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## The Magic Of Manifestation

### Session Nine: The Void

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## 9.1: Homework

1. Practise the “Manifestation from the Void” exercise at a set time of day every day.

See if you can find your “symbol” – not just in the imagination but in reality – “out there in the world.” It doesn’t matter if you can’t – but it helps a bit if you can because you then have concrete reminder of the journey.

The wonderful about this exercise is that people often receive images that they don’t even know exist – but then, when they research what they have found, they discover that these symbols *do* exist (often in ancient cultures) and have deep personal significance for them as individuals.

2. Keep a journal detailing what your attachments are and what steps you are taking to free yourself of them.

What is there to “destroy” in your life? What are you readily able to let go? What is more difficult?

3. Read *The Path of the Human Being – Zen Teachings on the Bodhisattva Way* and *The Mind of Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge*
4. Just sit with the Void:

Ask yourself: who or what is it that is this void?

As thoughts come into your mind suggesting that, as the Void, you are this or that (and they will) say to yourself (gently) *No, not that, I am not that.*

*Remember: you are not “something”; but you are not even “nothing”. You are, in the words of the Bhagvada Gita: “beyond what is and beyond what is not”.*

Consider the implications for manifestation in this: being beyond “what is not” yet in your life - (and therefore able to create it).

### Optional Extra:

5. Can you graduate from being “yourself” in the Void to Being the Void itself?



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## 9.2: Not That, Not That, Not That – A Void Meditation

Close your eyes breathe and relax.

Breathe, and become aware of your breathing.

Imagine that you are breathing in chi and sending it to all parts of your body.

As you do this, the atoms holding your body together go further and further apart.

The chi goes into the spaces between the atoms.

Your body is always more “empty space” than “solid” – but now it is even more so.

More and more relaxed, more and more empty, more and more filled with chi.

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Imagine you are on a cliff-top at night.

All around you are animals, you can see their eyes, you can sense their bodies.

You fear them.

Yet you know that you are privileged to experience what they will do to you.

You have a dim recollection that you have been “chosen” for this extraordinary ceremony.

Yet there is that fear, the fear of letting them approach you.

The animals wait. They will not come till you invite them.

But you can't summon up the courage.

Then you remember:

*Meister Eckhardt saw hell. The only thing that burns in hell, he said, is the part of you that you won't let go of in this life – your memories, your attachments. They burn them all away. But they are not punishing you – they are freeing your soul!*

You breathe and relax.

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You begin to feel a stirring of acceptance. You remember the monster behind the crystal screen in the cave – and how you loved it and it loved you. Could it be that these creatures real love you?

Could you love them?

You hear Meister Eckhardt:

*If you're frightened of dying and you're holding on, you'll see devils tearing your life away. But if you've made your peace, then instead of the devils you'll see angels freeing you from this earth. It's just a matter of how you look at it, that's all!*

Even if it doesn't hurt, what'll become of you? Who will you be, once you have been torn apart. You cringe, you struggle, you resist.

And then you remember:

*Are you willing to be sponged out, erased, cancelled, made nothing?  
Dipped into oblivion?  
If not, you'll never really change.*

Breathe and relax further.

The little nub of acceptance deep within begins to stir, a little more strongly now.

And then you summon up the courage. You invite them.

And they approach you.

And gently, every so gently, they sink their teeth into your now well-dispersed flesh.

*And it doesn't hurt!*

Gently, ever so gently, they prise away your attachments, your ego, your personality.

*And it doesn't hurt!*

What they leave behind is empty space, filled with chi. Feel this.

*It is beautiful!*

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Gently bring this chi-filled empty space to the edge of the cliff.

Remember Apollinaire:

*Come to the edge  
We might fall  
Come to the edge  
It is too high!  
Come to the edge  
And they came  
And we pushed  
And they flew.*

Let Go. Gently push this chi-filled region of energy over the edge.

Fly, float, down, to the beach below – and stand, facing the ocean of chi.

And as the tide comes in, the chi of the ocean laps at what were once your feet – but because your feet are now just chi, they dissolve.

And as the tide gets higher, the ocean of chi laps at your shins and ankles – but because your shins and ankles are now just chi, they dissolve.

