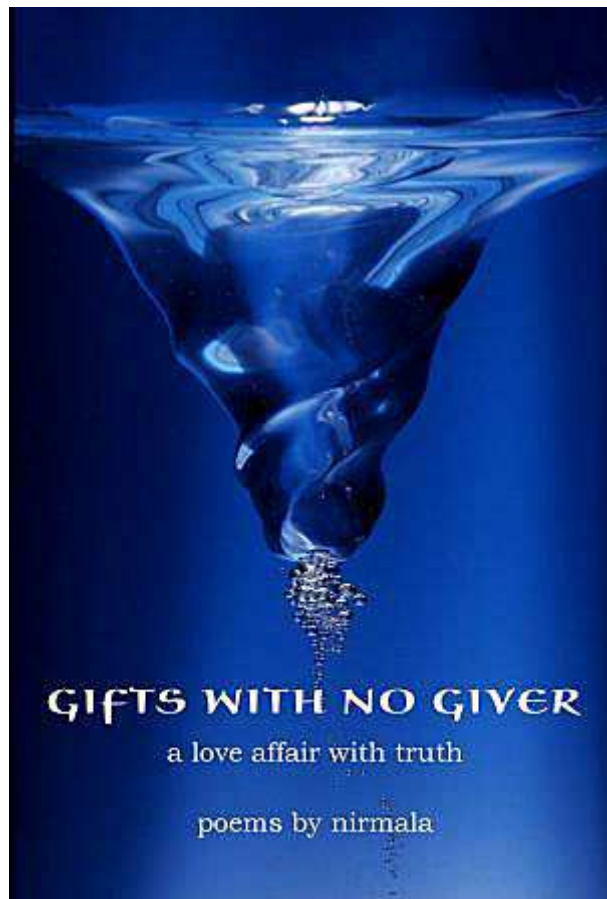


# Gifts with No Giver

a love affair with truth

Poems by Nirmala



Endless Satsang Press

## **GIFTS WITH NO GIVER**

**a love affair with truth**

**Poems by Nirmala**

Nirmala offers these poems in gratitude for the love and grace that flow through his teacher, Neelam, and in gratitude for the blessings of truth brought to this world by Ramana Maharshi and H.W.L. Poonja. In addition he would like to thank Donald Turcotte for his generous assistance in the design and production of this collection, and also Pamela Wilson for her help with editing.

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**To Neelam: the blue sapphire flame in my heart**

(Note: There is a free bonus at the end of this book of Part two of *Living from the Heart* by Nirmala)

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\*\*\*\*\*

## GIFTS WITH NO GIVER

your hand is always in mine  
your whispered endearments are my constant companion  
you have never turned your face from me  
no matter how many times I have turned from you

now I vow undying love  
I meet you in the secret places I used to hide from you in  
I hold you with tenderness I used to reserve for my pain  
I would give you my life and my breath in an instant

for you are my true love  
the one with no form  
the one who has never been anywhere, but right here  
in the singing of my heart

\*\*\*\*\*

why fear this moment  
when no thoughts come  
at last I lie naked  
in the arms of experience

why fear this moment  
when no words come  
at last I find rest  
in the lap of silence

why fear this moment when love finds itself alone  
at last I am embraced  
by infinity itself

why fear this moment  
when judgment falls away  
at last my defenses  
fail to keep intimacy at bay  
why fear this moment  
when hope is lost  
at last my foolish dreams  
are surrendered to perfection

\*\*\*\*\*

I may think I feel love but it is love that feels me  
constantly testing the woven fibers that enclose and protect my heart  
with a searing flame  
that allows no illusion of separation

and as the insubstantial fabric of my inner fortress  
is peeled away by the persistent fire  
I desperately try to save some charred remains  
by escaping into one more dream of passion  
I may think I can find love  
but it is love that finds me

meanwhile, love becomes patient and lies in wait  
its undying embers gently glowing  
and even if I now turn and grasp after the source of warmth  
I end up cold and empty-handed  
I may think I can possess love  
but it is love that possesses me

and finally, I am consumed  
for love has flared into an engulfing blaze  
that takes everything  
and gives nothing in return  
I may think love destroys me  
but it is love that sets me free

\*\*\*\*\*

the past is long gone  
from here  
there is no way back  
how could there be

the present is over too quickly for feeble desires to have any effect  
except to hide peace

the future races ahead forever out of reach  
of dreamy wishes  
and useless plans

and yet when I rest in the endless now  
every need is satisfied  
in ways never imagined

\*\*\*\*\*

I have fallen in love with truth  
I only want to be with her  
I cannot stand to be apart  
I would gladly go to the ends of the earth  
or I would never again move from this spot  
just to be sure to inhale her fragrant perfume  
with my dying breath

I have fallen in love with truth  
her every wish my command  
I simply must obey  
for she has captured my soul  
and taken complete control  
of even my innermost thoughts  
freeing me to find repose in her unadorned splendor

I have fallen in love with truth  
with exquisite tenderness she shows me  
the perfection in my every flaw  
no need for pretense  
for she knows everything about me  
and yet takes me in her arms  
with complete abandon  
until only she remains

\*\*\*\*\*



sunlight burns  
shadow cools  
there is no difference

earth is still  
grass is moving  
there is no difference

wind rustles  
sky is silent  
there is no difference

spider drifts by on a silken web  
and I remain  
there is no difference

\*\*\*\*\*

where is absence of desire  
once I dreamed there would only be bliss  
now I am in awe of the ordinary  
now I am content with longing or no longing  
desires do not disturb the source of all desire  
life and death carry on as they always have  
and always will

only the dreamer is gone  
behind the flow of imagination  
beyond any effort to be still  
dancing in the ebb and flow of attention  
more present than the breath  
I find the origins of my illusions

only the dreamer is gone  
the dream never ends

\*\*\*\*\*

river of voices  
eternal mantra of foam  
meaningless words swallowed in a humming roar  
thoughts arise and are splashed away

river of music  
sacred song of motion  
nowhere to go but downstream  
actions arise and are swept away

river of sounds  
laughing and crying  
impossible to bring the depths to the surface  
emotions arise and are washed away

river of silence  
flowing through everything  
peace beyond even the absence of sound  
nothing ever arises

\*\*\*\*\*

I don't know what to say  
I never know what to say  
yet there is great power in not knowing  
knowing I can never know  
the mystery constantly deepens  
overwhelming my sense of what is  
the mystery speaks without words  
taking the breath away  
leaving no air for words  
in silence there is room for pain and bliss  
in unlimited measure

\*\*\*\*\*

love is a dream that does not stop  
when you awaken  
but constantly surprises  
no strong emotions stirring up dust  
and clouding your vision

love is more than it seems  
and has a purpose  
you cannot see  
and yet cannot hide from

love is an inescapable reality  
that knocks you senseless  
takes your breath away  
and leaves no heart beating but its own

\*\*\*\*\*

nobody is my lover  
I searched for her for lifetimes  
and finally noticed she was always at my side  
nothing is my heart's true desire  
but something used to always get in the way  
now emptiness fills me to overflowing  
as I fall into my lover's embrace

I can love you or ...  
I can love love itself

and thus love you truly  
letting illusion rest at last  
has freedom spoiled me for any other lover  
or is there room for the one in the infinite

questions fall away in the embrace of my true love  
join me in her arms  
and rest at last  
I am carried  
like a mother holding her infant child  
tender, yet firm  
I am provided for  
with caring attention that anticipates every need  
and yet  
I am swallowed whole by this love

\*\*\*\*\*

no longer my hand that moves  
no longer my voice that muses  
no longer my eyes that fill with tears  
at the simple beauty of a hazy afternoon

who could contain this rapture  
who keeps this heart beating  
who could keep this heart from breaking  
at the loss of everything it foolishly held dear

questions have lost their fascination  
longing has surrendered to fullness  
gratitude is enough  
even with the loss of everything foolishly held dear

\*\*\*\*\*

endless traces of memory  
fill in empty moments  
stealing my peace  
and robbing my happiness  
they cannot take the real treasure  
beyond peace and happiness

behind every memory  
is simple awareness  
of this ordinary moment  
a body breathing a mind making comparisons  
and yet something more  
is always present

this simple moment  
a body still breathing  
mind still chasing dreams  
what is the something more  
that fills the ordinary with magic?  
the full recognition  
of what was always longed for  
in the heart

\*\*\*\*\*



through emptiness  
peace is born  
no painful labor required  
an easy birth  
an easy life an easy death  
the peace flows from the depths  
the heart can only be broken  
when the object of love is gone  
but true love has no object

through emptiness  
awareness is born  
it grows untended  
filling the emptiness with eyes  
and ears and noses  
and more hearts  
to be broken and mended  
broken and mended  
until they can no longer be broken  
only mended

through awareness  
birth is ended  
what never ends needs no beginning  
love is too large  
for a heart to hold  
yet the opened heart  
rests in this largeness  
until fear is also ended  
knowing the heart has always been unbroken

\*\*\*\*\*

no poem  
no song  
no ritual  
captures the simple beingness of a stone  
let alone a mountain of stone

but let the stone write the poem  
let the mountain sing in your heart  
let the rituals fall like gentle rain to nourish the gods inside every stone and every mountain  
let your soul rise above the mountain  
above the rain  
above the clouds  
the journey home requires no effort  
only willingness to release your claw like grip on the familiar ground

then the stone speaks unspeakable truth  
then the mountain fills your heart with a silent song of peace  
and rituals sprout wings of surrender in your soul  
and you arrive here

\*\*\*\*\*

like a green desert  
life has burst forth  
in this empty container  
spilling over  
and moistening the parched soil

no need to store the bounty  
the supply is endless  
the source is at hand  
the fruits of no labor  
within easy reach

feast on this feed the deepest longing  
drink until thirst is a distant memory  
desire itself is consumed  
when the heart finds nourishment

