

AWARENESS, Anthony deMello

FORWARD

"That's the eagle, the king of the birds," said his neighbor. "He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth - we're chickens." So the eagle lived and died a chicken, for that's what he thought he was." 3

ON WAKING UP

All is well, all is well. Though everything is a mess, all is well. 5

The point is that most of what we feel and think we conjure up for ourselves in our heads, including this business of being helped by people. 8

We don't really help people because we are in love with them. We're only in love with our prejudiced and hopeful idea of that person. How we fall out of love - our idea changes. We only trust our judgment about that person, because we never really trust someone. We feel so let down because we trusted them so much. 8

ON THE PROPER KIND OF SELFISHNESS

We really don't want to wake up. The first step to waking up is realizing this truth - we have to be honest with ourselves to admit that we don't like this.

RENUNCIATION IS NOT A SOLUTION

Anytime you're practicing renunciation, you're deluded... Anytime you renounce something, you are tied forever to the thing you renounce. When you renounce or fight something, you're stuck and tied to it forever. As long as you're fighting it, you are giving it power. You give it as much power as you are using to fight it... So you must receive your demons, because when you fight them, you empower them... The only way to get out of this is to see through it - "The only way out is through." Don't renounce it, see through it. Understand its true value and you won't need to renounce it; it will just drop from your hands. But of course, if you don't see that, if you're hypnotized into thinking that you won't be happy without this, that, or the other thing, you're stuck... What we need to do is understand. If you understood, you'd simply drop the desire for it. If you woke up, you'd simply drop the desire for it. 15, 16

LISTEN AND UNLEARN

Agreement and disagreement have to do with words and concepts and theories. They don't have anything to do with truth. Truth is never expressed in words... But there has to be an attitude of openness, of willingness to discover something new... We must have a willingness to unlearn. 17

We must analyze words like a goldsmith - by cutting, scraping, rubbing, melting. When we do this, we are listening... A next step is a readiness to understand, to listen, to challenge your whole belief system (i.e., social, psychological, political, spiritual, etc.), a readiness to reappraise them all. 19

Nobody is afraid of the unknown. What you really fear is the loss of the known. 29

OUR ILLUSION ABOUT OTHERS

Drop our false ideas about others. See through people. If you see through yourself, you will see through everyone. Then you will love them. Otherwise you spend the whole time grappling with your wrong notions of them, with your illusions that are constantly crashing against reality. 32

When someone tells you, "There is nothing you can do about it," you say, "There is, I can wake up!" All of a sudden, life is no longer the nightmare that it has seemed. Wake up! 34

SELF-OBSERVATION

The only way someone can be of help to you is in challenging your ideas. 35

The moment you pick up a technique you're programmed again. But self-observation - watching yourself - is important. Not the same as self-absorption - this is self-preoccupation, where you're concerned and worried about yourself... Self observation means to watch everything in you and around you as far as possible and watch it as if it were happening to someone else. It means that you do not personalize what is happening to you. It means that you look at things as if you have no connection with them whatsoever. 36

The reason you suffer from your depression and your anxieties is that you identify with them. You say, "I'm depressed." But that is false. You are not depressed. If you want to be accurate, you might say, "I am experiencing depression right now." But you can hardly say, "I am depressed." You are not your depression. That is but a strange kind of trick of the mind, a strange kind of illusion. You have deluded yourself into thinking - though you are not aware of it - that you are your depression, that you are your anxiety, that you are your joy or the thrills that you have. "I am delights!" You certainly are not delight. Delight may be in you right now, but wait around, it will change; it won't last: it never lasts; it keeps changing: it's always changing. Clouds come and go: some of them are black and some white, some of them are large, others small. If we want to follow the analogy, you would be the SKY, observing the clouds. You are a passive, detached observer. That's shocking, particularly to someone in the Western culture. You're not interfering. Don't interfere. Don't "fix" anything. Watch! Observe! 36, 37

The trouble with people is that they're busy fixing things they don't even understand. We're always fixing things, aren't we? It never strikes us that things don't need to be fixed. They really don't. This is a great illumination. They need to be understood. If you understood, them, they'd change. 37

AWARENESS WITHOUT EVALUATING EVERYTHING

Want to change the world? Begin with myself - transform myself first. How? Through observation, through understanding. With no interference or judgment on my part - because what I judge I cannot understand. 37

Whenever I say, "You so and so," understanding has stopped at that moment; I've slapped a label on that person. If the label carries undertones of approval or disapproval, so much the worse! I can't understand if I disapprove or approve. No judgment, commentary, attitude: one simply observes, studies, watches, without the desire to change what is. Because if I desire to change what is into what I think should be, I no longer understand... "He's not attempting to train them or get anything out of them." Sometimes we want others to change because we are in "want" from them - we end up sucking them dry." 38

Discipline: When there's something within you that moves in the right direction, it creates its own discipline. 38

THE ILLUSION OF REWARDS

One sign that you're awakened is that you don't give a damn about what's going to happen in the next life. You're not bothered about it; you don't care. You are not interested, period. 42

Wake up! That's what repent means! Not "weep for your sins." Wake up! Understand, stop all the crying. Understand! Wake up! 43

