

Russel Williams Open Meeting: 1st September 2008, 3 Grosvenor Square, Sale, Manchester.

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- P3 Talk about doing things that are 'you', just whilst there are a few people in.
- You know I do a bit of counseling work, and I also do a bit of work with St. X Hospice and it is with members of staff, and it is to give them an opportunity to ofload and talk.
- RW Yes they need that.
- P3 I got offered today the possibility of providing that service to the person who coordinates spiritual care there, and part of me was really drawn to it and part of me thought umm, I will sound that out with RW
- RW Why not. It could well be, you'll probably find it's more deeply spiritual than you think it is. Than they think it is too.
- (Laughs)*
- Yes, I don't see that there's anything wrong with that provided you're happy getting along with it.
- P3 Yes I'm very interested in doing it.
- RW I would say go ahead. But, only if you feel you want to do it.
- P3 Yes I do.
- RW And I think you'd do well on that.
- P3 Ah OK.
- RW Very well indeed. It would certainly improve the standards of those people as well. Give them a lot more confidence in what they are doing, because let's face it, most people in that state are pretty shaky.
- Good, excellent.
- P3 Yes. I would not be advice giving.
- RW The point really about the whole thing is that, as long as they can feel there's somewhere that can be trusted to unload feeling.
- P3 Yes.
- RW That can give them an enormous help.
- P3 Yes. I can go with that one.
- RW As I've said so many times in the past, one of the best things you can ever do to help people is have a listening ear, without criticism. Just to keep it flowing.
- <Break>

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P3 I don't know if it is relevant, but I had another 'kitchen' experience. I was preparing food and I suddenly had the experience of knowing what it would feel like to be preparing the last food that I had.

RW Mmm...

P3 It wasn't a thought, it was just a...

RW Just a knowing?

P3 A knowing, I just wondered if it had any kind of prophetic quality maybe, where the economy is going.

(Laughs)

P3 It was a very stark, kind of "That's it, there's no more!"

P4 It wasn't in the sense of knowing, these were your last moments.

P3 No, no, it wasn't that. It was more I was still alive.

The supply of food we take very much for granted actually. There was no more. There was also a sense in it that actually I have lived my life and I'm not going to go out there and hassle or hunt, I'm just going to leave that to the...

...I don't know if it was just imagination. It arose out of nowhere, you know.

It felt as though I would be in that position one day

RW It's a possibility, comes to us all. Comes a time when you don't need it anyway.

P3 Food?

RW Yes. Like breath.

P3 Are you saying there comes a point when you don't need food?

RW That is possible, yes.

P3 I heard that suggested by someone else this week.

RW If you open up sufficiently to the spirit side of life then you don't need anywhere near the food that you think you do, and gradually that will terminate.

It's sustained purely on the air oxygenating the blood.

It's rare but - not exactly uncommon.

I don't know how it works but - it does.

To me it's a different story though, I mean that's a very obvious one, as an illustration, but when you come to weight it up, look at it in a different direction, then you'll probably find it's true.

It's already happened, to you, but not necessarily food in that respect.

Shall we say, that all those conditioned aspects that supported ego, or food to the ego, no longer there. No ego. Does that make sense?

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P3 Partly, but the bits of the ego that is there...

RW Yes but it's so negligible it doesn't really matter does it. It's just a name as you might say.

P3 I can see it. It's losing its battle.

RW That's right.

P3 It's still there but...

RW Yes of course and it will be until you die actually.

It has to have a label in the world, and various habits there that appear to support it. But they have no true volition, as you might say, because they are not being fed. I think that's what it's really talking about.

P3 I knew I didn't really have to bother, you know? That I'd leave that to other people.

RW Mmm... When you live in the world and you're dealing with other people in the world, you've got to appear as they are. In a sense you need to eat, take food. But in a sense it's the food at this other end that is being depleted.

But unless you are seen as another person as such, you're not going to get anywhere with anybody. You have to have that façade.

<Break>

P7 The Buddhist centre in X, I used to do yoga classes there and knew some of the people there, and there was a woman there, ordained into the order, and she was saying something like how she likes it best when it is just Buddhists; a comment like "it is good when it is with other Buddhists", something like that.

There was something in me that really did not like her saying that. The idea that we just want to be with people like us. It seems like that is a mistake, to want a nice comfortable little world where you are not going to be threatened.

P1 A world in which you can learn nothing.

P7 Exactly

I think there is a bit of a tendency in certain circles, like a ghetto mentality, where you just want to be with other people like yourselves.

On the positive side it's good to have like-minded people around, you need that, but this idea, she wanted to have separation.

RW Really there is a lot of kiddology goes with that. Kidding themselves that things are in the perfect state.

