



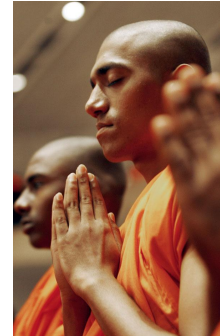
ACCEPTANCE AND THE KEY TO CONSCIOUSNESS

By **Phil Golding**

(Excerpt from 'Real Healing, Real Awakening')

There is an old truism that goes, **“what we resist will persist”**. This aligns to what Buddha taught when he gave the world his “Four Noble Truths” which are as follows:

- 1. The reality of suffering**
- 2. The nature of suffering**
- 3. The answer to overcoming suffering**
- 4. The path of overcoming suffering—The Noble Eightfold Path**



The first teaching, “The reality of suffering” refers to the fact that everything in the physical world that is dependent on physical properties is impermanent. For example, your body will grow old and die, if it does not die before that through misadventure or disease. You will inevitably lose all your loved ones, whether they leave you or they die. Most of your material possessions that you may own throughout your life will wear out and have to be replaced. Those that don’t wear out, such as diamonds or gold, you will have to leave behind when you die anyway—that’s if they don’t get stolen before that. Even your identity—who you think you are—will change many times over the course of your lifetime, sometimes quiet dramatically. There is nothing in this physical world that is not shifting, changing, dying or being born, and physical pain is an inevitable part of these experiences of physical life. Everything is in a state of flux. In other words; everything is impermanent.

The insecurities that impermanence causes in the human mind must be dealt with. We must accept and work with the fact that human beings get confused and outright deluded. We place too many expectations on each other in a futile attempt to avoid the insecurity caused by impermanence. Conflict is the inevitable result. Unless you are Buddha or some other enlightened master, that means you too.

Due to this fear and confusion, we think we are being threatened or attacked, when most of the time we are not. In reality, we are thinking that we *might* be threatened or attacked and try to act first to protect ourselves from what we think other people are thinking, or what we think they might do. As a result, we threaten and attack others based on what we think they are thinking. If

you think all this is very confusing, you are right!

All these misperceptions, however, are just our own fear-based imagination running off—our negative conditioning spinning out of control. The same goes for the meaning we place on events, big and small, that conclude that we are being threatened or attacked. At least ninety percent of all this drama is being played out in our imagination. The most tragic thing is that we then base our actions on these imaginary conclusions. This is the cause of all the injustice in the world today and in every preceding age. The world is over-run and literally run by our unrestrained egos, turbo charged with fear-based imaginations. These delusions continually trigger fight-or-flight instinctual reactions that pull us down into an “every man for himself” state of mind.

Sound depressing? It shouldn't be. These are just plain facts. These are simply the conditions of this world. This is the reality of suffering. The reason that Buddha pointed them out is because we spend a huge amount of effort in our lifetime being frightened of, denying or getting angry over the reality of life as a human being and this is where the problem lies. Our resistance to the facts of life points to the second teaching, “The nature of suffering”. We feel frightened, powerless and angry. We are in conflict with reality.

As the story goes, Buddha began his life on top of the social heap with abundant material wealth and princely status, largely shielded from the suffering that humanity generally experiences. When he was confronted with poverty, old age and death he was shaken to the core. This experience awoke in him deep compassion and a burning desire to solve this dilemma of life. He wasn't moved to solve the situation by building better roads and housing. He could see that this was just a band-aide. He wanted to get to the very core of the issue. He was intent on solving the very nature of suffering in the human mind itself.

He first looked for the answers to suffering by becoming a renunciant, which meant that he left behind all his worldly possessions, even the clothes on his back, and joined a band of holy men who practised strenuous forms of yoga in an attempt to reach enlightenment.

After a number of years, he became a very high yogi, but he still hadn't reached his goal. This just made him even more determined, and while fasting and meditating for a long period, he had a profound revelation. He realised that earlier in his life he was trapped by his attachments to his wealth and privilege. He also realised that he was equally trapped by his rejection of his worldly life. Everything suddenly made sense to him. He could see that the human mind suffers because it becomes trapped in a nexus of attachment/clinging/greed on the one hand and aversion/hate/rejection on the other. He saw that this dynamic covered all areas of human affairs. We try to possess and consume what brings us comfort and call this love, and run away from, or be in conflict with, what may cause pain and discomfort and call this bad and thus hate it. He realised that the human mind becomes lost in confusion as a result. He saw that the mind further causes its own suffering by projecting this confusion onto all that is experienced until the confusion appears to be reality and reality itself seems unreal. Buddha realised the nature of suffering.

