

The Testimony of Enlightened Beings

Spiritual awakening is best understood as consciousness realizing the true nature of what it really is. At the level of individual consciousness, consciousness realizes itself to be a presence of consciousness at the center of the world it perceives. This individual presence of consciousness is called the witness, which in modern physics is called the observer. Modern physics tells us the observer's world is a holographic world defined on a holographic screen that arises as an event horizon due to the observer's own accelerated motion. At the ultimate level of spiritual awakening, which is called spiritual enlightenment, consciousness realizes the true nature of what it is as an undivided and unlimited empty space of pure undifferentiated consciousness, which is called the void, and in modern physics is called the vacuum state. This ultimate state of awakening is described as a state of dissolution in which an individual presence of consciousness, present at the central point of view of the holographic world it perceives, returns to and dissolves back into its undivided source of pure undifferentiated consciousness. This return to the source is described as a dissolution of individual being into undivided being, which can only occur in an ultimate state of free fall when the observer's accelerated motion comes to an end, and is described as falling into the void.

The source of perceiving consciousness is discussed in terms of the hierarchy of consciousness and its objects of perception. The holographic principle tells us that all the objects of perception that an observer can perceive are forms of information encoded on the observer's holographic screen that are projected like images from its own holographic screen to its own point of view at the center of its own holographic world and are animated in the flow of energy that energizes that holographic world. The observer's holographic screen always arises as an event horizon in the observer's own accelerated frame of reference. The fundamental lesson is that the source of consciousness cannot be an object of perception. The nature of spiritual awakening is discussed in the sense of the perceiving consciousness of the observer, individually present at the central point of view of its own holographic world, returning to its undivided source of undifferentiated consciousness. That return to its source is understood as a dissolution that occurs in an ultimate state of free fall. This is exactly what is being testified to in the testimony of enlightened beings.

Enlightened beings have given a very clear description of the nature of spiritual awakening and the path that leads to awakening. Spiritual awakening is ultimately about discovering the truth of what you really are, which can only be understood as consciousness itself. The most detailed description of this path of discovery can be found in the teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj, especially in his classic book *I Am That*. Remarkably, everything that Nisargadatta describes in this book can be understood to be consistent with the discoveries of modern theoretical physics, specifically, the holographic principle of quantum gravity. The holographic principle is telling us that the world we perceive is no more real than a simulation or a computer-generated virtual reality, like depicted in the movie the Matrix. Everything the perceiver can perceive in that holographic world is no more real than a projected and animated image of that world. Only the

spiritual presence of consciousness that perceives that holographic world from the central point of view of that world has its own independent existence and reality.

Spiritual awakening is ultimately about discovering the source of your own consciousness. In all nondual traditions, like Advaita Vedanta, Taoism and Zen Buddhism, that source is described only in terms of negation as a void of absolute nothingness, an empty space of pure undivided being, or an undivided and unlimited ocean of pure undifferentiated consciousness.

The source can only be described in terms of negation because the source is not perceivable. The source is what gives rise to the experience of perception. The perceiver is called the witness, which in the language of modern theoretical physics is the observer at the central point of view of its own holographic world. The images of that world are always displayed on a holographic screen that arises as an event horizon due to the observer's own accelerated motion relative to the motionless ocean. The observer's event horizon is a surface of the ocean. The images are projected from the observer's holographic screen to its central point of view and are animated in the flow of energy that arises from that accelerated motion.

Everything the observer can perceive in its own holographic world, which can be called an object of perception, is a form of information encoded on the observer's holographic screen that is projected like an image from the observer's own screen to its own point of view at the center of that world and is animated in the flow of energy that arises from the observer's own accelerated motion relative to the motionless ocean. The projected images are illuminated by the light of consciousness, which emanates from the observer's own point of view. The ocean is described as the darkness and the deep that is the source of the illuminating light of consciousness. The light of consciousness is divided from the darkness of the ocean when the perceiving consciousness of the observer is divided from its source of pure undifferentiated consciousness. The ocean of pure undifferentiated consciousness is the source, which is not perceivable, but gives rise to the experience of perception when the perceiving consciousness of the observer is divided from its source and that point of consciousness begins to undergo accelerated motion relative to the motionless ocean, which is how the surface of the ocean arises as an event horizon.

Remarkably, this whole scenario is described in the first few lines of the book of Genesis. The important point is that this description of the creation of a holographic world is not a theory of creation. This is not even a theory of consciousness. This is a mechanism of creation that can be utilized by consciousness so that consciousness can create and perceive its own holographic world. This mechanism of creation is what is described in the first few lines of Genesis. This is exactly what the book of Genesis is telling us about the nature of that creation:

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth
And the earth was without form and void
And darkness was upon the face of the deep
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*

*And God said 'Let there be light'; and there was light
And God saw the light, that it was good
And God divided the light from the darkness*

The face of the deep is a holographic screen and the Spirit of God moving over the face of the deep is the observer moving in an accelerated frame of reference, which is how the screen arises as an event horizon. The waters refer to the void as an ocean of consciousness, which is also called the deep. The ocean is motionless, and the observer is moving relative to the motionless ocean, which is how the surface of the ocean arises as an event horizon. The face of the deep is a surface of the ocean, which arises as an event horizon due to the motion of the observer relative to the motionless ocean. The observer as a moving point of consciousness must divide itself from the motionless ocean of consciousness for this creation to occur.

