

Being Open to the Openness

Early on in the Direct Path, it is natural to make concerted efforts to try to understand the teaching. We make efforts in self-enquiry, we *try* to meditate, we *try* to apply the teaching in our normal lives. But at some point, we need to discover that all effort, all trying, takes us in the wrong direction, away from ourselves. This discovery leads us directly to the openness within which real feeling-understanding can arise. Here is an explanation from Jean Klein:

All that can be obtained, perceived, thought, is an object, but we are the subject of all objects. So if we remain in a state of trying to achieve understanding, we will only find an object and not the objectless truth. This object may be a subtle state, but what we are fundamentally is not a state. In trying to obtain ourselves, we go away from ourselves. When this is understood, our mind is automatically brought to a stop where all the energy used in projecting and attaining is no longer directed, and we find ourselves in non-directionless openness, waiting without waiting. This is really the most profoundly relaxed state of the body and the mind. We are simply open, open to the all-possible, open to the unknown. We can never go to it, because there is no one to go and nowhere to go. We can never take it; we can only be taken by it. So we must allow it.

[Jean Klein, *Open to the Unknown*: November 3rd 1990, Morning]

Another name for openness is 'not-knowing'. In a further dialogue later that day, Jean Klein explained that our true nature is 'not-knowing':

The natural state is a non-state of not-knowing, non-concluding. When there is knowing, there is a state. But your real nature is not-knowing. It is a total absence of all that you think you are, which is all that you are not. In this total absence of what you are not, there is presence. But this presence is not yours. It is the presence of all living beings.

You must not try to be open. You are open. When you say, 'I must be open', you create a state. When you say, 'I am going to meditate', you make a state of it. You are meditation. When you go into the state of so-called meditation or openness, you are like a donkey in a stall.

[Jean Klein, *Open to the Unknown*: November 3rd 1990, Afternoon]

When Francis was asked about what it means to be open, this was his response:

We have to be open to all dimensions of our experience. Our experience is in fact four-dimensional, but not all dimensions are the same. It's like space-time. We have three dimensions of space and one dimension of time. But they are not really equivalent. Time plays a special role. It is the same here. We have three phenomenal dimensions and one noumenal dimension. The three phenomenal dimensions are thoughts, external sense perceptions and bodily sensations. The noumenal dimension is the dimension through which we know consciousness, through which we experience love, happiness, beauty and understanding etc. So the fourth dimension is the dimension of consciousness, the non-phenomenal dimension.

When I say we have to be open to all dimensions, in fact it relates to how to be open to the fourth dimension, to the dimension of consciousness. And the prerequisite for this openness, strangely enough, is to be open to the three other dimensions. Why? Because we don't really know through the mind the direction that leads to the consciousness dimension. The mind doesn't know. Through the mind, we only have access to the three dimensions. But the beauty is that we don't need to be open to the fourth dimension. This fourth dimension is always open. All that needs to be done to experience the openness of the fourth dimension is to be open to the three dimensions of phenomenal experience. That's the beauty of it.

So let's take now the three dimensions. First, the thoughts, which is also usually construed as 'the mind' in a limited conception of the word 'mind'. To be open-minded. We are open-minded when we are truly free from belief. In other words when we don't pretend to have answers to questions for which we don't really have answers. It's a question of humility, in a sense. Not to pretend to have answers to questions for which we don't have real answers. And when we don't have the answers, we are in not-knowing, meaning that we are open to the answer. It doesn't mean naivety. It doesn't mean we are going to accept any ready-made answer as being the revealed truth. No. We are going to listen to the answer, trust it, but verify it. Accept or reject it in our openness. So the openness doesn't mean here that we have to accept everything. But it means to be not-knowing and to be open. So to be open-minded.

Then the other two dimensions that relate to what we experience within the body, physically, and without the body. Within the body through our inner feelings; without, through our senses, through our sense-perceptions. They are together. So to be open-bodied, would mean to welcome within, the space which is without. And to allow the sensations and the perceptions to evolve freely in this unified space. No distinction between within and without – it is the same space, an endless space. To liberate the sense perceptions and the bodily sensations that arise.

So then we can say that we are open-minded and open-bodied. And when we are open-minded and open-bodied, then the fourth dimension is open.

[Francis Lucille 7th July 2018: [Love, Belief, Parmenides and More](#)]

It is very important to avoid falling into the trap of believing that in order to be open, we need to have a silent mind. Trying to make the mind silent immediately takes us away from openness. Francis makes the surprising comment that although we cannot control the mind, we can choose open-mindedness:

Having a silent mind is not under our control. But being open-minded, which is different, is up to us at every moment. And the moment we switch to the open-minded mode, we remain in this open-minded mode up until we decide otherwise. Rather than a silent mind, I prefer an open mind. Open-mindedness is way better than silent-mindedness, and way, way better than mindfulness. Because mindfulness means to be full of mind.

[Francis Lucille, 7th May 2019: [Be Poor in Spirit](#)]

Openness means being free from *all* beliefs. But all of us have beliefs that we don't recognise as being beliefs. A belief is simply a pre-conceived idea for which we have no conclusive evidence. One obvious indicator of the presence of a belief is when we feel irritated when someone disagrees with us. But there are also deeply ingrained beliefs that *don't* produce that response in us, so it's not an infallible guide. It is common for students to take the words of their teacher and turn them into beliefs. Francis firmly discourages us from doing this:

What is important is to be open. I'm often amazed how once we have determined something, then we identify with it and we are attached to a theory, to a concept. Then it becomes fossilised. There is no freedom there. I want you to be free from what I say, free from all preconceived ideas about beauty, about politics, about ethics, about all of that stuff. To be free from all of that. To know nothing. You know Meister Eckhart says 'to know nothing, to have nothing, to want nothing'. He was calling that 'to be poor in spirit'. The biggest attachments are to concepts. It's very strange. But people are religious. For example, they will give their life to the church, they will give all their belongings to the church, they would give their sex life to the

church ... But their concepts about Jesus, about the after-life, no way would they give that up. Can't we take anything with a grain of salt?

