

Awake!

Handbook of Awakening

Kim Katami

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Contents

Endorsements **3**

Foreword **4**

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Awakening **7**

How to Become Awakened, The Two-Part Formula **9**

Dialogues:

Case 1: Timothy, incl. Written Account and Photos **12**

Case 2: Jason, incl. Written Account **26**

Case 3: Dan, incl. Written Account **41**

Case 4: Wolfgang, incl. Written Account and Photos **50**

Case 5: Mike **59**

Case 6: Mark **73**

Case 7: Jonathan **77**

Case 8: Shane **88**

Case 9: Matthew **89**

Case 10: Trevor **94**

Case 11: Hannah **96**

Case 12: Tom **102**

Case 13: Monica **110**

Case 14: Pauline **111**

Case 15: Kim **115**

Pointers to Awakening **116**

CHAPTER 2

A Look at Awakening and the Two-Part Formula **122**

Analysis of Attainments **128**

Photographic Analysis: Before and After Photos **130**

Awakening Statistics **136**

About the Author **138**

Endorsements

*"It would be nice if someone would come along
and find a method by which people could awaken.
Even the Buddha couldn't do that."*

*"I rejoice that Kim is enabling so many practitioners
to get awakened in such an approachable manner.
May the Dharma flourish for the benefit of all beings!"*

- Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo

*"As far as I know at present, the Two-Part Formula is as old and timeless as the
teachings of the Buddha. The steps are a simple and experiential way of combining
shamatha and vipashyana to reveal a timeless fact: that there never was any real ego: I,
me or myself. Calling it awakening is fine. According to what I have learned from Chokyi
Nyima Rinpoche, he calls it dakme tokpey sherab, the insight of seeing egolessness, in the
context of personal identity. It corresponds to the awakening of a hinayana
practitioner."*

- Erik Pema Kunsang

Foreword

It was a beautiful winter's morning when my friend and I were chopping wood together. We had been given this work assignment as our daily work at the Japanese zen monastery where we were training. As we chopped the wood and put it in stacks, we were discussing things related to our daily life at the temple.

I remember clearly the moment when we started talking about practice. My friend, who was a few years senior to me, told me that he had recently passed a *koan* and that the master of the monastery, a very renowned zen master, had given him his second koan. Koans are particular zen riddles that cannot be answered or solved through logical reasoning. Furthermore, passing a koan indicates that the practitioner has experienced *kensho*, insight or awakening into the True Self. As my friend was telling me this, with calm confidence, I had a hard time believing it. It was a shock, and it had not happened to me. I had read both ancient and modern stories of people who got awakened, but I had never personally known anyone who had been awakened. I assumed, as most do, that our master was awakened and much more, but he was a Japanese zen-superman who had been raised in a temple since he has a child. He was not 'normal' in that sense.

So, when my friend told me this, I was shocked. As he told me this, I looked sharply into his eyes and weighed his words. Could he be awakened? Did he look somehow different? Perhaps I did notice some difference. It was hard for me to believe that he had awakened because he was just an ordinary American guy who had stayed in the monastery for a few years. He really didn't seem like a superman, quite the opposite actually, and yet somehow he had awakened. I couldn't believe it!

Ever since I had started practicing myself I had wanted this, but for some reason awakening had never happened. I was sitting 8 hours or more everyday but still nothing. It was very frustrating. At the time, I actually didn't even know exactly what awakening was, but I intuitively knew it was something very important. I wanted to put an end to my existential confusion, and worked very hard for it, following all the instructions to the letter, day and night.

A decade later, in 2014, I had left zen buddhism and had done tantric practices for several years. By that time my view of *dharma* practice had changed significantly from the zen days. I had awakened myself a few years earlier through a certain mantra and had continued my daily practice, so I was now a lot more experienced.

One day in late March I got an email from a man, Alan, who asked for my help. He told me that he had meditated as hard as I had for *over 30 years* but still hadn't awakened. He had even been a monk for 12 years.

As I read his email I intuitively knew I could help him. I really wanted to because I knew from my own experience how significant the shift was. I closed the computer and sat down to contemplate what would be the best way to help him awaken. And then all of a sudden I understood how to do it. The Two-Part Formula just popped into my mind.

The next day I emailed him the instructions and we started a dialogue. Alan was to use the technique as a basis for his awakening practice and to report to me every day for further pointers and instructions. We worked on it together and four days later Alan awakened. His description of what had happened to him was almost identical to many classic stories, like those found in Philip Kapleau's 'Three Pillars of Zen' or Eckhart Tolle's 'Power of Now'.

Also, Alan's eyes and his whole face had lit up and became somehow radiant, as if he had just returned from the best holiday ever. This could be seen from the photographs taken before and after awakening, just like it can be seen in person.

That people would awaken with the Two-Part Formula was hard for me to believe at first. I had been raised in the ancient traditions where it seemed that awakenings were not common, but quite rare, so I was doubtful. It took 30-40 guidances after the first awakening for me to gain confidence that the technique really worked, regardless who they were or whether they had a practice history or not. Now after well over 100 guidances, with a success rate of 98%, I am fully convinced that the Two-Part Formula works for the vast majority of those who try it sincerely. Just like regular exercise makes one's physical condition better, so does the Two-Part Formula wake people up.

I feel obliged to share it with anyone who is interested in getting awakened and through that, finding relief from their existential confusion. Awakening matters, it really does, as has been taught by generations of yogis, mystics and teachers of most spiritual traditions.

My sincere wish is that the knowledge and instruction found in this book spreads far and wide, for the benefit of seekers and dharma practitioners. Thank you.

- Kim Katami

Chapter 1

Introduction to Awakening

Awakening is known and given emphasis in many spiritual, yogic or psychological methods around the world. In hinduism and buddhism, which I am most familiar with, awakening is known by names such as *kensho* (lit. seeing one's true nature), *semngo tropa*, *dakme tokpey sherab*, *shinjin*, *stream entry* (p. *sotapanna*), *insight* or *awakening*. Also christian and sufi mystics discuss awakening. Interestingly there are also people who awakened without following any tradition or didn't engage in any type of training. I think it is correct to say that awakening is universal, common to all people, regardless of their race, culture, religion, gender or social status.

The Purpose of Awakening

Various spiritual teachings talk about *self-delusion*. The idea is that self, our sense of self, is the cause of our unsatisfactoriness and confusion. Through contemplation it is easy to understand that life is marked with suffering (skt. *dukkha*) because we believe in our assumptions, ideas and thoughts. This basic unsatisfactoriness is created in our own mind by our sense of being a separate self, a separate entity apart from others, encased inside our bodies. The sense of self comes with many wants, desires and preferences which when blindly followed fortify the sense of self and make us even more alienated. This mental-emotional process, subconsciously reacting to arising conditions of life, makes us tied into a knot of sorts. Everytime we have a self-based reaction, whether that of anger or jealousy for example, the knot becomes tighter. A person who is highly self-absorbed cannot but be also highly unsatisfied, plagued by narrowminded and selfish ways of thinking. This is suffering according to buddhism. Awakening or insight dissolves the central part of the self, hence causing a sense of ease, unobstructedness and freedom. The purpose of awakening is to liberate from the sense of self.

How the Self is Constructed

The sense of self (skt. *atman*) is multifaceted. The delusion of self appears in three main forms. These are:

1. subject-self; I or me,
2. object-selves; thoughts and emotions and
3. ground of self (skt. *alaya vijnana*, tib. *kun gzhi*) which is the basis of the first two

When we meet something unpleasant, for example, we become frustrated or angry. We would say, 'I am angry because the petrol ran out'. In another situation, meeting something pleasant, we might say, 'I am happy because I have a new car'. In both examples, as we can see the conceptualisation begins with an 'I' or 'Me'. The I-thought is always at the root of the reactions that people have day and night. Not being aware of this taking place, it goes unnoticed and yet it has a great (negative) effect on our lives because it makes us bound by narrowminded and shortsighted ideas. 'I' or 'Me' at the root of all these mind functions is what I call *subject-self*.

The subject-self is a distinct part of our psyche. If we reflect on it, we quickly come to see that this 'I' or 'Me' is like some being we have assumed to exist behind our eyes, sitting somewhere there inside our heads. It is like this me-entity is in charge of our life, looking out through the eyes, hearing through the ears, living through the body, making all the

decisions and judgements. The sense of me-ness is often loaded with self-importance and pettiness.

Often when teaching, I ask people to point to their sense of subject-self with a finger. After some reflection, they always, without exception, end up pointing to between their eyes. When they realise this basic assumption, they always feel silly, even dumbfounded or cheated by their own ignorance. If not before, it is usually at this point when people realise how important the matter of awakening is. Most do not want to postpone fixing this problem not even for a day. They want to get right down to it.

Most people have the sense of subject-self. Religions give explanations why this happens but here it is sufficient to say that it simply accumulates with age, along with the rest of the habits, likes and dislikes. It doesn't really matter how it was constructed. It is more important to consider how it can be deconstructed (skt. vipashyana).

The key to release from existential confusion is to deconstruct what has been unnoticeably accumulated. The instructions and materials found in this book teach you how to accomplish that through a technique called The Two-Part Formula, which specifically addresses the subject-self and hence strikes at the very core of the selfing mechanism.

Awakening is not an accident anymore

Our present spiritual culture largely does not know a definite and certain way for getting awakened. It has been stated by exponents of various traditions that awakening is like an accident and that it happens randomly when some requirements are met. This claim has always seemed weird to me, as it is a fact that awakening is universal. I discuss the mechanism of awakening in detail in Chapter 2, under 'A Look at Awakening and the Two-Part Formula'.

What most traditions and teachers around the world are unaware of, is that very specific and distinctive instructions for generating awakening do exist. Within some lineages of *dzogchen* and *mahamudra* in Tibet, such instructions have been taught for hundreds of years. However because these instructions are traditionally received under strict vow of secrecy, they have been at the reach of a very limited number of people and haven't spread out to the world.

There is much incorrect and very little correct information about awakening available. It is clear that awakening, call it what you will, is universal, not particular to any religion or tradition, and deals with the basic problem of existence for *human beings*, not only practitioners of this or that tradition. I hope this book helps in creating a new culture of awakening for the benefit of all beings.

How to Become Awakened

The Two-Part Formula is a simple and effective method for bringing about a permanent awakening, that is, a dropping off of the illusion of self. It's about being aware of one's sense of self and observing it systematically. Applying the Two-Part Formula doesn't differ from the way a scientist carries out a careful examination. It's about examining the mind, looking into one's own psychology in a particular way.

When you really immerse yourself in applying the Two-Part Formula, it can bring about awakening. Awakening happens on the level of your mind and is a permanent state, not a temporary experience. The Two-Part Formula is a spiritual-psychological technique, which can produce a significant shift in one's mind and thereby in one's life as well. It's about illuminating the most significant cause of dissatisfaction from one's mind stream. Overall, awakening is a central theme in all time-tested spiritual traditions.

The Two-Part Formula deals directly with the primary factor in the existential dilemma and is easy to apply. However, it is useful to have one-on-one contact with an awakened person or a teacher who understands first-hand what awakening is, and who can therefore provide helpful pointers. That being said, when awakening happens, it dissolves the problem. So one simple indication of awakening is that you no longer need to seek or find anything because the seeker has dissolved away. Most authentic dharma teachers should be able to tell you if a shift has happened or not.

The Two-Part Formula

Before you read on, I have one request: Drop all pre-assumptions you may have concerning awakening and spirituality. Forget that you ever practiced meditation, read spiritual books or received spiritual teachings. Have a totally open mind. Start afresh without baggage. This is essential.

Steps of the Two-Part Formula:

1. First, sit down and relax thoroughly. Take a comfortable seat with eyes open or closed. Then scan through your body with attention and release tensions from anywhere you notice them. Scanning the body means that you look, feel and listen into the body space and scan around it as if using a flashlight in a dark house. When some tension is found and is allowed to release, pay close attention to what is found in the area of that released tension. Look closely. What you find is mere open space. After you notice this move on to the next tension, release it, and again notice the open inner space in the place of the former tension. After you have done this for several minutes with some sharpness of attention, what happens is that the small locations of open space become connected and a greater open space becomes revealed. Notice and enjoy that spaciousness. Marinate in it for several minutes.
2. This mode is called the 'I-less mode' because in this spaciousness there is no 'me' or 'you'. As you are in that experience of spaciousness, see if 'me' or 'I' can be found there. Check whether 'I' is there or not. Check left and right. Check front and back. Check up and down. Check the centre as well. Can you find the sense of me-ness

from this spacious mind? If you cannot find it, the recognition of the I-less mode is correct. If you are not sure, then do the exercise again and look with sharper attention. In this mode, when you listen to a sound or look at some external object in front of you, there is no 'hearer' or 'seer' but rather there is only 'hearing' and 'seeing'. It is important to recognise this selfless mode well. It is not difficult, you just need to apply some attention and relax properly.

3. Say to yourself 'I, I, I', 'me, me, me' or 'mine, mine, mine', aloud or silently, with conviction, so that you mean it. Repeat the affirmation 2-3 times, and then for a moment wait for sensations to arise. How does it feel? Do you feel some tensions arising? Do you feel some lack of freedom when you reinforce the I-thought? How does the I-thought feel? You have consciously brought up the sense of me-ness and are now consciously experiencing how your sense of me-ness feels, perhaps for the first time in your life. The subject, me, now becomes an object that can be observed. Make note of how me-ness feels all over your body, in the chest and the head.
4. Pick the strongest of these sensations. Observe it more closely, just like a scientist does when looking at an organism under a microscope, not to change anything but just to study it with great interest. Consciously look and feel the sensation and simply by experiencing it, make observations about it. How is the I-thought? Does it have a shape? What's the size of it? Where is it located? Is this experience of me-ness the truth of you? Is that the real 'you' or not? Look carefully and make observations. After some time, the I-sensations disappear. If at that point you still feel calm and not agitated, you can do another set of affirmations. If on the other hand you feel a bit restless, look into that restlessness to find out what's causing it. When these sensations eventually subside, the spaciousness again becomes revealed and so the formula begins again from the first step.

The idea is that you keep comparing the two modes until the sense of me-ness wears out. At some point when the affirmation no longer sticks, and the affirmation, no matter how intensely you say it, just echoes into empty space, awakening has more than likely taken place. At this point, you can feel a special kind of openness and elation, lightness and unobstructedness, when compared with before.

When practicing the Two-Part Formula, it is best to sit down and process the two modes silently 1-2-3 times a day for 20-30 minutes at each sitting. These sitting sessions are essential, along with processing during activities. In activities, whatever they may be, make note of how the two modes alternate. Also, when we are around others the 'I' can come up unexpectedly and strongly because we are used to reacting to other people from our sense of 'I'. Make use of these moments to look into the self or 'I' with awareness.

Selfless Spacious Mind

The first mode of the formula demonstrates that when the tensions are thoroughly released the landscape of your mind also changes. Thoughts disappear, emotions settle and a mind-space like a cloudless sky becomes revealed in your mind. Eyes see and the ears hear but the 'I', 'me', or experiencer is not there. There's no 'I' or owner in direct perception. There's only a spacious state of mind, a spacious inner state. You have to find this out for yourself. Anyone can do it. Even a short glimpse of a second or two into that spaciousness gives you something to work with. It doesn't have to be perfectly spacious and clear all the time. Just do your best. The selfless, spacious mind can be briefly recognised in any situation,

whether in silence or during activities, whether alone or amongst other people. Take this spaciousness just as it is. All questions dissolve in that space if you just relax enough. Don't add anything to this state.

If you look for a self, me, from the spacious mind, can you find it? If you find some sensation in your bodymind, look and investigate what it is. If the assumption is that your self, your sense of me-ness, is a real constant being, a stable entity, then surely it should be found somewhere, but is it there all the time? 'Me' or 'I' cannot be found in any other way except as a thought in your mind, which comes and goes according to likes and dislikes. When your mind is clear and peaceful, 'you' are not there.

Mind conditioned to I-thought

In the second mode, the sense of self is purposefully reinforced with the affirmations so that we can become aware of it in a very specific manner. If you look into your sense of self, you come to know that 'I' am actually a bundle of thoughts, emotions and impressions squeezed into a kind of knot. This knot has formed over time, through many different situations and experiences since birth, and it is this very knot that we imagine ourselves to be. We have created ourselves, and by doing so have gone astray, have left our true abode, so to speak. We have assumed that these feelings, thoughts and experiences are our 'self' or 'me'.

When applying the formula we have to examine if the feeling of self is a solid, immutable and stable character. Is the self something that is a stable, permanent element that is always there? Simply examine the feeling of self. Look directly at its center, its core.

These are the steps of the Two-Part Formula. It's necessary to thoroughly apply the two modes and bring awareness to that subconscious 'thing' that we call our 'self'. Eventually, if you correctly apply the formula, a shift will occur. All of a sudden it is like the sky becoming bright and clear after a long spell of rain. All of a sudden your mind becomes bright and being becomes effortless. Even the physical body may feel elated and healthy.

Dialogues

Case 1: Timothy

The following dialogue lasted 20 days.

Timothy: I've been trying out the 2PF for the last couple of weeks in addition to reading the e-book, which I found really interesting and helpful. I hope this email isn't too long and I will try keep them shorter in future but I guess I have quite a few questions that have accumulated over the last couple weeks!

I'm worried that perhaps I am overthinking or overcomplicating the process, particularly the first part of the practice. When I 'release' tension, during the scanning part, I just focus on the tension and consciously relax the muscles around that area. Is that what is meant by releasing?

Jonathan: Ok. You are just relaxing the bodymind and allowing yourself to rest in an open, spacious state of mind. Because of this spaciousness, whatever comes into that space (thoughts, emotions, sensations in the body) is not 'chased' or 'pushed' away but rather seen clearly, without identification, without the 'I' coming into the picture.

Timothy: I noticed that, especially during my first few sits, I always tend to begin the process feeling like an agent 'aiming' at releasing certain parts of the body. This normally changes to realising that the tensions are just naturally revealing themselves and grabbing attention without 'me' doing anything. Anyway, (each time I do the 2PF), after releasing tension in a few places for a while it always just ends up feeling like the "right" time to check if I am in the I-less mode.

I'm not sure what to make of the I-less mode, or the search for 'I'. When searching for 'I', nothing concrete or stable reveals itself. There are patterns of thought which contain 'I', but they can be observed in the same space as sounds and bodily sensations. However there is still at least some sense of being a subject, which I am not sure goes away.

Jonathan: No problem. Well, in the first mode, you're not 'searching for the I', just noticing that these thoughts, emotions, sensations and tensions are inherently free of the 'I'. We can relate to them perfectly fine, without the 'I' being there.

There can or will be a subtle sense of there being a subject even when the 'I' is not there. No problem at all. When we say the 'I' we mean the neurotic grasping at or running away from experience. It's the distortion of how we experience things. This pulls us away from experiencing things directly, as they really are. This grasping or pushing away can be strong, and it can also be very subtle. Being alert and honest will help in your analysis.

Timothy: During the second part of the 2PF I have had some interesting experiences. I normally say the affirmations out loud, and I have experimented with how many times I repeat them before paying attention to what arises. Consistently during this stage of the practice I experience significant vibrations, trembling and pressure sensations around my eyes and forehead. During one of my first sits the trembling was so powerful that I opened my eyes, got up and I went to check in the mirror, and it was not just an internal sensation,

my eyelids were actually trembling. I've experienced similar trembling in my eyes in the past prior to any meditation or inquiry into the self, so I wasn't initially sure it was because of the 2PF. However, as I've been continuing with the 2PF, the sensations always subside after a few minutes, and are not present before the exercise or during the I-less mode. So, if I am taking the advice of being a scientist, it seems reasonable to conclude that the affirmations are indeed bringing about these sensations.

Jonathan: Yes - that is exactly right and it is good you are experiencing the 'I' clearly in the body in this case pressure around the eyes and the forehead. Great! Look closely into these sensations. That is what you should be doing in the second mode. Analyse them... Start on the periphery or edge, feel into that, then go more to the centre. What shape, colour, size, is the 'I'? Does it move or stay the same? How solid does it feel? Just analyse it in this way - the direct physical sensation of it.

Timothy: In answer to your specific questions I wrote down in my diary after one of my sittings that:

"So the sense of 'I' or being an ego is a combinations of thoughts, impressions, sensations, emotions...."

The most significant and maybe subtle part of feeling like a self is subject-self: the feeling of being a subject...

Is this the part the affirmations bring up? You can observe it from spaciousness, instead of consciousness being consumed by it... You can notice specifically the patterns of sensations that are promoting this endorsement of self."

Jonathan: Very good. So we build up this impression of an 'I' by identifying with all of these thoughts and emotions etc. But in reality, there is nothing solid there holding them all together. 'You' are not this neurotic identification. The true 'you' is something much freer, liberated, spaciousness, open, wonderful. In the second mode, we summon up the 'I' and find in the body where we feel it the most. Then we analyse it. The more closely we look, the more it starts to break up, like a glacier melting in the warmth of the sun...

Timothy: That has cleared up a lot of the complications I was having and a really helpful description of that space, and something I had been struggling to articulate or think about myself since there is still the feeling of being a subject of experience. I've noticed, on 'clearer' days, in daily life that I am occasionally flicking between these two modes. When I am in the *spacious mode* I am more aware of the whole field of consciousness, my visual field actually feels much wider and (although I'm not sure if this is the best way to describe it) there seems to be space *around* thought. Whereas when I am not in the spacious mode, my visual field is much smaller, in fact thoughts seem to be replacing the input from the world on my visual field. In this mode there is no space around thought, I just seem to *be* the thought. I seem to be reduced to the next thought I have, which is pretty weird when I compare it to the clarity and freedom of the spacious mode.

Jonathan: Yes - space around thought - you can think and use your mind and observe thoughts that appear from the subconscious mind without getting consumed by them, i.e. overly identifying with the thoughts. Too much of the time, we live our life as if we *are* our thoughts. The 2PF helps break this habit. Ok. From now on, let's email each other each day, even if nothing unusual happens. This way it will keep the momentum going. Part of doing

a guidance is to get things moving. Awakening is sometimes like putting an immersion tank on in as if to heat the water for a bath. At the start nothing much seems to be happening, but eventually the water starts to simmer and bubble. That will never happen if we don't apply ourselves consistently though - the 'I' is just too stubborn. Keep up the consistent effort!

Timothy: Yes, no problem, I will make sure I email each day.

I have just done my first sit of the day. It took me a while to reach a place of awareness. I felt particularly un-mindful before I sat. When I did reach it, I felt relaxed and free. I was no longer jumping at thoughts, or trying to push them away. When I am not in this place of awareness, a thought will arise and most often the tendency is to try possess it in some way, or if it is a negative thought, it will trigger further thought patterns about how I can avoid having the thought or the content of the thought.

In the second mode of today's sit, I said the affirmations quietly but purposefully out loud: "I, I, I, me, me, me". Again, significant trembling and pressure around what feels like my eyelids and I think the gap between my two eyebrows on my forehead. I tried to simply observe the sensations without using language too specifically. The best way I can describe the sensations is that they simply seem like suggestions. There is nothing especially concrete about them. I'm not sure how I would describe the shape of them, and the only colour I remember was a kind of light green flickering of light that was constantly changing.

After observing the sensations for a while they began to fade, but when I began the process again with the body scanning or relaxing, there were a few times where thoughts arose and I was briefly clinging to them or jumping at them. This time, I noticed that thoughts that I cling to or push away also brought back the trembling or pressure around the eyes.

Jonathan: When off the cushion, observe what it is that is trying to possess or push away thoughts. Investigate it. It is the 'I'. See how it feels, look right at it and study it. Keep looking into those sensations - the more you do, the more they start to break up... You can feel the 'I' in both modes. Keep up the processing, stay committed and clear, keep looking into the sensations the 'I' evokes. Also, when interacting with others, watch keenly how the 'I' is subtly and sometimes not so subtly, present. So stay focussed both on and off the cushion...

Timothy: In daily life, when the 'I' is present, I don't tend to notice the trembling sensations behind the eyes as I do when I sit. Is that what I should be observing? Perhaps this is because in daily life I am not observing carefully.

Jonathan: That's fine - you might or might not get the trembling off and even on the cushion. As long as you are looking into the 'I', that's the main thing. Looking directly into the 'I'.

Timothy: I am noticing that, off the cushion, the feeling of 'I' is most persistently reinforced via thought. It is patterns of thought that go unnoticed. In real time, these thoughts feel authored. So it feels like, for example, that some external event will happen, and the next thought or reaction that pops up is *mine*, or is *my reaction*. This is different to when I'm sitting in the selfless mode, the thoughts begin to feel less authored. There becomes a bigger distance between 'me' and the thoughts arising. 'I' can be holding my

awareness on the whole field of consciousness where sounds are appearing and disappearing, the breath is coming in and out of awareness, and thoughts too are appearing and disappearing in the same way sounds are. When I am in this mode there seems less motivation to grasp or push away thoughts because, like sounds, I really cannot control them or how long / often they appear in the awareness.

So I'd say that's one big difference I'm noticing. This is quite frustrating, because even though I can experience this during my sits, throughout the day thoughts seem to hold much, much more weight than say, sounds. And the tendency is to push them away, attempt to control them in some way, or sometimes wish I wasn't having them all together. There seems to be some kind of internal blame when some thoughts arise, even though during my sits I've experienced that that doesn't make sense and isn't useful.

I was wondering if you could say a little bit more about this analogy that Kim uses:

Think of sheep in a field which is surrounded by a fence. Now your sheep of various sensations are spread all over the field. To get hands on more specific sensations, you need to narrow down the area inside the fence so that the sheep have less room to run about. When you affirm, say it sharply, even with some frustration or anger. I! I! I! Me! Me! Me! And then look, just feel, just perceive, just observe. Don't try to change anything, just be still and be aware of the sensations that will become narrowed down when you affirm more sharply.

Does Kim mean that out of all the bodily sensations that we feel, the ones brought to attention by the affirmations are the self? For instance as I'm sitting now I can feel my feet touching the floor and I have a general perception of my whole body. But straight after I say the affirmations, it is always a tingling and trembling in the eyes and forehead. Attention is drawn to that area, and not to my feet or arms for example.

During my sit just now, the affirmations brought about the familiar sensations. I noticed they seemed to have moved further up now, there was powerful vibrations / tingling around the top of my forehead in addition to my eyes. This time, though, I picked up on something that I don't think I had been before. In addition to the sensations, lots of thoughts and thought patterns arise:

"Just focus. You're lost in thought, focus on the sensations ---> Is there anything different about this sit that I can explain to Jonathan? ----> Stop thinking about how you're going to explain it later, what are you experiencing now? etc. etc..."

These thoughts are all quite quick and sharp, and I wonder if because I have been focusing so specifically on the sensations in the eyes, I was simply trying to ignore or push these thoughts away without realising that these very thought patterns (and how they feel) are being brought about by the affirmations. Thoughts directly after the affirmations feel as if they need to be addressed or pushed away, and everything feels narrow. I think up until this sit, I had missed that important distinction even though the difference now seems so clear. Before the affirmations, the thoughts feel as though they are just faintly appearing in awareness, there is no *charge* to them (couldn't think of a better word).

Jonathan: It's normal to experience less spaciousness off the cushion than on it. Meditation affords us the precious opportunity to look more deeply at these phenomena (thoughts, emotions). Don't get frustrated by that.

Also, don't get into the habit of trying to control thoughts that bubble up from the subconscious. That will get you stuck. The more you try and 'control', the more you give fuel to the 'I'. Is it not the 'I' that wants to control? What is required is to closely LOOK at the 'I'.

Kim is saying that by affirming the 'I', rather than just sitting passively, we can see much more clearly and accurately where the 'I' resides in the body (i.e. body=field). He is also saying to affirm with real intention and focus, not passively.

Find the self-based 'charge' that is the clinging of the 'I' to thoughts and look very closely at that. Try not to get lost in projections about what you are going to say or do regarding the guidance. That is further proliferation of thought! Go to the direct experience of the 'I' and look, REALLY LOOK.

Is this 'I' the real YOU? Check and see. Are you really just a knot in your forehead? Be committed and clear in your analysis. If the affirmations bring up strong sensation in the head, that is great. Zoom in, really look closely at those sensations. This is where the 'I' is 'residing' - in these knots. When, they start to soften and fall away (as they will, once you start to bring awareness to them, as ultimately they are no different to any other kind of knot in the body), when they are fully 'dissolved', that's when you wake up, for good.... But you have to make a real and committed effort because the 'I' is such a stubborn habit - it won't fall away without a fight (for most people).

Remember - STAY WITH DIRECT EXPERIENCE!

Timothy: During my sit today the sensations have been slightly different after saying the affirmations. I noticed a warm/hot temperature on the top of my head. Then after letting the sensations fade, and doing the affirmations for a second time, my whole face felt warm. But not in the usual way of feeling flushed or having hot cheeks after going for a run, more like just the outline of my head/face felt warm.

I don't believe I am a knot in my forehead. But whatever I am is observing the knot in the forehead. Other than simply observing the sensations with as much focus as possible, is there anything else I should be doing when the sensations arise? I'm struggling with locating a periphery/edge or a centre of the sensations. The sensations don't feel solid. They are vibrations, tingles, pressure, changing temperatures.