The light Genesis refers to is the light of consciousness, which is the light by which the world must be illuminated for that world to be perceived by the observer. The darkness is the void. To illuminate and perceive its own world, the observer must divide itself from its source, which is the void, which also divides the light of consciousness from the darkness of the void. Genesis describes the observer as a point of consciousness that must move in relation to its own holographic screen for that screen to display all the projected and animated images of its world, which are called forms. A form is a form of information encoded on the screen and projected to the central point of view of the observer like a projected image. Forms are images projected from the screen, which are illuminated as the light of consciousness is divided from the darkness. The forms are animated due to the energy that arises from the motion of the observer. The observer is creating the holographic screen with its own motion and is perceiving the forms as they're illuminated. That's how the observer's own holographic world is created. Why does this creation occur? For no other reason than it can and it feels good. Creation is the potentiality of the void.

The Testimony

Adapted from the teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj:

Be aware of being conscious and seek the source of consciousness.

In pure being consciousness arises.

In consciousness the world appears and disappears.

Consciousness is on contact, a reflection against a surface, a state of duality.

The center is a point of void and the witness a point of pure awareness; they know themselves to be as nothing.

But the void is full to the brim.

It is the eternal potential as consciousness is the eternal actual

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The Hierarchy of Consciousness and its Objects of Perception

The objects in the world are many, but the eye that sees them is one. The higher always appears as one to the lower and the lower as many to the higher.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The key point about spiritual awakening is that the source of consciousness cannot be an object of perception. The holographic principle tells us that all the objects of perception that an observer can perceive are forms of information encoded on the observer's own holographic screen that are projected like images from its own holographic screen to its point of view at the center of its own holographic world and are animated in the flow of energy that energizes that holographic world. It is logically impossible that the source of the observer's perceiving consciousness can be an object of perception that it perceives. The hierarchy of consciousness tells us that the source of the observer's perceiving consciousness, individually present at the central point of view of its own holographic world, is like an undivided ocean of pure undifferentiated consciousness. The observer's holographic screen always arises as an event horizon in the observer's own accelerated frame of reference. The observer's event horizon becomes its holographic screen when it encodes qubits of information. All the perceivable objects of the observer's holographic world are forms of information that can be reduced to qubits encoded on its own holographic screen that are projected like images from its screen to its point of view at the center of that holographic world and are animated in the flow of energy that arises from the observer's own accelerated motion.

The world is but a mistaken view of reality, unreal to its core.

You see yourself in the world, while I see the world in myself. To you, you get born and die, while to me, the world appears and disappears. It is your imagination that misleads you. There is a deep contradiction in your attitude which you do not see.

The source of consciousness cannot be an object in consciousness. To know the source is to be the source. When you realize that you are not the person, but the pure and calm witness, and that fearless awareness is your very being, you are the being.

Give attention to the witness to break the spell of the known, the illusion that only the perceivable world is real.

To become free your attention must be drawn to the witness.

I see only consciousness, and know everything to be but consciousness, as you know the pictures on the cinema screen to be but light.

It is enough to shift attention from the screen onto oneself to break the spell.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

In order to perceive the events of its own holographic world, as displayed on its own holographic screen and as perceived from the central point of view of its own world, the observer's perceiving consciousness must divide itself from its source of pure undifferentiated consciousness. That separation can only occur when energy is expressed and the observer's point of view begins to undergo accelerated motion relative to the motionless ocean of pure undifferentiated consciousness. The undivided ocean of pure undifferentiated consciousness is the source of the observer's perceiving consciousness and is the highest possible level of consciousness. It is the one source of all observers, each present at the central point of view of its own holographic world. This hierarchy of consciousness is represented by the symbolism of the All-Seeing-Eye.



All-Seeing-Eye

In terms of the symbolism of the All-Seeing-Eye, the central eye represents the observer, which is the perceiving consciousness of the individual spirit present at the central point of view of its own holographic world; the triangle represents the hierarchy of consciousness, with the Great Spirit, which is the one source of all individual spirits, at the apex or highest possible level of consciousness; the rays emanating from the central eye represent the light of consciousness that illuminates the observer's own holographic world; and the encompassing circle represents the boundary of that holographic world, which is the observer's event horizon or holographic screen.

The person is never the subject. You can see a person, but you are not the person. You are always the Supreme, which appears at a given point of time and space as the witness, a bridge between the pure awareness of the Supreme and the manifold consciousness of the person.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

Spiritual enlightenment is described as a return to the source. It is the individual consciousness of the observer, present at the central point of view of its own holographic world, that is returning to its source of pure undifferentiated consciousness. The individual spirit returns to, reunites itself

with, and becomes at-one with the Great Spirit. That return is described as a dissolution, as the individual being of the observer dissolves back into its source of pure undivided being, like a drop of water that dissolves back into the motionless ocean. That return always occurs in an ultimate state of free fall. When the accelerated motion of the observer in its accelerated frame of reference comes to an end in an ultimate freely falling frame of reference, the observer no longer has an event horizon, and therefore no longer has a holographic screen that displays images of its own holographic world. In that ultimate state of free fall, the observer's holographic world disappears from existence from its own point of view, and the individual being of the observer dissolves back into its source of pure undivided being.

The Supreme reality is the void beyond being and non-being, beyond consciousness.

In reality there is only the source, dark in itself, but making everything shine with the light of consciousness.

Unperceived, it causes perception. Being nothing it gives birth to all being.

It is the immovable background of motion.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

Spiritual Awakening is Darwinian Evolution Derailed

As long as you believe that only the perceivable world is real you remain its slave.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The important point about the nature of emotions has to do with the nature of personal self-identification, which is emotionally driven. At the level of the body, emotions are all about body survival. The primitive emotions of fear and desire, as in the desire to eat and the fear of being eaten, are about defending the survival of the body in a body-eat-body world. Even the social emotions of emotional attachments are about defending the survival of the body since the immature body of a child cannot fend for its own survival and is dependent on the care given by a caregiver. That caregiving always arises in an emotional attachment between the child and its caregiver. At the level of the body, the expression of all emotions is only about defending the survival of the body. All emotional expressions have been selected for by natural selection (Darwinian evolution) in the sense that the bodies that are most likely to survive and reproduce themselves in the form of another body are the bodies that are best able to express survival emotions. Body survival emotions are selected for by natural selection (the survival of the fittest body). Fitness for survival is selected for in terms of the expression of body survival emotions. Expression of body survival emotions is how the form of the body is self-replicated in form.