FINDING YOURSELF

It's as if you were outside yourself looking at yourself. "Who is this person who is doing the looking?" I am looking at me. What's an "I?" What's "me?" For the time being it's enough that I watch me, but if you find yourself condemning yourself or approving yourself, don't stop the condemnation and don't stop the judgment or approval, just watch it. I'm condemning me; I'm disapproving of me; I'm approving of me. Just look at it, period. Don't try to change it! Don't say, "Oh, we were told not to do this." Just observe what's going on. As I said to you before, self-observation means watching - observing whatever is going on in you and around you as if it were happening to someone else. 46

Some mystics say to begin first with awareness of things, then to an awareness of thoughts (that's the "me"); and finally we get to awareness of the thinker. Things, thoughts, thinker. 47

I am not my thoughts. Thoughts come and go. Neither am I my body. Cells change. "I" is something other and more than the body... Labels belong to "me." 48

Does the observer ever change? The fact is that no matter what labels you think of (except perhaps human being) you should apply them to "me." "I" is none of these things. So when you step out of yourself and observe "me," you no longer identify with "me." Suffering exists in me," so when you identify "I" with "me," suffering begins. 50

Say that you are afraid or desirous or anxious. When "I" does not identify with money, or name, or nationality, or person, or friends, or any quality, the "I" is never threatened. It can be very active, but it isn't threatened. Think of anything that caused or is causing you pain or worry or anxiety. First, can you pick up the desire under that suffering, that there's something you desire very keenly or else you wouldn't be suffering. What is that desire? Second, it isn't simply a desire; there's an identification there. You have somehow said to yourself, "The well-being of "I," almost the existence of "I," is tied up with this desire." All suffering is caused by my identifying myself with something, whether that something is within me or outside of me. 50

NEGATIVE FEELINGS TOWARD OTHERS

Just like I learned at the movies, I'm going to come outside myself... Anytime you have a negative feeling toward anyone, you're living in an illusion. There's something seriously wrong with you. You're not seeing reality. Something inside of you has to change. But what do we generally do when we have a negative feeling? Blame someone. We expect them to change. No! The world's all right. The one who has to change is me. 51

"The food stinks around here," and the regular dietitian would go into orbit. She has identified with the food. She is saying, "Anyone who attacks the food attacks me; I feel threatened." But the "I" is never threatened; it's only the "me" that is threatened. 51

Should you somehow want to involve yourself in correcting a situation that's wrong. Ex. of someone hurting a child. Idea is that we are not to do anything. If you didn't have negative feelings you'd be much more effective. When negative feelings come in, you go blind. "Me" steps into the picture, and everything gets fouled up... It's very important that when you swing into action, you be able to see things with detachment. But negative emotions prevent that. 52

What, then, would we call the kind of passion that motivates or activates energy into doing something about objective evils? Whatever it is, it is not a reaction; it is action. 52

We never feel grief when we lose something that we have allowed to be free, that we have never attempted to possess. Grief is a sign that I made my happiness depend on this thing or person, at least to some extent. 53

ON DEPENDENCE

To depend on another psychologically, emotionally means to depend on another human being for my happiness... If we are dependent, we will then be demanding that other people contribute to our happiness. The next step is fear, fear of loss, fear of alienation, fear of rejection, mutual control. 53, 54

Perfect love casts out fear. Where there is love there are no demands, no expectation, no dependency. I do not demand that you make me happy. I enjoy your company immensely, but I do not cling. 54

I enjoy it on a non-clinging basis. What I really enjoy is not you; it's something that's greater than both you and me. It is something that I discovered, a kind of symphony, a kind of orchestra that plays one melody in your presence, but when you depart, the orchestra doesn't stop. When I meet someone else, it plays another melody, which is also very delightful. And when I'm alone, it continues to play. There's a great repertoire and it never ceases to play. 54

You must drop it all. Not physical renunciation, you understand; that's easy. When your illusions drop, you're in touch with reality at last, and believe me, you will never again be lonely. Loneliness is not cured by human company. Loneliness is cured by contact with reality. Contact with reality, dropping one's illusions, making contact with the real. Whatever it is, it has no name. We can only know it by dropping what is unreal. You can only know what aloneness is when you drop your clinging, when you drop your dependency. But the first step toward that is that you see it as desirable. If you don't see it as desirable, how will you get anywhere near it? 55

Would human company ever take loneliness away? It will only serve as a distraction. There is an emptiness inside. When emptiness surfaces, we run away, turn on the TV, the radio, read a book, search for human company, seek entertainment, seek distraction. 55

HOW HAPPINESS HAPPENS

Watch yourself. When you talk to someone, are you aware of it or are you simply identifying with it? When you got angry with somebody, were you aware that you were angry or were you simply identifying with your anger? Later, when you had the time, did you study your experience and attempt to understand it? Where did it come from? What brought it on? I don't know of any other way to awareness. You only change what you understand. What you do not understand and are now aware of, you repress. You don't change. But when you understand it, it changes. 56, 57

You will fear no one and you will fear nothing. How extraordinary! You fear no one because you're perfectly content to be nobody. You don't give a damn about success or failure. They mean nothing. Honor, disgrace, they mean nothing! As we grow in awareness, we react less and act more. We see things we've never seen before. 58

You're much more energetic, much more alive. People think that if they had no cravings, they'd be like deadwood. But in fact they'd lose their tension. Get rid of your fear of failure, your tensions about succeeding, you will be yourself. Relaxed. You wouldn't be driving with your brakes on. That's what would happen. 58

