

Session 1 Saturday Morning 17 October 1998

My name is Gary Hipworth and I'll start by giving you some idea of my background and what brings me and my partner Jo here today.

I was born in 1947 and brought up in the Melbourne suburb of Braybrook in fairly poor circumstances. I became an observer of people from an early age.

There were two tickets out of Braybrook, being good at school and at sport. My father was an alcoholic, a gambler and violent. In 1956 my mother had had enough and left to bring up the three children alone. My Mother later had relationships with partners who did nothing to engender a positive outlook on life.

I trained with Footscray Aussie Rules football team and got some games in the thirds and seconds. This was a useful outlet for my anger. Hatred of my father was so great that I determined never to repeat that behavior in my own life and to become a perfect husband, father, etc., thereby locking myself into becoming, and setting myself up for, a perfect failure.

I married and went to live in Frankston and had two daughters. I was still carrying a great build up of anger and I had a fear of this rage building up into a crisis in which I might do something really rash, even kill someone.

I never searched for anything that you might call 'enlightenment'. I was searching for sanity, order; order in the house. I wanted some order in my life. I didn't want to go to school hungry, tired; worn out from what happened the previous night.

As a small child I decided to find out what life was all about, because if my experience was a reflection of what it was all about there was no point in being here.

This was the motivation that led me to read hundreds of books in the search for the missing ingredient. I didn't see it just as my problem or my father's problem but as the human problem. For example war, the Vietnam experience and how we have legalized killing.

What I stumbled across came from looking at the facts as I saw them not as other people were telling me. I thought no-one has got it right here because when I look around the world I see the relationship problem.

My ex wife had psychological problems which underlined my view that there was something seriously wrong.

What is wrong with the human mind because there are so many who seem to lose it? I decided I needed to read some more; psychology, philosophy, religion, science, physics, the universe, metaphysics - where do we stop? Then one day my brain started hurting. I picked up a book and it said "don't read any more, the answers are not in the book - you've become poisoned through knowledge. You are only getting it in bits, there must be some other way".

Fortunately for me, in all this crazy searching, I came across Krishnamurti. I remember reading an anecdote in which Krishnamurti was asked on his deathbed what life is really all about and replied "nothing". I couldn't make any sense of that and walked away from him for a few years but then picked up a copy of 'Freedom from the Known'. There were many things in there that my brain couldn't get around but the frustration resulted in a determination to understand; to stay with it until I got to the bottom of it.

I read a book by Albert Blackburn who had been influenced by Krishnamurti called 'Now Consciousness'. on one occasion Albert Blackburn referred Krishnamurti to some quotation of the Buddha about spiritual evolution when Krishnamurti replied "I don't think the Buddha said that - is there such a thing as spiritual evolution?" At that point Albert realised that everything he had built his life around, searching for this and that collapsed. As he realised what Krishnamurti was getting at, all his tendencies to acquire understanding in the form of knowledge ended. As I read the book I picked up that story and thought that is not just a coincidence, he really saw something, is it also possible for me to see something in this very simple statement? So I tossed that around for some time, maybe a year or more.

I was also deeply involved with the question 'who am I?'

Before all this happened I was convinced the problem was out there so I was busy concentrating on fixing the

world. So I went into business and then into politics, peace groups. I became an active greenie for a while. Eventually, I realised the problem might be in here. Is it possible there could be a problem in here which I'm not seeing? That then became my focus, working in the laboratory of myself. Finding out for myself became the principal thrust. Not depending on anybody else for solutions but studying myself through my reactions. And in observing myself I discovered that I am not free but a victim of my conditioning and condemned to react to every situation in terms of what I already know.

Such a reaction led to the murder of my brother by one of his friends. [In discussing the background to this event Gary found himself being caught up in the emotional reaction to the memories that arose as he explained what had happened. He used this personal reaction in that moment to illustrate how memory can take over our life.] Memory is not our life and we need to develop a simple technique or method to bring us 'back to life' when we fall asleep in this way; when we become entrapped in memory and the projections of thought.

We are born unconditioned. Just look around, observe the totality, there is something going on here which we were not taught to see. There is no such thing as a separate entity. Our minds have been trained to recognize things and identify them as separate objects and then to see ourselves as separate objects.

This separative activity has a necessary survival aspect - if you see the tiger coming you have to see, respond appropriately - act. But to become locked into the objective mode of understanding is a failure to get the full picture. If we suspend all our beliefs right now, just look and observe with all our senses at what's happening here, there's no me and you, there's an energy which has been structured in a certain way. An intelligent form of energy which has formed you and me into these structures - for a time. An ongoing process with all of life.

Life as an ongoing process has no reason other than to keep going. It wants life in any form to keep that process going. It 'says' don't ask questions, there is something happening, keep it going. If you look around and find craziness and disorder see if you can get some order going. Start with yourself and then see if you can spread a bit of order around.

Life is order and if we let it degenerate into chaos we are history.

When I began to accept reality as it is, not as I wish it to be, my brain started to do some strange things. I didn't seek anything other than the truth, the facts of existence. That is what I wanted desperately. I never sought inner peace, whatever that is.

Thought is man made, it is a tool. It is not what we are. It split itself into two to create a subject and then believed so much in itself that it assumed an actuality as a separate object. The brain is interested only in the survival of the organism but thought came along and created the idea of immortality.

Instead of looking at the facts of our life and saying this is it, deal with this and see what happens with life itself - it says, Oh no! this is too scary, I'm going to die one day, I don't want that so I'll invent a death-surviving self.

I repeat, thought is man-made and we have only one tool to understand reality - concepts. If anyone wants to explore reality they must understand what tools they have to explore reality with rather than assume the intellect is the obvious tool to use. But what if this tool is part of the problem?

Q Do you Gary have any sense of separateness, sense of self or separate identity?

GH At times, yes and it's the thinker in me that starts to mull over something. Essentially, it's where I have unfinished business - when I know there are things to be done and I have to do them. The way I handle this is to have an unfinished business list which I look at once a week. Consequently, I know the things to do are on the list I so don't have to keep them in my head. I've got it down to 10 items. If it starts getting much bigger than that I know I'm going to be in `trouble in terms of inner peace because the nature of thought is to get itself into a groove and worry itself to death. Keep the unfinished business to an absolute minimum and reduce the unnecessary things in life to an absolute minimum.

Q Who made up the things to do?

GH Life!

Q You didn't project what you wanted to do?

GH Well, in my other life I had a whole heap of things to do but in this one I've got it down to the basics of living: food, clothing, shelter, health, friendship and getting close to nature. The culture we are living in day after day reinforces our existence as entities.

Q Gary, are you talking about things you have control over? What about the things over which we seem to have no control,

GH Can you give a concrete example.

Q Well, for example I have had a friend who suffered a personal tragedy and I found myself overwhelmed with what is happening to them, to the point I can't go to the funeral. I can't deal with the grief. I am overwhelmed by what I see as universal grief. How does one resolve these issues, particularly the subconscious accumulation from one's early life, and move on?

GH You have a one-off insight that is not in time. You see the whole process of your memory system from the time you were born registering all these experiences and particularly registering the 'fact' that there is an entity called you squirreling away all these memories. You see that mechanical process that is operating in all human beings. You don't need time to see that - you just see it. Now don't look for anything after that. I saw that my brain had created the thinker and I realized that the only way such an idea could get into my head was that society educated my brain to think there was a separate entity here. It didn't come naturally. I saw that if the brain continued to register things as it always had done and believe in itself as a separate entity then it was trapped in that process. It would keep repeating itself until it died. If I allow something that happened a long time ago to affect my life today, I am dumb. Life is wonderful, full stop!

Q Yes, but it is the unconscious tendencies, reactions, not the conscious ones that create my problem. You don't know why....

GH But it's the same thing, it's not a mystery once you've seen that process. The first two letters of the word **memory**, what are they? The first two letters of **measurement**.....these things started popping into my head, I don't know where from "hey, look at what you are doing you are measuring your life against other people. Who is measuring? Not an entity, only a made up memory to create a sense of security or the possibility of security and continuity.

The pursuit of high levels of self-esteem reinforces this sense of entity. The whole business world and much of current psychological thinking seems to be insisting on this high self-esteem. Are we going in the wrong direction?

Q There is a point at which what you are saying would work but what if there is mental depression or people are mentally fragile?

GH I was into mental positive attitude. I used to say to people "I'm a survivor - get out of my way". I would see these situations, these tragedies in the world as something I could do nothing about - get on with your life, it's a sort of coping mechanism.

Q Yes, and I went through that part of it. From a left brain point of view I can understand what you say but the problem for me arises when the right brain comes in. There are reactions, bodily reactions which the left brain cannot interpret.....

GH I think that all questions and reactions become irrelevant when this hits you because you have this inner peace that has no cause. You go to bed with it and in the mornings, in particular, you awake with this incredible brain. When you start the day with that sense of wonder there are no questions and if you have a reaction, you have a reaction, You don't fight it. All you do is understand it as part of life.

Q Are you saying there are no good or bad reactions - just reactions.

GH Just reactions. As long as they don't kill you or anyone else. The real issue is understanding the facts of our existence. and that has its own way of working on the brain. It has its own way of saying somehow to the left side 'hey, get more into a holistic way of seeing reality. Then you won't be asking these dumb questions any

more because you will no longer be dominating and fragmenting this organism.'

This organism has worked out that life as it is is amazing. When it looks at life as it is without trying to put beliefs on it - and that is right brain stuff. Right brain then has a way of saying to leftie you are out of your depth and you are making the organism miserable for no good reason. When this starts happening just let it happen. My big thing here is, if you face reality now - always now - you will start to see time is an illusion. Left brain has fragmented our reality into parts and tried to make it into present moment, yesterday and tomorrow. It is looking for security all the time. It can't handle insecurity, the unknown, ambiguity. It must have certainty and creates time and slots everything into a time process. Right brain sees the whole situation unfolding, ever changing, dynamic and realizes this is not how left brain grasps reality but that reality is something strange, totallyrenewing itself every moment. And of course there can't be any permanent entity. There is nothing permanent anywhere. When I just look at reality things dying and being born. I don't have to believe in anything. I just look at the facts, the totality of existence moment to moment. It's there in front of my eyes if I learn how to look at the facts. In total, not in fragments, not with the old brain.

When I had this insight that there was no permanent entity anywhere, I could finally be at peace and not struggle against the tide in trying to create a permanent entity.

Break for Lunch

Session 2 Saturday Afternoon 17 October 1998

GH If I want to live an intelligent life, I must face up to the fact of my essential non-entity and I must do it now.

When you stop believing in a self-concept, it dies a natural death. The organism withdraws energy from believing in that system.

Q But what made you doubt it in the first place?

GH I had an insight into the whole process of thought, and in a flash I saw that it was a dumb way to live – I mean by dumb, that it was not intelligent to live in the past and be a slave to the future, always trying to become a better person, but never really succeeding. I saw that “I” was just a bundle of memories, and I understood what Krishnamurti was on about. Reality is made up of circles of energy, it is not straight lines. I can't find straight lines anywhere. I used to have straight lines all over the place. It was a huge shock, though, because there was no longer a future to believe in, and one was stuck with the present, so I had better make the most of the present. Something profound happened to my brain.

Don't be concerned about the rest of the universe because you've got a universe inside yourself. The reality I now see is that we are wholes within wholes. You are not there as an entity in your mind going along in a straight line. You are a process, a never ending process, a system that has somehow been brought into creation - that system doesn't know where it has come from or where it is going nor is it interested. It is now part of the bigger system. It is not standing back from it any more. And that consciousness has no centre and therefore has an energy that is infinite. In fact it can't describe itself without falling into the trap of words, which are limited to describing a fragment. As soon as you say 'I' you are caught up in the same jargon we've been talking about.

It is incredibly important to discover truth for oneself. If you accept another person's truth, you are really accumulating more knowledge, based on memory, and you stay in the trap of words. This other way of learning is not based on words or knowledge. It just is what it is, and you cannot see what is with a conditioned brain. You must start with a new brain that is passionate about discovering truth for itself by looking at the facts now, not what we are taught to believe. Not listening to or relying on Gary Hipworth or your own beliefs, or anyone else. It was the self discovery process that changed me. I was never going to listen to anybody else. I had to find out for myself the facts of my existence and those facts, faced squarely, not avoided, not manipulated are so shocking and so obvious that the conditioned brain goes quiet.

Q Isn't this a self-centred activity of no benefit to anyone but your self? And in this way a person doesn't make any contribution to the world's problems?

GH We can't help anyone else unless we are at peace. That's what I've discovered about me. You've got to get your own house in order and not be overly concerned what you can or cannot do about the world's problems. We always want the other person to change. And we always want to somehow fix that problem out there but if you trace it all back - the real problem is human behaviour. And if you ask what causes human behaviour you end up back at the psyche, the thought process. I don't see how you can go anywhere else - so environmental problems are caused not by corporate businesses being greedy but by the individual egos running those businesses who couldn't give a damn about their own relationships let alone what their business is doing. And what I saw in a flash was - if I can't get my house in order, if I'm running around solving someone else's problems, with a personal motive of becoming someone that other people look up to, then I will only create more mischief in the world. People who are 'doing good' are doing it for selfish reasons.

Q1 Life happens with its difficulties, with all its chaos, senselessness and misery – surely all these problems must happen for a reason?

Q2 Why do you think it's happening for a reason?