\*\*\*\*\*

your smile  
morning sun on new fallen snow  
melting the icy chill  
unveiling a blue sapphire flame in my heart  
burning memory into ash  
revealing bliss

your eyes  
dark liquid pools of grace  
causing a whirlpool of emotion  
carrying me to the depths  
drowning me in joy

your touch  
gentlest breeze  
passing through skin and flesh and bone  
healing so complete  
leaving no scars  
where once were deep wounds

your form  
graceful flight in empty sky  
giving me birth  
naming me  
ruling me forever  
yet your only command: setting me free

your voice  
birdsong and distant thunder  
inspiring quiet so vast  
thinking no longer finds refuge

your love  
a rain swollen river overflowing its banks  
washing away all cherished possessions  
leaving an empty cup  
full of peace

\*\*\*\*\*

I never knew tears could feel so good  
until I opened my heart and found they come from the same source  
as boundless laughter

instead of blurring my vision  
they bring beauty into focus

instead of burning my cheeks  
they wash away dusty dryness I used to hide behind

let sorrow have me now  
for surrender has freed me to savor the bittersweet nectar  
that flows in measureless abundance  
from within

\*\*\*\*\*

I bathe in holy water  
wash myself clean in the sacred river  
nothing has changed  
yet senses are now clear  
and I hear what she is saying to my heart:

give me your foolish thoughts...  
you don't need them anymore  
give me your every desire...  
they will never fulfill you  
give me your deepest fears...  
what use have they ever been to you  
give me your very soul...  
you have always been too large  
for its tight confines

so once again I plunge into Ganga's embrace

once for my thoughts  
once more for my desires  
and a third time for my fears

she has always had my soul

and once again, nothing has changed...  
nothing always changes

\*\*\*\*\*

no deep rooted fears  
fear exists on the surface  
fear is the surface dive deeper and fear is swallowed  
in the depth of knowing

nothing to fear in this moment  
even when a gun is held to your head  
the thing most feared has not yet happened  
once an event has occurred  
fear is too late

fear has no home here  
where all is as it is  
Breathe the tranquil air  
and discover the fragrant serenity

\*\*\*\*\*

thoughts dance their enticing moves  
before my entranced inner sight  
but the spell is broken  
when I wonder  
who is entranced

memories beckon seductively  
with all the luster they can manage  
yet their shine is swallowed  
in the light  
behind my eyes

there is one dancer  
I cannot resist  
her only movement is utter stillness  
I find no memory  
in her transparent gaze

\*\*\*\*\*



romance is a simple mistake  
finding true love  
in the arms of one other  
is like capturing a waterfall  
in a tiny cup  
thirst is slightly quenched  
why not just step into the source

romance is a beautiful distraction  
taking you beyond your dry concerns  
yet what good is an open heart  
with room for only one when that one is gone  
the heart is empty and dry  
and tears fall on empty ground

romance is a single drop  
in a torrent of love  
why settle for one sip at a time  
the sweetest tasting water is deeper than the surface  
dive into the current  
and as you are swept away  
drink to your heart's content

\*\*\*\*\*

nothing seen is wasted  
the sight of every eye  
increases the range of vision  
of that which sees

every sight is a gem  
of pure perfection  
in the inner eyes  
of that which sees

each viewpoint  
lives on forever  
nothing can die  
within that which sees

look deeply into any eye  
beyond your reflection  
come face to face  
with that which sees

abandon appearance  
let go of pretense  
you are naked and exposed  
before that which sees

do not turn away your gaze  
no need to hide  
only love shines in the eyes of that which sees

\*\*\*\*\*

all may have a mind of their own  
but thoughts are gifts of grace  
touching mind for an instant  
like melting snowflakes  
every place can be home but rest is a divine blessing  
when effort falls away  
like the setting sun

the heart may burn with emptiness  
but love comes in waves  
smoothing away doubts  
like a tide erasing footprints in the sand

\*\*\*\*\*

in the dream I always play the fool  
in the dream  
my defenses always fail  
in the dream  
my desires are never fully satisfied  
in the dream  
my heart is broken over and over

wide awake  
I always play the fool  
wide awake  
my defenses always fail  
wide awake  
my desires are never fully satisfied  
wide awake  
my heart sings its endless joy

\*\*\*\*\*

what should we do  
what is the purpose of life  
here is the endless task  
to do nothing well  
here is your purpose  
to be free of any purpose

why do we suffer so  
how can we end the pain  
here is the source of suffering  
in the desire to end suffering  
there is no end to pain  
nor an end to joy within the soul of freedom

\*\*\*\*\*

my longing was never deep enough  
to touch this empty well  
my effort was never great enough  
to move this unmovable mountain  
my understanding was never broad enough  
to contain this silent truth  
my dreaming was never real enough  
to shape this formless presence  
nothing is always enough  
when nothing is needed

\*\*\*\*\*

the mystery  
of this simple moment  
cannot be spoken  
yet all of history  
occurred to arrive here

the mystery  
of the endless terrain of self  
cannot be mapped out  
countless new frontiers  
are born with every breath

the mystery  
of awakening  
cannot be achieved all that is needed  
is to notice inner eyes that never close

the mystery  
of sweet undying love  
cannot be understood  
the heart already knows  
what the mind can only long for

the mysteries  
always remain  
untouched by worried thought  
ready to welcome us home  
when we abandon our dreams

\*\*\*\*\*

take my hand  
feel the vital grip  
that love lends to this flesh  
listen to my voice  
hear the catch in my throat  
of awe that can't be expressed  
gaze into my eyes  
see tears welling up  
as I recognize my long lost self in your smile  
rest in my arms  
find refuge in my embrace  
until you know you are forever safe  
join me now  
here where we have never parted

\*\*\*\*\*



no word is real enough  
to conjure up a crumb of bread  
still we try to find nourishment  
in endless musing

no thought is thick enough to cushion a fall  
yet we pursue idle distractions  
while tripping on obstacles in our path

there is a silent voice behind the words  
there is a quiet source of every thought  
listen without your ears  
ponder without your mind  
rest your senses and your sense  
for just one moment of this stillness  
will sustain and uphold you forever

\*\*\*\*\*

it is here  
in the breath  
it is here  
in the stillness between breaths

it is here  
in the active mind  
it is here  
in the resting mind  
it is here  
in the dream's panorama  
it is here  
in each moment of awakening

it is here  
when all is well  
it is here  
when fear has nothing left to fear

even then  
there is pure noticing even then  
there is no need for doing

no frantic searching can find the obvious  
no seeking needed  
to find that which seeks

it is here  
where it can never be lost  
or found

\*\*\*\*\*

where does willingness come from  
willing to do anything  
although nothing can be done  
willing to surrender everything  
although nothing is mine willing to be exposed although there is nothing to hide

where does lovingness come from  
loving the flaws in us  
although we are perfect  
loving the simplicity although feelings are so complex  
loving you although no one is there

where does gratefulness come from  
grateful for the laughter  
although the joke is on me  
grateful for the beauty  
although eyes cannot truly see  
grateful for the bounty  
although hands are forever empty

\*\*\*\*\*

truth is a living being  
that must be nourished and fed  
and loved  
then it grows and blossoms  
filling the air with pure aroma  
making us gasp with delight

truth is a friend  
that asks for loyalty and acceptance  
then it enters our hearts  
dissolving the boundaries freeing us from loneliness

truth is a demanding lover  
that requires constant affection  
and endless gifts  
then it rewards us  
with a glimpse of indescribable beauty  
making us faint with satisfaction

and finally truth is an empty hand  
that asks for and requires nothing

\*\*\*\*\*

the obvious signs  
a playful smile  
absence of pretense  
disregard for convention  
respect for truth

listen when they speak  
look where they point  
follow where they lead  
abandon hope and faith and dreams  
accept nothing less than all they have to give  
your share in the infinite is infinite

come claim your birthright  
return to the place never left  
return and let the seeker rest  
subside in the unending peace

let the seeker rest  
let that which you seek find you  
let the seeker rest  
the task is finished  
let the seeker rest  
let the seeker rest

\*\*\*\*\*

behind closed eyes  
the world falls away  
a whirl of empty sensation  
with no boundary  
drowning thought in a silent symphony  
burning the body  
in painless effigy  
when eyes open again  
the world is cleansed  
only perfection remains  
the room is resplendent  
with the absence of illusion

\*\*\*\*\*

grateful  
for grace  
that fills mind with visions  
of the invisible

grateful  
for time  
that expands to embrace  
stillness

grateful  
for breath  
that seems to require  
no breather

grateful  
for gratitude  
that breaks the soul wide open  
freeing love

\*\*\*\*\*

in a timeless instant  
before a painful idea appears in my mind  
an ever present softness, a gentle hand reaches into my thoughts  
and soothes them until they reflect only empty sky

in a timeless moment  
before a desire burns in my heart  
an inexhaustible peace, a whispered silence  
quells the storm  
of fruitless wishing  
leaving me breathlessly still

in a timeless lifetime  
before my story is wrenched from silence  
a wordless honesty, an unflinching gaze  
shows me my face  
without shadows of doubt dimming the fire within  
in a timeless eternity  
before my soul is torn from infinity  
a passionate tenderness, an enfolding embrace  
leaves me alone with the source of sweetness even closer than a kiss

\*\*\*\*\*



welcome home  
welcome to the home never left  
you have always lived here  
will always live here  
this is home, forever...  
so stop now  
no effort is required  
even during all journeys  
you have always been here  
this is home, forever...  
so relax now  
the fire is in the hearth  
this inner fire is keeping you warm  
the storms outside cannot touch you  
this is home, forever...  
so rest now  
everyone loved is right here  
we have always lived here will always live here  
this is home, forever...

