

How to Enlightenment (v 1.1)

by Kevin Damaso

Hi!

This is a booklet about enlightenment. It's pretty short, and contains only the most basic fundamentals. If you ever wanted to know anything about enlightenment you've come to the right place.

I'm an enlightened person, and I've been enlightening others for a while. At the time of writing, it's fourteen people that have been enlightened under my wing. I don't say that to brag. I say it because I think that if you come to someone for a service, it's only fair that you can ask for their portfolio. For example, if you need an architect to build your home, you'll want to see what he's designed in the past to get an idea of whether or not you'll like his work. I think that the same should be asked of spiritual teachers.

I'm not a spiritual teacher, as such, however. I don't think of myself as one. Really. I'm just some guy who saw something and thought it was worth sharing with other people.

I hope you find what I've written helpful. If not, feel free to print out a copy, rip it to shreds, set it on fire, piss on the ashes, and then send it all in a package to me with a very hateful letter.

All's fair in enlightenment and truth.

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WHY ENLIGHTENMENT?

Point de bonheur sans liberté

(No happiness without freedom)

Why try to become enlightened?

The answer to this question determines whether or not you'll want to pursue enlightenment. It is an important question that I didn't get an answer to until after I became enlightened. There were vague assertions, but no one really addressed the issue of *why*? Here, I hope to inform you in the way that I wasn't, because frankly, I didn't have a choice when I found it. I needed it because I was in the darkest bout of depression I had in years, and it was the only thing I could think of running to. It was the only hope I had that might help me.

By letting you know the why, perhaps I can spare you from *needing enlightenment because of suffering*, which seems to be a common occurrence. Eckhart Tolle talks about his enlightenment and how it was triggered by suicidal depression; Jed McKenna explains that you're drawn to enlightenment by a clawing desperate madness; Ramana Maharishi says that it was a sudden violent fear of death that overtook him which led to his awakening. That's not necessary. It's circumstantial whether or not you become enlightened through suffering.

I thought the opposite of this for years, and in fact *chased suffering* because I believed that hitting rock bottom would trigger my enlightenment. I thought that experiencing the kind of overwhelming despair they did would be a requirement. I was wrong, as I would find out, and there's hope for you yet if you're thinking the same way I did. Maybe you've been putting off reaching enlightenment because of how lucky you are, because of how little you've suffered. You don't have to.

BUT, it is relevant to look at how suffering is related to enlightened.

Enlightenment eliminates suffering.

That's one of the reasons why people search for it. They're told that it eliminates suffering because you can see evidence of peace and bliss in those who are enlightened. Well, they're half right. It doesn't magically or supernaturally protect you from suffering, which is what most people think this means. That's kind of silly, because then you're afraid of suffering, which really is another form of suffering—you're a slave to suffering because you're trying to escape it, and your actions are all dictated by what causes suffering and a need to go the opposite direction.

Enlightenment doesn't protect you from suffering; it makes you impervious to suffering. You'll still suffer (by which I mean feel bad, get angry, have desires that

are unfulfilled, cry, and all the whole range of negative emotions and experiences). It just won't trap you.

For example, I used to beat myself up over getting angry. Someone would say or do something that would tick me off, and I would get furious in return. Whatever happened next, the worst part was when I'd be alone again, and think to myself, "I shouldn't have gotten angry! I should know better!" and proceed to get angry at myself for having gotten angry. It's a cycle that traps people, and it's not just for anger, it's for everything. You feel a certain way, and then you make yourself continue feeling that way because you dwell on it, thus creating a *feedback loop* wherein your suffering causes more suffering, your anger causes more anger, your pain begets more pain. Ever ask someone who's in the middle of a tantrum why they were so angry and have them reply, "BECAUSE I AM!?" Yeah, it's that kind of thing.

Enlightenment stops you from going into the feedback process. You don't suffer for suffering's sake. You suffer, notice it, and then it moves on. Some gurus have suggested watching, but it's not really the watching that stops the suffering. It's the breaking of the feedback loop, which enlightenment does.

Perhaps the most relevant to your personal reasons as to why become enlightened, is *enlightenment frees you from suffering*.

What then, is the second?

Enlightenment is your natural state.

Given that enlightenment is the truth about what you are, then it is very much beneficial for you to be enlightened. If it is true, then you might as well know what it is. And you know what? It is. Enlightenment is absolutely true.

Let's trace it back to its etymology. Enlightenment comes from the Pali or Sanskrit term "bodhi," an abstract noun derived from the verb budh. Budh can mean any of the following; to awake, become aware, notice, understand. That's a curious thing because these convey a sense of "knowing." It could be said that the Christian term "to know God" refers to related matters.

More importantly, it puts into perspective the phrase "to attain enlightenment." Attaining bodhi is then translated to "attaining understanding" or "attaining awareness" or "noticing/awakening." Rather than an abstract striving, getting to enlightenment is shown to be a recognition.

A quick note on the use of the term "awakening." It conveys a mystical sense, wherein it is as if you were dreaming before you are enlightened. The dreamstate analogy comes from this conception of enlightenment as awakening, which is a poor way of communicating it because it indicates a state you need to overcome. Only, anyone who has attempted to overcome something knows that in that attempt, you place the thing you seek to overcome in the centre of all things. In trying to overcome being "asleep," one puts all the focus on struggling against it,

thereby giving more chance to failure. Hypnotists exploit this mercilessly.

