

100% Confidence

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Tom: Hey, Daniel, what's up? I hope you're fine.

Daniel: Good to hear from you, Tom. All good on my side, thank you. I'm enjoying the fruits of springtime lighting up our city (Cape Town).

Tom: I didn't do that much of self-inquiry lately, but when I returned to it I believe I've found something.

Daniel: Self-inquiry will eventually become "automatic" as you continue to train your mind to discriminate.

I don't believe that you have found anything new. Perhaps you've just become clearer as to what you had already "found."

Tom: It seems that after my realization, my mind turned outward again and started looking for happiness in experiences again, etc. It seems like you realize something profound, only to later back away from it and start looking for it again (paradoxical, huh?).

Daniel: This is because ignorance is hardwired. These conditioned tendencies (*vasanas*) will eventually get neutralized as you continue to apply and assimilate the teachings.

Tom: It seems like I was looking for the self "outwardly," like envisioning something and trying to live up to an ideal or something. I thought awareness was awesome, extremely hard to get and that, well, it was "different," like some super-duper fantasy come true, if I only realized it. Anyway, I thought it was something quite "big."

Daniel: Yeah, this is the belief of 99.9% of the spiritual marketplace!

Tom: Now when I look back at my realization, it seemed like a very normal thing, but after that, as I've said, I went looking for it again.

Daniel: You went looking again because the knowledge is not firm. This is common. The truth is counter-intuitive, and it takes time to root the truth in a way such that the mind remains steady, with a sense of completeness (non-seeking).

Tom: It's been there all the time... It seems like this actualizing is looking back to the realization, see what I've actually realized, without making assumptions about the self. It definitely seems like "direct" knowledge... I don't have to do anything with it, because I know it.

Daniel: Yes, fully assimilating what you had realized results in actualisation. It's quite easy to work out that "I am awareness," but what it actually means to be awareness is not so easy. Being 100% confident behind the implication of the statement "I am awareness" – is actualisation.

Tom: It doesn't feel foreign anymore, like it's something "out there." It feels like I can be honest with myself about this, and not think I'm a special person because I saw something.

Daniel: Yup, you, awareness, are the most obvious and common "thing" there is. Actually, you are the only thing there is!

Tom: It sets my mind at rest. I feel happy.

Daniel: The fruits of self-knowledge. Good for you, Tom.

Tom: Now I know you guys aren't guys with big egos because you know something.

Daniel: When one understands that the ego is just an apparent (*mithya*) notion appearing within oneself, it destroys the sense of separation.

Tom: Also, I now see that this knowledge "unites."

Daniel: Yes, it unites by revealing our already-united nature. There is only awareness, so you can never be not non-separated. You are only apparently separated by *maya*, a power that seemingly projects duality within you.

Tom: I watched Vishnudeva's videos, and in the first video, titled *Benefits of Self-Knowledge*, he says that one benefit is that you won't be looking for your true nature again.

Daniel: True.

Tom: Let me know how I'm doing.

Daniel: You are doing great, Tom. Continue to meditate on the teachings. *Nididhyasana* is essential for the assimilation of self-knowledge. It's the practice of continuously meditating upon

the teachings of Vedanta.

Because the ideas that reality is dualistic, the manifest universe (i.e. apparent reality) is real and that one is the limited person one appears to be are so deeply ingrained in one's psyche, it takes time and effort to remove its stain. For this reason, one has to continuously dwell on the teachings of Vedanta and apply them to each and every thought, circumstance, encounter, interaction, event and experience of one's life. While self-realisation may be a "one-off" in that there is a moment when you "see" who you really are, self-actualisation (i.e. the full assimilation of that knowledge, which allows one to live as the limitless self within the context of the limited body-mind-sense complex inhabiting an apparent reality characterised by limitation) takes time to establish.

Tom: Daniel, you said that being 100% confident in the realization is actualization.

Daniel: Yes, having 100% confidence in the knowledge that you are limitless awareness is liberation. In other words, knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that what you had realised is the truth regardless of what the mind may think or doubt. Being confident means to own the knowledge, to live the knowledge fearlessly regardless whether it feels counter-intuitive. When the knowledge is firm, one's experience is no longer an issue.

One hundred per cent confidence and application of self-knowledge means (1) that one has fully discriminated the self from the objects appearing in it (the *dharma* field, one's conditioning), that (2) that knowledge has (a) rendered the *vasanas* (likes and dislikes) non-binding and (b) destroyed one's sense of doership.

Mind you, this confidence takes time. This is why I had mentioned the stage of *nididhyasana*.

Tom: When you say "you're awareness," what do you actually mean? Does it mean that Tom is awareness?

Daniel: It means that you are free from Tom and everything else. Though Tom depends on you, you do not depend on Tom. Tom is an object that appears in you, awareness.

Tom: When I think "I am awareness" the "I" that I think of is, I believe, to be honest, Tom. It feels the most comfortable in my body when I think about that "I." Next I assert "I (or Tom) am awareness." It feels familiar. It seems like there is no distinction between "I" and awareness, like I can actually relax. It seems like it's so immediate that there is no separation between this most familiar feeling I know as "I" and awareness.

Daniel: Of course it feels most comfortable to think of yourself as Tom. This is what we mean by ignorance. Ignorance is just the conditioned belief that you are a limited, separate individual.

Though Tom is awareness, you, awareness, remain free from Tom. Tom will always be a limited entity. Because your true nature is limitless, any identification to a limited object (i.e. Tom) results in suffering. The whole point of self-knowledge is not to feel bound to objects, the body-mind

being the most “intimate” object of them all.

Tom: Sometimes I thought that “I am awareness” meant that “I (awareness) am awareness.” A great fact, sure, but Tom doesn’t feel more free by knowing that. I thought like I had to forget about Tom, or some weird thing like that. Like I had a concept of awareness in my mind and thought “this is you,” forgetting about Tom.

Daniel: “I am awareness,” if understood, just means that you are free and limitless. It’s not about forgetting or neglecting Tom, but simply about understanding the relationship between you and Tom.

You are currently identified as Tom and have not fully assimilated the knowledge that Tom is actually just an object appearing in you.

Freedom from Tom in turn allows Tom to live a much lighter life.

Tom: Sure, this “I” shouldn’t feel foreign to me, but sometimes it does.

Daniel: Ignorance is hardwired, Tom. Continue to contemplate the teachings. Investigate the relationship between you and all the objects (including Tom) that arise in you, awareness. Are you ever affected by Tom and his experiences? The answer is never. Who is the one who knows Tom and his experiences? The answer is you: simple, unchanging, unborn, deathless, ordinary awareness. Take a stand in awareness as awareness. Own it 100%. As my teacher says, fake it till you make it.