention in all that we do or say.

Is it possible to be this way all the time? Yes, it is possible though not immediately, unless we choose it. We believe and behave exactly as we wish to be. We create our reality. Our unfolding is up to us, with the help of our Source. That is the promise with which we were born unto this planet: we have free will - along with inner guidance from Universal Intelligence.

Interestingly, free will sometimes gets us into trouble - as noticed by a Bahamian tour-guide, who suggested that our world would be in a lot less difficulty without it. According

to him, many of us cannot handle the free will we have been handed on a platter. “God should take it back,” he said, “so that we could all lead happier lives!” Do you agree? Would our beliefs and behavioral choices be wiser and would we live more joyfully without free will? Or could we listen more within?

We do have a choice; we have free will, but it comes with consequences. It is up to each one of us every moment of every day to choose whether we live from our hearts, or our ego-guided minds.

The small ego-mind, when allowed to be the master, becomes irresponsible. It allows us to think negative thoughts over and over. It allows us to worry...a lot. It allows us to be the victim, the abused, the misled, and the one to suffer and be in fear and pain. It allows us to waste time, to let our bodies get into a state of dis-ease and not fulfill our potential. It steers us off course and disengages us from what we came here to accomplish. Basically, the ego rules us or at

least thinks it rules, when it's really meant to serve us, while the heart waits patiently, in silence, for us to listen.

The ego-mind cannot be allowed to make certain major decisions as though it were in charge. Instead, the heart, guided by genuine 'knowing', would be the master. Our gentle heart would be the source of our thoughts and actions with decision-making authority. For the heart is unlike the mind, that leads us into endless temptation, and ponders issues over and over piercingly to the point of 'crazy-making.'

The heart on the other hand functions quietly; when it talks, it uses a small voice - barely a whisper - and is frequently overlooked or missed altogether. Nevertheless, the heart operates by knowing what's best for us. It knows how to function optimally, how to remain healthy and whole, how to fulfill our potential, build relationships, share and communicate as if we are One.

What keeps us in negativity and out of the flow of love? Is it the need for excitement? Does life become really dull when we live from our hearts? Do we lose our passion when we are without any problems or challenges in our lives? Do we get less attention from others? Likely not, would be the response to these questions; however, our answers to these concerns and our choices cause us to respond and live in the ways that we live.

I often say, “Do what you want to do, and be what you want to be,” as long as you don’t let your ‘song’ die within you. What is your ‘song’, or gift, that describes your contribution to humanity, to the planet? Are you a singer, a dancer, an architect, or a secretary, a gardener, a tailor or a gentle sailor? Your gift is what you love to do. Your hallmark is that essence, that piece of the puzzle that completes the picture of our world and enables it all to flow and to glow. It is your gift from the Universe. It comes to us through you, easily, if you allow it.

You have been born with this gift and we all look forward to receiving it before you go. You may not want to take it with you, unrevealed. Only to have to come again for another spin in order to reveal it! When you are ready, you can allow the gentle release of your gift from your being a little bit each day until it springs forth naturally - until you cannot withhold it any longer.

“What will facilitate this happening?” you may ask. Some are born to release their gift from an early age. For others you will connect within and awaken so that your open heart will release that which you are. It all starts with a moment of awakening, a peak experience or asking your self, “Who am I?” You eventually become that which you are and are guided to be by your heart eternally.

We know from many sources that the heart has a very powerful presence and operates even more powerfully when united with positive tools of the mind - those practical

skills that keep us safe, secure, clean, fed and educated. As we become more and more aware, we create our highest purpose in every moment with a united mind and heart. If we don't do it alone, there are many other ways of leaping into the present moment; many Masters to lead us and an assortment of techniques.

My own awakening occurred some ten years ago. On the flight to a Radical Awakening retreat in LA, I remember thinking, "I'll likely never be the same again." True enough. When I returned, my entire life changed to a great extent. I had been working for years in a government funded supervisory position as a program consultant, responsible for forty-five addiction treatment agencies and a multi-million dollar budget.

