

# Depth over time

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God dwells within you as yourself. The purpose of life is to discover that ultimate truth. We all have the opportunity to gain this realization and attain a state of liberation by raising our consciousness beyond the fundamental misunderstanding that we are separate from Divinity. It is God's Grace, combined with our deep wish to grow, that transforms our experience from duality to Unity. If we are very clear about what we want in our life and continually focus our life force toward that profound inner transformation, we can achieve it. The expression "depth over time" captures the essence of the journey of transformation and liberation available to each of us in this lifetime.

When lightning strikes and nears the ground, its energetic field magnetizes energy from the earth, drawing it up toward itself. The ascending force is not visible until it connects with the descending lightning. What we see is a pattern of light (called a "leader") that spreads and forks through the sky. As it nears the ground, the leader attracts an energy (a "streamer") that rises up from the earth. When the leader and streamer connect, a powerful electrical current begins flowing. The connection is complete and apparent.

This natural phenomenon beautifully

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mirrors the process of spiritual transformation. As Grace descends, our individual wish ascends to meet it. Until the two meet, the current cannot flow. Is it the downward movement of Grace that lifts the ascending wish out of us? Or is it our wish rising, which pulls down Grace? Whatever the answer, it is the joining, the union, that creates our experience. This contact completes a connection that allows the full force of the power of the Divine to strike us at the core of our being. The strike of Grace frees us from our limited understanding, allowing us to recognize that we are not separate, not different from our Divine Source. When this happens, our consciousness and experience of life is transformed.

There are many authentic practices that allow such a profound recognition to unfold. Tantrik practices focus on the merging of individual consciousness with Supreme Consciousness. Tantrik traditions use the terms Consciousness (Shiva) and Energy (Shakti) to describe the structure of life. Shiva's Supreme Consciousness is the foundation of all of existence, and the universe is the manifestation of Shakti's power to create. But underlying this discussion is the fundamental understanding that all of life is simply One Thing, beyond all duality. This is not just philosophy or theory. It is our fortune that we are



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blessed with the possibility of realizing this truth. It is our birthright to experience this reality, and in order to live in that state of awareness, we must work to transform our consciousness, with depth, over time.

The power to create is the foundation of every individuated life—of *your* individuated life. We are mirrors of our Divine Source. God's will and power have brought us into existence, and embedded in our psychic DNA is the ability to be conscious, to use our will, and to act. It is important to understand that our will and power are not different from that of God, because this means we have been given the capacity to create the life we choose. It's a wonderful act of Grace that we not only have this power to create, but also have the opportunity to liberate ourselves.

I once saw an amazing documentary about the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. It was visually quite beautiful, but what really intrigued me was the actual process of transformation. When it is ready to become a butterfly, the caterpillar crawls up into a tree and begins to

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wind a cocoon around itself. The first marvel is that the cocoon is not made of things gathered from the environment. The caterpillar extracts from within itself a thread, which it wraps around its body, creating the cocoon. From the outside, it looks hard and ugly—yet within the cocoon a miracle of nature begins to take place. Instead, a metamorphosis takes place within this chrysalis as the caterpillar turns into what can only be described as “soup.” It completely dissolves into a mush, and yet its essence is the same even though the form has changed. From that soup, the butterfly forms a new body with wings, and then eats its way out of the cocoon and flies off. The butterfly may only live for a short time, but it went through that incredible metamorphosis just for the opportunity to fly!

Another wonderful insight from this documentary is that according to the “butterflyologists” the caterpillar is conscious of what is about to happen. I don't know how many caterpillars they interviewed to discern this, and I don't really care, because the scientists' conclusion suits my point perfectly: Transformation is a conscious process that happens from within us. Life arises and subsides in the field of consciousness. Life is consciousness pulsating into form, with form subsiding back into that. Consciousness itself never changes in this process. In the process of becoming, there is no diminishing of being, nor is there a diminishing of being as it subsides. The same vibrancy and consciousness is *always* there, giving us the power to choose to undergo a transformation even more miraculous than what happens to the caterpillar.

Life is always about the power of choice, the power to create, and the power to liberate.





The choice is this: Do you want to live a life of joy or not? Understand that this is our fundamental choice in life. We have the power to create our lives, right down to every moment and every experience in it. This is your life. What is it about? We get to choose whether we live in the unconditional joy of freedom or in the pain and suffering of not knowing we are one with God. It is every human being's right to have that experience; it is the gift and the purpose of our life.

Realization can be described as the complete immersion into the unity of life, a state in which the only experience is one of unconditional joy and love. These words hint at the nature of true freedom, but words cannot express the reality of living in God's Presence. Because the reality is like nothing we

can express, Rudi once said that so much of the challenge to our realization is our inability to imagine it. Try to imagine extraordinarily profound joy, and then multiply it one thousand times and you will not come close. Yet somehow, there is some part of us that knows, and seeks to make that dimension of life a living reality.

It is important to understand that although awakening can happen at any moment, it takes a lifetime to actualize our enlightenment—for that transformation of consciousness to permeate every layer of our lives. Even when we have a profound experience of our own Divinity, there is still the need, every day, to make the conscious choice to reinvest and internalize that awareness back into ourselves. This is how we transform our experience into a

state we always live in and function from. It's due to Grace that we have this experience, and then we have to integrate that new awareness and allow it to express itself in our life. We seek to be free of the limitations of our body, mind, and emotions, but we want this to be a living reality, not something we attain after death. In fact, if we don't attain freedom while we are alive, we won't gain it after we have died.

