

After the Glimpse

There are many false ideas about what life is like after enlightenment. Some think it is the end of pain – or at least the end of being affected by pain. Some think that our lives are somehow purified, so that all our actions are perfect. Some imagine it is the end of all thought, other than ‘spiritual thought’. In fact, none of these ideas is true. Life goes on much as before. States of ignorance come and go, gradually becoming shorter and less frequent. Life becomes happier and happier. There is no going back from a liberating glimpse. What has been understood, remains understood, and that understanding is always accessible.

As explained in this recent dialogue, it is important to avoid looking backwards to a joyful state of body and mind that was present during the liberating glimpse, as that will inhibit getting established in the understanding that was gained from the glimpse:

Q: A month ago I had this tremendous glimpse. It's like my life's purpose had been fulfilled. But it has vanished. If you asked me now is there a separate self, my answer is of course not, absurd. So that's clear. And it's still clear to me, at least intellectually, there's no doer here. On the other hand, the perfection that I had felt and the gratitude I had felt has all vanished. It's not as if this glimpse had never occurred because I can't forget it. But it exists now as a memory, almost like a concept rather than something that I can really embody.

FL: There were two real elements that were revealed to you in the glimpse: there is no separate doer, there is no separate consciousness. But when that was revealed, it is universally true. It's true not only for you, it's true for everybody, and it's also true throughout time. It's not that it was only true at that moment. Then there was something else which according to your own words has disappeared. It was there but it seems to be no longer present. ...

That which remains with you is the revelation. That's the real value of this experience. The rest – a temporary sense of relief, the mind gets quiet – that's just phenomenal. It's not important. What is important is for you to see what has real value. It's useless to have the nostalgia of a state of gratitude that was there. Because when you understand the true nature of the gift, you should be always grateful. You should be grateful right now.

Q: I think what you're saying here is that it's the insight that's important rather than the particular experience I had at the time, which was fantastic. If I had that the rest of my life, I'd be so happy. I'd like to have the experience again.

FL: It's always there. You have to rediscover that it is always there. But if you have a nostalgia for what happened in the past, that blindfolds you. It prevents you from seeing it's right here, right now. That's a difficult part of getting established after the glimpse – to understand that it's always in the now. The past has nothing to give, but that which has been given to us is always here now. That which we are really in love with is awareness itself.

[Francis Lucille, 5/11/2022 Online Satsang]

Many spiritual paths are seen as paths of self-improvement. We want a peaceful mind, a healthy body, harmonious relationships. But the Direct Path is different. The aim is happiness, not self-improvement. Any improvement to body or mind that occurs is a by-product, not a goal. Our true self cannot be improved. If we try to improve it, we fall into the trap of ignorance. Here is Francis's description of this trap:

Q: Can you explain something more about what you call the trap of self-improvement?

FL: It's not really the trap of self-improvement. The trap is to believe to be a body-mind. That's a trap. And in order to eliminate the sense of lack that I am experiencing and that I believe to be originating from some defects of the body-mind, I am trying to improve this body-mind, which I identify with myself. Of course, the body-mind being whatever it is, will always be defective because it has a major defect that cannot be fixed, that is unfixable. This defect is that it is impermanent. It is forever impermanent. So good luck if you try to fix this defect of the body-mind – you'll never be able to fix it. That's the trap of self-improvement. That's the bad news – that your false self can never be fixed.

The good news is that your real self doesn't need to be fixed. And as you can as you relax in this understanding that your real self doesn't need to be fixed, your body-mind will begin to fix itself. But then also you can make the decision to contribute to this improvement of the body-mind. There is nothing wrong with body-mind improvement. What is wrong is self-improvement, believing that the self is the body-mind. The body-mind is an instrument, so it's OK to improve it. Why not? It's an instrument of celebration. It's OK to aim for perfection in our actions in the world, knowing that our actions will be far from being perfect. But the goal is not to have perfect actions. The goal is the happiness we derive while aiming for perfection. Because as we aim for perfection, we connect with perfection itself, which is our true nature, and which is also the source of happiness. But that's enlightened self-improvement. Enlightened in this case means that it is improvement of the body-mind knowing full well that the self is not the body-mind, that the self is much bigger than the body-mind. Then it's OK.