Jonathan: Sure - this was a rhetorical question. Of course you are not a knot in your forehead. Clear open awareness is much closer to who you *really* are. Just look closely. Observe, study. Notice the tendency to grab, to possess. Look right in the centre of the sensations. Make sure you affirm with energy - don't be weak in the affirmations. Be very, very honest with yourself and all the games the 'I' plays on the cushion and in everyday life, especially in interactions with others. Sometimes the 'I' can be very subtle, so you have to be prepared to really hunt it down, a bit like a cat stalking a mouse - don't give it a chance.

If they don't feel solid sometimes that's no problem. Keep probing, keep cycling through the 2PF. You have to make a real committed, determined effort. Bit by bit the self weakens.

Have you noticed any change in yourself since you started doing the 2PF? I am referring to

general changes.

Timothy: I'm not too sure. The days are feeling different recently, but I think this is probably because I have dropped my *vipassana* practice and so I am much less mindful throughout the day. So I'd say I'm lost in thought more than usual. But I am finding that I can return increasingly quickly to the selfless mode. So no matter how stressed or identified with thought I am, I'm finding it very relieving to have that space to return to. Thoughts that seem highly charged and narrow can very quickly turn into faint appearances in a wider space. This wasn't the case with my vipassana practice, where if I was having a stressful day it would take a long time to calm down and often thoughts would remain highly charged for the whole sit. There was always the feeling of that connected story of "I am stressed. So I will meditate, then I won't be stressed". There was a sense of the storyline existing even during the meditation, whereas with the 2PF the storyline only makes sense when I am lost in thought. If I am in the selfless mode the storyline is just yet another thought-construct, not the actual reality.

I keep experiencing a kind of, "oh yeah" moment when I return to the selfless mode. It's kind of like, "all that time I've just spent lost in thought, clinging and pushing away thoughts, and narrating this 'connected story' of my life isn't necessary. I could of just been doing that task in the selfless mode and nothing from experience would of been lost except feeling stressed!"... I guess this itself is just more thinking but I feel as though I'm beginning to compare the modes more and more.

The 'I' feels like it is constantly trying to possess everything. Anything that I see or hear is a question of how it can relate to me and 'my story'. It just chatters about everything. It is like it is churning out thoughts and I have to 'catch' each one as it arises. If I don't catch it, I become it. The 'I' doesn't seem to know what it wants, no matter how happy I am or how great a day I am having, the 'I' is always poised to be miserable and self-hating from the slightest of insignificant things. It feels unstable and is like walking on eggshells compared to the freedom of the selfless mode.

Jonathan: I don't know much about your practice, but I do know that some vipassana practitioners try to 'shut out' or narrow down their experience so that they can do vipassana 'more effectively'. They become too 'one pointed' and try to shut out 'distractions'. This is actually a common mistake. Effective vipassana comes from a very open, spaciousness mind, from our buddha nature. If we practice in a narrow way our practice ends up being too rigid, too blinkered and can take us away from the very thing that we want to return to - an open spacious, liberated state of awareness. I'm not saying that this is your case, but it could be. Anyway, don't worry if you're getting a little more distracted. Maybe it's just that you're noticing it more.

See if there is a 'a practitioner' doing the practice. Sounds like you've being doing vipassana into the objective self (thoughts and emotions), but not much into the subjective self (the 'I', 'me', 'mine'). A common mistake. It was the same for me before I found the 2PF. There is no 'self' running around in your head. It's just a story, a total delusion!

Now you are understanding with increasing clarity that this 'I' think is a total illusion This is good Timothy. The 'I' is a real stubborn weed, and you are starting to dig it up. It still takes a real dedicated effort to do this though because it's a strong habit that's been around for a very long time! OK, now to really see through it you have to make a proper effort. OK? You are doing fine, but you are not yet 'out of the woods' so to speak. Keep up the

processing with all the commitment you can muster. Don't force things, but don't slacken either. Keep it committed and balanced. Really see into this 'I' thing. It's a total joke, but you have to really see that, and see it through for good!

Keep it up buddy!

Timothy: I've just woke up this morning and haven't practiced the 2PF yet but wanted to share the dream I just had. I realise the content of it is probably not related to awakening but just in case it's relevant:

I just woke up from a dream where I was sat with a psychologist or therapist talking about my experiences with my health condition and the anxiety and panic attacks during the particularly traumatic time in my life that led to me beginning meditation. I vividly remember intensely crying during the dream whilst talking about my experiences, and I woke up still crying. All the emotion and the physical sensations of crying, tears in eyes, wet cheeks, that kind of rush and pressure of energy were still present as I transitioned from asleep to awake. I feel as though the dream was a kind of release.

As I woke up, very quickly the storylines and thought patterns began to dial up. All the things that remind me who I am my plans for the day, the chores I need to do, the temptation to go check my phone began to emerge. But normally first thing in the morning, these storylines simply consume me and I become them. This time they were dialling up but I could observe them with a bit of space around them. They were more faint and not as persuasive. The storyline of 'I was asleep and I just had a dream but now **I'm** awake and can get on with **my** day' really does just seem like more of a storyline than usual, it is not as consuming. My focus stayed more on the continuation of consciousness that started during the dream and continued when I awoke. The awareness of the emotions and physical sensations stayed the same during the transition. The storylines are appearing in the background all by themselves and are not essential.

I tend to be anxious, grumpy and lost in thought when I first wake up in the morning, so I'm surprised to start the day with this kind of insight and the motivation to get my laptop straight out and try and articulate it. Especially when I did not meditate at all yesterday and my body has been run down due to sickness. In general I'd say that's one of the biggest things I'm noticing, a clearer awareness of the space around thought patterns and storylines at times when I would not really expect it. With my vipassana practice, clear awareness would generally depend on how many minutes daily I meditated, how mindful I was, and what I was doing that day. Recently, when I pay any kind of attention at all, even if I am bleary eyed, or just sat in traffic for a moment, that continuous storyline can be disrupted and observed and judged to not be essential to this experience, and I quickly change from being lost in thought and feeling as though the thoughts are being authored and created, to a realisation that I am not causing the thought.

“So, if we practice in this narrow way our practice ends up being too rigid, too blinkered and can take us away from the very thing that we want to return to - an open spacious, liberated state of awareness”

I think this is absolutely correct. I think over time my meditation practice simply became part of this continuous storyline that I am over-identified with. I will keep up the processing with all my commitment.

Jonathan: This sounds promising. You are headed in the right direction and the awakening may indeed have happened in your sleep. This can happen, as can further bhumi openings. To check, re-read again the instructions about checking for awakening :

"The idea is that you keep comparing the two modes until the sense of me-ness wears out. At some point when the affirmation no longer sticks and the affirmation, no matter how intensely you say it, just echoes into empty space, awakening has more than likely taken place. At this point, you can feel a special kind of openness and elation, lightness and unobstructedness, when compared to before."

If you think this is the case, send me a picture for confirmation...

If you don't think it's through yet, don't worry, you're definitely getting closer... So no big deal - just keep up the good work . The ego can never withstand constant attention like the 2PF, so it's only a matter of time.

Timothy: I'm glad you think I'm heading in the right direction. I do not believe that awakening has happened yet although I will send over a photo after this email for checking just in case as I really have no idea what awakening would feel like! During the affirmation stage of my first sit of today I've had powerful sensations that seemed to be more noticeable in my whole head and face, rather than just the eyes. I didn't really notice as much trembling but more of a kind of consistent, sustained pressure on my forehead up to my hairline. I also noticed my teeth chattering after the affirmations, which I think was brought about by the affirmations as I didn't feel noticeably cold.

The chatter and storylines actually seem more powerful today than they have the last couple of days. I woke up feeling anxious today which I haven't really been feeling too much recently. I'm curious about the correlation between feeling anxious, and the physiological reaction in the body and the intensity or frequency of chatter about this experience of consciousness being a coherent, connected storyline. I'm not sure if it is the extra chatter causing the anxiety, or the other way round or if they simply fuel each other.

The storylines seem noticeably irritable today. Every activity I go to do, even sitting down to write this email, triggers some sort of internal chatter about how this activity connects to the wider story of my life. It really is just a machine of thoughts with a life of its own that is trying to cling to something, anything. I'll try and articulate what it seems like, but apologies in advance if it doesn't make sense or isn't useful. Okay so for instance, I just had a thought that I should re-read some dialogues from the Awake book this afternoon. But rather than just being synonymous with continuing to write this email, and then going on to read the book a bit later, the thought that I should re-read the book *triggered* chatter that started to dial up that contains thoughts that are a bit like: *"Re-reading the book will be helpful, it will re-jog your memory of certain things.... I have 3 hours till work so I have plenty of time to read it, I can make a hot chocolate in a second and relax and read it slowly..."* It's not that these thoughts aren't true or at least don't have some kind of grounding in reality, but they're just really annoying, haha. I know all of those things to be true without them having to be told to myself in some kind of weird clingy dialogue.

I also had a similar dreaming experience last night except the emotion was anger. Felt very angry and frustrated in a vivid dream and woke up still experiencing the emotions. I've read online that this kind of pattern of dreams can be the mind releasing difficult emotions, but I'm hesitant to self-diagnose myself.

Jonathan: Ok. Well let's see. Your photo shows a definite improvement but maybe there is a bit to go yet. Keep up the affirmations and go the place where you feel them the strongest. Then zoom in and directly analyse the experience of the 'I'. Keep up this cycling over and over - this will eventually wear out the subjective self.

Anxiety (emotion) and chatter (thoughts) fuel each other. Don't worry too much about anxiety as it's just a feeling in the body (objective self). We are not analysing objective self in the 2PF. We focus on the subjective self. It perfectly possible to be anxious and awakened. Awakening changes the relationship to the emotion, but the emotion can be there all the same. See if there is a self still there in the thoughts. After awakening, you will have chatter still, but the relationship to it changes. You don't identify with it as strongly as before - you can see clearly that it's not the real 'you'. Don't expect chatter to fall away completely after awakening - it doesn't work like that.

In our dreams we can experience strong emotions which is the bodymind processing our fears and desires. This is totally fine and comes with dharma practice.

Keep going and let me know if you still feel the self in the affirmations. If so, there is more to go. If they just 'echo into empty space', then you're through.

Timothy: Do you mind saying a little bit more about the 'echoing into empty space'. When I say the affirmations it is still bringing attention to sensations of pressure, trembling, heat etc. Although they were much less significant during my sit today it was just a little bit of pressure on my forehead. Once awakening has happened do the sensations continue? If I say the affirmations in my head, no matter how forceful I try and imagine saying them in my head they appear so faint and they do feel empty. However, throughout this process I have generally been saying the affirmations out loud. When I say them out loud I am a bit more confused, because obviously they still sound forceful. But when I say them there is a clear distance between 'me' and the affirmations.

I was thinking a lot about what echoing into empty space might mean yesterday and I started to notice something similar to that description with thoughts that were just arising in daily life. As soon as I have any sort of awareness that I am thinking, the thought, as it is arising, just seems hollow and empty. It is very clear in awareness that the source of the thought is not me. This is quite difficult to explain and I would guess it seems like more of an experiential understanding rather than an intellectual one. I'm not sure if this is the case when I am lost in thought though. For example I may have a pattern of thought where I have four different thoughts consecutively, but I only become aware as the fourth one is arising. So the first three thoughts were pretty consuming and did seem at least partially authored, however the second that awareness dials up the thoughts immediately do kind of echo and there is a very clear sense of being detached from them. If I was awakened would all thoughts be echoing and seem detached? Or just ones that I am aware. At the moment it seems like this awareness can punctuate my experience throughout the day, rather than this being my experience of the *whole* day. Having said that, even when I am lost in thought, I don't know whether the thoughts themselves are effecting me in the way they used to (although I think this was true even of my vipassana practice).

I think I am close.

Jonathan: I agree. Some sensations may still be there as there will often be

energetics after awakening but the compulsive identification with them however slight is not there anymore. There affirmations don't 'stick' anywhere in the body and there is a freshness, and new sense of aliveness and openness to experience. Post awakening, I would say it's still possible to sometimes get identified with thought, but it feels like an old habit that's not 'real' anymore. And as time goes on, this habit gets weaker and weaker.

Timothy: I'm still noticing that tendency to grasp or possess, but as soon as I do that, asking the question of who is the one grasping or possessing makes the grasping seem pointless. So the tendency is still there but once it has been noticed it just seems like unnecessary suffering which is a HUGE difference to how I lived my life especially pre-meditation and pre-2PF. There is no clear, one thing that can be located to which all of this experience is happening. It just is happening. The desire or significance of connecting this whole story is starting to feel less strong.

Like yesterday, during my sits today the affirmations brought about subtle pressure sensations that weren't significant. I wrote this in one of my previous emails to you:

“Thoughts directly after the affirmations feel as if they need to be addressed or pushed away, and everything feels narrow. I think up until this sit, I had missed that important distinction even though the difference now seems so clear. Before the affirmations, the thoughts feel as though they are just faintly appearing in awareness, there is no charge to them (couldn't think of a better word).”

I noticed that that was no longer happening today. Thoughts do not become any more charged or weighted as more significant after the affirmations. Experience does not feel more narrow after the affirmations.

Jonathan: Sounds good!

I'd say keep going with the 2PF for two more days and if it's still this way send me a picture and I'll get back to you. Or if you think it's through, let me know and I'll check with the other teachers to be sure. I think you are actually through already, but there is no harm making certain of it.

Sometimes the shift is obvious, sometimes not so obvious. But nevertheless, it happens and there's no going back to the way things were before.

The stress of the new job will surely bring up the 'T' if it is still lurking...

Timothy: I definitely get the sense of an awareness, that, when I pay any kind of attention at all, will not go away now. I cannot un-see or un-know that awareness now. It does not seem to be dependent on being really mindful or having spent 2 hours meditating in peace and quiet. I may be subconsciously waiting for fireworks or some crazy awakening event!

... But I feel peaceful and I have had a very busy week with multiple interviews, being really ill for a few days, a new bar job with no previous bar experience. Yet I have just been getting on with it and although difficult emotions are arising every now and then, I can clearly see their causes and it is quite easy to just be detached and see it as unhelpful. This is a LOT different to how I have been in the past, I have a history of anxiety, depression, panic attacks etc! And about 6 months ago there's **no way** this week would have gone by so straightforwardly and essentially peacefully! I would have felt so overwhelmed and the

storylines would have consumed me.

Jonathan: This sounds very good Timothy. To me, it seems clear that there has been significant change during the guidance. I'm glad that it's helped you in this way. Don't worry - awakenings don't have to be about fireworks. They are often very subtle shifts, especially if the person already has a meditation practice and so is calmer than normal.

Looking forward to your email and picture.

Timothy: I'm finding the last couple of days that difficult emotions still arise (anxiety etc.) but they just don't stick in the way that they used to. It's clear to me that given the right conditions, anxiety, stress etc. can still occur, but I just do not need to try possess or push away the difficult emotions. They pass in their own time and I'm finding that the amount of time they do last is becoming increasingly less. In that sense feeling relaxed and present seems like more of the default mode, rather than something I have to work hard by meditating for x amount of minutes, exercising, having a peaceful day to get to. So in that sense I guess things are flipped so that actually it seems as though it is going to take quite a lot of negative input from the world to make me not feel peaceful. However, when the stress and anxiety arises, there does feel as though there is a difference in that I'm not sure who it is, for example, that is anxious. Anxiety is arising, for sure, all the thought patterns that are typical of anxiety and the physiological sensations are still there. But the idea that it is happening to a 'me', a constant, continuing self that is narrating this entire storyline doesn't feel persuasive. It just is happening, it's a constant flow of changing thoughts, feelings, sensations... none of them are continuing or permanent.

I had a pretty bad day yesterday at work but as soon as I got in the car I felt as if I was presented with a choice of whether I wanted to identify with the ruminating thoughts and replay it all over again, or just enjoy listening to music on the way home. It would be an understatement to say that I have not always had that choice! **Constant** ruminating has been the norm for me my entire life, and no matter how much I may have wanted to just be present, it's always been near-impossible to just be.

Even after a busy few days, it seems as though it is tending to just take a few moments to pay a little bit of attention and everything is very still and quiet. I can hear sounds clearly, my visual field feels wide. In the past, if I wanted to reach a place of stillness where I could actually just hear each sound as it arose without thoughts getting in the way it would of taken a lot of vipassana meditation and would have been dependent on my day going smoothly. In the past, just sitting and listening to sounds like the cars going past my window would trigger all kinds of crazy clinging and possessive thoughts that always seemed to be about how what I was doing was relating to how other people saw me in the world. If I was sat on a park bench meditating, I was *the type of person who sits on a bench meditating* and I identified with thoughts about how others would perceive that. Today, I just sat on a park bench and meditated. I didn't identify with a storyline attached to that.

Thoughts are still arising about whether I am awakened or not. I can recognise them as just thoughts, and I think that perhaps it doesn't really matter. Because who is it that wants to be awakened? That's just clinging to more thoughts and concepts. There is a still a steady stream of thoughts throughout the day but I feel comfortable with them being there, they do not feel intrusive like they have done in the past. Also, and I'm not sure if I can explain this very well, it feels as though whatever room I am in, or whatever activity I am doing, I

just am doing that activity. That storyline and baggage doesn't feel as though it's there. Rather than each present moment having to go through a mental filter of my past and future, I can very quickly just be as it feels like it is unnecessary and unhelpful to be ruminating or worried about what's coming next. I'm not sure if there is more to go with this process or not, but worrying about whether there is or not is just the ego.

Timothy sends his photos for evaluation.

Before:



After:



Jonathan: It's official - You're through! Well done and heartfelt congratulations!

Getting awakened is not a small thing. However, it is only one opened bhumi out of a total of 13 that need to be opened and perfected before the job is done, so the journey has just begun!

Many Congratulations!

Timothy's Written Account

I am 22 years old and I became interested in spirituality and meditation after suffering from physical and mental health problems that peaked around two years ago. The onset of a physical health condition at the age of 19 meant I spent the next year and a half in constant pain. At times, I would go weeks at a time with whole days of severe discomfort and pain, starting from the moment I woke up. I had to quit my job, break up with my long-term girlfriend, and when returning to university the next year, give up alcohol which is more difficult than it sounds in university culture and many hobbies I had taken for granted. Due to the severity of my symptoms at such a young age, I was recommended by multiple specialists to be tested for an auto-immune disease. I turned out not to have the condition, but the weeks in which I was waiting for the test results triggered the beginning of a series of panic attacks which span over the following months. This change in the way I had to live my life caused high levels of anxiety and, at times, crippling depression. I tried meditation as a last resort, as I was willing to give anything a shot to help with the physical and mental suffering, something I had been told it could help with.

I began with a simple vipassana practice, specifically following the teachings of Andy Puddicombe (Headspace app). I then began following the teachings in *The Mind Illuminated* by Culadasa John Yates, which initially places more focus on concentration meditation as well as insight meditation. It's difficult to overstate how much meditation in general has changed my conscious experience. My suffering has reduced so much, and the physical and mental pain that was consistently and as I thought at the time permanently ruining my life, now comes and goes much less frequently and intensely. My meditation practice, which had begun as a way of pain relief, carried through my life as I realised for the first time that it was possible to look in to the mind, not just live out through it.

As I continued with my practice, the 'self' increasingly fascinated me. One of the core teachings of Buddhism is that there is no permanent, unchanging self, and this teaching is supported by modern neuroscience. I read a lot of the scientific literature on this topic and gained a good intellectual understanding of this concept, but I did not have an experiential understanding of it. In fact, my practice began to become goal-oriented, with every sit having the aim of losing my sense of self. This ended up making my sits become unproductive. I read about Kim, Open Heart and the 2PF online. I must admit I was initially sceptical. There did seem as though there was a 'too good to be true' feel to it. After going through the process, I guess that is just a testament to how effective the 2PF is. Before beginning my guidance, I read reviews online that were also sceptical of Open Heart. I think this is probably because of that 'too good to be true' feel to it, but I noticed that even those who were sceptical conceded that the 2PF seemed like a solid meditation practice. After reading the book and a couple of days of practicing the 2PF I was convinced it was the real deal. My approach with all meditation has been to be sceptical but open-minded. I would encourage anyone to drop their pre-conceptions and try the 2PF for him- or herself.

After awakening, feeling relaxed and present has been the default mode of experience, rather than something I have to work hard to achieve. This was not true of my life with my previous meditation practice. Generally, feeling relaxed and present would be dependent on external factors such as how much I was able to meditate that day, how much exercise I was able to do, and whether my day was going peacefully. In this sense, things are flipped

so that actually it now requires a lot of negative input from the world to make me not feel peaceful. The default mode is content and calm. Sat in traffic, or bleary-eyed after waking up, there is just a natural equanimity. Needless to say, this has in no way been the norm for me throughout my life.

Difficult emotions still arise post-awakening. Anxiety and stress, given the right conditions, are still occurring. All the thought patterns and contents of consciousness that are typical of difficult emotions, as well as the physiological sensations, are still there. But the idea that it is happening to a 'me', a constant, continuing self that is narrating the entire storyline of my life no longer feels persuasive. This is all just happening, it's a constant flow of changing thoughts, feelings, and sensations. None of them are continuous or permanent. Experiential knowledge of this truth is truly liberating. It allows emotions and thoughts to truly just come and go in a detached place of awareness, without the unnecessary suffering. If you are interested in meditation and awakening, Open Heart and the 2PF is the most straightforward, systematic and thorough approach I have come across. I am incredibly grateful for their guidance.

Case 2: Jason

The following dialogue lasted 14 days.

Jason: Hello Kim. I am writing to see if you can provide any guidance for my practice. When I read about your 2PF technique, I instinctively felt like it made a lot of sense and I have tried it out a few times.

Kim: Aha, sure. Happy to help.

Jason: As for background, I am not really sure where I am at. I had a brief cessation after a 10-day retreat, some time after that one of my teachers thought I had reached stream entry but I am doubtful as I have not noticed any permanent shift.

Kim: That's interesting. I had many cessations since I was a child yet none of them caused stream entry.

Jason: I have had some experience of spacious awareness but it is brief and rare. It sometimes will become clear if I meditate for 45 minutes or more. I start to feel a large space in the body, but quickly the self gets excited and tries to claim ownership of it and so the space collapses.

Kim: Right. Well, a streak of awakenings helps in that. The first one will get you started.

Jason: Usually I can easily feel the sense of self as a spot behind my eyes. When I do the I-affirming practice, I feel the spot become more intense, felt as the center of tension that radiates out through the jaw and shoulders. When I go back to selfless mode, I do feel relatively less sense of self but still feel there must be some self there since I don't perceive spacious awareness, so there must be some underlying tension that I cannot see.

Kim: It is OK to have little tension, as long as selfless is mostly stressfree and easy. Are you prepared for guidance? How many times you've done 2PF by now? Have you read

Awake-book? Watched the lectures? If you have, we can start guidance right away.

Jason: Thanks Kim! I have read Awake, am still watching the lectures. I have ADD and was planning on restarting Vyvanse next week which I had temporarily discontinued for financial reasons. When I was taking it, it was a great help to the strength of my samadhi so I would like to get back on it and stabilize before starting the guidance (so I can distinguish between medication and meditation related effects). I will email you back when I have done so and finished the lectures.

Kim: OK. It will be postponed by 1-2 months then.

Jason: I was still hoping to start next week as I have many vacation days this month and I was hoping to use that time to practice. Also my wife and I are expecting our first child late December so after that time I expect that I will have less time and mental energy.

If we would need to start now for your schedule that is fine for me.

Kim: I see. Well, you certainly won't have time for guidance when your baby shows up. I know. Ha!

I am passing your case to Karl, if he could take you right away.

Kim passes the guidance over to Karl.

Karl: Hello Jason. I am happy to start the guidance straight away. I'll send you a separate email with the starting instructions.

Karl sends written instructions and guidelines for the guidance

Jason: I have been practicing 2PF for about 2 weeks. Usually about an hour a day, alternating 5 minutes for each mode. Here are my experiences so far.

Karl: Ok, good. Do you time the modes?

Jason: For the I-less mode:

In the past I have not able to reach complete open spaciousness very often. Usually there is some underlying tension that will not release unless I had a particularly good meditation for 45 minutes or more, in which case I have caught glimpses of a large space. So I have just been relaxing and trying to experience the space to the level that I can, although I know based on comparison to previous more clear experience of space that my current experience is still clouded by conceptualization.

Karl: Alright. First of all, forget about your past experiences and focus exclusively on what takes place during the actual investigation. The first mode is just about releasing tension and investigating the general feeling of relaxation, as you say. It does not need to be perfect, just relax and notice the general spaciousness that reveals itself when you let go of holding onto tension. When it becomes somewhat clear, see if you can further surrender to it.

Jason: For the I-based mode:

As I repeat the affirmations, I can feel a tension rising in the middle of my head. The shape

feels uneven, like some kind of tilted plane of tension in the middle of my head. Initially it feels like this is where I am watching from, but as I watch it I feel like I am watching from further back in my head in order to observe the initial sensation. I can never seem to observe the actual place I am observing from as it just keeps moving back. I know intellectually this is because it is not real, but not sure what to do with that.

Karl: Very good, you have found the general area of tension where the main knot of "I" is located. Your job now is to zoom in on it, to investigate it up close and shine the light of insight on it until it drops off on its own. So, without hurry, observe it thoroughly. Does it have a center? Does it have edges? How big is it? Also make note of movements such as those you describe, as you try to pinpoint the core of it.

Jason: I had one particularly clear session where I felt like the feeling of "I" was like a face I was wearing. It felt like a sensation of tension that was directing the eyes in some way.

Karl: Good. Explore this direction of seeing. Does it have a source? Where is it?

Jason: In another session I let the sense of I become very strong although the tension was uncomfortable. Instead of letting it relax away as I normally do, I sort of "relaxed around it" in a different way so that instead of dissipating, it became stronger but it was felt more as energy than as tension. The energy spread through my body and I felt a strong tingling sensation at my crown. I am not sure if I should let it become this strong though as other times it does not release in this way and I have a suspicion that I am getting stuck in it and becoming more irritable after the session.

Karl: These are good observations. It is very normal that there are energetic movements in the body, sometimes very strong and even uncomfortable. It is also normal to have reactions after. These are just signs that the processing is working on a deep level, that you are peeling the onion of "I" so to speak. Ground yourself in the first mode to better be able to observe it clearly.

Jason: In my average sessions, I sometimes feel as if I am more easily distracted in the I based mode, and I end up in mind wandering. I try to bring myself back to the object as best I can. There is some worry that by encouraging the I based mode, I am training it to come up more often. I don't feel like I can always clearly observe it, it feels like bringing it up can cause me to fall into it sometimes.

Karl: I understand what you mean, but don't worry about the increased sense of "I" being permanent. The only way to become free from it, is to see the "I" for what it is. This is the basis of vipashyana, or insight, in Buddhist meditation. And in order to see it clearly, we need bring forward what is already there (through the reaffirmations) and observe it in contrast to the spacious freedom of the first mode.

Allright, you are doing good here. Keep processing the two modes and report back to me.

Jason: I have been practicing about 2 years. Mostly following the samatha and vipassana techniques in the book, *The Mind Illuminated*. My sits would usually vary between stage 4-stage 8 in that system, although recently I have not been able to reach past stage 6 which is exclusive attention without subtle distractions.

I have been on one 10 day retreat about a year ago, that resulted in a brief cessation on the

plane on the way home. I don't feel like my practice is at the same level as it was at that time right now, probably because I am not taking Vyvanse for my ADD as I was at that time, although I am planning to restart it next week.

I find that for me, effort to focus on an object can quickly backfire and turn into wrong effort. I tend to do much better with an intention for open awareness or mahamudra style, which Kim describes as the "I-less" mode, but at the same time sometimes struggle with my energy level dropping when I do this. Figuring out how to put in energy without the sense of "me" doing it seems to be key, but my ability to do some comes and goes.

Typically I do 5 minutes per mode, but sometimes I just give myself more time to settle into the I-less mode before bringing in the affirmations.

Karl: Ok. I'd suggest you drop the focus on exact time and rather process the two modes in a more flexible manner. When the instructions say that you should spend an equal time on both, it means approximately. It is important not to hurry in either mode, so take your time, especially in the beginning. Don't move to the second mode until you are properly relaxed and don't go back to the first mode until the "I" fades on its own. Ok?

Jason: At times I have felt this sensation of "zooming in" on an object, or somehow inhabiting it, but I am not sure how to do so. It seems like something "I" cannot do, I just have to wait while watching and let it happen on its own? Are there some intentions I can use to encourage this?

Karl: What I mean by zooming in is just to look closely, carefully.

Jason: I get the sense that perhaps what I am trying to do is similar to how when using the breath as an object, as you observe it goes from the initial appearance of the breath (the conceptualization) to the acquired appearance (the real physical sensations which appear to me more as a pulsing or vibration). In the same way, there is the "sense of a self watching from behind my eyes", which is actually a conceptualization, and there is the actual physical sensation of it. It seems like perhaps if I could connect the two and observe how they are related, that would crack it. When I am in the I-based mode, does it make sense to go back and forth between these two ways of seeing it (the concept of a self there vs the physical sensation of tension), to try to see this relationship? Or should I stick to trying to see it as just the physical sensation?

Karl: Yes, you want to go to the actual sensation as it appears in the body. Just follow the plain instructions: reaffirming the "I", watching for the bodily sensations that are associated with the word "I" to appear, finding the strongest and then looking at it closely, discerning its actual qualities. We are not so much interested in conceptual thinking about what the "I" is etc. It is all about observing by feeling into it. Does it make sense?

