

FINDING FREEDOM IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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This evening we will look at the general principles of dzogchen understanding and I'll do my best to keep it clear, simple and hopefully useful in some way.

We all experience ourselves as existing. We have our body, we have our voice, we have our mind, we relate to other people, we're used to the experience of hopes and fears. The ceaseless movement of our thoughts, feelings, memories and so on. And, yet, this is easy to solidify as a sense of self, as a formalized identity, that we seek to know *who* we are and *how* we are, and, on the basis of that, maybe make some micro adjustments in order to facilitate a better engagement with those around us.

Generally, from the Buddhist point of view – and dzogchen is a sub-school of Buddhism –, we're concerned with impermanence. That is to say, we reflect on the fact that thoughts come and go, feelings come and go, sensations come and go. When we actually look at the phenomena which constitute the world around us and the components of what we take to be ourselves, we find that all of them are in flowing, they're in flux. There's nothing reliable.

The many thoughts that we've had already today are gone. We may have similar thoughts later, but each thought was arising and passing, sensations arise in pass and, inside that, there's very little to cling on to. And yet, when a strong thought arises, when a strong feeling arises, it feels as if it is me. I feel as if I am the thinker of my thought and, because I am the factory making that thought, that thought is my product and, therefore, the quality of that product reflects on the quality of the factory. So, if I have difficult, perturbed thoughts, anxious thoughts, depressed thoughts, this must mean something about the quality of me as the producer of the thoughts.

And this, of course, is our familiar ego identification. The enduring point of reference that I have, my sense of being somebody who exists as me – I, me, myself – means that I am constantly selecting items of this vast panorama that I inhabit, selecting items which I can incorporate in the ever-changing and ever developing unfolding and yet seemingly constant sense of I, me, myself.

So, although I become many people in the course of the day, or I express my potential in multiple formations in the course of the day, there is still some sense that there is an enduring thread of meanness, that I am the one who continues. And this is something that we need to investigate a little bit, because, of course, if we start with the assumption that I exist and, particularly, I am who I think I am, I am

¹ Audio available at <http://audio.simplybeing.co.uk/2018/11/finding-freedom-in-daily-life>

who I say I am, or more problematically, I am who other people have told me I am, and we've internalized these messages and definitions, which, then, become limiting factors in our possibility of self-expression and more problematic, self-inquiry... because, if you start your life with an answer, if you start with a statement, with an assumption, the beginning point of my sense of self is that I am who I take myself to be and I take myself to be this, because this has been given to me, through family, statements, through the way teachers behave towards us, other children in school and so on.

And from the Buddhist point of view, of course, we have a whole stream of ingredients coming from *karma*. Karma is the patterning that rises when we exist, when... Karma operates because, for example, now I can see you, which is lovely... So, I see you, I see different faces. In response to the different faces, I have different qualities of energy, of feelings tone and that would lead me towards an intention, that I might feel drawn toward someone, or little bit hesitant about someone. So, my intention is forming dualistically, subject-to-object. I exist, the object exists. And on the basis of my intention, I bring it into operations – I'm friendly to one person, maybe not so friendly to another –, which unfolds as modifications of my posture, my gesture, my facial expression, tone of voice and so on. So, it not that I intend to give myself, my intention is to connect, but as I move towards the object or the other person, how they are, their presence in the world, influences my potential for manifesting. Because I might feel friendly towards you, but if you give me a blank stare, then, okay, back off a little bit. And so, there's an interpersonal pulsation which is going on all the time.

And yet I'm doing this, this is my conclusion. I am the doer of myself, I am the actor, the agent, the one who makes things happen. That's how I maintain my sense of being an individual, with a particular identity, and, yet, I didn't intent that my facial expression would change in that way, I didn't plan that my breathing would change in that way on encountering your face.

Something happens to me. You could say "you happen to me", but, more strangely, "I happen to me". I find myself being like this with you. So, I'm not doing me. Me is coming to me. There's a double move here, in which I appear to be the creator, but also the recipient of what is created. In fact, our self is always tilting on this cuss point of subject and object.

I am an object and the subject simultaneously and, when I look at you, primarily, I see you as objects in a sense that I don't know many of you. And so, I can't impute too much to you, but I interpret you according to certain templates that I already have. Attributions around age, gender, style of clothing, style of hair and so on. I start to construct an image of you and, then, I start to relate to you as I have taken you to be. So, the closer I get to you and get more information about you, the more I can build up my image of you, which means that I start to see you through the opacity of my own assumptions. Does that seem familiar?

Probably, when we meet someone for the first time, we have five minutes, or maybe even just one minute to see them, and then after that we build up an internal picture of who they are and, because I'm relying on the usefulness of my image of you, to predict something about you, I need to be very careful how much of you, as you actually are, I allow into my picture. So, in fact I, want to edit a lot of you out, so that I can hang on to the fact that I know who you are. So, it's a kind of profound stupidity and blindness in the maintenance of knowledge, whether it's knowledge of oneself or knowledge of other people.

Identity is based on a foreclosure. Before we enter into the field of phenomena, we're starting with an idea. An idea of self – this is how I am –, an idea of other people – what I like, what I don't like – and, of course, that's operating on somewhat subconscious level. That is to say, I'm not consciously in touch with the criteria that I'm using for selecting aspects of the environment in order to build up the picture.

So, I've got habit formations which confirm to me that I am who I am. These are reinforced by my selectivity in how I perceive you, but, of course, I trust my template. You are who I see you to be. I don't want you to disturb my template. "Hmm, these people are difficult, aren't they? They just... I don't know why they are the way they are. I know who they are!"

So, actually, to open to the lived presence of another person is likely to disrupt the image of the map or the template that you have of them. This is why intimacy is actually very problematic. It's much easier to deal with people at some distance, because you can maintain them as imaginary figures in your own fantasy of the world.

This is a kind of sleep. Traditionally, in Buddhism, this is called stupidity, or opacity or mental dullness. In Tibetan, it is called *timuk*, which has the sense of something shadowy and dark and, of course, in the dark, if you're out in the dark night and there's no light at all, you're fumbling and stumbling, and you're trying to imagine what's there. Is it friendly? Is it dangerous? There's a kind of tentativeness, because we don't want to live in a tentative way. So the more strongly you can trust that the world is as you imagine it to be, you have the confidence to overcome your anxiety, which is probably a bit more honest, because it's telling you "I don't really know what is going on", but that is disturbing. So, let's just pretend that we're all competent and intelligent and we know what life's all about and we'll proceed in that way.