I had traveled all over the province, held endless meetings and experienced continuous stress without much family or leisure time. All that came to an end after my awakening. I let it all go and substituted it for

working from my home as a psychotherapist, also giving more of my time and enthusiasm to my family, friends, spiritual community, to myself and to the silence within.

Since experiencing a greater level of awareness, I find this way of being never disappears for long from my life. In this state, I feel a range of emotions, including anger, fear, pain, caring, joy, and compassion. Yet throughout any or all of these feelings, there is an underlying conscious awareness which is stable. The negative emotions do not have a hook any longer; they are short-lived, and are frequently replaced by a true wisdom and a trusting of how my life is unfolding.

My longing to share this teaching has encouraged me to offer Radical Awakening sessions, devised by Yukio Ramana, to facilitate the awakening of clients and to help integrate their hearts with the positive aspects of their ego-minds – having the best of both worlds on a daily basis.

Chapter 3.

Benefits of the Awakening Process

Thus, in my home-based psychotherapy practice, I use the same format by which I was awakened to reliably open my clients to greater awareness. A session begins with an issue a client brings for understanding, processing or release. Together, we move into a quiet peaceful place of meditation and begin a dialogue.

This meditative dialogue brings a relaxed way of being and an expanded state of awareness. As in our parable of how the goldfish Jack attained his freedom, once this state of pure awareness is felt, it compels clients to experience it over and over until it becomes part of their very nature. Opening to greater awareness begins to dissolve habitual negative patterns, and heals harmful emotional reactions. It brings about a life of synchronicities and unfolding of a healthy, meaningful way of living. Clients

are empowered to experience the present moment more often.

In session through dialogue, clients attend to different parts of their body demanding attention for emotional or physical pain. They ask those body parts what they want for the client in order to regain physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health and balance. Most often and reliably, each damaged part of the client wants to be whole again and fully aware in the present moment.

My clients have experienced expanding their vision, opening their hearts and accepting difficult issues. In this state of expanded awareness, they overcome and dissolve feelings of hate, fear, greed, rejection, unworthiness, abandonment, rage, powerlessness, depression, and meaninglessness.

I have noticed that as we become more aware, we develop new patterns of clearing the mind and flowing into the present moment. We

catch ourselves thinking negative thoughts and letting those go. What would those be for you? Find out and you have found ways of getting closer to your inner Self. That is unshakeable. That is permanent.

After the initial awakening session, pure consciousness continues to deepen at its own rate and individuals begin to function at higher levels of integrated awareness of body, mind, and spirit. In times of stress and confusion, clients are able to return to the awakened state and enjoy feelings of being grounded and contented, safe and secure.

Living in pure awareness, we live a life filled with grace, tolerance and willing collaboration. We are able to make a greater contribution to the well-being of our planet and live peacefully. Paying attention to our communities, we choose to make a difference quietly and humbly.

We take time to appreciate our family and friends. We are grateful for the abundance

and beauty in nature and enjoy the many gifts that life brings. Or we just sit and listen to a deep silence within.

Importantly, an awakening experience quickens the process of therapy by releasing, dissolving and transforming unwanted emotional and behavioral habits and patterns locked within the mind and body. Becoming aware opens the heart to more awareness and pure consciousness, allowing greater insight, compassion, and deeper appreciation of our source and acceptance of our world.

Some say the root of all our problems would be solved if we each took some time to be in a room in a quiet state, and meditate on 'Who we are'. Meditation and breathwork can help relieve the daily stress in our lives and help us recognize when our mind is working overtime. A quiet mind linked to the heart allows us to recognize what is the drama and what is the truth in our lives and the difference between them. The mind

becomes our beloved servant, and the heart,
the master of our destiny.

Catherine G Allon, BSc., MEd., (also known as Shanti Devi) is a pioneering thinker and innovator, a holistic psychotherapist, a facilitator of the Radical Awakening Process, a Kundalini Yoga teacher, a spiritual advisor, and a joyful grandmother living in The Beaches area in Toronto.

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