Jason: I should clarify: I don't mean thinking about what the "I" is conceptually. What I mean by the two ways I can perceive the "I" are this:

1. The sensation of physical tension in the head that arises when I say "I".
2. The proprioception that "I" am located in my head. In other words the sensation that this is the location where I am observing from.

Am I interested in both or just the first one?

Karl: Right, I understand what you mean. As these two are very much related when it comes to the "I", you should study both of them. First find the strongest sensation and then start investigating its qualities, including the feeling of being an "I".

Jason: Lots of distraction and zoning out in the morning. Was a bit better in the evening.

In the I-less mode, I still have the sense that the "I" is there to some degree from the start. If I look for it, I will always find it but I think this may just be because I am actively looking. Only when I actually do nothing can the sense of "I" start to fade.

Karl: Good. The I-less mode is not dependent on all tensions being fully gone, just recognise the spaciousness and then further let go into it. Not doing anything is a classic pointer to the I-less mode.

Jason: The I-based mode feels like a contraction that forces me to look in at it. There is nothing really there inside, just a blank fog, but it prevents me from seeing beyond it. When I release it, it seems like it just flips over at some point and I can see outside it again, but I am not sure I am seeing the moment of the transition. Is it important to see how the transition occurs or only noticing the difference?

Karl: This fog, where is it located? Keep watching it. Try to look deeper into the fog to see if there is a core in there. Keep watching the whole process of the "I" arising, staying and fading back into the I-less mode. Stay as sharp as possible at any point of the processing.

Jason: More clear this morning. The core feels like a vibrating point in space in the back of my head, behind the eyes. Sometimes when I am repeating "I / Me / Mine", the vibrating point feels like it is in the back of my throat. But most of the time, especially when I bring up the sense of observing from a location in my head, the point feels like it is behind the eyes.

Karl: Alright. Good. Keep your eyes on that spot, scrutinising it from all angles. The more you observe it, the quicker this will go. Also remember to relax properly into the selfless mode.

Jason: I took some medicine for my ADD today so my concentration is better.

This morning, in I-less mode, I was able to follow the joy of letting go to go deeper. In contrast I notice how the feeling of control of I based mode kills this joy. By finding the joy of letting go, the feeling of "I" was able to dissolve much faster than before.

Karl: Very good observations. Explore which one feels more natural and which one feels more artificial. What is the I?

Jason: I practiced bringing it up and letting it go again more rapidly, but I'm not sure if this is correct or if should I be holding the "I" based mode until it fades on its own (without me switching modes). In other words, does this process work by these parts of my mind being shown how to self liberate through repeated demonstration? Or is it more like I have to "wear out" the "I-based" mode? My feeling is that it is the former, and that making practicing the transition into selflessness until it becomes automatic is key.

Karl: When processing the self-based mode you shouldn't do anything but watch. Don't try to let go, to force the tension open or anything like that. Just sit with it, not rejecting or clinging to it, but simply watching how it behaves. The liberation does not come through learning to self-liberate.

Rather, it comes indeed by wearing it out, and this wearing out happens by means of it being exposed, seen clearly for what it is. So observe, observe, observe until it fades on its own. Then you go back to relaxing into the I-less.

The process is not about learning anything. When the I is seen through, there is no effort needed to liberate it anymore, not even an automatic process.

Jason: Thanks for the clear and detailed explanation!

I had another session where it felt like there was a sort of "deconstructing process" which built up momentum in the I-less mode. As I let go of everything, it felt like mental objects would start to deconstruct into bare sensations more and more automatically. When I changed to the I-based mode, it seemed like this deconstructing process applied to the sense of self as well and it would start to penetrate it, although at some point it would lose momentum.

Is this something I should look for when deciding when to change modes? i.e. building up this sort of momentum in I-less mode and then letting that apply itself to the I-based mode?

Karl: By "built up momentum" do you mean that clarity of phenomena was deepened?

If so, that is the whole point of setting the two modes up against each other. With the I-less mode comes natural clarity, expansiveness, focus, and when we bring up the "I" in this context it allows for this clarity to touch the "I"-tension as well, bringing clarity into the matter of selfing.

But don't get hung up on that it has to feel a certain way each time before you switch. Just follow the instructions of the 2PF, relaxing into the natural clarity of the "I"-less mode and when you feel like your mind is clear enough, then bring up and study the "I"-based mode and how it manifests in the body. Ok?

You're doing good. Keep at it!

Jason: I saw it more as deconceptualization, things started to appear more broken apart due to noticing impermanence. Which I guess is a form of clarity now that I think about it.

In any case I will not try to wait for it to feel a certain way before switching as you suggest.

I was able notice the spaciousness of awareness for the first time in awhile today as I started in I-less mode, by reminding myself to let sensations come to me so the mind can be still. After transitioning to I-based mode and changing back though, I was not able to regain it very well.

Karl: Good. It feels good, right? As I have said, the level of recognition does vary, but that is not a problem here. Just keep relaxing as best as you can each session.

Jason: One interesting thing I noticed was that as I looked at the sense of I, I would feel a spot of tension. Then after awhile I realized that since I was observing the tension from outside, the sense of where "I" am had moved. So I observe that and found the tension remained where it was, separate from the sense of I, so it seems the tension was mostly just caused by my own looking, while the sense of "I" itself was a much more subtle tension.

As I observed the new location of "I", it moved again, so I loosened my attention so that I could follow it around. Then I realized, it actually appears wherever my attention happens to go. Then I had another realization, that it actually is nowhere my attention goes because it is at the "root" of my attention, so I can never actually find it by looking. I can only see it by "being", but if I am only being then I am in I-less mode and it ceases to exist.

I am not really sure what to do with this, I suspect that this is the insight I am looking for but I only have realized it intellectually.

Karl: I feel that you are slightly off track here as you want to get to the core of the selfing mechanism, that which attaches itself to everything and claims it as "mine". Attention is not the problem here. Read the steps of the formula again. Put more emphasis on the affirmations, say them like you really mean them. I! I! I! Then just watch what happens in the body and mind. And always stick with the strongest sensations. Where is it? How does it feel? Please answer these questions in your next reply.

One tip is also to keep a pen and paper close-by and write some keywords about each mode after you finish the session.

Jason: Yes, I feel I am a bit stuck. When I just say the affirmations, it does generate a tension in the back of my mouth, but it seems like just the tension of forming any verbal thought. I can say any words with the same emphasis and it causes the same tension. It doesn't feel related to my sense of self at all now.

So I bring up what I feel is my sense of self by intending to take on that viewpoint of looking out from behind my eyes. That brings it up (feels like tension behind the eyes) but now I am almost immediately trapped in that viewpoint, I lose the ability to see through it clearly that the I-less mode generated.

I am not sure how to bring it up without losing the perspective that allows me to observe it.

Karl: Thoughts in themselves do not necessarily cause tension, as there can be thoughts in the I-less mode. I am sure that if you would continue with a different word than "I", eventually they would not create the same kind of tension. The formula is to stick to the strongest sensation that arises after reaffirming "I" at any given point during the processing.

What arises and where might change somewhat throughout the guidance, but if sensations arise in the throat, you watch that. Don't go looking for what you believe to be the self, if the processing needs to take place in the throat that moment.

If you wish you can try using an image, a memory of a setting or of people that usually trigger a strong sense of self instead, or in addition to the I-affirmations. Be serious about the reaffirmations.

Also, try out a recorded audio session, as well as reading a chapter or two in Awake e-book.

Jason: Ok, I understand, thanks for the course correction!

I have read all of the book. What do you mean by recorded session? I have just been saying the affirmations silently in my head, do you mean that I should say them out loud and record it?

Karl: It can be good to pick up from time to time and read a chapter with fresh eyes. No, I mean the recorded guided sessions by Kim in the internet. Have you tried it?

Jason: Oh, no, I will give that a shot. I did about an hour by myself and then did another session listening to Kim's video.

It feels like I am looking at something different than before. Following your advice, I let go of any idea of what the self should look like and just said the words. Looking past the tension of verbalizing that I described which still sometimes appears, I noticed a different sort of tension that felt more like an "echo" in the body. At first I felt it in the center of the head as before, but after one round of this it released. Then for every subsequent affirmation I have felt it near my heart, but slightly up and to the right side. It feels like a blockage... It also sometimes seems like it is in some kind of connection to the bottom of my throat.

Karl: Good. Keep trying to narrow it down.

Jason: When I return to I-less mode, I am not sure if it ever really goes away completely.

Karl: This is very normal. What you can do is that you can tune into the clarity, softness or spaciousness in a particular area where it is easier to recognise for you, such as for example the heart or the gut and then just relax into from there, allowing it to spread into the whole body and mind. That being said, as I have mentioned, it does not need to be perfect so it is not a big deal if it doesn't go away completely. Just keep relaxing and noticing the difference between the two modes.

Jason: It has definitely moved to the right part of the bottom of my throat now. It is about the size of a quarter or slightly smaller.

Karl: Alright, keep looking. How does it feel? Does it have a center? An edge?

Jason: If I find that I can bring up more energy (in either mode), without adding tension, should I do so? I find that if I do, the "I" spot vibrates faster, more strongly. I am not sure if this is useful for "flushing it out" or if it would cause too much "noise" and cover up some subtlety that I need to see.

Karl: What do you mean by bringing up more energy? The selfless mode is not about energy, but the context in which all phenomena, including energies, appear; spacious knowing. As for the I-based mode, if you can make it stronger and still be able to watch it clearly, sure, go ahead.

The processing is not about "flushing out" per say, but about watching the "I" until it is seen for what is. If you can increase the contrast between the two modes, this will help with that. But work with what you got, the intensity varies from day to day.

Jason: It feels like what I have thought of in the past as a "purification". The affirmations point me to a spot of tension and I bring awareness to that spot. At the moment I really see the sensations there, it seems to relax and I feel a surge of energy through the rest of my body, usually causing kriyas, spontaneous physical movements, elsewhere in the body. Is this what you mean by seeing what the "I" is? Not as a concept but just bringing the actual raw sensations into awareness?

Karl: Yes, exactly, you bring awareness to the pure sensation of "I", the strongest sensations arising after reaffirmation, and in that way peeling the onion layer by layer. Bodily kriyas and energy moving in the body are both very good signs that the process is working.

Jason: I have only experienced a handful of these purifications in my past practice but yesterday I had maybe 10 in a row! This is very encouraging to me, it feels like the affirmations are pointing me to exactly where I need to purify.

The spot moves around between my head, throat, heart, and this morning down into my solar plexus. Sometimes I get the feeling that it is like a sense of ownership, like this spot wants to be in charge of all the others, but if every spot is just aware of itself and leaves the other spots to be aware of themselves, then there is no tension. Sometimes dropping this idea in lets it come into awareness. At other times I feel that I need to bring a sense of acceptance or love or forgiveness to that part and that helps it to show itself.

Karl: Very good observations here regarding the two modes. Keep the momentum up now, keep digging deeper! What is the "I"?

Jason: I know this is mostly just intellectual knowledge that might be blocking true insight but this is what is coming to me now:

The "I" is the same as my awareness in I-less mode. It only appears separate due to a false division which are actually hindrances.

When I feel the I in the heart the hindrance is aversion or craving "I want something to be different". In the solar plexus it is fear. When I feel it in the throat it is like "I want to say something". In the head it is like delusion "I know something".

As soon as I fully perceive the hindrance, the division is not real and the I can be seen as part of awareness again.

Karl: You tell me, is it intellectual? Are you thinking it or experiencing it?

How do the two modes feel?

Jason: I think started as more of an intellectual pattern match but my experience seems to be verifying it more and more.

Karl: Stick to the pure experience of the two modes, that is all that matters in this setting.

Jason: The affirmations take longer and stronger affirmations are needed to bring the "I" up now. What it does bring up feels deeper and more dense. As it comes up, I dive into it and inhabit it. A certain faith has grown where I know that even when I am inhabiting it and appear cut off from awareness, it is still really there.

Karl: It is a relief isn't it? Being our own true nature, there is just no way we can lose it. Of course, it can feel like it is lost when the recognition gets obscured, but then it is a matter of letting go of illusion, rather than building or finding something outside ourselves.

Jason: Sometimes I can even see myself on both "sides", inhabiting the I and observing it at the same time. At first I would just hold there and wait for them to "sync up", but now I think that I am finding that I can fully dive in and inhabit the "I" to get at something deeper due to my growing faith that I can get back out.

Karl: Good. Keep observing how and when it pops up.

Jason: When the self appears separated from awareness, it naturally wants to reach out and get it back (possess it). While inhabiting it, I convince it that only by staying still can it rejoin awareness, because it can only be aware of itself, just as the rest of awareness is aware of itself. This allows me to "zoom out" a bit into awareness. By residing just at the border of the "I" and awareness, it feels like I get caught up in a stream of disidentification and release. A deep pleasure arises as "I" get swept up back into awareness. Shinzen Young speaks of something he calls "the taste of purification". I think that perhaps this is what he is referring to.

Karl: Yes, yes. The whole thing is a paradox, really, the "I" wants to experience it, but as such makes it into a thing, an object for itself, which naturally obscures it. However, by the release of the I-knot, spacious self-less awareness recognises itself and all is good.

I am not familiar with the context in which Shinzen says this, but it makes sense to speak of that release, dropping off of the heavy weight, as a taste of purification.

Jason: A few times after clearing other spots, when saying the affirmations I have not felt any particular spot come up but instead felt like it was the entire body that needed to be released. I find I have some limited ability to release the body into the surrounding space but it is not as easy as releasing the tension or energy of a particular spot into the rest of the body. It feels related but on a different level.

What should I do when this happens? So far every time this has happened, after awhile I do the affirmations again and a specific "I" spot appears once more.

Karl: Just affirm again as you say. Where is the spot now? Does it still move around?

Jason: It is mostly moving between around my heart and my head. I released a strong one in my left temple this morning. On average the ones in my head seem to be appearing higher up than before.

Karl: Ok, good. Keep following the strongest, narrowing it down.

Jason: It seems to be moving more towards the back of my head now. They are still

clearing but it is taking longer, but this seems like it is because my clarity is not as good today.

Karl: Alright, how does it feel in that location? Forget about time or waiting for it to drop and just study the raw sensations. Do you want you want to find out what it is? Wanting it to go away is just an added layer. Forget about it. How does it actually feel? What is it?

And how is the I-less mode? Are you taking enough time with it? Really letting it soak into your whole body and mind? You have to let it embrace your whole being.

If your mind is not clear, try shouting a few sharp "Ha!" or "Ho!" before starting the process. Immediately after shouting, relax your body fully. You can also try physically shaking the body, before you sit down. This cuts through the conceptual mind, clears things up and allows for greater relaxation.

Jason: It seems like progress is still occurring but my initial enthusiasm is waning. My mind seems to have started taking the progress for granted, is getting bored with purifications, and just wants to be done. I try to find the I that wants to be done but it is not clear. Maybe I am just tired.

I want to persist through but also know I shouldn't have an attitude of forcing it. Trying to find ways to rejuvenate the enthusiasm for the process.

Karl: Are you happy with how things are carrying around this extra weight all the time, or not? If you are, you are of course free to end the processing at any given moment. If however, you would like to know how it feels like to experience life and phenomena without the separation, it is pretty straight-forward. You just do it.

Jason: Yeah, this is spot on. Expectation of what should happen has come in and clouded the actual experience (a common theme in my practice after something is working: the analytical mind tries to take over once it thinks it knows what is going on). The initial curiosity of "what is it" is sated as it thinks it knows what it is, so motivating it to have the actual experience becomes harder.

I think you are right that I have not been spending enough time in I-less mode. If I soaked into that experience then the analytical mind would not be able to replace it with a lame concept so easily and the desire to be free of anything that is blocking it would become clear.

Watching out for any expectation of what will happen or wanting it to release seems to have gotten me over the hump, I can see the path forward clearly again. Spending more time in I-less mode is definitely helping.

I find that when I am in I-less mode, when I really let it embrace my whole being as you said, spots of tension below my head seem to spontaneously release with a small kriya without me even looking at them. As I push the edge of how much I can really let go, an "I" spot naturally reveals itself in my head and I am led naturally back into I-based mode without using any affirmations (although using them confirms that this is the "I" spot). Unlike before, when the spot shows itself like this it is always towards the front of the head and they seem to appear in a progression instead of randomly. The first one appeared between the eyes and each one has been progressively moving upwards.

Karl: Very good, it is crucial to balance off the two modes during the guidance. Focus too much on the "I" and you lose the ability to see clearly, focus too much on the I-less mode and the "I" will continue to operate subconsciously.

Keep processing!

Jason: The progression ended shortly after the last email, after 5 different spots from between the eyes going up to the last one directly on the crown. After that released it seems to have gone back to random spots, but mostly in the head.

Karl: Ok. Make sure that you are really looking for the strongest sensation, the core tension at any given point.

Jason: It is becoming easier to access the I-less mode more fully. I understand much better the difference between what I thought was relaxing before, which was really just cutting off the sensation, and really releasing fully to allow more in and let it spread through the body. I can feel very quickly where it is being limited, where I need to process. I went to work today and was able to access it more deeply than I have in the past at various points throughout the day, as long as I was not caught up directly in a thinking task. I actually got some processing done while driving around.

I am starting to see more clearly how the I is triggered by any sort of "trying", and how it is possible to do things without triggering it by just doing rather than trying.

Karl: Could you describe the "I"-less mode. How does it feel? What are some qualities that you can detect?

Jason: Initially I felt the I-less mode mostly as a stream of physical sensations that I let in. When the tension of a I spot released it would join with this stream of sensations and temporarily make it stronger. I usually only got a sense of space if I specifically invoked it.

Now I am starting to see it more often as a sense of space that can be more full of energy after a release or more empty after it has calmed down. Every once in a while the space will seem to really spread out beyond the body but then usually another "constraining" spot will reveal itself, which I then process.

I have some concern that my kriyas are distracting me from seeing the actual moment of release and that this is something I need to see. I try to stay focused through them but it is difficult, and attempting to suppress it seems to hamper the release. Do you have any tips for this?

Karl: Hmm... You seem to be somewhat hung up on causing these energies to release. The I-less mode is not the energies that appear in it, it is not some form of gross bliss etc. When you initially sit down, gently allow tensions to open up and watch the very ordinary, space, or neutrality, or knowingness that is already there in the spot where the tension. Nothing special... Just lack of solidity... Then moving on to the next tension, you do the same. When this lack of solidity starts to become more evident as a field that imbues the whole body, just relax into it. No need to hold the body in place, no need to go looking for something special or getting hung up on the kriyas. Just allow the bodyspace to recognise itself. Is there anything solid there?

Jason: Well, I take that back, today it did not seem very spacious. It was more like just things happening, random sensations without any context.

The I spot has narrowed down to just one spot, directly behind the eyes. I sat with it for a couple hours waiting for it to sync up on its own but it would not... I can "force it" through by saying "I" when it is right on the border of awareness and it will seem to go through and cause a kriya, for a moment it will seem to be resolved but then it comes back in the same spot. This has happened probably 8 times today.

Karl: Good that it has narrowed down. What do you mean sync up on its own? Don't force anything, just watch it. Keep looking at it without getting involved either way. Like a scientist. Just investigate its qualities with a curious matter. Is there movement? Vibration? Is it solid? In any case, don't try to make it go away, this is only more "I"...

Observe, observe, observe!

Jason: Thank you, I was caught up again in expectation based on what the process had looked like before, not allowing it to show itself differently.

I just observed as you said and held my concentration on it... At some point it seemed like it merged with awareness without me even noticing.

After that point there something felt different. I don't really feel any point of tension when I say the affirmations. It is like the "wall" between the two modes isn't really there anymore. There can still be tension but it doesn't quite respond in the same way. The difference is subtle but clear compared to the practice before. I will see if this change persists in the morning.

Karl: Sounds good. Let me know if it persists. If it does, describe as clearly as possible what the change feels like.

Jason: It has definitely persisted this morning. Before I felt like there was a hard line between attention and awareness, if I tried hard to focus on something it would block out everything else. Now it feels like they are fused, I never feel completely disconnected from the rest of awareness. I don't feel high or anything, it feels completely normal but I know in the past it was not like this.

Karl: Sounds promising. Could you send me a fresh photo of your face along with the one you already took, please?

Jason: Yes. I wasn't sure if I got good lighting so I took a few.

Photos not allowed to be published.

Karl: Yes, there is a nice clarity coming through the eyes in the latest photos. Congratulations on awakening!

It is quite normal and ordinary, isn't it? This comes as a surprise to most people who picture all kinds of fancy things happening, but in a sense there is nothing special about awareness.. it is just wonderful spacious clarity!

How have you been feeling today?

Jason: Thank you!

I did have a more grandiose idea of it from people's descriptions but I know for some people it can be very subtle as well. I have been generally feeling pretty good. I have been experimenting and looking at the mind trying to investigate exactly what has changed. It is so normal that I probably wouldn't notice if I hadn't been doing the practice this whole time and noticing the "I". When I try to do 2PF it seems like it doesn't really make sense now, without two sides there is nothing to compare against. At first it felt like there was barely any tension at all, but today I find that I can still generate tension. My relationship to it feels different and it seems like maybe I need to find a new way of working with it.

Do you have any advice on how I should progress from here? I've taken a look at the post awakening practices on Open Heart-website. They do seem very different than 2PF, which I was drawn to because it seemed very practical and in line with my understanding of dharma theory. The other practices (mantra, guru and deity yoga, empowerments etc) seem more ritualistic to me which I have not been drawn to in the past. However since 2PF worked so well I feel that perhaps I would be remiss if I did not at least give them a shot. Clearly they have worked for you, I am wondering if you have an opinion on different approaches?

Karl: Yes, there will still be tension, but as you say the relationship changes somewhat after awakening. You will probably notice as well, that after an initial honeymoon, more of your regular habit patterns will kick back in to function. This is because it is only the core habit that has been addressed and dealt with in the guidance, the subject-self. In order to deal with the more temporary object-selves such as thoughts, emotions and feelings, as well as more subtle dull mind states, what is needed is object vipashyana, insight practice. There are many forms of methods that lead to insight, but in Open Heart, as you have seen from the website, we recommend tantric practice, in the context of open awareness (selfless mode).

Although, the form of tantric practices are more exotic, I do not agree that they need be more ritualistic. All practices, regardless of tradition or categorisation can be ritualistic, but on the other hand, they can also be skillfully applied. What tantra means is simply "energy work". So instead of looking at the different qualities of each and every object that arises in the mind, we activate non-dual energies within our own body and allow them to transform confusion into clarity (selfless mode). The benefit of this is that we don't have to investigate the numerous habits in our minds one by one, but can address them in a more holistic way which is more effective.

In Open Heart we do not under any circumstance encourage empty rituals, so even though we use mantra, gurus-images, prayer, visualisation etc. the only focus is on the effect that this produces in our minds. The main goal of all practices, regardless of tradition, is to purify the mind of all selfing-habits in order to stabilise the full recognition of the natural state at all times. There is simply no other point to it. This is the same for Open Heart teachings.

Jason's Written Account

My name is Jason, I am 38 years old. I was raised a Christian but became a staunch atheist and scientific materialist for most of my life. I discounted the religious experiences of others as delusional. Then a few years ago, I heard a podcast in which they described the Marsh Chapel Experiment. The experiment appeared to demonstrate that religious experiences and psychedelic experiences are essentially the same thing. This got me thinking that if the same subjective experience can be reproduced using different means, perhaps there was something “real” about it after all. I decided that I needed to at least look for myself.

I began experimenting with psychedelics. It was not long before I realized that there was something real there and I began to follow the path in earnest. Two years ago I began meditating every day using the book *The Mind Illuminated* by Culadasa John Yates as a guide. I had some difficulties due to my ADD but made good progress. Eventually I decided to take medicine to treat my ADD and this improved the quality of my meditation. I considered myself to be around stage 5-6 of TMI when I went on my first retreat in October of 2017.

The retreat was incredible. It was a 10 day silent retreat, I experienced intense vibratory *piti* and flow states. On the plane ride home I had a cessation, after which my entire perception entered into a flow state for about 10 minutes. I thought that stream entry must be right around the corner.

However after the retreat, my experience returned basically to normal. I experimented with body awareness techniques, basic qigong, tai chi and mahamudra. I had some minor insights but every time I started to gain momentum with a technique, my analytical mind would attempt to take ownership of it and take me off track. For the next year I did not make much progress although I still could feel the benefits of the meditation.

When I heard about 2PF, I was very skeptical. The reported success rate within such a short amount of time seemed impossible to me, but the technique seemed like it should work very well based on my understanding of dharma theory. My wife was pregnant with our first child and due in less than a month, so I decided I would give it a shot in one last attempt to reach stream entry before my family commitments limited my ability to practice.

When I first started 2PF, I had some misunderstandings about what the “I” was. I read too much into the instructions because of my prior experiences and my expectations of what it should look like often got in the way. Karl helped me to lose these expectations and understand the instructions clearly. The instructions and the whole process were actually much more straightforward than I imagined. Five days in I realized what I was actually looking for and began the practice in earnest.

Many spots of tension became apparent. As I observed them, they seemed to rejoin open awareness with a big rush of energy as the blockage released. Over the next few days I experienced between 200-300 of these purifications, which I had only experienced a handful of times in my past two years of meditation.

One day, I had an acupuncture session, which I do every two weeks. After this the “I” spot narrowed down to just one spot, right behind the eyes. As I observed it, I seemed to enter an absorption with it. Instead of the big purification release that I experienced with the

other spots, this time it just seemed to slip into awareness without any resistance.

After that it felt like this spot that had been constraining my awareness was gone. The tension can still be there but it is seen as part of awareness. A wall that used to separate awareness and the “I” based mode is gone, so I never feel completely separated from awareness. This shift appears to be permanent. In a way it seems very "normal" and natural. In my daily life I might not even notice it, but since I have been comparing the “I” based mode with awareness so much, the fact that I can't see two modes anymore is very clear.

I highly recommend 2PF to anyone who is seeking stream entry. It cuts right to the core of the self delusion more easily than I could have imagined.

Case 3: Dan

The following dialogue lasted 18 days.

Dan: Hello Kim. Earlier today I read about the opportunity to undergo one-on-one guidance to awakening and I would love to be considered for this.

My name is Dan, I am a 34 year old male from the Netherlands, working as a manager of the human resources department of a large multinational. My first introduction to meditation was many years ago. I was studying abroad in my last year of college when I was introduced to zen meditation. Before this I had suffered from severe depression for many years due to unresolved childhood trauma. In the beginning, it was a very intense experience and it completely changed my life. However, after a while I got turned off by the rituals and dogmatism.

Ever since, I've been meditating on and off. I've tried several paths, but was not able to find the right fit. I accept and understand the claim that the self is an illusion. The sense of self disappears when closely examined, but so far as it has only been fleeting experiences. Periods of great happiness, joy and great clarity have ended only to fall back into a very deep darkness from one day to the next. It leaves me wanting for something permanent. For the clarity of mind to be available in the context of the ordinary every day life.

Last year, after spending over a decade abroad, my family and I moved from Mexico back to the Netherlands. We moved back in order to be closer to my mother who, after a surgery gone horribly wrong, only has a few more years left. We left our lives behind, moved to a different country, bought a house, switched careers, and changed to a different company, all in the span of a year. I suppose the stress of it all pushed me back into the darkness.

A couple of weeks ago a post on reddit sparked my interest and I tried the 2PF for the first time. It was an amazing experience for me. I was able to feel and visualize the suffering inside of my body. However, after being able to get rid of a few of the tensions inside of me, I was not able to dissolve the ones that remain to this day. I still feel the pressure on my skull. I still feel a black knot tied in my stomach and in front of my heart.

I would love to participate and get the support I need to move forward and finally release the tension that I've carried around with me for all these years. I want to modulate this pain, and mitigate my anxiety and depression. Not just for myself, but to show my children that it's possible to move on and find happiness again.

Kim: Thank you for your message and heart touching story. We are glad to help you out. I'm passing your guidance to Karl.

For now, do preparation. Instructions for that have been given. Prepare well so that you're ready when Karl sends you an email in few weeks time.

A short note about the dark knots. Don't try to dissolve them. Don't even expect them to dissolve. Just stay with them, like being together with an angry or scared dog in the room. Togetherness with the sensations, whatever they are, makes all the difference. The point is there should be no motivation to fix it, remove it or to win it. Also, always use both modes in equal measure. That's the key.

Good luck.

Kim passes on the guidance to Karl. After some preparation time Karl sends additional information and the guidance is started.

Dan: Here is a description of my perception of the I-less and I-based mode, although I fear it might sound quite cliché.

I-less mode:

- It usually starts in my belly. I feel the air flow in and the energy flows through my body
- The sense of separation disappears and it almost feels like my body is expanding
- It feels light, relaxed, warm, loving and free from concern

I-based mode:

- After repeating the affirmations I feel pressure on my stomach, the right side of my chest, and especially my forehead
- The feeling is dark and tight. Pressure preventing me from breathing fully
- The description of a knot feels accurate, as if something is stuck or as if the energy flow is blocked by something
- Around my head I feel pressure, as if I'm wearing a very tight and heavy crown, weighing down on my forehead, about 1 cm above my eyebrows
- There is a weird vibration and it's very "present", as if it consumes a lot of energy or as if it is very active

Throughout the day I noticed on multiple occasions that this sense of "I" was becoming more active, usually when I was angry or annoyed with something. I would feel the knot in my stomach and the pressure on my forehead. Even while writing this now, I can feel the pressure.