We cannot find freedom in the world. We have to find liberation in ourselves, and then express our freedom in the world. It does not work the other way around. Where shall we experience living in Divine Presence except within ourselves? We first go inside and discover that freedom, and then understand how it is expressed through our outward life. Living in freedom

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means flowing with every moment—accepting everything we encounter and letting go of the need to change anything. In order to live in Divine Presence, we must choose not to live in our own tensions and limited self. Therefore, if we are serious about finding freedom, we must also develop the ability to change our inner reality.

One of the significant tenets of the practice of Kundalini MahaYoga, as part of the Tantrik tradition, is that while freedom happens from within us, there is nothing in the world that needs to be rejected in order to find our realization. Freedom is the rejection of nothing, and the inclusion of

everything. Because there is no duality, there is no ultimate difference between our inner and our outer experience—and perhaps, coming to that understanding is the true meaning of freedom.

When we look at what keeps us from our freedom, we find that the ego seems to be as powerful as Divinity. It has a firm grip on us. The ego thinks it is real and the center of the universe. Its belief in its separate status is an illusion that dominates our awareness to such a degree that if we wish to transform ourselves, we must consciously choose to do so. We must proactively choose freedom and Grace, because we are

otherwise allowing limitation, tension, and ego to reinforce the hold they have over us.

Einstein said, “You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created.” The problem of the ego is its misunderstanding. We can’t chip away at our ego from the outside without first dissolving it from the inside. So often we are unwilling and unable to deeply open our hearts and feel love pour into us—and then we never find a different place in ourselves from which to combat the boundaries and the prison of the ego. God’s love is the only thing that can penetrate this density. We must allow the Divine Force within us to emerge. When that happens, the ego can be dissolved.

If we try to change the ego from the outside, we will not be able to do it. Even if we are successful at changing some of our patterns or our personality, we are just modifying something superficial, like the clothes we wear. Although this is where most people want to focus, it really has nothing to do with the ego. We can say, “I will change, I can behave differently.” We can—but the dissolution of the ego, the immersion into our own Divine Self, has nothing to do with personality. In the deepest sense, it has nothing to do with our day-to-day behavior. It has to do with the complete dissolution of the misunderstanding that we are separate from God, and more importantly, with the actual experience of our unity with that Divine Presence.

Once this transformation begins to happen, the Self emerges from within us, and the core attachment that the ego uses to bind us begins to dissolve. The ego falls away. This process of dissolution is inherently painful, especially if we only focus on it from the outside, from the point of view of



what is dropping away. But if we focus on what is emerging from within we are joyous about the process. As we start to experience the profound fulfillment and infinite space within us, we are motivated to strengthen our commitment to growth. We are trading up—trading in our ego for a Divine Life. Transcending the ego does not mean that we douse it with kerosene and throw a match on it. Rather, this is a process of expanding beyond the limited egocentric perspective. Our work is to recognize that although this perspective is part of the matrix of what we experience ourselves to be, it is not all that we are. In our attempt to expand beyond the boundaries of the ego, we must learn to consciously discriminate between that which is going to attune us to the highest place within ourselves and that which doesn't serve us. When making choices about our lives, we don't surrender the infinite possibility; we surrender our fear. Where do we find fear? What does it look like? It is energy. It has no form and yet we translate it primarily into form. What we really fear is giving up our attachment to form; giving up our attachment to the limitations we are used to and that defines who we think we are.

The profound superficiality we humans are willing to accept in ourselves denies us the depth that is available within. Ironically, it is the very joy and happiness of everyday life that can cause us to get complacent about our limited experience. That is why God provided a few challenges in our lives—to force us to look for a deeper reality. Regardless of what we experience on the surface of daily life, God dwells within us as ourselves, and what is available to us is unbounded and unlimited. It is always our choice to remain on the superficial level of life or to engage in the process of



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transformation. And while the first option is in some ways easier, the reward of doing the work needed to truly live in freedom is worth all the effort.

If we do not experience profound fulfillment, then there is some part of us that is still not free. The purpose of our lives is to live in unbounded joy and freedom. The trick God has played on us is that He gave us freedom and then put a container of lead around us, which we have to break our way out of in order to have that experience. Tantrik philosophy says that Shiva and Shakti decided to get together and apparently lose themselves in the world—to intentionally forget themselves so that they can experience the joy of remembrance, the joy of finding themselves again.

The paradox of Divine Life is that both freedom and binding exist within us. What part of us gets expressed is our choice. God invested a power in us to create whatever life we want, and this

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includes the possibility that we cannot remember our Source. We get caught up in one level of manifestation, thinking it is the only reality. Life is infinite. Creation dances on the field of consciousness, taking the form of everything in the universe, including our individuated lives. Form is consciousness pulsating into manifestation. That is how we get here and become part of the play and the beauty of God's creation. How wonderful!

My advice is to choose the highest in life. Choose to live in the experience of freedom, pure joy, and unconditional love. Choose transformation and liberation. Choose to live in depth every day. Choose it over and over, again and again. Remember, the equation for spirituality is depth over time. ●

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