So, from the Buddhist point of view, this is how what it called samsara is maintained. Samsara has the notion of turning around again and again in states of existence, each of which is patterned according to certain kinds of assumption. And the most of our life is starting from assumptions. We think "oh, this is a man, this is a woman." So, on a very basic level, we think we know the difference between men and women. So, implicit in that, is the notion that I know what men are like, I know what women are like. Then, we look in our own personal experience and we haven't a clue. We're confused in the actuality of meeting a real woman or a real man, but, if we step back and we just stay with the idea, the idea is so simple. This is why it's very difficult to get close.

Phenomena are delinquent. They do not fit into our map. So, this is the basic choice. If we are concerned with some sort of awakening, or the freshness of awareness, or to be in touch with our energy as it unfolds, dialogically, in non-duality, then, we have to start to be a little bit softer in relation to our own assumptions and our predictions. Who is the one who is thinking? Who is the one who is feeling?

If we start with a question, then, this starts to be two things possible. One is that there's a space of inquiry, which means the possibility of actually looking and seeing, the senses come alive, we become receptive rather than projective, because, of course, when you know something, you project that knowledge onto the object in the belief that you are actually knowing what the object is. In fact, you're telling the object what it is, you're controlling your own impression of the object in order to maintain your illusion that you know what it is. And this creates a security, but a great deal of mental dullness.

Now, if we can open to the object and then allow it to show itself, then, we're more likely to be touched and moved. Something will happen, because, then, we can receive the object through different aspects of ourselves. Traditionally, we can think in terms of the chakras. Points of clarity in ourselves, or the energy, or the erotic relationship that we have most of the time with everything which is arising. "Eros" is not just about some kind of genital excitation, but it's a response of warmth interest or the absence of that warmth interest, which has a major impact on how we pursue our existence, whether it's about buying clothes or getting close to other people.

So, the more receptive we are, receiving and being in touch with what is experienced in that receptivity, the strong positioning that "I know who I am" and "I know what I like" and "I know what I don't like" starts to dissolve. We don't know. Not knowing may be more of a blessing than knowing, because knowledge, cognitive knowledge, which is subject-onto-object knowledge or subject-onto-self-as-object knowledge, knowing something about something is always starting from the assumption: there is a knower and there is something that can be known about.

What do we do when we know something? We compose it, we take our impression and our interpretation and we melt the two together and that forms our knowledge. So, we're in a room, which has an unusually shaped ceiling. So, if you have look up and say "wow, that's interesting, that's unusual." It's unusual, because we're used to particular kinds of ceiling. So, through comparing and contrasting, through

holding our sense of the familiar and what we actually perceive, we can rapidly come to the conclusion "the ceiling is unusual".

– Where does that take us? Not very far...

– But now I know something about the room. I'm in kinda here!

Okay. Why would he do this? Who knows? So, expectation, predictive knowledge, meets a contradiction, which could be a little bit shimmery, a little bit "ooh! what is that?", but, rapidly, "Oh, this kind of a ceiling is different from what is familiar", and, therefore, the basic contradiction of friction between my assumptive starting point and the new phenomena which are arriving can get smoothed over, that we rapidly come to know. "Oh, I know that. oh, I know that."

You can see that with kids in the playground. Somebody says something quite surprising and the other "oh, I knew that! I knew that", because it is so important not to be exposed to somebody who doesn't know and most of our sense of self, our identity, is compounded from myriad forms, many moments of experience, into composite formations. Composite essentially means artificial. They are constructed, they are not intrinsic, they are not innate. They arise due to causes and conditions and, when the patterning of causes and conditions moves, the structure shifts. We're actually on sinking sand. We build our house on sand. There's nothing reliable.

And we see this very much with Brexit now. There's a whole confusion about what it means to be British. Who is truly British? Who should be entitled to have a passport? Who should be entitled to have identity? Should Britain stand alone against the world? Is Britain part of Europe? You have a maelstrom of thoughts interpretations. Fears of history, fears of geography, fears about the economy, fears about racial identity and so on.

And inside this constant movement of factors, all kinds of emotions arise, because people want to have certainty. "What shall we do? What shall we do?" Well, there is clearly a lot of things that you could do in relation to Brexit, but it's going to be presented as only two things: either you leave according to the government's plan or you totally fuck up.

So, you don't really have much of a choice and that's of course how we stabilize our ignorance and turn it into pseudo wisdom. We pretend that the world is simpler in order to make ourselves feel potent, but it's not like that. The world is extremely complex, it is not complicated. The complex appears complicated when you try to sort it out by cognition, by a rational thought, by joining the dots and making a new pattern, but complexity is actually simplicity, if you open to receive it.

So, you've got some nice parks. You go out in the park, there are many different trees. Even at this time of the year, when the leaves are down, you have the branches, thick branches, thin branches, little twig that's at the edge, there is so much to see in one tree. If you were to try to draw it precisely, it would take a very long time, but you, through your eyes, receive that tree, all the rich complexity. You look out at a field of grass, the wind's blowing across it, it's shimmering, millions and millions of moments are given to you in one moment. You receive the whole shebang. You get it all at once, in its complexity, as long as you don't think about it. But, once you try to work out why the grass there is moving more than the grass there, you've got compare and contrast, you've turned this patterning of movement into a thing, which that can, then, be held in relation to another kind of thing and, then, you've got a problem.

If you're working in the university, you could try to get the research grant and go out and fill the grass and take it to the laboratory and dry it and test it in all sorts of ways, to try to show and to establish a definitive reason for different movements of grass according to the same wind conditions. Why would you do that? Because you want to put food in your mouth. It's not intrinsically interesting at all. It becomes interesting when you devote years of your life to botany, because you put more and more blinkers on to yourself and you polished plants until they shine, you look at stones and think "Oh, that's the geology department, but plants, they are good."

So, in that way, your selective attention makes something's foreground bright and interesting and others recede into the background. This is the problem of interpretation, because it has to be selective, because there's always too much going on to compute, to comprehend, to apprehend, to take hold off. Everything is given, but we want to take hold of it, because we want to know...

– What is it?

– Well, it is what it is.

– Yes, but what it is?

– I don't know. It's just life.

Well, that wouldn't take you very far. You couldn't get one GCSE on that basis. You have to be able to say something. You have to learn to pretend that you're intelligent and you know what's what. And the more you know how things are, that is to say, how they should be described, named and weighed and put into categories of organization, the more you're seen as a competent person.

