

# A Life of Inquiry

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**Jane:** I was just reading your article *Dare to Be Yourself*. Indeed – I do enjoy the fiery spirit that comes through your writing.

I am not so sure I did always dare be myself in my own life struggling with feelings of inadequacy/low self-esteem/outcast that have arisen again in the solitude of my current life.

Whilst continuing to expose myself to the teachings via videos/books, notes, as a *jiva* (to which the pure Awareness I know I am is attached for this lifetime), metaphorically speaking, it feels like being on a mental battlefield where thoughts and emotions rise from all sides at times; it can be psychologically tough.

Fortunately, I have the clear knowledge and the *mantras* to not drown, yet pain and sadness is felt, allowed; I endure them, knowing I have little control over when this show will be over.

Then a new day arises, discarding the dark clouds I was engulfed in like in a mental prison; my cat comes in through the open door claiming its food; and I can breathe and serve him happily.

**Rory:** I loved your email! I found your words very poignant and moving. You perfectly describe the challenging, sometimes painful, yet ultimately liberating practice of self-knowledge. Alas, there's nothing much glamorous about it. It's often a down-in-the-trenches affair – just living simply, keeping the mind on the teachings, steadily applying the knowledge and dealing with whatever *pratibandikas* (obstacles to knowledge) arise.

It's no coincidence that the *Bhagavad Gita* is set on a battlefield. It's all about the battle for the mind. You, the self, are already free and can never be any other way. The secret is just getting the mind to realise that – and that takes time and “a little elbow grease,” as one of my schoolteachers used to say. The more refined the mind becomes, the more the parts of it that need to be healed and inquired into come to the surface, seeking the light.

It's incredible what the causal body can churn out when it gets the chance. Most *samsaris* never really have to face their stuff, because they're constantly staying distracted, always chasing this, that and the next thing, and doing whatever they can to numb and deaden their mind and emotions.

A life of inquiry creates the space for this stuff to come up, but it does so, not to torture us, but to give us the opportunity to resolve it once and for all. The only way is to just stay vigilant and keep practising inquiry, dismantling all those erroneous and belittling thought patterns, conditionings and false values. Keep chipping away, doing it all as *karma yoga* and taking everything as *prasad*.

What you're doing is hard work – but it is noble work, and you are doing it with great nobility.