

## **My current experience**

Chuck Kasmire

April 15, 2015

This represents my first effort to describe this experience. I'll update it as I find better ways to put it or if things change – as they tend to do from time to time...

The most obvious aspect of this experience is I think the immediacy and ever present sense of now. I cannot create a sense of me in the future - as I could in the past while daydreaming or planning. Planning is something I find almost painful and so I just tend to deal with what is going on right now - everything seems to work out and if it doesn't then it's over and gone anyway. Time is just right now - where as I used to experience the present as sort of a thin slice sandwiched between a long past and infinite future - now it is just the present - future and past have disappeared. This aspect along with others actually has a huge impact on the ability to hold a normal job – which I don't. Another aspect of this is that wherever I am and whatever I am doing – I am totally absorbed in that and forget about everything else I was doing before. That is, I can be making dinner, go outside to pick some lettuce, walk by the pruning shears, and start pruning the lemon tree. Once I am no longer involved with something or someone it is just gone from my awareness.

Another obvious one is that phenomena take on a surreal beauty - it is like I see into another dimension of them that has amazing depth - almost a consciousness like energy that permeates and saturates everything – there is a sense of simply melting or suffusing into this totality. This is all the time and requires no effort though the experience is most profound when I am in a natural setting - and less when in man-made structures – where this quality is attenuated.

I tend to be reclusive and am most happy when off in the woods by myself. I feel no need to socialize or seek out company. I experience no loneliness. I live quite simply and left to my own would simplify much more. I find no fascination with stuff or gadgets. I was not this way before.

I experience no depression, hatred, or jealousy – more generally speaking I no longer experience emotions in the sense that people think of them. Left to myself my day to day experience is something like delight/ease/contentment/happiness/spaciousness yet none of those words really describe this. I experience something like irritation or annoyance when having to deal with the world - what I mean by the world is the world of expectations, judgments, and such that impinge on me as I interact with people in some situations.

To expand on the above a bit: I think people will want to ask something like “So you don't have any angry thoughts at all?”. Thoughts in and of themselves are not emotions - to become an emotion they must be fed and nurtured – you have to believe in them. When the mind no longer picks them up and believes in them then they are just what they are. I will say more about this later.

I am like this sky like awareness that is informed by thoughts and senses which give me some kind of point of interaction with phenomena. Memories, habits, personality all continue as before yet now they simply give some sort of structure to my experience rather than a bases for judgment, manipulation, success, pride, or what have you that characterized the first 40 years of my life.

I have nice dreams. For the first few years it was mostly comedies. Past couple of years dreams have pretty much faded away - I just experience more a flow of odd thoughts - the makings of dreams I guess but they don't really materialize into dreams anymore. Awareness is continuous night and day -

though more subtle at night. I rest at night and seem to others asleep - yet awareness remains uninterrupted. In the morning there is no sense of waking-up or being startled - I just get up and continue on.

I see and experience what others do and yet I don't. It is as if an entire layer of what most people think reality is has simply fallen away and disappeared from my experience. And when this is gone, everything changes. I call this no-thingness because it is as if phenomena can no longer be mentally grasped or held as in the past. This is also the experience of the senses such as sights and sounds – the mind cannot fix on them – it is like trying to grasp water.

When there is no thingness - experience of the world changes tremendously. It is thingness that is the power behind our emotions. Thingness is a projection of our own mind onto phenomena. We paint phenomena with our perceptions and feelings - giving them a sense of reality. Sometimes angry thoughts for example come up - but they don't go anywhere at all - they just pass through and disappear. I don't experience emotions in the conventional sense. Emotions arise as a reaction to our perceptions of the world - the qualities we project onto phenomena. When this process of projection stops so do emotions as we normally think of them.

This experience is also one of being very exposed. Thingness separates us yet it also protects us (though actually imprisons us) - as the experience of self is a thingness so is the experience of other. I can be immersed in great peace or delight when alone - or, when with people that want me to engage with them in a way I don't want - when I feel sort of hemmed-in - there is irritation/annoyance. On the other hand, when that situation comes to an end then the irritation is gone instantly with no lingering residue at all. This is something like holding a microphone too close to a speaker and you get feed-back and when you move it away the feed back ceases. I can't really call it anger as it has no residual nor is it directed at anyone - just in response to a situation.

Body sensations, sickness, and pain:

When I went through that door and the world disappeared - so did the sense of a solid body. Since that time, it is just a cloud of energy with that becoming more subtle over the years. Because of this, my relation with pain has changed in that generally, I don't experience pain as a kind of solid pain as before but now as vibrating energy - this kind of energy is not necessarily painful or if it is - it is much attenuated but this may also be just because awareness doesn't grab onto it as before. The one exception to this seems back pain - it is pretty much the same as before – or maybe as I get older it just gets worse. This issue of pain creates kind of a funny situation: Over the last few years I have had occasion to visit doctors and of course they want to ask about symptoms such as pain - and I find myself having to first think "OK, if I was normal and had not gone through this experience would what I now feel be thought of as pain and if so how painful?". Sickness - a couple of very odd experiences regarding this: twice I have gone through an entire flu experience during a single night. As I mentioned above, there is a constant awareness even while sleeping (not sure if still qualifies as sleeping but people think I am asleep) so I can watch this stuff happen. It was like fast motion such that I went through all the sensations of getting the flu and going through the aches and pains and recovery - all in a very subtle awareness state during the night and then in the morning I am fine. The sensations are so real that both times I thought 'I am going to be really sick in the morning' yet when I got up there was no sign of it at all. I have also gotten regular everyday colds - the difference now is that in spite of coughing and hacking I find myself whistling or humming to myself - which gets to the sense of how mind or awareness has kind of peeled away from phenomena including the body and its sensations - remaining at ease.