And as the tide gets higher, the ocean of chi laps at your knees and thighs – but because your knees and thighs are now just chi, they dissolve.

And as the tide gets higher, the ocean of chi laps at your hips and tummy– but because your hips and tummy are now just chi, they dissolve.

And as the tide gets higher, the ocean of chi laps at your solar plexus and chest – but because your solar plexus and chest are now just chi, they dissolve.

And as the tide gets higher, the ocean of chi laps at your shoulders and neck – but because your shoulders and neck are now just chi, they dissolve.

And as the tide gets higher, the ocean of chi laps at your face and head – but because your face and head are now just chi, they dissolve.

Be the Void that you really are.

Be the Void that you were, are and always will be.

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Be the Void out of which you created the “you” that stood on the cliff-top

Be the Void

*Disciples, there is a realm in which there is neither earth nor water, fire nor air; not endless space, infinite consciousness, nor nothingness; no perception, nor non-perceptions; in it there is neither this world nor another. Disciples, this is the end of sorrow!*

*He who is beyond what is, and beyond what is not....This is the end of wisdom: He is One in All.*

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Now feel an impulse stir in the deep.

A tremor.

A shudder.

A vibration.

A glimmer – in the depths – of *love*.

A flicker – in the depths – of *light, of dark!*

A pulse – of light – and dark – of light – and dark – pulsating

And the light and the dark, a Wave, a Wave, growing, heaving, exploding.

Catch the wave, ride it, ride it, ride the wave.

And the wave emerges from the deep, with you riding it.

Symbols fly past you in the Void.

One of them is yours, grab it. Grab it and place it deep within your heart. This is your symbol, your formula, that which will convert form into matter in the manner of *your* choosing.

The symbol glows!

There is a barrier up ahead, a veil, a pane of glass, a prism.

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Crash through it, light splintered into a rainbow. All the colours of the rainbow.

Slowing now. Into the colours.

Slowing now and congealing. Into *form*.

Slower still, into a new body-suit of a new you, in a new drama, the drama of your choosing.

Fractured into being through the agency of the symbol that is yours, that is in your heart, the symbol, the abstract form of your new way of being.

Explore this new drama –

What do the sets look like?

What are the sounds that make up the sound track?

What are the touch sensations in this new world?

What are the smells in this new world?

What are the taste sensations in this new world?

Who would you like to cast in this new drama with you?

Can you summon them from the Void – the Void that is your home?

Are there any props that this drama still lacks – summon them from the Void!

And when you are satisfied with your Creation - this drama – Float up and look down on it – the smiling author – the I AM presence!

Then gently, ever so gently, float back down to the room that you are in now.

Find yourself at the start of a new drama, a good drama, a drama of your choosing, Act 2, beginning Here Now – in your room, Act 1 coming to an end, it's ok, you can let it go, Act 2 about to begin...

Coming back to your room.

Breathe, relax – and open your eyes...



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### 9.3: Quotations

#### **Durckheim – *Zones of annihilation***

Only if we venture repeatedly through zones of annihilation can our contact with Divine Being, which is beyond annihilation, become firm and stable. The more a man learns wholeheartedly to confront the world that threatens him with isolation, the more are the depths of the Ground of Being revealed and the possibilities of new life and Becoming opened.

#### **Lawrence – *Phoenix***

Are you willing to be sponged out, erased, cancelled, made nothing?  
Dipped into oblivion?  
If not, you will never really change.

The phoenix renews her youth  
Only when she is burnt, burnt alive, burnt down  
To hot and flocculent ash.  
Then the small stirring of a new small bub in the nest  
With strands of down like floating ash  
Shows that she is renewing her youth like the eagle,  
Immortal bird.

#### **Patanjali – *Yoga Sutras***

It is only by giving up this world that the other comes; never through holding on to this one

#### **Eckhardt – *Meister Eckhardt saw Hell***

Meister Eckhardt saw Hell. The only thing that burns in Hell, he said, is the part of you that won't let go of your life—your memories, your attachments. They burn them all away, but they're not punishing you. They're freeing your soul.

If you're frightened of dying and you're holding on you'll see devils tearing your life away. But if you've made your peace, then instead of the devils you'll see angels freeing you from the earth. It's just a matter of how you look at it, that's all.