[Francis Lucille, 6/6/2015, [Enlightened Self-Improvement](#)]

There is a commonly-held myth that most thinking is bad, that we should avoid becoming lost in thought, that either we should think knowingly or we should have a silent mind. But as Francis explains, that's not the case:

Q: Is there any difference between thinking knowingly and just thinking? Because when I say thinking, mostly there is a sense of being lost in the thought.

FL: I would replace the expression 'thinking knowingly' with 'thinking unknowingly'. 'Thinking unknowingly' would be any form of thought in which we don't know what we are. And that would be enlightened thought, in contradistinction with any form of thought in which we know what we are or believe we know what we are – and of course we are mistaken, because what we are is unknowable phenomenally as an object. So any form of thought in which we believe we are a human being, a human body-mind, a man, a woman, whatever, will be thinking knowingly, and that would be ignorance. Any other form of thought is devoid of ignorance.

You see the beauty of my rephrasing your question is that it extends widely the type of thoughts that are kosher, and strictly limits the ones that are ignorant to the ones in which we believe to know what we are as a phenomenon. So for instance, you are in your bathtub, the water temperature is just perfect, you have a little bit of sun coming through the window and your thoughts move with the water. You think of this and of that, and in fact it's quite enjoyable. It's a form of contemplation. And then you think 'I am lost in my thoughts, that's not kosher' and Francis says 'yes it's kosher'. You are having a good time. What's wrong with it? ... Thinking is OK. Being lost in your thoughts is OK. In this being lost in your thoughts, creativity comes to you, brain flowers will blossom, as long as you enjoy it. So it's OK to be lost in your thoughts, because if you are lost, there is nobody. The problem is when there is somebody, when there is a limited thinker or the belief that there is a limited thinker. So yes, if your thoughts involve fear, worries, then try to ascertain who is worried, who is afraid. But if you are comfortable, happy, with no

sense of lack, don't try to fix it.

[Francis Lucille, 24/9/2022 [Enlightened Thinking is Thinking Unknowingly](#)]

The only kind of thinking that is indicative of ignorance, is thinking that could only occur if we believe ourselves to be a separate entity. If we have had a liberating glimpse, we recognise that such thoughts are based on untruth. So as truth-lovers, we naturally feel an impulse to get rid of them. But that will only tend to strengthen them. In this dialogue, Francis explains that rather than trying to eliminate or suppress this type of thought, we need to tackle the root cause of the problem.

Q: Certain thoughts are very persistent. It almost seems that there is a strong impulse to think these thoughts. Most of these are personal thoughts. Could you talk a little about them, and how one can drop them. They seem very strong and induce strong reactions in the body.

FL: Let's be precise about what I mean by personal thoughts. A personal thought is a thought that wouldn't exist if we didn't believe ourselves to be a separate entity. That's what I call a personal thought. It's a thought that would simply not be there unless we believe we are a separate entity. Having defined what I mean by a personal thought, we can talk a little about them, and how one can drop them. Now having defined them in this way, it becomes obvious that as long as a belief to be a personal entity has not been uprooted, it will keep generating personal thoughts. So it is a useless effort to try and eliminate or suppress or repress personal thoughts as they arise, as long as we still believe ourselves to be a separate entity.

So the best course of action would be during the moments of availability, to investigate our belief to be a separate entity – to be a person, to be a man, to be a woman, to be a human body. That would be the most efficient way. At least up until we reach the situation of not-knowing, of true not-knowing, where having investigated fully, completely, we can honestly make the statement to ourselves 'I have no clue, I don't know whether this consciousness hearing these words is personal and limited, or infinite'. At that point you are fully open. You are fully open to the alternative possibility. Now when the personal thought arises, instead of arising out of a pseudo-certainty, it arises out of the soil of doubt. You don't know. So you are not really attached to it. You can then conduct experiments about it. For instance, if this thought tells you to act in a certain way, and if in the case where consciousness is not personal but universal, you would act or simply think or feel or relate to others in a different way, the investigation you have done now gives you the option, the possibility to conduct an experiment to act the other way. And it is by walking the walk of universal consciousness in this way, conducting these experiments that you will liberate yourself from personal thoughts.