\*\*\*\*\*

I must follow this thought  
all the way  
let the mind have its way with me  
but only with me  
not with the quiet presence  
the voice behind all thoughts

I must feel this emotion  
with my whole being  
and as it sweeps me off my feet  
enjoy the sensation of falling  
falling endlessly into the arms  
of no lover

I must, I must  
for this dream demands no less  
than total suspension of disbelief  
total surrender for the dream and the dreamer  
are one and the same

I have never been more than a dream  
and the dreamer  
is awake

\*\*\*\*\*

endless poems wait to be written while all has been said before  
this truth cannot be spoken and so I try again  
just to get a little closer  
to the unspeakable reality

forever gently teasing just out of reach  
forever invisible at the edge of perception  
forever tranquil in the maelstrom of feelings  
forever present in this moment's eternity

\*\*\*\*\*

it doesn't matter  
what I do  
mind judges  
then judges itself for judging  
that's just what minds do  
when I let it have its way  
it surprises me by stopping  
and in the vacant interlude  
the mind finds no grip  
and falls effortlessly into the deep pool of silence  
it never left

\*\*\*\*\*

rain falls  
within the endless awareness  
the sun still shines  
behind the clouds

loss rips  
at the heart of love  
empty peace still rests  
at the source of tears

floods wash  
away the precious hillsides  
life rises to the surface  
for another breath of joy

thoughts race  
across the mind's attention  
quiet still sings  
from the throat of nowhere

pure freedom remains  
when all else is  
swallowed in the river of time

\*\*\*\*\*

mind always wins  
every thought an artful trap  
leading further into dreams  
resistance speeds the entanglement  
surrender, the only option

then what surprising silence  
entanglement becomes a tender caress  
dreaming dissolves in wonder

mind continues the endless game  
jumping in to claim peace as its own  
creating a new identity to play with  
as if it could find something solid in empty space laughter, the only response

then identities come and go  
mind plays on the surface  
silence enjoys it all

\*\*\*\*\*

all I have ever wanted is wanting  
all I have ever had is having  
all I am is all there is  
and wanting and having are always here  
in equal measure

all I have ever loved is love  
all I have ever loved is loving  
all I am is love  
and loving is always here  
in infinite measure

\*\*\*\*\*

quite ordinary desires  
come and go come and go  
never needing to be fulfilled  
their satisfaction made irrelevant  
by the shining beauty of a rain soaked forest  
the rain washing away thoughts  
of something lacking

what could be lacking  
in this explosion of life  
that grows in each nook and cranny  
of the infinite heart  
the moisture of love  
seeping down to nourish the roots  
of every being  
or dancing in streams and rivers  
all the way home

\*\*\*\*\*



die a little  
with every disappointment  
or find what never dies  
and has no preferences

try a little  
and keep illusion going  
or see the futility of effort  
and stop pushing on nothing

be happy a little  
now and then when circumstance allows  
or rest in the source of happiness  
now, then and always

believe a little  
that you are someone  
or notice there is no separate one  
nor any limit to being

love a little  
with half a heart  
or let love have it all  
filling the heart to overflowing

\*\*\*\*\*

the dance of emptiness  
goes on and on  
colors, shapes and forms  
arrayed in courtly splendor  
on the dance floor of infinity

the patterns of the dance  
will hypnotize if watched too closely  
while the entire view  
ends all trances  
and frees the dreaming mind

now join the dance  
its irresistible ebb and flow  
swallows your pride  
in the pure joy  
of moving stillness

\*\*\*\*\*

this voice is inadequate  
to express the abundant wonder  
of this endless moment

this body is insufficient  
to embrace the sweet infinity  
of this lover's bodiless form

these eyes are unable  
to capture the invisible beauty  
of a cloudless sky

and yet I sing with joy,  
caress the air with tenderness,  
allow beauty to fill my eyes with tears,  
and know that the love in my heart  
is always enough

\*\*\*\*\*

truth is too simple for words  
before thought gets tangled up in nouns and verbs  
there is a wordless sound a deep breathless sigh  
of overwhelming relief  
to find the end of fiction  
in this ordinary  
yet extraordinary moment  
when words are recognized  
as words  
and truth is recognized  
as everything else

\*\*\*\*\*

a quiet room  
empty of profound thoughts  
in this moment  
no need to uncover deep truths

the chairs do not mind the silence  
the rug is not burdened by the lack of weighty ideas  
only the thought, "there must be something more"  
cries out in pretended anguish

the chairs pay no attention  
the rug only lies more quietly  
until the pretended suffering  
can't help but notice  
there is always more  
that does not need to be revealed

\*\*\*\*\*

laughter stops thought  
and fills the space behind the eyes with light  
such simple delight  
to find nothing is knowable

I can only give everything  
to this nothing  
and am overjoyed  
to let it tear down the barricade in my chest  
and steal my heart

\*\*\*\*\*

the room is empty  
except for these saddened eyes  
that find refuge in emptiness

friends come and go  
lovers come and go  
but love itself never wavers

emptiness is my refuge  
emptiness is my resting place  
everywhere I turn  
the end of boundaries awaits

take sadness now  
take happiness also  
leave only clear vision

the room is still empty  
except for these opened eyes  
that find refuge in fullness

\*\*\*\*\*

early in the morning  
asleep in a dream  
only to awaken in another dream  
why disturb the quiet mist  
with imaginary forms  
the heart is never fulfilled  
with dream lovers

for there is never enough  
of what does not satisfy

so let the mist have it all  
I have moistened my cheeks long enough in this fog of dreaming  
I will not move again until my true love appears

when at last the sun burns away the haze  
no one is there  
what relief. . . to find her waiting

\*\*\*\*\*



mind finds a path  
to struggle along  
never reaching the goal  
heart knows it already rests  
in the path of something wonderful  
it cannot escape

mind seeks to hold onto  
a still point of final understanding  
heart knows it is being held  
by an unmoving whirlwind  
that it will never comprehend

mind tries to feel safe enough  
to allow love  
out into the open  
heart knows love is never cautious  
and cannot be kept secret  
once all hope of refuge is abandoned

\*\*\*\*\*

simply resting  
from a full day of resting  
feeling too rested  
to even consider anything more

simply quiet  
staying in the silent pauses  
no thought  
not even the idea: no thought

too busy  
doing nothing  
to stop long enough  
to do something less

\*\*\*\*\*

excitement stirs the blood  
yet only nothingness is ever palpable  
imagined pleasures always fall short  
compared to the simple reality  
this bird in the hand  
is worth a million in the bush  
sensations have their say  
promising satisfaction, as if they could stay  
long enough to fulfill endless desire  
yet always ending in a reverberating empty stillness  
this deafening calm  
is cherished by the core of being as the true source of infinity

\*\*\*\*\*

light through a prism...  
a rainbow  
love through my heart...  
the spectrum of feelings revealed  
red anger to blue sadness  
yellow fear to black despair  
allow them back into my heart  
and the prism works in reverse  
turning the most deeply tinted pain  
back into pure white love

\*\*\*\*\*

foolish to chase after imaginary pleasures  
they love to dance out of reach  
giving only tastes of slight satisfaction

simpler to give heartfelt attention  
to the source of contentment  
and find there is never anything missing  
in this moment

then the rising water of devotion  
takes the weight out of these hands  
and dissolves the dreamlike boundaries  
of desire itself

\*\*\*\*\*

a world of endless contradiction  
sad smiles and joyous tears  
the heart is torn in two  
by feelings that never fail to pull in opposite directions  
torn in two  
by dreams that forever dance out of reach

until at last the contents of the heart  
spill out in an endless flood  
of sad smiles and joyous tears  
that no longer have any ambivalence  
because of their shared source

\*\*\*\*\*

words do not come  
there is no need for profound utterances or  
deep truths  
here is an ordinary evening  
why spoil it with dramatic overstatement

the silence amidst the noise  
the gem at the core  
of every experience  
is polished by simple attention  
into shining magnificence

\*\*\*\*\*

every taste  
every sensation  
every possible pleasure  
is already present  
in the timeless  
awareness  
that is beating my heart  
what use  
in chasing dreams  
that have already  
come true

\*\*\*\*\*



who would have guessed  
this empty feeling in my chest  
is the door to eternity

who could have known  
this longing  
is what I longed for

how is it possible  
thoughts of freedom  
only hide freedom

why don't I care  
about answers  
when questions never end

who would have guessed  
this empty feeling in my chest could be so full

\*\*\*\*\*

what kind of fire has no preference for fuel  
gladly burning thoughts, feelings,  
bodies and souls  
yet it is a cool flame  
leaving the core untouched

it flares whenever I give it attention  
or has it always been burning this brightly

\*\*\*\*\*

sleep comes in the afternoon  
and then wakefulness never truly returns  
drinking in rest like cool water  
cold outside does not touch it  
yawning does not disturb it  
thoughts of friends in pain  
can only make it more obvious  
here in this quiet house  
the totality comes out to play

\*\*\*\*\*

hot sun fills the eyes to overflowing  
while a cooling breeze of freedom lifts sweat from the brow  
every experience from the past that visits now is recognized for what it has always been  
pure food for the dreaming oneness  
the banquet continues with each breath

I feast now even on heartbreak and loss  
as they burst the limits I held so dear  
freeing me from resisting appetite  
for fear of a taste of sour fruit

I also welcome the sweet dessert of quiet moments  
truth with no trimmings  
a simple meal of limitless portion every tender morsel of silence  
more filling than the last

\*\*\*\*\*

desire  
pure unadulterated longing  
tears at the chest with such force it seems the soul might leave  
just to find relief

sadness  
bittersweet taste of emptiness  
weighs on the shoulders  
like a burden  
too heavy to bear

surrender  
swallowing all pride  
collapsing from all effort  
only to find rest again  
in the depths of pain itself

why was I running from this profound  
silent joy

\*\*\*\*\*

sweeter than any kiss  
the taste of eternity  
lingers on my lips  
tasting me

only the slightest pause  
before her passion  
overwhelms my feigned resistance  
and takes everything I have to give

if this lover breaks my heart  
there will be no pieces left

\*\*\*\*\*

gratitude burns in the chest  
glad tears run down the cheeks  
strange illusion fills the eyes  
the hum of life thrills the ears  
no more sense of mine to senses  
the body no longer belongs to anyone  
leaving no one in the way  
of all a body can contain  
and all a body cannot touch

wonder awes the mind inspiration raises the spirit  
silence soothes the doubts  
intuition speaks to the soul  
no more idea of someone with ideas  
knowing needs no knower  
freeing truth to expand  
into all mind can contain  
and all mind cannot even imagine

