

## The Feeling of Locatedness

It is not too difficult to recognise 'I am not my body or my mind. I am awareness.' But that does not in itself remove the belief and feeling of being located in a body – the belief and feeling that I, awareness, am looking out at the world from inside this body. As Rupert explains, we need to investigate further:

The discovery that awareness is the witness of all objective experience partially liberates it from the limitations of the body in and as which it seemed to be located, but it is not a full liberation. The discovery 'I am awareness or consciousness itself' is not what is referred to as enlightenment or awakening, although it is often mistaken as such in contemporary expressions of the non-dual understanding.

At this stage of understanding, although awareness is no longer exclusively identified with the body-mind, it still seems to be located and limited. As such, it still seems to be temporary and finite, the two beliefs that give rise to the fear of death and the sense of lack around which the apparently separate self or finite mind revolves. To fully liberate awareness from all superimposed beliefs and feelings, a further investigation is required as to the essential nature of awareness itself.

[*The Nature of Consciousness*, Ch 4]

At this point, we might argue that it's obvious that I am located in a body. I perceive the world from a specific location and that perception changes when my body moves to a different location. But if we examine this more closely, we see that the apparent viewpoint from which perception arises doesn't imply that myself, awareness, is located at that viewpoint:

In order to know objective experience, unlocated, dimensionless awareness must assume a location, place or 'point' from which it can view, know or perceive objective experience, and the body is that location. However, the body is not an object; it is an appearance in the mind, that is, it is the mechanism or agency through and as which awareness locates and thus limits itself, thereby seeming to become a separate subject of experience from whose point of view it can know or perceive objective experience.

This awareness-in-the-body entity is known as 'mind', the seemingly separate subject of experience which borrows its knowing quality from pure awareness and its apparent limitations from the body. However, the knowing with which the awareness-in-the-body entity knows or perceives its experience is not itself located *in the body*, just as the screen is not located in the character in the movie from whose point of view the landscape is viewed. The body is simply the activity that awareness assumes in order to collapse its infinite potential, thereby limiting itself in the form of mind, and thus bring manifestation out of infinite being and into finite existence.

[*The Nature of Consciousness*, Ch 11]

However, at a very early age we adopted the model of a world outside myself, and as Rupert explains, that is what ultimately led to the feeling of being a separate self inside the body:

The projection of an outside world always remains within our self, although such is its nature that the world seems to take place outside. As a result of the apparent division of experience into an inside and an outside, our self, Awareness, is imagined to remain on the inside as a separate, limited, located 'me' and everything that seems to be on the other side, the outside, becomes an object, other or world, 'not me'.

At first, Awareness seems to become the pure subject of experience, the witness, which knows or experiences the object – the mind, body and world. Witnessing can be seen, therefore, as a

subtle superimposition that is conferred upon Awareness by the primary division of experience in two, into a subject and an object. With a further act of imagination, this witnessing Awareness is believed to reside inside the body, and with this belief another, denser superimposition is conferred upon Awareness by thinking.

First, the pure 'I' of Awareness, which pervades all experience intimately and equally, is subtly contracted into the witnessing 'I', which is conceived to be at a distance and separate from the mind, body and world. This witnessing 'I' is then further reduced in the imagination into the thinker, apparently located in a mind. That is, it is conceived as 'I, the thinker', 'I, the mind'. Finally, it is imagined that the mind is located inside the body, and with this belief Awareness is imagined to reside inside, in fact to *become* the body, 'I, the feeler', 'I, the doer'.

Thus the pure 'I' of Awareness is seemingly reduced into 'I, the witness' and then further reduced into 'I, the separate, inside self'. Everything that is left over, with which Awareness has not been identified, is conceived as the object, other or world.

In this way the intimacy and seamlessness of experiencing is divided into two apparent things – an experiencer and an experienced, a subject and an object. The subject becomes a witness, then a mind, then a body. The object becomes the world and all others. Awareness seems to become located, limited and personal, and the object, other or world seems, simultaneously, to become separate, outside and distant.

This separation between the knower and the known, the experiencer and the experienced, the thinker and the thought, the feeler and the felt, the doer and the deed, never actually occurs. It is imagined with the thought that thinks it.

[*Presence Vol. II: The Intimacy of All Experience, The Pure 'I' of Awareness*]

It is one thing to *know* that we are not located inside a mind, which lives inside a body, which lives inside a world. But that understanding doesn't put an end to *feeling* that we are limited to and located in the body. That requires a different kind of investigation – an investigation into feelings and bodily sensations, in which mind plays no more than a very minor role. The best way of carrying out this investigation is through using the techniques from Rupert's yoga meditations. (The best source of these is the box set *Transparent Body, Luminous World*. But there are also many yoga meditations available on Rupert's website and a few, free of charge, on YouTube.) Once you are familiar with the techniques, they can be used to explore sensations and feelings during your normal daily activities.