Nature has designed the expression of emotions along the lines of the pleasure-pain principle. Whatever promotes body survival (as a desire is satisfied) feels good, while whatever threatens body survival (as a fear is manifested) feels bad. As we express our emotions in a personally

biased way, all we are really doing is pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. As we express fear and desire in a personally biased way, we are pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, which is how we defend the survival of our own body. At the level of the survival and the reproduction of the body, that's all that's really going on here. That's the essence of Darwin's theory of evolution.

Desire for embodied existence is the root-cause of trouble.

At the root of all creation lies desire.

The projecting power is imagination prompted by desire.

Desire and imagination foster and reinforce each other.

One becomes self-conscious only when caught in the conflict between pleasure and pain, which demands choice and decision. The personal self by its very nature is constantly pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. The ending of this pattern is the ending of the self. The ending of the self with its desires and fears enables you to return to your real nature.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The big question is about what is going on at the level of consciousness. Whatever consciousness is, when consciousness emotionally identifies itself with its body (personal self-identification), consciousness feels compelled to defend the survival of its body as though its existence depends upon it. That feeling of self-limitation is what compels the expression of survival emotions. That emotional expression leads to personal self-identification since consciousness feels emotionally self-limited to the emotionally animated form of the body as consciousness perceives that emotional expression. Personal self-identification is always emotionally driven as body survival emotions are expressed, which leads to the expression of more survival emotions that perpetuate the vicious cycle of personal self-identification.

Self-identifications are patently false and the cause of bondage.

Your attachment is your bondage.

There is trouble only when you cling to something.

It is your desire to hold onto it that creates the problem. Let go.

When you hold onto nothing, no trouble arises.

Freedom means letting go.

Spiritual maturity lies in the readiness to let go of everything.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

How can this vicious cycle be broken? Consciousness has to realize the true nature of what it is. When consciousness realizes the true nature of what it is and that its existence does not depend on the survival of its body, then there is no good reason to continue to express body survival emotions. That's how consciousness breaks the vicious cycle of personal self-identification. That

emotional energy is no longer wasted on defending the survival of its body. That energy is released and can be utilized in the pursuit of other endeavors, like the expression of creativity. In other words, when consciousness realizes the true nature of what it is and that its existence does not depend on the survival of the body, consciousness overcomes the expression of body survival emotions. That overcoming of body survival emotions is really nothing more than Darwinian evolution derailed. Spiritual awakening is really nothing more than consciousness freeing itself from the emotional bondage of Darwinian evolution.

You create bondage when you desire and fear and identify yourself with your feelings.

You identify yourself with your desires and become their slave.

Your bonds are self-created as chains of attachment.

Cut the knot of self-identification.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

At the level of expressing our own personally biased individual will, all we are really doing is pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain as we express our own emotions and express fear and desire in our own way due to our own personal bias in the focus of our attention. We are only pursuing whatever makes us feel good and avoiding whatever makes us feel bad as we express our own emotions. Even what we call love at a personal level is an expression of our own selfishness, which is only an expression of our own possessive, selfish love. As we pursue pleasure and avoid pain, we are in love with whatever makes us feel good and hate whatever makes us feel bad.

Only when we give up the expression of our own personally biased individual will and surrender to unbiased divine will can we experience selfless love, as the flow of energy through our own body comes into alignment with the flow of energy through all things and we feel connected to all things. When we express our own personally biased individual will, we feel disconnected and personally self-limited. We can only feel connected to all things when we surrender.

The Path to Spiritual Awakening

The world is but a show, glittering and empty. It is there as long as I want to see it and take part in it. When I cease caring, it dissolves. It has no cause and serves no purpose. It appears exactly as it looks, but there is no depth in it nor meaning

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The only thing you can perceive that's really real and really exists is your own being, which you perceive as the sense of being present as a presence of consciousness at the center of the world you perceive. Everything else you perceive in that world is part of the holographic virtual reality and isn't really real. If you really want to awaken to the truth of what you really are, you have to focus your attention on that sense of being present. You have to turn your attention away from the world you perceive, look within, and know yourself to be that presence of consciousness. You have to stop paying attention to an illusion of what you are that only appears to exist in the world you perceive, which is no more real than a holographic virtual reality.

Wherever you go, at all times, you carry with you the sense of being present and aware, here and now. It means that you are independent of space and time. Space and time are in you, not you in them. It is only your self-identification with the body, limited in space and time, that gives you a sense of limitation. In reality, you are limitless.

*All limited existence is imaginary.
Even space and time are imaginary.
Pure being, filling all and beyond all, is not limited.
All limitation is imaginary.
Only the unlimited is real.*

The witness is both real and unreal, the last remnant of illusion, the first touch of the real. The moment you say I Am, the entire universe comes into being.

Everything is a play of ideas. In the state free from ideation nothing is perceived. The root idea is I Am. It shatters the state of pure consciousness and is followed by the innumerable sensations and perceptions, feelings and ideas which in their totality constitute God's world. The I Am remains as the witness, but it is by the will of God that everything happens.

Delve deeply into the sense I Am and you will discover that the perceiving center is universal. All that happens in the universe happens to you, the silent witness. Whatever is done is done by you, the universal and inexhaustible energy.