Karl: This sounds very good. You seem to have clearly identified the two modes, so now the process is essentially about processing the two modes further until the the "I" drops away on its own accord. Keep marinating in the softness of the first mode and during the second, pick the strongest of the sensations and then just stay with it, not trying to manipulate the energy in any way like trying to make it go away. Just watch. Is there any clearly defined edge to the "I"? Does it have a shape? A center? What is it?

Dan: Today I went through two 20 minute sessions. Both sessions were pretty much identical. First I settled in the I-less mode, looking for relaxation and spaciousness. After my first round of affirmations I felt the tension in my forehead. The tension stayed there for the entire duration of the session, even when focusing the attention on the I-less mode. I was able to investigate it, to look deeper inside, and I noticed that it wasn't so much "behind the eyes" as is common, but more on the outside of the head, covering the skin and the skull. One observation from the first session, towards the end I felt like the tension area

was being "stretched out", almost like a rubber band. Only the "mine"-affirmations are giving me a very different sensation, closer to the chest and solar-plexus, pushing down on my lungs

Karl: Good. Keep at it. Regarding different sensations associated with "I", "me" and "mine", that is fine, but not very important. You don't have to use all of them in every session, as long as you get the "I"-feeling triggered enough to be able to study.

Dan: In my first session I felt like my ability to concentrate and focus wasn't as solid as normal as my mind kept wandering. After the first affirmations I felt pressure around my solar plexus, but after turning my attention towards it the tension slowly released. After the second round of affirmations I focused on the tension in my forehead but I noticed I kept getting distracted by thoughts about the earlier release I felt. As soon as I sat down on my pillow for my second sit I felt the tension in my head. Its been very present all day and on multiple occasions I became aware of it while interacting with others

Karl: Yes, it is totally normal that the ability to focus varies, just stick with it. Although it might be uncomfortable or draining, it is actually good that the sensations are becoming more evident. In addition to being easier to see, it is also a sign that the processing is working. Keep looking at the sensations, really getting into the core of the "I". What is in there?

Dan: I really enjoyed my second session as I tried to get into the core where I feel the tension most and ask myself the question you posed - what is in there? I noticed that the answer I kept getting was "nothing" just more space. However, it felt like a moving target and I was only able to create this sense of space in very small areas while still surrounded by tension.

Karl: Good work! Keep drilling into it!

Dan: I can't wait until tomorrow to try again.

Karl: That's the spirit. Shouldn't be too long with that kind of motivation.

Dan: Apologies for not writing earlier. In my first session yesterday I realized I was trying to "get rid" of the feeling of I rather than accepting it and investigating it. After this realization I shifted back to a more neutral mode, simply letting it be.

Karl: Good. There is nothing that "I" can do to get rid of the "I", that is the paradox here. Only by illuminating its artificial nature through meeting it with awareness, exposing the magic trick, so to speak, does it loose its hold.

Dan: It is difficult for me to "let go". Not just while meditating, but in life in general. Always striving for something, always trying to change and improve every aspect of my life.

Karl: Investigate this feeling here. Go to the core of it. What is it that is seeking something better?

Dan: In daily life a lot of emotional baggage has been coming to the surface. I'm having a hard time talking about it with the people around me, like my wife, but I've been reflecting on a lot of my thoughts, habits, relationships, etc. By reflecting I mainly mean me becoming aware that these thoughts are there. I try not to "engage" with these thoughts, but sometimes they feel quite useful and insightful, and it's difficult to find the right balance between non-judgement and actually taking action based on these thoughts and ideas.

Karl: Good. Means that the processing is working. So far so good. Keep drilling into the "I"! Is there anybody in there?

Karl doesn't receive a reply for a few days.

Karl: What's up? Did your email get stuck again?

Dan: Unfortunately this time it was work related. Due to a work emergency I worked almost non-stop for the last 2 days, with only a couple of hours of sleep in between.

Yesterday, when I was already close to the end of my morning meditation session, a repressed memory surfaced with a very strong negative emotional load attached to it. Tears came rolling down my eyes and it felt as if I was kicked in the stomach. My breathe slowly took control of the pain and my body returned to it's baseline again. It felt as if a layer of the onion had been peeled off and a heavy weight had been lifted from my shoulders. After the session I showered, drank my tea, and left for work. Just like I mentioned before, I had no desire for any additional stimuli, no radio, no podcasts, just me and my breath. I felt calm and relaxed, but also exhausted.

Later that day, due to the work emergency, I was not able to sit at night. I arrived home late and went straight to bed without seeing my wife or kids. This morning I woke up extra early in order to get a longer, 35 minute session in, to recover for the "pillow" time I had missed the night before, I'm not sure if that was the right decision or not. This time I used the guided meditation from recording and Kim talked me through the process. I woke up filled with work-related anxiety, but after meditating I felt re-energized and my mind was clear. I probably had one of my most productive workdays of the year and was even able to send my team home early.

Karl: Alright. How is your perception of the two modes at the present moment?

Dan: It sounds cliché but my perception right now is best described as a dark cloud (I-based mode) in a clear summer sky (I-less mode).

The strange thing is that before the I-based mode felt more stretched out along my forehead, whereas right now it feels more like it's a little black hole with "dark" vibrations radiating outwards. I've been looking for the centre or the core, but couldn't find or pinpoint it

Karl: Ok. Sounds like you have a very clear picture of the two modes. Keep marinating in the boundless sky and investigating the dark cloud over and over.

Very good observations regarding the I-feeling. Keep studying the black hole, shining the light of awarness directly on it. It doesn't matter if you have trouble pinpointing it, just keep on looking, really zooming on it. Closer and closer.

Dan: Today was mainly gym and family time so not much to report.

I've noticed a big improvement in becoming more aware of my thoughts and actions in daily life. The sudden realization I reacted to something on auto-pilot again. It's been helping me identify ego-driven behaviour, and to observe and analyse the feelings in my body and the thoughts driving the behaviour.

Karl: I understand, but do stick to the minimum requirement of two sessions per day. This is crucial in order to build enough momentum to be able to break through the illusion once and for all. Otherwise we're wasting time here. OK?

Dan: Apologies if I was not clear in my previous message, I did do my 2 sits. With not much to report I was referring to the sits themselves being unremarkable. My body felt relaxed, my mind was calm, and the black hole was just... there. It wasn't very active, but it was present.

Karl: Alright. Keep it up!

Dan: While focusing on the cloud I noticed the pressure felt strongest right above the eye brows, and I kept investigating it until my attention rested on one particular spot where I felt like I found a “trigger point” right above my right eyebrow. I kept my attention there for the duration of the entire sit, and it became so intense that the sound of the meditation bell to end the session made my heart almost skip a beat.

After that I had to shift my attention back to deep belly breathing for a solid 5 minutes before I felt ready to end the session. I was planning on doing some exercise after meditating, but I feel quite drained energy wise.

Karl: Good. Keep checking out that trigger point! What is in there? Also, do you really need to use a meditation bell for the sittings? I am asking because, as this is a very organic process, it would be better if you were able to finish on your own accord rather than having a bell telling you the time is up. You seem to be getting very close now and if it can be avoided it would be best if you weren't interrupted in the middle of your investigation. Of course you can use a clock and glance at it throughout the processing in order to keep track of the time, but when you do investigate the two modes you want to do so until you are actually finished, not when clock says you are.

Keep going now. All the way!

Dan: You are correct, I don't really need the meditation bell and I will move forward without it.

This morning my experience while sitting was quite different. The colour of the cloud was not as dark as before, and the vibrations were different as well. I tried to pay around a little with shifting my attention to the sensation of the breathe at my nostrils, which helped create a more clear picture of the cloud.

Karl: Try to stick with the instructions for the two modes. Sometimes, the sensations are not as strong and that is fine. Just study what is at that particular moment. If it is hard to get a clear picture you can try the affirmations with more force, like you really mean it. Don't mix the breath into it as it likely to lead you off track.

Dan: The area of tension didn't feel aggressive, but almost numb. The same way your arm feels after the blood stream has been cut off for a while. I kept looking inside but I didn't find anything. It's not easy putting these experiences into words but in some areas I find more spaciousness, while in other areas I feel some sort of resistance, and sometimes, when my eyes are closed, my eyelids start twitching.

Karl: What do you mean that in some areas you find more spaciousness? Where? Where is the cloud located? In your head? Can you still find the "I" in the eyebrow area?

Dan: I'm not sure if relevant, but the only noteworthy observation here was that my left arm kept tensing up (flexing) every time I did my affirmations. Either this is new, or I simply never noticed before.

Karl: Twitching and tensing in different body parts is very normal and often travels around the body throughout the guidance. After doing the affirmations, remember to single out the strongest sensation each time and study that with determination to discover something new. Keep the momentum up.

Dan: Quick update on the sessions today.

Mixed feelings about my morning session. I started with my eyes closed but everything started spinning. It got better with my eyes open but it took a while to get settled. There was only a very weak response to the first round of affirmations. For the first time since

starting this process I did a round of affirmations in my native tongue, which brought along a much stronger response. I was then settling in nicely and ended the session strong. Without the clock I went over by 10 minutes without noticing .

Second session was good but my brain was quite active, bringing up a lot of thoughts. It allowed me to practice non-judgement, which is something I struggle with off the cushion. My practice is spilling into my life off the cushion more and more. I do notice that I've been having difficulty being social lately, and generally speaking I just prefer to be left alone. Having said that, I've been extremely busy at work as well, so I'm also in need of some time off.

Karl: Ok. Stick to the native tongue as that is probably what you have been using the most throughout your life.

If a lot of stuff is coming up during the sessions, don't bother adding non-judgement practice etc. These sessions are not meditations, but purely investigations into the "I". If the mind is not clear enough to relax into awareness (which is automatically and effortlessly non-judgemental), then before you start, cut through the discursive mind by shouting a few sharp "Ha!" or "Ho!". Keep the body relaxed, but do apply some force. Nevermind the neighbours. Then relax fully, notice the space and get back to business. The only thing that counts is processing the two modes, nothing else.

Also, you seem to have somewhat lost focus. Try to find something new related to the two modes each session, applying razor sharp focus during every investigation. You can keep a pen and paper close by and try to write a few new observations everytime. This will sharpen things up.

Dan: It's often difficult to put into words what you see and feel while investigating either mode. When I try to describe the experience I feel lost for words.

Karl: I know that it is, but you have to do it anyways. Hah!

Dan: Just now one thing I experienced was that the cloud and I felt like "one". As in, it was there, but there was a feeling of peace and acceptance for a while. Only to return to normal. But after that experience I notice that normal is not exactly normal anymore.

Karl: Interesting. What do you mean that normal is not exactly normal anymore? What has changed? Describe as clearly as possible.

Dan: These are the things I experienced today, but it feels like incoherent rambling when I put it in words.

Karl: You are actually one of the more clear and coherent of those I have worked with, so don't worry.

Dan: Normal is not normal because I am now more aware of the sensations in the different modes and can therefore see things more clearly. Everything is the same and I still get lost in thought when I'm feeling stressed, or angry for no reason. But I can see that those reactions are then my auto-pilot and it's me, but it's not really me. I am able to tell the difference. Not always, but often. I'm more present and I'm better prepared to deal with the bad, and better able to enjoy the good. My reactions are also more pure and driven by reality rather than the stories programmed in my head.

Today my I-based mode was quite weak while sitting. It felt like I had a sticker stuck on my forehead. I couldn't really find anything new. It was there, it was vibrating, it felt tight, and when trying to look deeper I would feel pressure on my skull and a very light buzzing in my ears.

To be frank, it felt annoying. Like a tight muscle that needs to relax through either massage or dry needling. Like the tension you have right before you sneeze. I tried to observe it and analyze it. To just be with it. The I-less mode is much more pleasant and peaceful. Like everything is just right and you are at peace with your surroundings.

Karl: Ok. Keep at it, alternating the two modes.

Dan: First session started with very easy access to the I-less more. My body felt warm and light with some mild tension above the eye brow. When I sat there I remembered Kim's voice saying that "you do not need to do anything else" from the guided session as I settled in the spaciousness. At times I felt a light tingling sensation on my skin and after a minute or two I felt a slow melting sensation in my forehead, mainly on the right side. After this my eyes started tearing up but not out of joy or happiness. It also wasn't intense, just a very subtle release. After a minute I felt the light in my body go away to make place for a light gray. Less alive than before, but not in a bad way.

The affirmations had to be firm to bring up a reaction. I felt the tension a little above the third eye. It was clearly there, but it didn't feel hostile. Just light pressure.

Second session the tension and vibrations were a little weaker again Looking at it, it almost felt like dead skin. It's pulling a little, but it's mainly numb. The I-less mode was strong, peaceful, relaxed and there was a sense of acceptance of the tension in my forehead. It was just there, like a dull toothache. After the session ended I kind of just sat there for a while. Staring at the wall, enjoying just being there. No drive or desire to move.

My practice has been overlapping with daily life more and more. Creating awareness. For example, after meditating, while sitting on the couch I felt a sense of dualism. As in, there was "it" and there was me. "It" being the cloud in my head, me being the rest of my body. The life energy I feel with every breath.

Karl: I kind of get the feeling from your writing that a shift has already taken place. What do you reckon? Has the I lost its gripping power?

Dan: That's a tough one... I feel there was a shift, but I'm not sure if it was a permanent shift. Maybe it's that I would've expected more "bells and whistles" to come with a permanent shift, while this experience wasn't as powerful as some of the experiences I've had in the past.

Karl: It is very common to have expectations for what awakening is, and it is also common to question "is this really it?". However, what is revealed is not "bells and whistles", just very ordinary calm. It is not powerful in the normal sense of the world, but the effortlessness of it is. Extraordinarily ordinary.

Dan: Your question stuck with me for my first meditation session today. Maybe it was because of this question mauling over in my head that the affirmations did not bring up the typical sensations in my forehead. Instead, I felt tightness in my solar plexus. This tightness remained for the entire session, even though the I-less mode felt safe, free and comforting.

Throughout the day I did feel a certain sense of equanimity. The drive to work was fine, the stresses from work didn't seem to have any impact on me, and a big presentation didn't give me the typical nervous reaction.

For my second session today I decided to do a guided session with Kim, from one of the recordings. After moving into the I-less mode I did still notice some tension just above the eyebrows. When going through the affirmations I did feel light vibrations there, but the tension in my solar plexus returned and settled as the more powerful reaction to the

affirmations. I observed it from the I-less mode and it disappeared again after a couple of minutes. The second round of affirmations brought back some tension in the solar plexus, as well as the forehead, but both were very light and, for the most part, disappeared after a minute or two of observation.

As I sit here writing this, my body and mind feel relaxed, but I do still feel some light pressure on my forehead.

Karl: Please take another photo of your face and eyes, and send it to me along with the previous photo so I can have a look where we are at.

Dan: For some reason I cannot find the picture I took the day we started. I'll keep looking but for now I'm sending you a picture I took right before we got started.

Please let me know if you have any questions and/or comments.

Karl: No worries, it is obvious from the pictures that awakening has taken place.. Congratulations! Feel free to drop the 2PF now and enjoy the soft clarity.

How are you feeling?

Dan: It's hard to explain as I'm feeling the same, but different. The changes I'm experiencing are subtle but noticeable. For example:

- I feel like I'm less stuck in my head, and more present in my entire body
- I'm more aware of things happening around me, as well as my own thoughts and the rising and falling of my breath
- It's almost as if I'm in meditation mode all day and your description of soft clarity is quite accurate
- I do notice my thoughts taking control of my attention sometimes, but I tend to recognize this almost immediately
- Yesterday I noticed some sensations in my forehead, but instead of pressure it felt like it was stretching out, as if it was opening up wider and wider
- I still notice some sensations around my eyes, as if there is a need to re-adjust. My gaze is not as focused on one thing, but I have a broader field of view and I'm more aware of my peripheral vision
- I also notice my gaze being different when interacting with people. One odd thing is that I notice I keep raising my eyebrows when I talk to people, like a look of surprise or shock. Perhaps I've always done this and just now beginning to notice
- Sometimes I notice light pressure on my skull. Not in a bad way, but it's just there

Those are the observations I wrote down today. One realization as I am writing this is that at work we're going through the most stressful period of the year. Last year I was suffering tremendously and I was having nightmares and panic attacks. I would lie in bed with my eyes wide open all night long, thinking about all things that could go wrong. This year things are completely different. I feel balanced, confident, at peace with the situation and I sleep like a baby.

Karl: That is a really nice description! I'm happy for you!

Yes, it is subtle, because it is not some mind state that we have achieved but something unnecessary that has been dropped. It is like getting rid of the stone in the shoe. Just natural, how it should be.

Yet you will probably notice the old habits will kick somewhat back into function after some time. This is because there is a difference between the subject-self and the object-selves; thoughts, emotions, feelings - and the Two-Part Formula targets only the former. So, although it won't "go back" to what it used to be before awakening, after an initial honeymoon of being very clear, these objects will come rising to the surface. This is where post-awakening practice comes into the picture.

Dan: Words cannot express how grateful I am for your guidance. I went into this with a healthy dose of scepticism but the whole process was easy to understand, pleasant and extremely effective. These past couple of days have been quite interesting and it has taken my practice to a whole new level.

Dan's Written Account

Anxiety and depression have been a major part of my life for as long as I can remember. I grew up in a warm and loving family, but at a very young age I was diagnosed with a disease which kept me in a wheelchair for almost my entire childhood. I was placed in a special school, and I was unable to play with kids from my neighbourhood. Even after full recovery, the social isolation and feelings of inadequacy stuck with me for many years.

I struggled through high school and college with suicidal thoughts and self-destructive behaviour. It wasn't until I got the opportunity to study abroad in my final year in college that I found some relief through Zen Buddhism. Sitting in silent meditation alleviated some of the pain and suffering which had been inside of me for so many years. I started attending the weekly group sessions and created the habit of daily meditation. A habit I have continued for almost 15 years now.

Not long after I started meditating on a daily basis I was having very intense experiences.

Some of these experiences were extremely powerful and would stick with me for days at a time. More than once I felt like I had been able to shrug off the many years of pain and suffering. While the practice did completely change my life, the experiences were fleeting and they never lasted. It left me wanting for something permanent. For the clarity of mind to be available in the context of the ordinary every day life. After a while I started getting turned off by the rituals and dogmatism of our group, and I decided to try different forms of meditation and spiritual practices. Yoga, zen, anapanasati, mindfulness, deep breathing, mantra meditation, I tried it all but was never able to find the right fit.

When I first read about Kim Katami and Open Heart I was quite sceptical. The claims he made seemed too good to be true, and I had reservations about the practice itself due to the many references to tantric elements, such as deities and gurus. However, not long after my first exposure to the practice I ran into an online discussion where people were talking about the Two-Part Formula (2PF) and awakening. The more I read about the 2PF the more I realized that there was no need to accept anything purely based on faith. The approach made sense logically and the practice itself was simple and easy to understand. I used the 2PF on my own for a couple of weeks and something just clicked for me. Because of this I applied for online guidance and was paired up with Karl who I worked with until the moment of awakening. The process was intense but extremely rewarding. And most importantly, the shift was not fleeting, but actually intensified over time.

For me the biggest difference is that my practice has taken over my regular daily life. It's almost as if I'm in meditation mode the entire day and there is a permanent soft clarity. I have become much more present and more aware of the things happening around me at all

times. Nowadays I actually enjoy my commute to work and I do not feel the need to speed or distract myself with loud music and podcasts. At work even the most stressful periods do not have any negative impact on my emotional wellbeing.

After the experience I had I decided to continue working with post-awakening practices taught by Open Heart. Undergoing the guidance to awakening with Karl has been a wonderful experience I would highly recommend to anyone looking to invest in their happiness and well-being. It has allowed me to let go of my painful past and move forward with a sense of peace and equanimity.

Case 4: Wolfgang

The following dialogue lasted 12 days.

Wolfgang: Hello! I just read about your Guidance to Awakening. My name is Wolfgang, I am 33 years old, and live in Austria. I am working part time in retail, while getting a degree in law. My history of practice is pretty long, but also very spotty: I have tried various types of practice on my own, mostly Theravadin insight meditation, but never very intensively, and so not under guidance so far. I am very interested in the type of practice you offer, because the success-stories associated with it made me curious. Thank you again for your consideration. I would be delighted to hear back from you.

Kim: Hi Wolfgang. Sure thing, glad to help you. Do preparation for a week and I'll email you when its time to begin dialogue.

After preparation period Kim sends some additional information and the guidance is started.

Wolfgang: You asked me to report on the I-less mode and the I-based modes. I-less mode feels quiet and spacious. The release of tensions caused little problems, and I felt rather comfortable with being with my body. Sometimes things here shifted to a sense of space on the outside, which didn't seem like a big problem, since as soon as any tensions came up, "embodiment" came with them immediately. I-mode is immediately different, as there is a rather clear focus and slight pressure between the eyes, which sometimes extends into the forehead. That is the main experience I have when formally sitting down. During everyday life, the sensations associated with "me" are a bit different. The feeling of pressure and tension between the eyes is the most regular and most obvious sensation, but there also often is a slight constriction around the chest area. Sometimes, especially when engaged in a bodily activity, "I" also comes up as "me as my body". This often comes with thoughts like: "Currently I am stirring the pot", for example, where there is a narrowing of attention to the activity and the sensations, without a sense of spaciousness.

Kim: You are making good basic notions.

Wolfgang: During formal sitting it's not a big problem to relax back into I-less mode, though it can still take some time till the tension releases. During everyday life it can be a bit trickier, as there are sometimes distractions which keep me from tuning into spaciousness. I hope this is alright for my first report, and that this includes feedback on

my experience you can work with. If you have any aspects of my experience you want me to emphasize, or want more detail, please feel free to offer suggestions for improvement.

Kim: You write well, no problem. Just keep at it and report. Release into the basic space, I-less, and the dig in to the I. Are you able to notice that the I-less space is there, even despite of tensions or movement of the body?

Wolfgang: Sometimes. It's not a level of clarity I can maintain all the time. Sometimes I simply forget to pay attention. Sometimes other sensations seem so dominant and in the foreground that I can't seem to get a clear look on whether there also is I-less space present, or not.

Kim: Oh, that is fine. That is good enough.

Wolfgang: I think that's a good intro toward what is happening during formal sitting: Easing into I-less state remains easy, and seems to become a little easier with ongoing practice. Sometimes there are some tensions, which I try to release. Sometimes they go away easily. Sometimes they stay a while, which I suppose is okay, since there doesn't seem to be anything I can do about that, but to remain open.

Kim: Exactly, not forcing tension release. It is actually OK whether or not there are tensions but for a beginner relaxation is helpful. Good.

Wolfgang: The interesting thing is that the distinction between I-based mode and I-less mode seems to become a little less strict. Tensions still come up similarly to yesterday, but they don't necessarily make the spacious aspect go away. I had an interesting aha-moment where some piece of that self-tension itself had a spacious quality to it. That was just a moment though, and with noticing it, it felt like things immediately snapped back into place again, with spaciousness and tension only intersecting at the borders.

Kim: Oh, interesting. After insight, that self-tension keeps that spacious quality.

Wolfgang: The nature of the tensions itself is mostly unchanged, as they still feel similar, and come up in similar places, as slight pressure between the eyes and, as I have noticed now, a slight focus on visual things that seems to come along with that. What seems to increasingly occur is that spaciousness seems to remain more prevalent and that the borders between tension and the relaxed room around them seem softer.

Kim: All right. Just stick with it.

Wolfgang: Today I was rereading the book, and it is really interesting how many things that I just glossed over the first time around start to make sense now. Especially statements about "looking out of the eyes, instead of looking behind the eyes", which is described as a deeply ingrained tendency seems to make a lot more sense, after looking behind the eyes for a while. There really seems to be a tendency to simply not look there, and look out instead of in.

Kim: It's a good observation. This area inside the head, is really where the I sits. Therefore, important to pay attention to what's going on there, how the me shows up in one instant and disappears in another.

Wolfgang: Yesterday I shortly referred to "visual things" in I-mode. That was what I tried to put into words there: There was a strong perspective of "looking out", going along with "seeing things" that went into the foreground. Today there are many moments where it's easy to rest with the tensions and sensations that come up while "looking in", and then sometimes, going along with the affirmations, things seem to shift toward a "looking out"-perspective, which goes along with tension. It is all very interesting to look at. All in all the rest of the rest of the experiences haven't changed much compared to yesterday. I'll continue to investigate.

Kim: You need to dig in more with the affirmation. Put some emotion, will, into saying, "I, I, I" or "me, me, me". Say it with more energy and see what happens. Let me know.

Wolfgang: I have been digging in harder with the affirmation, as you suggested, and there were some changes. At times there were quite a few emotions and tensions that came up in response to the affirmations. And I have been able to recognize those same tensions when they were coming up in everyday life. What mainly comes up now is still tension between the eyes, but also a broader, slightly constricted feeling in the head. Sometimes it feels like I can clearly look through them.

Kim: Good.

Wolfgang: What has probably increased most is the ability to differentiate when selfing occurs in everyday life. Through the increased intensity of the affirmations, I can often see when it occurs now, and what emotions come along with it. That has also been one of the differences I noticed that more emotions seem to come up, There seems to be little thinking, or reasoning coming along with them, but they seem mostly bodily. There is sometimes a feeling like sadness, around the heart, sometimes the feeling like tears want to come up, often quite spontaneously. It's nothing that is very strong, but something that I can notice that sometimes comes along when that tension comes up.

Kim: OK. Continue. Drill it!

Wolfgang: Alright, I'll be upping the pace. There are still various responses happening. So far today responses when doing the affirmations have been heavy on the bodily side. Lots of goosebumps, sometimes along with slight shaking. Constricting feelings that were at the heart area before, are now coming up more around the stomach. At times there is a slight pressure in the broader head area that goes along with those physical sensations. Emotions sometimes bubble up, mostly sadness.

The other side is that the "I-less" type of seeing becomes more prevalent at the same time. When emotions like sadness come up, they usually don't feel heavy, or constrictive, but rather light. When rereading all the things that happen up there, with tensions, and emotions, and unexplained things happening, that might sound disconcerting, but usually that's not what it feels like at all. It's all not particularly uncomfortable. Sometimes I find myself not wanting to look at the biggest pieces of tension, but that's usually short-lived, and as soon as I look I have to ask myself why I didn't want to do my job.

Kim: The direction is right. Keep going, keep going.

Wolfgang: Thank you, it's reassuring to know that the direction seems right. The previous session was interesting, since this was the first time that I got hot on the meditation cushion. That was the most remarkable thing I noticed about it.

When I notice "I-mode" in everyday life on the other hand, there are fewer strong sensations going along with that now, but it's limited to a sense of "centeredness". It seems more subtle, but also pretty pervasive, comes up very often and very quickly, but also goes away like that. It's quite different from what happens after doing determined affirmations, and examining that under the microscope.

Kim: Does the affirmation stick? Was there a shift? If it doesn't stick, awakening has occurred. If it does, still work to do. If it does subtly, still work to do. Look into it.

Wolfgang: Does the affirmation stick? Good question. There might maybe still be something there, behind the eyes. I'll look some more. And there is definitely a sense of pressure around the "third eye" area. The sensation I get when looking at it, is moving and pulsing, with a lot of colors in the visual space. The affirmations themselves have a sense of being shouted into empty space. Generally things feel very spacious and broad today, which is nice. Though maybe not entirely clear.

So, was there a shift? Maybe. There definitely is space in my forehead, in a way that was not before. Still, there sometimes is pressure at the third eye area. It's not particularly uncomfortable, but it's definitely there. All in all I might still have a little looking to do. Can't do any harm, I guess.

Kim: Right. You got a little taste on your tongue but it's not fully through. Just stick with it. Be aware of that pressure, third eye tension, and it will burst.

Wolfgang: Alright, paying attention to the "third eye pressure sensation", until it bursts. So far relatively little has changed since last time. A change in degree, more than a change in direction: The "third eye pressure" is still present after affirmations, and sometimes persists for some time, stretching into "I-less mode" when practicing the first part. Otherwise, in everyday life and "I-less mode" feelings of broadness and space around the head area are increasing. Emotionally things that bubble up are rather bright, compared to the sadness and constriction which were the dominant emotions/sensations that came up before. As for strange and interesting things on the cushion: After my last sit verbal thinking has literally dropped down from head to throat. Which is new, a little strange, and entirely unexpected.

Kim: Put more emotion or energy into the affirmation. You need to hammer it. Be aware what's going on behind your eyes.

Wolfgang: I am following your advice and putting energy and emotions into the affirmation. Nothing much is happening in response anymore. The pressure that came up in response to self thought and affirmations before doesn't come up as a reaction anymore. It's not like an explosion, or anything spectacular has happened. At times in everyday life there sometimes is still a bit of pressure and sensation around the forehead. That sometimes happens, but all of that doesn't seem to come up in response to "selfing". It's sensation. It's just something that seems to happen at times, unrelated to affirmations.

Generally, things feel like last time, with brightness and positive feelings slowly leveling themselves off to a pretty relaxed and pretty silent "normal".

I'll investigate some more, and will carefully look at what comes up in response to affirmations, to look into subtle things that might still be there.

Kim: Oh, if it wore off, it would be positive. Relax a bit and see if anything is different.

Good.

Wolfgang: I did relax a bit, and things maybe feel a little different. I am still not sure. Nothing big has happened. During everyday life it feels like there is less compulsion. Everything feels a little easier. No nagging thoughts. Self referential thoughts feel funny. I think I said "I" so often, it doesn't mean anything anymore.