The more helpful way of looking at the term “awakening” is to see it as a type of enabling. When you are asleep, you can’t consciously move your body or control your functions. They are done on autopilot. When you are awake, you have control and choice. In terms of enlightenment, being asleep is reacting on autopilot, your actions and motivations being decided for you by feedback loops, emotions, your environment, and the particular indoctrination of your upbringing. Being awake is having full choice and control over these things, because one is *aware, noticing, and understanding*.

Enlightenment isn’t something you strive for; it’s your natural state. It’s what you already are and already have all around you, but what you’re not yet noticing now.
Enlightenment is recognising your natural state.

And it is because you notice, recognise, and act from your natural state that you stop being self-contradictory, nay, self-destructive!

Enlightenment makes the world a better place.

It does, it really does. This part I laboured for months after I got enlightened to try to understand. How does it make the world a better place? I asked that of myself and tried to find the answer, and I’ve got the rough sketch here for you.

The main problem of human beings isn't that we don't have great ideas; it's that we fight amongst ourselves for whose idea is best. It is that we are divided and cannot get along because of those divisions, not realising there is no us, reality is one, and that for us to fight ourselves is ridiculous.

Think about Lennon's exhortation to "give peace a chance." Is that really so difficult? When you're unenlightened the answer apparently is yeah. We can't even sit still for long enough to try peace; because we'll look the other guy in the eye and think he's trying to kill us first. Infighting plaguing humanity.

When you are enlightened, and recognise that there's no you, what power drives the division between you and others? What strength can your conflicting convictions use to fight each other? None! It becomes a technical matter, rather than an underlying fault.

That's why so many enlightened live hermetically sealed lives. That's where most of them draw their peace. Because they see the futility of conflict, they leave it to unenlightened persons.

Not a bad move, if what you're going for is personal peace. Sure, you'll get it. But what about the rest of the world? How about them, huh? The task of the bodhisattva is to learn the technical resolutions to other people's conflicts, and use that to enlighten them. IF WE CAN GET EVERYONE ENLIGHTENED, THEN PEACE WILL GET ITS CHANCE.

Because if we can get people enlightened, we can show people that their conflicts, no matter how large or small or devastating, are all futile, and from that point we can work together to find ways of surviving without self-destructive behaviours. We can end pointless wars and stop hurting each other. Enlightenment makes peace sustainable, because it's built not on fear of conflict, but on lack of it. Enlightenment makes bliss sustainable because it's built on what's real, rather than untrue beliefs and unchecked assumptions. **Enlightenment makes the the world a better place.**

So why enlightenment, you ask?

Because it's real, because it's true, because we can build a world that isn't self-contradictory, that isn't self-destructive, we can be decent people and sustain that decency with it. Because it frees us from all feedback loops and cycles leading to dysfunction.

Enlightenment isn't a magic pill, but it is ground zero from which we can make our lives less miserable. Without it, we'll be fighting ourselves all our lives. It's the truth about yourself, without which you'll be living blind, doing what you do on autopilot, never understanding what it is that's going on, and so living in fear, in darkness, in never ending conflict.

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That's why enlightenment.

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

Enlightenment is the recognition that there's no you.

HOW TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Make it “How to reach enlightenment?” or “How to attain enlightenment?” or insert any of the selfsame verbs—obtain, find, gain— if it bugs you so much grammatically. Heck, maybe even ask “How can I become enlightened?” instead. The meaning is identical. The question is a cry; the singular reverberation of hope against desperation, echoed by a multitude of voices in unison.

“I’m in suffering. How do I stop it?”

I’ve made that exact sound many times before. Usually on dark lonely nights, overcome by grief, anger, frustration, or sorrow. It is a sound of despair, that simultaneously strikes against it, because it speaks of hope. It is the sound of a hope for a way out. And you know what? There is. And I’m more than happy to show you, nay, walk with you.

How to enlightenment? I’m glad you asked.

I’ve been trying to piece it all together in my head, and I realised that while it can seem complicated, there’s a way to massively simplify it. I’m going to give you a directive and a disclaimer.

First the disclaimer.

Disclaimer:

What I will say will not make you feel good. It is not meant to comfort you. I am giving you the barest minimum of instruction that will nevertheless ensure you find enlightenment. If you feel unsettled by the lack of length in my directive, good. It remains up to you to discover what you're not understanding in my brief statement, because I am not withholding anything from you.

I do not ask you to believe it. Trying to convince yourself of it will result in painful contradictions. Repeating it to yourself will do nothing. If you wish, attempt to find fault in it. That would give you more progress than the above.

It is not gradual, and no concentric actions will bring it about. It is immediate. It is unrelated to meditation. It is not a mantra. It shouldn't make you enter any altered states; if it does, consider the possibility that you've gone looney. It has nothing to do with religion, spirituality, or beliefs.

It is simple and it is real.

Directive:

Remember what I identified enlightenment to

be? You should, it's quite simple. Etch these words into memory, and it will serve you well.

Enlightenment is the recognition that there's no you.

Eight words. You can manage not forgetting that, can't you?

This sentence holds two bits of information. The what and the where. It is an objective and a location.

The what—as in, “what we’re talking about”—is enlightenment. That should be obvious enough, but I feel the need to stress this point. The objective is enlightenment. The objective is NOT kindness, richness, prosperity, longevity, health, or peace. If that is what you seek, then seek it, not enlightenment.

The second bit of information—where—is the recognition that there's no you. That's the location. That's where you dig. That's the X that marks the spot. If enlightenment is what you're looking for, then you're looking for it in the recognition that there's no you.

Forgive me if I am belabouring the point to exhaustion. I need to be exceptionally thorough to make this impervious to the misunderstanding that has pervaded readers of other texts. I shall require at least one more analogy, so please bear with

me.