Q1 My experience indicates that - the uses of diversity and from what Gary is saying – he (Gary) has gone through hell to arrive at this fantastic insight. You had to be prepared in some way, to be made ready to see it as it is.

Q3 Couldn't what you learn from your adversity also 'just happen'? Why does it have to have a reason? Isn't it just another part of life that just happens?

Q4 It seems there is something in us that will not let things be as they are. Someone said earlier we are on the road whether we like it or not - we have no choice in it. It's not a question of having to do this or that. We can't establish a state of stasis which is comfortably numb or meaninglessly suffering. There seems to be some power within us or without which will not let that happen, which moves us on - breaks us out of those patterns.

GH I agree. Life has its own momentum and it is a creative destructive momentum. And we've got that power in us to create and destroy, every one of us. To ask the reason for it puts us back in the concept-conditioned brain; straight-line thinking, cause and effect. It is far too inter-related for the poor little conditioned brain to work out. The conditioned brain wants to battle with the fragmented reality it sees. So what do we do? We fight cancer, we fight muscular dystrophy and the classic one is **'fight for peace'**. We don't see the whole picture, because if we did, we would see that we are fighting ourselves. And suffering by itself is not enough. I could have suffered endlessly - so holistic intelligence came in and said 'hey, have a look at the totality of what's going on here - see if you can work it out, don't just keep on suffering for its own sake and be the sacrificial person'. I'm sure there have been a few through history who have said "I'll be a sacrifice for you lot". I don't believe in sacrifice. I believe that whatever is happening is unlimited and cannot be understood by a conceptual brain. The human brain must get more intelligent if it wants to survive. It is immediately more intelligent when it sees the simple fact that a conceptual reality is limited and should not be the centre of our existence.

When you look at the totality of what is happening and learn to see the totality of your life rather than just look at a part of your life and say 'I'm a part, it's a part - it is the cause, I'm the effect, attack, destroy, I want, I don't want - when we live our lives in those sort of reactions, we are living in bondage to a false god - the "me."

Q Gary, are you saying that left brain is bad and right brain is good because I'm beginning to get the impression that whatever the left brain does in your opinion is bad. If we are going to be human we have to have both sides and we can't get too extreme about it.

GH Well, I don't know what to believe any more about these terms. For me, the real issue is the conceptually conditioned brain, and whether it resides in the left or right hemisphere is not the point. The conceptual brain to me is good in a technical sense, for practical matters - making a new dishwasher. That's about it as far as I am concerned. It's a technological tool that allows us to take things apart and build better gadgets.

Q There is more to it than that. Presumably there is also our ability to communicate. For instance I had the impression you were saying memory is bad which is a generalisation.

Q Is it judgement of memory?

Q Is it emotional attachment to that memory?

GH It's psychological memory, let's call it that. It's the memory of the me that's done certain things and is going to retain those little treasures in its memory and is going to trot them out when it's old and grey or any time and experience them again and again.

As I see it there is a place for the conceptual brain but it's a practical, planning aspect of the basics of life. It should butt out of the psychological realm and stop having us live symbolically in a past that is gone and a future that's yet to come. Because we get lost in that symbolic existence. It has taken over too much territory in terms of helping us live a sane life but its practical aspect is absolutely critical.

In the language sense, the structure of language - subject, verb, object - every time we speak we are dealing in a straight line process. We have learnt to see the world and speak in a straight line - subject, verb, object - someone doing something to someone else. That straight line thinking is part of our language structure and I think that is a problem we need to look at. Right brain is looking at the totality of that language structure and saying I see a problem here. This way of understanding is always going to be communicating the message that you and I are separate entities interacting and causing and effecting each

other when there is a whole lot of other stuff going on around us that is probably more important than our puny little egos trying to battle each other and get out there and compete and so on.

Q You want us to look at the facts as they are. The facts as they are, as far as I can see, are that you think that we ought to look more at the totality of things.

GH Yes, the whole situation that is changing every moment. It is not a static process.

Q No, but this is a value judgement isn't it? What enables you to call that a fact? Because you've seen it?

GH Everyone look around you and observe what you see. I see a total system which consists of other systems, wholes. I see energy moving between us. I don't see any separate autonomous individuals causing and effecting each other unless they start believing in that reality and then they do start thinking that's the way it is. But when I just look with all my senses, and I don't look with the left brain, you see I'm looking with - I'm just looking. Can anyone see anything that's separate, hanging suspended in a universe of its own? Every tree has got roots into the earth, an earth spinning around a sun, spinning around a galaxy, spinning around who knows what and it's all hanging together. There are no separate bits saying "hello, I'm out here, I'm struggling along by myself, I wish some bastard would help me". I'd never looked this way before. My brain was never taught to just look at what is and see how everything is connected to everything else and it is a most wonderful thing to start seeing this way.

Q You are not suggesting we sit and contemplate our navels are you?

GH No.

Q I can see when I look around here a lot of individuals with the same feeling of wanting to improve something. You need to have the thought to carry out the ...if you didn't use thought to improve things then nothing would happen. Then you would sit and contemplate.

Q You said that being a separate individual or self, I'm not quite sure of the word you used, but you said it's just a belief.

GH Yes.

Q And it only exists while you believe it. I've had various beliefs in my life and at some time or other something has happened to make me doubt those beliefs. And sometimes you have a choice, will I really face into this or will I not look at it and push it away because it is too hard to handle. Typically, at the end of a love affair when I think there are things that are wrong with her and she sees things that are wrong with me. Then one day we sit down and have a good talk and bring everything out into the open and suddenly it's there. It's obvious that it's over, it's finished. But this belief that I exist as a self seems much more solid, real and believable.

GH And you are saying how can you just walk away from that?

Q How do you just walk away from it?

GH You can't, because you are that belief. This is the absolute paradox of the situation. There is nothing you can do about it. Nothing that you as a belief system can do about it. You are backed into a corner with nowhere to go. You cannot escape that reality. This is the shock that hit me. Me, this person who thought I was such a go getter, someone who could go out and slay dragons and rescue damsels in distress and all that. Suddenly, I find in my own little head I can't do a thing about this. I realise this entity I've built all my life is an absolute fantasy. And yet the fantasy, sees it's a fantasy and says 'my God, for the first time in my life I can't do anything about this situation that is so critical to my life. What do you do then when faced with that reality? There's a belief system in your head that's stuffing your life up. What can you do?

Q You can re-examine your belief system.

GH You'll go back to it and come up with the same answer. If you are serious about the facts and you look at them intelligently, sanely, logically you keep coming back to that place in the dark alley where you've got nowhere to go. You've got a brick wall in front of you. Your mental, psychic intellect cannot solve this

problem which is so critical to living a sane healthy life - full of joy every moment. For me this is the crux of the issue. You are faced with this issue full on and know you can't do anything about it. What do you do. There is a very simple answer. What is there to be done? In one word, nothing. You cannot do anything. That is it - so simple. So that when you see that the most important issue you've ever had to face involves a realisation that you can do nothing... no choice will do it. You know what happens? You die; a psychological death. If you are serious about life and about investigating who you are and you are confronted with that fact in all its terror and it was a terrifying experience for me. This is not pretty. Walk away now if you think this is going to be handed to you on a plate. This is not about entertainment or a lovely change in consciousness. This is the most terrifying thing - to face that prospect about yourself and let yourself die a natural death, psychologically. And you go through all the dying, grieving process. I went through it all, denial, this can't be true - read another book, keep searching, I can't face this fact about my existence. Anger, who were the bastards who gave me this wrong angle on life? I wanted to smash them up. All that stuff came out in me. I wanted to find someone to blame. It's the greatest con job our society has ever performed on you and me and it's through ignorance. Not deliberate, through ignorance.

The poor old brain got into a mechanical process and just took a wrong turn, invented its own entity, thought that was a lovely thing to do at the time, and gave itself a real sense of security - except it started to fear its own death. We don't really fear physical death. We fear our psychological death. That's who we think we are. When you go into this you realise that fear of death is a psychological fear. The entity that you are has to die sometime, so why not die now. The miracle of this thing is that you can die now. There's no need to wait until you die physically. You can experience death now and then you can get on with your life. Isn't that amazing?

Q Is that just rhetorical? I mean the time now is ten to three this Saturday afternoon. Do you mean this now or do you mean

GH No. I mean now.

Q Is anybody doing it?

GH Well, that's up to each person. The point I'm making is that you are trapped and there is no way out of your current mental state. It can not solve this problem so it has to give up. That mental/psychological process you are hanging on to cannot solve this crisis in your life. It is a crisis if you've dealt with it factually, not intellectually, not as entertainment. Because I was serious about this, I said 'look, I have to have some answers or my life is not worth living. I don't want to live in an insane world where people are bashing each other and stealing one another's possessions and killing our children. I'm not going to buy into that sort of existence, let me out, beam me up. But first of all I'm going to give it my best shot and I'm not going to give up until I get to the end of this road and, if necessary, I'm going to sacrifice my life.

You see I was prepared to sacrifice my life to find the truth. How many of us are prepared to sacrifice everything, I mean everything, everything is on the line here if you are serious about this issue. You can't just treat this as 'I'll come along once a week and have a dialogue session and hope like hell something happens to my brain'. Well, you might be able to. I shouldn't say you can't. But for me I was deadly, deadly serious. I might as well go on and explain what happened before and after my change in consciousness. But first, I'll ask Jo to comment.

Jo. I think it finally reached a crescendo, after years of reading and searching. It was very frustrating from the onlooker's point of view and we would argue about it. I'd try to put something into it but it didn't work. He had to do it on his own. It got to the point where it reached crisis point and Gary was living separately from me at that stage and he said he had to go to the end. I did not know where it was going to end. I drove away with a feeling of absolute impending doom and had to accept that. Whatever came of it I had to accept it. There was no saving him and there was no saving me. There was just a total acceptance and I honestly didn't know whether I'd see him again. He may have died or taken his own life as far as I knew. I didn't know what would happen and it just had to take its course which it did. A couple of days after, I went to see him, and he'd woken up a very different person and it just came clear. The years after that it has become clearer and certainly he's a very different person - which I won't go into right now - is that what you wanted me to cover.

GH It was more that I put you on notice that I had to go to the end of the road. The sequence of events here is interesting because I finally had an insight into that statement of Krishnamurti "is there such a thing as

psychological evolution.” For some years I'd also been exploring something called systems thinking where you look at the total system and how it's operating. You don't look at a part, you look at the totality of it and then in terms of the influences within that system if you want real change, to change the system you have to change the structure. It's no good just mucking around with it. You've got to find the lever that changes how that system works. So, somehow I think that helped me because my brain started to look at my thought process and discovered that 'this is a system that's got a flaw in it.' It thinks it's going somewhere and yet all I can see when I look at it in total is a belief system that thinks it is going somewhere. It wants to be a better person tomorrow so it's working on that aspect of itself. It wants to be more honest, it wants to be more loving, but it lives in time and it's always postponing the real thing. Yeah, I could become a bit more loving but I put Jo through hell during these years. I kept looking at my options, my perfect partner was my ideal and I didn't think Jo was my perfect partner. I thought she was about 78% and I wanted someone up in the nineties. I was still searching for someone who matched an image. This perfect partner who was going to make life so fantastic. But it wasn't working. There was another woman who I thought might be a perfect partner and I went off with this woman and Jo knew I'd gone. She just said well, you've got to do what you've got to do.

Jo put up with all this crap and was still there when I came back after four days in the wilderness with this other woman. That's how my life was and I was striving to become a better person. When I saw that way of living could never achieve perfection, could never make me a better person, maybe it could make me a bit better, but then I would fall back and so I was in conflict with myself. I was pitting one bit of myself against another as I tried to work out a better way to live. But for me the grass was always greener; I had to have a better woman in my life, a better this, a better that. It was me, me, me, me, me...that was the core of my existence. Measuring, measuring...this woman against that woman, this job against that job, this friend against that friend. If someone let me down once, they were gone. That's why I had no friends. Why would I? So how many people are perfect?

Q To die and be born again. When Jesus was asked how the enquirer could change himself. Jesus replied that unless he be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Is that the same thing as you are saying?

GH I'll continue on and come back to that. I want to get back to this insight because that was the real trigger for my whole organism to start not doing anything. In other words, the insight that this 'entity' which was really a made up belief system, that could keep going if it believed in itself enough and go on improving itself, once it saw that it was only a silly idea, it said 'sorry mate the game's up, you are the problem'.

It's nothing outside your head. It's this ego programme that will keep playing games until eternity freezes over. Now, what happens when you see for yourself that the thinker is an idea? Krishnamurti said these words, "thought denies itself". I could never work that out. I thought, what is he talking about, how can thought deny itself? You know how thought can deny itself? When it sees it is being stupid, that it's playing a silly game that is destroying the light and joy of living. Yes, it can deny itself. It can say stop doing this, stop believing in yourself. How do you do that? You don't do anything. You stop planning for the future in the way I used to. You start living very simply. You are going nowhere folks. You might think you are but every one of us is in the same boat and none of us chose to be born. We think choice is such a great thing. Who chose to be born? I found myself here. I didn't choose to come here. The most incredible thing that starts this process off is a verb and yet none of us chose that verb. It's a process that's been going on for four billion years, it has it's own momentum, it doesn't need anything else. It doesn't need a left brain to tell it 'you should have a purpose!'. It's much smarter than that. It doesn't need a purpose - it's the magic right now. But, when I saw that I went through the denial and the anger and then a benign sort of acceptance. Well, this is my life, I can't do anything about it, I'm stuck with this conditioned brain and that's part of the facts of my existence. No good fighting it because who is going to fight it? It's going to fight itself and then we are back in the same old jungle. All I can do is eat, go to bed, get up in the morning, go to the station. I was unemployed, by choice, because I was trying to work this stuff out without any distractions and I needed that time. I was living in Elwood in Melbourne near the beach and I'd get up in the morning feeling absolutely terrible and I kept a diary. For some reason, for three days of this process I thought I'm going to write down what's going on here. It may or may not be important but I'm going to keep the ledger for three days. It is in the book I've written. But when I read that now I see it was a brain that was still struggling to come to terms with the terrifying facts. It was still trying to find a way out. It was a kind of psychosis. But what I kept doing was saying, look you are alone, you don't feel that bad except you don't have any will to go anywhere so keep eating, keep walking and going down to the beach, have a brisk walk, smell the sea air and look around.