There can be no universe without the witness, no witness without the universe.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

Whatever you do in the world, as you focus your attention on the world, make that doing of secondary importance. Make focusing your attention on your own sense of being present of primary importance. Before you can awaken, your attention has to become firmly focused and stabilized on your own sense of being present for the world you perceive to the exclusion of everything else you can perceive in that world. Your attention has to become firmly focused on your own sense of being present for the world you perceive to the point you become willing to totally withdraw your attention away from that world and do nothing in that world.

To be born means to create a world around yourself as the center.

You are that point of consciousness.

By your movement the world is ever created.

Stop moving and there will be no world.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

To awaken to the ultimate truth of what you really are, you have to become willing to do nothing. You first become willing to do nothing at a personal level, and then ultimately, you become willing to do nothing at an absolute level. You can only pass through the gateless gate when you

become motionless and desireless. You first have to become aware of yourself as a moving point of illuminating consciousness and then allow yourself to become motionless. When you totally withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive and do nothing in that world, while steadily focusing your attention only on your own sense of being present as a moving point of consciousness, you stop moving. You stop animating that world as you become motionless and desireless. When you totally withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive, you stop illuminating that world, and that world disappears from existence. When you become motionless and desireless, you enter into an ultimate state of free fall, the holographic world you perceive disappears from existence from your own point of view, and your own sense of being present for that world dissolves away as your individual being, present at a point of view, dissolves back into the infinite emptiness and silence of its source of pure undivided being.

Nothing perceivable is real. Only the onlooker is real, call him Self or Atman. That which makes you think that you are a human is not human. It is a dimensionless point of consciousness.

All you can say about yourself is I Am.

Even the sense I Am is not continuous, though it is a useful pointer; it shows where to seek, but not what to seek.

At the root of my being is pure awareness, a speck of intense light. This speck, by its nature, radiates and creates pictures in space and events in time.

To the Self the world is but a passing show. The world just sprouts into being out of nothing and returns to nothing. As long as the Self is merely aware, there is no problem.

You can stop it any moment by switching off attention.

You make it possible by giving it attention.

The totality of all mental projections is the Great Illusion.

When I look beyond the mind I see the witness.

Beyond the witness is infinite emptiness and silence.

Go back to that state of pure being, the I Am in its purity before it became contaminated with false self-identifications. Abandon them all. Focus the mind on pure being. In it all disappears: myself, the life I live, the world around me. Only peace and unfathomable silence remains.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

Why don't more people awaken? Awakening is ultimately about becoming desireless, which is the same as dying. Who really wants to die? The answer is nobody. The question itself is a contradiction in terms. The expression of desire is all about living. To awaken, you have to get to

the point that you see the futility of everything you can appear to do and the meaninglessness of the life you appear to live in the world, become willing to accept death, do nothing, and give up your desire to live. You have to become willing to let go and move on. You have to detach yourself from everything, sever all your emotional attachments, and stop caring about the life you appear to live. Easy to say, but impossible to do, because it means doing nothing.

From my point of view everything happens by itself, quite spontaneously.

I do nothing. I just see them happen.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The Dark Night of the Soul

Why don't more people awaken? The vast majority of people haven't reached an adequate level of despair to awaken. You have to lose all hope for the future. As long as you're hoping for a better life in the future and believe you can do something that will give you a better life, you cannot awaken. As long as you believe that awakening will give you that better life in the future, you cannot awaken. Only when you lose all hope for the future can you enter into the emptiness and silence of your own being, which you can only find in the present moment.

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.

You have to see the futility of everything you can appear to do and the meaninglessness of the life you appear to live in the world, enter into a state of despair, and become willing to give up everything you have and everything you can do before you can awaken. In that despair, you become willing to do nothing and give up your desire to live. In that despair, you accept death and become willing to let go and move on. The key emotional state is despair that is the natural result of seeing the futility of everything you can do and the meaninglessness of your own life.

There is no such thing as an expression of reality. Neither action nor feeling nor thought express reality. I know that life itself is only a make-believe. I just watch events happening, knowing them to be unreal.

My life is a succession of events just like yours. Only I Am detached and see the passing show as a passing show, while you stick to things and move along with them.

Liberation is never of the person, it is always from the person.

The difference between the person and the witness is as between not knowing and knowing oneself.

The dissolution of personality is always followed by a sense of great relief, as if a heavy burden has fallen off.

The reward of Self-knowledge is freedom from the personal self.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The Meaning of Life

Why isn't love the meaning of life? If you mean the kind of emotionally attached possessive love that arises from the expression of the social emotions of emotional attachments, then you're only talking about body survival emotions that are really no different in kind than the expression of the primitive survival emotions of fear and desire. The only purpose of these emotional expressions is to defend the survival of a body that appears in the world you perceive, which is only an illusion of what you really are. If you mean the kind of non-attached and non-possessive love that arises from the normal flow of energy through that world and the normal flow of things, which you perceive as non-attached feelings of connection to all things, then that non-possessive love can be understood as the meaning of life, but at the end of the day, you're only in love with something that appears in a dream that you're dreaming. The Creator is the dreamer that is in love with the creation that appears in its dream. Life is but a dream.

The world you can perceive is a very small world, entirely private. The world is but a reflection of imagination. Take it to be a dream and be done with it. What you call survival is but the survival of a dream. By forgetting who you are and imagining yourself a mortal creature you create so much trouble for yourself that you have to wake up, like from a bad dream.

Some go on a journey and come back, some never leave. What difference does it make since they travel in dreamlands, each wrapped up in his own dream. Only the waking up is important.