It's not what Buddhism is about, it's the opposite.

Recognizing the fact that they are always in this world of conditions, that are the conditions that produce dissatisfaction. It's only by looking at that all the time that you can withdraw from it. Otherwise you're covering it up and hiding it. You shouldn't be hiding it.

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I mean lets face it, this is where Buddhism, to an extent, is quite different to anything else. It recognizes that this is a world of suffering and delusion, and to keep your eye on it so you don't get affected by it, in other words walk away from it backwards so that you've got an eye on it, not to cover it up so it's not there, everything is glossy and fine. Because it's not. I mean that's total deceit that is.

P9 What about the other people as well. If you think you've found something that's making you happy, and is the answer, and you are keeping it to yourself.

RW Well let's face it, one can be happy for a little while and then lose it. This is happening all the time. This is part of the suffering, because it doesn't last. The only way one can be truly happy is to be totally contented by stepping outside of it, so that you're not suffering it all the time.

So contentedness is the true happiness, not a mere moment of elation, and that can be achieved even whilst one is watching suffering.

Surprise, surprise.

P9 How?

RW I was talking to X here a little earlier on, and if you take anything in this world, show me something, somewhere, that doesn't suffer?

Take a tree, or a plant, initially lovely, nice and green when it's young. As it gets a little more mature, it decays from the inside out doesn't it?

So everything, because it's changing all the time, the potential to change, it can't stay as it is, and if you want happiness you have to stay as you are.

But you can't. There's a simple little question of time. I get older. Things get worn out, so on and so forth, and of course all the hazards you meet as you go through life: illness, breakages, emotional situations, they are all there.

But suppose you could step aside and look at it, which you can. You could still see it, but you don't have to suffer it. That is the difference.

This is what Buddhism is about: to release yourself from those conditions altogether, by not obeying the rules that go with them, instead set up other rules that don't necessarily reject them, but sort of untie them. This is what it is all about.

Oh it can be done there's no doubt about that. But it's not an easy one.

Nobody said that. Quite the opposite in actual fact. Whilst it may be simple, it is most likely, and I mean most likely, to be the most difficult thing anyone ever attempted in the whole history of the world.

If that be so why should I bother? It's worth trying because it is there. As I say, it is only simple, if you learn the simplicity of it you can do it.

P9 Can you achieve that by living in the now?

RW By living more carefully, consciously aware rather than indulging in thinking about it.

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When you become consciously aware of the very nature of everything you're dealing with you'll find there's something greatly in common with everything and within that commonality we find we have release.

<Break>

RW Really and truly speaking the whole thing rests on learning to be a little more wise in the way we go about things, that's all.

To examine whatever it is we do, not so much the nature of what the doing itself, but the manner in which we go about it. See if we can find a different approach, to achieve the same ends. One which produces less fuss and bother.

P9 So that it's more comfortable.

RW So if you're more comfortable with things, you don't suffer quite the dissatisfaction, and it's just a question of that. Because we've done it a hundred times this way, it doesn't mean we've got to keep on doing it. We might try one hundred and one and do it slightly differently and find it's much more satisfactory.

So it's just a case of readjusting one's life as one goes along by observing where the faults lie, not where the perfection lies. Faults need readjusting, perfection doesn't. So if you stick with an old bit of (*inaudible*) you're going to miss the faults.

So look for the faults and get them right, and you'll get the perfections, it's that simple really.

Fundamentally this is what the Buddha taught, in actual fact, to look where these things are going wrong in your life and endeavor, not to change everything you do necessarily, but to see whether it's worthwhile or not, continuing in the manner in which you do it.

You've still got to live your life and probably do the same jobs over and over again. But can you have a different attitude to it, and approach to it, that will bring you a great deal satisfaction. You can!

So this is where wisdom comes in you see, by being more clearly aware of the nature of what's going on, put it right. That's wisdom.

But there needs to be a little more attention in the moment of doing rather than doing something now and thinking of something further on. So it's bringing the mind back to the now. Then you are aware of where it is going wrong, but otherwise you'll probably miss it every time.

Simple. But it takes a bit of training to learn to give your whole mind here, here, here, here, and not then while you're here.

P7 When I went on the meditation retreat, that I was on a few weeks ago, I really noticed myself thinking ahead all the time.

RW Well the point about it is, if you're engaged in thought, you're not attending what you're doing in the moment. Half your mind is here and half there, and it doesn't see things clearly. When you learn to be consciously aware there is very little thought goes on. Very very little indeed.

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People think you're got to be thinking all the time, you haven't. You're better off not thinking. Only then do you begin to fully experience things.