*From the film: Jacob's Ladder*

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### **Chuang Tzu – *Use the mind like a mirror***

Do not be an embodier of fame  
Do not be a storehouse of schemes  
Do not be an embodier of projects  
Do not be a proprietor of wisdom  
Embody to the fullest what has no end  
    and wander where there is no trail...  
Be empty, that is all...  
    — going after nothing, welcoming nothing

### **Buddha – *The end of sorrow***

Disciples, there is a realm in which there is neither earth nor water, fire nor air; not endless space, infinite consciousness, nor nothingness; not perceptions nor nonperceptions. In it there is neither this world nor another, neither sun nor moon. I call it neither a coming nor a going nor a standing still; not death, nor birth; it is without basis, change or stability. Disciples, it is the end of sorrow.



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### **Upanishads – *The Golden God***

He moves through the realm of dreams; makes numberless forms;  
Delights in sex; eats, drinks, laughs with His friends;  
frightens Himself with scenes of heart chilling terror.  
But He is not attached to anything that He sees;  
and after He has wandered in the realms of dream and awakesness,  
Has tasted pleasures and experienced good and evil,  
He returns to the blissful state from which He began.  
As a fish swims forward to one riverbank then the other,  
Self alternates between awakesness and dreaming.  
As an eagle, weary from long flight, folds its wings,  
Gliding down to its nest, Self hurries to the realm  
of dreamless sleep free of desires, fear, and pain.  
As a man in sexual union with his beloved  
is unaware of anything outside or inside,  
so a man in union with Self knows nothing, wants nothing,  
has found his heart's fulfillment and is free of sorrow.  
Father disappears, mother disappears, gods  
and scriptures disappear, thief disappears, murderer,  
rich man, beggar, world disappears,  
good and evil disappear; he has passed beyond sorrow.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Translated Stephen Mitchell*

### **From the *Bhagvada Gita***

He who is beyond what is, and beyond what is not....This is the end of wisdom:



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#### 9.4: *The Mind of Ramana Maharsi* – selection

Arthur Osborn, *The Mind of Ramana Maharshi And The Path Of Self-knowledge*  
1959, Jaico

The same line you take in meditation will be expressed in your activities... Your actions will tend to follow your meditation of their own accord. (p.70)

He did not instruct his devotees to think out problems but to eliminate thought. (p.79)

In deep sleep the mind is stilled and a man is one with the Self, but in an unconscious way. In samadhi he is one with the Self in a fully conscious way. (p.80)

Until you get rid of the appearance of a serpent you cannot see that what exists is only the rope. (p.82)

"It will be better if you throw the entire burden on the Lord. He will carry all the burdens and you will be free from them. He will do his part." (p.94)

Master, can I help the world?  
Help yourself and you will help the world.  
(p.96)

Depicting the attitude of the disciple to the Guru: "Didst Thou not call me in? I have come in and my maintenance is now Thy burden." ... "I undertake to protect and secure the welfare of those who, without otherness, meditate on Me and worship Me and ever abide thus attuned. (p.174)

The body is like a banana-leaf on which all kinds of delicious food have been served. After we have eaten the food from it do we take the leaf and preserve it? Do we not throw it away now that it has served its purpose? (p.190)

In the course of the struggle he should have surrendered himself to a Higher Power whose Might must be kept in mind and never lost sight of. How then can he be elated? He should not even care for the results of his actions... That is to say that the outcome of one's activity rests with God, and all that one is responsible for is the purity and disinterestedness of it. (p.156)

Whether one is Caesar who is stabbed or Brutus who stabs, being unaffected by it because one knows one is not that person. In the same way, he who realizes his identity with the deathless Self acts his part on the human stage without fear or anxiety, hope or regret, not being touched by the part played. (p.35)

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Even in games, fortune favours one who is unconcerned. (p.71)

[Of] the idea of renouncing home life and going forth as a penniless wanderer... Sri Bhagavan discouraged this. "Just as you avoid the cares of home life when you are here, go home and try to be equally unconcerned and unaffected there." (p.90)