\*\*\*\*\*

when I am held in your arms  
even pain is pure bliss  
dark thoughts of separation and lack  
are waves of pure pleasure  
unfulfilled desire is complete ecstasy

thank you for never having let go

\*\*\*\*\*



the truth catches up with me  
I am not enough  
never have been  
never will be  
what relief to admit this finite container  
can never contain infinity  
what joy to find infinity needs no container

\*\*\*\*\*

the tears flow freely now  
the mind quiets and the heart breaks wide open  
all the hopes and dreams of a lifetime, many lifetimes  
gently washed away

longings that have burned in the mind for ages  
suddenly flare up, but are quenched  
the dying embers of illusion  
gently washed away

and the soul thus unburdened of pretense  
can barely stand to open its watery eyes  
sights so intense, and yet so unreal  
gently washed away

finally, a voice that speaks the simplest of truth  
intermingled with sweet blissful sighs  
all the remaining fears and excitements  
gently laughed away

\*\*\*\*\*

the tired wanderer  
loses the strength to go on  
and in surrendering to hopelessness  
is surprised to finally feel at home

the hurried creek  
pauses in a cold, stony pool  
and in sudden stillness  
arrives  
at the distant ocean

the frightened warrior decides  
"I am ready to die"  
and in willing abandon  
becomes immortal

the fitful breeze  
fades to calm in the afternoon heat  
and in catching its breath  
is reborn  
as undying tradewinds

the troubled philosopher  
finds nothing to believe in  
and in unexpected silence  
just smiles  
at the still unanswered questions

the restless sea  
becomes smooth and mirrors the clouds  
and in ceasing all motion  
rejoins  
its own depths

the saddened lover  
faces the loss of illusion once again  
and in dying to passion  
falls in love  
with love itself

the weary sun  
sinks into the embrace of the horizon  
and in resting at last  
welcomes other shores

to a new day

\*\*\*\*\*

memories of true love  
are useless in filling empty moments  
for this lover never shows the same face  
always a new disguise  
keeping mind in suspense  
and senses alert

surrender to perpetual surprise  
and find her waiting once again  
in emptiness itself

\*\*\*\*\*

body is pure doing  
beyond doing there is mind  
mind is pure knowing  
beyond knowing there is heart  
heart is pure being

mind is more than the brain  
the heart of being is infinitely more  
than this physical beating in the chest  
all resides in this heart  
the pulse of all life depends on its endless rhythm  
lifting us in moments of simple awareness  
beyond the limits of doing and knowing  
directly to the source of our most tender feelings  
and beyond even limitless love

where all is merged  
in silent wonder

\*\*\*\*\*

the passion for freedom  
swallows the source of passion  
if twoness could lead to oneness  
we would all be faithful lovers  
no reason to dream of love  
for it is already here in the waking heart  
find it now  
in the sweet infinity  
of this moment's  
eternal embrace

\*\*\*\*\*

the flower can only wait for the bee to arrive  
yet passion appears from nowhere to play hide and seek with peace  
all that is gained is lost once again

timeless dreams are swallowed in the yawn of an awakened sleeper  
yet spring rises like a phoenix from the ashes of winter  
all that is lost was never real

is the heart big enough  
for the source of weeping  
is the heart big enough  
for this pure delight

\*\*\*\*\*



mind plays its oldest trick  
sighing woe is me  
so lonely so lonely....being someone

what's this  
a sweetness  
in the embrace of loneliness  
what deeper longing is being satisfied

\*\*\*\*\*

I always thought you would come to me in the shape of a beautiful lover  
I never dreamed you would steal my heart  
with no shape at all

I always pretended I needed arms to hold me  
and lips to kiss away my pain  
yet I find fulfillment  
in the embrace of empty space

I always wished you would speak to me  
with words of tender sweetness  
now I know you whisper silently  
of your undying love

I always knew I would find you although I foolishly looked with my eyes  
you were here all along  
hiding just out of sight in my heart

\*\*\*\*\*

a lasting marriage  
when devotion has claimed you for its own  
no longer any chance to stray  
a brief fling with illusion no longer satisfies  
the truth demands utter fidelity  
with no possibility of divorce  
all pain must be faced  
and embraced as the true countenance of your beloved

all fear must be met  
and recognized as the thrill of tasting the unknowable

all joy must be surrendered  
and acknowledged as a gift with no giver

this union only requires telling the truth  
even when the truth shatters your dreams  
even when the truth leaves you emptied out  
even when the truth reveals your counterfeit existence  
then there is no other possibility than happily ever after

\*\*\*\*\*

fire may burn the wood  
the ashes do not mind

\*\*\*\*\*

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

After a lifetime of spiritual seeking, Nirmala met his teacher, Neelam, a devotee of H.W.L. Poonja (Papaji). She convinced Nirmala that seeking wasn't necessary; and after experiencing a profound spiritual awakening in India, he began offering satsang and Nondual Spiritual Mentoring with Neelam's blessing. This tradition of spiritual wisdom has been most profoundly disseminated by Ramana Maharshi, a revered Indian saint, who was Papaji's teacher. Nirmala's perspective was also profoundly expanded by his friend and teacher, Adyashanti.

Nirmala offers a unique vision and a gentle, compassionate approach, which adds to this rich tradition of inquiry into the truth of Being. He is also the author of several books including Nothing Personal: Seeing Beyond the Illusion of a Separate Self. He has been offering satsang throughout the United States and Canada since 1998. Nirmala lives in Sedona, Arizona with his wife, Gina Lake.

**Visit Nirmala's website:**

**<http://www.endless-satsang.com>**

For more info or to purchase Nirmala's other books on various ebook stores: <http://endless-satsang.com/free>

### **About Nondual Spiritual Mentoring with Nirmala**

Nondual Spiritual Mentoring with Nirmala is available to support you in giving attention and awareness to the more subtle and yet more satisfying inner dimensions of your being. Whether it is for a single spiritual mentoring session or for ongoing one-to-one spiritual guidance, this is an opportunity for you to more completely orient your life towards the true source of peace, joy, and happiness, especially if there is not ongoing satsang or other support available in your location. As a spiritual teacher and spiritual mentor, Nirmala has worked with thousands of individuals and groups around the world to bring people into a direct experience of the spiritual truth of oneness beyond the illusion of separation. He especially enjoys working with individuals in one-to-one sessions because of the greater depth and intimacy possible.

Mentoring sessions with Nirmala are an opportunity for open-ended inquiry. In your session, you can ask any questions, raise any concerns that are meaningful to you, or simply explore your present moment experience, which is a doorway into a deeper reality. Regular weekly, biweekly, or monthly mentoring sessions can be especially transformative. These mentoring sessions are offered either in person or over the phone and typically last an hour. You can contact Nirmala at <http://endless-satsang.com/arrange-a-session.htm> to arrange a time for a spiritual mentoring session. At the arranged time, Nirmala will call you if you live in the United States or Canada. If you live in another country, you must initiate the call.

## **[FREE E-BOOKS AND EXCERPTS BY NIRMALA](#)**

The following e-books and book excerpts are available for free at <http://endless-satsang.com/free>

### **Free Excerpt: Part Two of Living From the Heart**

\*Note: Part Two is included in this ebook as a free bonus at the end of this list. For more info or to purchase the book on various ebook stores: <http://endless-satsang.com/living>

A collection of teachings about the Heart, including:

-Part one: From the Heart: Dropping out of Your Mind and Into Your Being: Offers simple ways to shift into a more open and accepting perspective and to experience your true nature as aware space.

-Part two: The Heart's Wisdom: Points the reader back to the Heart, the truest source of wisdom.

-Part three: Love Is for Giving, Not for Getting: Points to the true source of love in your own heart. It is by giving love that we are filled with love.

### **Free Ebook: That Is That: Essays about True Nature**

That Is That: Essays About True Nature is a free collection of articles and answers to questions posed by spiritual seekers. It captures the essence of spiritual inquiry and provides the reader with a real transmission of Presence on every page. It is much more than an exposition about our true nature as infinite consciousness, it offers an experiential exploration of who we really are, not only through the transmission in the words, but through the many thoughtful questions it raises. Nirmala's warm-hearted and accepting presence makes it possible to drop into the space he so eloquently describes, where peace, love, and joy abide. For more info or to download this free ebook at various ebook stores: <http://endless-satsang.com/that>

### **Free Excerpt: Chapter 7 of Meeting the Mystery: Exploring the Aware Presence at the Heart of All Life**

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What is the source of the aliveness and awareness, which are fundamental to all life? What is the nature of desire, and how do our desires relate to suffering? How do we know what is true? What is the nature of belief, and how do our beliefs affect our ability to experience the deeper reality that is always here? And in the midst of these mysteries, how do we live our daily lives in the most satisfying and integrated way? *Meeting the Mystery* explores these questions and will help you discover new dimensions and possibilities in your life. This collection of articles and answers to questions posed by spiritual seekers is a springboard to ever deeper inquiry into the greatest mystery of all—Presence, which is who you really are.

### **Free Excerpt: Part One of Nothing Personal, Seeing Beyond the Illusion of a Separate Self**

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For more info or to purchase the book at various online ebook stores: <http://endless-satsang.com/nothing>

In this concisely edited collection of satsang talks and dialogues, Nirmala “welcomes whatever arises within the field of experience. In the midst of this welcoming is always an invitation to inquire deeply within, to the core of who and what you are. Again and again, Nirmala points the questions back to the questioner and beyond to the very source of existence itself—to the faceless awareness that holds both the question and the questioner in a timeless embrace.” –From the Foreword by Adyashanti.