If you are an archaeologist seeking buried treasure, and I've just shown you a map saying that you're standing on the spot where it was hidden, what do you do?

If you are a pirate wanting to get your hands on Aztec gold, and I've just given you a compass that points to Isla de Muerta where it lies, what do you do?

If you are bloody Harry Potter and you've been looking for the last Horcrux, and I've just told you that You-Know-Who hid it in the Room of Requirement, what do you do?

You DIG.

You SET SAIL.

YOU APPARATE TO THE ROOM, AND IF YOU CAN'T THEN YOU RUN,
BUT YOU GET THERE, AND YOU TURN THE ROOM OF HIDDEN THINGS
INSIDE OUT UNTIL YOU FIND RAVENCLAW'S DIADEM SO YOU CAN
DESTROY IT AND KILL HE-WHO-MUST-NOT-BE-NAMED!

If you're seeking enlightenment, then I've just handed you a map marking the X

where it's at. What do you do?

You look. You dig. You push, pull, or pulverize whatever obstacles are in your way. You scrape it off with your fingernails if it comes down to that. But whatever you do, you get to it, and you do not let anything stop you.

Thankfully, it's nothing that dramatic in real life. Like I said, it was simple. I also said it was real, and reality is all around you. You can see it wherever you look.

And that, is my directive.

Look.

Enlightenment is the recognition that there's no you. Look.

LOOK.

What are you doing? Looking.

What are you looking at? There being no you.

Where do you look at it? Everywhere, it's all around you.

How are supposed to find it? It's not hidden, so you're not looking for it. You're looking AT it.

Recognise means that it's already there, already in front of you. You're just not, for whatever reason, seeing it. How do you start to see it? Look. Keep looking. Don't turn away. Resolve to see it. It's in the spot "There's no you." Look at it and meet it there.

Enlightenment is the recognition that there's no you. Look.

THE ENEMY GATE IS DOWN

I don't care anymore, thought Ender. You can keep your game. If you won't even give me a chance, why should I play?

Like his last game in Battle School, when they put two armies against him.

And just as he remembered that game, apparently Bean remembered it, too, for his voice came over the headset, saying, "Remember, the enemy's gate is *down*"

Molo, Soup, Vlad, Dumper, and Crazy Tom all laughed. They remembered too.

And Ender also laughed. It *was* funny. The adults taking all this so seriously, and the children playing along, playing along, believing it too until suddenly the adults went too far, tried too hard, and the children could see through their game. Forget it, Mazer. I don't care if I pass your test, I don't care if I follow your rules. If you can cheat, so can I. I won't let you beat me unfairly—I'll beat you unfairly first.

In that final game in Battle School, he had won by ignoring the enemy, ignoring his own losses; he had moved against the enemy's gate.

And the enemy's gate was down.

– Ender's Game; Orson Scott Card, (pg 205)

The above is a scene from one of my favourite books. It depicts the final test Ender has to pass through, where he is to command an fleet of twenty starships, old and sluggish, comprised of an outnumbered eighty fighters against the enemy's five thousand surrounding the enemy planet. The odds weren't good.

But then again, when were they ever?

There's only two choices we are afforded when faced with something so unfair. The first is to crumble underneath it. Leave it to better and stronger persons to strike it down. Trust that it goes away of its own accord. Hope that it is not you that will pay the consequences. After all, we are not strong, we are not good, we are not wise, so what can we do against it? Let it do as it wishes so long as we are not harmed.

The other is to risk ignominy and stand in its way. Whether or not you are a strong person, capable or able, or wise or knowledgeable, or have any means against it matters not. You may fail, but that also matters not. All that counts is that it is wrong. It is unfair, it is unreasonable, it is unjust. And that is why you must stand up against it.

Because if not you, then who?

Faced with a mountain of madness, there are only two paths. To, essentially, lie down and wait to die. Or to climb over it, arm over arm and foothold over foothold, as painstakingly and slowly as it takes, because you refuse to give up and surrender to this obstacle.

Faced with a planet full of Buggers threatening to destroy the human race and

repopulate the Earth with their insectoid species, there was only one choice Ender could make. *The enemy's gate is down. GO.*

It was, after all, that old fool Winston Churchill that said, “If you are going through hell, keep going.”

And so he sent forward his ships on a suicidal mission with an impossible task against an innumerable opposition, armed with nothing more than five words– and Molecular Disruption Devices that tear apart the bonds that hold together atoms.

What happens next? Well, you'll have to read Ender's Game to find out. I've got something specific to point out.

It's in those five little words that you'd do well to look, whenever you want something done.

It's an attitude to hold against whatever stands in your way. It reminds you of only the two things you need to keep in mind. The enemy gate. Is down.

It reminds you of your objective. And it tells you where it is.

Place yourself in Ender's simulation console, for a moment. How daunting, do

you think it must have felt to be faced against such a massive opposition? How dreadful the knots that formed in his stomach must have been! Imagine the thoughts running through his head. “If I can’t beat them, then humanity is as good as dead.” There was nowhere to run to, and yet he couldn’t face them.

What about you?

What are you looking for?

What do you want, however impossible it may be to get?

There’s only one way out, and it’s not by clever outmaneuvering or beating them through force. It is by ignoring everything you can and moving only towards the goal. It is by launching yourself, Ahab, onto the White Whale with nothing save a knife. It is by grabbing the Golden Snitch, when you are 140 points down, Seeker.

The goal.

The gate.

The enemy gate is down.