We sink into the measureless being that is without limitation or determination. It is pure being in which one thing is not opposed to another. There is no being to which the subject opposes himself. He identifies himself with all things and events as they happen. Reality fills the self as it is no longer barred by preferences or aversions, likes or dislikes. (p.xi)

Some people also revolt against the conception of the world as unreal, even while admitting the reality of the Spirit, but that is because they have not understood in what sense it is unreal... "Shankaracharya has been criticized for his philosophy of Maya (illusion) without understanding his meaning. He made three statements: that Brahman is real, that the universe is unreal, and that Brahman is the universe. He did not stop with the second. The third statement explains the first two; it signifies that when the universe is perceived apart from Brahman that perception is false and illusory. What it amounts to is that phenomena are real when experienced as the Self and illusory when seen apart from the Self." (p.79)

Never yield room in your mind for such doubts, but dive into the Self with firm resolve... When you feel any doubt, do not try to elucidate it but to know who it is to whom the doubt occurs. What is required is continuous and uninterrupted remembrance of the Self... As the beings reap the fruit of their actions in accordance with His laws, the responsibility is theirs, not God's. (p.83-84)

Let your whole thought in meditation be not on the act of seeing, nor on what you see, but immovably on That which Sees. (p.100)

The mind, animated by the one Life into the act of thinking, a part of the whole which is God, then you argue your mind out of existence as a separate entity; and the result is that mind and body, physically (so to speak) disappear; and the only thing that remains is Be-ing, which is at once existence and non-existence and not explainable in words or ideas.

A Master cannot help being perpetually in this state with only this difference, that in some, to us incomprehensible, way he can use the mind, body and intellect too, without falling back into the delusion of having separate consciousness.

That one point where all religions meet is the realization – in no mystical sense, and the more worldly and everyday and practical the better – of the fact that God is everything, and everything is God.



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All it amounts to is the breaking of a habit. One has to cease calling things 'things', and must call them God. (p. 103)

Although the sun is shining you must make the effort of turning to look at it if you want to see it. (p.143)

Two things are to be done, first to find the Guru outside yourself and then to find the Guru within. (p.144)

Your business is only to surrender and leave everything to me... There are two ways: either ask yourself 'Who am I?' or surrender to the Guru. (p.148)

The instruction, then, was to sit concentrating on the heart at the right side and ask 'Who am I?' When thoughts arise during the meditation one is not to follow them up but to watch them and ask: 'What is this thought? Where did it come from? And to whom? To me – and who am I?' (p.153)

The only freedom you have is whether or not to identify yourself with the body. (p.35)

Whatever you do, do without egoism, that is without the feeling 'I am doing this'. (p.83)

"If the Yogi, though starting upon Yoga for the fulfilment of his desires, gained Knowledge in the meantime he would not be unduly elated even though his desires were likewise fulfilled." (p95)

Sri Bhagavan enjoined surrender and submission to the Divine Will side by side with vichara. He compared a person who though he was bearing his own burdens and responsibilities to a passenger in a train who insists on carrying his luggage even though the train is taking it along just the same and a wiser passenger puts it on the rack and sits back comfortably. (p. 155-6)

The transition from the love and devotion of duality to the blissful serenity of Oneness. (p.17)

Complete absorption in the Self with resultant oblivion to the manifested world is termed *nirvikalpa samadhi*. This is a state of blissful trance but is not permanent. Sri Bhagavan has compared it (in *Maharshi's Gospel*) to a bucket of water lowered into a well. In the bucket is water (the mind) which is merged with that in the well (the Self), but the rope and bucket (the ego) still exist to draw it out again. The highest state, complete and final, is *sahaja samadhi*. This is pure uninterrupted Consciousness, transcending the mental and physical plan and yet with full awareness of the manifested world and full use of the mental and physical faculties, a state of perfect equilibrium, perfect harmony, beyond even bliss. This he has compared with the waters of a river merged in those of the ocean. In this state the ego with all its limitations is dissolved once and for ever in the Self. This is absolute freedom, pure consciousness, pure I-am-ness no longer limited to the body or the individuality. (p.38)

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In consciousness, there are no others... Sri Bhagavan sometimes remarked on the excellence of 'I Am' as a Divine Name (p.134-135)

Self-enquiry alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists and enable one to realize the pure, undifferentiated Being of the Self or Absolute. Having realized the Self, nothing remains to be known, because it is perfect Bliss, it is the All. (p.150)

He defined *Moksha* (Liberation) ... "Do you know what *Moksha* is? Getting rid of non-existent misery and attaining the Bliss which is always there, that is *Moksha*." (p.190)



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## 9.5: *The Path of the Human Being – Zen Teachings on the Bodhisattva Way* – selection

Dennis Genpo Merzel, *The Path of the Human Being – Zen Teachings on the Bodhisattva Way* (2003), Shambhala.