“Nothing Personal is an excellent book, very clear and warm-hearted. I love it and recommend it highly. Nirmala is a genuine and authentic teacher, who points with great clarity to the simplicity and wonder of nondual presence. He invites you to ‘say yes to the mystery of every moment.’ Good stuff!” –Joan Tollifson, Advaita teacher and author of *Awake in the Heartland*

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**FREE BONUS SECTION:**

**LIVING FROM THE HEART**

(Excerpt entitled The Heart's Wisdom)

**Nirmala**

Please note: This free bonus is part two only of the book, *Living from the Heart*.  
For more info or to purchase the book on various ebook stores: <http://endless-satsang.com/free>

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This book consists of three related teachings about the Heart by Nirmala. They were previously offered as downloads on [www.endless-satsang.com](http://www.endless-satsang.com). The poetry is from *Gifts with No Giver* by Nirmala.

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**THE HEART'S WISDOM**

The truth is that which opens the Heart. The capacity to sense the truth is something we all already have. We all have a Heart that is already accurately showing us how true things are.

Anything that puts you in touch with more of the truth opens the Heart. This is a literal and experiential description of truth. When your experience is bringing you more truth, there is a sense of opening, softening, relaxation, expansion, fulfillment, and satisfaction in the Heart. This can be most directly sensed in the center of the chest, but the Heart of all Being is infinite and therefore actually bigger than your entire body. So this opening, softening, and expansion is actually happening everywhere; we just sense it most clearly and directly in the center of the chest.

When you encounter truth, the sense of your self opens, expands, softens, fills in, and lets go. The *me*, the sense of your self, is no longer felt to be so limited or small. It becomes more complete and unbounded. The boundaries soften and dissolve, and any sense of inadequacy, limitation, or deficiency is lessened or eliminated.

As a side effect of being in touch with more of the truth, your mind gets quieter because you simply have less to think about. Even knowing a simple truth like where your car keys are gives you less to think about. And when you touch upon a very large truth, your mind becomes even



quieter, like when you see the ocean for the first time: The truth or reality you're viewing is so immense that, at least for a moment, your mind is stopped and becomes very quiet.

In contrast, when your experience is moving into a diminished or smaller experience of the truth and of reality, the Heart contracts. The sense of your self gets tight, hard, contracted, and feels incomplete, bounded, and limited. It can feel like you are small, inadequate, or unworthy. The smallness of the truth is reflected in the smallness of the sense of your self. The result of being less in touch with the truth is that your mind gets busier as it tries to figure out what is true.

Fortunately, your Being is never diminished or contracted, only the *sense* of your self. Just as blocking your view of the whole room by partially covering your eyes makes your sense of the room smaller without actually making the room smaller, an idea or belief that is not very true is reflected in a small sense of your self, without actually limiting or contracting your Being.

This opening and closing of the Heart in response to the degree of truth you are experiencing isn't something you need to practice or perfect. Your Heart has been accurately and perfectly showing you how true your experience has been all along. If you start to notice your Heart's openings and closings, you'll discover that you already have everything you need to determine what is true. The Heart is the true inner teacher, the source of inner guidance we all have as our birthright. You don't need a spiritual teacher or spiritual books to show you what is true, just your own Heart.

***Exercise:** Take a moment to sense your Heart. Dropping into the Heart can help you get more in touch with what is happening there. Notice if the Heart feels relatively contracted or relatively open. In either case, your Heart is working perfectly to show you the degree of truth you are experiencing in this moment. Also notice if your Heart is expanding or contracting in this moment. The movement might be subtle or a fairly gross contraction or relaxation. You may be able to notice that the Heart is always shifting in response to every thought, feeling, desire, and experience that arises in your awareness. There is no wrong way for your Heart to respond. It is always showing you the relative truth of this moment.*

## **WHAT IS THE TRUTH?**

Truth is what exists, what is here now. So if what exists is also what is true, then there is only truth. Whatever is present is true—but to varying degrees. Just as there is no actual substance or energy that is darkness, but just varying amounts of the energy of light or photons, there is no falsehood or untruth, only varying degrees of the truth.

We are always experiencing the truth. But because we don't experience everything in any one moment, our experience of truth is always limited. Sometimes we experience a large amount of truth—of what is actually here—and sometimes we experience only a small amount of what is actually happening, of what is true. Our Heart's openness or lack of openness in each moment is what shows us how much of the truth is being experienced in any moment.

What about ideas that are mistaken? An idea or belief that has little or no correspondence to external reality is going to be an extremely small truth, so small it may only exist in one person's mind, like the saying: "He was a legend in his own mind." When you experience an erroneous idea or belief, your Heart will contract appropriately to show you that it is a very small and inconsequential truth.

For example, if you entertain the idea that you will never be happy unless you have ten million dollars, your Heart will contract appropriately to show you that it is just an idea. This

contraction may be very quick, so quick that it doesn't cause you any discomfort or trouble. But if you really believe this, then the sense of your self will contract for as long as that idea is held.

***Exercise:** For just a moment, hold onto a limiting thought, such as "I will never have enough time," and notice the response in your Heart. Does that thought allow you to relax and be, or does it require a kind of effort or contraction just to hold it? Now consider another thought that you find ridiculous because it is so untrue, such as "I will never be happy unless I become President of the United States." Notice how it might not even be possible to hold onto this thought. It might even make you laugh. Many jokes end with a ridiculously impossible truth (e.g., "And then the dog said to its owner, 'I guess I should have said Dimaggio instead of Ruth') and the smallness of the truth of the punch line causes you to let go of believing in it. Laughter is a wonderful movement into a bigger perspective!*

Thoughts are real—they exist—but they still exist only as ideas. You could put all the thoughts ever thought into a pile, and they still wouldn't trip anybody. They only exist as neural firings in the brain, so to focus on thoughts exclusively is to severely limit or contract your experience of reality and therefore the sense of your self.

In the range of everyday experience, our ideas have varying degrees of correspondence with reality. Those that correspond more closely to reality won't contract or limit the sense of self for as long as mistaken ones. Many ideas are of service to our ability to be at ease in the world. For example, when you need to go someplace, correct ideas about how to get there allow you to simply go there and then move on to other experiences. Ideas such as these can enhance our experience, rather than limit or contract it. An idea about where something is located is, of course, not a big truth, but it's also not usually experienced as a limiting one.

## **THE HEART'S CAPACITY TO SHOW YOU THE TRUTH**

All there is, is truth, and our Heart's capacity to reflect the degree of truth in any experience is the way we recognize how true a particular experience is.

What is this Heart? What is this sense of self that is ever present? It doesn't relate to sensations in the physical heart or chest. It's a more subtle sense, at times even more subtle than the physical senses, although the opening or contracting can also be experienced as relaxation and contraction in the physical body. The sense of your self, the sense that you exist, is something more intimate than your physical experience.

What does it mean when you say *me*? What are you referring to when you say *me*? This simple fact that we are here, that we exist, is a very mysterious aspect of our experience. When we speak of it poetically to try to capture its essence, we call it the Heart, like when you know something in your Heart or when your Heart is touched.

This sense of your self is a very alive and changing experience. At times, your sense of *me* is open, free-flowing, and expanded. At other times, like when a judgment arises, it feels small, inadequate, and deficient. In these moments, have you actually changed? Has your body suddenly shrunk? Much of the time this sense of *me* is bigger than or smaller than your physical body. How does that work? Have you ever experienced your inner child? How can your *me* be the size of a child when you are an adult?

The sense of *me*, the sense of self, is shifting all the time. It's always either opening and expanding, or contracting and tightening, similar to the ongoing expansion and contraction of our

breathing.

**Exercise:** Consider the idea that it is better to be thinner or more beautiful or younger than you are, and notice what happens to the sense of your self. Does your Heart open, soften, and expand? Does this idea allow you to simply be? Or does it tighten and restrict the flow of your experience?

Then just for contrast, notice what happens to the sense of your self if you consider the idea that you are okay just the way you are. It might be challenging to consider this idea without other thoughts being triggered, such as “But I’m not really good enough!” If this happens, your Heart will show you how true this response is, not how true the original idea of okayness is.

Just as an experiment, see if you can hold the idea that you’re okay just the way you are, and then notice what happens in your Heart. Does this idea allow your Heart to open, soften, and expand? Does it allow you to simply be? Or does it tighten and restrict the flow of your experience? For most, the idea of being okay just the way they are allows a greater ease and fullness to the experience of the self.

The idea that it is better to be thinner, more beautiful, or younger than you are is simply a smaller truth than the idea that you are perfect the way you are. Even if you *are* beautiful, thin, or young, the idea that it is better to be that way can limit the sense of your self. If it’s better to be that way, can you just relax and be, or do you need to do something to stay that way?

In contrast, a neutral idea that doesn’t state or imply anything about you can be experienced neutrally in your sense of self. For example, if you consider the color of the ceiling in someone else’s house, this usually won’t open or close your Heart because it’s not about you and probably doesn’t imply anything about you. The sense of your self doesn’t shift in response to neutral ideas like this.

This opening and closing of the Heart is not a prescription—something you need to practice—but simply a description of what your Heart has been doing your entire life. Whatever does happen in the sense of self in any moment is entirely correct and appropriate. It’s appropriate for your Heart to close when someone is telling you a small, limiting truth; and it’s appropriate for your Heart to open when you experience a deep and profound reality.

## **THE HEART’S QUICKNESS**

Your Heart is incredibly quick. It instantly knows how true something is and instantly opens or closes to that degree. It’s so fast that it never really lands anywhere. It is always either opening or closing in response to each moment.

So if a thought triggers another thought, the Heart will then be reflecting the relative truth of the triggered thought, not the original one. And if this triggered thought triggers another one, then your Heart will reflect how true the latest thought is. The openness of your Heart can shift very rapidly, as rapidly as you can think another thought!

I was working with a woman once who had difficulty taking time for herself. I asked her to check in her Heart to see how true it is that it is okay to take time for herself. She closed her eyes for a moment, and when I asked her what had happened, she said she felt an intense contraction. I was surprised, so I asked her to tell me exactly what had happened. She said she thought, “It’s okay to take time for myself,” and then immediately decided this would be selfish, and her Heart contracted. Her Heart was showing her how true it was that it would be selfish to take time for

herself. It was no longer reflecting the truth of the idea that it is okay to take time for herself.