That went on for three months. It was like - is this what happens when you don't have an ego. Going through life crawling around like a dog, just doing the basics. Is this it? This is worse than death, worse than having an ego. But I knew somehow there was no turning back. I couldn't go back to that other conceptual existence. Whatever it is it will happen in its own good time or you can just drag yourself through life.

Then I woke up on the morning of July 9, 1996. There were two hours of amazing silence, conscious energy without any thought and I lay in the bed stunned. I was still living separately from Jo. When you are awake and not thinking and that experience hits your brain it's like a thunderbolt. Suddenly it all makes sense. Thought doesn't go away but it starts to find its own place. It knows when it is needed; to solve practical things, to pay the bills, etc. We are dealing with a conditioned entity that has been conditioned for thousands of years. Don't think thought is suddenly going to disappear and you walk around in this other consciousness all the time. Well that's my experience. It works in tandem with this otherness that has no reason to exist other than it is. And that other unconditioned consciousness is what makes life worth living now. If you just observe nature and look at the birds, and the kangaroos and whatever and see how many of them have psychological problems. That's what really hit me, here we are - we are such an intelligent species, we have this arrogance about us and yet that simple little animal goes about its existence, yes it has to struggle out there but it has a joy and zest for life that I find very few humans have got.

Q That sounds very anthropomorphic to me. Joy and zest for life - how do we know?

GH I just get a sense of ... when parrots fly past and zig-zag. They could fly more efficiently in a straight line. To me fear only comes in when we predict a future and can remember the past. Fear is a thought process so when that is in abeyance there is no fear. The only fear is a practical kind of fear and then you act in the moment. You don't think about it. Most of our fears are unfounded.

There is another movement that is much deeper and spontaneously happening. Thought is a superficial process that comes and goes. But now and then it tries to get to the front again but this otherness has had a taste of what it is really like to be alive so there is no hope of thought re-establishing itself as top dog. Thought sees what it is up to and goes quiet again. As long as I stay on top of the unfinished business and resolve the issues before going to bed I have a lovely sleep, I don't dream and when I wake up in the night, there is a blissful awareness and no problems going through my head.

There is a great serenity when thought is naturally quiet, but if thought goes after it you will never get it.

It is living with death every moment of your life and that is what life is for me. This otherness is not security. It is insecurity. It is living with death for death is part of life, it's not in the future. It's right here now. And when you live with death you don't need an entity to play games. You realise that life is uncertain. It is the unknown which is the mystery and the magic of life, not the known.

The known makes life boring, repetitive, mechanical, aggressive, fearful, ambitious, competitive, arrogant, habitual and that is how we live, in the known. And then we think we've got it, we've got some security. My little place here, my friends, my family and all that can be blown away in a moment. But, no, we don't see it that way. The way we hang on to it is by memory. And every time you wake up in the morning - I want you to try this tomorrow morning - just observe your thoughts when you wake up, watch the thoughts come into your head. Anyone got any idea of what thoughts might come into your head first thing?

Q The last thing I thought of the night before.

Q Problems, I forgot to iron my husband's shirt.

GH Yes, unfinished business. Problems are the life-blood of the conditioned brain. It loves problems and will keep creating them until you die. It will drown in them but that is what keeps it going. So get on top of your unfinished business and don't give it that luxury. What happened to my brain when I started observing it first thing in the morning was it wanted to work out what day it was. Wednesday, work to do. Saturday, Oh that's all right - a bit of freedom here. We measure our lives by a clock. And this is all artificial of course. There's no such thing as a Saturday, is there?

Q I woke up the other morning and it wasn't 'in the beginning was the word' one of those famous statements but 'in the beginning was the void'.

Q If you are quick enough - I usually awake post-void - but sometimes I realise a sequence of 'who am I, then, where am I, what day is it and then when the day 'arrives' it comes with images of all the things that have to be completed on that day. Now I've rebuilt the whole structure, then I enter it, and go and live in it.

Q One of the things that occurred to me apropos of memory, you seem to be painting it as the enemy. All the memories that you quoted were rather traumatic and I'm wondering, in the scheme of things, whether good memories have a role?

GH No relevance whatsoever. The organism realises it can't be in two places at once. If I'm going to be, I'm going to be here. The moment I get into memory whether good or bad, and I'm making a value judgement there, I can't have my cake and eat it too. That's how I see it. Because that is a form of denying reality as it is right now. With its wondrous ability to give you a sense of serenity and joy that is not the form of happiness or pleasure you get from recalling your memories. Over a lifetime memory-based pleasure and pain even themselves out and yield a big fat zero. The joy and the bliss of being alive and having that sense of - it's not a pleasure, it's just what it is, there's no ups and downs, no evening out. Every day there is this new day. Unless you say, sorry, I don't want to be part of this uncertain creation stuff with every day a new day and me and you something I can't even put a name to. I want some security. I want to go back into memory and start being that person and remembering those good times. What happens? See, you've just gone back into that old brain.

So, this is the awful truth about this other consciousness. It is not interested in the past. In fact, there is no such thing. What time is it...in seconds...by the time you give me the time it is no longer that time. We can't get a handle on it. It is an arbitrary concept. We've cut our existence into time slices which suits our memory process. It allows us to postpone any real change in our consciousness, to dream and play with our memories. There is no such thing as a cut up reality except in our minds. The elapse of time in the process of cognition means the 'present' is always the past before we know it. We live in memory based on a conceptual understanding of what is going on around us. It is a dream world, a symbolic existence. You might say - 'go away, this works quite well, you are destroying my dreams. I don't know what this other reality you describe is like. So, I fear it, I know something I've got now. I can live with that. It has problems but at least I know who I am.'

There is something else which is so much more and you can't promise it is going to happen so what sort of a risk is that? That's why it's such a terrifying thing to discover it for yourself. Nobody else can take your self-concept away from you. It's got to die its own natural death. It won't do that unless it's convinced by itself there is no other option for it other than death. I might be wrong because you've got to doubt everything I'm saying too. Because, if you are serious about this self-discovery you have got to discover it. Who wants to die today? Psychologically we're talking?

Q Several volunteers.

Q Presumably all the habits, values and habits of the past no longer have any significance.

GH You don't do anything. And you stop doing what the old brain did as a matter of mechanical conditioning. You stop making choices. If you stop making choices how do you live? Do what comes naturally. In the crucial decisions let nature take it's place in the scheme of things. How did we resolve the question of my relationship with Jo when I was going off with this other woman? Well, it solved itself. I didn't do anything. What happened was I started seeing Jo in a different light. Jo is my best friend but she's more than that .. in her position I would have told me to get lost a long time ago. Life said, look at what is here. How are you going to choose? On the basis of height, hair colour, what? And where do I get these criteria - from memory and that sort of process is endless. So I let the intelligence of life start to operate and reveal the totality of self, children, other women and not just the ego-self.

Q But you are talking as if people who act on the ordinary left brain are always completely selfish but that clearly isn't true is it? I mean people who haven't died to themselves can still be altruistic;, can think of other people.

GH Altruism to me is a form of selfishness. Why are people being altruistic? They want to feel they are important ...

Q Or, we want to feel better.

GH It is still me.

Q That's very cynical.

GH I don't think it is cynical. I looked at myself and saw myself wanting to do good. And I asked myself what am I really doing. Getting into parliament as an independent to do something about this sham democracy we live in. It was me wanting to get out there and be someone, be known as somebody, recognised ...sure, I hoped to save a few trees, improve our democracy, but it is so hard to be truthful about one's real motive.

Q Gary. To return to the point that we want them to feel better. How do you react to that?

GH We want the other person to feel better?

Q Yes. This is a human quality.

GH The human thing is to share in other people's tragedy and try and make them feel better. But we don't see that we are really continuing a silly game of building false egos. This game must end if we really want to bring an end to the monstrous psychological suffering in the world. But the real solution means the end of you and me. We don't really want that!

Unless you've experienced the joy of just being alive, no other reason, I add a rider to that, you've got to have a healthy lifestyle. I've looked after myself all my life. I played sport and continued with an almost daily regime of exercise. I watched my diet. I have a glass of wine once a week. I hardly ever drink tea or coffee. Now, that's not puritanical, not religious, to me it's a sane way to live. If you want to live as long as you can and enjoy this marvellous existence look after this precious instrument and watch what you put in your mouth.

We are physical creatures and when I mix a good long walk in the bush with the silent brain, when those two come together I have to sit down and look out of the window because the bliss is unbelievable. It feels as though I am on some kind of drug.

Q But I think there is a real physical cause that produces energy after exercise

GH It's a combination.

Q Yes.

GH What I've discovered is to stay healthy, not only in mind but physically because how do you get an organism that is in harmony and order when ...if you stop being physical - first of all your sex life goes to pot. How many of us see that the sane intelligent thing to do in our lives is to get at least a twenty minute walk in every day? Or do something we enjoy doing which is a bit physical but is also not walking along a road breathing in exhaust fumes. It is important to recover or maintain contact with nature.

Q What about when it comes to matters of ordinary life. When you have to vote.

GH It's funny you should pick that one because I'm a conscientious objector to compulsory voting. I had this thing about real freedom in a democracy. I lost my licence for two years because I refused to blow in a breathalyser bag. Not because I was drunk or anything - it seemed that big brother was coming very fast. Where is freedom? But that was my ego - so the ego got me into trouble. It said 'go out there and show them.' I went to court and they threw the book at me. So for some time I haven't been on any electoral roll.

Jo That's very valid. My thing on the wall is about how we translate this (what Gary's on about) to the everyday world. It's something I have to reconcile every day of my life. To live like this and transfer it into my business world which is so different. That for me is an interesting challenge. I wear a gum boot on one leg and a high heel on the other. That is one of the reasons I'm interested in discussion with ordinary people in the ordinary world. Up to now it's Gary & I and we have very contrasting Monday to Friday lives.

Q Do you think the world is going to change because of a change of Prime Minister or Party.

Q2 No. One year I didn't vote for the same reason (as Gary). But then I felt that to be an evasion of responsibility....

GH Don't settle for anything less than you are passionate about, where time "disappears". And the first objection is that you won't be able to earn a living. There are some ways around that. First, cut back on your normal lifestyle, live more simply but never give up on saying I'd better get to my passion soon. And my passion is not accounting, not business - never has been. Why are people being treated this way, in the workplace? That was my passion so I'd try and get people working together, I'd start social clubs. I'd do anything to prevent people being retrenched or put on the scrap heap. But that didn't get me anywhere in the business world. It got me retrenched because I spoke out.

Fear is what stops us from embracing life ...when you are working with your passion your creativity starts to come out. And you suddenly find yourself doing things you never thought you had in you. Now will I be able to make a living to get by and live in the bush and allow this serenity to just keep happening? I don't know. But there is no fear any more about the alternative. I'm going to keep following this passion because I have no choice. I don't want to live any other way any more and if that means I end up ...well, I don't know. Intelligence and creativity will find a way. Does it work in ordinary life? I think you will find that if this gets hold of you, you will make a lot of changes. You will not make them out of choice but out of necessity. There is no choice in what I'm doing. People find this hard to understand but I'm not choosing to be here today. Life, in its natural flow has brought me here and will take me somewhere else because I'm following a passion which has its own energy and direction. Isn't that a wonderful way to live? I couldn't go back to living in fear of where the next dollar's coming from and therefore making the choice to become an accountant again or a consultant. That is the worst kind of reality now.

So, the practical things are all this brain is interested in and you don't need a lot of money unless you send your kids to private schools and all that.

Q Yes, but that seems very idealistic. It sounds good but how many people could live in the way you describe?

GH I'm not speculating about what kind of future...

Q You are not talking about opting out?

GH No, I'm talking about opting in. I'm now living for the first time in my life which is a shocking thing. I'm 51 and I'm just starting to live. Most of my life has been in a fog of unanswered questions or the fear of where my next buck is coming from...

Q Isn't that all very well if you don't have to worry very much where your next buck is coming from? If you were in Kosovo at the moment would the same philosophy get you anywhere. I doubt it very much...you are talking as if this is open to everybody and desirable for everybody.

GH I'm saying check it out for yourself.

Q I can identify with Gary.

GH I'm not drifting. There is an idea out there if you are not driving yourself down a conventional track you are drifting. There's another way of rejoining the flow of life, getting in touch with that raw energy and then moving with your passion. That's not 'work', it's a joy. If you've got some abilities in any area, it's a joy to express them. Jo is a fantastic cook, she takes cook books to bed, they're almost more important than I am....