So, from the meditative strands of Buddhist practice, this is seen as a great delusion. This is the seduction of the world. That by abstracting selected items from the immediacy of the phenomenological field and privileging these items and giving them a particular valance, you position yourself in the world as someone drawn to this and shying away from that. So, you become partial and your partiality – which as it extends through time becomes that bias and a selective attention – becomes the very way that you stabilize yourself.

So, I become more like me, when I see less of the world. And of course, I'm in the world, so, when I see less of me... So, it's like in therapy, we talk a lot about the shadow, that is to say the aspects of myself which I can't see, because I'm maintaining an image of myself.

So just as if you have a sculpture and it's in the garden at night. If you've only got one lamp illuminating it, certain features will shine forth and others will be hidden. So, the more you fix the line of your attitude and your intention towards the world you encounter, some factors become more obvious to you – seem to register more and, so, you respond more to them – and others are less available.

So, of course, we're drawn to the things which seem to make sense to us. Not just because the object *per se* seems to be fascinating and intriguing, but because it's confirming that I exist, that I have a life, that I am me and not you, that you do things I don't do and, actually, the fact that you do things that I don't do is very lovely for me, because it confirms that I'm not you, because it's bad enough to me to look after me, but if I was like you as well and try to work out why you do what you do, that's very hard.

As a psychotherapist, I do that for a living. Not a bad-to-be-paid kind of work to have, trying to work out are people were up to. Generally, after many years in the trade, I'd have to say I'm usually unsuccessful, because people are always more than your interpretation or your conclusion or your set of assumptions. Life is more.

So, the function of a meditative approach to life is to allow more receptivity without being overwhelmed.

Now, I've got a cup here and the cup has some water in it. So, when we look at the cup, we see that it has a certain capacity, it can accept a certain volume of liquid into it. You couldn't take a whole liter all at once, it's too small, that it's obviously too small for that, because it's a cup.

Now, this room has more capacity. We have quite a lot of people here. So, we're filling some capacity, but, above us, between our heads and the ceiling, there's a lot of space, but we can't really get people up there. So, there's a lot of – as it were – dead space and, if you go outside, there's a big amount of space. The sky and the stars and all this *wha, hoo!* You could put a lot in the sky. But you can't put so much in the room, you can't put so much in the cup and you can't put so much in yourself.

So, the more you define yourself, the more you know who you are, you define your capacity and, therefore, we start to feel overwhelmed. "I don't like. That that doesn't feel right to me." So, something is arising and it's being evaluated. Evaluated in terms of my senses, of my capacity, but we know that, if we go outside and we're relaxed and open, all the trees arrive at once. We see the clouds scudding across the sky. Vast vistas are my experience and I'm not overwhelmed. I may be intrigued, I may be energized, I may be amazed and dazzled, I may become speechless, thoughtless, just in wonder, and I'm still here, breathing in and out, alive. I haven't been diminished or destroyed.

So, that is a very, very important beginning point for thinking about meditation. How is it that, sometimes, I seem to have access to infinity or to that which is beyond limitation and, other times, I find myself very, very small, with an extremely diminished capacity, in which "I've had it up to here. I've had enough. Back off! Leave me alone! I don't want to hear it from you! I've had it."? "It just feels too much, too much for me", but, half an hour later, you say "Oh, I feel a bit better now. It's when, you know, when I come home from work and you start talking at me... I can't bear it! Just even half an hour. Oh, that feels better."

So, we can see that in ourselves, that we are like an accordion, opening and closing, less capacity, more capacity, less capacity, more capacity. So, capacity is an energetic formation, which we misidentify as being the truth of myself. It is, if you like, situationally, the truth of myself in this moment. If you were writing, it would be "myself-in-this-moment". That would be a kind of:

– Oh, it's all there, but this is too much. You know what I'm like. Why do you always do this? It is really not fair. How long have we been together? And you always say the same thing to me.

What is this? People fight like this, they quarrel:

– I want you to understand that I can't do this. Five minutes with your mother is enough for me. You can talk with her for five hours, but five minutes for me, enough!

But it's not always true. Sometimes, it's easy. So, I've got an idea of my capacity in relation to that person, but it's not the truth of the actuality of the emergence of the phenomenological field. That is to say:

– Sometimes, she seems quite interesting and sometimes just "shut ut! go away! why are you here?"

I'm sure we all have this kind of experience.

So, we have a fluctuating capacity and, yet, on the basis of bad moments, we can try to just cut a very sharp line that defines:

– This is too much. I'm not putting up with this. How dare you do that to me.

As if I'm being invaded and overwhelmed and undermined, because to be overwhelmed means that the other or the outer takes over the inner and the sense of self that I'm trying to maintain, although I'm operating through my senses all the time and I can't govern what's going to come through my eyes or ears or proprioception in the body, I mean, this fluid moving world experience, but I think "oh that's enough." That's enough because, as I start to feel it's too much, I tense up. And, as I tense up, I shrink in. And, when I shrink in, I'm gonna have less capacity.

So, this is the central point for us in our human existence. It feels healthy to protect myself, that, if I can withdraw, tense, edit and, if possible, try to control the object, then, I shall maintain some arena of individual freedom in which I can move this way and move that way. If I can't do that, if I'm at the mercy of what happens, then, it appears that I am being acted on. I am the object. Now, you have become the subject and "you are doing this to me and I don't like it".

So, of course, you have unpleasant sensations arising, which you are the cause of and I'm being limited by this arising sensation and it appears to be the totality of my existence. And, then, it's gone, because something else happens. You smile, you go make a cup of tea, the mood changes and I relax a little

bit and it's not so bad. It was horrible and it's not so bad. Like a wave rising and going down. Something expanding and then contracting. But, in each stage, I'm wanting to define myself: "This is me, this is how I am, don't push it, boy. Just careful." So, there, we can see how much we're drawn into the fantasy of control. If only I had more power to control circumstances, I would be a happier person.

Now, as we know, some babies are very peaceful, sleep easily, drink their milk, can have a little doze and other babies are very, very hard to settle and extremely difficult for a mom with a small baby that cries a lot in the night and can't settle, because, of course, in a sense, is nothing much that the mom can do, she's got to be there with this disturbed young ball of energy. And that, sometimes, leads into revenge attacks on the baby, "because the baby's getting to me. Why don't you shut up?" We know that parents shout at small babies. "Why don't you shut up?" This may well be parents who generally love the baby, but they come to a point where they just can't take it anymore. "I've had enough!"