Also, be open to change. I had all kinds of preconceived ideas. When I met my teacher, I could see that within a very short time, my political belief systems, what I believe about Art to be true – all of that changes. Finally, I didn't know much but I was open to be shown things. There is something beautiful about a scientific upbringing in that we don't very much like beliefs. We want to check it out and we have this openness that if something experientially comes up that doesn't jibe with what we believe, we are very ready to get rid of our previous belief system. And not only not being unhappy about having to do it, but being happy to have done it, to have got rid of something that was false and replace it with something that was better. That's how scientific progress is made. And that's something that you don't find in other realms – this type of openness. It's rather that things are inherited from the past and we have the mission to perpetuate them. That's a very old way that human societies have survived.

{Francis Lucille 27th February 2020: [The Teacher Arrives with the Question ...](#)}

Earlier this year, I asked Francis how we can live in not-knowing, when practical life requires us to know things:

What does it mean to live in not-knowing? It doesn't mean to live in not knowing how to drive. It doesn't mean to live in not knowing languages, to not knowing how to play music, how to sing. No. So it means to live in not-knowing in a very specific sense. And the specific sense is the following: to not know what you are. In other words, not to know that you are a limited human being, not to know that you are a soul. Just replace all of that by a big question-mark. Because when you don't know what you are in this way, you are open. And then you allow for your true nature, for what you truly are to express itself in everything you do, in everything you say.

[23rd May 2020, A New Beginning World Conference: *Self-discovery with Francis Lucille*]

Openness also implies non-resistance to what is happening. This short, guided meditation from Rupert gives a taste of what that non-resistance feels like:

See that what you are is pure openness. An openness that allows all experience to be just as it is from moment to moment without choice, preference or distinction. There is nothing we need to do or cease doing with the mind in order to make ourselves more this openness than we already are. We can never be more this openness than we already are. This openness that is our nature is right now as wide open as it is ever going to be. This openness knows no closed-off-ness. It knows no resistance to any experience.

It is only an imaginary self, made out of thoughts and feelings that resists what is present and seeks what is not present. It is only such an imaginary self that says: 'I don't like the current experience; I don't want the current experience. It is too much for me, it is overwhelming me. I cannot bear it.' You, this openness, the only one that truly is, cannot and does not say such things to experience. You are just a wide open, silent, empty 'yes', to all experience. Pure sensitivity. Pure allowing. Pure availability to all experience, just as it is, from moment to moment.

See that this sensitivity, this openness, this availability, this vulnerability to all experience just as it is, cannot be harmed, hurt, or stained in any way whatsoever. No experience – however wonderful or awful – leaves a trace in you. You always remain this pristine, open, sensitive, vulnerable allowing. Totally vulnerable, but at the same time you cannot be hurt. This inability to be harmed or hurt is not brought about by defending yourself in any way from the current

experience. This openness that we naturally are, is totally open to every experience. Its inability to be hurt comes from its lack of resistance, not from the strength of its defences or resistance. The imaginary separate self resists experience, defends itself from experience in order to prevent itself from being hurt. But you, this sensitivity, and availability, can never be hurt on account of being totally open to all experience. Be knowingly this alive vulnerability, allowing everything into yourself. And gradually allow your thoughts and feelings, your body, your perceptions, your actions and your relationships, to be pervaded by this new feeling-understanding. Allow the way you think, feel, act, perceive and relate, to share, express and celebrate this feeling-understanding.

[Rupert Spira 17th May 2012: [Openness, Availability & Vulnerability](#)]

We see from this, that there is much more to openness than just open-mindedness. As Jean Klein explains, it applies to *all* realms of experience:

When you look at the mountains, your five senses must be open. You taste, smell, feel, touch, hear the mountain. You are in total receptivity. ... The seen is in the seeing, what you look at has its potentiality, its reality, in you as the ultimate looker.

When we speak of being open, we must be completely open. This is very important. The looking, the hearing, the listening, must become organic. By organic I mean that the body, the five senses, must be included. For example, when you look at this beautiful valley here and you go really into the valley with your tactile sensation, your body sensation, you feel yourself without any boundaries. Then there is a feeling of freedom which brings great joy. Or when you are in front of a big green meadow and you go into every corner of the green, you bathe in the green, then you come out feeling completely fresh, because green has a very strong power, the power to emphasize existence, to make you feel more integrated, more alive.

Similarly, when you look at a beautiful stone, you may feel the quality of the stone, its stone-stillness. It lives in its stillness. The reason for its existence is its stillness. And so when you really go into the stone and feel its heaviness and follow all the variations of its form, its cavities and convexity, it brings you to stillness. Really looking at a stone, being one with it, makes you also still.

[Jean Klein, *Open to the Unknown*: November 6th 1990]

Contemplation

It [realization of Oneness] means being constantly open to the possibility that we are like two flowers looking at each other from two different branches of the same tree, so that if we were to go deep enough inside to the trunk, we would realize that we are one. Just being open to this possibility will have a profound effect on your relationships and on your experience of the world.

[Francis Lucille, *the Perfume of Silence*]