While sitting there also is no reaction to affirmations. It doesn't feel different from sitting in I-less mode. On the other hand, there is still slight pressure on the forehead that comes up at times. It doesn't seem specific to affirmations or anything specific happening in everyday life. When it comes up, I look at it. Sometimes it goes away again. Sometimes it stays a while.

All in all, I am not sure if anything has happened, and I'll continue with energetic affirmations, and looking carefully.

Kim: See what happens if you do the affirmation charged with strong emotion.

Wolfgang: Thank you very much for the suggestion! With strong emotion in the affirmation, there is still a reaction, and a tensing up in the forehead, where that pressure sits.

I also rewatched your guided meditation on YouTube, and noticed that I might have been approaching sitting with an increasingly tense attitude, regarding that remaining pressure that is still around. After all, the contrast to I-mode is broad, relaxed, self-knowing attention, even when tensions are present... I might have been a little bit gung-ho about going "deep into the problem". Seems pretty obvious now, at hindsight...

Anyway, there is still some reaction remaining, but the pretty persistent pressure that has been coming up during the last few days now also seems to diminish.

Kim: Ok, good. Just continue. It will pop.

Wolfgang: On my side, things have gotten a little more steady by placing a little more emphasis on a balanced representation of "I-less mode". The forehead pressure is not as consistent anymore, but it comes up, persists, and then goes away again. There regularly are "release moments". Sometimes it feels like goosebumps and tingling running all over my body, with a little shaking, and then there is a turn into i-less mode. Sometimes that tension resolves into a cool feeling spreading on the forehead sometimes with remnants of that tension spreading into my nose, which I can't help but find a bit funny.

That often happens in everyday life, as the the shifts between I-less and I-mode seem to be becoming much more clear, and it is easier to pay attention to that throughout the day. The i-less moments seem to become a little more frequent, and it's always nice to see when self-tension is indeed not needed for some everyday activity.

Kim: All right. Look Wolfgang, if you read your last several posts, you can see that you are pretty much repeating yourself, there is a similar tone and same matters that you talk about.

You already know the Two-Part Formula (2PF), and you know how to distinguish between the two modes. What is needed now, is a killing strike. You need to finish this thing. Do you understand what I mean? It's all up to you now. Finish!

Wolfgang: Yes, you are right, I have started to sound like a broken record.

So, for something new: The tension around the forehead is gone now. Instead it's cool, broad, and comfortable. There is quite a bit of relief that has come along with it. What

seems to come along with the affirmations right now is ease. When there are sensations, they immediately resolve themselves.

I am unsure if that will last, but for now that definitely is quite nice.

Kim: Tension is gone, coolness and broadness in the place of it. Did you notice an event between these two? Describe in more detail how you feel now. If you dig in with affirmations, how do they feel? If this lasts until tomorrow, take a picture next morning and send me both for analysis.

Wolfgang: An event between the tension and the going away? There was some heat coming up, and then it felt like opening up. It's a funny example, but a little like after your nose is stuffy for a while, and you can not breathe... and then it opens up, and you can take a free breath.

When hammering in the affirmations things stay in their place now. Before, when going in with emotions, they rose up to the head and that got uncomfortable. Now they remain in the chest area, and go away there. When saying things out loud there are the words which happen, around the throat area, and that goes away. All of that often goes along with a shift in focus into... broadness might be a word for it?

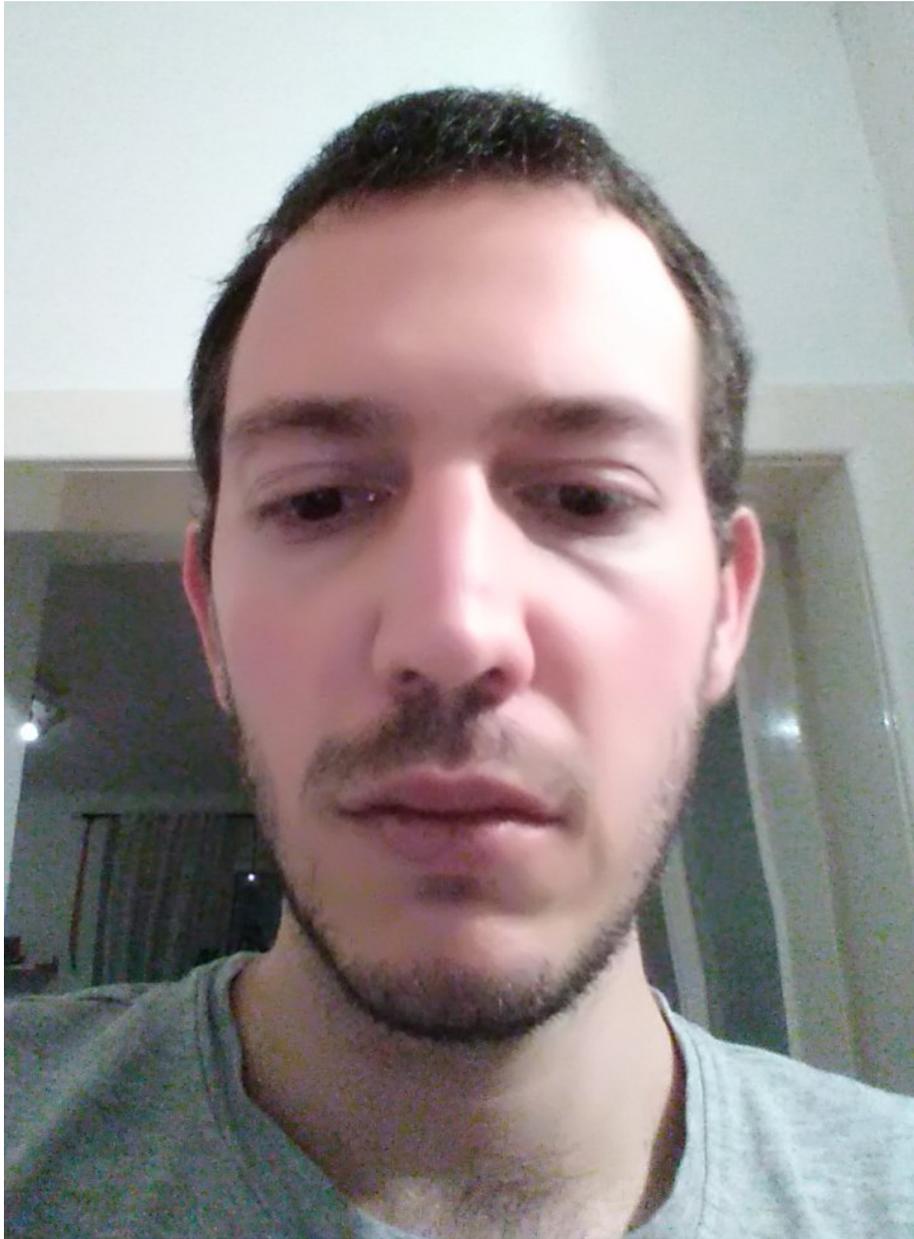
So if things stay like that, I'll be sending you two photos tomorrow morning, one from before, and a current one, correct?

Kim: Great. Sounds really good. I am quite sure it is done. Yes, send the photos tomorrow. Now you can stop doing the 2PF. Just see how you feel and give a description of that tomorrow.

Wolfgang: I am feeling rather good. Colors feel bright, and the mind is pretty flexible. It's easy to pay attention, it's easy to concentrate, or to just step aside and be there. At the same time it doesn't feel like very much has changed. There is just less of a compulsion to "go back and check" on how things relate to myself. I feel quite "drama free", and that is rather nice.

Attached you find the two photos, one from 3rd of November, before starting practice, and one from today, 14th of November. I hope they are suitable.

Before:



After:



Kim: That's it, Wolfgang. Congrats! Well done. That is the opening of the 1st bhumi. If you have any questions or comments, I'm glad to give my point of view. Congrats again!

Wolfgang's Written Account

I am 33 years old, and have been interested in the dharma and meditation for a pretty long time now. I started practicing in my early 20s, and have kept it up ever since then, as well as one can, when doing practice that is self-guided, and a bit disorderly. Over the last few years my interest became a little more serious, and the topic of awakening became more attractive to me as well. I have been seeking out various groups, live, as well as on the internet, but so far nothing really clicked.

And that's where my encounter with Open Heart started. I first stumbled over it on the internet, and read about the description of the bhumis, and the mechanism of awakening. That piqued my interest, as before I had never heard awakening described on the level of energy centers. That's not entirely correct: I probably heard somewhere, that awakening and the energy body were in some way related, but this was the first time that I encountered a clear and explicit explanation of what happens in the process. Seeing the practice that comes together with this "energy model of awakening" then intrigued me even more.

After all, the kind of practice you expect when you want to open up an energy center, and piece through a layer, blocking it, would probably involve imagination, visualization, and the breath, and a process of sensitizing yourself to subtle energy flows, learning to guide it, and so on. So when I encountered the Two-Part Formula, I was puzzled: "How do careful observation and affirmations lead to changes in the body's energy?". It was a very interesting question to me. So, when I then encountered the gracious offer for free guidance from Kim, that was a chance I couldn't afford to miss. Even if it didn't lead to awakening, I was sure to encounter something interesting!

An interesting encounter it was. Right from the beginning I was surprised about the amount and intensity of tensions and releases that kept coming up with so little time invested in formal meditation, and with such simple instructions. One of the main appeals of the instructions of the Two-Part Formula, is that it is mechanical: I only had to follow the method in the way that it is written. And that was pretty much it.

Even if that is pretty much it, that's not always totally easy. One can, for example, add too little pressure, and be a little lax. Or one can then do too much, and neglect the relaxing part of the practice. For those kinds of mistakes and I am sure for many others guidance was useful, and probably necessary. Ultimately that worked.

So: How are things after? The change that happened seems subtle, but permanent, and pervasive. It started with a sense of release. All tension and pressure that had accumulated over the course of practice at vanished, and was replaced by a cool sensation. That went along with thorough mental silence, with a sense that colors seemed to have become a little more vibrant, and an ease that carried into everyday life, and without a though loss of the feeling of having a permanent center. Which was all very nice. But I have been doing this meditation stuff for a some time by now, so while nice things happen sometimes, there always remains the question of how profound and lasting of a change it turns out to be, after the fireworks are over.

I am happy to report that, even after the initial "honeymoon phase" that went along with that release, after that deep mental clarity and silence started to dim a little, this change

still seems in several ways different from other meditative experiences I had. As indicated: Most of those were rather flashy, wore off quickly, and after wearing off, only had a very limited lasting influence, if any. The situation after is just a little different, from how it was before, in a good way. Whenever I look for the sense of self, for that accumulation of tension that was there before, it isn't there now. I don't think it will crop up again. In a way it's hard to see how it would.

Mind you, that doesn't mean it's all just roses or that it's all done and over now. Even when there is less of a sense of a central "internal executor" sitting in the head, overseeing operations, bad habits are still bad habits. My personality, including all the good, the bad, and the ugly, is still very much around. And that's just how it sounds: Sometimes good, sometimes bad, and sometimes maybe even a little ugly. What I can say with confidence is that this kind of awakening probably doesn't turn you into a flawless saint. It didn't do that for me at last. There definitely is an effect that, about one week in, seems permanent and beneficial and very helpful for further practice. Ultimately it's more like a first step into a good direction.

So, for someone who is serious about their practice, I would recommend that they take this step. Compared to many other kinds of practices which seriously aim toward awakening, the practice of the Two-Part Formula is harmless, as far as effort, and investment of time and energy are concerned. Mind you: I said "harmless", not "effortless". But you are not required to take a long retreat in a secluded environment, and sit for hours upon hours while life is on hold, and still have a realistic shot at causing a lasting beneficial change in your mind.

Case 5: Mike

Mike is a long-time practitioner of buddhist meditation. The following dialogue lasted 12 days.

Mike: My friend told me of his experience with your guidance. It's very difficult to not want to experience what he describes. So I would like to ask to be considered for the process. I have no idea what is involved, maybe it's even presumptuous of me to even ask. But anyway, I would like to open a conversation with you about the topic. So that is my personal aspiration.

Kim: Sure, no problem, we can do the guidance if you have read the book and have familiarised yourself with the Two-Part Formula.

Mike: I have not read too much of your website. I do not want to clutter my mind with information and preconceptions about the process. I'd just like to try to stay open as best as I can, even though there is a lot of doubt and fear there too. I know my two weeks of preparation have not passed yet, but I wanted to let you know how I am getting on.

Kim: We can begin, if you feel like you are ready.

Mike: I have been proceeding with the 2PF*. About once a day, sometimes twice, for

about 40 minutes at a time. For the I-less part, I am relaxed, open, joyful. A 'space' did not open up for me as I eased each bit of tension in my body. Instead, when I eased tension, I just felt relaxed, joyful, effortless - without there being a sense of an identifiable space that I could observe. Every now and again, I would drop in the question 'Is there a self here?', or 'Who is here?' and nothing would answer. Just peace. Having said that, there can be a very quiet commentator present when I do this part, verbalising the experience now and again. I am not 100% I-less, neither am I a slave to compulsive thinking. Its very peaceful without being fully empty. Since I started the 2PF, I have had freer laughter at various stages in the week, and one period of intense relaxation and noticeably easy, deep breathing in my stomach on Saturday.

*2PF refers to the Two-Part Formula

Kim: Space is a metaphor for awareness which is similar to sky. Things appear, pass through and disappear in sky. So does all self-based mind content in the field of awareness. Important: The space of awareness cannot be observed. Why? Because it is not a thing, an object, that can be observed. Do you understand this point?

Awareness that is selfless can be with or without thoughts. Despite how it is, it is still empty of self, *if* this has been recognised in practice. Understand?

One distinction that is essential is the difference between subject-self (me/I) and object-selves (thoughts and emotions). In the experience of being angry, we would describe 'I am angry', where 'I' is the subject that has identified with the emotion of anger. Awakening concerns the subject. It is the sense of entityness behind the eyes inside the head which is where the energy sensations are felt before awakening.

Mike: For the second part of the formula, the self-affirming part, initially, for a few days, nothing at all happened. I had no reaction at all to reciting 'me, me, me, I, I, I'. This did not surprise me, as my meditation practice has never produced any energetic effects in my body, or anything 'interesting' in the body. Just a sense of peace, alertness and clear-minded-ness has been my experience. But in the last few days, I have been getting an intense 'buzzing' in my head as I recite the words. A tingling of energy. Initially at the sides of my head, between the temples and the ears. This happens as I focus REALLY hard on 'me, me, me'. More recently it feels more inside my head, behind the eyes as people in the book say. It can get so intense that for a moment I can feel like I might faint. It kind of feels like something is going to burst. Also my body starts to twitch - my arm might jump, or my whole torso. Just a single twitch then after a 30 seconds or a minute, maybe another twitch. Waves of energy can run up my back, or around my hips. Sometimes my hands get very hot. I am not sure if this means anything at all, because I then decided to see if the same would happen if I used a different word. So I tried reciting the word 'chair, chair, chair', and I got a similar buzzing, and similar body twitches, and similar hot hands. So I am not sure I am getting in touch with the felt-sense of I, as the 2PF requires, because it does not seem to be the 'I, me, mine' words specifically that bring about this reaction, rather the act of concentrating seems to cause it. But 'something' weird is going on, that has never happened before for me. Today I tapped into it several times as I was going about my work. I feel the tingling in my head - it's kinda hanging around more now, and it kind of snaps me to attention when I sense it, and then I start to recite 'me, me, me', intensifying the tingling. It stops me doing what I am doing and brings me into the moment. Then it recedes, and I get back to what I was doing. The sensation is neither unpleasant nor pleasant - just interesting. For the last couple of days I thought 'this will probably pass', but it has become stronger, and now I kind of expect it to be there.

Kim: What do you mean by 'reciting' the affirmation? It should not be said peacefully, in the normal way that you refer to yourself in daily life, rather it should be imbued with self-based emotion, like with frustration or with anxiety.

My bet is that if you only kept using a word like 'chair' the sensations would eventually subside because chair is a neutral thing.

What you describe is actually very good, especially what you feel in the head. Keep applying the formula. Dig out the sense of me-ness and when you feel those sensations pick the strongest of them and simply observe it. That is all you need to do. And remember to use both modes. Your background of meditation is very useful here as you are quite calm and therefore can make clear observations.

Mike: The I-less mode feels like an *integrated* experience. I experience my body as a whole, as a sense of presence. My attention is not on a specific part of my body. As I have eased tensions, no single point of my body is pulling my attention in. Also, my field of vision is wide, and bright, and I can take in the whole room. I notice the flutter of the curtain as the breeze enters the room. I do not try to possess the movement of the curtain, to move my attention to it, or to think about it or explain it. I am not looking at anything specifically, just taking the whole in. Certain sounds can come to me from outside on the street, and I can feel my body momentarily tense in reaction to them - a very subtle flinch, but then I return to just sitting there. A story might try to form itself about what that sound is or was, but it usually does not pull me in. Other than that, there is a deep sense of content, of peace, of not wanting anything. Possibly I am smiling faintly, or certainly my face is relaxed. Everything as it is is ok.

Kim: This is all right.

Mike: In contrast, the I-based mode of experience is a 'broken up' experience. My attention is jumping around the place. From one thought to the next, from one bodily sensation to the next. I don't see much of the room, my vision is not registering much of my environment, if anything at all. I have retreated into myself. As I am doing this as part of the 2PF, my body is twitching, my breath is catching and starts to spasm. My shoulders tighten, my breath tightens. There is a definite buzzing of energy inside my head. But that experience of tightening and buzzing subsides quickly - maybe after 30 seconds - as soon as I stop focusing on the 'me, me, me' words. Within 30 seconds, my shoulders are coming down, relaxing again, my breath deepens again, relaxation returns, my vision opens up again, I take in the room.

Kim: OK, good. Valid observations.

Mike: I am not sure what the 'I' is, to answer your question. It seems to be an experience of 'wanting'. It seems to be a hunger. It wants to grab everything, possess it. It tries to possess it by 'talking' about it. I experience a lot of vocalization of my experience. A bus passes me, I see it, and a millisecond later is the thought 'oh, there's the bus'. It's always there chattering away, ruining the moment. And I seem powerless to stop it. So far, I have not been able to connect that experience of constant chattering about my experience with the new experience of buzzing in my head when I focus on the words 'me, me, me'. They seem like separate things.

Kim: Inner chattering, that function of our mind, is different to subject-self. There is a connection between them but they are two separate functions. Where is the 'I' found? When does it appear? As what kind of mental element it is found? Does it exist always?

Mike: That's where I am at the minute with the process. Still much work to do. I will repeat the process tomorrow morning, and I look forward to your next message.

Kim: This can be over sooner than you think. Work diligently.

Mike: Kim, I am not sure if I am pulling this off, but for maybe 1 second in the entire last 30 minutes, I got a brief sense of 'being aware of being aware'. It came and went, and I could not recover it. In fact 'I' tried too hard to recover it and it was lost. I look forward to investigating that more in the morning. I did this session with my eyes closed, to try to focus better on the inner experience, so I was not taking in the room at all. Is this the general direction?

Kim: Choose between having eyes open or closed according to which one helps you to make clearer observations. OK. What you told me is good enough for the analysis. Just relax, notice the spaciousness and try to find yourself in it.

Mike: It does not always exist. It comes and goes. It comes mainly as thinking for me. A thought or story line, then an interruption, followed by another. It's a like a machine - it has a mind of its own!

Kim: That is exactly right. You as an entity exist only as a thought. Let this sentence sink in... Are you observing the two modes among activities? That is essential.

Mike: This morning, I tried to remind myself of the self-based mode during my sitting but it felt like 'I' was trying to remind myself that 'I' is a thought, by thinking, and that thinking was actually being done by 'I'. So I dropped it, and tried to get back to bodily sensations. When I invoke the words 'me, me, me', I feel the 'tingling' reaction I described before in my head, but also a general all over body tightening, and a sense of energy rising up my body to my head. A very fast rising of energy, like a flinch. When I stop invoking the words 'me, me, me' the entire physical sensation subsides, more slowly than it rises, and energy seems to settle back down my body. It feels like my diaphragm tightens and rises when I say 'I, me, mine', and it subsides slowly again when I stop. Like a whale rising in the sea, and then submerging again. So I can say that in terms of 2PF, where the 'I' is found is in these bodily reactions. It exists only when I invoke the 'I, me, mine' words. Without those words, my body and mind is at peace and emptier (not fully empty). The mental element I find it in is thought. 'I, me, mine'. But it also invokes this flinching, bodily contraction and rising of energy. It does not always exist. It exists when 'I think of I', which is another weird sentence to write. I guess this shows the absurdity of the 'I' at an intellectual level, but I can't see through it yet.

Kim: That's the thing. Thinking is largely impulsive and that's the reason why we are confused. Thoughts are no problem if we have the insight of the selflessness of them, but if we don't have that knowledge we believe a lot of things that we come to think, and therefore we suffer. The idea of the affirmation is to bring it up again and again to give us an opportunity to look and observe what this 'self-delusion' is. Existential confusion exists

on the level of thought (and subtle energy) and it is according to this principle that it has to be removed. 'I' am in the head, looking out through the eyes and hearing out through the ears. Become aware of the space inside the head and observe how the 'I' comes up, how it stays and how it disappears. It is ignorant to think that such a solid entity exists, like a little man sitting inside the skull who is responsible for all the achievements and guilty for all the bad deeds. Look into this. Look!

Mike: The I-based mode presents itself to me automatically during the day. I do work on a computer, so several times in the day, I stop, rise my head and will recite 'I, me, mine' and observe the usual reaction (tingling, twitching). On the train, I did the same. But I have not been able to experience the I-less mode to the same degree in my daily activities. At least not to the degree that I can experience it in sitting 2PF. I am not sure what to do about this. Should I take deliberate time out from my activities and deliberately invoke the I-less mode?

Kim: You are doing fine, just keep at it. But regarding those self-sensations, here's an analogy. Think of sheep in a field which is surrounded by a fence. Now, your sheep of various sensations are spread all over the field. To grasp more specific sensations, you need to narrow down the area inside the fence so that the sheep have less room to run about. When you affirm, say it sharply, even with some frustration and anger. 'I! I! I! Me! Me! Me!' And then look, just feel, just perceive, just observe. Don't try to change anything, just be still and be aware of the sensations that will become narrowed down when you affirm more sharply.

Mike: What has happened this morning and last night is that my bodily reaction to the 'me, me, me' is less intense. Less twitching and jumping. In body terms, I experience more an overall (and simpler) general contraction or squeezing now, in my stomach, legs, shoulders. This means I was more able to 'stay with' what is happening as I affirm the self. What I have observed is that I cannot find any place from which the self arises. I cannot see or understand who decides 'now it's time to start the I-based mode'. I am sitting quietly, as I-less as I can be, and then up comes this decision. Once I start the I-based part of the formula, I cannot see who is saying 'me, me, me'. Further, I cannot see who decides that now is the time to change the word from 'me' to 'mine', because I have said 'me' 10 times. I cannot see who or what decides that 'now its time to stop the I-based mode, and go back to the I-less mode'.

Kim: You are off track here, barking up the wrong tree. Awareness, selfless mind knows and cognises through the senses of the body and mind. It knows. In knowing and sensing, the self is extra. Do you follow me?

Mike: I do get some sense of all of this arising from nothing - or at least arising from something that is invisible to my consciousness. It's really quite weird. I must add that this realisation that I can't find anything from which all this happens is not blindingly bright and clear. Its more like observing something vague in a muddy river. I continue to look to see from where this all arises.

Kim: Just stick with the formula. Make sense of it.

Mike: Because I was more able to 'stay with' the process of bringing up the self through affirmations these last two sessions, I tried to see where it comes from. It seems to just arise from nowhere, with nobody 'driving the car', as I was saying above. Somehow a

decision is made that 'now it's time to affirm the self' and then it starts - 'me, me, me, me, me, me, me' - until somehow a decision is made that it's time to stop. It does not feel like 'I am doing this. The self - at least in terms of the felt reaction to the words 'me, me, me' in my body - stays around only as long as this thing, whatever it is, continues to say the words 'me, me, me'. Once that stops, the felt sense drops back down again and (relative) emptiness is there again.

Kim: Some of what you say implies that there might have been a shift. Some doesn't.

Mike: I have been more forceful with my affirmations, with the above results. But also, a couple of times last night and this morning, I have affirmed gently. When I am still, just pop in the word 'me' and feel the energy bounce up, and a slight tingling in my head, then fall down again. Then I affirm again, so the energy was rising and falling like a child on a trampoline. I did this not to amuse myself, but because I was trying to see where my reaction to the word 'me' comes from, how it behaves etc. What it led me to think is that 'M, forget the bodily reaction. Focus on finding the thing that is saying 'me'. Who is doing that? Where does it come from?'. I am not sure if it's correct to do this, but clearly I need to be honest in telling you everything.

Kim: Good that you told me but it is going in the wrong direction. It is not important where and how the sensations come up after the affirmation. What is important is to look into those sensations.

Mike: Another thing from yesterday. After I emailed you and started to get into my work, the felt-sense of 'I' in the head kept coming so many times and so strongly, along with twitching arms and legs, that I found it hard to focus on my work. I was not upset about it, it was kind of fun. I will see what happens today.

Kim: A good sign. You are stirring the pot.

Mike: One other question – I'm doing a retreat tomorrow. Should I use each of the meditation periods to practice 2PF? I am wondering if it's possible to do too much of 2PF - but another part of me would love to practice it intensely for the day.

Kim: Yes, you can practice it but don't overdo it. The general feeling of calm should be there all the time. Just look into it, deep into the sense of me-ness... What is found there?

Mike: Good morning Kim. I am soon starting my retreat so I re-read our exchanges to freshen myself up. You refer to a sense of 'entityness' in the head. Also the 'sense of me-ness'. While I do get a very definite reaction to 'me,me,me' in my head, it does not feel like an 'entity', or what I would call 'me'. It feels like a mechanical or automatic response to stimulus. Like skin feeling heat. It does not feel like it's the root of my ignorance. My suffering. If anything, it feels kind of nice. Am I missing something here? Also, yesterday evening spending time with people for a meal, I experienced really intense moments of that energy in my head. I reinforced it by shouting 'me, me, me' with my inner voice. It would get strong enough to make my eyes cross, then subside fairly fast. Like I said, it does not feel like a 'me' or a small man in my head or suffering etc. Not something I feel an urgent need to get rid of in other words.

Kim: In that case there are two options: 1. you are already awakened or 2. you suffer from what is commonly known as 'spiritual bypassing' which means that when one's skill to get

calm quickly is good, any mental or emotional stresses become bypassed by it. When you get back, take a new photo of your face and send both to me for checking.

Mike: There is no chance I am awakened. The brief description you present in option 2 could explain a lot about me. Certainly my wife would agree with that assessment. And it would explain a lot about myself and my life. I attach two pictures for checking. Both terrible looking.

Today's retreat was an emotional experience. I had just read your message about spiritual bypassing before going in, and during the day I welled up with gratitude that people like you and my late teacher exist. Helping us people who are lost. I am deeply grateful to you for helping me.

During the day, I practiced 2PF a bit, and tried to just sit open and observing for the most part. It was probably the most open I have been in a body sense ever, just very very comfortable and at ease. Now that I am finished, by whole body is tingling and quite warm, kind of wobbling a bit, from my feet to the crown of my head. I feel open and raw.

With the I-based mode, the usual experience happened: intensity of energy in the centre of my head and all around the ears, falling away quickly once I stop stimulating it with 'me, me, me'. I did have one period where my mind was very dull, pulling me towards sleep.

Then the next period I was bright again.

Anyway, not sure what the way forward is. Lets see what you conclude from the pictures.

Kim: You have a little bit more to go. You have a bit of taste on your tongue but it's not fully through yet. Make a decisive push! Pay attention to that tendency of spiritual bypassing. Pay attention before the I-sensation rolls off. Attentive, like a hawk in the sky seeing a mouse from a far distance. Look closely! Push!

Mike: Last night, and at 3 am this morning, and this morning when I sat, I focused as hard as I could on the tingling in my head, not letting it go, and it intensified to the point that my head started to physically rattle. Quite dramatically, and initially quite scary. I put my hands on my head to see if muscles were twitching, but I could detect nothing external. It was like the inside of my skull was rattling, right at the crown of my head. It was like driving down a cobbled street in a car with no suspension. Lasted 20-30 seconds, faded, came again. It's not scary any more. I will continue today to try to stay with the tingling in my head. It is a bit more ever-present now, I can sense a subtly tingling most of time.

Kim: Good. Don't take the kettle from the fire, not even for a moment now.

Mike: Straight to it. At yesterday evenings sitting 2PF, when I really focused on the sensation brought about by saying 'me, me, me', and did not let go for all I was worth. Soon, 'throbbing' started to come into my head, in my skull as I described before, and it would grow and grow and then my head would start rocking. The rocking in my head went insane, my face started swinging from side to side, so hard that the meat of my cheeks started wobbling and my eyes were being rocked around in their sockets to the point that they got a bit sore. At one point, the shaking/rocking went through my whole body, and my hands and fingers were just being thrown around. I was just sitting on the cushion, violently spasming. It scared me it was so strong. These experiences built up over a period of about a minute, lasted for about 30 seconds or so, then fell away into peace. It was like water gushing up through a pipe, then finishing, and the surrounding waters becoming peaceful again. When I went to bed, I could feel the throbbing in my head. I focused on it, without saying 'me, me, me', and it built in intensity on its own, so the point that it became

a clearly defined vibration, I would say about 10 Hz, right in my head behind the eyes. It lasted for minutes as I lay in bed, trying to relax, because my body was trying to tense up - my neck, shoulders, legs. But I was mostly able to relax and allow this thing to vibrate on its own. I did not have to make any effort to keep it there, other than to observe. I would say it was about the size of a grape or raisin. I could a very clear sense of its location. I am not sure how many minutes it lasted, 5 or 10 maybe. Then it kind of stopped on its own, or maybe I got tired focusing on it - I am not sure and I felt relief - mainly due to the absence of the throbbing, because it is not peaceful to be watching it! A few minutes later, I would sense the beginning of the agitation again, and I focused on it and it grew and the same thing happened. This throbbing behind the eyes, that I did not have to maintain by saying 'me, me, me'. I think this one lasted longer, but hard to say. Again, it faded, and I was left with a feeling of peace, because I had stopped vibrating.

