

*The Translucent Revolution by Arjuna Ardagh
From the Introduction.*

Robert had it all: the beach house in Malibu, the latest SUV, designer clothes, the right connections. He also had a small drinking problem, and a few personal difficulties to resolve at home. He had made his money in California real estate, and when the market crashed in the late eighties, so did Robert. He went from a net worth of millions to bankruptcy. He lost the house, many of his friends, and his confidence. By 1992 he was thinking about killing himself.

Late one evening, he was out taking a walk. He stopped and stood motionless, his mood blacker than the night. He had a thought, a simple thought. "I am finished," his mind announced.

He still has trouble explaining what happened next.

"I was overcome by a sense of relief," he reports. "A sudden feeling of inexpressible freedom. I even began to laugh out loud. My body was filled with happiness, as if I was suddenly getting a joke I'd been missing. For the first time I was feeling really good for no reason at all. I was totally here, in this moment. I could feel the trees around me, and hear the sounds without having to listen to thoughts telling me things needed to be different in some way. Everything was being experienced, but the 'me' was gone."

He went home and made love with his wife for the first time in seven months.

Later, Robert described his experience to a friend, a student of Eastern philosophies and meditation practices. Robert's epiphany, it seemed, had an obscure eastern name. But his friend warned him it would pass, that he had tasted a fleeting glimpse of a state only great yogis could attain.

"It didn't pass, though," Robert says today. "I still have ups and downs, of course. Things still come up with my wife. My back still aches when it rains. But this mysterious sense of well-being I found that night, this feeling of lightness for no reason, has stayed with me for more than ten years. I couldn't get rid of it if I tried. In fact, it only seems to grow deeper and deeper. It is not happening to me, it is who I am."

A similar same thing happened to Mary, while she was working the early shift at a vegetable-canning factory. Stephan was driving on the freeway, while Jacquelyn's awakening came in a hospital, after she gave birth to her third child. Michael went through a similar shift serving an eighty-seven-month prison sentence in a cell with thirty-two other inmates, and Douglas was hiking in the Himalayas. Some have come to this awakening through contact with a teacher, some from entering the depths of despair and coming out the other side. Some have woken up after years of meditation. For others this awakening has come out of the blue, for no apparent reason at all.

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