You can battle with demons all you like, you can shoot Quaffles through the goal hoops all you like, you can harpoon all the Sperm Whales in the world, but none of these things will bring you any closer to the goal. To the sunlight, to the Golden Snitch, to Moby Dick.

Ignore everything and everyone else. It's your only shot with these impossible odds. Otherwise, you might as well give up and give in now.

WHY ENLIGHTEN PEOPLE

I could give you the answer in its simplest form and leave it at that, but I won't. I won't because it would be ironic in the face of that answer itself.

“I do it because it was what I needed done for me.”

I was looking for it for about three years, and to be frank, only thing helped. Everything I encountered was either about being nice, meditation, or about how you couldn't get to it. Those were the basic three things I repeatedly found in the texts I read.

-Be compassionate towards all things.

~Okay, check I can do that.

-Meditate.

~That's a little hard for me, but I'll do it anyway.

-You can't really get to it.

~Then what the hell have I been doing all these things for?

-Exactly! So do nothing about it.

~...But even doing nothing is doing something about it!

This was the kind of circle jerk I was subjected to. I'd suppose a lot of you have gone through similar things. You might even have different reference points, but those are my three anyway.

And it was impossible to do it with that. It was impossible to find enlightenment through that. Looking back with the perspective I have now, the only way I can see someone getting enlightened through that is if they do it their whole lives, realise that some point it's not going to lead them anywhere, give up, and in the act of giving up, get there. But when they get there through that, after years of useless directions, that's what sticks. Give up. Do nothing. Be still, be uniform, be (essentially) dead. It sucks the life out of you, the motives out of you, rather than give you a life of freedom. At the very best, it will waste only a little bit of your time. At the worst, you'll be enlightened and incapable of communicating how to do it to others. And so you'll lead them down the same fruitless years as you, knowing full well that it's not what they need to do, but unable to help yourself because it's the only road you know how to use to get there.

Enlightenment by years of irrelevant compassion, meditation, and surrender. And yes, those things aren't bad things. They teach you how to treat people well. But they are irrelevant to enlightenment itself. They're the toppings, so to speak, over the salad. Get the salad.

Why do I enlighten other people?

Because I don't want them to go through that. I don't want them to go through those years that I did, absolutely confused and filled with contradicting beliefs.

Ever heard of the paradox of compassion? How can you be compassionate to another person if all they do is take from you, hurt you, and selfishly use you? How long can you keep it up? After a while, you'll have nothing left to give. Their lack of compassion took from you all the compassion you had, perverted it, and left you empty. Hrmmm.

Think about it this way. If a country had a nuclear weapon and was threatening to use it on your country, and afterwards every other country it so desired, what would blind compassion do to you? What would your non-violence ideal do to you, followed to the letter? It would get your country blown up, and a lot of people hurt. A LOT of people, including those other countries it was determined to launch nukes against.

If everyone in the world was blindly compassionate against said country, everyone but that country would be left dead. If everyone responded non-violently to that country, everyone would be dead. But we can't just blindly use aggression either against them, or we'll cause a large scale nuclear war resulting in the same devastation.

What's the solution?

You have to apply force, cautiously to where it will affect change. Compassion isn't blind, and it isn't impotent, and it isn't immobile. Compassion has in it, the discretion to use force, the discretion to act violently where only violence will protect from harm, the discretion to do what no one else is willing to do. It has in it the understanding that, while yes, sometimes you may be wrong, others can be wrong also, and if so they are, it is within your right to correct that wrong in whatever necessary manner.

The people who would dogmatically assert that compassion is only being peaceful, is only being kind, is only being good, are mistaking the idea of compassion, or the look of compassion, or what seems to be compassion, to be the same as the principle of compassion.

I've talked at length about this because it was a contradiction I faced for a very long time. "How can I be compassionate to you if all you do is hurt me?" My answer is that compassion allows me to use force to stop you from hurting me, and whatever corrective means I can to prevent it from happening in the future, with the barest minimum of invasion. That's compassion. Not "Being kind to anyone and everyone regardless of what they do to you." Because you know what? Some people are compulsively hurtful, because it's what they know, because it's what other people have done to them, and they don't know how to stop, even if they know they should and want to.

I'm a peaceful person. You're not. You want to be peaceful too, but you can't help

yourself. If I care about you, I'll do what it takes to help you, even if it seemingly contradicts what I am.

I mean, take Snape, for instance. He killed Dumbledore. But was he really a traitor to the Order of the Pheonix? Did he betray Dumbledore's trust? Or was he actually on Dumbledore's side the entire time he was working for the Dark Lord? (The increasing occurrences of these Harry Potter analogies is because I've, after an eight year break—I stopped reading after the fifth book—finally read the last two books in the series.)

Enlightenment is the same thing.

I'm an enlightened person. You're not. You want enlightenment, but don't know how to get there. I'll do what it takes to get you there, because I care enough to do so, regardless of how it makes me look.

And why?

WHY WHY WHY?

Because I would have liked someone to have done that for me.

It's a purely selfish reason. If I were unenlightened, and you had some way of helping me, no matter how dreadful it might have been, I would have wanted you to do it.

You may notice one thing.

I necessarily point out, that I only do it for the people that want it. If you're perfectly happy where you are, I'm not going to shove anything down your throat. That's a given. I would never want anyone to do that to me, and I expect people to be smart enough to know what they want, so I refuse to do the thinking for them. We can be friends, and I'll still talk to you and share whatever information I have that you want, but it'll only be casually. If you want to know me, want to know my reasons and ideas, I would love to tell you all about it. But that's a personal thing. It's not me saying, "This is enlightenment. You have to have it." Not at all.