This morning, when I was doing my sitting 2PF, it took some time to locate it. I focused as hard as I could and then I finally managed. The 'grape' started throbbing again, and I stayed with it as best as I could, until it stopped and peace returned. I think it happened again, but maybe less intense (I'm finding it hard to recall exactly how many times this all happened etc), and when this one stopped after a few minutes, I retained my focus on the area where the grape used to be. I think it started to cool. I think in fact it started to feel cold - like your mouth reacts when you first chew chewing gum with menthol in it. I am not sure whether I am convinced of this though. I have always been cynical of 'energetic' phenomenon in meditation. I have always tried to stay 'grounded', whatever that means, and I would be quick to say 'it's only your imagination' when 'things' happen. But on the train here to work, I tried as hard as I could to focus on that part of my skull. I think I detected coolness. I tried really hard to make the tingling happen by saying 'me, I, mine' with all my force, and eventually the tingling/vibration kind of shows itself, but I did not want to push it too hard because people were beside me on the train and I did not want my face to start jumping from side to side. It felt harder to make the tingling happen by focusing, but maybe thats just because I was on the train.

Now I am in work. I will try to stay as observant as I can, but there are going to be many people around me, many tasks to do, so I am not sure how aware of the 'grape' I am going to be - assuming that is indeed what I should be doing. Any advice you have on how to continue this in the office, and programming computers, would help. The next two nights I am in the hotel in my own with no distractions, so I will use that time to really double down on focus.

What I do think it is important to say: I am relaxed in my walking around. My body feels lose and free and I feel content and happy (when the grape is not vibrating). I am feeling warm. My wife told me I am hot around the chest and back. But I do not feel like there has been any insight. I still do not feel like this thing is a 'little man inside my head'. I cannot connect any of this energetic experience as being a 'me'. It is definitely staying around longer (minutes), I do not feel I am artificially trying to calm it so I can bypass it. My vision feels a bit funny, but my cynical side is saying 'Mike, its just your imagination'. So I don't know - doubt is a constant companion with me during this process. Except for the vibrating grape last night in bed. That was definitely real.

So that's where I am. I am getting more and more committed to this process, and I can't wait to get back to the hotel and get stuck into looking at this again. I very much looking to reading your next guidance message.

Kim: Just keep at it. Narrow it down. Use *both* modes. Don't forget open awareness! Those twitches, tremblings and whatnot are stress release. They are known by many

names, like *spontaneous kriya*, rushen or TRE. Sometimes it can be quite dramatic but it is not dangerous or harmful in any way. It's just a natural way for the bodymind to release excess stuff. I think I already explained how to observe the two modes during activities.

Regardless of one's chosen path, meditators work with sensations because they are indicators. We have to work with them because we have them. When we become buddhas, we don't have any sensations anymore because all karmic knots have been opened up and released. But us who have them, we have to work with them because they are indicative of our self-delusion. Keep at it!

Mike: I think I have been fooled by the simplicity of this practice.

Kim: Most people get fooled by the simplicity of this practice. It takes a bit of effort to get what it points to, how it works.

Mike: I think 'I' have been trying too hard, trying to make this process unfold in the way 'I' thought it should. I have been really *really* pushing hard with the 'I, me, mine' part - the I-based part. Part of me is probably looking for a experience of some sort from the practice, and really pushing produced that experience - at least so far. When it came to the I-less part, again I think 'I' was trying too hard. I really *really* tried to see the lamp in front of me. I come with the baggage that awakening should be hard, and require tremendous effort.

Kim: A classic pointer to the I-less, doing-less, mode is to stop all doing. Don't-act-or-initiate-anything. Don't-even-stay. The moment you stop doing anything, the I-less shows up... Clear, pure, immaculate... Use both modes in balance. That's the key.

Mike: So after reading the line above from you, last night and this morning, I reset a bit, especially in the I-less mode. I just looked at the lamp. I looked at other things in the room. The table, the walls. I recalled your earlier message saying 'awareness sees and hears through the senses, the I is additional' (not the exact quote). I got a sense of that. I moved my head a bit to look at things either side of me. I wondered if moving my head to look was 'wrong', because I needed to be concentrated and still. So 'School Teacher Mike' was chatting away, saying I was a 'bad boy'. Anyway, I looked around the room a little and got a sense of the simplicity of just looking, and the directness of doing that. Uncomplicated. Nothing added. It felt new to me. Once or twice, I *did* get a sense of being 'inside my head looking out'.

Kim: Good, good. Feel free to move, jump and dance as much as you like! And while you're at it, see if there's 'me' doing it. It's never there during engaged action. It only comes up when there's an emotional reaction and an opinion, 'my opinion'. Impulsive stuff.

Mike: When it came to the I-based mode, I did not push as hard either. Still energy gathered in my head, but I did not focus like a maniac on it so it grew to twitching/shaking levels, I let it be and tried to observe it. A tingling energy around my head is there, pretty much all the time.

Kim: Just keep at it.

Mike: Because I have been so intent on 'trying hard', I have found it difficult to implement either mode in my day to day activities. I was forcing the process, which is hard to do when trying to give your attention to somebody as you talk to them. After taking it down a gear last night, I feel that I know how to do it in my day better now. I can just look and hear.

Kim: Ha! It happens sometimes. It's OK. Just adjust and continue. Start fresh. Be smart.

Mike: I will and am. At the minute I feel a bit lost, and upset that I missed the simplicity of the I-less mode. It kinda feels like I am starting again. And I am tired of this 'Mike', this 'I' that keeps sticking its nose into everything and ruining it. Even looking at a lamp is full of force and effort when 'Mike' is around. I know I am lost, I get a sense of the freedom of being free of 'Mike', and it's frustrating and disappointing. But I will practice today freshened up a bit by the idea that I can relax into it a bit more. That less of 'me' is required.

Kim: Who is the one who thought of already having made progress and is now upset of needing to start over? Be aware of that bugger! An insect with antennas automatically senses the smallest of changes. Do the same. Utmost but gentle mindfulness. If we are too tense we can't observe. The key is in being very relaxed and very mindful at the same time. It allows us to be aware the moment the mouse shows its whisker! Be aware of the space behind the eyes. When looking out, is there me looking out? Or just seeing?

Mike: The summary of the past day is that during work I was more aware of looking. Of the feeling of looking. At people, screens, walls. Particularly at people's faces as I spoke to them. I did sometimes get a sense of being inside my head, but sometimes not. When I looked at the screen of my phone, I can feel myself looking at it, I can feel it in my hands. It was easier to invoke the I-less mode in work than I thought. In fact, I found it easier to invoke than the I-based mode.

Kim: Of course because it's the real you, devoid of any entity. It seems it has gotten quite a bit clearer than before. Excellent.

Mike: I had the same experience doing sitting 2PF yesterday evening and this morning. I would look at the floor or a chair. Not a lot is going on when I do that. But once or twice in 40 minutes, I get a flash of being inside my head. It is not a sensation that lasts long though.

Kim: Ok.

Mike: Sometimes when I am just looking at the floor or the wardrobe, there is a dullness. Nothing much at all is going on. It's nice and peaceful and warm and simple - but it's not shining brightness.

Kim: This dullness is substrate consciousness, (skt. alaya vijñana), the root cause of depression. That's the basis of self-delusion in all forms. Meditators often get stuck in that,

some for decades without knowing that it actually isn't selfless and clear.

Mike: I can feel 'Mike' wanting to get in on the action, and turn it into a doing. When I invoke the I-based mode, I get the usual tingling in my head and some body twitching, but not to the same intensity as before.

Kim: Is the I-sensation all over the head or behind the eyes?

Mike: During the night, I woke up suddenly at 2 am. I had the sensation of 'everything' disappearing down into nothingness in a space behind my eyes. When I woke up, I thought 'was that a dream I created, prompted by Kim's words today? It seems too close to what he wrote in his email.'. I lay there, slowly falling back to sleep, and something similar happened. It was like a falling sensation that made me open my eyes wide and be very alert. For a long time, probably an hour maybe, I lay there. Heat was gathering in my hips and back. Each time I kind of drifted back to sleep, a flash of energy would run up my body. But these flashes were more like the reaction I get in the I-based mode, not a sense of something falling away. Eventually I did sleep again. This morning when I got up, I felt tired and a bit dull. Still do a bit.

Kim: Sounds very good actually. Let's see.

Mike: This really helped. I am 'marinated' more now. This really freed me up in the practice. It helped me relax more into non-doing.

Kim: Yeah, it really is that simple...

Mike: This makes sense. Gentle mindfulness is more what I have been doing. The one who thought of making progress and is now upset at needing to start over is the one that is ruining my life. 'Mike, the trier. The effort-maker'. I am not sure how or when I picked him up along the way. In this 2PF process, I do get some small sense of the freedom of I-less-ness. Not to mention the energy saving! So he has to go.

Kim: I know people who never had the sense of subject-self. It's simple, Mike. You just have to dig in and look into the bull's eye, 'me'. You cannot get rid of him! It is you who wants to get rid of him, which is like an eye ball wanting to see itself. Cannot happen. The only thing that can be done is for you as entityless cognizant awareness to be aware of the self after it is affirmed. This wears it off. The subject-self has accumulated but it can also be taken down. Persist!

Mike: I think maybe that sense of space behind the eyes is coming.

Kim: By 'space' behind the eyes I refer to the area behind the physical eye balls and the eye balls themselves.

Mike: Sometimes there does feel like a me looking out. Or is that actually a true representation of what I experience? What happens is as if the lens of a camera suddenly zooms back onto itself, and I am more aware of my eyes. I think that is a better explanation. Rather than an 'entity doing looking'. A lot of the time when I am looking, it feels more like just seeing, but it has a dullness to it.
Back to practice!

Kim: Zoom out, zoom in all you want, that's just movement. Study it, investigate.

Mike: Thanks Kim.

Kim: Stop thanking me. We are not done yet!

Mike: I need to close my eyes to get a good fix on it, but when I do, and focus on me, me, me, it's behind the eyes, but towards the top of the skull. But in my sentence above, when I say I can feel Mike trying to get in on the action, I am referring to an urge to move or 'do something' when I am sitting as I-lessly as I can.

Kim: It's still lurking there. Aha, OK. Now I get it.

Mike: I am really affirming 'me' today at work. There is force coming up in my body, strong squeezing like I am going to burst, and that familiar sensation in my forehead. As this energy rises, I am trying my best to look at it. As it unfolds, I just fix my stare at my screen and watch it do its thing, looking as best I can. I'm also giving myself time in as much I-less-ness as I can manage.

Kim: Sounds great.

Mike: To help communicate my understanding of what I think you are getting at, when I direct my attention to my attention there, it feels like crossing my eyes ever so slightly, without actually crossing them.

Kim: This is actually a very important little trick in *nonmeditation*, to learn how to bring one's awareness behind the eyes instead of the attention going out the eyes all the time. In the beginning one might feel that this has something to do with the physical eyes and therefore get cross eyed but soon you'll figure it out that you can totally rest your eyes. When you feel any self-caused sensations, fully allow them to be, don't do anything to them. Be a surveillance camera that simply sees. Just a little more!

Mike: I really paid attention as much as I could yesterday. In work, on the train home, at home. When I got home and spoke to my wife, I had some sort of sense of concentrated observation of her as we spoke. That sense of concentration was around the eyes and forehead. During yesterday evenings sitting 2PF, I did it in the garden because my meditation room was boiling hot. Towards the end of the session several times I got a sense of being part of the environment. Without moving my eyes, I was aware of the insects, the newts in the pond, the water flowing continuously, the movement of the bushes, pigeons attacking the grapes, birds flying quietly overhead. No part of me wanted to claim the experience. Visual perception widened out, and I was aware of a vapour trail developing as a plane passed over my head. My eyes were fixed, but still all of this was coming in, a wide field of vision. It was very soothing. During a good chunk of that observation, I had a sense of 'sitting in my eye balls', without being cross eyed. It did, does make my eyes water a little bit though, and several times I need to blink to clear and relax them.

Kim: Aha.

Mike: Invoking the I-based mode still brings up the same reaction. Its getting harder to sustain the intense effort I make when invoking the I-based mode. I really say 'me' with all

I'm worth, many many times. Like I said, I am getting tired of it, and it's not producing anything like the reaction I used to get - the intense vibrating grape, the body rocking etc. This morning's sitting 2PF was quite undramatic. I did not have quite the same sense of I-less-ness as yesterday evening, and I did not have a strong I-reaction during the I-based mode. In any case, I will continue with the same commitment today as yesterday.

One doubt I have, is when I am being as I-less as I can, not doing anything, not initiating anything - thinking is still there. Like a radio in the background. There really seems to be nothing I can do about that. Is this ok, or is it a sign of persistent self, and I should be doing something about it?

Kim: Aha, OK. Thoughts don't matter.

Mike: Yes, it is. These urges to 'do something' do have a feeling sense associated with them. Not in my head so much, more in my stomach or over-all in my body. I can feel a momentary contraction in my body, and more especially in my gut when the urge to 'do something' comes. So in that sense there is a physical I-sense. I do not sense the source of these urges, and various other daily manifestations of the self, as being in my head, behind the eyes, where you suggest I should be looking for it. If I get pissed off with somebody barging in front of me when in the commuter crowd in London, like I did last night, I get a momentary tightening of my gut. That is there for sure. It's just that I have not been paying so much attention to it, because I have been attempting to find it more in the head.

Kim: All right. I think you should just chill for today, maybe tomorrow too. Stop doing the 2PF now and don't do anything else either. Just be. Relax. Take a break. On Friday evening or Saturday morning, send me email again to let me know how it has been.

Mike: I have let go as much as I know how, as you instructed, for the last two days.

In the immediate period after you told me to do that, I experienced sessions of weeping. I think I experienced an unusual relief at being told to not do anything! That afternoon, I experienced a huge surge of rage, pure raw energy. A very difficult client in work did his usual thing of obstructing our work. I have been 'managing' him for the last 3 months. Not an easy thing to do. Now we are 2 weeks from finishing our project, and he came in with his misguided contributions. Rage rose up powerfully, making me shake (I was working from home with nobody looking, safe to allow what was happening to happen. This interaction was all over email) . Initially I was able to experience it as energy, but I did lose it a bit at the end and it started clouding my thinking. I was shaking for some time afterwards. It scared me, and I was thinking of emailing you, but then things settled down again.

Kim: Aha, OK.

Mike: On Friday morning I left the house early to get some fruit for breakfast. Again, weeping as I walked past the trees and the birds and the people going to work. The lovely blue sky, the sun, amazingly amazingly beautiful criss-cross pattern of so many airplane vapor trails. When I got to the shop, it was closed, so I just walked on into the park, still weeping periodically. I sat in the sun, and just did nothing. Tears came. Why? It was two reasons: everything was so beautiful and peaceful, and it moved me. And on top of that, I knew that I was unable to experience it as fully as I should be able to. I came back, and got

into my work. Periodically, rushes of energy ran up my body during the day - my body would contract or squeeze, and energy would run to my head. It would stop me in what I was doing, and make me open my eyes wide. On one occasion two crows calling loudly to each other in the garden brought on a very intense surge of this experience.

When I finished my work, I went and lay in bed. I fell asleep for about 30 or 40 minutes. When I woke, my whole body was bathed in energy. My feet, hips, hands, face and head especially. I just lay there for an hour. Marinating. When I came down, I was slow in my movements, and a bit dull in my head. There was not a lot going on. I went into the garden and cleaned the ponds. I sat there afterwards, with not much going on inside me at all. That evening, my wife was upstairs packing for a trip to her mother's today. I just sat on the sofa downstairs. These surges of energy to my head kept coming. My body would squeeze, energy would rush up, I would feel it gathering in my head. All over my head, not just in a specific place. It was like somebody had put their warm hands around my head, gently. Like in a reiki session. After some time, these rushes stopped. Tension in my gut released and I was breathing more freely. Really nothing much was going on at all inside me. When I looked at something, there was very little reaction. I would *feel* silence between my ears. I could also hear it - a high pitched ringing. I sat like that for an hour, quite empty, then went to bed.

This morning, there is nothing special going on. I sat in the garden having coffee, and I got a couple of energy rushes. I can feel a slight gathering of energy in my head, I can feel a slight ringing in my ears - it's there now. So that's how its been!

Kim: All this sounds very good. Could you take a new photo and send it to me? Are you usually emotional, ref. to that weeping? It sounds to me that those fresh experiences were experienced 'just as they are', without the self. In general your description would strongly imply dropping off of the self, even though some indications of object-selves exist. After a nap dullness can be there because of the hypnagogic states, still coming out of sleep. But other than that have you had dullness for the last two days as you mentioned it before. I'll check the photo and get back to you then.

Mike sends the photo and Kim checks it.

Kim: Congratulations! You are through. I'll comment on this a little bit.

Mike: No, I am not usually a weeper. Some years back though, I did go through a period of weeping for no reason. Then that passed. I am usually happy, joyful in spirit. I must say though that this weeping this week, and the period some years back, did not feel sad. Just open to the beauty around me.

Kim: Yes, yes. I got that it was not because of sadness or sorrow. I know. It's wonderment. That happens when one's mind is clear like a sky after a shift.

Mike: Something does feel slightly different. Just now, talking to my wife, I noticed an absence of tightness in my forehead. But I must emphasize, this change, whatever it is, is slight. There has been no lightning bolt. I certainly do not feel awakened!

Kim: Yes. You were waiting for a lightning bolt. We used to have analog televisions.

Sometimes the picture was blurry and we had to turn to adjustment knob to make it clear again. We would take a hold of the knob and twist it, twist it... And then it would become clear. Good. Nothing flashy, just clear. That's how it most often is. There are no fireworks and heavenly orchestras. Actually if there are that's likely just a flashy experience, not an awakening.

It is impossible to know before hand what awakening 'feels like'. And even when a perceptual shift happens, often people don't consider it awakening because false stories and rumours of how awakening feels like are plenty. You have awakened, my friend. There is no doubt about that. That's it! Utterly simple!

Mike: I have not been what I could call dull the last 2 days. Just slower in action with less mental activity.

Kim: Another indication of a shift. Your case was quite easy. Congrats again!

Mike: It's hard to believe. Once again, thank you. All the way through I had doubts that it would happen for me. I think I am going to have to take some time to get used to this subtle difference.

Case 6: Mark

Mark is a family man who had previously done some simple guided meditations and relaxation exercises from recordings. The following dialogue lasted 3 days.

Mark: After listening to your interview on the internet which I thought was great, I looked you up on the net. I was very interested to see that you offer help with initial awakenings and after reading your book I was surprised to see how easy people made it seem to remove the illusion of duality. Is it really so easy?

Kim: It took me about 30-40 cases to start believing that it actually works. Now it is 126 cases and counting.

Mark: After having recent, strong feelings of dissatisfaction I decided to take up my meditation practice again. I came to the conclusion that awakening is the only option. Everything else seems to be a waste of time now. My view of life really has changed a lot in the last few months and I feel now might be the right time to do this. I have started using the Two-Part Formula and have been listening to the guided practice. It was surprising to see how well you know this territory as all of the sensations you mentioned when we focus on the 'I, me or mine' happened exactly as you said it might. Stomach twisting, chest feeling tight and a pressure behind the eyes. Whereas feeling the space in between the body was such a good feeling and I felt like nothing could harm me as there was nothing there to harm.

Kim: Aha, OK.

Mark: However, when I'm not meditating my logic tells me I have a brain which causes me to see, hear, think and so on. I'm having trouble going against my logic in day to day life when I'm not meditating.

Kim: Yes, of course. Our education tells us that the brain and all the organs are there inside the body but we don't see them do we? Our education tells us we all have brains and it does this or that but when it comes to analysis like this all this information isn't of much help because a pre-assumption is quick to incapacitate our first hand observations based on what we *actually experience* or do not experience. You follow me?

Mark: I've also tried the Two-Part Formula, but I found investigating where the seer is or where the listener is when a sound is heard causes a lot of logical thought, which leads nowhere. For example when I investigate where the listener is, my logic or rather education, tells me the listener is the brain interpreting the electrical signals from the nerve from the ear drums. It's quite frustrating to think about for some reason though and in a way it doesn't satisfy.

Kim: Drop the theory-based reasoning. It happens on the level of thought just like any other thinking. Thinking in itself isn't bad in any way but it is a poor master. So, just *do* the practice and make observations on what is actually experienced. You have to get into the doing business, instead of thinking business. It's an epidemic among modern people.

Mark: As for today's meditation. With the first part of the two modes I found it difficult to answer the question 'If I or Me can be found'. Logic started again and said the thinking itself IS me. But then I asked where is the thought exactly. I couldn't pin point it. It was a good feeling and I felt like I could have stayed like that for a long time. I marinated in it as you asked and I started to lose feeling of my body, any pains and negative feelings.

Kim: The question whether or not 'I' is there is found in the first, selfless, mode. In order to understand this correctly you just need to go with the formula to first get to know what the self or me even means. So, just use both modes to find that out.

Mark: With the second mode I repeated I, Me and Mine. I don't notice as many uncomfortable feelings as yesterday. I just became aware of some pain in my neck and some itching sensations. The main thing I noticed this time was that I really wanted to end the meditation and struggled to keep going with this part, whereas with the first part it was effortless to stay with the meditation.

Kim: Let your mind become calm in the first mode. And from there you punch in the 'I, I, I'. Don't prefer one mode over the other. Stick with it. Work diligently.

Mark: Okay, in the first mode I search to see if there is an 'I' and where it can be located, right? I tried looking up and down forward and behind and so on. It was almost funny and it made me smile because I couldn't find an 'I', not exactly. Once I don't associate the thoughts with an 'I' and I can no longer feel my body through spaciousness I can't really say where the 'I' is. It seemed ridiculous! However it's much harder with the eyes open.

Kim: What you say here is often an indication that a shift, awakening, might have happened. Do you feel a bit different now than before? If you do, how exactly?

These sitting sessions are essential along with processing during activities. In activities, whatever they may be, make note of how the two modes alternate. Also, when we are around others the 'I' can come up unexpectedly and strongly because we are used to reacting to other people from our sense of 'I'. Make use of these moments to look into the self or 'I' with awareness.'

Mark: Does this mean I should try to relax in day to day activities and try to feel the space,

and if an 'I' can be found, as well as using the affirmations from part two in day to day activities?

Kim: No. It means that among other people the 'I' comes up on its own because we are used to reacting to different circumstances with our 'I' or 'me'. When it comes up, just be aware of it, no need to affirm because it's already there. Also, the I-less space is always there when the mind goes thoughtless, without the I-reference. Do you understand?

Mark: I feel a little more happier recently, and desire is less, but I can't be sure that it is permanent. There's more calmness too. I'll try to observe myself more today to see.

Kim: OK, let me know.

Mark: Ah, I see. It's obvious once you tell it to me, hehe. You mean in day to day life observe myself and notice times of thoughtlessness - meaning not identifying with 'self'? For example today I was doing my morning routine and I wasn't really thinking about the past, future, no desires etc. I was just being. And then when I interact with people I should be aware when the 'I' comes up. Ego, thoughts relating to 'I', jealousy etc?

Kim: Yes. But you have to make a distinction between subject-self and object-selves. Subject is 'me' or 'I', object is some thought or emotion. For example in 'I am jealous', I is the subject and the emotion of jealousy is the object that the subject has identified with. You learn the difference of these through affirmations.

Mark: I can easily notice a huge difference in myself from when I'm alone in nature or alone at home to when I interact with friends and strangers. Maybe it's wrong but I much prefer the alone version of myself. It's something I've noticed a lot lately.

Kim: Of course, being alone is frictionless for a person who is psychologically balanced.

Mark: Am I wrong to imagine that awakening feels like I do when I'm alone all of the time including when I'm dealing with difficult people?

Kim: I don't understand what you mean. Clarify, please.

Mark: Early this morning it took a long time to release the tension and find the space in my body so I changed position and supported my back which brought the feeling quite soon. I investigated the space and looked for an 'I'. I couldn't really say where an 'I' exists. I could feel my hands on my legs a little but that answer didn't really answer the question. This time the spacious feeling didn't feel especially good or bad. It just was. No bad or good feelings.

Kim: Exactly! It's not good or bad, it just is. Conflicts do not harm this basic space.

Mark: In the second part I used the affirmation 'I' and 'me' with my eyes open. Once I finished I closed my eyes and I could almost see in my mind's eye a sort of twisting. I could feel the twisting with my mind and heart and I felt a little dizzy. I could also feel a tingling around and behind my eyes. I focused on those feelings for a while and they slowly disappeared.

Kim: Very good. Stick with it! Grind it off!

Mark: Okay, that will take some practice I think as it's new to me, but I understand. Today I felt some anger completely randomly and I couldn't see why or where it came from when I was relaxing at home. I tried to find the distinction between the subject and object the I and the anger, but it was difficult. I'll keep trying.

Kim: The energetic sensation that actually is the subject(!), is behind the eyes inside the head. If there is some sensation there then it is the subject. You will naturally come to know this by using the 2PF. Objects on the other hand are felt in the body or in areas other than the space behind the eyes. It's that simple.

Mark: I mean once someone is fully awakened do they find it easier to deal with difficult people? When I meditate I feel like nothing anyone could say to me could hurt, but when I deal with people in day to day life I don't have that calm feeling. I wonder if awakened people do?

Kim: Awakening is just the beginning. It is important for the person himself but it doesn't necessarily make one's life that different, a little but not greatly because there is still a lot of stuff arising from the subconscious mind. An awakened person will still feel all the human emotions but its slightly different. This does make a big difference. But for now, do not waste your time thinking how it will be. Just leave it. Focus on the task at hand, the two modes.

Mark: This afternoon I meditated by the river. Found a comfortable spot and quickly started to lose feeling of the physical body, could feel my hands on the legs a little and the wind blowing on my face and arms. It was pleasant but not amazing. I searched for an 'I' inside and outside. I felt like there was a shell of the shape of my body. Like an Easter egg, nothing inside. Just the wind and some mild sensations telling me there is a shell.

Kim: Awareness just as it is, is not 'amazing' and yet it is a profoundly refreshing. Don't wait for fireworks or something flashy. Selfless awareness is subtle and fully content. It's that simple. It's nothing 'big'.

Mark: For the second mode I used the affirmation 'I' and 'Me'. I couldn't find any strong sensations, I tried the affirmations again and not much again. I wanted to scream 'I! I! I! I!' but thought not as there are children around, haha. But it felt sad that I couldn't find 'I' and a few tears of sadness came from this as well as pressure behind the eyes and forehead. I meditated on those sensations till they mostly disappeared but they stayed with me a little after I finished meditating. I think this was my first time to feel sad about not finding an 'I'. Interesting.

Kim: Very interesting, actually. Please take a second photo of your face and send me both for analysis, including dates. Once I see those I'll say more. Sounds promising.

Mark sent the photos and Kim checked them.

Kim: Based on your photos I can confirm that an awakening has taken place, just like I thought already a few days ago. Congrats! That was easy.

Mark: It's so simple, but I would never have known. What does it mean if there is less sensation behind the eyes? I noticed that there is less sensation behind the eyes today. I tried to focus on the subject and object, but I noticed more object sensations like when a car sped past me today.

Kim: Yeah, the mechanism of awakening is too obvious when one knows about it. But the tendency to look out from the eyes, instead of looking behind the eyes, is so deeply ingrained that we never come to think of it. Lessening of the subject-self sensations shows

wearing off of the subject. On the other hand, for a person who is already awakened, when subject-self has dropped off, the sensations in the eye area are caused by objects that momentary take the place where the subject used to be.

Mark: I mean once someone is fully awakened do they find it easier to deal with difficult people? When I meditate I feel like nothing anyone could say to me could hurt, but when I deal with people in day to day life I don't have that calm feeling. I wonder if awakened people do?

Kim: It varies how long people are 'sober' after awakening. For some it's weeks, even months, for some its merely hours. The shift cannot be reverted but stuff starts coming from the subconscious mind. Clearing the subconscious mind, which is a big and demanding task, is the next thing to do.

Mark: I meditated twice today so far, about 15-20 mins each. I couldn't feel the sensation behind the eyes so much with the affirmation 'I', just a little tightness of the chest. It seems the 'I and Me' affirmation doesn't have as much impact as before. I'm trying to be scientific and use the same amount of intention but it doesn't seem to be as powerful. I have no idea what that means.

Kim: It means that despite of how you use the affirmation, there is no longer anything that sticks to that word, the thought concept of 'me' or 'I'. It is transparent now, doesn't mean anything, any *thing*. The illusion of self-ness is gone. *Poof*. Congrats again. Thank you on my behalf. You did well.