P7 You know, I'd find myself planning for something that afternoon or the next day, not that there was anything to do, but thinking "I'm going to go and do this," or "when I have finished the retreat I will make that phone call," making these plans. I thought, "You can think about that when the time comes to do it."

RW That's right. Well put it this way. If you had to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning, you set your mind and say "I will be up at 5 o'clock" and you go to sleep. You don't think about it all the time do you, but you wake up at 5 o'clock. Why can't you deal with other things in the same way? Most of our thought is repetition, it's not necessary. If we could wipe out the 99 out of the 100, are there gaps we'd have to experience life?

Life is in experiencing, not in thinking. So it enriches your life, rather than detracts from it. But this "I've got to think I've got to think", you don't have to think.

You know.

You know far more than you think you do, and thinking takes you away from the knowing.

You'd be surprised at how much you already know but you don't realize. Because you never look at it completely.

Life's a very strange thing. It's all clouded with the delusions that we hold about things, both in concept and in thought.

<Break>

P10 You know you say you sit and try to calm your mind and not think of anything and meditate, but it goes off and starts doing all these things. It is like an entertainment, it is hard to sit because something seems to want to be entertained all the time.

RW Do you really need to think so much? Is there so many things you can do without thinking, just recognizing.

You came in that door a little while ago, you looked around, you didn't think "I think I'll go and sit there", you just did. Its just a recognition. It didn't take any thinking.

P10 If you try to sit in meditation the mind does want to be entertained.

RW Ah well, the think box has been taught to think. In actual fact, as far as I'm concerned, it's a misuse of the brain.

We've been trained to misuse it and because it's been trained it just keeps on doing it. Regardless of whether we want to or not. Most of the thoughts you think you didn't think. They just appear, is that true?

Most thoughts appear rather than you deliberately think them. Are they necessary? Not really are they?

Because there's a habit thing there, that's all. Suppose we could clear away the extraneous thoughts that we never really bother about, and just stick to the ones we really want, we'd have huge gaps in our thought.

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Because it's so used, it's like an engine rolling on without being switched off, even when it's not in use. The engine just keeps on going. There's no purpose, it's just wearing itself out. Our brains are like that.

We've been taught to think and they just think, think, think, for no reason at all, other than when we deliberately choose to think.

It doesn't need to. You can be aware and enjoy your experiences in life without thought, and I mean this quite seriously.

Perhaps you might get a moment or so now and then to prove the point. Try some time: give your full attention to somebody, when you're dealing with them, just look, just see them and listen to what they have to say rather than what you want to hear. You find something totally different.

P10 But that's easier than sitting quiet, trying to not think of anything.

RW Well it's one thing, it's not an easy thing to sit quiet, but the point about it is, if you're going to sit quiet, you've still got to be active in other directions. You can be aware of hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, feeling. These are your sense perceptions, and these are quite frankly your total experiences in life, through your sense receptors not the thinking.

P10 If you're in a quiet room though, where there's no stimuli?

RW Well everything is thought in a consciousness. There's no feeling in thought, unless you cover it up through emotion which give you greater delusion.

I will give you a little exercise to try anyway, a little question to find the answer to. A simple little question.

What is feeling?

I don't mean who, I mean what is the action of feel?

When you can answer that in one word, I'll know you've got it.

Not easy is it? But this is fundamental to it all, and grossly, physical feeling is the easiest to deal with. Obviously, it's the coarsest. Seeing take a little more finesse, and smell does of course, this is where it's fundamental.

So perhaps if you look at it from that point of view, you might find it easier to find.

You see, when you find out what feeling is, you'll begin for the first time to understand what consciousness is. The two are so related.

P11 Is there any connection between that and being sensible? Being aware of your senses and reacting...

RW Look, it's a very obvious thing when you see it.

Absolute. It doesn't require any discussion whatsoever.

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RW Here's a point. This has reminded me of the very thing we are talking about in feeling, I'm just taking in a bite of this stuff. It's a good thing to try that. Use a bit of food or something, get the flavour in your mouth and the texture there.

Just sense it, and in the moment of sensing it, is that experience, as you might say, a question of me doing it, experiencing it, or is it consciousness in its own right?

Touch something. Feel it. It could be hot, cold, hard, soft, whatever, that's not what the feeling is about.

The contact of experience, it's a sense of union takes place consciously, and what is union, but non separateness. True?

The experience here now, it isn't a question of 'my finger' touching 'that bit of wood'. That's a concept/idea, but the actual experience, as such, is something in its own right. That is a moment of true consciousness.

Because of that, because of that, I mean I could quite inadvertently touch something, not even know I'm reaching for it, and I become conscious of that. Would I become conscious of it if I didn't touch it? Or see it, or hear it?