If someone is curious about, even marginally so, I'll tell them what they ask about. Again, I expect people to be smart, and if they find withing my rational and logic something that interests them, I'll be willing to go further. But only what people want. Only what people ask for.

I do not create a vacuum that I cannot fill.

Alright, but those are my personal reasons. The why behind what I do.

What about you? What are the technical reasons for you to do so, once you're enlightened?

Well, why should you give a damn?

The answer is, that there's no reason for you to give a damn. Walk away or help out, it's your prerogative and there's no reason why anyone should stop you.

But giving a damn is crucial. If you don't, there's really no reason for you to stay, and what you do won't have your heart in it so don't stick around. I'm sure you have other things you want to do and are passionate about. Do that instead. You'll be much better there rather than here on the frontlines anyway.

But think about this. What could be more cool than enlightening other people? There might be other games in town, but they're a side show compared to this. As for me, this is where the action is.

If you do give a shit, and you do care, then I suppose you'll need no more persuading, but here's the why anyhow.

1) **It's the truth.** As such, it would be massively beneficial for all sorts of people to know it, and we can build and explore using it as a foundation. Think, for example, what we've been able to accomplish since Copernicus and Galileo

rid us of the notion that the universe is geocentric. Without that, we wouldn't have probes in outer spaces, satellites around the Earth, and have been able to land on the moon. Perhaps that might seem like a bit of a stretch, but it is Galileo Galilei's championing of Copernicanism that stands as the foundation of what we (as human beings, not as Soviets or Americans) were able to accomplish in the space race. Imagine what bounds and leaps human beings will be able to accomplish with the foundation of enlightenment.

2) **It forms the basis of sustainable human cooperation.** That's just a fancy way of saying, "It'll bring peace on earth." I've already said this in the essay as to why you should personally be enlightened, but I'll repeat it here because it's relevant. Humans are naturally divisive; it is our way of finding variation that makes us the dominant creature on the planet. It's given us creative solutions to innumerable problems, and makes us incredibly resilient. But it is also that division that now tears us apart. Instead of working together, or even working separately but cooperatively, we treat our ideas as more important than human beings themselves. We commit acts of genocide, and murder entire groups of people, simply because they disagree with us. Enlightenment, the recognition that there's no you, corrects that. It shows us that the divisions we make are intellectual concepts, and not real objects, and so we must treat them as such. Whatever we think, however we may act, humanity is a species, and must act together for its own preservation, and how we'll do that is by cooperative variation. Our greatest natural asset is our fellow human beings; and they are also our greatest natural predator. We need to strengthen the former, in order to negate the latter.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why we should enlighten people.

HOW TO ENLIGHTEN OTHERS

The first thing that need to be pointed out is that you can't enlighten someone else. Not really. In the same sense as you can't MAKE someone else learn something. You certainly can teach someone, you certainly can lecture on a subject, but you cannot make anybody learn anything. We always have to learn for ourselves and by ourselves.

Other people can help us learn, they can help us in the learning process, but they can't make us learn.

It is imperative, then, to identify what it is we do when we learn, because this can serve as a model for how someone becomes enlightened.

So let's go, back to the classroom, and remember what happened there.

Math and Learning and Enlightenment

My Math teachers' lectures were always the most structured and organised of all those whose tutelage I was under. English and Science and History and what esle have you simply communicated in a different language than the rigid forms of math. It may have also helped that the textbooks we had were so ordered.

Here's how my math classes worked.

We'd enter the room, the air conditioner buzzing in cold air against a car air freshener shaped like a tree. It was a welcome reprieve from the hot sun and the walk from our previous class. Students would pour in and dig their bottoms into their seats, gearing up for the lazy hour ahead. Armed with nothing more than college ruled paper, a number two pencil, and a scientific calculator, we found ourselves in an information war.

Our mission was to hold the information and detain them until questioning, quizzes, and tests.

It would always start out slow, with deliberate strokes on the board naming the territory we were in. Chapter 3.2 — Binomial Factoring. And then, it would hit. "Brace yourselves, men!" Like a mortar launched against the beach sand, sending dirt flying everywhere and into our eyes, the first example detailing a principle would explode in front of us. Some were able to keep up, others immediately found themselves stuck, their eyes beginning to blur out of focus, their eyelids unbearably heavy, and folded. Those of us who could keep going ran on, our pencils scribbling as the jagged lines of our footsteps up the sand.

Two more examples would be fill the board with its grimy black dry erase ink. At the end of the examples, those of us who were still there had made it to the top of the bunker, having contained the first wave of mathematical information in our

once blank papers. The others, not so lucky, had been hit by the information hard. All were disarmed, their pencils having rolled away onto the floor or flung high, stuck into the ceiling. Many were left looking up blankly and scratching their heads, the information having blown what cognitive abilities they had to bits; their only remnants would be drawings of superheroes and anime styled classmates and teachers in comic strips as evil overlords. Some were not so lucky, and had their limbs lost and motor functions disabled; evidenced by the arms limply dying on the desks, heads still and fallen, and drool slowly pooling into a puddle.

It was then that a second wave would hit us. We were given problems to solve on our own. The effect was an immediate dismantling of persons, shaking heads, slumped torsos, and palmed faces. You could almost hear us collectively groan in pain. A brave student would now and again valiantly rush up the hills, as if with a death wish. He or she would take up one of the coloured dry erase markers, uncap it as if unpinning a grenade, and attack the problem with unconfident and hardly legible handwriting. And you know what was the crazy part? Some of them would fluke out and get it right, essentially solving the problem for the rest of us—for which we were thankful!

