

# How Does Non-Duality Feel?

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Candice:** Hi, James. How are you? Thanks, I received your DVD on self-realization. The teachings are sinking in – *karma yoga*, *vasanas*, experience and knowledge – but I am still fighting with the concept of non-duality. Without referring to your book, I would define non-duality as “if everything is the self, then the sun is it, my dog is it, etc., etc.,” so I can’t separate my ego, mind and intellect from the self, because they depend on it (the self or consciousness). Lately I understood that the self is prior to the mind, so if I get sick the self operates every cell of my body without problem because I am not my mind... I don’t know if I am regressing, but sometimes I wonder, am I on the right track? So can you help me clear that up once and for all... non-duality and oneness?

Thanks a lot, my dear *guru*.

**James:** Hi, Candice. Very nice to hear from you. I am quite fine. Busy, but doing very well. I just finished a five-day retreat in the mountains. It was a big success.

Okay, let’s see if I can help you with this. You are right, everything is the self because reality is non-dual. But what does that mean in a practical way? How would you feel if you appreciate this fact? It means that everything is okay, that there is no reason to be afraid or to want anything. It means you can see that Candice is being looked after all the time, that everything she needs is automatically supplied. So you don’t have to worry about Candice. The way you tell about whether or not you are progressing is if you feel lighter and happier, more cheerful and dispassionate. You are making progress if you are not so interested in your agitating habits – the food, the wine, etc. You will not be interested in such things, because the happiness that comes from within takes the place of the happiness that you get from sense pleasures. From time to time there should be a feeling of happiness and peace that you cannot attribute to experience. It just comes up from within for no reason at all. Along with it there should be a feeling of dispassion, a “been there, done that” feeling. You should not care what is going on around you, just witness it with a sense of humor. If you do not have these symptoms, it means that somehow you believe that you are separate from everything. If you crave things, it means that you have a dualistic outlook. If you are afraid to lose the things you value, it means that you have dualistic outlook. If you want your life to be different, then you have a dualistic outlook.

If you cannot see that you are everything – which is the meaning of non-duality (Candice is you, your dog is you, your mind is you, etc.) – then duality is fine too – if you understand that everything can only be what it is and that the only way to live is to respond naturally to what comes according to your nature without fear.

When you say that you wonder if you are on the right track, what do you mean exactly? What practical problems do you have? Are you happy? Or if you have no practical problems and you are happy, is your only problem your confusion about non-duality? If it is, it is a good problem to have and you need not worry about it because non-duality is only for happiness, nothing else.

~ Much love, James