Generally speaking, no, I wouldn't. So is it possible that, that contact, that form of consciousness, contact, is then transmitted to "Oh, you've touched something."

"You" have touched.

"I" ?

Is this me?

No it's not.

It may be my arm, or my fingers, but it isn't me.

"I" arise with the thought. There wasn't any "I" until that transmitted and was identified. But when you identify it, it isn't the experience that you had in the first place. Is it?

Have a think about it, have a think about it, the very process. You see one thing leads to another.

Does it hurt, or is it reasonable? It all goes through the computer as you might say. Is it acceptable or is it not? And very very rapidly, because if it's comfortable it can stay there. If it's not, get rid of it.

All these things go on, without a single thought taking place. But as it's going on it's, "Ooh I have done that!" You didn't do it. You weren't there to do it. There was an experience to which you became attached.

By attachment then, ego, "I". So it's condition producing ego, not ego producing conditions.

So much of doing is done for you rather than by you.

Quite surprising!

Everybody thinks they live their own life, and they're all wrong.

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They don't.

You share other people's lives, very definitely.

Have you not been in a situation where someone's irritation rubs off on you and you become irritated? Somebody becomes angry, you respond with anger.

Whose life are you living, that you have to pick up somebody else vibes and make them your own?

And sometimes as a result of this, you resent it, perhaps for a week, before you put it down. Is it not true? It is isn't it?

When you become aware that this is happening, let it go. You can do it within minutes, or even less, when you're aware that this is happening. It's not mine, leave it be.

But you don't, you carry on, so most of your life is lived on other people, by other people, by the vibes they're putting out, and you accepting them as your own.

The same would go with a lot of the thoughts you think, you pick them up and keep them as your own. But did you really think it out yourself, to see whether they are reasonable or not? Quite often no.

Most of the country is done by this, they are kidded to think they thought of something because somebody suggested it.

You play games with people like this. You put ideas into their heads and wait for the results to come and then let them think that they thought it up in the first place.

I know, I've done it. I don't do it nowadays.

P11 Most wives have done it.

(Laughter)

P2 It's not only what people are thinking, it's absolutely everything. It's also the weather, the space that you're in.

RW Yes. Well you know, very well, on a dark cloudy day you go down. On a nice sunny day, you lift up.

Air pressure, everything. So realistically we are living according to the conditions around us. We are not living our personal lives. It's only when you begin to doubt these things and seek answers to them that you begin to release yourselves from these conditions and can be independent for the first time.

Only because you have to be aware in the moment, all of the time, or at least most of the time, if not all of it.

P2 There's a switch when that happens where you feel as though, instead of going out, you're actually receiving what's happening around you. Impressions, and even thoughts.

You were saying you cannot go in a room and stop thinking. But if you are aware of what is arising, then you are not "thought". So it does not really matter if the mind is thinking anyway, because you are kind of somewhere else.

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So whatever comes up does not over power you, or you don't identify with, and it tends to be quite weak and fade away.

It is as though you are in a place where you are receiving what is happening from moment to moment, and there is no sense of having to make anything happen. It is all going to happen anyway, because it is not a result of you, you are a result of it, and there is a kind of fascination and interest that arises to see what you are going to see from moment to moment as it changes.

So it is like a funny reversal.

RW Yes

P10 So if you are not overwhelmed by emotional states.

P2 If the emotions have arisen there is almost nothing you can do, it is conditioning and thought process, and five minutes later you wake up. You think – “Oh, OK. I won't do that again.”

If the emotions are churning, quite disturbed for whatever reason, then it is really difficult to do, but that's part of practice.

<Break>

RW I think one of the things to recognize here is the fact that, in most of these areas, consciousness recognizes things in it's own right, and has nothing to do with 'thought identity' what-so-ever.

The problem is, thought gets in the way, quite often.

I'm quite sure you meet certain situations and something arises within, which you're vaguely aware of, and instinctively sort of guide you in one particular direction but your thought mind puts you in the opposite direction which you usually follow.

This is mainly because the consciousness is being clouded by your thoughts and anticipation. If that anticipation were not there, the consciousness would observe that arising and know its true nature, and follow it, and not be distorted.

This is the difference between conscious action, which is spontaneous and thought action which in fact is not spontaneous, but is volitional. The strength of which would apply to the degree of emotion by which you get involved in it.

So we have two different things here. Ultimately, but certainly not initially, hopefully, you will come to realize that consciousness *is* what you are, rather than “I am conscious.”

You say, “I am conscious” because I identify this as opposed to that. But always in duality. Consciousness never sees anything (in) duality, it only sees it in a co-joining of experience.

It doesn't see things in duality *at all*.

Any experience that it has *is* the complete thing, and not half of it.