If lucky, the bell would then ring, dismissing us from the class, but not until we received our homework assignment; a solo, guerrilla attack against enemy forces that night, on the odd numbered problems from pages 72-5. We were made to repeat this for almost always all of the chapters in the textbook for all the years of taking maths, and were given quizzes and tests to find out which bits of information we were able to capture and detain.

Cruel, huh?

Okay, so the model.

Here's what happened, in short version:

- 1) Given examples that explained underlying principles
- 2) Were made to solve problems with assistance, given solutions at the end
- 3) Were made to solve problems without assistance, with instruction to refer to examples and in class problems when in need of help
- 4) Given tests to see what was learned

I don't know how your classes worked, but my math classes were undeviating from this formula. All of them, in all of my years, worked like this. There's gotta be a method to the madness, right? After all, despite my not being very interested in maths and not being a good maths student at all, I can still factor binomials! (Yeaaaahhhh, don't ask what the last maths class I took was. Didn't get very far.)

And I noticed, yes noticed, that there was a similarity to how one learns and retains a maths concept to how one becomes enlightened.

Let's get to it, shall we?

How people seem to come to enlightenment under the guidance of others seems to follow a path like that of learning maths.

Let's say I'm unenlightened. How would I get enlightened? It starts with me wanting it. Not enlightenment, mind you, but specifically, what enlightenment stands for—freedom from suffering. I say this because there are people who've become enlightened without initially knowing that it was enlightenment they've found. That's a necessary component, and it is that compulsion that drives the whole process. If you don't really care about enlightenment one way or another, you can go through life and the motions that enlightened people go through without really understanding what it is. This is clearly seen in those raised by Buddhist or Hindu parents, indoctrinated from childhood about enlightenment and going through the motions but not having a clue what it is and what it means.

So you have to want it. Once you start wanting it, you look for it. Unfortunately, many people are led to believe that enlightenment is achievable through meditation, satsangs, retreats, asceticism, renouncement, compassionate action, or by a gradual shedding of ego. The mistake is that these are things done by enlightened people, not things done to get to enlightenment by people. Taking the model of what enlightened persons do, rather than digging behind to understand the why, they copy the surface actions only.

Guys? It uh... sorry to tell you this so late... it doesn't work like that. You can spend 40 years in meditation, or travel to all the ashrams and see all the gurus, and these would (in relevance to enlightenment) have been little more than doing a handstand tightrope walk across two skyscrapers. Very cool and very enriching, but absolutely not going to get you enlightened.

But people do it anyways, because it's the model that they're taught. Meditate. Right action. Satsangs and gurus. Ypu can do that your whole life and never achieve nirvana. Think about how many generations of India has done exactly that, and how many of them have reached enlightenment. They might be really cool people, really ego free and really compassionate, but they're not enlightened and they know it. And you know what? Some of them are cool with it. That's what they want and they're happy with that and they're not looking for enlightenment. But you and I, we're here for enlightenment. That's the goal.

My soul is the arrow, Brahman is the goal.

So a few of them try the whole spiritual gamut of actions, realise that it's not getting them any further towards being enlightened, and start looking elsewhere, start trying to figure it out. A few of you might even see that the whole spiritual life is a trap; it gets people in with the promise of enlightenment but few ever really come out enlightened as much as neutered. BUT IT'S THE MODEL PEOPLE ARE GIVEN. Those are the examples on the board. So that's what we try and what we do, but it doesn't work. And it's the fault of those who are

enlightened that they've not worked out simpler and better ways of communicating this. The burden is on them, because they're enlightened, and people are asking them how to find enlightenment, and their answers all take the roundabout tour so people get lost along the way. Come on, guys, get it straight, put it simply. Find the core of enlightenment, because that's what people want. If you're going to set yourself up as someone that people come to for enlightenment, give them enlightenment! Not some other substitute for improving their lives.

Okay. And then what happens? Well, from quite a few accounts, those who found enlightenment on their own did so after a period of depression. Some of them simply gave up. Interestingly, it was in the act of giving up that they found enlightenment. You know how they *tried to* "just be here now" and all those things along that line? Beforehand, it was contradictory. You can't TRY TO BE RELAXED. You're either relaxed or not. It was that kind of thing. Instead of trying to relax, they actually relaxed.

In giving up, they tried the one tactic they hadn't done. And in trying that tactic out for themselves, they understood the principle. In understanding the principle, they understood the meaning of "there is no you." They recognised how it isn't simply "we are all one" but that that there isn't an "us" to be a "we" that can "join as one." That it is the state of things, the state of the universe, the state of reality and of life itself to be one. To be singular, even when it seems divided. That even now it is only one.

That's what they did when they gave up. That's what they found in despair, and that's the reason why despair has led to the enlightenment of so many.

And? Those that were unfamiliar with enlightenment didn't know what they were until someone pointed it out later on. Those that were, went on to talk about it, or to talk about the benefits of being enlightened. Few ever rigorously attempted to lock onto the single cause of their enlightenment. Why? Most of just were too content. Enlightenment can do that to you (I'll make it a point to say that it does not necessarily sap your motivation; that it does is due to the person himself or herself, and is not an intrinsic part of enlightenment; you can be enlightened and busy and driven and motivated at the same time—enlightenment doesn't equal doing nothing).

So how was it that enlightenment happened to these people?

