

A Stand-Up Attitude

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Ed: Dear Daniel, I hope you don't mind my introducing myself more fully and asking for some advice – if this was inappropriate, then let me know.

I am quite new to Vedanta. I am 51 and began the spiritual search after a non-dual experience 26 years ago. At that time I was an actor and an alcoholic. Shortly after that experience, I began Buddhist mindfulness meditation and study. I wrestled with alcohol for five years and finally quit at age 30. There was another much stronger non-dual experience shortly after that during a period of several years of very disciplined practice. My marriage fell apart, my father died, one of my dearest friends died, and Buddhism could not hold me together. I entered a nihilistic depression.

I met an old friend from the Buddhist days (six years ago now) at the funeral of another old friend – he gave me the first non-dual pointer: “You know that everything is transient?” “Yes, absolutely.” “So, what is the one thing that never changes?”

This obsessed the mind, and I had found the answer in a few hours. Huge epiphany. I was directed to James and read the book, but it didn't click yet.

I fell victim to the Neos!!! Aaaaargh! It was too vague, so I bounced back to Buddhism and gave it all I was worth, martyring myself in a refugee camp in an effort to kill my ego!!! After that, I picked up James' book again and it went in instantly. I got on the website, I emailed James and started a dialogue which has gone on all year.

I have always been an outwardly *rajasic*-type *jiva*. I am a teacher, I often charge into situations with great, false confidence and I have big ideas.

As this persona begins to crumble, I am becoming aware of the fearful thoughts and feelings behind a lot of this activity. I am not doing the activities anymore, so I am left with the fears. The good thing about fears is – you really want to get rid of the buggers! The bad thing is, they really hurt.

I know you have dealt with a lot of stuff, from reports. I am currently dealing with a lot of fear, based on past *adharmic* behaviour and consequent worry about consequences.

I am using Christian's five-step formula, I am thanking Bhagavan for the fears and the desires, I am inquiring into the self many times a day and when the worst comes to the worst I am just running “I am awareness” over and over.

I am listening to James' *Bhagavad Gita* talks and rereading *How to Attain Enlightenment*. Just for the record, I have read *The Yoga of the Three Energies*, *The Yoga of Love* and *The Essence of Enlightenment*.

I am aware that I have avoided dealing with fear my whole life and this is my task now.

Do you have any advice for me? Please feel free to ask any questions and I will answer with

100% candour.

I love Vedanta. I love the people I am beginning to interact with now and I want to devote the rest of my life to this.

~ With love, Ed

Daniel: I totally get where you're coming from, Ed. And now that you're on the Vedanta bus, I also know where you are heading to: right back home.

Your story is one typical of *Isvara* sending through a hard, loving *prasad*, a perfectly set up gift, that has prepared you to receive the granddaddy of all teachings: Vedanta.

Vedanta is the game ender. So you can happily relax into this fact.

Despite their limitations, your previous *sadhanas* have served you well. Even the Neo circus was good!

As you know, Vedanta requires certain [qualifications](#), and like so many of us, it's only through suffering that we're forced to go inwards and cultivate these qualities. So thank *Isvara* for your apparently shitty times, and compliment yourself for standing up to them.

"I am becoming aware of the fear thoughts and feelings behind a lot of this activity." This, my friend, demonstrates great courage.

I also like how you're able to acknowledge fears based on past *adharmic* behaviour. Again, this is a stand-up attitude, and it's a stand-up attitude that qualifies the mind to assimilate the teachings.

Glad to hear that you're using [Christian's five-step formula](#), brilliant toolkit!

Thanking Bhagavan for the fears and desires is good. But passing them right back is even better. Try this approach next time: pass them back whilst taking a stand in awareness as awareness.

Do you, awareness, need (desire) or lack (fear) anything? I know you already know the answer. So just sit with the knowledge and see what happens to the *jiva's* fears.

And if the mind's too agitated or the fears just too dense to appreciate your freedom from these fears, then lovingly welcome them to a bit of cuddle time. Sit them down and give them a cup of tea. Objectify them. No need to claim them.

You have the right to allow them to arise without identifying with them.

The *jiva* – and its *karmic* package of fears and desires – is an object known to you, awareness. And are you ever affected by the objects that you know? Never. You are always free from Ed and his *karmic* fruits.