But the experience of Oneness is not the end of the story. We have encountered the Absolute, but that is not yet enlightenment. (p.189)

It's only human to try to cling to the absolute view of reality because it feels so good, but every perspective is limited, even this ultimate perspective. (p.189)

We need to ascend the mountain in order to have enough faith to let it all go again. (p.202)

We learn that the journey is to go through this process again and again. (p.150)

It's easy to slip right back into looking for an answer. But Tozan is asking a different question: can we live without knowing? (p.150)

No longer stuck in "I am It" or "I am not It," Tozan goes beyond. He just is. (p.150)

This profound liberation enables us to really choose to live in the world as it is. (p.xiv)

Practice disappears and there is just life... Everything is the living Dharma. Life itself becomes our teacher: whatever is happening is simply what we need to be going through at the moment. (p.xv)

In order to be liberated, it is not enough simply to see how we have caused our own suffering through *karma*, the law of cause and effect. We have to see that we are creating our suffering now, moment by moment, by setting up the delusion of separateness. (p.47)

Thoughts aren't bad; they help us take action in life. But our suffering is linked to our thoughts through the reactions that we have to them. If we didn't react to thoughts, we wouldn't suffer; we could be at peace, with an occasional thought rising up like a bubble to the surface of a lake. Then, poof. Gone. (p.52)

Zen tells us to look inward and pay attention to all of it, the beautiful and the ugly aspects of ourselves. The posture of zazen gives us the strength and grounding we need to face it all. We can look honestly at ourselves and acknowledge everything that comes up. And as we become more familiar with the workings of our mind, our true nature begins to clarify: "My true nature is dynamic and unfixed, every-thing and no-thing. My true Self is no-self!" (p.53)



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The same thing happens when we do anything completely; we could be swimming laps or playing the piano. So why does it seem like such a big deal when it happens to us in zazen? Simply, when we are completely involved in any activity, we can identify with the activity itself' but when we are completely involved in doing nothing, there is nothing to identify with. (p.64)

Discover the truth of the Dharma in daily life. Buddha nature can be realized in the simple and mundane acts of daily life when we do them completely. Brushing our teeth and taking out the trash are nothing but manifestations of Buddha nature... Be completely present in whatever you are doing. (p.71)

True peace of mind is achieved when we learn how to accept what is. (p.81)

I would like to live my life like the man in this story. A man living at the foot of a mountain likes to hike and explore. He is happily hiking along one day, when he trips and falls over the edge of a cliff. Miraculously, he manages to stop his fall by grabbing a branch of a scrawny tree with his teeth. He knows that he is doomed. Either the branch or his strength will eventually give way. The guy is just hanging there when he spots a juicy, red strawberry growing on the cliff. He reaches out, plucks the strawberry, and pops it into his mouth! (p.83)

Zen practice is about seeing what is and then acknowledging that truth. (p.83)

To just sit, to just be, is the hardest thing to do because it demands tremendous faith and trust. (p.116)

When we look inside and let go, we can come from Big Mind and see that life is going perfectly. There is no need to try to control any of it. When we allow everything to just be, it all functions perfectly, exactly the way we want because we give up wanting it to be any other way. The trick is to let go of wanting. When we give up our preconceptions of where the snow should fall and let it fall where it falls, when there is no question about what to do. Grab a shovel! Instead of fighting and resisting, we can simply take care of each situation as it happens. So take a vacation. Put the car in neutral and give up trying to control. Relax and let be. Appreciate how everything is functioning perfectly. (p.125)

We open ourselves to whatever life holds. There is no greater liberation. (p.130)