But that's what *mind - full - ness* really is, it is full of the experience of the moment and nothing else *what – so – ever*.

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Right mindful, that's why the cultivation, in actual fact, of emptiness of mind, and I mean emptiness, no thought, no pre-conceived ideas, or any judgement whatsoever, meets situation, becomes the whole situation and responds according to that, rather than what we think at all. Then you find it gets along with it beautifully, because it recognizes from it's own consciousness, which it is, is of the same as the consciousness in the experience it has brought together to itself.

So in that sense there is only unity and never duality. So you have a totally different world altogether.

Everything at all times is, I won't say satisfactory, but certainly not unsatisfactory. Satisfactory is the wrong word, it would imply somebody being satisfied, but consciousness is what it is and doesn't need that.

But that is truly what you are, consciousness. Not "I am conscious."

It's something to ponder, something to ponder.

There's so many ways that we can begin to appreciate this, but they are very subtle little ways. But they need to be recognized.

In a sense, you're sitting over there, you over there, all these people sitting around, you don't feel out of order, you feel quite at home here, why?

There's nothing to be fearful (of), is there? Of any kind. No apprehension. Beginning to see things, perhaps that you don't know, and you think "maybe known, maybe not." Not uncomfortable. Is it?

Do you feel within yourself that there's anything untoward in any person in this room?

Now, it's a good fair question. I don't mind if you find there is, it's OK by me.

But lets be honest. 100% honest if we can, because only then can we really begin to get anywhere.

Now the real feel about it is, is a sense of wellbeing. Would you not agree?

And you feel at home within that wellbeing. Yes?

So somehow or another you are opening yourself to the 'vibes' of everybody in this room, willingly. Not a bad idea really.

There is an immense amount of good will there going. But it is only through the absorption of these 'vibes' that you feel comfortable, not by anything you think, because some of the things which are said, you may not appreciate altogether at all.

But you still feel at ease. It doesn't threaten you in anyway.

Look at the nature of what I'm talking about here. Not so much the content, but feel and sense that nature. So it's absorbed as part of you. Now that part of you is part of everybody else in this room. So it's a shared form of consciousness that we're living with at the present moment.

Would you not agree? In a very strange way, not altogether separate, but a part of.

Now this is the thing that we need to look at. As I say, this consciousness business, it doesn't have any words, but it certainly does have feeling.

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Either welcomely or unwelcomely. Or perhaps even neutral.

But feeling is where the communication really lies. If I feel comfortable, I can be open to you. If I don't, I've got to close myself up and separate myself.

Is this not true?

Which is the better, do you feel better this way, or this way?

It's simple isn't it? Do I feel better open in this company, or do I feel closed and separate myself? Obviously it is open isn't it?

No effort to that, you just relax and let it be, because there's no harm coming. If anything, quite the opposite, a great deal of well-being.

But it's in feeling as much as thinking we've got to look at this. Because this is where consciousness lies. Consciousness never thinks, it doesn't have a brain.

"Oh", now here's a thing. Consciousness hasn't got a brain, it can't think. How does it know? Through feeling. In the gross and the subtlest areas and the infinitely fine areas. Yes it can know all these things, without a single thought or identification. Of course that would need a thought. To identify.

Now if I am consciousness how is it possible that I can think? Because I have a brain.

The snag is, when I think, I'm not being conscious of anything else. So I'm cutting myself off from this very nature of consciousness of which I truly am.

Dare I suggest to you, that in every aspect of our consciousness in terms of recognition or perspective, take eyes for instance, seeing. Eyes see only colour, do they? No. They may register as colour, yes. They only pick up very very subtle colour vibrations, every colour has a different vibration, but the eye picks those up, from the most subtle to the grossest colour of any part of the whole spectrum.

So there's feeling, in that subtle area and when you come to think about it, you can take any colour you wish, whatever you fancy, and just think of the number of gradations you have from the very palest to the darkest, you'll probably find there's hundreds, and the same would apply to every colour in the spectrum, and those beyond it that we can see. But the eye can register those things, even if the mind can't. So it covers a broad scope.

Then you've got sound, hearing. This is a vibration on the eardrum. It gives you sound. It is another vibration. It is felt. So hearing is feeling as well. You take taste, that's again feeling, smell, there's a very faint smell, it's a feeling, and physically, well obviously that is feeling, so every aspect that we use, of sense perception, is all of feeling and all of the conscious nature of feeling, but not necessarily of identification.

Unless, whatever it is sensed, is transmitted through the emotion, and how I see it separately as a self entity, then I identify it as separate from myself.

But consciousness is the actual experience, so how could it be separate from these things?

Any little thought, even a little thought, play with the idea, "What is consciousness?"