Jo What do you mean, almost? (Laughter)

GH The truth comes out. I say to Jo, 'when are you going to embrace your passion?'

Jo Fine! I am still helping a daughter with a mortgage. I have very good earning capacity at the moment to take care of the future, my hopefully very long future. I love my job. I'm not suffering at it. So, all of this..

GH Hang on ! Is it your passion?

Jo No, but I love it, it's not my passion no.....it's not ruining my life to do a job every day,

GH No, but what's coming up for me is a fear, there's a fear behind that. What is it.

Jo I suppose fear that I'll live a long life and lose my earning capacity and all I've got to have basically is a roof over my head.

GH If you took a balance sheet on Jo's assets she's got more money than most...

Jo No I have not...

GH What I'm saying is she could set herself up tomorrow in the way she wants to live. The only thing that's stopping her is the fear in her own head.

Jo I can set myself up but it's not going to last forever.

GH There's not enough trust in her ability to use her own passion to create enough money to feed herself into the future.

Jo Another thing is that like many of my peers and family I've supported a child, I've got a house, I've done all those structured things we've all done. It is only recently that pressure has been removed to a certain extent. Gary has had a certain amount of luxury in that he's had no dependants for a very long time. So he's been able to take time off and do what he wants. The unfortunate thing is that that luxury is not available for young people who are supporting families.

Q I wonder if we here realise how lucky we are in this country to be able to discuss the things we are discussing. I wonder with all the problems there are in the world, whether a person of above average intelligence living in Kosovo or in an African famine could understand what we are talking about here.

GH Well, we can only speculate and we are not into speculation. I keep coming back to the facts of my existence that I face every moment. And if I deal with that in a sane way and start to see the totality of the world I am living in and share the responsibility for that world and the way it is. Not to go out and change it but to get my own life and relationships in order. If we all did that the world would be different. That's what we never see. That by getting our own world in order; by having harmony and peace and love in our own relationships that flows out to the people we relate to.

Q We talk about the problems of Kosovo but where is the love in our lives? If I'm not surrounded by a tremendous energy what's the point of talking about all that?

Q2 No sorry, this came up because the thing was follow your bliss, do what you really want, there no point in doing anything else. And that luxury is not given to people in a situation like Kosovo.

Q3 I wonder if you can follow your passion without making choices. I think in the way you are addressing Jo's situation she is being required to make a choice. It seems to me she is doing what comes naturally at the moment and today's imagined bliss could be tomorrow's disappointment.

GH I'm saying that when the new consciousness sees that we are not really doing what we love doing and life is passing us by, there is no choice. You don't postpone it until you feel you've got enough in the bank. You just see the totality of what is happening now and you have no choice. It's a question of not living in fear any more - it's a sane logical way to live.

Q You are saying we don't have choice. I think that is semantic game playing. Because I think we choose everything.

GH Yes, but that's always a movement of ego.

Q But you've chosen to be here Gary even though life is bringing you here.

GH No I'm not. You see that is what I'm trying to get across. I'm doing what is my passion and what has

been my passion for a long time. It's learning about reality, discovering what reality really is. Now that is being shared around as much as I'm capable of and the choice is really to follow that passion that life has brought. If that is choice well OK let's get the semantics out of the way. But when you look at the totality of you and your life, your skills and interests and you see it all unfolding, you see what the right thing is to do without too much thought and analysis about possible future scenarios.

Q I don't think we always do this. I mean you saying you didn't have a choice to come today. The opportunity, because of your passion presents itself and all the circumstances came about. Inevitably, and without all the left brain should I, shouldn't I ...you could have just had the feeling I'd like to stay at home this weekend and walk in the bush. You wouldn't have had to put it into words - there is some sort of choice one has to make to get on the plane and come here. There are other passions than the one that brought you here which have to be chosen 'out' as it were. I do think choice comes into everything we do.

Q2 The state you are talking about is one where life is happening. As it's happening right now which doesn't involve this cognitive projection of choice. It's happening. Choice is a mental overlaying of what is happening.

GH I don't want us to get hung up on this. There is a thing called choice. But to me it is a conceptual activity and it is one thing after the other and it is a measurement process. When we make a choice we are making a decision based on certain criteria we have worked out before. What I am saying is that there is a greater power than choice. If we want freedom in our lives and want truth, it's right here now and it's the freedom to observe without choosing. I don't have to do anything - there is no sense in continuing a discussion that is getting nowhere. There is freedom to observe we are now locked in to a no-win debate here about something that, at the end of the day, is not going to solve the world's problems or your problems. What might help is all of us are weighing up new abilities that overlay choice which is small fry compared to the big stuff. The big stuff involves feeling joyfully alive without any reason to feel joyfully alive, without any choice involved. Isn't that a magnificent reality if it is possible?

Q Where you lose me is that I don't think it is either or. I think you can be joyfully alive and come through the dark night of the soul or whatever and still make choices.

Q2 But how do you know that if you are not living it?

Q Well, how do you know you are not living it?

Q2 But do you feel you are living it?

Q I went through this sort of journey as Gary did. I'm not saying I live it all the time but I don't feel that I'm missing out on something

Q3 Can I come in with something here. I was in the USA with a Russian man. He along with tens of thousands of his fellow countrymen & women was between Moscow and Germany when the Germans came through. He was eight years old. Before the Germans arrived the Russian army razed the whole area. One day they were established in reasonable comfort on the farm, the next day they had no house, food - nothing and stuck in the path of an advancing army. Suddenly, his future had vanished, total crisis, no future - the conceptual framework had collapsed and he was left only with life as it was at that moment. There was no condemnation of the people who had burnt their farm or the approaching enemy - conceptualising had been completely expelled. Just this

Q Is the experience reversible. Can the ego come back and start all over again. If there was some crisis or shock?

GH I don't know. The worst thing that could happen would be Jo leaving me or something bad happening to one of my daughters.

Jo All the things that happened over the years hurt me terribly. And he left three hundred times a week and it never stopped hurting, it kept getting worse. Then something clicked and I started to understand why it was so devastating for me that he should go. It wasn't ever as though I needed him. I was very independent in every way. I started to understand it was me, my ego, getting rejected. Once I'd come to terms with that .. and I'm sure Gary would say the same, if suddenly the partnership ended it ends. That's it. It doesn't destroy

your life. You get on with it. If your ego is not wrapped up and dependent on another person then you get on with it.

GH Even when we were breaking up and getting back together, in the worst times I was waking up with the same brain that I couldn't believe. So, it doesn't go away. You realise that if you try to project the future which is a conceptual activity you are back in the fear state trying to establish security all the time, 'how can I be secure in this relationship'. And the classic response is to say we're committed and thereby establish another concept.

How do you live then? You don't live in that symbolic future. Me and my possessions and my partner because that's a kind of living death. You are always in fear that the partner will look at someone else and disappear. How can you live with that fear all the time. Jealousy.

Q Sometimes we fear what we think we will suffer

GH If you are living and dying psychologically every day it's amazing how that fear recedes. It becomes a non-issue in your life. You are so full of life that the fear of death of your physical organism, somewhere out there in the distance, is a non-issue. We can't fear death as a feeling on its own. There has to be a thought that precedes it. What is the thought behind the fear? I fear death because I'm coming to an end. I don't like that and maybe I want to continue. I want this life to continue. So what sort of fear are we talking about?

Q Loneliness....someone dies who you love.

GH When my brother died at thirty three, I'd known him properly for only two years. He was quite a rogue, a bit of a black sheep but a great character and wonderful company. I had to identify the body and when I saw my brother, three years younger than me, on that slab of concrete, someone I had only just got to know and love, the fact that this is; that I am going to die some day. I felt sorry. Not for him, but for me - I didn't realise at the time but I was grieving for my loss. Me, me, me.

He didn't leave a will. He had two young daughters. I stored all his furniture in a spare room but I had to move it because I had rented the room out. In clearing out the room I came upon his carry bag. On the last morning I had seen him, he had taken off without that bag which was in my car and as I'd driven off I saw him jumping around to attract my attention as he realised he'd left it with me. When I came upon this bag again I had an insight into all belongings and how useless they are and this somehow changed the grieving from what I'd lost to what he'd lost.

Then I realised this fear of death is a fact and if we stop both hiding it and hiding from it, and face the facts of our existence, NOW, we can change radically. The fear of death is a concept that comes into existence when we create the self, they are twins. In fact there is a threesome: the ego or self, time and the fear of death that comes with those two. So we live in time and we die in time but the 'we living in time' is a conceptual existence and we don't want that self concept to come to an end; our history, our past. To say that somehow you can end your life in every moment and be born alive every moment and die every moment is so foreign to our brains that we can't just let it happen to us.

Q The ending in every moment is a very important thing. The actual mechanics of the ending.....

GH Well, it's not being in memory. It is a state of pure observation, pure awareness; not locking on to any particular object in its vicinity and desiring that particular object. There is contentment and a serenity that comes with just being in a reality that you are an integral part of; it can't do without you and you can't do without it and it is what it is and you look and you look and you don't conceptualise that reality. You don't start locking on to any particular individual. The moment we recognise something we are lost in a conceptual world of evaluating that object in terms of our past experiences, our hurts and our pleasures. The moment I see something I recognise and have already stored in memory it is a good, bad or neutral item for me. Something we like or don't like causes an immediate reaction in us and then off we go. We try to avoid or grasp it and it's me wanting that.

If you want to live like that you continue to use your brain to recognise objects with a subject, in your brain, continue to believe in a self that recognises and wants to maintain a self-image which avoids or desires separate objects. It has never looked at the totality of life that's always in front of our eyes and if your blind it's always in front of your ears and if you're deaf it's whatever your other senses reveal.

Q You went through a lot in your life. Do you think you could have arrived at this insight without going through all that?

GH I think there are some shortcuts that would have saved a couple of decades of reading so many books. To me suffering per se is not the answer. As soon as I came across these weird teachings of Krishnamurti something struck a chord which I'd never met before. And the intrigue and curiosity with that stuff was with what seemed to lie between the lines. 'Truth is a pathless land' - what does that mean? I think we can save ourselves a lot of suffering if we work on what it means to be a conceptual being. If we started to teach this subject in our schools, our youth would have some incredible insights. The moment I saw that my brain had been conditioned to believe in certain concepts I went back to find out where that process starts. As a child we are taught certain language rules.. this whole area of learning to use the brain in a holistic way is an unlearning of how we use it in a straight line, left brain language way which is subject, verb, object. There are some assumptions we have accepted without question. And most of these are perpetuating the false notion of an ego that is going somewhere, that's growing, that is improving over time. How many of us know what a concept is?

Q What is it?

GH A concept is a symbol (word, number) that represents some aspect of our environment and obviously has some survival value. We might use the word "tiger" to communicate the physical danger associated with that animal. A symbol represents something in the real world, but is not the thing or a group of things itself. It is an abstraction of reality because the real dynamic world is one movement and our brains are not capable of abstracting the total unlimited reality. It is our human limited way of trying to stay secure and safe and concepts can give us a degree of safety because they allow us to communicate with each other and memorise the names of objects that might do us some harm (or give us some pleasure) But then we started creating concepts which do not have a demonstrable, objective presence in the real world, e.g., love, god, justice. The brain then went completely out of control and created a self-concept. This idea has become so important to our sense of security that it has assumed an objective reality.

When we stop putting up these self created barriers of sustaining some kind of person all the pretence goes from our relationships because ...I can't hurt you. How can I hurt you when you are me? When the stuff you are made of is my stuff. The only difference between me and you is my belief systems which I've locked away in memory. Take that away and be devoid of memory right now. How do we start relating to one another? It's mind boggling. I saw that not over time but instantaneously. What happens when we all start waking up here and not wanting life to be anything but what it is. We would start co-operating on a level we couldn't dream of. There'd be nothing stopping us creating a world where everyone had enough food. It would just be the sane thing to do. The maintenance of a common belief system in an individual ego is what stops the human being from going beyond this limitation.

In seeing the falseness we are free of it. We can't know what we are, we only know we've got more in common than we ever had in that other crazy existence and what we've got in common starts to take over how we relate. Not our separate egos that want to keep on battling with each other, competing, measuring, fighting. The only thing in our way is a belief system. Why do we need any beliefs? Because we are empty beings without beliefs. And we cannot stand being nothing.

The energy that has been going into sustaining the self image is released to be creative in ways we can't imagine. But it will be a natural creativeness, not just setting up another "vision".

Our society and our education system are all trying to sustain our limited world view and promoting it as the way to live and that is taking us to the edge. I see the next one or two generations as absolutely crisis-ridden for our species. We've got lots of people following leaders who are taking us to this edge. Each one of us has got to say 'hang on' I've got to be a leader for myself and see what happens. Because these leaders, where are they taking us? Who can you look up to in the world today?

Q That's a really good question and I suggest we look at that tomorrow. 'What do we do instead of leaders?'

Session 3 Sunday Morning 18 October 1998

When I was entering the 'Dark Night of the Soul' phase I started to keep a diary which I did for three days and then decided to give it up. I found I was repeating myself over and over. I thought it would give you a sense of what was happening to me at that time if I read Day 1 of it now.

May 15, 1996.

Had a very restless night. Mind cannot leave this ego stuff alone for one second! I feel like a trapped rat, with no way out of its predicament.