So, this question of capacity is really vital for ordinary mental health. But, if I am a person in a world of others, other people, who expand and contract in rhythms, I can't predict. Then, I'm constantly trying to work out how much of you can I tolerate at this moment. So, we go forward to get bit more and go back to get a bit less. And, when you're a baby, you don't really have much capacity to do that. You're at the mercy of what's arising inside.

So, as an adult, we can see my independence, my freedom to be myself arises, because I can modulate the impact of the environment on myself. And I can learn to modulate the ways in which I express myself out into the environment.

"I learned that if I'm very rude to people, they will get upset and, when they're upset, they'll reject me and I don't like to be rejected, so, either I continue to say what I want to say, or I learn to cook it a little bit, put some honey on it, or maybe just repress it, retroflex it altogether, because I am a social creature and I need to survive in the world with other social creatures.

So, let's try to link this to meditation and to the understanding of the nature of the mind. What I've been talking about so far is a sense of being a self, being a person who has a mind. "In my mind, it occurs to me that..." All sorts of things are arising in our minds. As we are here together in this room, each having their own experience – emotions, memories, thoughts, plans and so on – arising and passing in the mind, the flow of experience. We know that this is happening. Who is it happening to? To me. This is a conclusion; this is something to be learnt.

When you're a small child, people keep telling you are the one who is making a lot of noise; you are the one who keeps throwing your food on the floor; you are the one who pees in the bed. So, you get the sense that you are an agent, that *you* are the one who does whatever it is you are taken to be, and you have to learn to manage this quite complex mélange of arising factors. We manage ourselves through learning to move our energy in particular ways, expressions, expressing, expanding, restricting and so on.

– Who is doing that?

– I am doing that.

– But who is this "I"?

"I" is a sign, is a linguistic signifier, that seems to indicate something reliable and knowable, but, when we look for ourselves, what do we find? Because I can be happy and then I can be sad, I can be warm, I can be cold, I can be hungry, I can be satisfied. "I" is an empty signifier. "I" have no content of its own. That's why it's so useful. Anything can be put into "I". "I love you. I hate you. I want to kill you. I want to kiss you." All kind of thoughts and feelings can arise and we can feel them. We may say them or you might just feel them, because they seem to be part of who we are, in that moment, but they are discontinuous.

So, "I" only works because it is empty. So, it's like a theater stage. If the props were nailed and superglued onto the stage, the value of the stage would be reduced, unless it's a play that's going to run for many, many years. Because the props have to be put up and, then, taken down, they need to be safe

enough that you can move around them, but they are not fixed features, they are temporary features, just as the movement of the actors on stage and the words they have said are part of the unfolding drama that you go to the theater to see. It is the emptiness of the stage that is the potential of the theater. If the stage was already pre-occupied, it would be very difficult to stage something fresh and new, because your eye will be caught by... say there's a backdrop of a mountain scene and the play is about two people trapped in a bedsit who hate each other, that would be rather disconcerting.

So, the more furniture you have in your mind, the more overdetermined the kind of drama you're likely to respond to is. Does that make sense?

So, this is when we look at our neurotic structures of energetic patterns, how *chi* operates in our body, or *prana* operates the *nadis*, the pathways and the knots and the limitations that create these habitual vibrations, which are the determinants of repetition compulsion. And, because we've been raised in families with value systems, a lot of that furniture is actually values, it's means, it's beliefs, which we adhere to. Maybe democracy, or a liberal attitude, or religious attitude, or politeness, or whatever, and, when a challenging situation arises, it feels to us that it shouldn't be like that. "Of course, it's obvious it shouldn't be like that."

And we can say that with some confidence, because my value system has been activated by the behavior of these people.

– How could they do that? How could they say that? How's that possible?

– Clearly, it's possible, because they have different furniture in their head. They don't share my values.

That is to say that the organizing factors of our existence are mental, they are mental phenomena, they are primarily beliefs, ideas, cognitions, which appear to be true and valid and especially valid under all circumstances.

So, inside this maze, this labyrinth of factors, which seem to confirm the continuity of my sense of self, how will I get an open vista? If you've ever been in a maze or labyrinth situation, you see there all these pathways and these high hedges are up and you can't see over. You're trying to remember which one you came from and where you're going to go. And that is without lights, we look in the past and we think:

– Shit! What was that all about? Seemed a good idea at the time. I don't have a clue why I did that. And now I'm here, where should I go? Oh, I am going that way. Why am I going this way? I don't know. I just thought I maybe should do that.

We are all that sea], drifting around. We are like even worse than seaweed? At least, the seaweed doesn't try to lock itself into a rock. But we're just... ahh, like leaves in the autumn wind. Yet, with this over-determined story that "I am the master of the ship", "I am the maker of my life story", "I am myself", "I want to be authentic and true to myself".

So, these constructions are quite problematic. They lead us into a notion of ourselves, which is over-determined. So, how would I get the open space within which the factors of my existence can take on their proper shape and the function, which is non-exclusive, non-limiting for my capacity to receive all that, is arising?

In the Buddhist tradition, they talk a lot about a *path*. Generally speaking, in the more dualistic systems, dualistic simply means *here*, as I am using the term just now, that there is a difference between now and yesterday and now and tomorrow, or between here and there. I go from here to there. I go from darkness into light. I go from limitation into more clarity. There is somewhere to get to, somewhere that will be different from here and that will be better than here, according to my idea, anyway. So, *there* is usually just another formal idea. It's not intrinsically different, it has the same kind of structure.

So, there are many teachings about the stages of the path and the different kinds of purification that you have to undertake in order to develop your capacity to increase loving kindness, to

increase generosity, patience and standard virtues and diminish reactivity, selfishness, murderous intention and so on.

All these paths start from the assumption that we somehow know who we are and we know what we should be about. "I want to be a better person". That assumes that I've got some idea of what a person is. So, we're starting moving the furniture on the Titanic. "If I've got a better pattern of this, that will be good. That would be really nice." The ship is sinking, we're going to die. We don't know when we're gonna die, but we're all going to die.

– Oh, who am I?

– Well, I'm this pattern. I used to be that pattern, but now I am this pattern. And I hope you to be that pattern, because that's a very nice pattern.

But, when the ship goes under the water, all the deckchairs are washed off; all the patterns vanish.