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Now, you know in your own experience what you see, hear, taste, touch, smell, and it's been common in your life, there are other aspects that have been common in your life as well.

We begin to ask, "If this body is conscious, obviously it can only be conscious of that which is within, as you might say, earshot, or length of sight that we can see, or whatever."

Is that not reasonable?

But hold on, how is it possible that we can recognize, particularly people we are fond of and know well, that their condition can be known to us when they may be a thousand miles away?

How does consciousness do that, if it were confined to this body?

Most people have experienced that sort of thing at some time in their lives. So we know it does happen. But if it were confined only to these bodies, we couldn't see that far, we couldn't hear that far, and yet we know instinctively.

How do we know? Because consciousness is a very great aspect, it is more than us. We are only a pinprick in the middle of it, and if we can gain access to that true consciousness by dropping our clinging to this separateness, then we can get access to an awful lot more.

This is where we begin to realize the very nature of what *life* is, because you don't know it through thinking.

All the while you think, you don't live. So all the while you're thinking, you've not enjoying your life. You can't, because you're not experiencing it, except a little bit here and there.

When you do things perhaps in a physical way, and you have a direct physical contact, yes you are living, provided you are aware of it, but if your mind's somewhere else, you're not even aware of that.

But that's the only time you truly live, is in your experience, and that is through consciousness.

Ponder that. See if it's not true.

So learn to experience, wherever it's possible to do so, and that's almost all the time, and you'll begin to see that the thinking process is getting in the way, and you'll not use it so (much).

It doesn't mean to say, by any means, that we want to destroy intellect. Quite the opposite. We want to make it better. But to chuck out all the rubbish that it clings to, so that we do think when necessary, and when it's not necessary to think we just experience life as it comes.

We don't determine life. We meet it as it comes. If we determine it by our own separateness, we'll get it wrong. Accept it as it comes to us, then we'll get it right.

Just ponder these things. I don't ask you to believe anything, just ponder it. See whether it has any reality or not within your life. You don't have to believe, nobody

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says that at all. But it's well to open your mind and see things a little more clearly in what you do, and that doesn't require thinking, it requires experiencing.

In a sense, I mean, if you put a nail in the wall and hang a picture up, and you bash your thumb you'd know what hurt was. But would you think it that way. Could you produce it in thought? You couldn't. But that is experiencing, hard part of life I'll grant you, but I'm using it deliberately in this sense, because it's painful and it's something that you mostly know. You do get hurt from time to time in a physical sense and there's no way you can think it up. Even to record it by thought, there's no way to make it the same. No matter how you think.

Experience is unique and always new. There is nothing old. Experience is always new. Brand new, that's one of the better parts of it. Always new, all the time. Nothing old hat.

Interesting is that. Little nuances make everything different.

You can say the same thing over and over again, different company, and each time you do it differently. You won't do the same thing.

I used to work for shows a long time ago, and one of the things we learned there was, there were never any two shows alike. Even though it might be the same thing year after year, there were never two shows alike. Because you never knew those little nuances that went differently.

So it is with life. So everything is always new. Even though it may have a sort of set rule to it.

Ponder it. Comfortably.

But don't get too serious for goodness sake because all you do is go into depression. Light heartedly, jocularly if possible. Make a joke of it then you'll find you absorb things better.

All the while you strive you close your mind. All the while you open you can absorb, and in the absorption you come to know. Without any words, but sense feel.

Is it not true? Learn to recognize this.

Be joyful in the experiencing of life, and you find you can..., there's the answer to your question. Just enjoy as you go through the experience, not the thinking about it, and you find you can.

It just means that little bit more open, open.

P8 You said about spontaneity last week as well.

RW Just be more open. If you need help, the help will be there. Don't be afraid it won't, it will be always be there. If you ever need it, it will be there, provided you can be open and not closed.

<Break>

RW There's a point to consider too, giving and taking.

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Here you've demonstrated tonight for one thing, and not just from me but from others as well, that behind everything that's been said, there's a very great element of goodwill.

I think you'll agree with that, and whoever said it, it's spread to everybody ... as they've absorbed it and re – spread it, it has come back multiplied.

One of me and many of you. The same for anybody else, one of them and many others. As you expand in wellbeing, all the others reflect like mirrors back to you what you are giving. If I became angry, how long before you'd all be angry and come back at me?

Imagine it.

You see by giving out is what comes back.

Remember that the world repays with what you put into it. So it isn't what you put in, it's the attitude with which you put in that matters most of all.

This you might well say is the basis of morality. Yes.

What's good for this is good for everybody else. So my action towards you, isn't so much you, as what I give, and to some degree it helps you, in the same way you in turn help me. It's a two-way job. It's not a one way.