Here's how it works:

- 1) You have to want it. First you hear about enlightenment, and genuinely become driven to it. If you, or someone you're trying to enlighten, doesn't want it, you're wasting your breath. Let them be.
- 2) You're shown the paths that others took to get to enlightenment, and you try them for yourself. Meditation under a tree for forty days, suicidal depression to the brink of enlightenment, contemplating a flower, etc. etc. That doesn't work.

3) After exhaustive efforts, still unenlightened, you give up. In giving up, you have a moment of complete harmony with the universe, the kind that you used to read about, and with that comes the ephiphany that the all is one. You are enlightened.

4) You question whether or not you are, for a while, until it becomes strikingly clear. At which point, most enlightened persons start trying to find ways to communicate it to others. You are what Jed McKenna calls “A butterfly among caterpillars, trying to explain what it’s like to be a butterfly.”

That’s a highly impoverished view of it, and definitely a roundabout way to get to where you already are anyway.

So... how can we speed things up?

The magic of dots

Reference points. It’s always about reference points.

And it’s quite funny, how we treat points as real things. They have no dimensions, and in every sense of the term, they don’t exist. They’re just markers, indicators of a particular point in time and space. But we treat them as real.

And yes, they are very real. But they are a real non-entity.

I'm being obscure. Allow me to stop with the inside jokes.

The way we enlighten other people is with reference points.

This is because the way we learn is with reference points.

The first of these points occurs when we are introduced to a concept. The second takes place when we are taught theoretically about the concept. The third reference point solidifies itself at the moment that the concept is applied. The fourth and final one is when we come to use it and rely on it on a regular basis. From there, mastery is only a matter of fine tuning and time.

One of the first quotes I remember memorising, comes from the English translation of Card College by Roberto Giobbi, and it's this. "Theory is only useful when understood. And true understanding only comes as a result of direct experience." Ain't that the truth. He was talking specifically about cards and magic, but it applies to so much more. And it applies to us.

So. Four parts.

1) Introduction

2) Theory

3) Practice

4) Utilisation

When it comes to enlightenment, the first time we hear about it, it tends to fly a little over our heads.

Point One, Meeting the Buddha

If you were introduced to it through a religious or spiritual background, the trap is that it's seen as this mysterious, difficult to understand and almost impossible to achieve, object of reverence. That's the first reference point you're given. SO MANY PROBLEMS arise from that. Instead of directly sharing and explaining the core, what spirituality and religion sells you is an entire belief system.

If you were lucky enough to come across us, we've cut it down to the core. And that core is that "Enlightenment is noticing that there's no you." Problem is... when you first read that it tends to fly under radar. It's been evident in the people that I've talked to. The first time they read "There is no you" the words become blurred and forgotten.

It's like the Silence, from the newest season of Doctor Who.

And so the first and most important part about introducing to someone the concept of enlightenment, is getting them to understand WHAT THE HELL IT IS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

As someone trying to enlighten other people, my first job is always, always, always, explaining that "Enlightenment is noticing that there's no you." It's not about the feelings, it's not a state, it's not some magical/mystical/metaphorical metamorphosis.

Alright guys? We need to get this clear to people. Enlightenment is this. We're talking about enlightenment. And enlightenment is noticing that there's no you. That's all it is. That's all it ever was. Get that memorised. "Enlightenment is noticing that there's no you." Drill it into your head and into whomever is asking for your help in reaching it.

Kay? Good.

Point Deux, Looking AT rather than Looking For

Second point. Theory.

Once we've got the lock on our target (enlightenment) we need to understand it. Mainly, these two pieces of information. "Noticing" and "there's no you." That's what we need to explain.

Noticing simply means this. It's already there, you just have to look at it. It's not hidden, though you might overlook it. In fact, we've all overlooked it. And that's why putting the emphasis on noticing it is CRUCIAL.

It's not something you're looking for. It's everything you're looking at.

Let me repeat.

It's not something you're LOOKING FOR. It's everything you're LOOKING AT.

You're already looking at it. It's already present in what you're looking at. At what you're doing. At wherever and whenever you are. There is no you in _____.

Fill in the blank. See it from YOUR PERSPECTIVE, not someone else's perspective, not in some theoretical manner. Wherever you're at, it can be seen.

You don't need to go looking for it. You don't need to search anywhere else.

You're standing in the exact spot you can see it from.

...Because you can see it EVERYWHERE in EVERYTHING.

There's no you at all, ever. Not in the trees, not in the breeze, not in the squirrels and not in the seas. Not in the rocking of the waves, or the rocking of your patio chair, not in the dancing you do all night long with a stranger, not in waking up in a room of lavender.

It's nowhere. You, that is. You are nowhere to be found. There's no you.

And there's no you is visible everywhere.

Got it? Got it. That's the noticing part.

Point Deux, If there is no me, what am I?

Part two of point two, (clever, eh?) is understanding, intellectually, what you are.

You are the assumed cause behind your life.

You are the thing that's supposed to be controlling your life, or directing it, or doing stuff in it. That's you. Right?

Play around in these parts. You'll spend a lot of time trying to pin down what someone thinks they are. Get good at it. People think that they're all sorts of crazy things. They'll say things they were taught, not even knowing what they mean.

Y'kno, things like, "I am a soul," or "I am a spritual being having a human experience," or "I am the owner of my body."

Pin it down. It is absolutely necessary to get a lock onto what someone thinks they are. If you can't do that, you won't make any progress. Also, this is necessary for later on when you want to deepen the state. You'll have to pin down in yourself what you think you are so that you can move past whatever is limiting you.

So, whatever it is they say they are, you look deeply into it.

You look deeply, and you give them the benefit of the doubt, and you try to strengthen their argument.