Once you have seen that you are dreaming, you shall wake up, but you do not see because you want the dream to continue. A day will come when you long for the ending of the dream. You become willing to pay any price. The price will be dispassion and detachment, the loss of interest in the dream.

*What you call survival is but the survival of a dream.
Death is preferable to it. There is a chance of waking up.*

As life before death is but imagination, so is life after death. The dream continues.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

Final Awakening Instructions

No one can tell you or show you how to awaken. No one can push you or pull you to awakening. You have to do it by yourself, for yourself. It's all up to you. You've been given the complete set of instructions, the complete roadmap that will allow you to make the journey, you just have to

become willing to take the journey. It's not so much about doing things in the world you perceive but your willingness to do nothing, first at a personal level and then at an absolute level.

*Do nothing. There is nothing to do. Just be.
To be, you must be nobody.
You make yourself mortal by taking yourself to be a body.
That which is alive in you is immortal.*

*Reality is essentially alone.
To know that nothing is, is true knowledge.*

*For the path of return naughting oneself is necessary.
My stand I take where nothing is.
To the mind it is all darkness and silence.
It is deep and dark, mystery beyond mystery.
It is, while all else merely happens.
It is like a bottomless well, whatever falls into it disappears.
-Nisargadatta Maharaj*

You need focus and intent. You have to express a clear, unconflicted intent, and focus your time, energy and attention on the awakening process like a laser beam. You need to be serious and discipline yourself. You have to stop allowing your attention to wander around and become distracted by the distractions of the world. You have to stop seeking out distractions. You have to see the world as an illusion, lose interest in paying attention to an illusion, and only become interested in discovering the truth of what you really are to the exclusion of everything else.

*It is disinterestedness that liberates.
If you lose interest, you break the emotional link that perpetuates the bondage.*

The unreal appears to be real only because you believe in it. You impart reality to it by taking it to be real. Doubt it and it ceases.

As long as you are interested in your present way of living, you will shirk from the final leap into the unknown.

*Nothing stands in the way of your liberation here and now except for your being more interested in other things. You must see through them as mere mental errors.
-Nisargadatta Maharaj*

The only thing you can perceive that really exists is your own being, which you perceive as the sense of being present as a presence of consciousness at the center of the world you perceive. Everything else you perceive in that world is part of the holographic virtual reality and isn't

really real. Only your own being is really real. You have to focus your attention on that sense of being present to the exclusion of everything else.

As long as you are engrossed in the world, you cannot know yourself. To know yourself, turn your attention away from the world and turn within.

Turn within. I Am you know. Be with it all the time, until you revert to it spontaneously. There is no simpler and easier way.

Know yourself as you are. Stay with the sense I Am.

Your questions are about a non-existing person. Realize that whatever you think yourself to be is just a stream of events; that whatever happens, comes and goes, is not real; that you alone are, the changeless among the changeful. Separate the observed from the observer and abandon false identifications. Be a fully awakened witness of the field of consciousness.

Whatever you perceive is not you. It is there in the field of consciousness, but you are not the field and its contents.

To realize that is the end of all seeking. You come to it when you see all you think yourself to be as mere imagination and stand aloof in pure awareness. It is not difficult but detachment is needed. It is the clinging to the false that makes the truth so difficult to see. Discard what is not your own until nothing is left which you can disown. You will find that what is left is nothing.

In reality nothing happens. Nothing happens to space itself. In pure consciousness nothing ever happens. Onto the screen of the mind destiny forever projects its pictures, and thus illusion constantly renews itself. The pictures come and go as light intercepted by ignorance. See the light and disregard the pictures.

You can spend an eternity looking elsewhere for truth, all in vain. You must begin in yourself, with yourself. Realize that your world is only a reflection of yourself. All you need is to stop searching outside what can only be found within.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

You need to surrender and accept everything as it is every moment with no desire that anything be any different than it is in the present moment. As long as you express the personally biased emotions of fear and desire and emotionally attach yourself to things, you will emotionally project yourself into an imaginary past and future as you remember a personal past and anticipate a personal future. Your attention has to become firmly focused on the present moment because that is the only place you can find yourself as a presence of consciousness with its own sense of being present. You surrender as you stop trying to control things in a personally biased way and

stop defending a mentally constructed and emotionally energized personal concept of yourself, which is only an illusion of what you really are. You surrender as you stop fighting against and resisting the normal flow of things and allow yourself to come into alignment. You know you've surrendered as you feel connected rather than disconnected and personally self-limited.

*Some unknown power acts and you imagine that you are acting.
You are merely watching what happens.*

As long as there is the sense of identity with the body, frustration is inevitable. It is because of your illusion that you are the doer.

As long as you have the idea of influencing events, liberation is not for you. The very notion of doership, of being a cause, is bondage.

There is no such thing as free will. Will is bondage. You identify yourself with your desires and become their slave.

To imagine that you are in control is the aberration of the body-mind. There is a universal power that is in control. The illusion of personal control is in the mind only. Stand without desire and fear, relinquishing all control. This is the shortest way to reality.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

You need to sever your emotional attachments to things and detach yourself from things. When you detach yourself, you empty yourself of things, and you become able to externalize yourself. You're able to step out of the world you perceive and see that world from the outside, from a higher level of consciousness. You see that everything you've attached yourself to is an illusion, no more real than the projected and animated images of a movie you're watching. When you see the illusion as an illusion, you lose interest in paying attention to an illusion. That's how you sever the emotional attachment as you withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive and withdraw your investment of emotional energy that animates your character in that world in relation to other things that appear in that world. When you detach yourself, it feels like something dies inside, because your ego begins to die away. Your ego is nothing more than your consciousness, which is what you really are, emotionally identifying itself with the emotionally animated form of your character that appears in the world you perceive due to emotional feelings of self-limitation to that personal form. When you sever your emotional attachment to your character, your character becomes dead to you as your ego dies away and that emotional self-identification comes to an end. That's how you cut the knot of personal self-identification. You sever your emotional attachment to your character and your character becomes dead to you.