There is then a moment in which when personal thoughts arise out of some kind of mechanical habit, you can just drop them because you know, because you have investigated. So you just drop them out of understanding. So that's different. It's not that you drop them through an effort. It's not that you *have* to drop them. They just disappear. ...

Now the reactions in the body are the delayed result of buying into this cute concept of being a separate person. So also see the truth of that. See that every time you experience this type of suffering it's because you have fallen in love with the cute thought of being separate.

[Francis Lucille, 1/3/2014, [How to Drop Personal Thoughts in the Most Efficient Way](#)]

Relationships are another area where long-established habits that come from ignorance tend to resurface. Once again, Francis explains that our goal is not about being able to deal with situations in which people are annoying or insulting, without experiencing negative feelings. Instead, we can use

moments of availability when we are drawn towards truth to conduct experiments and deepen our understanding:

Q: When your buttons get pushed, is it the same process as in any kind of emotion or sensation – that you just notice something got pushed and then you see it's the person and then you go back to the place of awareness. Or is there more to it? ... Is it useful to tell the other that you don't like what they say, or is it better to keep things for yourself, investigate, and see it as a yoga exercise only for yourself.

FL: It's always better to look within yourself first, yes. Because then what you are going to say will be informed. In other words, you are going to make a decision to say something based on total information. Whereas if you just react without being aware of your own mechanisms, it would only be business as usual. But we have to remember that the goal is not to be able to deal with this situation when our buttons are being pushed, because that would be being in the personal improvement business. What you are talking about here is about the truth. One of the by-products of you becoming involved with the truth, is that as time goes on, you will be able to observe that your buttons are not as easily pushed as they used to be. That's just a by-product of your being interested in the truth. But the goal is the truth. The goal is not to not have your buttons pushed, because who cares at the end? There often is a complete misunderstanding when we enter the path. We enter the path from the vantage point of personal improvement. That's not what it is about, not at all, not at all. So I'm losing 80% of my congregation here!

Q: I was almost feeling that I have to visit this friend again to work on my buttons. So it would be better to be interested in the truth and see later on in the moment. I would like to make it as an exercise because of course I want to change this – not from the 'me' person, but my buttons get pushed very easily sometimes.

FL: But when your buttons are being pushed it's too late – the train has left the station. There was something more subtle that happened before that, some frustration, 'how did he or she dare do that to me, or say that to me?' or 'how did God dare do that to me?'. So in the very beginning of this frustration, there was a separation between he, she, God, and me. So it was this belief in separation that triggered the buttons being pushed. So if we try to find a way not to have *this* button pushed, and then we do another button that is going to be pushed, it's an endless task. Whereas if we liberate ourselves from the very origin of the buttons being pushed, which is the sense of separation, then we don't have to do anything about the buttons. The buttons may very well stay there – they just won't be pushed. And it's good to have the buttons there in case you need them. Sometimes someone may try to punch you in the face, so it's good to have the button there to defend yourself.

The benchmark of the truth is that your buttons get less and less pushed. That's how you can observe that it's working for you. And the beauty is that it's working for you without you trying to do anything about the buttons. That's what is often not understood. It's too late when you work on the buttons. It has already happened, the train has left the station. You can say in hindsight 'yes, my buttons were pushed because I believed myself to be a separate entity'. So then what is the natural cure for that? Stop believing yourself to be a separate identity. It's very simple. It's not complicated. But to work on not taking yourself to be a separate entity is better done during those moments when your buttons are not being pushed, because then you are too busy playing with your buttons. So it is how we take advantage of these moments of availability when we have nothing more important to do and when we are driven by our interest for the truth. So it can be questions we have and we are dealing with. Or it can be experiments we

conduct like regarding how we perceive the world and our body. Once you get the flavour of it, during your day you can go again and again to this place of welcoming the totality of your experience without judging, without evaluating, without anticipating, without recapitulating. Or you can also be a little more proactive and see what happens when you try on purpose to change the way you perceive your body in the world, the relationship between your body and the world.