In the quickness of our usual rapid-fire thinking, it can be tricky to determine what your Heart is actually responding to. Therefore, when checking in your Heart to see how true something is, it is helpful to slow down and take each thought or each possibility one at a time.

***Exercise:** Take a moment to think about a situation in your life. Notice if there are any familiar or recurring thoughts about that situation. Pick one of the main ideas, beliefs, opinions, or attitudes you have about that situation or about someone or something related to it. Now just hold that thought gently in your awareness. Repeat it to yourself a few times, and as you do, notice what happens in your Heart. Does it open and soften, or is there a kind of tightness or hardness that starts to form in your awareness? Remember, either way your Heart is working perfectly to show you how true the thought is.*

*See if you can hold that one simple thought for a moment, almost like a child completely engrossed in whatever he or she is looking at. Holding a thought for a moment gives you a clearer picture of the relative truth of that thought, as indicated by your Heart's response while you are focusing completely on it.*

*If your mind wanders and you find yourself having second and third thoughts, or even a whole conversation with yourself about the situation, that's fine. Just note that the Heart has moved on along with your thoughts and is now showing you the truth of the thought you are having in this moment.*

## **THE ROLE OF JUDGMENTS**

Not only can an initial thought or experience trigger other thoughts, the opening or closing of your Heart can itself trigger a thought or judgment that results in the further closing of the Heart and a sense of your self as limited or small. If you are a spiritual seeker and have come to believe that it is better for your Heart to be open than closed, then a sudden contraction of the sense of your self can trigger a further judgment related to not wanting to be contracted, which closes the Heart even further. Test it for yourself:

***Exercise:** If you hold the idea that you shouldn't feel contracted, does your Heart open? Does that idea allow you to just be? Or does it tighten or limit the sense of your self? The idea that you shouldn't feel contracted is a limiting idea and usually feels tight or limited because it is simply not very true.*

There is a certain kind of logic to this cycle of judgment, even though it results in a restricted sense of self: When the sense of your self contracts, your awareness also contracts and becomes limited, and your *unawareness* expands. When your field of awareness becomes smaller, the rest of reality lies outside your awareness in that moment. The logic of judgment is based on this simple effect. As a result of a judgment, you become less aware of your experience and temporarily less aware of the initial discomfort that triggered the judgment. Therefore, you get some relief from it. The logic of judgment is based on this temporary relief provided by the reduction in your awareness.

However, the flaw in this logic is that now that contraction of your awareness must be maintained or you will become aware again of the initial discomfort. Maintaining a contraction is, itself, uncomfortable. Try making a tight fist and holding it for several moments. It will

quickly begin to feel uncomfortable. Similarly, when you keep your awareness contracted to avoid an uncomfortable sensation, this generates even more discomfort.

So when a cycle of judgment is triggered, the sense of your self and your awareness keep getting smaller as you try to avoid the ever-increasing discomfort caused by this same contraction of your sense of self and your awareness. This often continues until you are exhausted by the effort involved in maintaining vigilance against your discomfort, and you simply let go of any judgment.

The good news is that whenever you are not contracting your sense of self through small truths, such as judgments, the sense of your self naturally relaxes and opens. An open, spacious sense of self is the natural resting state of your Being, just as your muscles naturally lengthen and expand in the absence of any effort to contract them. So when a cycle of judgment wears you out, there is sometimes a profound release of the small sense of self and the contraction of awareness. In light of this, it's not surprising that many realizations and spiritual awakenings occur immediately following an extremely contracted and painful experience.

More good news is that the tendency to judge is not your fault. You were taught to do it by those who raised you, who were taught by those who raised them. They did this because it was the best way they knew to manage their own discomfort. When parents are confronted with the unlimited Being of a two year-old (and we all know how big that can be), they often resort to the best means they know for giving that two year-old a more limited sense of his or her Being: judgment.

We eventually learned to do this for ourselves. We learned to judge ourselves and hold limiting ideas about ourselves to get along with the people around us, especially those who clothed and fed us.

Judgment is just one of the many ways we limit our experience of the truth and thereby limit our experience of our self. Other culprits are our ideas, beliefs, opinions, concepts, doubts, fears, worries, hopes, dreams, desires, and our usual knowledge. Judgment is just one of the more effective ways of limiting the sense of our self because it always implies something limiting about the self.

***Exercise:** Make a list of some of the judgments you have about yourself, life, and other people. Pick ones that you really believe. Now read through your list several times and notice the sense you have of yourself as you do this. Does holding these judgments give you a sense of yourself as someone in particular, someone who has a very definite perspective on life? Do you feel more connected with others and with the world, or do you feel more separate and apart from the world? Even if that separate sense of self feels superior because it has the right judgments, how big or open and relaxed is your sense of self when you have these judgments?*

This implied someone in all of your judgments is always a small someone, someone who is limited and therefore vulnerable to something bad or who needs to feel superior or for something good to happen to feel better or even survive. The ultimate truth is that you are unlimited. Your Being can never be harmed—or benefited—by any experience. Only a smaller (less true) idea of your self can seem to be harmed or benefited.

## **POSITIVE JUDGMENT**

What was said about negative judgments applies to positive judgments as well. When some

experience triggers a positive judgment, the sense of our self contracts just as much as when we have a negative judgment. Test this for yourself:

***Exercise:** Think about something you have a very strong positive judgment of, like your favorite movie or something you have done that you are very proud of. Notice what happens to the sense of your self when you have a positive thought about this. If you find yourself thinking something like, “Great! This is wonderful—wait until I tell my friends!” notice what happens to the sense of your self. You may be surprised to find that your Heart isn’t as open as it was before the positive judgment. A big truth allows you to relax and just be however you are and to change in any way that naturally happens. A positive idea about your self implies that you have to continue to be a certain way to be okay.*

Implied even in positive judgments is an idea of yourself as someone who is limited—someone who needs good things to happen to be okay and feel adequate. There’s nothing wrong with something good happening; it’s just that even your positive judgments are small truths that are based on a small idea of your self. Your Heart will contract just as much for a small positive truth as for a small negative truth.

Fortunately, there’s nothing you need to do about a small truth beyond recognizing it’s small. Besides, even small truths can be useful. So there is no need to try to rid yourself of them, which isn’t even possible. Seeing that they are small immediately puts them in perspective. Then, when they arise, they are seen as no big deal. You might still think them, but no matter how often they arise, you recognize them as relatively unimportant.

You have probably experienced this ability of a bigger truth to displace or put in perspective a smaller truth. For example, if you or someone you love is suddenly diagnosed with a life-threatening disease, what really matters becomes obvious. The truth, or reality, of a possible death makes many other truths appear small and insignificant in comparison.

You don’t need to wait for a big truth to hit you over the head to put your experience in perspective. Simply notice how true each thought is. Experiences come in all different sizes. You are always moving in and out of different degrees of truth, and you are naturally able to discriminate how true each one is. You can determine how truly important something is just by noticing the content of your thought and the sense of self it results in. If it opens and relaxes the sense of your self, your Heart, then it is truly important. If it contracts or limits the sense of your self, your Heart, then it’s not.

## **ALL TRUTH IS RELATIVE**

Truth is all there is. Yet our experience of truth, of reality, is always partial. Right now your field of vision is partial. You can only see what is in front of you, not what’s behind you. Similarly, your Heart is always showing you the degree of truth of the experience you are having in the moment.

Your view or range of experience is always opening and closing, filling in the blanks in your experience or forgetting or ignoring parts of your experience. Whenever you focus on a particular aspect of experience, you necessarily stop noticing other aspects. As a result, any particular perspective is either smaller and more limited, larger and more complete, or roughly the same degree of completeness as another perspective.

The openness of the sense of your self is always relative. Because truth is always relative,

any particular truth could be experienced as an opening or a closing of your Heart. Even a small experience of the truth may be larger than the experience you were just having and therefore will be experienced as an opening or relaxation in your Heart. Similarly, even a fairly large truth can feel limiting if you move into it from an even larger, more spacious experience.

For example, if you've lived most of your life paying attention to your thoughts and ideas, then the first time you are put in touch with your emotions will be experienced as an expansion of consciousness. It will feel like you've discovered a new, rich dimension of your Being.

However, if you've had many even larger experiences of much more expanded states of Being, possibly through spiritual practices, then moving into a strong emotion like anger, sadness, or excitement may be experienced as a contraction or diminishment of the sense of your self. The same truth, the same experience of emotion, can be experienced as either an opening up in your Heart or a closing down. It just depends on where you move into the emotion from and also how open or expanded the sense of your self generally is.

The difference can be slight between two experiences with similar degrees of truth or unimaginably huge. The true dimensions of your Being are limitless. You are everything, and when you directly experience this completeness, the sense of self can be equally vast and limitless.

## **YOUR PERFECT WISDOM**

Your Heart is the wisest thing in the universe. The sense of your self is always perfectly and accurately showing you how true things are, how complete your perspective is in every moment. Even when your Heart is contracted because of some deeply conditioned idea you are holding, it is appropriately and accurately wise in its contraction.

No one has more capacity to distinguish how true things are than anyone else. No one is wiser than you, and no one is less wise than you. Since no one else is able to experience your individual perspective, no one else can ever be more of an expert on your experience than you. Just as someone else can't eat and digest your breakfast for you, others can't experience and digest your perspective of the truth in each moment.

If no Heart is any wiser than any other, perhaps that's because there is just one Heart that functions through many bodies and yet is not contained in any of these particular expressions. What you are is this one Heart of Being.

Since we are all equally endowed with the wisdom of the Heart, there is no need to give away our authority to another. There is nothing better than your own Heart at discriminating how true something is for you right now.

In addition, the thoughts that cause contraction are not your fault. Your thoughts and beliefs were passed on to you by others, who learned them from others. If you trace each conditioned thought or reaction back to its source, you'll discover that all limiting beliefs and ideas are shared among us all. If anyone is to blame for them, it's all of us put together. Another way you could say this is that the whole of Being is the source of everything, even the limited ways we have of experiencing that Being.