So, what was that all about? What was that for? From the dzogchen point of view, you are starting from the wrong place, you are starting from yourself. As if you knew where you were, you knew what was wrong with you, you knew what you have to develop.

Dzogchen starts with the idea of a ground, or a base, or a source. That there is an openness, a space, out of which – but also within which – there is an effulgence, a radiance, a display, a clarity. It doesn't go from here to there. It displays itself within itself, because you don't have a space and, then, a boundary and, then, another kind of space and another kind of space. The space has no limit. It's an infinite spaciousness. And this is the ground of our being, which is our being, each of us, we have this.

This is how we are able to be out in a storm, seeing all the trees moving, the seagulls rising and falling, everything, everything, everything... What an infinity of perception coming to us! You couldn't get that into a small pot. We can see "Wow! My mind is much bigger than I think it is", because, when I think what my mind is, I shrink it, in order to know it, in order to be me. So, being me is not good for my mind. Being me blinds me to who I am. So, the ground is infinite.

There are many different meditations that we can do, which are patterns of being open to how things are, allowing the display, or the unfolding, or the revelation of how it is and this direct how-it-is-ness, when we stay with it, is not what we might have imagined, or believed, or thought. We don't know how to interpret it. It is beyond thought, beyond appropriation, conceptualization and, yet, it is undeniably present. Our presence, the lucidity of the mind itself is not a thing and, in this lucidity, we see the movements of shapes, forms, patterns, ever-changing. Some of these patterns feel like me or I take to be me, some of these patterns I take to be you, but they arise together.

We're in this room together, we can all look around, we see different people. The people in this room are your experience. You are in your body. This feels like me. I am the one who is here, but I'm here with you, because you are my experience. I experience my body, but I experience you. Unless you're deeply asleep, you are in a field of experience, which you can cut down in middle and say "subject", "object", "self", "other". But, in its immediacy, in how it shows itself, there is no difference.

So, I can feel my feet on the ground, I can feel my lungs, a little bit of pressure as I breathe, and I see your different shapes and colors. I experience you, I experience me. This is the field of experience. When I experience you, I experience light. What I see is light. What I interpret is man, woman, young, old. I experience green t-shirt, gray t-shirt. That's what I tell myself about what I see. A story *about*. What is the immediacy? It is inexpressible. When we just stay with the color, we just stay with the shape of someone's face, their eyes, the shading, "what's that?"

There is nothing to be done with it. We receive it and is enough. Satisfaction, ceaseless satisfaction, moment by moment.

– But what does it all mean?

This is where we get stupid. "What does it mean?" It means whatever you want it to mean. Because the world is open, you can put any meaning you like on anything. Tonight, in Oxford, there are people going around, trying to get money, so they can stick a needle in their arm. Not everybody wants to do that, but some people desperately want to do it. And they'll steal from you and push you over, because they feel the most important thing is to get some powder, cook it up, stick it in a syringe and bang it in their arm.

That's interesting, isn't it? How could that happen? There are some other people, out having a meal, and, when they go home, the first thing they do is go to the toilet and puke it up.

– Fucking hell! Why would you do that? You've just spend twenty quid stuffing yourself in order to puke.

But it feels very important to the person. These are standardized behaviours. That's how the world appears to someone, according to the prisons of their mind. So, the potential of the world, the light, the freshness of this ever glistening, shimmering world that we inhabit refracts according to our neurotic interpretation of family, inherited interpretations and so on, and we find ourselves drawn to these behaviors. And, if you've ever been trapped in a behavior like anorexia, self-cutting, self-hatred and so on, then, you know what it's like. It feels real, it feels really important. People banging their head on the wall, they punch the wall, they hate themselves.

– I hate myself.

That's an amazing thing to say. "I hate myself."

– What is yourself?

– It's the fucking thing I hate.

– But what is it?

– You're stupid? You don't fucking listen to me! Can't you hear what I'm saying?

It is an amazing thing to hate yourself, to despair over yourself. Some people despise themselves. They feel that they are some kind of insult to the world, just their existence. So, there you see that the inner division of subject and object has become rancid, it's become rotten, it's something putrid, in which "I have to live with the rotting corpse of myself. I'm chained to this dead body, this uselessness, this hopelessness." And I've spent, over the years, a lot of time talking to very suicidal patients and they are very often in this hating themselves, and trying to shed a little light into that, to show the particular dynamic of that theatre of the self is often very, very hard. It's resisted.

In the same way we know that people develop major drug addictions and freeing themselves from these addictions is very hard, because these strong patterns are very simplifying ways of experiencing the world. Just as we have in Poland and Hungary and many, many other countries now, with movements of right-wing strong leaders coming up and the dictator leader removes anxiety by saying "you don't have to think, I'll tell you". So, when you have an addiction, "I need to use heroin" or "I need to cut myself, because I can't bear the feelings that are arising inside", this is a dictatorial function. There is one truth, one panacea, one method for transforming all life's problems– which could be starving myself, vomiting, beating myself up, going out and having sex with strangers, it could be any of these very well-known patterns – by which I learned to manage the ungrounded confusion of "why am I like this? I don't want to be like this! I can't bear to be like this".

So, this again brings us back to the sense of *self*. So, what would we do from a meditative point of view? We take up this idea of an infinite ground, that the base of the thoughts and feelings and sensations, which can feel so overwhelming, so intolerable, is actually spaciousness. These are movements in space. "I hate myself" takes about three seconds to say it. "I hate myself." What is that? It is sound, dissolving into emptiness.

"I hate myself. I hate myself. I hate myself." You have to say it again and again and again, because, every time you say it, it goes into silence. It's a construct. But, if you believe it, it appears to be a truth about yourself. So, the statement "I hate myself" is empty and full at the same time. It's full, if you believe it and it's empty if you just hear it. The meaning is embedded in the words from the heart, from the troubled heart, and we can believe anything about ourselves. We can believe that we are unworthy or hyper-worthy, that people should adore us and praise us. People have many, many different ways of self-position ourselves.

But all of these mental events, when you start to sit with them, you see they are evanescent, they are transient, they arise and, then, they're gone. When they're there, if you believe in them, they give you the full whack, but is it the whack of the thought, which is vanishing, or is it the whack of belief?

– I believe it's true, therefore, it's true for me, because I believe it.

So, that is slightly solipsistic, slightly sealed and self-serving. "It's true, because I believe it to be true." What then is a belief? It's a pathway of investing a transient formation with an enduring value. The value is always projected onto the phenomena. Phenomena themselves are transparent, translucent. They come and they go; they come and they go.