"When the archer shoots for no particular prize, he has all his skills; when he shoots to win a brass buckle, he is already nervous; when he shoots for a gold prize, he goes blind, sees two targets, and is out of his mind. His skill has not changed, but the prize divides him. He cares! He thinks more of winning than of shooting, and the need to win drains him of power." When you're living for nothing, you've got all your skills, you've got all your energy, you're relaxed, you don't care, it doesn't matter whether you win or lose. 59

The three most difficult things for a human being are not physical feats or intellectual achievements. They are, first, returning love for hate; second, including the excluded; third, admitting that you are wrong. But these are the easiest things in the world if you haven't identified with the "me." You can say things like "I'm wrong! If you know me better, you'd see how often I'm wrong. What would you expect from an ass?" But if I haven't identified with these aspects of "me," you can't hurt me. Initially, the old conditioning will kick in and you'll be depressed and anxious. You'll grieve, cry, and so on. "Before enlightenment, I used to be depressed: after enlightenment, I continue to be depressed." The difference is that I don't identify with it anymore. 59

You step outside of yourself and look at that depression, and don't identify with it. You don't do a thing to make it go away; you are perfectly willing to go on with your life while it passes through you and disappears. And anxiety? There it comes and you're not troubled. You're anxious but you're not troubled. 60

Be willing to let this cloud come in, because the more you fight it, the more power you give it. You're willing to observe it as it passes by. You can be happy in your anxiety. You can be happy in your depression. But you can't have the wrong notion of happiness. Happiness is not excitement or thrills. That's what causes the depression. Getting thrilled is preparing the way for your next depression. Being thrilled - pick up the anxiety behind that: How can I make it last? This is not happiness - it is addiction. 60

There's only one reason why you're not experiencing bliss at this present moment, and it's because you're thinking or focusing on what you don't have. Otherwise you would be experiencing bliss. You're focusing on what you don't have. But, right now you have everything you need to be in bliss. 61

FEAR - THE ROOT OF VIOLENCE [ANGER]

Ignorance and fear, ignorance caused by fear, that's where all the evil comes from, that's where your violence comes from. The person who is truly nonviolent, who is incapable of violence, is the person who is fearless. It's only when you're afraid that you become angry. Think of the last time you were angry. Search for the fear behind it. What were you afraid of losing? What were you afraid would be taken from you? That's where the anger comes from. Think of an angry person, maybe someone you're afraid of. Can you see how frightened he is? He's really frightened. One is frightened or he wouldn't be angry. Ultimately, there are only two things, love and fear. 62, 63

Awareness, love, spirituality, freedom, awakening - it's all the same thing. 63

AWARENESS AND CONTACT WITH REALITY

To watch everything inside of you and outside, and when there is something happening to you, to see it as if it were happening to someone else, with no comment, no judgment, no attitude, no interference, no attempt to change, only to understand. As you do this, you'll begin to realize that increasingly you are dis-identifying from "me." 63

How would it be if God gave me grace not to call things mine? I'd be detached; I'd be dis-identified. That's what it means to lose the self, to deny the self, to die to self. 64

GOOD RELIGION - THE ANTITHESIS OF UNAWARENESS

God would be much happier, according to Jesus, if you were transformed than if you worshipped. He would be much more pleased by your loving than by your adoration. Then we worship in spirit and truth. 65

Be aware of what you're saying, be aware of what you're doing, be aware of what you're thinking, be aware of how you're acting. Be aware of where you're coming from, what your motives are. The unaware life is not worth living. Let it register - in order to gain awareness. 67

What you are aware of you are in control of; what you are not aware of is in control of you. You are always a slave to what you're not aware of. When you're aware of it, you're free from it. It's there, but you're not affected by it. You're not controlled by it; you're not enslaved by it. That's the difference. 71

Awareness is not the same as concentration. Concentration is a spotlight, a floodlight. It is easy to become distracted while concentrating. We are never distracted while practicing awareness, because you're always aware of whatever happens to be. 72

Say I'm looking at those trees and I'm worrying. Am I distracted? I am distracted only if I mean to concentrate on the trees. But if I'm aware that I'm worried, too, that isn't a distraction at all. Just be aware of where your attention goes. When anything goes awry or anything untoward happens, you'll be alerted at once. Something's going wrong! The moment any negative feeling comes into consciousness, you'll be alerted. You're like the driver of the car. 72

LABELS

The important thing is not to know who "I" is or what "I" is. You'll never succeed. There are no words for it. The important thing is to drop the labels. As the Japanese Zen master say, "Don't seek the truth; just drop your opinions." Drop your theories; don't seek the truth. Truth isn't something you search for. If you stop being opinionated, you would know. Something similar happens here. If you drop your labels, you would know. What do I mean by labels? Every label you can conceive of except perhaps that of human being. I am a human being. Fair enough; doesn't say very much. But when you say, "I am successful," that's crazy. Success is not part of the "I." Success is something that comes and goes; it could be here today and gone tomorrow. That's not "I." When you said, "I was a success," you were in error; you were plunged into darkness. You identified yourself with success. The same thing when you said, "I am a failure, a lawyer, a businessman." You know what's going to happen to you if you identify yourself with these things. You're going to cling to them, you're going to be worried that they may fall apart, and that's where your suffering come in. That is what I meant earlier when I said to you, "If you're suffering, you're asleep." Do you want a sign that you're asleep? Here it is: You're suffering. Suffering is a sign that you're out of touch with the truth. Suffering is given to you that you might open your eyes to the truth, that you might understand that there's falsehood somewhere, just as physical pain is given to you so you will understand that there is disease or illness somewhere. Suffering points out that there is falsehood somewhere. Suffering occurs when you clash with reality. When you illusion clashes with reality, when your falsehood clashes with truth, then you have suffering. Otherwise there is no suffering. 73, 74