With this understanding, the possibility exists to simply trust your Heart, no matter how big or small the truth is that you are experiencing. You can trust your Heart when it opens, and you can trust it when it closes. Your Heart is the wisest and most trustworthy thing there is. In the deepest spiritual traditions, the true teacher, or *satguru*, is seen to be within each of us. Your true teacher is this sensitive and accurate Heart, which expands and contracts as it senses the endless

folding and unfolding of life.

## **APPLYING YOUR HEART'S WISDOM**

Because the Heart responds so quickly to what's happening now. . . and now. . . and now, it's helpful to slow down and take your experience one thought or response at a time if you wish to find out how true it is. Just as you can more fully appreciate a meal if you take each bite and savor it, the possibility exists to take time to fully sense a thought that arises.

For example, let's say you remember a disappointing experience and then the thought arises, "My life will never be good enough." Before you rush into thinking of all the ways this is true or, alternatively, defending yourself with reasons why it isn't true, you might take a moment to sense directly how this thought affects the sense of your self. Then, when you know for yourself how true this thought is all by itself, it may be obvious that it is neither completely true nor completely false. If it is sensed directly as a relatively small truth about your life, it may not even be necessary to defend against it with an opposing thought. Sensing how true an initial thought is in this way can reduce the importance of any ensuing thoughts.

Another practical way of exploring and utilizing your Heart's truth-sensing capacity is to check in your Heart when making a choice. By doing that, you can find out what choice is the truer one. However, when it comes to relative choices (e.g., what to do, what to eat, where to live, who to marry, etc.), the differences may be slight in your Heart. From the ultimate perspective, the practical choices we make in life may not be that important. So it may take a while to learn to accurately sense the differences in how true various choices are. But just as a wine connoisseur can learn to discriminate the subtlest difference in flavors, you can learn to sense even very small differences in how true a choice is relative to another.

When checking in your Heart for the truth about some choice, it's helpful to consider as many choices as possible. The truest one may be somewhere in between the possibilities you've considered, or it may be something completely different. For example, a friend was torn between her desire to go permanently on spiritual retreat and her desire to stay with her husband. Neither option felt completely true in her Heart. When I suggested that maybe she could stay with her husband but still go away for long periods of time on spiritual retreats, her Heart opened, as she sensed this was the truest way to respond to both desires.

***Exercise:** Think of a choice you are considering in your life. It might be best to pick something where you have a decision to make that isn't too important and not too immediate so that you can really explore the process of comparing the truth of your choices. Make a list of possible choices you could make, and be sure to include some that are in between or completely different from the first two options you come up with.*

*Now really take some time with each choice and sense your Heart's response as you hold in mind the idea of making that choice. Again, keep it simple, and just picture having made the choice, and let go of secondary considerations, such as pros and cons and further ramifications. Notice whether considering a particular choice results in a spacious, easeful sense in your Heart or a contracted sense of your own self. There is no right or wrong way for your Heart to respond. Just notice the way it does respond.*

*Include the thought that it doesn't matter what you choose. In many cases, the biggest truth about your choices is that what you choose doesn't really matter. If that is the case, then that thought or perspective will give you the most room to just be, and the largest sense of yourself.*



Finally, when considering the relative truth of various possible choices, it is also helpful to check in your Heart several times over a period of time. Especially when making major life choices, checking numerous times before acting is more likely to result in a more satisfying outcome. For example, if you want to know if it's true to stay in an intimate relationship, you might find a different result right after an argument than right after your lover has surprised you with a gift. It's a bigger perspective to find out what is truest over the long term than just what is true in the present moment.

The Heart is wise and accurate and can show you how true it is to stay or go, how true it is to buy a house, how true it is to take a new job, even how true it is to eat another cookie. But it also can show you much more of the possibilities inherent in this life and much more of the truth of your Being. In relation to these bigger truths, the practical questions of your life turn out to be relatively small matters. Using your Heart only to know things like what to do or where to live is like using a global positioning satellite system to find your way from your bedroom to your bathroom. It utilizes only a small part of your Heart's capacity.

However, following your Heart day in and day out can put you in touch with the richness of the functioning of this dimension of your Being. Along the way, you may also find your Heart opening in response to the bigger truths and deeper movements of Being that touch every life.

***Exercise:** For a moment, sense if there is any Peace here. Don't worry how much or if there's only a little bit of Peace here right now. Just notice if you can sense any Peace at all. Now focus your attention on that Peace that is here beneath the flow of thoughts or feelings. Give yourself permission to really sense the nature of Peace and the deep stillness in that experience. As you touch Peace with your awareness, notice if there really is any boundary to the stillness at the core of this moment. Don't worry about doing this right, but just taste as much of the Peace that is here right now as you can.*

*Now notice the sense of your own Being. Focusing on Peace may have relaxed or opened your sense of self profoundly or just a little. Notice if this has softened or expanded your Heart.*

## **THE MANY SIZES OF TRUTH**

The deepest and largest truths don't fit into words or language. While words can act as pointers, your Heart will open the widest and the sense of your self will feel the most complete and full in response to the direct experience of the vast dimensions of Being that are beyond thoughts and beliefs. As always, your own Heart is the truest guide to these larger dimensions and possibilities, but the reason the sense of your self expands when your view of the truth is more complete is because you *are* the truth. You are everything that exists. When you are experiencing more of the truth, you are experiencing more of your self.

The truth comes in many different sizes. One of the primary ways you create and maintain a small sense of self is through a profound involvement with thought. We've been taught from an early age to think, conceptualize, and name things. Because there is such a huge momentum to thinking, moments without a thought happening are rare. Thinking is such a prevalent part of our moment-to-moment experience that many of us live mostly in our minds.

Adding to this momentum of thought are strongly held assumptions and beliefs about the world and yourself, many of which are unconscious. This deeper current of thought also serves to create and maintain a small, separate sense of self. As a result of all of our conscious thinking

and unconscious assumptions and beliefs, most people live in awareness of a very small part of reality, most of which only exists in their mind.

This momentum of small truths is reflected in a momentum to your small sense of self. This leads to the question of what to do about it. Unfortunately, any idea about what to do about it is just that—an idea, another thought. However, what *is* possible is to simply be aware of the prevalence of thought in your experience. This awareness is not really something you do, as awareness is a fundamental quality of what you are. Just as you don't need to do anything to have shoulders, you don't need to do anything extra right now to be aware—and to be aware of your thinking.

**Exercise:** *What is thinking like right now? You can notice not only the content of your thoughts, but also the rhythm and speed of your thoughts, the ebb and flow of thought. Where do thoughts come from and where do they go? What happens if there is a pause between thoughts?*

*How is the sense of your self affected by this flow of thought? Do you need to think in order to be? Does thinking give your sense of self a familiar smallness and sense of boundaries? Is it uncomfortable to not know something in this moment, to not have a thought?*

*The invitation is to just notice thought and its effect on the sense of your self. Any idea of changing your experience is just another thought that will have a similar effect on the sense of your self. Why not simply find out what thought is like? Experience for yourself how true each thought is. There's nothing wrong with small truths—they're just small. What if all of your thinking is not that big a deal? What if your thinking is just not a very large container for the truth? Thinking can only contain a small amount of the truth.*

*There is no need to get rid of thought. Once you experience that thought is not a very large container for the truth, this gives way to another question: What else is here besides thought? What else is true? As you sense the prevalence of thought and possibly even the deeper current of unconscious beliefs and assumptions, you may also begin to sense what surrounds and contains thought.*

*Drop into your Heart and notice the space all around your thoughts. What effect does dropping into your Heart have on your sense of self?*

## **THE DEEPER CURRENTS OF THOUGHT**

Many beliefs and assumptions shape and limit our experience of truth and the sense of our self even when we aren't consciously thinking them. They are ideas and concepts that are so deeply believed that they aren't even questioned, such as "Life is short" or "There's never enough time." Furthermore, these beliefs and assumptions generate other thoughts, which add to the momentum of thinking and keep your Heart, the sense of your self, small and contracted.

Two deeper currents of thought strongly shape the experience of your self. The first is the belief in a direction to your life. Usually this direction is toward more, different, or better experiences. But sometimes it's framed in opposite terms as not less, the same, or not worse. In either case, there is a deeply held belief that life should move or change in a particular way.

Of course, things do change, which keeps the hope alive that they will change in the way you want them to. This deeply held assumption that things could or should be better implies a small *you*. The directionality of this assumption is based on a reference point: Things should be better—for *you*. If things should be better for *you*, then *you* must be lacking something. This assumption and the thinking it generates help maintain a small, contracted sense of your self

because that is the implied reference point of the assumption—a small *you*.

The second, even deeper and less conscious current of thought that serves to maintain a contracted sense of self is the assumption that physical experience is the most real. This is such a widely held assumption that any other orientation could get you labeled crazy. Even very sensitive and spiritually-oriented people who have had very real and profound experiences of other dimensions are often pulled by this assumption back toward the physical into a more limited experience of truth and their own Being.

There are many dimensions to reality besides the purely physical, and as a human being, your experience includes all of these dimensions. There are the dimensions of thought, emotion, and intuition. And beyond those, are dimensions of pure presence and spacious Being. Many of these dimensions are more real than even physical reality. Experiences of this transcendent reality give you a transcendent sense of your self that is much fuller and more complete than the purely physical sense of your self.

## **THE THOUGHT THAT YOU ARE THE BODY**

The idea that your life could or should be better and the idea that physical reality is the most real animate an even more basic assumption: that you are the body. Your sense of your self, and therefore the experience of your Being, is most often shaped and limited by your identification with the body, which results in the ongoing question, How is it going for the body? Is it better, more pleasurable, or at least not painful right now for the body? This orientation toward the body isn't bad, but it is a limited way of experiencing reality and your self. It's like watching only one channel on your television: It's something, but it's limited.

This limitation can affect every experience you have. By focusing on how it's going for your body, you can miss some of the richest and most profound possibilities in life. The biggest truths may not even be particularly comfortable for your body. Profound states of love and bliss can be exhausting from a purely physical perspective. The deepest realizations of the nature of your Being can be so vast and expansive as to feel like a death for your identity as the body.