It's time now that I really started to think for myself, without reference to any book or authority. But then I realise that the only instrument that I have to know anything is the software in my head that society has put there. If I throw this knowledge away - there is nothing - no ego, no self (other than the biological self, i.e. my body), no motivation to do anything other than the bare minimum to keep the body alive.

I am forced to see that what I call living is a conceptual existence - this seems to be the only reality that we humans can be aware of - we live in a world of ideas, symbols, imaginings, dreams and fantasies that are dreamed by a non-existent dreamer. Is this the only way that life can be aware of itself? That is, by imagining what life is like, by having memories of past experiences, memories of self, and reliving these memories all the time, in time. It gives humans incredible creative power in the world, because we can imagine almost anything and then make it happen, by manipulating people, ideas, things and nature to bring our vision about. But we need to believe in ourselves and the power of knowledge and seek self fulfilment for us to put the energy into creating.

But is all this creative energy therefore dependent upon our self image, our self consciousness, and our sense of separateness from nature and other people? It seems to be. People seek relationships because they are lonely, unhappy or wish to be more happy than they are in their current relationship. And this whole process has a dark side, a very destructive side. Some people cannot handle their loneliness, their rejections, their frustration and lash out society or their loved ones with violent words, thoughts or actions. This creative mental state of humans seems to be very unstable and we pay a huge price for our self consciousness.

When I search for some answers to this state I am in, I find none and my head starts to hurt. Is this a signal? Is my body giving me a strong message that the head is not the way out of this mess? Is there any way out? What about enlightenment, self-realisation, liberation, God, Truth, Love, Reality etc. The only enlightenment I have known is the insight that my life has been imagined and my self is an illusion. This has not made me blissfully happy - not for one second. I feel that I have been robbed of my life and that there is nothing else to replace it with. It is ironical because I wanted to know what was causing all the terrible misery in the world and I have found the problem - it is me! It is a paradox. I must cease to exist as a separate ego if there is to be a sane world. But this very entity is what makes me feel that I am alive. Take it away and I am literally nothing but a body. But there is no way that I can eliminate my ego.

So, I find myself at a dead end. I have nowhere to go. I have lost interest in everything except meeting basic survival needs. It is like being in a mental straightjacket. I see the games that people are playing to keep their self-image alive. I don't have the energy to play these games anymore.

But I still have this nagging residual idea that all is not lost. There must be some way out! Perhaps I have missed something along the way. Why can't I accept that there is no way out? Probably because my imagined reality is the only life that I have experienced - if this goes then it is truly death for me. My mind cannot imagine a life without itself!

Nature created me. I had no say in the matter. Suddenly, here I am. I'm told that I am the product of millions of years of evolution and that man is the most highly evolved animal because of his self consciousness and creative abilities. But I witness the insanity in the world and in my family history and my own intellect is jolted into seeking some explanation for this situation. It finally comes upon its own structural weakness. It becomes desperate at this turn of events. This is not what it wanted to find! Surely it has made a mistake. Let's check it out again, read all the relevant spiritual, psychological, sociological, philosophical and scientific books on the subject. Live the stuff that might provide a way out of this impasse - Krishnamurti's choiceless awareness and so on.

And I come back to the same point again. I am a product of my society, my species. The core aspect of the human species is our self consciousness. We live in this imagined world. We create this imagined world. We create our relationships based on our images of each other and we need each other because of our imagined core identities. At our core we feel that we are on our own in this crazy world. We are mentally unstable - every human is mentally unstable. This must be so, because we live in a fantasy world. We literally live in a mindscape of our own making. Our bodies have been turned into a pleasure palace, which our minds won't leave alone. Because the self is an idea, a bundle of memories, it must continue to try and improve itself and convince itself that it is making some progress. It is always measuring itself. Its mindscape is full of opposing ideas and concepts such as good and bad, love and hate, success

and failure. This is how it keeps itself amused and entertained. And this is the only life that we know. The mind cannot conceive of its own death. That is why it has invented God, heaven.

I keep coming full circle! I have been getting headaches and not sleeping well. This is a very dangerous business - delving into the psyche. Is this nature's way of confusing us and eliminating us? Do we lose the will to live this imaginary existence?

Take another approach. We are the dominant species on the planet because we are mentally unstable, and live in a dream world. We will not survive much longer because this self consciousness is destroying our environment, destroying each other. This feedback is obvious to any thinking person. What will it take to survive the environmental and social challenges that are threatening our species? Ask this question of yourself. Sheer terror of mutual extinction? Sorry, but this won't be sufficient. We are just not smart enough to produce a sustainable economy and a sustainable ecosystem because we live in an imaginary world - not the real world and we attribute our problems "to the other person". New value systems will not work - more of the same.

There seems to be no way out that our minds can dream up, because the mind is the problem! It has to go! But it will not and cannot kill itself. We are stuck with our conditioning and our mental world. We are neurotic with our minds the way they function now, and probably more neurotic with the realisation that our minds live in an imagined world, and are the cause of the world's suffering. We are between a rock and a hard place. We are left at the mercy of nature, provided that we don't go crazy in the meantime.

Does that give you some idea of the reality I was going through?

For me this has not been a joyful experience,. The memory can return but now I see that it is not me. This is the reality, what is happening now. Start to experience this reality and you are not back in your memory. To me, that is a miracle, because my life used to be my memories.

Q Gary, the account of your thoughts you have just read to us have to do with the general condition of the world and the average human being. I thought what you were going to give an account of was what your reactions were in terms of thoughts as they arose in your consciousness. What you told us was very coherent but I imagine there was a lot going on at the time that wasn't.

GH No. That was the only issue. When I saw what was true I just kept coming back to it. There were no idle thoughts, just the focus on that one issue. I had discovered that I was not an ego but that left me with nothing and I didn't like that feeling of being nothing. And that discomfort is what I kept returning to. No one is taught how to function from nothing, everything was new, I was mentally naked, living step by step in the present.

I was so intent on finding what was the problem in the world, not finding enlightenment or some benefit out of this, to find an explanation for the turmoil that had been and was my life. To get some sanity into it if it was possible. I suspect the people who are looking to get something out of this will never find it because the seeker who wants something other than what is, what life is, is in a conceptual trap. My only intent was to have order in my life and not be at the mercy of wild inner rages of the sort that built up at the inquest into my brother's death and which nearly drove me to attack the accused there and then. Revenge! And I realised that if I did it I would be joining him and there was an instantaneous awareness of the impact on all the others involved, family on both sides, etc.

The freedom to observe reality without doing anything is the greatest freedom a human being potentially has. You don't have to do anything in most situations. The problem will solve itself and the peace that comes with knowing that you don't have to do anything. Life has given us that ability ..it is just latent at the moment.

If you want other than what you have now I suspect you are going to go round in circles. Someone asked if there are any short cuts.....

Q What you were saying about experience at the inquest came across as very life affirmative. And, as you pointed out it gave you an opportunity to learn. But I do get confused by the suggestion that we can snap out of a life situation we are undergoing as though we've got to abandon it and that it has no value whatsoever. I think that because it's happening it must be purposeful and the example you gave seems to confirm that?

GH I am not saying life's experiences are not necessary. Just be aware of your reaction to circumstances

and be aware of the extent to which it is based on the past. Now you become aware of what is happening whereas before you were identifying with that memory process, as if it was you. Whereas this has the power to suddenly change your consciousness into the present. It is not you that's changing because you are now left in that memory bank.

I am not saying all memory is bad. Some memory is essential to go about our everyday life, sort out the practical things.

Q I found the whole of what you had to say quite fascinating. The journal reading was terrific because I saw myself at the end of it seeing that there was nothing that I can do, nothing that I can do. Then almost immediately, the thought "well what do I do now?". Even after hearing it and being deeply affected by it I return to the usual mode. So even after seeing it has to work on you in some way....

Q One of your comments from yesterday about personal growth and therapy. When you said throw it away. I don't agree. For me therapy helped me explore my conditioning and realising through therapy how conditioned I am. For some people it may be necessary.

GH If it was an analytical kind of therapy the question arises which bits do you start analysing. I did it until I realised you can't get the insight into the totality of life by looking at a fragment. You have to start looking differently at life. If you want to study yourself there is a better way. which involves doing it as you go along in your life not sitting in a room somewhere trying to work out what happened years ago. If you look at life right now and watch your reactions in present situations then you are confronted with the shocking truth about yourself in the present moment.

Gary asked Jo to relate an example of him seeing someone hurting a dog as he and Jo were driving past. Jo said Gary got so mad he tried to grab the wheel from her as she was turning and tried to toot the horn. As they were wrestling for the wheel Jo's arm got caught and she got angry with him because he was hurting her as well as threatening to run the car off the road. He was so focused on the dog that he just about killed them .A complete lack of awareness of the whole picture.

GH My action was based not on what was happening at the time but past experiences of vulnerable people and animals being abused.

I think I am calm, loving, etc., and then I react like that. I see that I'm just like everyone else. To see that I've got reactive tendencies in me is a liberating realisation if it becomes part of your awareness. To be aware of what is, of myself. When you start putting the microscope on yourself in everyday situations and face up to what you find, that openness has enormous effect and power to reveal the conditioned nature of my behaviour.

GH We talked about passion yesterday. It seems to me that unless this is the most important thing in your life nothing will change.

Q In being, where is the knower to know? So, there's no passion - being, awareness, bliss is the everything of what it is to be present. If you say I will be present you introduce the future, you are playing with time. You are moving from the past to something that hasn't arrived. That is not what being here now is all about. Being is.

Q I don't know if people have fully realised you can sit inside yourself and do nothing. And you can do it now. And the body's hearing, breathing, talking, the mind is thinking but you are actually doing nothing.

GH It's almost too simple and that's the problem. It's too simple.

Q I have a problem with sitting and doing nothing. If I'm sitting and doing nothing I can go into a sort of stupor, I am not alert and awake. I can't be alert and awake and do nothing. And that's not being awake to the moment.

GH I think that subject of awareness is central. When you read Krishnamurti's books on this question you find he didn't give many clues. So I decided I would have to try everything that feels right. I used to walk through the bush with my eyes wide open and try not to blink. I think it's important to experiment with a different way of looking and seeing without that recognition factor cutting in and saying 'I'm looking at a tree

and naming it. Just look at the totality of what's in front of you, wide landscape and don't be selective.

There is a way of perceiving reality without involving memory. Looking at a people without dragging in what you already know about them. All the bad things you know about them. Hanging on to that stuff is bad for us, bad for our health.

Q The solution is forgiveness. For in forgiving the only one to forgive is your very own self. In that act of forgiving yourself for the thoughts and the responses and reactions you have had. That disconnection allows the love to reverberate widely. And you bless the murderer for being a superb teacher and showing you the way. Krishnamurti showed me everything in different ways time after time. In the absence of desire three things are present: love, compassion, intelligence. He taught me that. I don't need to know anything else.

GH I taught myself. I read Krishnamurti but I said I've got to work it out for myself. I'm not going to trust anyone. They've all let us down. Every one of them even Krishnamurti. Look at his life and there are some amazing contradictions and all you can do is look at your own life and put your own house in order because, if you follow anyone, you are a follower and you are going to go over the edge with that leader. What we need today is leaders not followers. Leaders who are going to stand alone. If I then go over the edge it's because I make a mistake not because I'm following somebody else. That was the one thing I got out of Krishnamurti. He didn't follow anyone else

If we want to be perfect beings, if we look for perfection I think we'll be disappointed. I think perfection is death, a straight line going nowhere. If you are perfect you've got nowhere to go. That's the end.

Q What about perfection just being. Just being. Being here. Not everyone being good and perfect in that sense, but here and not doing.....

Q2 In this moment , all I can say is I have witnessed the perceptions that you have from your mind.....

Q3 You were talking a moment ago about what's actually happening right now. What's actually happening right now is that all my buttons are pressed. M (previous speaker) you are a lovely person but when you talk like that I become angry. I don't have to be angry, logically, but in fact I do.

GH

You are having a reaction.

Q Yes, I'm having a reaction.

Q2 I found that really interesting. I used to have those reactions but now I appreciate what she was saying. Weeks ago I would have felt the same.

Q I wanted to clarify what you were talking about Gary. Just as a metaphor, going into the jungle and meeting your fears and desires. And I understood you to say that you don't come out of the jungle. Previously you were running away from the fear and after the desire. But you are in the jungle now and you are sitting and watching and know that you are going to stay in that jungle for the rest of your life. But you're making friends with the lions and tigers and you are not running from those fears any more. Just remaining there as it were. Have I understood you.

GH I'm accepting what is, including my conditioning. But I'm taking responsibility for that. I'm not walking away from it. I'm putting my house in order which is a big change for me because I wanted to change the world. So, chucking the books away and living an orderly, sane existence is a wonderful change for me. And then you start smelling the roses. No longer chasing an elusive dream but right here with what is. The ordinary things, my dog, my partner, daughter - right here, here it is. For me that's where life is - right here. And then if you want a symbol for it , God starts to come in but it's nothing like I would ever have imagined it. It's reality as it is. And the wonder and mystery of what is, right here is so astonishing to a brain that has cleansed itself of the garbage that's been put into it that it starts looking in a different way. You wake up every morning with the same astonishment. This is heaven.

Q I'm missing something. You went through the dark night of the soul. Then what? What happened then?