For example, in chronic pain clinics they now teach meditation, because, if somebody says "I have this terrible backache. It is there all the time. I can't bear it. I can't bear it.", that's a story and that is a composite story.

– Doesn't it change?

– No! It is always the same! Arrrrgg!

The person is completely persecuted by this grinding which is always there and what we find is that, when someone troubled in that way is encouraged to attend to what's there, which is, of course, the contrary movement, cause "if you've got this pain in your back, you just want to get away from it. You want to kind of free yourself from it, with a heavy medication, but just not to have it. It is the enemy, it's getting to me."

Then, you can teach people some breathing techniques and, then, they can open to the nature of the sensation and what they start to find is that the sensation changes through time. That it's hot and it's grinding, then, it's clawing, then, it's dull and dark and, so, they get myriad formations, pulsations of pain. It's not one thing and, so, they're not persecuted by just one thing. They are living with a transient moving panorama of tightening and hot and sharp movements of sensation. They don't want that to be the case, but the more you can see it as process, as flow, as part of your experience, then, you see that that is already part of your expertise.

– Is your pain what is happening for you?

– Yes, is my pain.

Now, I can embrace what is happening and, so, it's not on the top of my head, I'm not being governed by it, defined by it, determined by it. It is with me and I am with it. And this reduces the amount of tension and it allows people to enjoy the moments of respite that come and so on.

So, this is an outer way of showing the basic function of meditation, that if you offer space to how things *actually* are, then how they *appear* to be will shift. But, if you stick with your interpretation, your assumption, you believe that you know how it actually is, it will become a self-validating proposition, because you will always know "Arhh. Is it that same damn thing again? Why am I always the one the feels it?" People who suffer from chronic depression often have this feeling.

– It's just the same thing. I can't bear it. It takes me over.

But it's not the same. When you are into it, there are many, many different variations and shades. So, what we see here is that the major obscuration that we have to clarity is knowledge, is our

compounding, our gathering moments, transient, evanescent moments and compounding them, compressing them into a truth, an enduring truth, but that is an idea. Phenomena always shift. Ideas have to be repeated, but "I hate myself, I hate myself, I hate myself", each time you say it, it's as if you're kind of stamping – in some countries, you put the earth into a winged box and stamp on it and stamp on it, and, then, you can turn it upside down and you have a basic brick that you can start to build with in a hot dry country.

So, we're doing that to ourselves, we're taking these moments of self-belief, which actually self-imagining, and by reiteration, by repetition and by belief, we compress and squeeze this and we come to a conclusion:

– This is just how I am. Why you always want me to be different? I am just like this.

While doing couple therapy, you hear people saying these things again and again:

– Come on, sweetie. It's not like that. You are not like that all the time.

– Yes, I am! You never listen!

This is very normal. We understand why human beings speak and say these things, because it feels true, but it's not true. It's a self-deception, it's a delusion, because, if you attend to *how* you actually are, it will not be the same as *what* you think you are.

So, the function of meditation and deep inquiry is to go from "what", which is describing entities, things, definable substances, to the experience of being present with the unfolding of the field of experience.

So, this infinite ground is not dead, it's not dark, it's not a blank empty space, because it's pervaded by the illumination of our awareness, our presence, we are here, in this room, we are here. Lots of things are going on, I am talking a lot, moving around, people are going in the room and out, your body is moving, you've got sensations, there is a lot going on and you are aware of it. And, when you think about what is going on, you bring your selective attention that we've already been looking at and that selective attention, if it's always privileged, will blind you to the presence of awareness.

So, awareness, that is to say, our receptivity of the open immediacy of what's unfolding is obscured by our own mental activity. We stupefy ourselves. No one's doing it to us. We fall into the belief that our thoughts are more illuminative than the immediacy of the clarity of awareness itself. And, so, we think we have to think.

– I have to try to make sense of what is going on. Wait a minute. Let me think about it.

– Think about what?

– What you just said.

– But I said it. It's gone.

– No, but I need to think about what you said. Did you hear it?

– Yes

– So?

– No, but I need to think about that. Give me a space. I need to collect my thoughts, so I can reply to what you said to me.

Problematic, because what you're doing is you're building and solidifying an edifice of interpretation, a construct, which, because of its density is opaque and, then, because it is opaque, you cannot see through it, the light, the clarity of the mind, which is the immediacy of presence, is dulled by our own effort to add light. When we think about things, we add darkness, not light. That's a terrifying thought. It would indicate that our education system is just horrible and stupid.

"What function does Ophelia have in the life trajectory of Hamlet?" You have to write essays like that at school. You have to think about it, you read these big tomes and copy things down. You prepare for the exam, all these ideas of why Cordelia did this and that, why is Cordelia such a stupid girl, bla bla bla... Thought about thought about thought about thought and, then, you get an A-level, an A-level on being full of thoughts.

So, when you walk outside and you're studying for the exams and it's May and it's the May blossom on the trees, the teachers are walking behind you and, with a stopwatch, seeing how long you pause in front of the tree and how mesmerized you are, inviting the tree to fill your heart. You don't get one mark for that. You hear the black birds singing, you don't even get one point for that. You get nothing, you get marks for thoughts, thought production, pattern creation.

So, the natural clarity of the mind, the original freshness, the pristine beauty of the world, as it is offered to us and as we can receive it, *nul point*, we get nothing, nothing for that. You get rewarded for cutting and stitching. We are the endless tailors in the sweatshop of samsara, cutting and stitching and making and the fashion changes and fashion changes, and we are cutting and stitching and making, trying to fit in, trying to be regular people.

So, meditation is simply to relax out of the unnecessary work of making yourself stupid, so that the natural clarity of the mind can shine forth. Because, when we start from the position of the individual, that we looked at some time ago now, we often have a sense "I want freedom. I'm tired of myself. I'm tired of how my life is. I'm surrounded by all these limitations. I don't really know how to be with other people. I am not sure what to do with my life. The years are going by. What should I do?" And, then, we think, "I want freedom *from* the restraints, the things that restrict me and direct me and I want to have freedom *to* express myself."

The words *from* and *to* are both indicating activities. To have ***freedom from something***, we step away from it; to have ***freedom to do something***, we step towards it. So, these are movements of engagement and disengagement, but you are still in duality, still subject and object. And you can spend your whole life doing that, but we have other aspects of freedom, which is the particular concern of dzogchen – also of Daoism and many other of the non-dual schools – which is ***freedom as*** and ***freedom with***.