Case 7: Jonathan

Jonathan is a long-time practitioner of buddhist meditation. His processing lasted 3 weeks.

Jonathan: I am interested in making an arrangement to start the awakening guidance with you. My name is Jonathan. I'm almost 43 years of age and work in computers, although I used to be a musician. My spiritual practice started at 24 years of age when I decided to learn to meditate. I recognised that meditation would also help me overcome the loneliness, social awkwardness and insecurity that I experienced during my childhood years and early twenties. Initially I spent 4 years with a certain buddhist community where I practiced the samatha meditation practices of mindfulness of breathing and *metta bhavana* (loving kindness). Although I benefited greatly from these practices and the supportive conditions of a sangha, for the first time in my life I started to feel the need for a teacher and could not find one within this tradition. It was around this time that I read a book that was personal account of the author, which inspired me greatly and led me to believe that with a teacher I could experience an authentic spiritual breakthrough. The book described the author's spiritual journey from an ordinary working class background to awakening and his progression through the following stages. He subsequently became my dharma teacher.

I have been his student since 2002. It was during this period that I became more committed to dharma practice. The practice of the group practice is very close in spirit to just sitting (jap. shikantaza) style of practice, also known as silent illumination. It is also close in spirit to Zen, which was the teacher's background. I have spent a considerable

amount of time with my teacher over the years, learning from him and attending his monthly retreats. I meditate each morning for 40 minutes and also facilitate a local group in my home town. Sadly, my teacher passed away in 2015.

My practice has been the practice of 'taming the wild horse', of opening in a direct way to the physical and emotional drives in experienced in the body, both on and off the cushion, of surrounding these forces with non judgemental awareness and allowing awareness to guide the forces back to the hara, the lower abdomen. Within awareness the forces 'turn over' and return to their true nature; awareness and the forces merge and the power of the emotional force dissipates. Awareness itself is seen to transform the emotional force into more awareness and clarity. I have also employed some vipassana techniques to help with this process, which has been a powerful way of 'cutting through' the emotional forces.

After about 7 years with my teacher, towards the end of a retreat in 2009, I experienced a glimpse of my true nature or Buddha Nature while out walking in the countryside the following afternoon. This experience was my first taste of a universal awareness which I realised was also the True Me that I see is present in all things, even inanimate, whereby when I look at life, I experience it looking and smiling back at me. I discovered the reason why young children paint a smiling face on the sun! I discovered my true home - in the eternal Here and Now, something that to my amazement had been sitting in front of my nose my whole life! Eternity was just another word for Now. It was extraordinary but at the same very very ordinary, extra-ordinary. That is why I had never seen it before, because I was seeking for something 'special'. I couldn't believe how simple the whole thing was. It felt like breaking out of a prison, like dancing in the sky, free of the prison of self-consciousness. At the time I was told that it was not stream entry, but a glimpse of my Buddha Nature and was encouraged to 'mature it', which I have been doing for the last 7 years. Although the experience and connection to Buddha Nature has strengthened and become a lot more accessible and open, to the point at which it is relatively easy to access, I have not experienced the 'cessation of awareness' which is, as far as I have read, the trigger for stream entry, and a genuine awakening that is irreversible.

I came across your materials a short while ago. I have read and familiarised with all of them. I've been very impressed with the progress you've reported in your students and also your honesty in being open about it. I have tried the 'Two-Part Formula' meditation and found the second part - the 'I affirming' part very powerful, humbling and helpful to identifying the self. The first part feels very much of the same spirit as the practice I have been engaging with till now, but the 'I affirming' part is new and very useful. Through this 'Two-Part Formula' I now recognise that there has been a deficiency in my practice for a long time - although I have been 'taming the wild horse' and doing a lot of purification of attachments over the years, there has been 'a practitioner doing the purification' all along. It's the 'thinker' and it is felt in the head between the eyes, mainly, or at least that's how it currently feels, a band around the forehead where thinking is experienced. I now recognise that I need to let go of that 'practitioner'. It's something that my teacher mentioned to me during my training with him, but I now see that it requires a lot more dedicated attention. The 'practitioner' or 'thinker' is felt in my head, and letting it go provokes feelings of fear and of losing my identity.

I was wondering if you would consider working with me to help me finally cut through this 'I'.

Kim: Thank you for telling me your story. I always like hearing people's stories. I am happy to help.

I understand your problem. I have worked with people like you before. The person who first asked to be guided had a solid meditation history of 35 years, was even a meditation monk for 12 years, practicing Transcendental Meditation, but just hadn't gotten to the root problem, the subject self. It took us four days of emailing to sort it out.

I am pretty sure your problem will be removed in a couple of sessions of using the Two-Part Formula. This technique hits right at the target, so simply follow the instructions. Just do the formula and compare the two modes. The selfless state is beautifully known to you already so this processing is more like 'giving a finishing touch' to a long process.

Good luck with processing! Straight at the bull's eye!

Jonathan: Thank you so much for your inspiring email which I received today at work. Since then a strong peace has descended on me and the 'thinker' has gone pretty quiet. I am immediately feeling more at peace with others in work and my interactions are smoother, more open. The extra openness brings feelings of fresh vulnerability, but that's a good sign. Into the lions cave... I am determined to see this through. I listened to the guided practice this evening again and followed along and then went and did a 40 min meditation.

I am breaking up the 40 mins as follows
 5 mins open awareness, 5 mins I-affirming
 5 mins open awareness, 5 mins I-affirming
 5 mins open awareness, 5 mins I-affirming
 5 mins open awareness, 5 mins I-affirming

To be honest I'm not strictly observing these exact intervals but I'm trying to keep things 50/50. I say the I-affirming part as follows :

Me, me me
 Me, me, me
 Me, me, me
 Me, me, me
 Mine, mine, mine
 Mine, mine, mine
 Mine, mine, mine
 Mine, mine, mine
 I, I, I
 I, I, I
 I, I, I
 I, I, I

Then back to the start again.

For the open awareness stage I am noticing little shifts between my eyes as I let go of the 'I' there, and also a loosening of tension of my lower belly. Also a loosening of tension around the solar plexus, an area that I carry feelings of stress. I find my mind can wander a little during the open awareness stage, but it's relatively easy to return to the awareness. For the I-affirming stage, I say the words with intention, and immediately notice the emotional loosening it brings. If I say them like I mean them, the effect is better. It feels like I'm letting go of something I've been carrying, I feel more human. Emotional shifts are happening in the body.

Regarding the feelings of 'I', It feels like I'm finally coming to the head of the matter of my practice. There are also the fears that 'what will become of me', like I'm walking to my death, which I suppose 'I' am. Of course I can then get caught up in the 'story' of it all and the self can make a possession of the whole thing, but I can see this and am wise to it, as much as possible. I will have to keep this intensity up. The feeling of 'I' has lessened, but it's still pretty much there at a subtle level almost all of the time. However, it is lessening. I am amazed at the speed that you managed to help the person with 35 years of practice. I'm going to put ideas of timescales out of my mind though, because I know that nothing real happens in the future or the past, and awakening only ever happens in the here and now, and I don't want to get goal orientated and affect the process. It is still inspiring though. Being goal-orientated is something that my teacher always pointed out was something I carried. I really see now that my practice has been mainly concerned with the object-I (emotions, body tensions etc) and not concerned enough with the subject-I (where it really gets personal). I will never forget my first meditation interview with my teacher, where he really shined a light on my smugness and conceit. It's something that I've been working with to this day. I have been successful in the 'world', academically and in music and in work, and have built up an identity around this, a superiority complex which puts a strain on my interactions with others. It has lessened over the years but I think this process is finally the medicine that will put this smugness into change.

Should I continue with my week at work as normal or take some time off this week? It feels ok to work, and meeting times with others feels like a great time to observe the I-based insecurities that really come up around others. Although I am used to bringing open awareness to work situations, I'm not yet used to bringing the I-affirming part. My job involves quite a bit of thinking as I write software, but hopefully I can just keep with the practice. I'm not sure how accurate I will be with the times (i.e. trying to get it 50/50). Have you any suggestions here?

I just wanted to tell you that last night while lying in bed I was focusing on the sense of 'I' around the head and a sort of quick succession of flashes happened and my head felt unblocked. Something fell away. The sense of 'I' is has really receded. It's the same this morning. A joyous sense of letting go of things I had been carrying, letting go of concerns and worries. The sense of 'I' during the I-affirming stage of the meditation is a lot weaker. There is still more to go so I'll keep with the processing! Lots of subtle 'I' still around....

Kim: Sounds promising. On the other hand you say that the affirmation feels 'a lot weaker'. 'Weaker' implies it is not yet completely *through*. If it was through it feels like air, the affirmation just echoes in empty space. And there is a feeling of subtle exhilaration. If the bull's eye is not yet pierced, sit down and aim right at the core of the sensation the affirmation brings up. If it is gone, give me a specific description what is different. I can also check your photo, if you wish to send it for analysis.

Referring to your previous email, about timelines. I also spent years in a lot of meditation and received instructions from many good and highly regarded teachers.

Jonathan: Am getting closer, but am not there yet. During the I-affirming stage I felt my sense of 'I' inside the head become surrounded by a sort of clear gel or goo and rise up, so that it felt like my sense of 'I' was above my head, or at least my head was stretched up vertically. Also a few times that same sense of 'I' swelled, as if it was trying to break out of my head. It seems like the sense of 'I' is more objectified now, rather than personal. There

is less identification with it (it seems more like a physical sensation, rather than a 'me', but it's definitely still there. I'm getting a little closer to the affirmation echoing into empty space, as you say.

During the I-affirming stage, I also feel a sense of 'I' in my chest, where the voice resonates. Should I also focus on that, or stick with the head?

Kim: Choose the strongest sensation. Look carefully. Look-at-it. Zoom in-zoom out-zoom in. What is there in the middle?

Jonathan: Ok, I went for a walk in the park at lunch. Beautiful sunny winter's day. Did the I-affirming part. The pressure is definitely between the eyebrows at the temple, not much at the chest. Sat down and continued. Noticed the sense of self. A vulnerability, a feeling of being in a glass prison. Bit by bit there are little energetic shifts at the temple, it starts to break, this provokes breaking up at the hara also. I feel freer, less vulnerable. It feels like I'm going invisible, and all that remains is life. I'm simply not there. Seeing with nobody seeing. When I zoom in to the pressure at the temple, a sense of exhilaration comes, excitement. Something about to break free. This feels wonderful. There is more to work with - the pressure is still there but it is slowly crumbling. I get a sense of where this is going... Wow!

Kim: OK. You have to punch it in. Several times you have said 'something is about to happen', 'more to work with', 'get a sense where this is going' and yada yada. You are caught in a loop while thinking you are getting out of it. This processing seems to have created a samsara of it's own for you. Can you see it? It's time to get this sorted. Sit down and be serious about it.

Jonathan: I will do whatever it takes. Another question - in the I-affirming stage, it feels better to have the eyes open. Should I also have the eyes open in the open awareness stage?

Kim: Use both, open and closed eyes.

Jonathan: I took the afternoon off work and spent 2 hours in the park practicing. Then went home, had dinner and did the practice for 4 x 40 min sessions, with walking meditation in between. I'm going to do a retreat schedule on the weekend. If I need to take days off work next week, I will.

Kim: Oh no no no!!! You are making this a cozy practice that you can perform for hours and days. No-way-dude! Use the formula and be done with it! Then you can throw it away to the gutter. You have to sit down, shut your mouth and drill with the formula. You need to keep up with the effort, making observations all the time, until the bubble bursts up! Not tomorrow, not next week. Now. You are getting into pretty serious limbos. Has happened to me too. This is the stuff old traditions carry. It sneaks up on you.

Jonathan: Yes - the processing seems to have created a samsara of it's own - I feel the pressure that it should all get done in a matter of days. This creates expectation and urgency in my mind. I can identify it and I'll let that go. I don't want to break off and 'fail', yet at the same time I feel the pressure to 'succeed' quickly. I feel like I'm caught in a trap.

Kim: Look.' I, me, self' can only be *seen* to be an illusion. *Just look* and you can make the observation that your 'I' is an illusion. Look! Forget the goal, forget any possible result.

Look! Investigate!

Jonathan: When you say 'punch it in', do you mean punch in the sensation of 'I' in between the eyes? I'm not sure how to do that. I'm able to zoom in on the sensation of 'I' there (between the temples) and let it go, let the energy dissipate and crumble, but trying to punch it in creates pressure in my head that feels forced. Is this ok?

Kim: By punching it I mean using the formula, the two modes, with your whole being, your body and energy. You have to get involved in using it! Punch it in! Full steam!

Jonathan: OK! I get the picture now! Beautiful. One final question and that should be it! I'm not sure whether to take time off work next week. Does it even matter? My job is head stuff - programming and involves a fair bit of thinking. I don't know if I can go full steam into the two modes in the work environment, as there is a lot of thinking there. I think I'll just give it a shot and see. Any advice as to how to do the two modes when you have to 'think' also? Thank you, I will give this 100% commitment.

Kim: Work and being with people is excellent for processing because then you can see how the two modes alternate by themselves. Seeing, hearing, thinking, all the same, no? See for yourself.

Jonathan: Ok, that's great, thanks. I'm giving this 100%, Punching through it. Like you say, you have to give it everything. This 'I' is a huge fiction which I have been manicturing my whole life. What a total waste! I think you're right about thinking. A lot of stuff regarding 'spiritual seeking' has fallen away today. I'm de-cluttering myself of that baggage. When I say the 'I' affirmation there is less of a sense of 'I' there and my head feels clearer. I feel the block at the centre of my temple. I will continue. Thank you for this.

Kim: Seeking is a classic pitfall. Who seeks? Right? Keep being aware of that block in the head. But always feel it from selfless space. Skip a day, tomorrow, in your reports and get back to me on the day after.

Jonathan: There is still a subtle clinging on waiting to see 'what's going to happen next', but when I put my heart into it, it fades.

Kim: 'I' wants to find out.

Jonathan: I will tell you how things have been overall the last 3 days and let you judge for yourself. I've had 'good' patches and 'challenging' patches.

On Saturday night, after finishing off the last meditation of the evening (that was the day I did my 'meditation day' - I didn't repeat that on Sunday), I realised that I was in a dream. I could see it, feel it, sense it all around me. Everything was a dream and the dreamer could never wake up from that dream because the dreamer too was part of the dream. The only way out was to let go of the dreamer. That was the 'I'. I felt like I was just starting to wake up from the dream. I remember in one of the meditations that evening sensing the 'I' in my head and realising what an utter joke the whole concept was. Pathetic. It felt no different than any other attachment.

On Sunday, I felt like somebody who had been for a long operation and who had been under general anaesthetic and who was just coming round, waking up. There was a lot of pressure on my head. there still is but that is clearing each day. When I was cleaning my

shower, I noticed how alive and fresh the drops of water on the glass were. Also, watching nature programs on TV was such a vivid experience. It felt like the TV was alive.

Monday and today at work have been very good. My interactions with people have become much less edgy. There is a space between me and the 'I' now. I'm facing the bull head on in interactions and usually it breaks up. Sometimes it gets it's way too. Interactions are the most difficult experiences - just being open with others. At the computer, I find that I can use my mind and think when I need to, but most of the time it's pretty quiet. I am a lot more patient. On Monday I had a lot of inner dialogue about how happy I was with this whole experience and how I was so excited about sharing it with others. Of course that was also the 'I' trying to edge in with another scenario and that's faded today (although I still do want to share this). There were pretty much no other mental distractions apart from that. On the negative side, Monday evening was a practice night and I remember feeling disillusioned with the practice of the group and impatient with others. The 'I' was starting to re-assert itself again...

Today at work was the same as Monday. I went for a walk in the park and worked on the 2PF. During the open-awareness stage I felt so connected with everything. There was/is just a little 'I' coming from my temple, which kind of put a strain on my sense of vision. Other than that there really was no 'I' anywhere. Nothing, just life. It was like being in a cinema. It felt wonderful, so alive.

Tonight was difficult as I visited my family. Family frustrations giving the 'I' a chance again for a few hours, but it clears up after a while.

Overall, there has been a permanent shift in me. I will never go back to the way I was before I started this process, but it doesn't feel finished either. When I do the 'I' affirming part, I hear my voice but it doesn't sound like me. There are still blocks around my temple though, and I feel the 'I' there, but each day the blocks get clearer. I need to truly commit though and keep the flame burning brightly. This I find hard. It's a lot easier to do the 2PF when I'm on my own, but the challenges and distractions are great fuel too.

Kim: You say that there has been a permanent shift while there still are tensions in your temples. I can sense that there has been some insight but I am not sure if it is fully through. Sit down and do 2PF a few times. Then tell me how it felt. Please remember to make difference between subject-self and object-selves.

Jonathan: When I do the I-affirming stage, I feel the pressure as usual between the eyebrows and my head feels blocked around my forehead although less blocked than yesterday and this evening at work. I feel the 'I' between between the eyebrows in a knot there. There's a subtle feeling of vanity, superiority and aggression and being in control. The sense of 'I' is concentrated there, but there's also a subtle sense of it in my voice and also in front of my torso.

When I do the open awareness stage after the I-affirming stage I feel the 'I' in the same place, and it starts to soften and break up a little. This releases tension deep in the belly also. There is a subtle sense of the 'I' trying the find the 'I' and so getting stuck in a loop - a practitioner 'doing' the practice so to speak. There is a subtle fear of opening up to the sensation of 'I' as it means that this 'piece' of 'I' will 'be lost', and a feeling of subtle apprehension about that but it's fairly mild and just feels a little strange. Letting go of emotional attachments i.e. object-selves is far easier to detach from. The subject-self is much more personal - thats where I'm putting 90% of the effort, whereas before stating the 2PF practice it was probably the other way round.

In the next session the head felt much clearer. I can see that there is a big fat practitioner sitting on top of both parts of the Two-Part Formula. Letting go of this I start to feel like the first time I meditated, when I knew nothing about practice. This feels a lot more right.

It makes me feel like I'm doing the practice not for 'myself' but out of a kindness. I see from this session that a major block for me is the 'practitioner' hitching a ride on the whole thing.

This evening at work the knot I mentioned became softer and was replaced with a strange tingling that lasted for about 1 hour. I felt slightly queasy and there was a tinge of sadness or regret to the experience, but I felt clearer and more open as a result. Interactions with people in work keep getting less edgy and more open.

Kim: You just have to keep pounding the two modes. The 'I' sits right there behind the eyes. So come back to that space and check if the 'I' is there. No searching, just observing. And no emotions, like kindness. This is plain analysis, *vipashyana*, no room for emotions. Wrathful compassion. Hard light.

Jonathan: I also watched some of the videos of meditators online and was inspired by their calmness and concentration.

Kim: Great but don't watch videos now. Focus on the task at hand. Push!

Jonathan: After the last message I felt like I wouldn't send you another one until I had completely finished the job as I felt very confident on Thursday evening. I have been on retreat all Saturday, and travelling that has affected the process in a negative way. I feel a bit ashamed that this process is taking so long. I will absolutely send you an email each day from now on, even if there is nothing unusual to report. Actually, I can send you several short emails during the day, throughout the day, just to keep the intensity up and to keep reminding me of the process. Please accept my apologies and continue to work with me to see this through to the end.

Kim: Don't worry about it taking so long. And it is usually an issue when one has the thought of 'I can pull this off by myself'. If awakening happens on its own that is one thing but if there is a thought-based motivation like this, one will probably just get misled. There is no use imagining what it will be like and thinking like this, 'I can do this', is just another form of being fooled by one's self.

Jonathan: My analysis is going OK. After your message on Thursday evening I did the analysis and it went really well. The blocks were dissolving behind my eyes and I felt confident that it would be over soon. I feel a lot of clarity about what was required of me. Very simple, nothing to do except work with the block between the eyes. There was no expectation. No spiritual-practitioner ego around anymore. I felt like a beginner, not striving for anything. I had a palpable sense of the 'I' even when not sitting and doing the analysis and was able to identify and let it go. That was Thursday night.

Kim: You mean that you were able to perceive the 'I' and let go of it? Do you know the difference between calming down (skt. *shamatha*) and analytical (skt. *vipashyana*) principles? In *calming down meditation* you let go of things and, well, calm down. In analytical meditation you actively look and investigate the elements that come up, in this case, the subject self. The point is not to repeatedly detach from the self but the exact opposite, to be aware of it directly.

Jonathan: Friday and Saturday were spent on retreat. There was a lot of effort travelling to the location and giving lifts to chatty newcomers, plus some heated discussion on Friday regarding the running and the future of the group. I lost the analysis and got caught up in

talking (and even arguing) to people most of Friday.

Kim: It's fine. When you need to engage in work, action or discussion do so without hesitation. What you can do is use an active moment for processing to notice if there is me or not during the action. Simple as that.

Jonathan: Meditations on Saturday were fine and I was able to continue with the analysis all day long, although I could only say the analysis in my head during the 'I' affirming stage, as the retreat was in silence. This took away some of the spirit of the 'I' affirming stage. I did the 2PF, not silent illumination. Saturday evening I lost the Two-Part Formula travelling home and wasted 3 hours in front of the TV from 10 pm-1 am. I would have been better staying at home and just practicing the 2PF all weekend, I think. However, I felt far more awake than I ever had done before on these daily retreats.

Kim: If you spend a lot of time, like more than a couple of hours doing 2PF in sitting posture, then it is best to do longer arcs of the two modes. I mean that you could lengthen the periods spent in each mode. If you did, for example, a few minutes in one mode before, now do 5-10 minutes, longer arcs.

Jonathan: Today (Sunday) has been better. I have an issue in that I'm probably going to break up with my girlfriend as I don't feel I can commit to her and I don't want to waste any more of her time as it's unfair. Basic ethics. We went for a walk this afternoon and I couldn't bring myself to break up. This has clouded my mind. This evening has been calm however and I am able to do the Two-Part Formula. Sorry for all these excuses.

Kim: These are not excuses. Our practice should never exclude life circumstances at hand but rather include it in one's practice. I cannot tell you what to do with your girlfriend but when pondering that stuff, you can observe when and how the 'I' comes and goes during it.

Jonathan: My main issue is that I can't continuously do the 2PF. It's patchy. It's fine when I sit down or meditate, and it's good in work, as there is a routine and people are polite and I have space, but in other situations like what happened this weekend, I am pulled away from it, for hours. I feel like I've fallen backwards this weekend overall and I genuinely apologise for this.

Kim: I think that you have become too attached to sitting practice. I was like that too. But both recognition of the selfless state, as well as self-based state can be done any time. It is small observation of a split second or few seconds that matter. Yes, we use concentration and mindfulness in this processing but it's not like one has to stare at one's breath or navel as in common meditation. Do the analysis, observe the modes bit by bit, moment by moment. 2-3 minutes is a long time when doing this practice correctly, and such a short period can be all that is required. It is a matter of processing, keeping the water on heat for it to become warm and to start boiling. This means digging the subject-self out into the open so that it can be seen in a correct way. What is the correct way? 'I' doesn't stay and it doesn't have a fixed, firm, solid shape. 'I' is just a bundle of stuff, emotions and impressions on top of each other. 'I' is deeply imprinted continuous associations and we *believe* it. We have a fixed belief in this entity. 'I can not do this... I can do this! I am poor. I am great!' and whatever thought associations we have. But this is just being identified as concepts and thoughts... Are 'you' anything else than a stubborn idea? Look at yourself and find out.

Jonathan: Thank you for your very helpful email. It all makes sense to me. Regarding your question 'Do you know the difference between shamatha and vipashyana-principles' I would say yes - the practice I've been doing up till now has been the investigation of emotional forces in the body and bringing awareness to them, perceiving them directly and watching awareness and the emotion become one, so that the emotion transforms back to more awareness. The practice of investigating the 'I' in between the head that I'm doing now feels more one pointed and direct even than this 'emotional investigation' as it is a smaller area, and also more personal since it is where the 'I' is felt. It also doesn't seem to move around much. But yes, I'm not just trying to let go of the 'I' but burrow into it and watching it break up. On reflection though, I could be even more 'active' in this burrowing.

Kim: Emotions and thoughts are objects which the subject identifies with. This is a good practice. However, analytical meditation of objects becomes very different when subject is gone. The cart wheel cannot but crumble down when the central spoke is gone. When the central spoke is there however it is very difficult for the cart wheel of delusion to collapse.

Jonathan: You are right - I probably am attached to meditation as I always look forward to it.

Kim: I like meditation too but what often happens, seeming in your case as well, is that we become fixed to a method and particularly to techniques. For this reason I have asked people to forget everything they have ever learned and practiced before, and start afresh. Fresh!

Jonathan: I like the analogy of the water boiling! I worked from home so I had no distractions. I did the 2PF in the morning and afternoon and during lunch when I went for a walk in the park. I had some emotional tension in my chest to let go of after the difficult weekend and this wore off as the evening came. I did my best to stay aware at the computer keyboard during the day and keep doing the formula and worked with the blocks in my head. There is less of a feeling of pressure between the eyebrows now, more of a feeling of an overall cloudiness in the top hemisphere of my head. There is still some pressure though.

Kim: OK.

Jonathan: After dinner I meditated for 40 mins and did the 2PF again. The tension of the weekend was gone at this stage. I burrowed into the feeling of 'I' between the temples and bits of it started to loosen; this also released tension at the hara. In fact, I got the strange sense that the blocks in the head and in the hara were really one thing, not separate. During the second half of the meditation, I perceived the energy in the torso as not my energy, but something divine, something other than me. I sensed a sort of 'holy spirit' within. I was (and still am) filled with a deep sense of peace. Doing the 'I'-based stage of the 2PF, I got the distinct feeling that I was slowly waking up from a dream, again I could sense it everywhere around me, but I was not yet awake from it. I didn't get distracted by these phenomena but continued with the investigation.

Kim: It is unusual compared to many others in guidance, that you feel that connection between the head and gut. But it must be because you have a long history of practice. The fact that you are feeling the connection is promising because you are reaching deep layers. I'll talk more about this later.

Jonathan: There is still a sense of 'I' overall, but it is weaker each day. I'm going to work in the office tomorrow and look forward to seeing the 'I' in my interactions with others there.

Kim: Just stick with it, moment to moment. You understand the instruction to just keep applying it. It won't be long until the cloud evaporates for good. Just look into the heart of it!

Jonathan: Thank you for your really helpful comments. Well, I have definitely woken up out of the dream! I can't be 100% certain if I need to do more processing and if there's still more 'I' to investigate - if not, and there's a little more to do, I don't mind one bit, it still feels wonderful! I will tell you what happened and how I feel.

Kim: That carefreeness whether this is the real thing or not is always a promising comment.

Jonathan: The day went very well and I pretty much was able to do the 2PF all day. Interactions at work were very smooth. After work I went home and had dinner and after dinner when I had just finished the washing up, a shift occurred and all of a sudden the 'I' slipped away. Everything became present, alive. I felt like I had woken up out of the dream that I referred to last night. The feeling of being in a dream was really gone. It felt joyous and hilarious.

Kim: This is a classic example of *kensho*, seeing through to the true nature caused by dropping of self.

Jonathan: I went to the kitchen, which is an extension, so that I could really shout the affirmations without disturbing the neighbours. Like you say, the affirmation just echoes into empty space. That was pretty much my experience yesterday too. This evening however, there is no cloudiness in the top part of my head and just a sort of tingling/slight pressure between the eyebrows and the main difference is that the feeling of 'I' is not there anymore, or so it seems. Yesterday, investigating the 'I' between the eyebrows felt like investigating something that was 'I', however now I don't get a sense of 'I' there. There's something still there but it doesn't feel like 'I' anymore. Or does it? It's hard to say for sure! As I write this email and look to the 'I' between the eyebrows, I get a sense of something being present all right, but it feels more like warmth, not threatening. There is still some 'I' there too perhaps if I really go right to the centre, but the fear of looking at it (and losing it) is gone now. I do feel elation. It feels easy. I need to investigate this sensation between the eyebrows a bit more. There is certainly more investigation required, but as to whether it's finished, I really can't be certain. It's totally fine either way.

Kim: Yes, affirmation echoing to empty space, doesn't stick anywhere. Based on your photographs I can see some energetics still getting worked out, or better, aligned after the shift that took place. I am pretty sure that these remnants will be gone in a day or two.

Jonathan: This morning I feel exactly the same, still awake. I really burrowed into the centre of my head between the eyebrows this morning and could find no 'I' there. There are other energetic sensations, some higher up the head, but the sense of 'I' is very difficult to find. Some little remnants here and there, but the bull seems to be docile now, even gone, or dead? Insightful investigation in other parts of the body seems just like swimming, almost effortless, awareness just bursting through attachment. So easy! This is

just pure fun.

Kim: Yes. I am so happy for you. I never get tired of this job. You have awakened. At last! My heartfelt congratulations.

Jonathan: Thank You Kim.

Kim: You are very welcome. My job in regards to this guidance is now done but if you have questions or comments, feel free to ask. Congrats again and have a nice evening Yay!

Case 8: Shane

Shane is a musician who had joined a few meditation retreats many years before being told about the Two-Part Formula by his brother. This is Shane's own account that describes his experiences over few weeks time. His awakening was confirmed by Kim from his verbal account as well as from photos.

Before I discovered the Two-Part Formula I hadn't much experience in meditation, in fact, for reasons that I am not entirely sure of, I hadn't meditated for nearly 10 years.