OBSTACLES TO HAPPINESS

You could be happy forever. Nothing would have the power to hurt you again. It's like when you throw black paint in the air; the air remains uncontaminated. You never color the air black. No matter what happens to you, you remain uncontaminated. You remain at peace... It is nonsense to be a puppet, jerked about this way and that way, letting events or others people tell you how to feel. If your refuse to identify with any of those labels, most of your worries cease. 75

You're a success in life when you wake up! Then you don't have to apologize to anyone, you don't have to explain anything to anyone, you don't give a damn what anybody thinks about you or what anybody says about you. You have no worries; you're happy. This is success. 76

Having a good job or being famous or having a great reputation has absolutely nothing to do with happiness or success. It is totally irrelevant. All he is really worried about is what his children, neighbors, wife will think about him. Our society and culture drills popularity into our heads. This kind of success is controlling, manipulation, unhappiness, misery. They don't enjoy life. There is constant tenseness and anxiety. All this happens because people identified with some label. They identified the "I" with their money or their profession. That was their error. 76

You could be a plumber, lawyer, businessman, priest - but that does not affect the essential "I." It doesn't affect you. If I change my profession tomorrow, it's just like changing my clothes. I am untouched. Are you your clothes? Are you your name? Are you your profession? Stop identifying with them. They come and go. 77

When you really understand this, no criticism can affect you. No flattery or praise can affect you either. When someone says, "You're a great guy," what is he talking about? He's talking about "me," he's not talking about "I." "I" is neither great, small, successful, nor a failure. It is none of these labels. Labels come and go. "Me" is generally selfish, foolish, childish - a great big ass. So when you say, "you're an ass," I've known it for years! Why do you identify with him? Silly! That isn't "I." That's "me." 77

Uninterrupted happiness is uncaused. True happiness is uncaused. You cannot make me happy. You are not my happiness. You say to the awakened person, "Why are you happy?" and the awakened person replies, "Why not?" 77

Happiness is our natural state. Happiness is the natural state of little children, to whom the kingdom belongs until they have been polluted and contaminated by the stupidity of society and culture. To acquire happiness you don't have to do anything, because happiness cannot be acquired. Does anybody know why? Because we have it already. How can you acquire what you already have? Then why don't you experience it? Because you've got to drop something. You've got to drop illusions. You don't have to add anything in order to be happy; you've got to drop something. Life is easy, life is delightful. It's only hard on your illusions, your ambitions, your greed, your craving. Do you know where these things come from? From having identified with all kinds of labels!

FOUR STEPS TO WISDOM

First thing you need to do is get in touch with negative feelings that you're not even aware of. Gloominess, moody, self-hatred, guilt, feel that life is pointless, that it makes no sense; you've got hurt feelings, feeling nervous and tense - get in touch with these feelings first. 78, 79

Second is to understand that the feeling is in you, not in reality. Negative feelings are in you, not in reality. So stop trying to change reality. Stop trying to change the other person. We spend all our time and energy trying to change external circumstances, our spouses, bosses, friends, enemies, and everybody else. We don't have to change anything. No person on earth has the power to make you unhappy. There is no event on earth that has the power to disturb you or hurt you. 79

Example: Let's suppose that rain washes out a picnic. Who is feeling negative? The rain? Or you? What's causing the negative feeling? The rain or your reaction? When you bump your knee against a table, the table's fine. It's busy being what it was made to be - a table. The pain is in our knee, not in the table. The mystics keep trying to tell us that reality is all right. Reality is not problematic. Problems

exist only in the human mind - in the stupid, sleeping human mind. Reality is not problematic. You created the problem. You are the problem. You identified with "me" and that is the problem. The feeling is in you, not in reality. 80

Third: Never identify with that feeling. It has nothing to do with the "I." Don't define your essential self in terms of that feeling. Don't say, "I am depressed." It is all right to say "It is depressed." It is ok to say depression is there, or what ever is there is fine. But not "I am gloom." You're defining yourself in terms of the feelings. That's your illusion, that's your mistake. There is a depression there right now, there are hurt feelings there right now, but let it be, leave it alone. It will pass. Everything passes, everything. Your depressions and your thrills have nothing to do with happiness. Those are the swings of the pendulum. If you seek kicks or thrills, get ready for depression. One end of the pendulum swings to the other. This has nothing to do with "I" nor happiness. It is the "me." 80

You're free; you don't care anymore about being accepted or rejected, that makes no difference. Psychologists tell us how important it is to get a sense of belonging. Balony! What you need is to be free. What you need is to love. That's it; that's our nature. But what you're really telling me is that you want to be desired, applauded, to be attractive, to have all the little monkeys running after you. You're wasting our life. Wake up! You don't need this. You can be blissfully happy without it. 81

There is no situation in the world that justifies a negative feeling. "Plunge into the heat of battle and keep your heart at the lotus feet of the Lord." 82

You don't have to do anything to acquire happiness. The great Meister Eckhar, "God is not attained by a process of addition to anything in the soul, but by a process of subtraction." You don't do anything to be free, you drop something. Then you're free. 82