*Externalization is the first step in liberation. Step away and look. Separate yourself and watch.
The physical events will go on happening, but in themselves they have no importance.*

Seeing that you are not the person you take yourself to be, step out and look from the outside.

You are the source of reality, a dimensionless center of perception that imparts reality to whatever it perceives, a pure witness that watches what is going on and remains unaffected. It is only imagination and self-identification with the imagined that encloses and converts the inner watcher into a person.

Feelings, thoughts and actions race before the watcher in endless succession.

The person is merely the result of a misunderstanding.

In reality there is no such thing.

In reality there is no person, only the watcher identifying itself.

I am like a cinema screen, clear and empty.

The pictures pass over it and disappear, leaving it as clear and empty as before.

The screen intercepts and reflects the pictures. These are lumps of destiny, but not my destiny; the destinies of the people on the screen.

The character will become a person when he begins to shape his life instead of accepting it as it comes-identifying himself with it.

All this I perceive quite clearly, but I am not in it.

I feel myself as floating over it, aloof and detached.

There is also the awareness of it all and a sense of immense distance as if the body and the mind and all that happens to them were somewhere far out on the horizon.

To myself I Am neither perceivable nor conceivable.

There is nothing I can point out and say "this I am".

Once you realize that there is nothing in this world which you can call your own, you look at it from the outside as you look at a play on the stage or a picture on the screen. To know the picture as the play of light on the screen gives freedom from the idea that the picture is real. In reality I only look. Whatever is done is done on the stage. Joy and sorrow, life and death, they are real to the man in bondage. To me they are all in the show, as unreal as the show itself.

Death gives freedom. To be free in the world you must die to the world.

I Am dead already. Physical death will make no difference. I Am timeless being.

The realized man is beyond life and death. Life and death appears to him but a way of expressing movement in the immovable, change in the changeless.

He has died before his death and he saw that there was nothing to be afraid of.

The moment you know your real being you are afraid of nothing.

All that is, lives and moves and has its being in consciousness.

I Am in and beyond that consciousness.

I Am in it as the witness. I Am beyond it as Being.

Awareness comes as if from a higher dimension.

In ignorance the seer becomes the seen and in wisdom he is the seeing.

When you refuse to open your eyes, what can you be shown?

You must realize yourself as the silent witness of all that happens. Your consciousness raised to a higher dimension, from which you see everything much clearer.

The witness that stands aloof is the watchtower of the real, the point at which awareness, inherent in the unmanifested, contacts the manifested.

Find the immutable center where all movement takes birth. Be the axis at the center, not whirling at the periphery. Nothing stops you except fear. You are afraid of impersonal being.

If you desire nothing, then you are as good as dead, or you are the Supreme.

The Supreme is both creation and dissolution, the beingness of all beings, the ground from which all grows, alone. Words do not reach there, nor mind.

Before the mind happens, I Am.

Before all beginnings, after all endings, I Am.

All has its being in the I Am that shines in every living being.

The dreamer is one.

I Am beyond all dreams.

I Am the light in which all dreams appear and disappear.

The Supreme state neither comes nor goes. It is.

It is a timeless state, ever present.

There is no journey to Supreme reality. One is undeceived only.

In the timeless state there is no Self, no I Am, no witness.

Awareness is beyond all.

Awareness is primordial; it is the original state.

Awareness is undivided, aware of itself.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

You detach yourself because you see that you've only attached yourself to an illusion of what you really are, and you lose interest in paying attention to that illusion. That's why you withdraw your attention away from the illusion and stop expressing personally self-defensive, personally self-limiting, and personally biased emotional energy.

We have enclosed ourselves in a cloud of personal desires and fears, images and thoughts, ideas and concepts.

*You must begin by being the dispassionate observer.
Then only will you realize your full being.*

Only in complete self-negation is there a chance to discover our real being.

The urge must come from within as a wave of detachment.

The way to truth lies through the destruction of the false. To destroy the false you must question your most inveterate beliefs. Of these the idea that you are the body is the worst.

Destroy the wall that separates; the I-am-the-body idea.

*Investigate your world, apply your mind to it, examine it critically.
Scrutinize every idea about it.*

*Everything must be scrutinized and the unnecessary ruthlessly destroyed.
There cannot be too much destruction.
For in reality nothing is of value.*

As long as you take yourself to be a person, a body and a mind, separate from the stream of life, having a will of its own, pursuing its own aims, you are living merely on the surface and whatever you do will be short-lived and of little value, mere straw to feed the flames of vanity.

As long as you are locked up with your mind and ego, you cannot go further. Were you really at war with your ego, you would question its reality. You don't question because you are not really interested. You are moved by the pleasure-pain principle, fear and desire, which is your ego. You are going along with your ego, not fighting against it. You are not even aware how totally swayed you are by personal considerations. Be in revolt against your ego, for the ego narrows and distorts. It is the worst of all tyrants. It dominates you completely.

Ego is in resistance until the very end.

In the end you get fed up with the waste of time and energy.

When you refuse to play the game you are out of it.

Moments when one feels empty and estranged are desirable moments, for it means the soul has cast its moorings and is sailing for distant places.

