

That Pesky Inner Critic

Ram (James Swartz)

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Claudia: Hi, James. I cannot express enough my enormous gratitude for people like you and others to have the compassion and kindness for people like me who mistakenly feel lost in this world.

Thank you very much for your work and for helping people awakening to the one reality there is.

I'm writing to you because I had the most amazing experience, like a month ago after reading *The Untethered Soul* by Michael A. Singer, and since then I couldn't go back to that great feeling of aliveness and completeness.

I came across your website while surfing the web, listen to your talks at YouTube and also I read a part of your book *How to Attain Enlightenment*. I can honestly say that "that" feeling came again. I've ordered the book and it's already on its way!! I can't wait to fully read it.

James: Don't get too excited, sweetheart. It is a dense read. Take your time, a few pages at a time. Pay particular attention to the second chapter. It will be difficult for you because your idea of enlightenment will be challenged. Read a few pages, put it down and absorb the logic. You need the big picture. Right now you are looking at life from a limited experiential point of view - from how you feel. It is natural, but there is more to it. So take it easy, please.

Claudia: I'm just going to describe what I felt that one day so that you understand my point and can hopefully help me!... if you don't mind, of course.

Throughout my life I could hear an annoying voice inside my head. I came to a point where I couldn't just live with it anymore, that voice just judges everything. Even when I don't want to listen to it, it's always there, and I'm coming to a point where I just can't take it anymore.

James: It always came with a picture of my mother when I had it. I got rid of it when I was 29, thank God.

Claudia: So, this one day after me being tired of it all, with no strength to engage in any of it, I just started to witness it. I came to the conclusion that I was listening to something that wasn't even happening AT THAT MOMENT!! So how could it be real???? This is what I thought at the time. So what I decided to do that day was IGNORE IT! I spent my day ignoring that voice and not believing anything it was saying. At that time I could really see that the problem is our identification with the voice... with the thought!

I could see that I'm not the "I" I think I am. I JUST AM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I could see the others around me, and I could relate to them. It was totally impersonal. For a while,

nothing could upset me anymore. It was like I knew the mystery of life. I finally could live ONE WITH LIFE. NO STRUGGLE.

James: Yes, when you cease to identify with the small I, you suddenly find yourself as you are, as non-experiencing awareness. Everything makes sense from this perspective. You are no longer separate from the world. You have a relationless relationship with everything.

Claudia: After a few days, I don't know what happened, but I went back to the normal "ME"!!!! and after since then it's been so hard to attain that state again.

James: Your conditioning kicked in and you identified with it – some fear or desire hooked you – and back you came to your old self. It was a nice break, however, and gives you an idea of what is possible.

Claudia: I know that the truth of it all is not to do anything, and let it be... but I quickly forget my purpose. Why is that?

Can you help, James? Thanks once again.

~ Claudia

James: I think I can, Claudia. You need a means of self-knowledge and a way to realize yourself. I asked my wife, who is a realized person and a Vedanta teacher, if she would be willing to coach you a bit in the teaching until you get on your feet.

I check everything she writes, so it is as good as talking with me. If there is something she can't handle – which is doubtful – I will reply. The advantage of talking with her is that you will get replies more quickly than with me. I am quite famous in this non-dual world and I have a long queue of people to teach, so it sometimes takes quite a while for me to get to your questions. Anyway, you need to read the book first. As I said – and I can't say this too much – don't read for inspiration – it is an inspiring book, no doubt, but read for understanding. If you want to get back to who you are you need some knowledge. Not a lot, but a certain knowledge that will guide your path. It is not a knowledge that you are in contact with right now, although it is in you. The book will awaken this knowledge and when you begin to understand, you will get very inspired and relieved. There is a way out of this world, a path away from the critical voice. While you are waiting for the book you can have a look at my website, *ShiningWorld.com*. There is a link on the home page that says "New to Non-Duality?" Click it and read the article. Also if you could write a page or two about your life, your spiritual search – if any – so we can get an idea of where you are at spiritually.

~ Love, James