

BASIC AWAKENING

by Ric Weinman, published in *More to Life, Winter, 2012*

The term I use for someone's initial awakening, for the first level of awakening, is *Basic Awakening*. People have all kinds of experiences that they like to think are awakenings, but most aren't. Most of those experiences are just expanded ego states, and most of the rest are simply a momentary taste of something deeper, and then the moment passes. A quick rule of thumb: if the description of the experience has the word 'expanded' in it, then most likely it was an expanded ego state. The overriding quality of a true awakening experience would be most aligned with the word 'empty', in the sense that it feels empty of a familiar sense of self. And what has become empty stays empty, if it is a true awakening and not just a taste.

To bring this out of the conceptual realm, let's try this: notice if you can that if you follow your inner sense of *I*, it actually centers in your heart. Your mind is filled with *I*-thoughts, but your basic sense of *I* tracks to your heart. Since the heart holds the basic sense of identity, it is no coincidence that your basic sense of *I* is going to sit there. That is your basic identity. And with Basic Awakening, that *I* is going to disappear. That's the definition of Basic Awakening: the *I* in the heart disappears.

But what is this *I*-sense, really? It is ultimately rooted in the pure identity of the One, but through the process of entering into the experience of separation, it has become merged into an identity of personal self, of being a separate someone, an *individual I*. So, the personal sense of *I* is not simply a concept, but something more fundamental. And it is held in place by a particular construct of consciousness, focused in the center of the heart. Because we are not truly separate individuals—we are the One, the ground of Being Itself—this construct of consciousness that holds our sense of *I* in place *veils* us from our true nature. Therefore, I call this consciousness structure our *Core Veil*. Basic Awakening is losing your Core Veil.

The experience created by your Core Veil is like an ongoing dream, and as long as you are dreaming, you take this for Reality. But the Core Veil is just a construct in consciousness and can be broken down when you are 'ripe'. When this happens, the particular *I*-sense and identity it has created disappears with it. Because there is a sense of coming out of a very deep dream, the most common term for this is 'awakening'. But because there are still deeper levels of the dream to awaken out of, and because this is the first movement, I call this *Basic Awakening*. Although the spiritual fantasy is that this is the end of the road, it is only the beginning. With Basic Awakening, you have awakened out of the false identity you believed you were, but you have not yet begun to awaken to your true reality. That comes later, as a deeper awakening—if you keep going deeper. With the loss of your Core Veil and your core sense of *I*, it can seem as if everything has changed. And yet the awakening doesn't eliminate the old mental and emotional conditioning, so it will still be there (even if there is no one, no *I*, inside of it), which can make it seem as if everything is still the same. This typically creates confusion, at the very least, and fear and a sense of loss may also arise. Sometimes, though, there is laughter. Sometimes there is a sense of relaxed beingness arising from the awakesness. And often it is all of these, sequentially or even simultaneously. This is not what we expect. Awakening is never what we expect.

There are a great many spiritual fantasies about what will be experienced with Basic Awakening, and they almost always are very wide of the reality. Our expectations for later awakenings miss the boat as well. At the very least, the ego always expects it will be there in the middle of the awakening, to enjoy it or get something else from it, but that can't happen, because awakening by definition is a no-I zone. Awakening is what arises when *I* disappears. Whatever we expect to *get* from awakening, we should be prepared for the fact that the focus of awakening is about what we *lose*. Awakening is a *losing* game. In fact, if you traverse the whole path, you don't get a bigger, better Self; you lose your self entirely, and in that space of no-self, the Truth of what you truly are emerges.

Welcome to the wonderful, confusing world of awakening.

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