GH What happened was on July 9th 1996, I woke up at 5am and my brain was conscious and I was simply aware of the environment I was in. It was dark. There were birds twittering, there was no thinking person. It was a new form of consciousness. I got such a shock that the thought process kicked in and I started thinking. Then I realised I should let it be, not be afraid just be aware and go with it. As though someone was saying don't be afraid to let go. That experience changed me for ever. It wasn't the intellectual insight that shattered my illusion. It was a new way of being. Maybe that is how we are as children. That's just speculation but we don't come into this world with a talking head. Then I realised it wasn't going to go away. As long as I stayed aware and stopped worrying about what might or might not happen, just kept on with the 'going nowhere fast' approach to life - no one going anywhere, doing anything, to become anybody, impress anyone as long as I stayed in that state life had its own momentum. That was a sort of bland, silent awareness but a few weeks later I started feeling electrical impulses that would go from one side of the brain to the other at the most unexpected times. It was like an energy surge - when it happened I would recall that in my past experience I had noticed energy shifts of this kind. Has anyone else noticed this?

Q Yes, I have noticed changes which were not simply a response to what was going on in my environment. I have wondered at these times if they might be the precursor to major change. However, I discovered they are what is called 'petit-mal' which are tiny epileptic fits and I discovered this when I had a 'grand-mal' which is a major epileptic fit. So what I had hoped might be a precursor to enlightenment was a malfunction of the brain. But, who knows, maybe the brain was headed in the right direction but incapable of handling the load.

Q On occasions my brain just stops and it's very jarring. It's as if I have come to a standstill.

Q I have talked to people who describe their drug experiences in exactly the way we are talking here.

GH I think the problem in all this is that you can only relate to your own experience and as soon as I speculate about what might be happening to someone else we can get into trouble. So, I try not to speculate. All I know is that something is happening to my brain over which I have no control but it's not doing me any harm so far. If there were choice, I would choose this rather than the memory based consciousness I was locked into before. There is a free energy which is of now. It has no interest in the past or any kind of conceptual memory. The conditioned entity is still lurking and shows itself in the reactive movement that arose earlier. As though it is saying 'I'm still here, I'm not going away'.

Q Does your visual perception change when you are experiencing the wide-eyed way of viewing?

GH No. there is no real change from normal perception. But I rarely see a tree any more, the name rarely pops up. I have a real problem remembering people's names when I used to be really good. It's as though the brain has realised that a conscious effort to remember everything is not good for it. It only remembers the essential. It is no longer generating unfinished business. It can be embarrassing to forget who someone is but I have forgotten who I am so what matter? Then people will start explaining this change in me as Alzheimer's or something.

Q Yes, isn't that also a defensive movement of ego when faced with this sort of shift - 'I'm going mad, quick let's get back to normal'.

GH That's one of the things we are up against here because there is an illness with a scientific name (depersonalization ?) where people have come to the conclusion they don't have a self is treated as a mental illness. How many people are locked away because of this?

Q Maybe the people who have been locked away have in fact 'died' but unlike your case, they haven't been reborn. People for whom the second phase didn't happen. Rajneesh claimed it was dangerous to go into that phase because you might not come out of it. They didn't have a guru to bring them out of it.

Q He would say that!

Q That seemed to me to reconfirm that life plays a role, how significant the illusion or dream is in terms of putting in perspective any possible kind of liberation from it. We can't be liberated from what we don't understand. The experience or trial or undergoing of the illusion is important so that you can look back from that position on the illusion and understand what it is about. And, therefore, avoid becoming a lost self in an institution.

Q We have to have developed and gone through a strong sense of self and then become enabled thereby to understand what confines us and work from that rather than throw it out. To me it's like having a witness type consciousness. The observer, the aware one who can notice the ego -'Oh there I go again', etc. and try to look at it with compassion rather than to push it aside because I don't think we ever get rid of that.

Q When you say a sense of self, I never know quite what people mean by it. Do you mean identifying with a particular way of life?

Q Yes, that and all of what I identify with is, to me, my ego and I think it is important I understand what that comprises and how I became conditioned so I can take steps to get outside it.

GH Life is so incredibly mysterious and creative and the possibilities are so unlimited that to assume anything about it, even to assume that we need to go through an ego process ... who is assuming that. We don't know what life can do. Maybe one day our species will look back on this ego stage as a transition stage and that there was some psychological scaffolding that had to be erected for a time but then the whole species moves on to a new phase. But we can't speculate. But, if we trust the process of life enough and we see the fact of that false structure that is the intelligence which operates. Seeing the fact for what it is not what it could be or should be. Now that we are aware there is a disordering factor this will be sorted out. The life force will correct because it is intelligent. It is far more intelligent than any individual.

Q As I understood you M, you were speaking to us as we are as we arrive at this state through the way we are treated from birth onwards and then the dismantling happens. Is that correct or do you think that biologically we need to assemble and then disassemble ourselves? This raises for me the big question of how we handle the immature being?

GH There's only one answer to that. If you are one of those immature human beings - you do it.

Q Yes, but children. What do we do with children.

GH Oh I see - children. Get your own house in order. Don't worry about what you are going to do. That's a method a 'me'. Don't try and get ahead of yourself, always stay with what is and then as what is unfolding you see the whole picture - whatever your children are doing - suddenly it makes sense to cuddle them or whatever. Why do we need a method in advance? Because we are insecure in ourselves. We want a formula, we want to know what the right thing to do is. The Port Arthur massacre is an example of people meeting something that was completely beyond formulae, beyond what they thought possible. Some later said they thought it was a re-enactment and by the time reality caught up with them they were dead or almost dead. Meeting life with pre-digested knowledge.

Q I can imagine myself being in that situation and thinking it was a re-enactment because I'm thinking everything is fine. So don't you have to have a kind of paranoid mind-set to respond promptly in the way you suggest.

GH I don't suggest we go around expecting doors to be burst open by gun-toting psychopaths. However, the fact is that that is always a possibility and I was talking to Jo about his possibility when she goes shopping at night and she was saying how much more aware of the possibilities, you become more alert don't you?

Jo It's not a fear and it's not a nervousness. It's simply an awareness of the whole situation and that's it!

Q I have an acceptance that I am always in the right place at the right time.

Q There is no death. I live in life everlasting.

GH Sometimes we remain silent. I have no idea other than what is happening right now. I refuse to speculate on anything else. When you come right here and realise that most of your life has been spent somewhere else. That's a shocking insight.

Q Be still and know that I am God. In stillness the intelligence informs and activation happens.

GH Thank you! There is an outstanding question.

Q You talk of the sense of self having gone. Could you point out the difference between someone who does have a sense of self and someone who doesn't. What is it we are looking at.

GH The sense of self hasn't gone. The belief in the self has gone. And this is what I didn't understand, it's a belief system. So when there is no self it can't go anywhere. The me is a bundle of memories, a self-image, a description, words, symbols. I've got these weaknesses and these strengths. At the core of us there is nothing other than a changing process, a mystery. Where it's coming from and going to is a mystery but right now the only thing we've got to hang on to if we don't want to be nothing is a belief system that we've been building all our lives. There is a belief system that unravels once it sees its own stupidity, the game it is playing. Because that is not an intelligent way to live. It is not intelligence operating. It is a mechanical process, a copying process that has been handed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. We started off as copying machines, as genes, and then progressed to copying machines as ideas and intelligence looks at this copying process and sees that there is no need to sustain the psychological side of the copying process any longer.

Q The copying machine. The cells that are replicating. Where does breath fit in? (Inaudible comments)

GH The point is now that all of us are aware we don't have to be psychological copying machines for one second longer in our lives.

Q I've had experiences when I sit in the dialogue. I call it open listening. I find that it happens when I'm listening openly without much mental commentary or analysis. I begin to be aware of the totality you mentioned and it takes me beyond the personalities involved in the dialogue and their opinions. I find the open listening enables me to experience this totality and be much more aware especially of my reactions that are preventing me from being in touch and interacting with the group. I realise then that this separation process is simply a mental construct.

GH One thing I saw was that a shared insight is going to be a trillion times more powerful than a shared vision for our species. This process that you've started with the Now Dialogues somehow is part of this transition to a process of people getting together to share an insight that is immediately transforming in terms of how they view each other and how they go about their ordinary lives. Because the insight is not part of the copying process. It is outside that time based reality. It sees the total situation as it unfolds. To meet the global crisis we need a global mind. A mind that sees wholes.

At this point Gary dealt with questions which had been submitted in advance of the gathering in response to a section of the registration form calling for questions. If questions had already been covered by the discussions he did not repeat the answer.

1 Have any new skills or unusual abilities come with this change?

GH I'm having a lot of insights that seem to be so obvious now and I think that comes with seeing wholes and somehow freeing up and allowing the right brain to start to operate. (At this point Gary referred to his book as a result of the change pointing out that writing was not something he would have contemplated in his former role as 'accountant'.)

As an illustration of right brain effects beginning to appear Gary quoted the boiling frog tale in which a frog in a pan of water which is subjected to a slowly increasing temperature remains where it is until it is too late to move.

And so my brain said that's what humans are doing. We are oblivious to gradual change because cause and effect are far apart in time and our left brain is not used to dealing with realities where the consequences of our actions are not immediate. So I now have a nickname for left brained humans, I call them 'Bogs' derived from boiled frogs. Then I took barking dog and turned it into 'Darking Bog' and that is insane but now, when I'm having a reaction, I'm having a darking bog.

I see the need to make it humorous and absurd because it is. If we can create these caricatures then we see ourselves magnified in the light of humour.

2 Is it a being in the present?

There is no present. There is no past and there is no future. That's how I understand reality. Present is probably the biggest figment our conceptual minds have invented. You can quickly establish this by trying to work out what time it is. The moment you say what time it is it is not that. We have invented a concept called time and tried to fragment reality and live by that fragmentation. Science describes it as a space-time continuum so there is no such thing as time as a separate dimension.

3 Is there a short-cut?

To me the short-cut is if you have worked out intellectually that the ego is a constructed belief system and you find yourself going up and down on the one spot, it is making no difference. Start living it, the awareness reality every day of your life. You've got the message. You are aware of the fact. And the awareness of that fact is part of living now. Don't try and do anything about the conditioning other than be aware of it. To me seeing the fact and living it is the short-cut. Work out triggers for yourself. We've mentioned two: the finger click and going open-eyed.

4 Is there any such thing as psychological or spiritual evolution. Are you suggesting it is the idea of psychological evolution that allows us to avoid the fact there is only one time to get it right and that is now?

Not quite. When I had the insight that there is no such thing as psychological or spiritual evolution as in the way various religions suggest, I saw there was nowhere to go but here and that stopped me wanting anything. I saw that my thoughts about growing as a psychological entity which could grow because it got better and bigger, were false. It was simply a bundle of ideas that was growing. All of a sudden I saw how stupid and pointless this way of living was.

Q I take your point but there seem to have been stages in what happened to you. The initial chaos, then the dying, then the being reborn.

GH The critical issue was the insight because that shocked my brain. It was like an arrow that went through my brain showing me that I was the problem. And if I wanted to do anything about the world I had to start with me and understand what this 'me' is. Without that trigger nothing would have happened. It smashed the reality I had been living. When I discovered the truth, I then tried to find loopholes to escape it, for some years without success, before I realised the game was up. It wasn't the 'truth' I'd wanted. What came after was effortless because I'd realised there was nothing I could do.

5 Is it a permanent state or one that can be called on at any time?

You can't call upon it. Life is here. It's nowhere else. What calls upon things is the old entity. It's a permanent state that has degrees of intensity. It is maximised when the brain is in a fairly secure state. When it realises nothing is going to come along and harm it and when it is not under the gaze and influence of other self-conscious humans who are waiting just to knock it around and prove it is wrong. At night time when problems are under control and when the body is well exercised.

6 Looking back to your other consciousness existence. What was the major obstacle to making the shift?

The idea that knowledge was the way out. I wanted knowledge about reality and I kept reading books about the different areas of knowledge. Seeking truth through knowledge was my biggest obstacle.

7 What were the trigger skills that helped or impeded the process.

Well I think we've covered that. What helped was that I am a bull. I will not rest until I've gone to the end of the road if there is something I'm passionate about.

8 Was the transformation spontaneous or sought after?

It was spontaneous because I only saw truth. I wasn't looking for transformation, whatever that is. I don't know what transformation is. We have a concept called 'transformation' so everyone is searching for transformation now. We don't stop do we?

9 Is there any thing a lefty can do to access right brain mode?

Be aware. Now. Not tomorrow. Aware in terms of now, in the whole picture that is unfolding from moment to moment.

10 Is it possible that enlightenment seems illusory because we seek it partially through thought, awareness, listening, seeing?

Because we seek it. Not because we seek it partially or any other way. Enlightenment is a concept. What is, is what is. So - don't seek anything, particularly something called enlightenment.

11 How do the thoughts flow now? Is there any self-talk still?

There is certainly self talk. The thoughts flow, most of them are pretty practical or petty. They are based on my 'unfinished business' list.

12 When one is talking, for example planning a trip or driving a car does the consciousness automatically shift back into a relative mode.

It just is. The background never goes. Its degree of 'strength' changes but it is a constant. Thought comes and goes. Thought is chaotic in the sense that it is all over the place.

Session 4 Sunday Afternoon 18 October 1998

Discussion Session

We agreed that participants in the discussion session would introduce themselves by reading out the 'Post-It' note on which they had summarised their reason for coming to the meeting. These had been pinned to the walls for all to see prior to the opening session on Saturday morning.

In this section the speakers are named. They were not named in the transcripts of the 'General' sessions because it wasn't always possible to identify the questioner from the taped recording. In this session the questioner was handed the microphone before speaking.