[Francis Lucille, 4/10/2020, [What to Do When Someone Pushes Your Buttons](#)]

It is commonly assumed that when we are absorbed in activity, our true nature of consciousness is veiled and we fall into ignorance. As Francis explains, this is not necessarily the case, especially if we are completely absorbed in the activity. It is only ignorance if the activity is accompanied by a sense of lack:

Q: it's clear that there's noumenal and phenomenal experience at all times. But sometimes it seems like when you're so immersed in the phenomena it's difficult to go to the noumenal experience.

FL: If in the presence of phenomenal perceptions there is no sense of lack, then the apparent phenomenal perceptions are in fact noumenal because there is no duality - the phenomenon is the noumenal, ultimately. So if there is the absence of a sense of lack, that's it. If there is a sense of lack, there is ignorance. When there is ignorance, yes, it takes it takes time. The situation of a truth-lover is very different from the situation of someone who has not had a glimpse. Someone who has not had a glimpse may stay in ignorance for years and years. The one who has had a glimpse will stay perhaps for a minute and then perhaps for a few seconds. So it's a huge difference.

Q: The understanding is still there. So when there is ignorance, if I say 'I know I'm Consciousness, and I don't know whether it's limited', and do it more conceptually, is that OK?

FL: It's OK provided we don't lose track of the meaning of the word. For instance, you can say Shivoham, Shivoham, Shivoham. Shivoham, Shivoham. But it's just sounds. It will be better to remind myself once, Shiv-oh-am, because then I go to the meaning of Shivoham – I am Shiva, I am the absolute truth, I am the absolute reality. I go to the meaning of the words. I realize 'how do I know I am something else?, how do I know I am limited? No!' So I go to the meaning and that leaves me with the glimpse. It's then up to me to stay there, or at some point down the road to fall back into ignorance. But at least it restores my default state of freedom. If it becomes repetitive it becomes boring.

[Francis Lucille, 29/10/2022 online satsang]

An important aspect of the role of the teacher is to illustrate and demonstrate what it is like to be established in the non-dual understanding. Here is an example from Francis:

Q: You say that one can get established in peace and happiness. So if and when that state is achieved or attained, does one still feel uncomfortable feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations?

FL: Well, yes, if you go to the dentist, or if you have a headache, or if you bang into some hard object at night, you will feel some discomfort.

Q: So do you still feel these things are just these things, and you just apply what you teach in terms of benevolent indifference? And is that what is meant by mastering life?

FL: Well if I hurt myself, sometimes I speak a different type of French! Mastering life begins with mastering your deepest habit of worrying. That's to move from worrying to happy camping – that's the general idea. To get this deep sense that life sucks out of the picture. And this deep sense that life sucks is simply because we believe ourself to be a separate entity. That's all there is to it.

But then when we are on the spiritual path, we have been hearing teachers or reading books and we have the wrong idea of what it means to be a spiritual happy camper. You have too big an idea, too grand an idea. And at the same time any grand idea that we have about it, means that's it's not big enough, it's not grand enough. So it's kind of a paradox. So get rid of any imagination or projection or belief of what it means to be free. Because in order to be free, you have first to be free of all these projections. Because these projections are all limiting: if I am this, I'm not that; if I'm like this, I'm not like that.

[Francis Lucille, 16/2/2020, [Mastering Life: from Worrying to Happy Camping](#)]

Contemplation

When timeless moments solicit you, accept the invitation. Go deep within it, until you find yourself in your absence.

[Jean Klein]