

***The Translucent Revolution by Arjuna Ardagh***  
***From Chapter Two:***  
***Radical Awakening***

*Steve started to practice Zen meditation when he was nineteen. He loved to sit in silence. Although he had many big openings, brief tastes of silence, a voice would always say, "This isn't it, keep going." One night, getting ready for bed, he said to himself, "I'm ready." He was newly married, very happy in every area of his life. He didn't even know what it meant, just, "I'm ready." He went to sleep.*

*"I woke up in the morning and sat to meditate. I heard the sound of a bird outside. The question spontaneously arose, 'Who hears that sound?' It wasn't a question of my mind. It was as if something questioned itself. I'd never heard such a question. It just spoke itself. 'Who hears that sound?' "*

*"As soon as the question spoke itself, everything turned upside down and inside out. I was the bird, I was the hearing, and I was the sound. I was all just one thing. All of a sudden there was no more reason to sit, of course. I hopped up. 'I wonder if I am also the stove?' I asked myself. So I walked out into the living room and I looked at the stove. 'I'll be damned, I'm the stove, too!' I realized. And so it went. Like a child, very innocent. I didn't feel 'Wow I've arrived, I've got it, I'm enlightened.' None of that was in my mind. It was just the recognition.*

*"I opened the bedroom door. Annie was sleeping. And it was the same. 'There I am, I am sleeping.' And then there was the experience of love. I am that, too. I am that love. It was just a childlike investigation of 'I am everything,' but in a very innocent way. In no way spiritual, and in no way holy. In no way hierarchical, just very, very humbling.*

*"About a half an hour later, there was a further waking up, even out of that oneness. There was an awareness of... who knows what? There is something, or nothing, that exists when even an experience of oneness disappeared. Something that remains ever awake."*

Over the last twelve years, I have spoken to thousands of people who have had similar moments of a shift of consciousness. These moments have changed who they know themselves to be and the nature of the world around them. While some are notable teachers and writers, the majority are ordinary people leading everyday lives. These breakthrough moments may or may not lead to a sustained transformation, but their increased frequency is remarkable.

We will call such a shift in awareness a "radical awakening." It is the moment when you taste reality outside the limiting confines of the mind, when you know yourself to be limitless, much bigger than, yet containing the body, beyond birth and death, eternally free. Despite the activity of thought and feeling, you know yourself to be the silence experiencing that movement. It is the moment when you can intuit the real potential of life, free from the incessant mental machinery of complaint and ambition. A radical awakening often releases a tidal wave of creativity and generosity of spirit, a natural impulse to serve and contribute. In

these moments, we know that love is who we are, not something we sometimes feel.

Such an acute glimpse of freedom from the mind is a huge moment. We realize that almost all our suffering is caused by our addiction to untested beliefs. We can, at least temporarily, let go of our preoccupation with fear and desire and have direct contact with what is real, what is present. A radical awakening rips the veil of our preoccupation with a personal life, often so much that we acquire ongoing access to reality as peaceful and infinite, even in the midst of external noise.

Stephan was driving on the freeway when the veil lifted:

*Suddenly everything shifted. I was this vast expanse of space, 'Stephan' was in this space; infinitely expanded. Energy was rushing through the body. I had never had powerful energy experiences before. It was a feeling of tremendous empowerment. Everything since then has been contained in that awakening. That initial moment was like a seed. Everything else has grown from that. In the last twelve years it has been like I've been catching up to that awakening and fully experiencing it. There is just this present moment with nobody here. Now it is no longer an experience; it just is, ordinary.*

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