Asking what you can do about this limitation will only reinforce it. Another possibility is to explore the sense of limitation that identification with the body gives to your awareness and your Heart.

*Exercise: What is it like to believe you are the body right now? Does this allow your Heart to open and relax? Or does it result in a small sense of your self? There is nothing wrong with small truths; they just aren't very complete. You don't have to get rid of or change small truths. Just recognizing they are small is enough.*

*With the recognition of the incompleteness of identifying with the body, a larger curiosity often arises: What else is true about you? Are you more than the body? What other channels are there on this television called your life? What else is going on here?*

## **THE SENSE OF ME**

Beneath the assumption that you are the body is an even deeper one. The idea that you are the body is predicated on the assumption that *you* exist, that you are a *me*—a separate, individual self. The most intimate sense of your self is often this sense of *me*, which is a limited and incomplete sensing of your self. It doesn't include the far reaches of your greater Being. This

sense of a separate *me* is not bad or wrong; it's just limited and incomplete.

In the midst of a very profound and large experience of truth, the sense of your self can become so large and inclusive that it no longer has much of a sense of being *your* Being. When you awaken to the oneness of all things, the sense of a *me* can thin out quite dramatically. If *you* are the couch you are sitting on, the clouds in the sky, and everything else, then it simply doesn't make sense to call it all *me*. If it is so much more than what you usually take yourself to be, then the term *me* is just too small.

In a profound experience of truth, the sense of *me* softens and expands to such a degree that there is only a slight sense of *me* as a separate self remaining, perhaps just as the observer of the vastness of truth. Beyond these profound experiences of the truth, is the truth itself. When you are in touch with the ultimate truth and the most complete sense of Being, there is nothing separate remaining to sense itself—there is no experience and no experiencer, no Heart, and no sense of self. There is only Being.

The experience of bigger truths and even the biggest truth doesn't obliterate your capacity to experience a small truth and therefore a separate self. But with many experiences of shifting in and out of a small sense of self, this separate self feels more like a suit of clothes you can take on and off than like something permanent. As you move in and out of many dimensions of Being and even beyond experience itself, the boundaries between all of these dimensions become very permeable and inconsequential. It turns out that these boundaries are just thoughts anyway. They don't actually separate anything.

The question isn't how to get rid of a small sense of self, but what is the sense of your self like? Is it fixed or is it constantly shifting—opening and closing, expanding and contracting, tightening and loosening, and sometimes even disappearing altogether? The sense of a separate self can therefore be loosely held even though it continues to contract appropriately when a small truth is triggered.

What is your sense of self like right now? What is true right now? Your Heart is the only guide you need for exploring even the biggest truths.

## **THERE IS ONLY LOVE**

Anything you or anyone else has ever done has been the movement of love. What shapes the movement of love is the sense of *me*. What we are always doing is taking care of the self, whether it is a small sense of self or a more expanded one. Whenever that sense of self is contracted and small, we take care of that *me*. And when it's expanded, we take care of that larger sense of self. All we have ever done is tried to take care of the self in the best way we know how, which is always a loving act.

But, of course, when our actions only take care of a contracted *me*, they don't take care of or take into account other things. For example, we might take care of our taste buds by eating tasty foods, while ignoring our body's need for nutrition. Or if we are so identified with a feeling that all we can do is take care of it, we may not be taking care of our whole Being. Taking care of only the taste buds or only the emotions is still a loving act, but because it is such a narrow way of loving ourselves, it can be neglectful or even harmful to other aspects of our Being or to others.

If we see love in everything we may be afraid that we will allow rape, murder, and other horribly narrow ways of taking care of a small separate sense of *me* to continue. Yet in discovering that there is only love, the surprising thing is that our actions naturally become more

loving. If we see murder as an evil that needs to be abolished without also seeing its basic loving nature, that is when it makes sense to murder. If murder is really bad, then it makes sense to kill someone who has murdered someone else. Or it even makes sense to kill someone before they kill us. It makes sense to bomb a country before it attacks us. But when we see the loving nature even of murder, we can respond to it in a way that doesn't perpetuate it, even as we work to prevent it.

It is possible to recognize the love that is already inside of us and already acting through all of us. It is in recognizing that love that the possibility exists for even greater recognition of love. Contrarily, when we reject any aspect of love—which includes anything that's happening—the more contracted our experience will be and the less completely loving our actions will be. So in condemning, we actually become more like what we condemn. Seeing the beauty, perfection, and love within something is what allows it to transform, to move into a more complete way of loving.

When the sense of our self expands, our actions aren't really any more loving; they're just more loving toward a more complete view of the self. When our loving actions take care of a larger sense of ourselves, we appear more saint-like because they are taking into account everybody, since we recognize that we *are* everybody. These actions are still self-gratifying, but they are gratifying to a much broader sense of self.

When the awareness of self becomes even more complete, you come to see that there is ultimately nothing that needs to be changed or fixed. Everything is already fine. The world already is full of love. Your actions and everyone else's are already loving. Whatever Being is doing is Being taking care of itself. That is all it ever does or ever has done.

This leads to an appreciation of everything you do and everything that happens, an appreciation of the way Being moves every time it moves. Love is pouring out everywhere. There's no evidence of the lack of love. What a surprise to discover this in a world that seems so full of problems and things that need to be changed.

## **TRUE FREEDOM**

In this culture where more is felt to be better, there is often an implication that bigger truths are better. If your Heart can open and expand, then it may seem best to find a way to open the darn thing all the way and keep it that way.

However, if you check in your Heart right now as you hold the idea that it's better to open your Heart and keep it that way, you may be surprised to find that this idea actually feels tight or limiting. It's simply not the biggest truth or the most freeing possibility. An even bigger, freer possibility is to allow the sense of your self to be whatever size it is. If your Heart is always accurately and appropriately opening or contracting to show you how true each moment's perspective is, then the best result of experiencing a small truth is for your Heart to contract and show you how small that truth is. It can be as liberating to find out that a small truth is small as to find out that a vast dimension of Being is profoundly real. In both cases, the nature of truth has been more fully illuminated.

Once you realize you can trust your Heart just the way it is right now, whether it is open or closed, you can just rest within the folding and unfolding of all perspectives. You don't do anything to get rid of the small perspectives, which just arise out of the conditioned parts of your Being, and you don't do anything to bring on the bigger perspectives, which just arise out of the unconditioned parts of your Being. You just rest in the moment as it is.

There is never a need to have a bigger or smaller experience, as Being is still Being even in the small experiences. Its nature is the same, and part of its nature is this capacity to discriminate how true—how complete—a particular perspective is. The small experiences of Being are still an expression of Being's ultimate nature, just as a single drop of water is still wet.

Spiritual seekers often think of liberation as staying in an expanded experience of truth. While expanded experiences are freeing (especially when you've been contracted for a long time), the ability to move in and out of many different perspectives is an even greater freedom. Walls are only a problem when you don't know where the door is and therefore can't get in or out.

True freedom is when you can move in and out of identification with a small sense of your self. You don't have to take my word for it. Find out what happens in your Heart if you just let the opening and closing of your sense of self be just the way it is right now. Does this allow your Heart to open? Does it allow you to just be for a moment?

## WHO ARE YOU?

What is this Being that you are always sensing to some degree? Perhaps the most surprising discovery is that the sense of your self is not showing you anything about your true nature. A limited sense of your self is never about who you really are! It's not indicative of who you are but, rather, shows you how true your conditioning is. Recognizing this can turn your world inside out. The sense of your self is being shaped and limited by the unfolding of conditioned beliefs and ideas; it's not a reflection of your true nature.

This can be a tremendous relief. All of your experiences of limitation, incompleteness, contraction, insufficiency, or unworthiness have nothing to do with you! Instead, they are accurate reflections of the limitations, incompleteness, smallness, insufficiency, and unworthiness of your ideas, judgments, beliefs, concepts, fears, doubts, worries, hopes, dreams, and desires. They have nothing to do with the nature of you.

The most intimate experience of your self—your Heart—is ultimately never a *complete* experience of your true self. It is always a *relative* experience of the functioning of that true self as it determines the *relative* degree of truth in the particular content of your experience.

This brings us back to the question: Who or what is the Being that you are always sensing to a greater or lesser degree? This question points to what is completely beyond words—and even beyond experience. Even the most expanded *experience* of Being is still not free of this shaping or limitation. In this case the question itself points to a bigger truth than any answer, even an experiential one.

What happens in your Heart when you simply hold the question, Who am I or what am I? Even if your Heart is open, you can still wonder who or what is experiencing the openness. The ultimate truth will never be captured in an experience because it's simply too big to fit in even the most expanded experience. This provides a clue to the question, Who are you? The reason an expanded sense of your self never quite contains the *whole* truth of your Being is that you *are* everything that exists.

Perhaps you can rest now from the dream of experiencing the ultimate truth. The truth is not dependent in any way on your experience of it. It is and always has been functioning just fine through what you call your experience of a self, without ever being contained in that experience. The sense of your self, whether it is expanded or contracted, is a functioning expression of a much larger Being that can never be fully captured in experience.

Perhaps the *experience* of truth doesn't need to be captured. Truth is something we can also unfold gradually bit by bit like a meal or novel that we slowly savor rather than rush through. We are and always have been realizing the truth even when we experience only a small part of it. The richness of Being is also revealed in the small truths that make up our lives.

Being is never harmed by the limited perspectives we experience. Being is not dependent on any particular way of sensing your self, nor even on the absence of a sense of self. Being is already resting within the endless opening and closing of your Heart, so you might as well enjoy the ride.

*the truth catches up with me  
I am not enough  
never have been  
never will be  
what relief to admit this finite container  
can never contain infinity  
what joy to find infinity  
needs no container*

**Please note: This free bonus is part two only of the book, *Living from the Heart*.**  
For more info or to purchase the book on various ebook stores: <http://endless-satsang.com/free>

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