

# The Burden of Trying Falls Away

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Mary Lee:** Hi, James. If you have the time, I have some thoughts to run by you. I am looking for the unattached perceiver who seems to be right next to the involved, attached reactor to perceptions. Oh, brother.

I am trying to track this for myself and not quickly resort to things I have read or heard. My body is a sense organ, picking up “outside” stimuli. Who is the receiver? I see the egoic mind react to a stimulus. Is it the perceiver? It feels a bit as though the mind is the hysterical character in a play. It perceives and reacts as per its nature. It reacts strongly enough that I wonder, where is this unattached perceiver? Is there a line between them? But... is there some consciousness that perceives the character/mind? It's a hall of mirrors with the unattached perceiver receding infinitely. “I” can't grasp it.

**James:** Information comes in through the senses. It takes the shape of knowledge in the mind. You see a tree and a tree-thought arises in the mind. Then the intellect interprets the thought according to the *vasanas*, i.e. your conditioning. This process takes place in the subtle body and is witnessed by you, awareness.

The subtle body is the “you” that is trying to figure it out. “Mary Lee,” whatever that is, is the subtle body, the mind/intellect/ego entity. It is not actually conscious. It seems to be conscious because you, awareness, illumine it and the processes (emotion, discrimination, will, etc.) that take place in it. This is all explained in my book. The video series gets into the way it works in detail.

The “you” that is trying to “grasp” awareness, what you call the “unattached perceiver,” cannot do it. It is equivalent to a light bulb trying to illumine electricity. It cannot do it, because electricity is subtler than light. Light is a grossified transformation of electricity. The intellect cannot experience awareness, nor can the mind feel it.

**Mary Lee:** I so appreciate your response. I will study your book more carefully as you recommend. You say, “The ‘you’ that is trying to ‘grasp’ awareness, what you call the ‘unattached perceiver,’ cannot do it. It is equivalent to a light bulb trying to illumine electricity. It cannot do it because electricity is subtler than light.”

I have such relief hearing this. I feel the burden of trying fall away. Ahh, this alone is a gift. And it is a jolt to know that what I really am is not at all what have felt myself to be... at all. Wow. That opens everything.

Again you say, “Nothing can be added to you or subtracted from you. It means that what happens to the experiencing entity, Mary Lee, has nothing to do with you. It means that you do not depend on anything, that you are free. To realize it, you have to contemplate the meaning of this knowledge. You have to see whether or not it is true.”

So is it my mind/intellect that contemplates this? Is the contemplation of “my mind” of value? Jac

O'Keeffe said that who we really are has no idea at all about our individual self drama/suffering/seeking. This one stunned me. I don't think I can imagine what my real existence is from where I am now. Sometimes I think it's all nonsense and give up on it for a few hours, which seems to be a good break from my thoughts. Then the pull exerts itself again. Yes, sometimes it makes me feel truly nuts and stressed.

**James:** Yes. It is the mind that has the problem. There is no actual problem, so the mind needs to understand its true nature. Enlightenment is for the intellect. You, the self, are the light, i.e. awareness. What do you need to know? Mary Lee, the intellect, is unclear. She is seeking to know who she is. She needs to know what her nature is. Enlightenment is *bodhi*, knowledge. This is the way the self is known. A Buddha is just someone who knows that he or she is the self.

**Mary Lee:** Is the contemplation of "my mind" of value?

**James:** Absolutely. You have been misled by experiential teachings, the no-mind teachings.

**Mary Lee:** Jac O'Keeffe said that who we really are has no idea at all about our individual self drama/suffering/seeking.

**James:** Yes. This suffering is just cooked up by ignorance. You are not actually suffering. But because you do not understand your nature, you seem to suffer.

**Mary Lee:** This one stunned me. I don't think I can imagine what my real existence is from where I am now.

**James:** It is not hard at all. You are the one who knows that Mary Lee is suffering. The suffering is an object to you. The subject cannot be the object. When you go to sleep at night, you don't suffer. You don't suffer, because you are free of Mary Lee and her stuff. This shows that you are not Mary Lee. What belongs to her does not belong to you.

**Mary Lee:** Sometimes I think it's all nonsense and give up on it for a few hours, which seems to be a good break from my thoughts. Then the pull exerts itself again. Yes, sometimes it makes me feel truly nuts and stressed.

**James:** You need help. You cannot figure it out on your own. You need to be taught. Read my book. Sign on to the logic at every stage.