The search for reality is the most dangerous of all undertakings for it will destroy the world in which you live.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

You have to lose that personal bias. You have to become willing to do nothing at a personal level as you stop expressing personally biased emotions. You only stop expressing those personally biased emotions when you see the futility of everything that you can do and the meaninglessness of your own life. You are only defending an illusion of what you really are. You have to see the futility of everything you can do and enter into a state of despair as you lose all hope for a better life in the future. You have to see the futility of everything you can do that you falsely believe will give you a better life in the future. When you express personally biased emotions, you interfere with the normal flow of things, create feelings of disconnection and self-limitation, and only make things worse for yourself. When you lose all hope for the future, you're forced into paying attention only to the present moment, which is the only place you can find yourself as a presence of consciousness. You have to enter into a state of despair about the futility of everything you can do and lose all hope for the future so that you can look into the emptiness and silence of your own being, which you can only find in the present moment.

What begins and ends is mere appearance. The world can be said to appear but not to be. It is your memory that makes you think that the world continues. Memory creates the illusion of continuity. I see the world as it is, a momentary appearance in consciousness.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The final step in awakening is to become willing to do nothing at an absolute level, which can only happen when you totally withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive. When you totally withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive and do nothing in that world, while steadily focusing your attention only on your own sense of being present as a moving point of illuminating consciousness at the center of that world, you stop moving. You stop animating that world as you become motionless and desireless. When you totally withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive, you stop illuminating that world, and that world disappears from existence from your own point of view. When you become motionless and desireless, you pass through the gateless gate. When you become motionless and desireless, you enter into an ultimate state of free fall, the holographic world you perceive disappears from existence from your own point of view, and your own sense of being present for that world dissolves away as your individual being, present at a point of view, dissolves back into the infinite emptiness and silence of its source of pure undivided being.

First we must know ourselves as witnesses only, dimensionless and timeless centers of observation, and then realize that immense ocean of pure awareness.

On the surface of the ocean of consciousness, names and forms are transitory waves. Only consciousness has real being, not its transformations.

*As long as you are enmeshed in the tribulations of a particular personality, you can see nothing beyond it. Ultimately you will come to see that you are neither the particular nor the universal.
You are beyond both.*

The witness-consciousness is the reflection of the real in the mind. The real is beyond.

The witness is the door through which you pass beyond.

*The door that locks you in is also the door that lets you out.
I Am is the door. Stay with it until it opens. It is always open, but you are not at it.*

*Between desires and freedom from all desires is an abyss which must be crossed.
Cross the door and go beyond.*

The experience of the inner void is an explosion into reality.

Realization is in discovering the source and abiding there.

By itself nothing has existence

Your true home is in nothingness.

The timeless and spaceless reality is undifferentiated, the infinite potentiality, the source. It cannot be perceived, but can be experienced as ever witnessing the witness, perceiving the perceiver, the origin and end of all manifestation, the root of time and space.

Realization is sudden and irreversible. You rotate into a new dimension.

You see everything as it is. The world of illusions is left behind.

-Nisargadatta Maharaj

Adapted from the teachings of Osho:

We call Buddha the awakened one. This awakening is really the cessation of inner dreaming. When there is no dreaming you become pure space. This non-dreaming consciousness is what is known as enlightenment.

If you go on inquiring 'Who am I?' you are bound to come to the conclusion that you are not. This is an inquiry to dissolve. There is no answer. Only the question will dissolve. There will be no one to ask 'Who am I?' And then you know.

When the 'I' is not, the real 'I' opens. When the ego is not, you are for the first time encountering your being. That being is void.

You fall into an abyss, and the abyss is bottomless: you go on falling. That is why Buddha has called this nothingness emptiness. There is no end to it. Once you know it, you also have become endless. At this point Being is revealed: then you know who you are, what is your real being, what is your authentic existence.

*The inner emptiness itself is the mystery.
When the inner space is there, you are not.
When you dissolve, the inner emptiness is there.
When you are not, the mystery will be revealed.
You will not be a witness to the mystery, you will be the mystery.*

-Osho

Other testimonies:

He must dare to leap into the Origin so as to live by the Truth and in the Truth, like one who has become one with it. He must become a pupil again, a beginner; conquer the last and steepest stretch of the way, undergo new transformation. If he survives its perils then is his destiny fulfilled; face to face he beholds the unbroken Truth, the Truth beyond all truths, the formless Origin of origins, the Void which is the All; is absorbed into it and from it emerges reborn.

-Eugen Herrigel

"I cannot live with myself any longer". This was the thought that kept repeating itself in my mind. Then suddenly I became aware of what a peculiar thought it was. Am I one or two? If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me: the 'I' and the 'self' that 'I' cannot live with. Maybe, I thought, only one of them is real.

I was so stunned by this strange realization that my mind stopped. I was fully conscious, but there were no more thoughts. Then I felt drawn into what seemed like a vortex of energy. It was a slow movement at first and then accelerated. I was gripped by an intense fear, and my body started to shake. I heard the words 'resist nothing', as if spoken inside my chest. I could feel myself being sucked into a void. It felt as if the void was inside myself rather than outside. Suddenly, there was no more fear, and I let myself fall into that void.

I knew that something profoundly significant had happened to me. I understood that the intense pressure of suffering that night must have forced my consciousness to withdraw from its identification with the unhappy and deeply fearful self, which is ultimately a fiction of the mind. This withdrawal must have been so complete that this false, suffering self immediately collapsed, just as if a plug had been pulled out of an inflatable toy. What was left was my true nature as the ever-present 'I am': consciousness in its pure state prior to identification with form. Later I also learned to go into that inner timeless and deathless realm that I had originally perceived as a void and remain fully conscious.