Yet when you let go of your mind, you do function more freely. You lighten up and have more fun playing the game. Before we realize that life is a game, we take the whole thing too seriously. (p.170)

Some spiritual practices focus on getting rid of negative traits, but not Zen. In Zen practice we work on embracing the whole, and that means every aspect of ourselves. (p.65)

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Our positive and negative sides are simply two halves of the same whole. We need to embrace both of them if we want to feel complete – and *be* complete. We can never fulfil our true potential if we are denying half of who we are. (p.65)

We are looking for answers but searching is the problem. Cease seeking; stop looking for a solution. (p.75)

Choose to let go... Take this “me” less seriously. (p.81)

With practice we begin to see the world from the perspective of Big Mind, which can see all perspectives but clings to none. (p.81)

An ongoing refinement of who we are... Our life becomes an adventure when it is fed by the limitless Source of our true nature. (p. 109)

To embrace all views without holding on to any of them, perhaps you have to be a fool – or a Buddha. (p.156)

Thoughts come and go, sensations come and go, things come and go. We practice not clinging to anything, neither pleasure nor pain. In this way we train ourselves to stop resisting life. And we learn something wonderful: the mind can be at ease regardless of what is happening. (p.85)

With practice, we can become aware of conditioned responses before acting on them. In Buddhism this is the point of liberation. The moment a thought or desire pops up, we can choose to respond in a way that is different from our habitual, self-serving response. Mindfulness allows us to seize the moment between the impulse to act and the action itself. We can choose to respond in a new and creative way, or we can choose to simply watch as the impulse fades away. Either way, we have claimed our freedom. (p.90)

There is nothing to grasp. (p.107)

If the role of “mother” is our identity and somehow that identity is taken away from us, we suddenly don’t know who we are anymore. But not knowing is a good thing! Until we give up our identity, *any* identity, we will not have the opportunity to be something else – our true Self. (p.174)

Trying to control or interfere with the process of change only leads to disharmony, frustration, and conflict. As we learn to *let go* and *go with* the impermanence in our lives, we notice that change doesn’t upset us as much as it used to. (p.185)

Even the notion of dropping duality is duality. The duality that there is duality to drop is the last duality to drop. There is *nothing* to drop. There is *nothing* to do... Our life becomes something

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to resolve, something to fix. In fact, *there is nothing to begin with!* So, of course, there's nothing to fix. But because that is inconceivable, we conceive ourselves as something – and that is what we try to fix. (p.194)

Sooner or later we find ourselves back where we started, in our limited, ego-centered mind. Nevertheless, things will never again be the same for us because something remarkable has happened: *we have seen through the illusion of the small self, we know that this self is not solid and substantial.* (p.xiv)

*We are liberated from the fear of losing anything, including the self. When we are everything and everyone, how could we possibly fear any loss? But don't believe me. Discover this Mind for yourself. To simply believe the teaching is like counting another person's treasure; what good does it do you if it's not your own?* (p.6)

*Enlightenment* means that you have directly experienced your true nature, your intrinsic perfection and wholeness. But that doesn't mean you have somehow gotten rid of your imperfections and become a perfect being. *Realization lets you see perfection and imperfection simultaneously.* When you can view your imperfections from the place of knowing your intrinsic perfection, your life is forever changed. (p.7)

We don't need to give up our families or our jobs, our lifestyle or our culture, to accomplish the Buddha Way. *We only have to let go of the self.* (p.41)

If Buddha is not out there, Buddha must be in here – as if there might be a little Buddha hidden inside, to be found if we just look hard enough. This is still dualistic thinking. (p.4)

By *letting go of our desire to understand,* we can open ourselves to Oneness, the absolute unity of all things. (p.109)

We need to realize that it is our *concept* of wholeness that blocks us from the experience. *We may have confusion, feelings of inadequacy, and a bunch of other problems, but if the point is to experience wholeness, how can any part of ourselves be left out?* To be perfect and complete as we are is not the same as having only the nice bits. By definition, perfect wholeness has to include and embrace all aspects of ourselves. Yet we go on trying to eliminate the disagreeable parts while hoping to attain the experience of wholeness. (p.137)

*This existence, as it is, is already nirvana.* (p.154)



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## 9.6: The self emerges out of the ocean of I AM – image