Wendy. My note related to wanting to experience what you are experiencing but I can't do that of course. I can't even experience what it is I think I want to experience. Doesn't make sense and I just realised that what I wrote down is not possible.

Marie You say you wanted to experience what Gary has experienced but after this weekend do you feel that you don't have to go out there and experience anything in particular?

Gary. Wendy, you said I can't. I say I don't know. You blocked any outcome. That's what knowledge does. I know or I can't!

Wendy. I was trying to lead to the fact that 'I' as an ego can't. That's what I was saying.

Gary. Thank you. I understand.

Terry. For me what has been useful and practical was the issue of putting your house in order in terms of the simple tasks that need to be completed. And the cause of the bothersome thought activity being this failure, the activity of the unfinished business.

Alan. I wrote up that I wanted to find out what was really going on because whilst I'd had intimations in my normal consciousness, I wasn't alert to the full story. It remains the case except that I've got a much deeper understanding of the fact that I really can't do anything. That the I can't do anything. I feel at the moment suspended between the actuality of not being able to do anything and the fact that 'this is it' there is just this. And the solution is in that of course but there is the sense of 'I' being hammered on the anvil of these two facts. And that has become increasingly clear over these two days.

Gary What were the words you used. You said 'it just is'?

Alan. This is it, that's the way it is.

Gary. When you start looking at what is you reintroduce a miracle into your life. The what is is so miraculous. What we think it should be is another story. If you just look at what is with fresh eyes and appreciate what is in your own life then that is how the what is starts to creep up on you. We have lost touch with what is; the miracle of life as it is. That is part of it, letting go of 'what we would like it to be like.

Dan. I don't think that just saying there is nothing to be done - in your own life Gary you did a hell of a lot - you came to a point where you did nothing after doing an enormous amount.

Alan. I didn't say there's nothing to be done.

Dan. I think the 'nothing to be done' came after an enormous effort. It's a case of doing things with such intensity that you come to the stage when there's nothing to be done then. It's a tremendous stage to reach but I don't think it's reached by just sitting here and thinking there's nothing to be done.

Gary. What we said earlier about there being no psychological evolution and if I'd realised the fact that the entity that was doing the doing was, in fact, a false one. I kept doing the doing until my brain hurt.

Dan. You might not realise this but the Buddha did the same. He tried everything until in the end he had to give up. And that is when it happened to him. A tremendous effort and there was nothing more that could be done because he'd done everything.

Margaret D. I feel incredibly nervous for some reason. Having to talk about my expectations. Uses of adversity, growing through difficulties. You (Gary) have obviously grown through your difficulties. I was enormously relieved that you've acknowledged this incredible, central nervous system that we have. That you trust it, I also trust it - that you are not looking for some external wonder or force and it has just confirmed my understanding that I can trust my nervous system if I'm willing to spread my awareness a little more.

Maria. I realise I'm sitting here and trying to rehearse what I'm going to say so it will come together. It's incredible watching myself do this. It was a relief to see how I'm trying to impress, to do the right thing. I feel I have an understanding Gary of what you are talking about because of my past experience. The arising of fear and the grabbing and trying to keep the space, wanting to be in it all the time. My longing is to be in that space all the time because it is so beautiful and peaceful and effortless. And I know this trying to recapture it is getting in my own way.

Terry. I find our language works against us. It came to mind when Margaret was talking about trusting our central nervous system. The way in which I might use the same terminology implies an owner, an entity to which the nervous system, my feelings, etc., belong. The language is reinforcing the division, the duality.

John. It's good to know after two days that I don't have to do anything, and I hope my wife Marian is listening to this. (Laughter) Gary's thesis seems to be an awareness of the reality of the here and now which I think is very useful and I certainly go along with that. There are a couple of things Gary I have been a bit confused about. You sometimes talk about the intelligence and I'm not sure if you mean it's coming from you or from somewhere else.

Gary. This is a tricky one. It's coming from within and without. How's that for a bet each way? It must come from within and without because we are one system. We are of and not separate from the totality. How it operates I have no idea. When we try to personalise this total intelligence we create knowledge. Life as it moves has its own dynamic. When you are part of that flow there is an intelligent response that seems to come from nowhere. There is a greater intelligence when we operate as wholes and in wholes than as fragments.

Marie P. Would you say this intelligence is perhaps the true self? If there is such a thing.

Gary. One of the books I found fascinating was about Ramana Maharshi who talks about the higher Self. Self with a big 'S'. And everything he said I could really relate to except when it came to putting an identification around what it is. Big, small or medium 's' still indicates an entity. I don't believe there is a self as a permanent entity.

Marie P. So what do you think about the Hindu idea that we are an unchanging spirit that has many lives, that is not the mind or the body. Or is that speculation?

Gary. Yes. I've found inner peace without needing those answers. I come back to Dan's point. I got to a stage where I must have overloaded my brain. Something happened, I'd been down all these tracks and that was it – my whole being "gave up on knowledge." Any kind of knowledge, spiritual traditions, whatever. It wasn't helping. It was only when I accepted what is, here and now, always - that inner peace came about in the most unlikely way. Once that inner peace starts to permeate the organism you run out of questions very quickly. It's that simple.

Margot. My experience of these two days has been that I enjoyed myself. Thank you Gary & Jo for coming. I feel warmly towards you and I feel warmly towards everyone else here. I feel very warm. (Laughter)

Maria D. Are you definitely sure that you are definitely going to stay in that state? Could you fall asleep again?

Gary. Who is it that is going to speculate about the future?

Jo. I think one of the advantages of having a partner is that we keep one another honest. Every day, every moment. We are brutally honest with each other (Jo & Gary) if it's an issue for either. It's fun, not all heavy stuff and we don't talk about this all the time either. The truth is paramount in our relationship and it's important we pull one another up. And we don't have a group like this in Melbourne, an open group of caring people who can come together 'warts and all' and not feel threatened. Just to let the pressure off and be as you are. As we don't have that luxury we probably do it for each other in spades.

Barry. It seems that what you two have got is what we call dialogue here. Not a discussion. And this session here as much as we would like to call it a dialogue is more of a question and answer session. But what you describe Jo as your exchanges with Gary is nearer to how our dialogues go.

Jo. We have a bit of a disadvantage due to handing the microphone around.

Warwick. Most of us here have done the Douglas Harding exercises. There is an experiment we do with eyes closed. What has happened during the course of that experiment all the sensations which I would normally cobble together as 'me', thoughts, pressures on the body, feelings, etc., arise and fall without sustaining the sense of an ongoing entity. To me it's the only concrete experience of there not being a kind of central entity in the middle of it all. All the things I know and experience exist independently of each other and even if I talk to someone it's quite strange the voice is not really my voice and I'm not quite sure where the words are coming from and they come out of nowhere and disappear into nowhere. It's all quite miraculous. When I open my eyes it doesn't continue. It's business as usual.

I have a real feeling of this emptiness. Whatever I am physically or mentally is all taking place in a context of emptiness. I am as much the emptiness as I am the body and the thoughts or whatever. And you don't talk about emptiness very much and I wonder if it is relevant to the way you approach things.

Gary. I suppose the thing I talk about most is the structure of self and ego. By becoming aware of that everything else seems to fall into place. I also see the pointlessness of trying to describe this other state and give it a name. To conceptualise it as nothingness or whatever. To me it just is and can't be put in a box like we are conditioned to do with anything we come across. So what I'm experiencing may not be what anyone else is experiencing and so you've got to be careful and get in touch with what you think the truth is and see what happens. That emptiness stuff, that is where words start to fail us. The negative way for me ends up in the positive. We look at what is false and that falseness falls away leaving what is and that what is can not be put in a box.

Tony. Most of us in this group have the ideas of many lives, reincarnation. It seems from what you say you also have this understanding. What is it that reincarnates?

Gary. Who is it that wants to reincarnate? Who is so insecure with what is that cannot wait to reincarnate in another life with all the travails, etc.? Who is it that wants permanence, continuity. It seems to me it can only be something false. That longing for something beyond what is without being able to face what is now, knowing that one day this organism will die. The scientific explanation that the matter of the body

reconstitutes in another form isn't much help to that which wants to retain the entity, to survive death. The thing that makes life so excruciatingly miraculous is the fact that it is not permanent. It is fragile and momentary but look at this miracle happening here. We pass the miracle by and live in fear of ending instead of living the miracle.

John. I've been very impressed with Gary and Jo's relationship. On your truth sessions, do you comment on one another's behaviour or criticise each other.

Jo. I wouldn't call them truth sessions. We have lots of interesting discussions. It's a just a way of life that we have. We don't really argue or get heavy with each other but we do make sure we're on the ball all the time. We remain aware. We don't criticise or pick on each other. We allow one another to be.

Gary. Beware the perils of perfectionism. Awareness reduces the prospect of over reaction. We are best friends and that is very important.

Marian. I've been wondering how much I can live in the moment, in the present, what it means? I've related to a lot of stuff that's going on here. I had a young 12 year old staying for two days and she taught me what living in the moment is about. We cooked together and walked together and made up stories together and had fun together and I thought 'why is my life so serious?' Why have I got so many ideas in my head? This 12 year old girl is into fun and that's what I need more of at the moment.

Terry. You have just reminded me how children spontaneously live the moment. They are the moment experiencing itself and we grow up to become adults and the separation becomes reinforced. And all of a sudden it's no longer the moment experiencing itself but me trying to live the present. I think that's where we've gone off the rails.

Tony. Loss of innocence.

Marian. And it's also about expectations and roles too. This is my sister's grand child so I'm not hooked into her nor is she hooked into me. Then my sister arrives and the games begin. The child-like behaviour changes. The ability to play and live in the moment is such a precious thing.

Dan. I've really enjoyed this weekend. I like talking about this sort of stuff. I would encourage you to go on and talk to a lot of people because I think you've discovered something and very few people are working on it. You are very honest and straightforward, and that's very rare and you talk about your own experiences which is important. There's just not enough knowledge of this kind of thing happening. I know people in Melbourne who would be interested.

Gary. A Now group going in Melbourne?

Dan. Yes, we could feed into one another. I've been to a lot of groups and listened to many teachers. One talked of immortality and in answer to a question about how many human beings had achieved immortality replied nine.(Laughter) It's important to be with someone (Gary) who's done it.

Margaret D. How can anyone ever know that somebody is immortal?

Dan. The point I was making is that these other people are talking of things far away whereas Gary is dealing with what is close.

Gary. If this is not relevant in everyday life I'm not sure what we are mucking around with it for. If this wasn't going to help me in my relationships ..I remember going to an Ian Gawler seminar in Melbourne and he hopped up to another person and they just hugged one another. I couldn't do that then. I thought it incredible. Hugging each other in public because that's not our cultural norm. That was cissy, etc. But no problem now. I think there is something here which is profound so check it out and if it is not relevant to you, well fine. But in my life as I'm living it some things have changed so profoundly. Mostly little things, changes that seem to make it worthwhile. The everyday things.

I don't buy the fact that someone can sit up on the mountain top and say I'm immortal, eight others have been immortal and you can be the tenth. With all this mayhem here and in our relationships the inner peace that comes with having order in your life is so profound that you don't need to look for anything else.

For a while Jo was so cynical about this. She said 'look at Krishnamurti, look at his life, he didn't have to feed himself and there were people looking after him. What would he know about the ordinary person and what they have to 'go through' so she was very doubtful that any of this could be relevant in an everyday sense. We went through a long period in which I said 'I have no commitment to you, I don't understand what that means any more and I'm not going to live that way'. Jo would say 'Then, we might not be together tomorrow?' I said 'correct, can you live like that?' She said 'I don't know', and it worried the heck out of her for a long time. I wasn't sure that was the way to live and she was saying you can't live like this, without commitment. The more you persist with what is without promising or guaranteeing anything there is a sanity that comes with it. It's not a moral issue. You don't behave yourself because you fear it is deceitful or immoral or feel guilty. There is an awareness that your inner peace will be disturbed. It has nothing to do with morality or conscience, it's a natural thing.

Alan. Why couldn't morality have arisen from that understanding. It has now become codified and everything but could not that be the original wellspring of what we call morality - the awareness that immorality is not of the holistic movement.

Gary. I think it's a left brain duality that we create what is good and what is bad. And every culture has a different version. Look at the Muslim situation and who determines what is good and bad?

Alan. I'm not saying that. You say there is an inner drive towards what you call 'good'.

Gary. Order.

Alan. Order. And that's a natural movement. And I'm saying isn't that possibly the original source of what later became all this religious, morality.....

Graeme. I've been very much aware today of the tremendous amount of energy required to construct all these bones and tendons and sinews of the self. Every time I'm listening to people it's fluctuating. If I'm me, Graeme, and I'm mentally responding to what somebody is saying I'm narrowed, shut down, nothing is flowing. I'm spending a tremendous amount of energy just holding this structure there. This utterly unnecessary structure. It has been fascinating for me because at times I've had this, you mentioned warmth, this warm flow just wonderful. And it's only when I've snapped back into being Graeme, into constructing Graeme, holding him up with this fantastic input of energy that I realise for a while I was experiencing no energy I was simply being. .What is at the very base, I don't know what it is.

Terry. Graeme. Can I ask you a question? We've sat in a few dialogues over at Greville St and I've noticed that you rarely say anything but I've also noticed that when you do speak I really connect with what you are saying and I feel there's a depth there but you don't speak superfluously. You've had a lot of experience with Rajneesh, and the Headless movement and so on. What value do you place on your experiences and maybe I'm imposing.....?