-Eckhart Tolle

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

-Teilhard de Chardin

I discovered the secret of the sea in meditation upon a dewdrop

-Kahlil Gibran

When the joy of my own emptiness began to wane I decided to rejuvenate it by spending some solitary time gazing into my empty self. Though the center of self was gone, I was sure the remaining emptiness, the silence and joy, was God Himself. Thus on one occasion, with full hedonistic deliberation, I settled myself down and turned my gaze inward. Almost immediately the empty space began to expand, and expanded so rapidly it seemed to explode; then, in the pit of my stomach I had the feeling of falling a hundred floors in a non-stop elevator, and in this fall every sense of life was drained from me. The moment of landing I knew: When there is no personal self, there is also no personal God. I saw clearly how the two go together-and where they went, I have never found out.

-Bernadette Roberts

Now she's in freefall. At the precise moment of impact, the planet will disappear, and nothing will take its place. Her freefall won't end, but it will no longer feel like falling because there will no longer be anything to reference it against. This is where dual awareness ends. From then on she will live in boundless awareness, never again able to differentiate between self and non-self.

Abiding non-dual awareness.

Truth is one, is non-dual, is infinite, is one-without-other. Truth is dissolution, no-self, unity. There's nothing to say about it, nothing to feel about it, nothing to know about it. You are true or you're a lie, as in ego-bound, as in dual, as in asleep.

The truth of the situation is that eventually, there's nothing. Infinity. Eternity. The void.

Like a child flicking a switch that turns the world off like a light. What can you say when the thing that ends isn't within a context, but context itself?

There is the place where all the paradoxes disappear and where no questions remain, but there's no point trying to describe this place.

That's where I am now. Empty space is my reality. The void. No-self. I abide in non-dual, non-relative awareness.

Come see for yourself.

-Jed McKenna

Bits and pieces of the puzzle can be found in all nondual traditions:

*The unreal has no being
The real never ceases to be*

*Never the spirit was born
The spirit shall cease to be never
Never was time it was not
End and beginning are dreams
-Bhagavad Gita*

*Brahman is the only Truth, the world is illusion, and ultimately, there is no difference between
Atman and Brahman
-Shankara*

*In the knowledge of the Atman, which is a dark night to the ignorant,
The recollected mind is fully awake and aware.
The ignorant are awake in their sense life, which is darkness to the sage
-Bhagavad Gita*

*In the silence and the void
Standing alone and unchanging
Ever present and in motion
I do not know its name
Call it Tao*

Empty yourself of everything

The wise are impartial

Tao in the world is like a river flowing home to the sea

Returning is the motion of the Tao

*It returns to nothingness
It leads all things back to the great oneness*

*Ever desireless, one can see the mystery
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations
These two spring from the same source
This appears as darkness
Darkness within darkness
The gate to all mystery
–Tao-Te-Ching*

*The great path has no gates
Thousands of roads enter it
When one passes through this gateless gate
One walks the universe alone
–Mu-mon*

*The man of Tao remains unknown.
Perfect virtue produces nothing.
No-self is true self
And the greatest man is nobody
–Chuang Tzu*

*Truly, I have attained nothing from total enlightenment
–Buddha*

*Burning, burning, burning, burning, O Lord, Thou pluckest me out
–The Fire Sermon*

*Now I Am become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds
–Bhagavad Gita*

*He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin, whereas he who brings himself to naught for
me discovers who he is.
-Gospel of Matthew*

Be still and know that I Am God

-Psalms

That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit

Unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God

-Gospel of John

Before Abraham was, I Am

-Gospel of John

How is it that this Being that Is inhabits this nothingness?

These are the words of the secret.

Whoever lives the meaning of these words shall no longer taste death.

-Gospel of Thomas

That which permeates all, which nothing transcends, and which like the universal space around us fills everything completely from within and without, that Supreme non-dual Brahman,

That thou art.

-Shankara

That in whom reside all beings and who resides in all beings

Who is the giver of grace to all

The Supreme Soul of the universe

The limitless being

I Am That

-Upanishads

Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning

All that existed then was void and formless

That which becomes, was born through the power of heat

Upon that desire arose in the beginning the first discharge of thought

Sages discovered this link of the existent to the non-existent

Having searched in the heart with wisdom

Their line of vision was extended across

He, the first origin of this creation

Whether he formed it all or did not form it

Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven

Surely he knows, or perhaps he knows not

-Rig Veda

*Without form there is no desire
Without desire there is tranquility
Therefore the sage seeks freedom from desire
-Tao-Te-Ching*

*We are such stuff as dreams are made on
And our little life is rounded with a sleep*

*To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil.
-Shakespeare*

*Being at one with the Tao is eternal
And though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away*

*Because there is no place for death to enter
-Tao-Te-Ching*

Conclusion: Spiritual enlightenment is the way out. The only way out of the bondage of the delusional state of false personal self-identification is to realize the truth of what you really are.

*There must be some way out of here, said the Joker to the Thief,
There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief.
No reason to get excited, the Thief he kindly spoke,
There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke,
But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate,
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.
-B. Dylan*

*And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water,
And he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower,
And when he knew for certain only drowning men could see him,
He said all men shall be sailors then until the sea shall free them.
-L. Cohen*

References

- The Bhagavad-Gita (1909): Edwin Arnold trans. (Harvard Classics)
Jed McKenna (2002, 2004, 2007): Spiritual Enlightenment Trilogy (Wisefool Press)
Nisargadatta Maharaj (1973): I Am That (Acorn Press)
Osho (1974): The Book of Secrets (St Martin's Griffin)

Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki (1957): *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* (Tuttle Publishing)

Bernadette Roberts (1993): *The Experience of No-Self* (State University of New York Press)

Eckhart Tolle (1997): *The Power of Now* (New World Library)

Lao Tsu (1989): *Tao Te Ching*. Gia-Fu Feng trans. (Vintage Books)