Fourth: We always want someone else to change so that we will feel good. Even if your spouse or whomever changes, what does that do to you? You're just as vulnerable, idiotic, as asleep as before. You are the one who needs to change, who needs to take medicine. You keep insisting, "I feel good because the world is right." Wrong! The world is right because I feel good. That's what all the mystics are saying. 83

ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD

When you awaken - understand - see, the world becomes right. 84

There is no explanation you can give that would explain away all the suffering, evil, torture, destruction, and hunger in the world! You'll never explain it. You can try gamely with your formulas, religious and otherwise, but you'll never explain it. Because life is a mystery, which means your thinking mind cannot make sense out of it. For that - you've got to wake up and then you'll suddenly realize that reality is not problematic, you are the problem. 86

SLEEPWALKING

Scriptures and reality make sense when we are awake. But you'll never be able to put it into words. You'd rather do something? But even there we've got to make sure that you're not swinging into action simply to get rid of our negative feelings. Many people swing into action only to make things worse. They're not coming from love, they're coming from negative feelings. There're coming from guilt, anger, hate; from a sense of injustice or whatever. You've got to make sure of your "being" before you swing into action. You have to make sure of who you are before you act. Unfortunately, when sleeping people swing into action, they simply substitute one cruelty for another, one injustice for another. And so it goes. Mester Eckhart say, "It is not by our actions that you will be saved" (or awakened; call it by any

word you want), "but by your being. It is not by what you do, but by what you are that you will be judged." It's not your actions, it's your being that counts. Then you might swing into action. 87

We see people and things not as they are, but as we are. 88

The day you are different, they will become different. And you will see them differently, too. Someone who seemed terrifying will now seem frightened. Someone who seemed rude will seem frightened. All of a sudden, no one has the power to hurt you anymore. No one has the power to put pressure on you. It's something like this: You leave a book on the table and I pick it up and say, "You're pressing this book on me. I have to pick it up or not pick it up." People are so busy accusing everyone else, blaming everyone else, life, society, their neighbor. You'll never change that way; you'll continue in your nightmare, you'll never wake up. 89

Put THIS PROGRAM into action, a thousand times: (a) identify the negative feelings in you; (b) understand that they are in you, not in the world, not in external reality; (c) do not see them as an essential part of "I;" these things come and go; (d) understand that when you change, everything changes. 89

CHANGE AS GREED

Do I do anything to change myself? I don't have to do anything! The more I do, the worse it gets. All I have to do is understand. 90

Think of somebody you are living or working with whom you do not like, who causes negative feelings to arise in you. Let's understand what is going on. The first thing you need to understand is that the negative feeling is inside me. You are responsible for the negative feeling, not the other person. Someone else in our place would be perfectly calm and at ease in the presence of this person; they wouldn't be affected. You are. Now, understand another thing, that you're making a demand. You have an expectation of this person. Can you get in touch with that? Then say to this person, "I have no right to make any demands on you." In saying that, you will drop our expectation. "I have no right to make any demands on you. Oh, I'll protect myself from the consequence of your actions or your moods or whatever, but you can go right ahead and be what you choose to be. I have no right to make any demands on you." 90

See what happens to you when you do this. If there's a resistance to saying it, my, how much you're going to discover about your "me." Let the dictator in you come out, let the tyrant come out. You thought you were such a little lamb. But I'm a tyrant and you're a tyrant. A little variation on "I'm an ass, you're an ass." I'm a dictator, you're a dictator. I want to run your life for you; I want to tell you exactly how you're expected to be and how you're expected to behave, and you'd better behave as I have decided or I shall punish myself by having negative feelings. Everybody's a lunatic. 91

People get a good feeling on the basis of somebody getting a bad feeling; you win over somebody else. Isn't that terrible? Taken for granted in a lunatic asylum! 91

I will not allow you to manipulate me. I'll live my life; I'll go my own way; I'll keep myself free to think my thoughts, to follow my inclinations and tastes. And I'll say no to you. To say no to people is wonderful; that's part of waking up. Part of waking up is that you live your life as you see fit. This is not selfish. The selfish thing is to demand that someone else live their life as you see fit. It is selfish to demand that others live their life to suit your tastes, pride, profit, or your pleasure. But I no longer avoid you because of any negative feelings you create in me. You don't have that power anymore. 93

You will come to understand that there are times when you will inevitably react, even in awareness. But as awareness grows, you react less and act more. 94

So begin to be aware of our present condition, whatever that condition is. Stop being a dictator. Stop trying to push yourself somewhere. Then someday you will understand that simply by awareness you have already attained what you were pushing yourself toward. 95

A CHANGED PERSON

In your pursuit of awareness, don't make demands. It's more like obeying the traffic rules. If you don't observe traffic rules, you pay the penalty. 95

It's only when you become love - when you have dropped your illusions and attachments - that you will "know." 96

As you identify less and less with the "I," you will be more at ease with everybody and with everything. You are no longer afraid of being hurt or not liked. You no longer desire to impress anyone. What relief when you don't have to impress anybody anymore! Happiness at last! There is no longer the need or the compulsion to explain things anymore. It's all right. What is there to be explained? No longer the compulsion or need to apologize anymore. Why would anyone demand an apology? You have something to explore in that. Even when someone supposedly was mean to you, there is no room for apology. 97