You should pack it in on having some kind of dramatic experience.

**Mary Lee:** I'm okay with that. I do have some expectation of some different perspective, view, reality or "something" distinct when my real nature is known. Yes? No?

**James:** Yes. But you can cultivate this vision. You do not have to wait for some kind of dramatic shift. Even if you have one, it will shift back. So you have to take a stand in awareness as awareness and stick with it. Your perspective will gradually change.

**Mary Lee:** Are you still here as open, impersonal awareness? The same world is seen, but impersonally? Or what?

**James:** Yes, absolutely. The book will show you how to see things impersonally and why it is the only way to see reality. It will give the logic.

**Mary Lee:** I am going to slowly reread your book, so if all the answers to my questions are there, you don't have to answer. I find that it takes me some time to absorb much of this knowledge. I remember Joseph Goldstein saying that enlightenment is knowledge. This was a surprise to me.

**James:** He is right. Try to forget everything you have learned, everything you think you know about yourself. Read the book with the eyes of a child, a beginner. Later, when you have absorbed the knowledge, you can fight with it if you want. You can argue with me. But first, you have to have a clear, impartial understanding. It will be a great relief when this vision of non-duality begins to take root in your mind. You will see that you are on the bus to enlightenment and you can put Mary Lee and her burden of suffering down.

**Mary Lee:** What I read tells me I can't grasp it, because I am it. I read something interesting from Robert Adams to the effect that we must change our viewpoint and give up the assumption that we are the seeker. Rather we must accept and assume our identity as that unattached perceiver.

**James:** This is true. You are awareness. This is a simple matter of direct experience. You can leave "Mary Lee" out of it. There is no evidence that there is someone called Mary Lee. It is just a name that has been assigned to you, awareness. To relinquish the limited standpoint, "Mary Lee," and assume your real identity/platform is self-inquiry. It is not asking a question or trying to "grasp" anything. It is just knowledge. To say that you are awareness means that you are whole and complete, a partless whole, an indivisible oneness. It means that nothing can be added to you or subtracted from you. It means that what happens to the experiencing entity, Mary Lee, has nothing to do with you. It means that you do not depend on anything, that you are free. To realize it, you have to contemplate the meaning of this knowledge. You have to see whether or not it is true.

Until you can see that it is true and it stops your seeking you need to take a stand in awareness as awareness. When desires and fears appear you need to dismiss them with the knowledge that you are whole and complete. This is how you assume the platform of awareness, your true nature. It is hard, tiresome work but it is the only way. Very few seekers get enlightened because they do not understand what is involved. They want a dramatic quick fix. It does not work that way.

**Mary Lee:** I have been waiting for the Totality to reveal itself, maybe in some dramatic fashion! Oh, what fun! While we read of that happening to some, it hasn't happened for me. I wonder if my 60+ yrs of believing my egoic mind traps me in this habit of assumed identity. Often when I write with a question, I move on to some understanding on my own, though I seem to be hung up here.

**James:** Forget it. It may happen but whether or not you will grasp the significance of it is anybody's guess. If it does it will probably get interpreted according to your beliefs and opinions and end up meaning nothing. Maybe it will become a source of frustration because it will set up a *vasana* for epiphanies that will drive you crazy. The spiritual world is nothing but hundreds of thousands of people who have had dramatic epiphanies but who at the end of the day are even more confused about who they are than they were before the epiphany. You should pack it in on having some kind of dramatic experience. If one is not coming, consciousness does not want you to have one. At least half the people who attain enlightenment have not had an epiphany. Epiphanies are not listed in any of the texts that unfold the qualifications for enlightenment.

I hope this has been helpful. I suggest you study my book *How to Attain Enlightenment* carefully. If you have read it, you missed the teaching. The second chapter alone dismisses the experiential notion of enlightenment. As you read, sign on to the logic at each stage before you move on to the next topic. Put all your ideas and efforts on the shelf and read it like you were reading the morning paper. Just see what is being said there. Don't interpret it. Later on you can argue with it if you want. Be sure to take your time. Only do a few pages a day. Vedanta works, but you have to expose your mind to it in a very simple, dispassionate way. Don't think it is a manual telling you to do anything. It is simply for understanding. Once you get the big picture, then you can set out to do what needs to be done. You are not going to figure this out on your own. You need help. And get back to me when you get stuck.

~ Love, James