Just remember that. If you're going to live peacefully in the world, you've got to keep giving peace into the world. If you want agitation, give agitation and you'll get it.

Trouble is with peace it takes a little longer sometimes. But when it does move, it moves permanently, gradually you can achieve it. But you have to start putting it into practice from the word go, what you want, but be very careful, what you think you want.

I would suggest that before we go any further along life's path, ask yourself one simple little question; it's one I asked myself many many years ago, "What do I really want out of life?"

Now that is a very good question to ask yourself, deep down, not just superficially. What do I really want out of life?

It's no good asking for a Rolls Royce or something like that. You'll probably get it, but it won't do any good. You're probably stuck with the expense of the darn thing.

I suggest in actual fact, that what everybody really wants is a sense of comfort within.

"I wish I had a comfortable life."

"I wish I had comfortable emotion."

Comfortable, yes. This is the prime motivation, because it's so basic, "I want to be comfortable" , and you're not!

So whatever you do, and you get ideas, 'I have got to be better than this,' that's why people have careers and go chasing after this, that, or something else, because "it will make me feel better." Better is not comfortable necessarily.

Look to the prime question – comfortable not better.

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People feel comfortable running 10 thousand miles just for the sake of it and feel that's better, "I've done it." But it's taken a lot of stress and strain that sort of thing. But comfort wise that's a different thing, but what you want doesn't necessarily produce that.

"The way I'm going about things, is it conducive to being more comfortable? What prevents me being comfortable?"

Now we're getting to it. "What prevents me being comfortable?" Not, "what I need to have to make me comfortable?", but "what prevents me having it?" Now this is a good one, and what you find is, you look in physical terms obviously, because that's the obvious one at the moment.

There's too much tension. "If I could only release the tensions", relax a bit, I would be much more..."

Now we're getting on the right track.

This is the physical part. Well it also helps with the emotional and mental part because you can't do one without the others. So you have to learn to relax emotionally and mentally as well.

So, when we become totally relaxed, could there be any thought? And I don't mean going to sleep.

But you will be comfortable without thought, without any tension, and you'll find the body will be better off for it. Because without the tension, the blood flow will go round and circulate in the body so much better. Your digestive process will go so much easier. Nervous system will operate so much better. Everything will operate better, because there's no restriction anywhere because there's free flow.

Now, since there's nothing in the way, we now begin to find we have a totality of consciousness. Not thought necessarily, "I am this," but a consciousness flow, and what you find is, within the nature of that true consciousness, you get a flow of well being coming though, which has to emanate into the world.

This is where you begin to see that consciousness is not bound by the conditions of the physical world, which is constant change and chaos, but the opposite. It is of a peaceful well-being nature of a loving kind, of union and not of separation.

And this is where, for the first time, you begin to find your true nature, which is consciousness. Not physical at all.

You only became attached to the physical thing, and by it got deluded, by the training it received, as a thought process.

You've been fooled all these years, fooled.

Mine was too, for a long time. But gradually it penetrated and found differently.

Yes, the body is still subject to illness or whatever, to that degree, because it's subject to injury, which can happen. But mainly it's not likely to if one is mindful most of the time.

Accidents only occur through not being aware. So they are not really accidents, they're careless. If one is aware of where one puts one's feet or touches this or that,

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one would not have accidents. But because one is thinking of other things whilst doing something other than what they're thinking, they are not aware, therefore careless. Things happen.

The body is within that world, but consciousness never ever was. It sees things in a different dimension altogether. That's why it can be at peace even in a troubled world.

It is not of the nature of the physical world.

That's why we can enjoy this sense of well-being, because that truly is the nature of consciousness, not of thought, or physicality, even though we feel it within the physical body.

Something to think about, ponder, to see whether it be true or false, that's all I ask.

See, whether it's true or false. I don't mind if you find it false. Reject it then. But if you find its true, make use of it.

Worthwhile, isn't it?

We're all linked up in some strange fashion through consciousness. Consciousness is the prime being. There is only one, but there are many manifestations of it, and that is your life essence. That's strange.

Goodness gracious me. Well have we anything else on the board tonight.

P1 Is there anything else?

(Laughter)

RW The main thing isn't so much dealing with words, thoughts or ideas, but beginning to feel at ease and at peace within yourself and with those around you. Out of that you'll find everything will arise of itself. Just trust it, it will happen.

P3 Its interesting Russel, as you mentioned it, I've been examining tensions within the body...

RW Good.

P3 ... just letting them go.

RW It's surprising how different it becomes isn't it?

P3 Very much, and people often find it hard to understand an empty mind...

RW Yes.

P3 ... but if you actually go through the body and release all the inherent tensions ...