Nobody was mean to you. Somebody was mean to what he thought was you, but not to you. Nobody ever rejects you; they're only rejecting what they think you are. But that cuts both ways. Nobody ever accepts you either. Until people come awake, they are simply accepting or rejecting their image of you. They've fashioned an image of you, and they're rejecting or accepting that. See how devastating it is to go deeply into that. It's a bit too liberating. But how easy it is to love people when you understand this. How easy it is to love everyone when you don't identify with what they imagine you are or they are. It becomes easy to love them, to love everyday. 97

I observe "me," but I do not think about "me." Because the thinking "me" does a lot of bad thinking, too. But when I watch "me," I am constantly aware that this is a reflection. 97

ARRIVING AT SILENCE

"Those who know, do not say; those who say, do not know." The guru can only point out your errors. When you drop our errors, your will know the truth. 99

It's terrifying to see what sincere believers will do because they think they know. 101

The highest knowledge of God is to know God as unknowable. There is far too much God talk; the world is sick of it. There is too little awareness, too little love, too little happiness, but let's not use those words either. There's too little dropping of illusions, errors, attachments and cruelty, too little awareness. 102

LOSING THE RAT RACE

It's when you're not trying that you lose things. You lose something when you're not aware. You're never so ready to forget yourself as when you are happy. Happiness releases you from self. It is suffering, pain, misery, and depression that tie you to the self. To deny the self, to die to it, to lose it, to understand its true nature. 104

To lose the self is to suddenly realize that you are something other than what you thought you were. You thought you were at the center; now you experience yourself as a satellite. You thought you were the dancer; you now experience yourself as the dance. These are just analogies, images, so you cannot take

them literally. They just give you a clue, a hint; they're only pointers, don't forget. So you cannot press them too much. Don't take them too literally. 106

PERMANENT WORTH

Self-worth - can be how we are reflected in the mirrors of other people's minds. We can be depended upon this. One understands one's personal worth when one no longer identifies or defines one's self in terms of these transient things. I'm not beautiful because everyone says I'm beautiful. I'm really neither beautiful nor ugly. These are things that come and go. 106

Pleasant experiences make life delightful, but they don't lead to growth in themselves. Painful experiences lead to growth. Suffering points up an area in you where you have not yet grown, where you need to grow and be transformed and change. The disappointment you experience when things don't turn out as you wanted them to, watch that! Look at what it says about you. I say this without condemnation (otherwise you're going to get caught up in self-hatred). Observe it as you would observe it in another person. Look at that disappointment, that depression you experience when you are criticized. What does that say about you? 107

Worry, anxiety - what does it say about you? Negative feelings, every negative feeling is useful for awareness, for understanding. They give you the opportunity to feel it, to watch it from the outside. In the beginning, the depression will still be there, but you will have cut your connection with it. Gradually you will understand the depression. As you understand it, it will occur less frequently, and will disappear altogether. Wakefulness - the state where you drop desire. But remember what I meant by desire and craving. I meant: "unless I get what I desire, I refuse to be happy." I mean cases where happiness depends on the fulfillment of desire. 108

DESIRE, NOT PREFERENCE

Do not suppress desire, because then you would become lifeless. You'd be without energy and that would be terrible. Desire in the healthy sense of the word is energy, and the more energy we have, the better. But don't suppress desire, understand it. Don't seek to fulfill desire so much as to understand desire. And don't just renounce the object of your desire, understand them; see them in their true light. See them for what they are really worth. Because if you just suppress your desire, and you attempt to renounce the object of your desire, you are likely to be tied to it. Whereas if you look at it and see it for what it is really worth, if you understand how you are preparing the ground for misery and disappointment and depression, your desire will then be transformed into what I call a preference. 109

When you go through life with preferences but don't let your happiness depend on any one of them, then you're awake. You're moving toward wakefulness. Wakefulness, happiness - call it what you wish - is the state of non delusion, where you see things not as you are but as they are, insofar as this is possible for a human being. To drop illusions is to see things, to see reality. Every time you are unhappy, you have added something to reality. It is that addition that makes you unhappy. A negative reaction in you. Reality provides the stimulus, you provide the reaction. You have added something by your reaction. And if you examine what you have added, there is always an illusion there, there's a demand, an expectation, a craving. Always. 109

So if you want to live, you must have no permanent abode. You must have no place to rest your head. You have to flow with it. 110

CLINGING TO ILLUSION

When you cling, life is destroyed; when you hold on to anything, you cease to live. One attains this by understanding. Desire breeds anxiety and sooner or later it brings its hangover. When you've suffered sufficiently, then you are ready to see it. You're feeding yourself with thrills. This is like feeding a

racehorse with delicacies. You're giving it cakes and wine. You don't feed a racehorse like that. It's like feeding human being with drugs. You don't fill your stomach with drugs. You need good, solid, nutritious food and drink. You need to understand all this for yourself. 111

"The nature of the rain is the same and yet it produces thorns in the marsh and flowers in the garden." It is you who have to do it. No one else can help you. It is you who have to digest your food, it is you who have to understand. No one else can understand for you. It is you who have to seek. Nobody can seek for you. And if what you seek is truth, the you must do this. You can lean on no one. 112

Another illusion is that external events have the power to hurt you, that other people have the power to hurt you. They don't. It's you who give this power to them. 113

As soon as I take a label seriously, I'm in big trouble. I'm going to start getting tense. I've got to live up to it, to maintain it. Smash the label in order to be free! 113

HUGGING MEMORIES

How to bring about change: not by condemnation, not by calling yourself names, but by understanding what's going on. 115