Graeme. Yes, I think they've all been of enormous value. Particularly the negative ones. I really can't judge, quantify them at all and I don't talk very much because as soon as something begins to formulate itself I get back into Graeme and see you as 'there'. It loses its value. I seem to need to be in a certain state to be able to say anything. There seems to be no point in saying many of the things that come up but occasionally I do. If I feel great pressure to say something it's usually an ego based thing which I think will be of no value to anyone or myself, whoever that is.

Gary. Graeme, what do you then think of the dialogue process? In terms of the value of people getting together and discussing these kinds of issues.

Graeme. Very much so. Most of the people in the dialogue groups are more articulate on that level than I am. When I have something to say I just say it when I don't I sit dead. Might be months before I say anything, but I enjoy it. I get a lot from it.

Gary. I'm intrigued with some of these gurus who seem to place themselves in a leadership position and create a hierarchy around themselves. Some of you here have had experiences of this process. I see that as inconsistent with an egalitarian understanding of reality. But I might be missing something and I'd like feedback on that issue.

Warwick. There's something enormously paradoxical - the one who has most clearly defined hierarchy that I've encountered is Andrew Cohen. He has a community and in the community there are lay students, serious students, formal and committed students. It's not written down anywhere but everyone is supposed to show a lot of respect to those who are higher in the hierarchy than they are. This means not questioning the 'senior's interpretation of Andrew's teaching and if you do you are told you are not really looking for truth are you? The paradox is that his teaching was exactly like you (addressing Gary)

Jo. Don't worry about that anyone. (Laughter)

Warwick. He used to say that what it is you are looking for is right here now and if you think you can, by some process, of self-transformation find it you are barking up the wrong tree. There is nothing you can do, the idea of a structure is absurd and self-defeating. This is when he first started. Now the structure is so strict and so watertight. - it's a spiritual fascism. If he were here I would be happy to tell him that. When I listen to him it is an extraordinary experience and you do feel that the mystery is being manifested in front of you. A lot of us have felt that. A lot of what he says is similar to what you (Gary) say. The truth is the truth and doesn't compromise and once you see it that's it. You can't just say 'Oh, how interesting' and pass on. It's a matter of giving your life for it. When he talks it's an amazing thing and when he acts through his community it is a horrible business and I don't understand it.

Terry. I had a chap working for me who is very high up in the Andrew Cohen group. I'm fond of this guy and we had some good dialogues. I found out that the bottom line was whatever Andrew said was it. I went over to their centre one night and watched a video. I couldn't get over the disrespect and bad manners he showed to his audience which were so passive and submissive. Yet, he said things in that video which really hit home for me

Jo. I find the inconsistencies in that obscene. And I found those inconsistencies in Krishnamurti that were totally unacceptable and rejected. Obviously, there's a lot of interesting stuff but I won't accept it. It's hypocritical and it's a business and those people are con men. I know that sounds cynical but the whole new age movement is a con. What we do is look for leaders, people to put on pedestals because we are basically transferring responsibility to someone else. Tell me what to do, how can I get there.....it's irresponsible to put anyone on a pedestal and accept anything they say without seriously looking at the whole deal. These people are ordinary human beings and they've got intelligent things to say but the package deal does not fit with me.

Margot. Well, you've got to be there. I sat and listened to Cohen and those of you who know me know I don't subscribe to gurus in any shape or form. He was an in your face Jew, he had a sense of humour, he was nice to me (Laughter) and when he said speak up it wasn't rude. Was it, Alan?

Alan. I think there is a big difference between the situation that we found ourselves in and the situation Warwick described. The one is where the devotees are gathered and....

Margot. I don't know about the devotees stuff.....

Alan. No, but that is the way Krishnamurti treated his staff at Rishi Valley. You see him on the tape dismissing some poor fellow... terribly rude. The authority goes to their head. They are respectful to you and me because we're fringe dwellers. Andrew was good and kind to us and I do have a great deal of respect for him as a teacher but the fact that he allows what Warwick has described to develop is a sign that says 'keep clear'.

Graeme. We used to make excuses for Rajneesh. That Sheila was running the show or any of the other machine gun-toting hierarchy and Rajneesh was this poor enlightened fellow that was above all of this but that wasn't true. So what if he was taking twenty seven different drugs a day - it was his responsibility and it was the natural culmination of that sort of venture. When someone says there is one way to get rid of your ego - give it to me I'll take as much as I can get - that's the end of it in my opinion.

Warwick. Andrew Cohen often says 'you can't just take my word for it - unless it's your own experience and you've sweated and worked for it in your own life, and worked it out for yourself it's nothing'. He says that over and over. But once you are a member of the community and you've done some sweating and contemplating and then experience some slight variation on the orthodoxy, the heavens fall in, you are

ridiculed and accused of wilfully trying to destroy this beautiful space that Andrew has created in order that the human spirit may flourish. You are not just dumb but wicked.

Gary. I don't want this to develop into a defaming session of all the gurus who have ever lived.

Q? Why not? (Laughter)

Gary. I am interested in people's experience of them because I've never been near one other than reading Krishnamurti's books.

Barry. It amazes me what comes out of a group of people sitting together with no authority. There is no need for any authority whatsoever.

Terry. On the question of keeping one another honest. What Barry says about no authority is dead right. You've been with us this weekend and for God's sake don't lose that quality - don't become an asshole. You might have broken free of the ego thing but I suspect there is the possibility of it sneaking up on you in a subtle way. Like Andrew Cohen. He's had this tremendous shift obviously but there is a contradiction there and that seems to be a possibility. I appreciate what you've done this weekend and your ordinariness. I just hope you keep that.

Gary. I had another insight about this business of leaders and followers. Shared insight like we are having creates leaders and no followers which is what Barry was saying. Then, when you get a bunch of leaders who aren't interested in following anyone else - that's a new society. That creates its own momentum and keeps everybody honest because when you are not interested in following anyone else that tendency to want to be the leader is immediately thwarted by the non-followers you have chosen to be with. As soon as someone starts to take off on an ego-trip - someone taps them on the shoulder and says 'this is going to your head Gary'. 'I've never seen you like this before, you used to be ...etc.'. I think if you are fair dinkum about your conditioning you live with that reality. It doesn't go away - it's in remission. You don't try to overcome it. If you try to overcome, it is just the conditioning trying to overcome itself and it's caught again, it's building itself. Being aware of it is the freedom that comes. And being aware that it can trap itself again at any moment is also important.

Warwick. As you train a dog to snarl at someone wearing a certain garment. We are also trained to react automatically. Are you saying that once the grooves are laid down in the brain there is no way really to wipe the slate clean?

Gary. Life is a moving moment to moment reality. Part of that reality I have discovered in myself is a conditioned entity. It's very stubborn and long standing. Because life can change any moment that reaction can happen any moment and to fight this experience is part of building another internal formula for stopping the reaction. So you can't win. There is no way out but there is a different way of living moment to moment which is the awareness state that includes being aware of the conditioning process.

Awareness observes the conditioning that you are. In observing it without judging it it is no longer part of the conditioning. When we evaluate and judge we strengthen the ego structure. When we stop evaluating we withdraw the energy which is feeding that process. To have any ideas about what might then happen, such as 'it's going to go away', is again that structure. That's the tricky bit about all this, as soon as you start thinking about the structure and whether it's going to go away or not, it's the structure again. The awareness factor which is living now and seeing the totality of reality is the key.

Gary. At any moment we have the freedom to observe, right now, do it. That's freedom. We haven't realised how powerful that is - and you are not wanting anything are you?

Dan. Freedom not to react.

Gary. A freedom not to react, yes. But you are not trying not to react. You are just observing what is happening totally in front of you. You are listening with all your awareness and, at this moment, someone could insult you without reaction. This is an amazing freedom.

Terry. If that is so and if I do react and my reaction is what is. And if I watch that I can see it happening and observe the hurt developing but even so I do regularly go with the reaction, even though I see what's going

on.

Gary. I know this might sound weird but the next time someone has a go at you, immediately, click your fingers, look away if necessary to develop an awareness of the totality. Then you see this verbal attack as such a small part of what is going on because you've experienced the picture. There's no need to respond any more.

Jo. That's all very well and good. The other side of it is the keeping each other honest thing. It's also important to take on board the information that's being fed to you. It's all very well to observe and not get involved but sometimes you get valuable, honest feedback. Some people are aggressive in getting it across, others are low key. So it's important to understand what's being said and not just separate yourself from it. We do have to keep ourselves honest.

Margaret D. Jo took the words out of my mouth but I wanted to say the same thing. In any relationship that's important to you, you've got to hear the words. And I could see that getting into a mind set where there 's just a mouth going yabber, yabber ,yabber could just be a defence. Maybe being able to accept another person's reality as their reality and not having to take it on as your reality.

Gary. I'm talking about a person who is deliberately trying too provoke you with an argumentative blast of venom. I'm not talking about constructive feedback.

Margaret G. It's not another person who keeps me honest. It's my own integrity, my own witnessing monitor, dialogue within that's the important thing and if I know my motive is right then when there's purity of intention then that's the way it is.

Dan. Yesterday you talked initially about death and dying to the ego and the ego dying. Then you also talked about dying each moment. You haven't said dying to each moment and when you just talked about when someone attacks you is that what you were saying?

Gary. No, not really. There is just an awareness that life is dying and being reborn all the time. You become part of that process if you just give up. If you give up your false identity what takes over is a dying and being reborn which you can't experience. Because there is no one there any more to exist as an entity living in a memory system, memory recedes and what's left is a tuning in to the fact that there's nothing that exists in a permanent way. Everything is coming and going all the time including this energy that's part of you but the concept of dying is replaced by a freshness that everything is happening new all the time. If we could really see what was happening with every atom and molecule right now we'd see a dancing rhythm of vibration and you realise you've been trying to hold on to a reality that's fixed and permanent. And there never was such a thing. So that's what I mean the dying and rebirth is an awareness that is coming and going and words become totally useless.....

Margaret G. And then there's the constantly experiencing universe. The concept that it's never without its motion and it is always in right and divine order every moment.

Enid. I've been thinking about you saying you are dying every minute and I've understood it differently. That every minute the ego is there and has to be slapped down. In fact, ego death. Not to go out and glory in something but....

Terry. But who is going to slap it down?

Enid. Well, that which is not the ego. And what that might be you can tell us.

Gary. I come back to this basic point and that once this has been tasted for what it is the questions of the conceptually conditioned brain become superfluous to living. The energy doesn't go into that pursuit any more. The energy goes into living and the awareness of living now. My "knowledge" brain was very interested in searching for some answers so it went on this journey. When it found that it was trapped inside its own 'self-made conceptual prison' it gave up on itself.

When the questioning stops and that whole mechanical process of thought based activity stops – even for a second, then what is IS. and it can't be anything else than what it is. And that becomes what you are. But to then try and pin it down, put a concept around it and file it away is a futile exercise. Who is trying to do

that? It's the made up entity again.

Dan. I'm glad you said that. When you say you can't say anything about it and that you can't do anything about it. That it's there. Andrew Cohen in one of his talks said that when you experience this then you come back and you think about it and somebody in the audience pointed out to him that Ramana Maharishi, who he looked up to, had said what you have said, that you don't do anything about it. It is its own frame of reference - it is itself. And he was pointed out to be wrong. And I know people here have said Andrew Cohen is very deep but I've found that he made very basic mistakes like that which indicated to me that he did not really know the truth.

Gary. I'm not theorising here. I'm trying to give you my own assessment of what this is. I don't know what these other people are on about and I can't know but I now know what my self structure has been up to. It's so aware of itself now that it keeps itself honest to some degree and it realises this otherness, that is, the miracle of life that will go on creating other forms and has its own momentum and intelligence. It doesn't matter what I do or want to do about it, or what any of us want to do as self-conscious individuals, it is going to ignore all that and sweep all that away in its own good time. So that's it. To try and put a name to it or put it in a conceptual box is totally outrageous - arrogant.

The meeting concluded with an expression of thanks to Gary and Jo.

Appendix - The 'Post-It' notes

At the opening of Session 1 Gary asked the participants to write down their reason for coming to the gathering or what they expected from the weekend on a 'Post-It' note which was then pinned to the wall. This is a record of those notes.

Hope to move beyond my surface self

I am,- 1)Curious, 2) Interested, 3) Sceptical

Curious, belonging.

To live truth without resistance

"Wake up"

Hope, Entertainment, Belonging, Enquiry

Finding myself - good or bad - spending time on it.

This is my main & pre-eminent concern

Being - Oneness

Excitement of journey into unknown mysteries

Freedom to explore my creativity - Joy, love & empathy for others - Love for myself

I want to be in the state Gary is in

The uses of adversity

I'm looking for a separate, conscious identity

To feel reality

Answers - Unload baggage - To bring balance

Letting go

How does this work in the real world

To see an alternative way of looking at life

Interest in being free

I do not know

Can freedom be communicated in a group

Group inspiration - To go beyond conditioning - to develop self

I am interested in finding out what is going on

If there is no self as a single, individual entity, is there any individual entity anywhere in the universe?

Search for my full potential and curiosity about other human beings

Life - other people - myself

Freedom to love life

Fellowship

Is this practice of incorporating the right side of the brain helpful for spiritual life?

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