And if their argument collapses and it makes no sense for someone to be whatever it is they claim to be, then you DEMONSTRATE THAT. You take them step by step over the identity they hold and show them where the fault lines are.

You want an example of this? Go back over your own enlightenment. Look at how you've thought over the years that you're this or you're that, only to have it shown to you to be wrong. All the selves you've ever considered yourself to be were only ever arbitrarily chosen and ephemeral. They're only mirror reflections of what you wanted, or what the world around you made you become.

THEN, once you've shown them how it's NOT the thing they thought it was, when you've demonstrated fully and completely and they're on your side because you've done this in a clear and concise way, you walk them calmly over to the conclusion that all they are is an assumption.

You elaborate that what the I is, is merely an idea. That it's the idea that there MUST BE this CONTROLLER of life that is SEPARATE from life. Emphasise the separate part. Explain how, while there is control in life, it's not separate from life. That while there is a controller of life, it's not separate from life.

Because life only ever flows naturally. There's nothing separate from life controlling it, directing it, changing things in it. Whatever is controlling life, is a part of life! Point that out. Make that clear. People need to understand this.

Part Three, Use the Formula

Once someone understands the meaning of enlightenment and what it is, they

might well ask you, “I understand it intellectually, but I don’t feel/see/experience it. I still feel like a me.”

Simples. Use the formula. You might have to wash, rinse, and repeat step 2.b, but you’re smooth sailing from here. Tell the person that they’re close, because they are. They’re standing right on the edge of enlightenment. Just walk them over to it so they can choose it for themselves.

They’re saying that they still have this pervasive feeling of being a me. Like they still are an I.

Good. Okay. This isn’t a bad thing.

In fact it’s a very good thing because they’ve engaged with it so deeply that they’re now just looking for the finer details.

Here’s what you tell someone when they say “I still feel like a me.”

-Sure, but that feeling doesn’t come from you. It arises naturally in life. Even THAT PARTICULAR FEELING isn’t separate from life. It naturally comes from within life.

You get the gist of it. Use it, and shapeshift it to form your needs.

When you're on that kind of level ground, time to bring it home.

Formula time.

There is no you to perceive, just perception.

There is no you to think, just thinking itself.

There's no you that experiences, but experiencing occurs.

There's no you living life, life happens all on its own.

There's no you to _____, but _____ exists.

Simple, easy, clean. And it's gotten more people enlightened than the whole of Buddha's masturbations.

Walk WITH someone down that road. Don't just throw them down the path. Walk them through it until they can do it for themselves. Show them how to apply it to the things they do in their daily routines. Things like during walking the dog, or driving their car, or drinking water. It fits; let them see that.

It is BY DOING THIS that someone will crack. This is how everyone that's ever been enlightened got to be that way, whether they were conscious of it or not. This

is the process. Walking through your daily life in your head fitting it into that formula. That's how it works. That's how we recognise that there never was an us.

And it's by getting someone to this point and going with them the whole distance that you'll enlighten a person.

Point 4, I'm enlightened, what now?

This fourth and last part is important because people want to figure out what to do next once they're enlightened. You've just rocked their world and shown them, if I may quote Alladin, a new fantastic point of view, a dazzling place they never knew. Of COURSE THEY'RE GOING TO BE EXCITED.

Hello enlightened people. I hope you're digging your new digs. Here's the cool thing you can do next.

You know how you saw that there was no you?

Use it. Push it. Explore the absence of a you.

Explore the infinite space.

Y'see, there's no you isn't flat. It's not just on one level. It's in everywhere and everything. And well, guess what? Everything has DEPTH. The universe has depth, has dimensions, has space and relative points.

You got to enlightenment be recognising that the reference point called "I" is well, a reference point that has no dimensions. It has no volume, area, or length. In fact, what the point refers to is nothing.

That's what you saw when you looked at the fact that there's no you.

It's time to look at your other reference points.

And this requires a bit of good ol' philosophy diggin'. Get your boots on, 'cause you'll end up stepping in some shit. Your shit, to be exact. The bullshit you've allowed yourself to fall for over the years. The lies you've believed. Lies, bullshit, and untruths that you now have to uncover.

Explore them all. That's your job for your personal well being. That's what you need to do for yourself ("Oh but there's no me!" Ya think you're clever don't you >.>) That's how you deepen the state.

Go into what you fear. Go into what you love. Go into what you hate. Go into what you do on a day to day basis.

Explore and examine those reference points now.

Use the absence of yourself. There's no thing that can harm you now. It's okay. Trust it.

Have a ruthless faith in truth. That's the only thing you can bow your knee to, because it's the only monarchy with divine authority. Truth. Truth is the only authority.

Find truth, and be relentless in searching for it. Once you've got it, be ruthless in your usage of it. Spare nothing from the truth.

Always be unconditionally loving, yes, and unconditional love means understanding and accepting. But still spare nothing and no one, not even yourself (especially not yourself), from the truth.

Test what you believe against reality. Test your reference points against reality.

See what shatters. See what's real.

Whatever remains, whatever you place through tribulation, whatever you strike with thunder and lightning, whatever you test under ice, whatever you refine

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through fire, whatever comes out pure as gold, will be solid and trustworthy. You must find out what's real.

Trust only in truth. Trust only in reality.

Again, have a ruthless faith in truth.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how you enlighten others.

If you've read this and you're still unenlightened, use it on yourself. Leave a comment and let me know how it works for you.

I leave you now with a quote, by Christopher McCandles (paraphrasing Thoreau) from *Into the Wild*.

“Rather than love, than money, than faith, than fame, than fairness... give me truth.”