The cause of our suffering that I gave at the beginning of this chapter (chapter 2), regarding ourselves as unworthy because we are human, ties right in here. The self-condemning belief that we are unworthy because we are human creates within us a feeling of emptiness and a sense of separation from the Universal Life-Force of Unconditional Love. It is a belief that flows from a mind

that does not know the true nature of itself. Perceiving itself to be separated from the Life-Force, our conscious-awareness becomes mere ego and tries to survive by seeking fulfilment from the impermanent and confused physical world and the inevitable result is being trapped in the nexus of attachment and aversion.

Buddha realised that the answer was to pull his conscious-awareness free of all this attachment and aversion and instead rest in the still silence in between as the detached observer of himself and life. In this still silence he found himself at one with the supreme consciousness of the Universal Life-Force that is behind and within all things. His awareness and spiritual training was so powerful at this stage of his journey that this revelation was enough to place his mind in perfect alignment with Universal Consciousness and thus render his mind impervious to all suffering. In other words, he became enlightened, free. In the process, he realised the true nature of himself. He fully awakened to the fact that he was not his vulnerable, mortal human-self but his indestructible Higher-Self. As this Higher-Self, he realised that he simply could not be threatened in any way by the physical world. His human mind, with its attachments and aversions, no longer had an effect on him.

The answer to overcoming suffering was therefore revealed to him.

The fourth teaching is about how he went about teaching these truths all those years ago. The 5 Step Process is a simplified version of this type of teaching.

Jesus revealed that he understood the deeper meaning of impermanence as well when he said, “build your house on rock, not on shifting sand.”¹ Your “house” meaning your mind that you live in. By “rock” he meant the permanent laws of consciousness, Unconditional Love and Total Personal Responsibility. By “shifting sand” he meant the impermanent physical world.

The beautiful statement in the Bible that says, “Be still and know that I am God,”² speaks of this inner-stillness that Buddha, as well as Christ, literally became.

This brings us back to, “what you resist will persist”. You can expand this a little by saying that if you resist, get upset over and argue against the reality that appears in front of you, you will suffer. It is like arguing with the tide or the weather. It is ultimately futile. The tide is going to come in whether you agree with it or not. The sun will shine or it will rain. You have no control over it. You just have to work with it. Suffering, therefore, is regarded as a mental condition that is self-induced due to confusion about the nature of reality.

Physical pain is not suffering as such. A pain in the leg, for example, is just that—a pain in the leg. The suffering is caused by not accepting and working constructively with the pain in the leg. Added to the pain in the leg, therefore, is fear and anger, for example. The natural grief surrounding the loss of a loved one is not suffering. Not accepting that your loved one is gone and believing that you can’t live without that person is the cause of the suffering. Even facing death is not suffering, because to the Higher-Self, death has no real meaning. The passing away of the physical body is just another experience on its journey of ever expanding consciousness.

Of course the ego is in conflict with this because it can’t relate to itself beyond the physical body/mind and what it can possess with that physical body/mind. Peace cannot be found in the ego. It can only be found in the conscious-awareness of the Higher-Self through the practise of

¹ The Bible, International Standard Version (1984). Matthew 7:24-27.

² The Bible, King James Version. Cambridge Edition. [Psalm 46](#).

acceptance.

The various conditions in which we live, simply make up our environment. It is what we think about our environment, the meanings we place on it and as a result, what we feel about it and do with it, that determines our suffering or our peace of mind. It also determines whether we act destructively or constructively.

The answer comes with the understanding that, on the level of the human fear-based mind, we know nothing about the reality of things. Our pain and fear confirms this. Only on the level of conscious-awareness we see true reality with any real clarity. Only when we let go of the aversions and attachments that blind us to the reality of what is around us, and even to the nature of our own mind-states, do we start to slip out of the nexus of our confused habitual unconscious mental programs. Only then can we transcend into a state of conscious-awareness. Only at this level of consciousness does true insight come that leads to real solutions, such as working to improve the way we communicate with a loved one, for example.

Your relationship with the world at large points to your relationship with your own mind. Are you *being* the mind that is lost in its confusions, or are you working toward *being* conscious-awareness that is endeavouring to rise above and take care of the mind, using the tried and proven principles of Unconditional Love and Total Personal Responsibility? Are you accepting full responsibility to Love yourself unconditionally and in so doing, setting yourself free from your futile struggle with the world, as well as those immediately around you? Are you recognising the true nature of yourself?

The key that frees you from suffering is within YOU.