RW Then you get an empty mind...

P3 ... but what you first taste is an empty body.

RW Yes.

P3 You know, something you normally think of as being solid and full of sensations.

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RW Yes, it's almost as if it's hollow isn't it.

P3 It's as if it's invisible. So it's easy to understand an empty mind when you experience an empty body.

RW Yes, surprising isn't it?

P3 It's still there ...

RW Yes but the point about it is, an empty mind is more comfortable isn't it. Because it's not got to worry about this or that or try to understand anything, does it? It just knows.

Without a single word of understanding, it knows.

That's the beauty of it. Just to be aware, is to know.

And within the knowing, of course, it is never separate. It is within the whole experience, as such.

Always whole, never separate.

<Break>

P1 You were talking about accidents, on occasions I have been aware of operating slightly clumsily...

RW Yes.

P1 ... and I realize that it's when the ego area of mind is operational that that clumsiness occurs...

RW Yes.

P1 When the open mind operates, there's no clumsiness.

RW That's right.

P1 Because there is a different pace of activity.

RW That's right.

P1 When the mind is open it operates at a very different pace...

RW That's right.

P1 ... and you have to accept that.

RW Oh yes. It's no longer me doing it, it's just happening.

P1 It has its own pace ...

RW ... and it's attuned to everything it meets ...

P1 ... and it acts appropriately.

RW Yes that's right. It doesn't think "I'm going to do this." It merely sees the need and meets the need. But before that it always thought, "I must do this because of that."

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But it never really saw the need of the moment. But in that appropriate sense it just... there's the need and here we respond, and that's it.

P1 But in watching that, it has reminded me on a number of occasions of the things you've talked about, about handling things carefully.

RW Oh yes, very much.

P1 Because that takes you straight into that.

RW Yes. Well it brings about relaxation to start with, to some degree, controlled relaxation in the sense of being gentle to, rather than aggressive. It's giving a loving condition through the hands which means its got to be quiet and gentle.

It's surprising.

I know it sounds daft to many people but take a thing like this, a bit of wood, (*taps arm of chair*), door knob over there, regard them as if they were living entities and had feeling.

I mean this quite seriously. Handle them as though if you hit them too hard it would hurt. They're a bit lonely; they might need a bit of caressing. I mean this quite seriously.

Try it.

When you polish your table, don't go too hard, gently caress it. Handle a doorknob as if it was eggshells – you squeeze too hard, it will break.

Gently. Gently.

Handle your pots when you wash up after a meal, gently, gently, as if they had feelings. Love them, love them.

What you find is you get peace of mind within a few seconds. Yes, just like that. Peace of mind comes with that and when it comes to the objects you are dealing with, they last a lot longer and don't need replacing so it makes your pocket books a bit better off as well.

So in all directions, you gain. Both physically and spiritually, and your mind becomes much more at ease. Simple little thing like that, that's all it takes. If you give love, you'll get it back.

Everybody who wants a bit of love in their life, they expect life to give it to them. It won't until you give it out first. Give it to things and nobody else knows what you're doing except you. So you won't be making a fool of yourself. And it's easier to do to things like this than it is to people, to practice on. Give it a try, see what happens.

If you get the right attitude, I guarantee within minutes you'll find a peacefulness within, both here and there. Other people have tried it and it works on them as well. So you won't be alone. You couldn't have a easier practice than that could you?

Whatever it is you have to handle, handle with care. In that way, see what happens.

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It'll help your thinking process because it will slow it down somewhat and give your mind a bit of ease to get started up again. To come back afresh as you might say. When it needs to think.

You want to find a life peaceful, this is the way to do it. Give peace and love into the world and the world will return it. Even in your little world that you live, and gradually from there it will spread still further, like ripples on a pond.

Don't expect the world to give anything that you're not ready to give to it.

It won't. It can't.

You are your own creator. You create the nature of the world in which you live.

Yes you, each one. Now you can make it a paradise or you can make it a hell, or everything in between.

It's up to you to decide what you want.

I know which way I wanted to go and I did it, I know it works. By giving it, it came back. Ultimately to take over altogether. So it is worthwhile. It's that simple too, you don't have to understand anything in the head at all. Just feel... feel... feel.

The only truth you will ever know is your own personal experience. You can't tell anybody else's. It's not in words, it's not in books, it's not anywhere. It's in your own experience.

Learn to experience properly, and the truth will free you from all your ills. Surprise, once you realize it.

Strange isn't it, that you can be in control; to right to the point of letting go altogether to allow the consciousness to take over, and that is the greater aspect of true self, the "I am" exceeds all things, and you are that, in truth.

RW Anyway, the time has moved on. Time to call it a day I think.