So, to have freedom *as* is to have freedom as one is in this moment, to be free as you emerge in the patterning of relatedness with the environment around you, with the dependent co-origination. "On the basis of seeing your face, I feel this. On the basis of an itch, I have a scratch." So, we're pulsating and moving. Can we be present as that?

And but you can only be free as this, if you dissolve the deep tendency to have commentary, because, when you split yourself and you keep an eye on yourself and you have an observing self – which is not a good thing to have, really not a good thing to have –, when you observe yourself, you look at yourself as if you were something which was observable. This is subject and object in a splitting and not a good idea. But, when you do that, "I know how I am".

No, you don't. You know how to tell yourself a story about how you think you are. That is storytelling, that is narrative. Narrative is clothing. The naked self has no clothes. The naked self can wear clothes and be naked. We are all naked under our clothes, but, when you don't know that you're naked, you just have clothes. So, you have an infinite neurotic wardrobe, trying on this, wearing that. How you talk to your parents, your kids, how you talk to your boss and lovers and so on. Different conversations in different situations.

So, what is the naked presence that we have? It's not a thing. It doesn't stand in relation to anything else. It's not an entity. You cannot do comparing and contrasting, which is the basis of all school and university education, whether you're doing Science or Arts. Comparing and contrasting. This experiment and that experiment. The hypothesis with the outcomes. This in relation to that. But this is an idea. Carbon is an idea, heat is an idea. These are how we conceptualize these formations, because lots of cultures are aware of carbon, but they call it different things and they make use of it in different ways. But

we, through our formalized education, tend to come to the one particular reading of *it*, the standardized reading, which with our wonderful national curriculum, we can ensure that all children are exposed to the same formations of their thoughts, so that we all think alike, we all know what is what. This is a big stupidity, because, actually, carbon is a name, which you apply, is a sign, it belongs in the domain of semiotics.

Semiotics is a game that your mind plays, with emergent, transient, ungraspable phenomena. It is as if, it is as if. It is make-believe. "Let's pretend and, if you're good at pretending, you get your degree, and your mom is applauding and crying." Family delusion. What have you got? A lot of debt and a bit of paper.

– We could have given to you a bit of paper for 10 dollars, with things printed on it.

– No, but it wouldn't be official, it wouldn't be a *real* validation.

That is a concept, that is a concept. In our culture, at this time, degrees have different valencies. Girls are getting many more degrees now than boys. A whole shift in gender. Dynamic is the open field, the power relationship changes.

So, all these things that we seem to encounter, objective things, facts, entities, being the hard world, the material world, from the point of view of dzogchen, is interpretation. "This is a rock." "What kind of rock is it?" Many, many different names.

We think we are seeing what is there, but we are telling what is there, what it is. This is the work of the mind. There is no granite in the ground. There is no limestone on the hill. Limestone is a concept. Whatever is there is not limestone until you tell it is limestone. And you only say it's limestone in English. If you're speaking Russian, you wouldn't call it limestone. It is a sign, it's a way of making sense of patterns, but we believe that our concepts tell us the truth about phenomena.

So, the function of meditation is to sit openly and allow the movement of the mind to arise and pass and the more you see this pattern weaving, it's like a ceaseless kaleidoscope. It could be this, it could be that. These are mind-created – by William Blake, 'mind-formed-manacles' – that we are trapped by our thoughts, when we take the thoughts to be true, to be actually definitive of what's there. In fact, they're more like caresses; they are gestures, which bring about movement in our interaction with the world. They are energy pulsations. They don't tell you a final point. They are participative.

When we use language is how we participate in the unfolding and we can be together, just as tonight I'm blathering a lot. Some particular mood, some particular feeling tone of being together hopefully arises from this. That's what it's for, it's about the mood creation and, in the mood, perhaps some lightness of being, some sense of possibility unfolds. We are not trying to nail down facts. That's the way you become stupid. It's participative, when we give ourselves into the co-emergence or the co-creation of this particular pattern. And if we are here, present with it, this is it, this is it. They don't give you a doggie bag, there's nothing to take away.

"What was that bloke are talking about? He went on and on and on. What did he actually say?" It is not about cognitions, it's not about building a better image of yourself. It's about experiencing, being here together, moment by moment, different and different and different.

And, then, ***the fourth kind of freedom is the freedom with***. I am free to be with this and this. I'm free to be in the world, as part of the world, so that my attention can allow equal status to the other and to the so-called self. The more we equalize the two, the more we have equanimity and free ourselves from bias, from prejudice either towards ourselves or prejudice for others, through idealization or denigration, then there's an ease of being, because the fluctuations of the world flow through us. We expand and we contract. And this is all that is happening. It doesn't matter; it's just this.

The train I came on was delayed by about 15-20 minutes, stuck in the middle of nowhere. This happened and that happened, and I could see the people sitting around me getting agitated: "This shouldn't be happening." They had things to do, they had places to go, but, actually, this is what there is.

"But I don't want it to be like this." So, they sent phone messages to other people. The actual experience of being on that train, in that particular situation, was not interesting in itself. It was something to be managed or reacted or thought about or shared with other people. That is to say, instead of opening to "what's happening in my body, when I feel trapped on a train? What is this? What's happening to my breathing?" I don't mean that as a kind of research question. I mean "It's fucking happening. I'm here. What is this?" When I ask "What is it?", thoughts, thoughts, thoughts... How is it? How does it feel? "How" is it a lovely word, because it means being receptive. It means I have to let this come through, I have to be with this, to let it show how it is for me to be with this: "I'm on the train." Thoughts, feelings, irritations, frustrations, relaxations, all kinds of little moments pulse through. This is being alive.

– But, surely, the train should run better? People are getting irritated.

– The train is late, the train is late, the train is late.

– There's nothing I can do about it.

– But the train is late...

Give us a rest! There is no train. You're sitting on your seat, in a metal tube. And how is this?

So, meditation is not something foreign. It's called home, because it takes you from the alienation back to yourself. When you think about being on the train, you alienate yourself from the experience to go into a commentary. You rise up on your helicopter, above the situation, you have an overview, through which you can construe the many different factors that are operating, and with that understanding, you, then, create a picture or an image. "Oh, this is how it is." But you are not there anymore.