Whatever a relationship may be, it certainly entails two things: clarity of perception and accuracy of response. You're more likely to respond accurately when you perceive clearly. 116

You have to be aware of your prejudices, likes, dislikes, attractions - there're all there, they come from your conditioning. 117

The first thing we need is clarity of perception. One reason we don't perceive people clearly is evident - our emotions get in the way, our conditioning, our likes and dislikes. We've got to grapple with that fact. But we've got to grapple with something much more fundamental - with our ideas, conclusions, and concepts. Every concept that was meant to help us get in touch with reality ends up by being a barrier to getting in touch with reality, because we forget that the words are not the thing. The concept is not the same as the reality. 119

Be aware of reality around you. Awareness means to watch, to observe what is going on within you and around you. "Going on" is pretty accurate: Trees, grass, flowers, animals, rocks, all of reality is moving. One observes it, one watches it. How essential it is for the human being not just to observe oneself, but to watch all of reality. Are you imprisoned by your concepts? Do you want to break out of your prison? Then look; observe; spend hours observing. Watching what? Anything. The faces of people, the shapes of trees, a bird in flight, a pile of stones, watch the grass grow. Get in touch with things, look at them, Hopefully you will then break out of these rigid patterns we have all developed, out of what our thoughts and our words have imposed on us. Hopefully we will see. What will we see? This thing that we choose to call reality, whatever is beyond words and concepts. This is a spiritual exercise - connected with spirituality - connected with breaking out of your cage, out of the imprisonment of the concepts and words. 125, 126

AT A LOSS FOR WORDS

Dag Hammarskjöld: "God does not die on the day we cease to believe in a personal deity. But we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance of wonder renewed daily, the source of which is beyond all reason." We don't have to quarrel about a word, because "God" is only a word, a concept. One never quarrels about reality; we only quarrel about opinions, concepts, and judgments. Drop your concepts, opinions, prejudices, judgments, and you will see that. 127

FILTERED REALITY

The root of sorrow is craving, attachment, and desire. Craving distorts and destroys perception. Fears and desires haunt us. An attachment is a belief that without something you are not going to be happy. 133

DETACHMENT

Attachment destroys your capacity to love. Love is sensitivity, consciousness. Example: I'm listening to a symphony, but if all I hear is the sound of the drums I don't hear the symphony. A loving heart is sensitive to the whole of life, to all persons; a loving heart doesn't harden itself to any person or thing. But the moment you become attached in any sense of the word, then you're blocking out many other things. You've got eyes only for the object of your attachment; you've got ears only for the drums; the heart has hardened. Moreover, it's blinded, because it no longer sees the object of its attachment objectively. Love entails clarity of perception, objectivity; there is nothing so clear-sighted as love. 140

ADDICTIVE LOVE

Guilt is hating myself for anything I've done. I'm not going to give myself a bad feeling and whip myself for anything I have done, either right or wrong. I'm ready to analyze it, to watch it, and say, "Well, if I did wrong, it was in unawareness."

HIDDEN AGENDAS

If you are tense, you simply observe your tension. You will never understand yourself if you seek to change yourself. The harder you try to change yourself, the worse it gets. You are called upon to be aware. Get the feel of that jangling telephone; get the feel of jarred nerves; get the sensation of the steering wheel in the car. Come to reality, and let tension or the calmness take care of itself. You will have to let them take care of themselves because you'll be too preoccupied with getting in touch with reality. Step by step, let whatever happens happen. Real change will come when it is brought about, not by your ego, but by reality. Awareness releases reality to change you. 145

"I want to be aware, I want to be in touch with whatever is and let whatever happens happen; if I'm awake, fine, and if I'm asleep, fine." The moment you make a goal out of it and attempt to get it, you're seeking ego glorification, ego promotion. You want the good feeling that you've made it. When you do "make it," you won't know. 146

GIVING IN

The harder you try to change, the worse it can get. A certain degree of passivity is all right. Again, the more you resist something, the greater power you give to it. Similar to Jesus' words: "When someone strikes you on the right cheek, offer him your left as well." You always empower the demons you fight. Very Oriental. But if you flow with the enemy, you overcome the enemy. How does one cope with evil? Not by fighting it but by understanding it. In understanding, it disappears. How does one cope with darkness? Not with one's fist. You don't chase darkness out of the room with a broom - you turn on a light. The more you fight darkness, the more real it becomes to you, and the more you exhaust yourself. But when you turn on the light of awareness, it melts. 148

ASSORTED LANDMINES

Loneliness is when you're missing people, aloneness is when you're enjoying yourself. You never enjoy others when you are enslaved to them. 149

True Awareness there's nowhere to go, nothing to achieve. How do we get to this awareness? Through awareness. When people say they really want to experience every moment, they're really talking awareness, except for that "wanting." You don't want to experience awareness; you do or you don't. 149

THE DEATH OF ME

The only tragedy there is in the world is ignorance; all evil comes from that. If you would die to the past, if you would die to every minute, you would be the person who is fully alive, because a fully alive person is one who is full of death. We're always dying to things. We're always shedding everything in order to be fully alive and to be resurrected at every moment. 150

INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING

Not effort, not cultivating habits, not having an ideal. Ideals do a lot of damage. The whole time you're focusing on what should be instead of focusing on what is. 152