The following description of what you discover when you undertake this exploration of feelings and sensations comes from a dialogue with Francis Lucille. The dialogue started with a question about feelings and emotions:

FL: When you look at the actual experience of the body, we discover there are no feelings, no emotions – only bodily sensations. And that includes the sense of 'me'. The moment we have debunked the sense of 'me' in this manner, it becomes de-activated. To put it in a nutshell, my sense of me is not me, any more than my thought of me is me. My thought of me appears in me, but it's not me. Certainly not all there is to me. Similarly, my feeling of 'me' appears in me and therefore is not me. I am the witness of the I thought and the I feeling. But in ignorance I have chosen to identify with the I thought and to identify with the I feeling. In fact, the I thought is just a thought – at this point there is no ignorance. It becomes ignorance when it becomes an I-belief. In the same way, that a feeling in the forehead or in the chest that I identify as 'me' is just a bodily sensation, not a feeling, up until I say 'that's me'.

Consciousness identifies either with a thought or with a bodily sensation. And then what was just a thought becomes a belief, what was just a bodily sensation becomes a 'me' feeling. Because consciousness, by its very nature, is not an object and therefore not a perception. This marriage between a perceived object and consciousness cannot last forever. It's like an emulsion of water and oil: if you agitate it, it will seem to be one liquid, but after a while they separate. The recognition of the independent nature of consciousness generates in us the process of discrimination that realises this separation. Consciousness returns to this not-knowing place where it belongs, and the feeling is seen for what it is – a bodily sensation. That's how this process works on the level of feeling.

[Francis Lucille: [My Sense of Me is Not Me](#)]

Finally, here is a dialogue Rupert had with someone who was wanting to explore the feeling of locatedness. The approach Rupert takes here is to start with 'seeing', and to discover that all seeing takes place inside oneself. Space is just a construct of the mind:

RS: With your eyes open now, just imagine this is the first experience you have ever had. Take some time to really feel that. What is it about the current experience that tells you that you are this body, and not everything else? How do you know that your foot – this object here is me, and the other object right next to it is not me? What tells me that, without reference to memory?

Q: *The trickiest part is when I turn.*

RS: OK. So turn round. And now without reference to memory – in other words you can't remember what you previously experienced – do the same experiment. You see it's a construct of memory. Even with our eyes open, you can't see space. Space is a mental construct. What you see is objects. The mind places all these objects in a system of reference and deduces the space between them. But if you were to remove all the objects that you see now – imagine removing all of them, every last object – it's just white light that you're looking at. How would you know if it was two inches deep or two hundred miles deep? What would tell you? Would you have any experience of space? You would have no idea there was a space in front of you, until the first object appears. In fact, two objects would have to appear. But you still wouldn't see the space; you would just see the objects. And unless your mind had some previous knowledge of what those objects were, it wouldn't know how close they were.

If the object looks like a hill and is very, very small, the mind makes a calculation and says 'in reality hills are very big' and because this image is very small it must be a long way away. In fact, the sound of the aeroplane – mind says aeroplanes are really very loud, but this one is very quiet, therefore the sound must be a long way away. The mind is making a calculation. The sound is not a long way away. Through a process of conceptual thinking, the mind, this super-computer, has just generated this model of time and space for us.

Q: *It seems to take longer to sink in. I can see right now ....*

RS: I understand, of course, what you are getting at. But the realm of seeing is the last of the senses to be colonised by this understanding. It's the realm in which duality and distance is at its most persuasive. When you close your eyes, sounds are inside, tastes are inside, smells are inside, sensations are inside. You open your eyes and the world jumps outside again. So it's a more persuasive illusion than, for instance, the illusion that sound is outside. It's relatively easy and I'm sure we all experienced it earlier [*in a yoga meditation*] with the sound of the plane. It's relatively easy to say, 'yes, that sound takes place in the same place as my thoughts. It's startling

when we first notice it but it's undeniably true – all sounds take place in the same place. But it's more difficult to really feel that with 'seeing'.

You just keep going back to it. Don't try and make it happen with your thoughts. Just keep going back to these very simple but powerful exercises. And then you can make up your own. See that what you are is not made out of a sensation. It's just made out of empty knowing. And that knowing – you never find a limit to it, you never find a location to it. Just keep going back and back and back to that experience. Every time you go back to it, you are, without realising it, deconditioning an old habit in the mind of conceptualising experience in terms of subjects and objects.

[20/05/2012 [Investigating the sense of being located](#)]

## Contemplation

*Locate yourself nowhere; find yourself everywhere.*

[Rupert Spira]