But coming back to Ed and his *sadhana*:

"I am aware that I have avoided dealing with fear my whole life and this is my task now." This attitude, along with the continuous application of the teachings, is all that's needed, Ed. Nothing

more, nothing less. You're already doing all that's required.

Based on your *jiva's rajasic* nature, perhaps adding a little more patience and flexibility can be of benefit. And the application of *karma yoga* can never be overstated.

Be gentle with yourself and take it easy. There's no destination to get to or time limited when dealing with the *jiva's prarabdha karma*.

My advice is to continue doing exactly what you're doing. The application of the teachings does the work.

You love Vedanta because you love yourself. It's just a mirror that reflects your already-perfect and complete identity.

You're welcome to write to me anytime, Ed.

~ Much love, Dear Self

Ed: Dear Daniel, Thank you for your kind reply.

I will read it again tomorrow and look for the advice in detail. I do appreciate this teaching and the little group of teachers around James. It is truly an oasis in the desert!

~ With gratitude, Ed

Daniel: You're most welcome, Ed.

I understand your urge to seek further advice and validation if you still have a sense as if something is still missing. This is natural whilst burning up *vasanas* and shifting your attention back to your true identity. Your mind's needing to digest fear thoughts, and because the knowledge is not yet firm, of course a little insecurity or sense of lack in the thought "there must be something else I can do" will arise.

In addition, because your *jiva's* predominantly *rajasic*, until the knowledge is firm, it will always want seek more, want to add.

But there's nothing to add. You're nailing it perfectly, and the only advice I can offer is that of confirmation.

Reread your statements below and my responses.

Ed: "So, what is the one thing that never changes?" This obsessed the mind and I had found the answer in a few hours. Huge epiphany.

Daniel: Game over. There's nothing more to realise. It's now a matter of converting this realisation into actualisation. In other words, getting this self-knowledge firm and direct so it dissolves the sense of fear. Welcome to the stage of *nididhyasana*.

Ed: I have always been an outwardly *rajasic*-type *jiva*. I am a teacher, I often charge into situations with great, false confidence and I have big ideas.

Daniel: It's good that you've acknowledged this. To avoid it, bring in a little *guna* management. You want the mind to be predominantly *sattvic* so false confidence can be replaced by clear confidence. In addition to cultivating a more *sattvic* subtle body, *karma yoga* remains your mothership when approaching all situations.

Ed: As this persona begins to crumble, I am becoming aware of the fear thoughts and feelings behind a lot of this activity. I am not doing the activities anymore, so I am left with the fears. The good thing about fears is – you really want to get rid of the buggers! The bad thing is, they really hurt.

Daniel: It's more that your identification with the persona (*jiva*) is crumbling. And of course this crumbling comes with fear – it's been conditioned as your primary identity for more than 50 years.

Ed: I am currently dealing with a lot of fear, based on past *adharmic* behaviour and consequent worry about consequences. I am aware that I have avoided dealing with fear my whole life and this is my task now.

Daniel: The continued application of self-knowledge will eventually lighten the load. Simply continue to contemplate the teachings whilst holding a *karma yoga* attitude and let *Isvara* deal with the timing of the *vasana* load decreasing.

As unattractive as this may sound, these fear-based *vasanas* are serving as your greatest *prasad*. It's *Isvara's* way of turning your attention back inwards, back to home sweet home.

Ed: I am using Christian's five-step formula.

Daniel: Brilliant.

Ed: I am thanking Bhagavan for the fears and the desires, I am inquiring into the self many times a day and when the worst comes to the worst I am just running "I am awareness" over and over.

Daniel: Perfect.

Ed: I am listening to James' *Bhagavad Gita* talks and rereading *How to Attain Enlightenment*. Just for the record, I have read *The Yoga of the Three Energies*, *The Yoga of Love* and *The Essence of Enlightenment*.

Daniel: Nothing to add, Ed. You're perfectly armed and just need to continue exposing the mind to the teachings as you are, in the *karma yoga* spirit.

Ed: I love Vedanta. I love the people I am beginning to interact with now and I want to devote the rest of my life to this.

Daniel: There is nothing like being in the company of your Self.

Ed: Dear Daniel, thank you again for this detailed and incredibly helpful reply.

It is wonderful to have such genuine help and support at this point.

~ In gratitude, Ed

Daniel: You are most welcome, Ed. And please feel free to write to me any time.

~ All my love, Dan

PS: Thank you for your kind donation.