NOT PUSHING IT

You need understanding, insight, awareness - you don't need pushing. You don't need effort. That's why people are so tired, so weary. You and I were trained to be dissatisfied with ourselves. That's where the evil come from psychologically. We're always dissatisfied, we're always discontented, we're always pushing. Go on, put out more effort, more and more effort. But there's always that conflict inside; there's very little understanding. 156

GETTING REAL

As you begin to observe yourself, to watch yourself, to pick up those negative feelings, you'll find your own way of explaining it. And you'll notice the change. But then you'll have to deal with the big villain, and that villain is self-condemnation, self-hatred, self-dissatisfaction. 158

ASSORTED IMAGES

You've got solid attitudes inside you; you've got solid illusions inside you; that's what bumps against nature, that's where you get hurt, that's where the pain comes from. 159

Wisdom occurs when you drop barriers you have erected through your concepts and conditioning. 160

If the heart is unobstructed, the result is love. 160

SAYING NOTHING ABOUT LOVE

Freedom lies not in external circumstances; freedom resides in the heart. 161

Love: It means to see a person, a situation, a thing as it really is, not as you imagine it to be. And to give it the response it deserves. You can hardly be said to love what you do not even see. And what prevents us from seeing? Our conditioning. Your concepts, categories, prejudices, projections, the labels that we have drawn from our cultures and our past experiences. 161

LISTENING TO LIFE

Take the plate of sweets away, because in front of a plate of sweets or chocolate, I lose my freedom. That was true of me, too; I lost my freedom in front of all kinds of things, but no more! I'm satisfied with very little and I enjoy it intensely. When you have enjoyed something intensely, you need very little. 166

Slow down and taste and smell and hear, and let your senses come alive. If you want a royal road to mysticism, sit down quietly and listen to all the sounds around you. You do not focus on any one sound; you try to hear them all. Oh, you'll see the miracles that happen to you when your senses come unclogged. That is extremely important for the process of change. 166

THE END OF ANALYSIS

There is a difference between analysis and awareness, or information the one hand and insight on the other. Information is not insight, analysis is not awareness, knowledge is not awareness. 166

You see change take place in you, through you; in your awareness, it happens. You don't do it. When you're doing it, it's a bad sign; it won't last. But in awareness, you keep your softness, subtleness, gentleness, openness, flexibility, and you don't push - change occurs. 167

Taste and feel the truth - not knowing it, but tasting and feeling it, getting a feel for it. When you get a feel for it you change. When you know it in your head, you don't. 168

DEAD AHEAD

The way to really live is to die. The passport to living is to imagine yourself in your grave. Imagine that you're lying in your coffin. Any posture you like. So imagine your posture and you're dead. Now look at your problems from that viewpoint. It can change everything. 169

THE LAND OF LOVE

In this solitude your dependence dies. 172

LOVE: Too see at last with a vision that is clear and unclouded by fear or desire. How to get there - by ceaseless awareness, by the infinite patience and compassion you would have for a drug addict. By developing a taste for the good things in life to counter the craving for your drug. What good things? The love of work which you enjoy doing for the love of itself; the love of laughter and intimacy with people to whom you do not cling and on whom you do not depend emotionally but whose company you enjoy. It will also help if you take on activities that you can do with your whole being, activities that you so love to do that while you're engaged in them - success, recognition, and approval simply do not mean a thing to you. 173

It will help, too, if you return to nature. Send the crowds away, go up to the mountains, and silently commune with trees and flowers and animals and birds, with sea and clouds and sky and stars. I've told you what a spiritual exercise it is to gaze at things, to be aware of things around you. Hopefully, the words will drop, the concepts will drop, and you will see, you will make contact with reality. That is the cure for loneliness. Generally, we seek to cure our loneliness through emotional dependence on people, through gregariousness and noise. That is no cure. Get back to things, get back to nature, go up in the mountains. Then you will know that your heart has brought you to the vast desert of solitude, there is no one there at our side. 173, 174

Understand the obstructions you are putting in the way of love, freedom, and happiness and they will drop. Turn on the light of awareness and the darkness will disappear. Happiness is not something you acquire; love is not something you produce; love is not something that you have; love is something that has you. You do not have the wind, the stars, and the rain. You don't possess these things; you surrender to them. And surrender occurs when you are aware of your illusions, addictions, desires and fears. 176

First: I don't identify. Here comes a low feeling. Instead of getting tense about it, or irritated with myself about it, I understand I'm feeling depressed, disappointed, or whatever.

Second: I admit the feeling is in me, not in the other person, e.g., in the person who didn't write me a letter, not in the exterior world; it's in me. Because as long as I think it's outside me, I feel justified in holding on to my feelings. I can't say every body would feel this way; in fact, only idiotic and sleeping people would feel this way.

Third: I don't identify with the feeling. "I" is not that feeling. "I" am not lonely, "I" am not depressed, "I" am not disappointed. Disappointment is there, one watches it. You'd be amazed how quickly it glides away. Anything you're aware of keeps changeling; clouds keep moving. As you do this, you also get all kinds of insights into why clouds were coming in the first place. 178

The root of evil is within you. As you begin to understand this, you stop making demands on yourself, you stop having expectations of yourself, you stop pushing yourself and you understand. Nourish yourself on wholesome food, good wholesome food. I'm not talking about actual food, I'm talking about sunsets, about nature, about a good movie, about a good book, about enjoyable work, about good company, and hopefully you will break your addictions to those other feelings. 184