You are off this little island of ideas and interpretations, floating above the situation. So, commentary doesn't help. Commentary is the way in which we maintain the seeming indestructible continuity of the sense of self. The self is a commentary, the self is narrative, it's nothing else. Who you take yourself to be, who you imagine yourself to be, is constructed by thoughts, memories, sensations, feelings, moving together in these different patterns.

You don't need to change any of it. It's just a question of relaxing into, being present with it.

– Oh, this is arising, this is arising, this is arising.

– But it shouldn't be. It would be better if...

I am adding, I am adding. Do I need to add? Am I adding volume or am I covering value?

So, in practices like dzogchen, we make a very clear distinction between intrinsic value and compounded or constructed or added value. So, intrinsic value is the immediacy of the saddle of the blackbird or the feeling of the wind on your face, or hearing what somebody's saying and just been present with that. The compounded value comes when we add our interpretation, when we make sense of it, when we take the fresh and add the old, the stale, the habitual, the familiar and mix the two together and, then, we know where we are, we know what's what, we know what's going on.

But, actually, the fresh is spoiled, it's not fresh. So, how are you going to refresh yourself with the stale? How is that possible? It is not possible, but it's reassuring the stale is very comforting, is very, very comforting.

Soap operas are watched by millions everyday. Soap operas tend to be very predictable. There's always going to be infidelities. There's always going to be some nasty person and some real cutie. It's not very difficult to work out the top lines of these scenes and people listen it on the radio and watch them on television, because they are predictable, they are reassuring, they are stale. Your own thoughts are very stale, they are neurotic formulations.

So, the practice of meditation would be to open to the quality of pristine, the unchanging, the fresh, that which is not developed on the basis of cognition, which is pre-cognitive, pre-conceptual, but it's

not an either/or choice, because that's the stage of the path. As you start to see, oh, there is a luminosity, or a presence, or a clarity, prior to thinking.

When thoughts come and move in that clarity, not onto the clarity, not as an alternative to the clarity, but as an expression of the clarity... if you imagine a wave coming out of the sea, cause the wind is blowing, and you see these little flecks of spume, you know, the running horses on top of the waves, that's what the thoughts are. The thoughts are the excitation on the top of the wave which is inseparable from the ocean. And, then, you have really non-duality.

So, you have all the diversity of interpretations and thoughts, but they are contained within the infinity of awareness. It's when the ground of awareness is lost sight of, is forgotten, that you're stuck with the absence of the intrinsic and the pristine and you only have a constructed. And that's what called samsara.

So, that's really the heart of it, is to learn to relax out of the addiction to making sense, interpreting, commenting – which, of course, are all dynamic moves, they're all phallic, they're all doing something, there are trusting, they are creative, they're masculine, using traditional symbolism –, and we want to move to something more feminine and receptive, something which is more spacious, that there is a space to receive and the more we receive, the more we realize that we are space, that the mind itself is not a thing. And, then, by not being a thing, by being no-thing, by being nothing, you get everything. But, if you're something, you are something in a world of other somethings. You get crashes and frictions, contradictions and so on.

So the door to freedom is to go from something to nothing, to everything, but if we hang on to somethingness, to "I exist", "I am me", "I know who I am", "you know who I am", this very constricted, compounded edifice blocks us to the infinity of the ground of which we are the expression moment by moment. So, we are ungrounded.

That's why we all have these air disorders in the body; you have *lung* and different kinds of excitation, because we're not actually grounded, but the issue here is the ground. The ground that's been referring to is the ground of space or *sunyata*, emptiness. It's a ground which you cannot find anywhere. It's not a ground under your feet. It's not a ground behind you. It is the infinity of the field of experiences within which trees, airplanes, cars, people, rotten apples, everything manifest. There is nothing which is outside the infinity of the presence of the mind. This becomes radical, because:

– "But I am just me, inside my wee body. I am just one person in a big big world. I look through my eyes and I see you and I don't know who you are. I don't know who you are. Who am I? Can you tell me who I am?"

This is what it's like on a bad day. You feel fucked. You're getting older, you don't know who you are.

– You are getting older.

– What is it all about?

– I don't know.

That is all thought construction. That is just a little whirlwind, moving.

– Where is it moving?

– Through my mind.

– Oh, through my mind. That is quite nice

– Is there a front door in your mind?

– I don't think so. I just blew in.

– Is there a back door?

– No, I don't think so, I just blew out.

– Oh, maybe there is no door. Any walls?

– No top, no bottom.

This is our live. Movement in space. And the space is still and ungraspable and the movement is unceasing.

So, these are the basic principles that the practice is designed to help us to open to, so that we can live with it, so that everyday life is not about struggling to hold yourself together, but you start to realize that what I take myself to be is a self-patterning manifestation of energy. There isn't a core self inside to be defended against, or defended from the factors around me, but, rather, we emerge in these different situations.

So, when I was seeing a lot of patients, each person who came to see me in the course of the day saw a different James Low, because I was constituted by the person who was sitting in the room with me. Everybody got a different deal. Everybody got the bit of me that they could get and I got the bit of them that I could get. And if they had gone to see someone else, they would have had a different experience. And this is our life, that it is coemergent.

So, we have the open ground, which is infinite space, which is our mind, this is illuminated by the natural clarity of the mind, which is the showing of everything all at once and, within this, we have this ceaseless pulsation of subject-to-object, self-and-other, moving and swaying within clarity, within space. And that movement is non problematic, if you have clarity and space.

So, instead of looking for something to hold on to, you realize that patterning and shaping is how it is. You don't need to shape yourself. You will emerge in shapes in different situations. And sometimes you will smile and sometimes you will cry and, if you're connected with what's going on, it's a really good idea to cry sometimes. When you feel like shit, why don't have a cry? That is a good thing to do. When you get angry, you can shout. Why not? It's what you do you. You do all these things, you have more energetic freedom, it's more relational.

Other people, for the first time, start to see "Wow! You have feelings!" That's how you show yourself, because, if you don't show yourself, I'm only able to imagine what's going on inside you. The more you hide yourself from me, you are simply my speculation.

So, English niceness is not a good idea. It's a cover-up, it's a pretense. And what it is a pretense against is not that I am full of shit and when you find out you will hate me. It's that "I don't know who I'm going to be, when I'm with you." The main thing we're ashamed of is our unpredictability, because we don't know who we are. But you can't know who you are, because you are emergent within the field of clarity.

So, we've had an awful a lot of words. Maybe it's time to say "the end".