My brother introduced me to meditation about 12 years ago and the first method I learned was a breathing awareness meditation. This seemed to have a very positive effect on me so I made a commitment to practice everyday, even though the idea of awakening or enlightenment was completely unknown to me at this stage. Around this time I also took part in a small number of retreats that were focused mainly on the practice of pure awareness. I stuck with this meditation for a while but found it hard to stay committed. My daily practice became less and less frequent until eventually I stopped.

During the 10 years of not meditating I had considered returning to a daily practice but could never find the inspiration that I needed. One day my brother mentioned to me that he had discovered a new meditation technique that was awakening nearly everybody who tried it. As you can imagine I found this quite hard to believe but simply hearing about it was enough to reignite a spark in me. I didn't go to the 2PF straight away, there was definitely something in me that was resisting it. It took a few months before I eventually decided to give it a go.

The 2PF felt strange at first and was quite unlike any meditation technique I had tried before. I certainly wasn't one of those individuals who awakens after one or two days. In fact, it took several weeks to break through the illusion. The 2PF never felt like it was having a very strong effect on me. I found it difficult to trigger any strong sensations of self, but I was committed and eventually it worked.

My awakening happened early on a Saturday morning, but since the afternoon of the previous day I had felt like a shift had occurred. I went out that evening to meet friends and go to a concert and throughout this whole time I felt unusually peaceful. So content and relaxed, yet energised. Socialising was much easier than usual. I often had difficulty relaxing in large groups and would usually resort to excessive drinking as a way of dealing with the tension. While cycling home I decided to try out the affirmation. Saying the words out loud and in my head, I couldn't help but notice how the words had lost some of the

meaning that they previously had. Almost to the point where they felt like they weren't bouncing off anything, like they weren't triggering anything in me. I went to bed when I got home and as I lay there, already after 4 am at this point, I couldn't stop thinking to myself that something was missing. This couldn't be awakening. My experience lacked heart, lacked warmth and love.

While lying there I became increasingly aware of a glow between my eyes. I had felt something like this before during meditation, but it had previously felt more like tension, like a clenched fist, or a rock, or a knot in my forehead. Now it felt like it was coming to life, growing warmer, and pulsing with energy. I decided to focus my entire being on it and as I did so it started to expand. The more it expanded the warmer and freer I felt. Suddenly I realised something that I had known before, but there was a sudden shock realisation of what it truly meant. For the first time in my life I realised I can be me now, really me. I said this to myself out loud. 'Oh my God, I can be me now'. Nothing to be scared of anymore, nothing to chase, no-one to be, except me. These words had such profound meaning to me that I needed to repeat them several times, completely shocked by the realisation. Suddenly I started crying and the warm glow that was expanding across my forehead suddenly exploded, releasing a massive wave of energy across my entire body. The feeling was so indescribably intense that I broke down in completely uncontrollable tears.

My body was shaking. It felt like a huge amount of dark energy was bursting out of my body through this point in my forehead. I'm not sure how long the tears lasted but as they calmed down they were replaced by laughter and a feeling of lightness and energy like nothing I'd felt before. Even though it was 5 am I felt like getting dressed and running down the road telling everybody I met what had happened to me and how much I loved them! Crazy! I did go for a walk but you can imagine what the few people around would be like at that time on a Saturday morning, so I kept it to myself.

My awakening was such an intense experience that it took several days to recover from. The whole experience had rattled me so much that I could do very little for those few days. But as my life gradually returned to normality reality started to sink in. The sights, the sounds, I no longer feel separated from them as I did before. I feel so connected with everything and everyone around me. Such a strange but beautiful feeling. My self could never have experienced life in this way.

Case 9: Matthew

Matthew is a long time buddhist meditator. His processing lasted 5 days.

Matthew: Hi Kim. My name is Matthew from UK. My good friends Jon and Mike, whom I believe you have had some contact with, suggested that I get in touch with you regarding your guidance on how to awaken. After all three of us had a group internet call, they told me about you and the guidance that you offer, guidance which I would like to follow also.

A little bit more about me: I am 40 years old and have been a member of a buddhist group since its inception in 2008. We are a practice group who follow the path of *silent illumination* (ch. mozhao). Prior to joining that group I was practicing with a different buddhist organisation called the Triratna (formally Friends of the Western Buddhist Order or FWBO). I joined that group when I was 20 and have had a committed practice including

a daily meditation practice since that time. I have done many practice retreats including almost all of the retreats that our group has organised. I work in engineering, although I consider myself to be an artist.

Practice: I have begun the process of familiarising myself with the Two-Part Formula, and have been trying it out since Wednesday morning (13th September 2017) where I effectively used my morning sitting period (40mins) to practice the 2PF and have been trying it out during lunchtime at work and also a little time in the evenings. I almost immediately experienced physical contractions in my body, hands and chest with some shaking of the head, especially this Saturday morning (16th September 2017) during the second, self-affirmation mode of the formula. I would say that the first part of the practice, of experiencing embodied expansive spaciousness I am pretty familiar with, but only that it has deepened somewhat, especially in my head since using the second part of the formula. But now the contractions have subsided, at least I think they have, and I notice a subtle quietness in my mind and head, again, at least I think I do.

Sunday morning update (17th September 2017 - today):

This morning I sat my 40 min period of meditation, and essentially just tried to open up to the feeling of quietness in my head/mind. I tried out the Two-Part Formula once, saying the affirmations 'I, I, I, me, me, me, mine, mine, mine' out loud, but I kind of feel like my heart's not in it. I am just not getting the same convolutions/contractions that I was having earlier, so it felt best to just be with my experience and leave the formula alone until I know what is happening.

So anyhow, I could do with some guidance in these matters regarding the 2PF.

Kim: Hey Matthew. Are you ready to begin? Your training history makes you well fit for this process. Keep an open mind. Don't bring all what you know or have experienced with you because you need none of that now. Start afresh. No expectations or high hopes, with plainness and simplicity. If you can do just that, this can be over in few short days.

Matthew: Hi Kim. Great to hear back from you. With regards the awakening process I think the horse may have bolted already, so to speak. I think it happened last Saturday morning during meditation. After reading some of the case studies of the process, I recognise the events having had occurred to myself as well. I would like to write you an account if I may? I think this would be helpful.

In terms of my practice right now - I have a lot of questions. I wonder if I can ask you them?

Kim: Matt. You mean you awakened already? Wouldn't be surprised in your case. Sure, write me an account and send me a photo (eyes directly in the camera, no eye glasses, good light). If you are awake, we can talk practice related matters.

Matthew: Hi. Please find below an account of what I believe was an awakening experience I had last week. I have attached a picture of my face to this email.

Matthew's Notes

Tuesday 12th September 2017:

During the evening, after a sangha team internet call to plan for the forthcoming autumn retreat, there followed a second call between myself, Jonathan and Mike, who are also long

standing members of the group.

Jonathan went on to explain that after many years of practice under the guidance of our former teacher, he had still not woken up to the truth. That this is 'getting ridiculous' I think was the phrase he used. So he decided to do some googling to see what else is out there, perhaps there was another path more suitable?

And so he happened upon the Open Heart-website and the Two-Part Formula that you offer guidance on. After trying it out for a short time, his words were that he had a 'kensho' experience. So he tells Mike, who in a short time, under your guidance, also has an awakening experience and that Karl, another long standing member of the sangha, has also woken and that two other members of the sangha were also 'in the process'.

Well, me thinks, on the surface it sounds too good to be true, but that these are people I trust and have known them for a long time, and I know they are committed dharma practitioners. And so, with a feeling of disbelief but also trusting my spiritual friends I accept their advice. Jonathan sends me an email with all of the relevant links to the material. During our discussion that evening, Jon mentions the 2PF and the affirmations of 'I,I,I' and 'me, me, me', and, you know I almost immediately had a sense of what was happening when the I or the self is affirmed, exposed and brought out into the open light of awareness. A kind of purposeful exposure. Still with a feeling of disbelief, I head off to the land of nod, bedtime.

I check my emails in the morning and Jon's email regarding 'Guidance' has already landed the night before. Such an important email I will not open at work though, and wait until the evening to open it. However, having listened to Jon talk about the 2PF, I start playing around with saying 'I' and 'Me' at work in my head and mind especially during my lunch break, to see what kind of effect it would have on my experience.

My sense at this time, not fully knowing the 2PF, only knowing that it involves affirming the 'I', is that tension is created, or rather exposed as pain and contractions in the bodymind. But that after saying the affirmations there comes a feeling of release and spaciousness.

In the evening, after a run in the park, I open Jon's email, following the links and read the instructions for using the 2PF. I reply to Jon's email with thanks and try out 2PF a little as I fall asleep.

Thursday 14th September 2017:

I incorporate the 2PF into my 40 minute morning meditation as a means of beginning preparatory work for 'guidance'. After some minutes of watching the rise and fall of my abdomen and opening to awareness, I begin the affirmations saying out loud, 'I, I, I, me, me, me, mine, mine, mine' twice, all the while experiencing contractions and convulsions in my hands, chest and head, unpleasant but not totally unbearable. And then rest again in open awareness. I continue in this way until the end of the sitting period.

At work I use the 2PF during quieter periods including a half hour period of 2PF during my lunch break. During the evening I sit meditating, doing 2PF for half an hour and read some materials from Awake-book.

Friday 15th September 2017:

Pretty much the same as Thursday.

Saturday 16th September 2017:

Again I use my morning period of meditation to continue the practice of 2PF. As I continue alternating between opening to spacious awareness and then affirming the 'I', I continue to

experience physical contractions in my body, hands and chest with some shaking of the head. The head shaking, I experienced the day before but this time the onset is more sudden, happening much earlier in the meditation period. As the sit goes on, so do the contractions and subsequent feelings of release. During what I think was the last set of affirmations, saying out loud, 'I, I, I, me, me, me, mine, mine, mine' twice, my head shook and then curled around my neck and my legs flew in the air like one flap of a birds wings (I sit cross legged). As this happened a kind of small explosion happened in my mind/head and I saw a light appear in my minds eye, high in the room. It was a whitish blue colour and sparkled with small trails around it. It appeared as though something moved across it, just like the movement of an eye lid. There was also one trail that shimmered from its centre. I also think I saw a small black dot, but at the same time I thought a bird had flown into the room. It was there for a moment and then it was gone, disappearing with an after image of soft, sparking white-blue light. As it appeared it felt very peaceful and warm, loving and tender, gentle and soft, the kind of thing you would want to melt into. There for a moment and then gone.

Whatever it was it was kind of cool and didn't feel wrong it any way, just another meditation experience I thought. As the morning unfolded I noticed that I was getting myself organised in an usually clear and concise way, without any fuss and very smoothly, as usually I flap and rush in an effort to save time. After getting breakfast in a nearby cafe I drove to my parents house, who are away at the moment, in order to do a few administrative tasks. Admin tasks done, I settle down with the ebook 'Awake' and continue to read. After lunch I decide to take a walk in the park. The colours are bright and sharp, the sounds clear and do not feel like cutting stabs in my head as they have done in the past for years and years. I feel light and relaxed and not lonely and worried as I often am. I enjoy the sunlight and do not feel like wearing my sun glasses. I sit down in the park and enjoy the quietness in my head/mind, that feels unusually stable and permanent, not fleeting and a battle to 'stay concentrated'. It was then that I thought perhaps I have woken up, and that what happened during morning meditation was an awakening experience.

From then on:

After I emailed you on last Sunday (17th September 2017), to express my interest in the awakening guidance, I have been following your advice to continue to do 2PF and familiarise myself with the material. This I continue from last Sunday. Now when I say the 'I' affirmations, I get no reaction, no contractions of the bodymind. I think I do get perhaps a faint after effect of the affirmations, perhaps a very slight sharpening of something in my experience, but to all intents it feels like I just say the affirmations into space, with nothing reacting to them. What I do have is a brightness in my head/mind like never before, which I feel invited to open up to. It feels exciting and like I can actually practice meditation properly for the first time in my life. Which leads me practice, but first things first, am I deluding myself here with regards what I believe to be my awakening?

Kim: Hi Matt. After reading your report and seen your photo, absolutely, you are through. Congratulations! I'll make some comments.

You are one of 15 people so far who have come to awakening by reading the materials and testing the 2PF by themselves. Nice.

You wrote on Saturday 16th of September,

'...a kind of small explosion happened in my mind/head and I saw a light appear in my minds eye, high in the room. It was a whitish blue colour and sparkled with small trails around it. It appeared as though something moved across it, just like the movement of an eye lid. There was also one trail that shimmered from its centre. I also think I saw a small

black dot, but at the same time I thought a bird had flown into the room. It was there for a moment and then it was gone, disappearing with an after image of soft, sparking white-blue light. As it appeared it felt very peaceful and warm, loving and tender, gentle and soft, the kind of thing you would want to melt into. There for a moment and then gone. What ever it was it was kind of cool and didn't feel wrong in any way, just another meditation experience I thought.'

This is not actually 'just another meditation experience', or it kind of is, but this is very significant. What happened here was an energetic occurrence which unwound your so called *kundalini energy*, connected it with energy centers above the head which are very important regarding the recognition of the natural state and then disappeared at the heart for good, leaving that warm and loving feel. I have seen some teachers mention this, including my teacher Sivakami and Ramana Maharishi, the well-known *advaita* saint. This is known in buddhism as well. The outcome of this energetic event is the dissolution of the self-knot in the head. It is an irreversible shift. Experiences like this are indications that something important is happening in practice.

You have a long practice background. Awakening was long overdue. I am so glad that it finally happened! Its good that you didn't have to wait any longer.

As you say, your meditation will be significantly different from now on because 'I' won't be jumping back and forth to split it. It has been great for me to work with your group because you have done so much hard work sitting on your butt. That's why its also been rewarding, kind of a relief, because you if anyone deserve it after all that sitting.

I am sure your mind is pretty stable by now, after 20 years of practice but having said that you still have a whole range of insights and maturation ahead of you. Because it is quite a task, I recommend tantric practice for this because it much faster than *sutra* path and is more suitable for laypeople. Other methods work too, it just takes longer.

If you have any questions, glad to help.

Matthew: Hi Kim. That's great news many thanks. It feels good to get confirmation on my awakening. Also thanks for the information that you have sent me, it is very informative and inspiring. I shall begin looking through the info and see how it feels. I will also speak to Jon and compare notes. I look forward hearing his experience.

I know almost nothing of insights, apart from what our former teacher, now deceased, has written about them, but that was something I read years ago and never went anywhere near since, as nothing like that was ever my experience, at least not before last Saturday's awakening.

Once again a hearty warm thanks for offering the 2PF. I must say that although very grateful for the spiritual transformation (which is kind of an understatement!) I am stunned and shocked at the simplicity and childishness of the predicament I was in. I could almost cry at the time and effort I have put into practice over the years, all the needless suffering. However, how was I to know the way out would be so simple? Thanks again.

Kim: In my view, the most important thing on the path is to have glimpses of the *natural state*, awareness as it is. Everything else is secondary. Unfortunately the vast majority of dharma systems are caught in thinking otherwise which makes the path for the practitioners needlessly long, demanding and fruitless. Both you, me and your dharma siblings are examples of this, as are numerous others around the world. There must be hundreds of thousands of people worldwide putting in the hours, being very devoted and good students and yet, not getting much fruit. I have made a conscious effort to shed everything that is needless to make the system simple and direct without compromising attainments.

I am so glad that Jon has made this great effort in getting you all to try. Do you think you would have considered the Two-Part Formula without the recommendation of your fellow practitioners? Maybe, maybe not. But now, a week or two after meeting with the instructions, without any instructions from a teacher, you are awake, which didn't happen through practices you have followed for almost 20 years. The same has happened to 126 other people so far. This is just a pragmatic note. People should think these things. It is that simple... Thank you and have a great day!

Case 10: Trevor

Trevor is a layman with some meditation training. His processing lasted for a week.

Trevor: I was reluctant to contact you for guidance, as I was not sure how intensive the process is nor how long it would take, but it may be time to jump in and see what it's about. Before we begin I'd like to ask if I need to take time off of work to complete this guidance process?

Kim: No, you don't need to take time off. Ordinary life with normal routines is best.

Trevor: Here is the rundown of my situation. I have been using the Two-Part Formula, and I have run into somewhat of a wall. It seems so obvious that the self is a fabricated sensation in the bodymind. This feeling is amplified in the second mode of the technique. When I am in the first mode, selflessness, I cannot see a self when I am directly aware of sounds and sensations. When I look for a self, of course the mind fabrication of self is there, because I am looking. So, I try to wake up to the fact that there is obviously not a self by just being with the sensations. Unfortunately, after a while of peace and generally pleasant feeling, my heart begins to race, my body begins to shake and twitch mostly in the groin muscles, sides and upper back muscles, thoughts arise about what is happening, and I eventually lose the ability to stay with the sensations due to their amplitude. At that point, going back to the second mode makes the twitching and shaking worse, so I stop the exercise. This process usually takes around 20-30 minutes of going back and forth between parts before it gets too much to handle.

I'm not sure what to do at this point, maybe I am going about the first mode incorrectly, or Kim maybe I should just keep doing what I'm doing and try to be with the sensations, no matter how severe. I'd appreciate your help.

Kim: Thank you for your post. Yes, we can do it. Now I am busy for two weeks but we can start after that. Until then you can prepare yourself by reading the book and trying the Two-Part Formula on your own. When it's time to begin, I'll contact you.

After a few days

Trevor: You may have another tally to add to your number of awakenings using the Two-Part Formula! Of course, there is still a measure of doubt, so I'd still like to correspond with you when you are free.

Kim: Really? Tell me what is different? What happened? Are you sure? And include photos, please. Sounds promising.

Trevor sent his photos and Kim checked them.

Kim: Yes, that's it. Wonderful! Congratulations! I'll comment below.

Trevor: I'm sure something is different but only subtly. It happened last night after a week of watching sensations associated with I or me that I felt identified with. The last two days were the worst with growing frustration that I still felt identification with I-sensations, even though I thought I knew better intellectually. There was a feeling of anguish in my heart and left arm that has been there since three days ago, though it would sometimes be a feeling of dread or mild fear in my gut, throat and legs.

Kim: It is not a dramatic or flashy thing. Rather, awakening is a disappearance of a stone from one's shoe. Then it just feels natural. Sense of freedom, sense of openness. What you experienced with frustration and anguish is very common. It's just the bundle of conditioning, 'I', becoming untied.

Trevor: Last night, I gave up the self-affirmations. I just sat and watched it. I had the thought, 'So what if it is here? What if the peace I'm looking for is here anyway, even if I feel like there is a me or I?' Then there it was. The identification with the anguish slipped away and I could feel the ever-accessible peace, which is always here now. It's even here this morning, which is new for me. I'm used to it being gone when I wake up the morning after meditation. My perception seemed wider somehow, even though it wasn't, and my heart was pounding with the fear sensation, but it didn't matter.

Kim: Yes. After awakening it's always there. Even with strong emotions, that can and do arise after awakening, it's much more easily accessed, which makes all the difference. It's a permanent shift. I'm glad for you.

Trevor: What's cool is that the anguish sensation is still in my heart but I don't care about it. It is just a sensation. I feel like me, but the suffering from the feelings is gone. I'm trying not to use meditation jargon, because it always makes me suspicious of claims of this or that when they are overused, but suffering feels like the right word to use. That's gone.

Kim: Exactly! Mental and emotional stuff still arises but as there is no one to react to it, it's significantly different. This in turn allows for seeing all that anguish or whatever emotions in a different way. Clear seeing becomes easy, even effortless. Mindstuff is released the moment they arise.

It varies how long the honeymoon lasts after awakening. With meditation background, what you have, it is probably longer than without any previous practice. Good. Enjoy it while it lasts! However, sooner or later stuff comes up from the subconscious mind. For that you need solid samatha-vipashyana practice.

You are one of the cases who by preparing for guidance to awakening got awakened. I'm so happy to hear that this happened. It shows that the formula works precisely as it should. Congrats again!

Case 11: Hannah

Hannah had some secular mindfulness background before finding out about The Two-Part Formula and awakening. The following dialogue lasted for 6 days.

Kim: Let's start. You've read the instructions. What have you gotten out of it?

Hannah: Here are my notes.

Observations regarding selflessness: *The selfless state is bright, spacious, flowing, natural and safe. I am in contact with myself and others. I do not have to worry about anything, not even big challenges. I find myself grateful for the small things and after any big success I shed tears and my heart is filled with an overwhelmingly strong sense of gratitude. I know my role and at the same time it is easy to recognize and acknowledge the role of the others. Recognition of others is easy! Serving others and helping feels easy. Interacting with people is natural and genuine. When I listen to people their sorrows don't drag me down, instead I can be compassionate without taking on their worries. At my best, I can even be grateful for the challenges and suffering I face, because I know that they will lead to improved understanding and even brighter and wider prospects in my life.*

Regarding being 'me' and my identification with the self: *I, me, mine... Feels unsympathetic, tight and stuffy. I'm scared and worried, and caught by fear. Also proud and hyperactive, caught by pride. A success feeds pride, feels intoxicating. The ego rises rapidly and falls even faster, which leads to a nasty 'hangover'. I pay more attention all the time, in order to keep the intoxicating pride in check. Success is me being 'special'. I'm ungrateful and I take others for granted. I am excellent and others are just fools. When fear is in charge, I'm nervous, I want to be alone, I'm separated and lonely. The voice of fear is a bully which fosters negativity towards myself. This wears me out and makes me nervous. I find it hard to be in other people's company. I am clumsy and uncertain. I do not know anything and I don't understand anything. I recognize situations in which pride or fear is in charge. It occurs most often when I'm tired, or when I feel threatened or in a stressful situation, sometimes even when I'm being successful. When pride and fear are in charge other people's faults stand out and the world is full of annoying flaws. Ugliness pokes me in the eyes. Interactions with people are reserved and false. I can't connect openly with people.*

The self and no-self follow different cycles. The cycle of day is unfortunate for the family. Normally during the working days I'm in a no-self mode or in a neutral intermediate state. During the afternoon and evening I'm often tired and in the grip of the self. Or, in the intermediate state, which I would call the mode of blankness, which can vary from phlegmatic to neutral. Neutral blankness is pleasant, if there is no pressure to get something done.

The last couple of years I have sometimes experienced 1-2 weeks of continuous periods of time where I've been mostly in the mode of no-self. During those times, I have made the mistake of thinking that I've awakened. This fine period ends in the darkness and tightness of the self through pride. Large cycles go something like this: 1) a blissful stretch of no-self, which is characterized by open interaction with others and gratitude 2) The self regains its foothold. Boy, am I a 'good person' and able to help others and solve problems i.e. I'm

puffed up with pride in my spiritual progress. 3) Empathy with other wears thin, my gratitude is lost and I start to experience challenges again which feel heavy 4) I humble myself before the challenges and the cycle starts all over again.

Quite a roller coaster ride!

Kim: Great reflection. You are very well aware of the challenges and blocks in your analysis. Good.

The self (the subject) is often associated with an emotion or condition (object) which it attaches to. This then circles again and again with resulting stress, pain and dissatisfaction. This analysis we are doing is specifically designed to focus on the 'subject' and to end it forever.

The method of releasing the subject is already familiar to you from the Two-Part Formula. The aim, therefore, is not to remain in a selfless state in order to cultivate presence or stillness, but to instead frame or target the self, then aim at it and get it to dissolve away with the help of the intensive observation. In practice, this is done by evoking the self again and again and then looking at it clearly, in a penetrating way, understanding what the ultimate truth of it is. And you keep this up until it is gone for good.

This is a simple matter but please stay with it stubbornly. You have the potential to become awakened. The self does not add anything useful to your experience. The self is extra, unnecessary. Please take this process seriously and take it to the end. You're already very close.

Hannah: Thank you for your encouraging words! So close and yet so far away. It feels a little like my daughter when she was five and learned how to ride the bicycle without stabilizers. Either you can ride a bicycle or you can't. There's nothing in the middle. I'm either awakened or I'm not. I believe that I can become awakened just like I've learned how to ride a bike!

Kim: It is more obvious than you can imagine.

Hannah: I am a human being. After my death in my next incarnation, I may be a dog or a horse. Or, after my death my spirit or soul will go to heaven. Is the spirit or soul still human? I don't know, and I am also not sure about reincarnation. Now I know I'm a human on earth, and it is unique and wonderful. Since I'm not a tree, I have the ability to move, think and feel. If I were a dog I could move, feel and perhaps even think. If I were truly human as a dog is a dog, I'd be awakened. Indeed, a person can be also be a role, as in the following play I might get a role of a dog!

Kim: Romantic babble, not relevant.

Hannah: My 'self' has many roles, from one play to another. I am a daughter, spouse, sister, sister-in-law, a friend and, above all, a mother to my children. However, all of these are ever-changing and culturally conditioned roles. I'm assumed to act like all mothers, sisters or wives are supposed to act in the 2000s. If I had been a mother of 1900 or the 2100s, my role would be completely different. If I was a mother in Italy or in Syria now, I'd have different expectations. It's merely a coincidence that I'm in a role of a mother in Finland! Good! A mother's role is ever-changing. It is one thing to be a mother for 1, 10 or 60-year-old child. The mother's role is determined by the child's age, era, nationality, social class and so on. Is there anything permanent in these roles? Our 7-year-old said to me today, 'Mom, you're nice, no matter what, because you are my mother.' Is it enough that I am?

Kim: Still too lively. You can answer your own questions concerning being adequate as mother after you've awakened. Until then, it's just speculation.

Hannah: The mother's role is often filled with fast-paced routines, tasks and chores. The most difficult times are when I perform chores while tired surrounded by my children quarrelling. 'I'm tired, I'm too tired to cook again, how can I get the kids to stop quarrelling?' Mom's role is filled with tasks, which I do not particularly like but they have to be done nonetheless. I can't affect the tasks, but I can influence my attitude and thereby the quality of the action. Carrying out tasks can be heavy and stale, or bright and relaxed. I can influence how strongly I'm identified with my mind while doing tasks when I'm exhausted, tasks which I would prefer not to do. How can I get rid of the tired self and its self-built musty dungeon? I want to be free and I want to enjoy life with my family and with all the people I interact with each day. I am a doctor, clinical teacher, advisor, mentor, tutor. I am a resume and a portfolio. What might my employer think, if I said that I'm working at being in the moment? I am analytical, questioning, interested in people, sentient and responsive.

Kim: I have already explained how to get out of the dungeon. All of this storytelling is fine and probably in some way necessary to you, but you already know all of this, and thus you know that you're still going round in circles. Return to my instruction. I deliberately limit the instructions into a tight package since this is quite a special, surgical procedure. The self wants to be free. All selves say so and at the same you have already fallen into a trap. This is because the self can never be free and it can never come loose. It can't escape. The awakening is done by seeing that the self is only a dream. A dream! Wake Up! WAKE UP!!! Now, cut the waffle and get to it.

Hannah: Some observations. I am a mother -> the mother I am is clinical instructor -> the clinical instructor has children -> the kids give me a headache -> the headache makes me tired -> the tiredness makes me feel like I have been unfairly treated -> being unfairly treated makes me feel like a part of a power play -> I'm also in a power play with my child who is misbehaving -> this only makes the child behave even worse. I have an apartment in the city -> to pay the rent I have a job -> I am unsure of my job's responsibilities, and feel separate. It's all just an empty dungeon.

I, me, mine. I'm in a dungeon into which I can drag any event or observation. In a dungeon any event is then so close and tight that there is no air or light. Therefore, it is dark, stuffy and tight, even if the event itself should be OK. It's always dark in a dungeon! At worst, there is nothing more than an empty dungeon. Sometimes I have not even taken anything in the dungeon, I've just lay around in the dark, cramped prison cell. Observation and events outside the cell are a couple of steps away. But they seem so far away that there is no need to worry about the dungeon capturing them in its dark jaws. I can view, reflect, listen and respond in things in private. In a dungeon I'm in a hurry, but a couple of steps away from it there is time, space and light.

Kim: All right. You can continue this if you feel it necessary. Here's something you can try. Mindful attention is kind of like a lighthouse beam directed to investigate and take a look at the surrounding ocean, islands, and so on. Turn the beam of the lighthouse back to itself and become aware of the direct experience of the lighthouse itself. This way you become aware of the lighthouse without the self, ie. the selfless mode. Then bring the self back by affirming it and look at it in the same way. Is it real? What is it? Why is it there? How has it affected your life? What are the multiple consequences in your life because of this I-assumption (the cause and effect relation)? And then realise that the self is just a belief. Do you understand this in a way that it awakens you?

Hannah: I look at a flower with direct observation, focusing the light of awareness like a beam on direct experience. Just look at it. White cape primrose flowers become a bright

blur, my eyes resting directly on their glow. There is just a white glow in the flowers, everything else is soft. I do not perceive my body, I am close to the flower. I think, 'My flower, my flower, my flower ...' the space around flower becomes clearer and their glow goes out. I feel a slight pain in my stomach and my jaw tenses up. I perceive the outlines of my body. I am separated from the flower.

I breathe in and I repeat, in my mind, 'me', 'me', 'me'. I feel the outline of my body clearly and it feels like there is like cellophane around me separating me from my surroundings. I sense the tightness of my body inside the film. I breathe out and repeat, 'me, me'. The film disappears and I am connected to the surroundings. I am not separate, I do not sense tension in my body, though I repeat in my mind during exhalation, 'me, me'.

I walk slowly and concentrate on stepping forward. The same thing, as when looking at a flower. I sense very clearly the contact of the sole of my foot with the floor, and the complex motion, which takes place while walking. I do not perceive the outline of my body or internal body sensations. I do not change anything other than repeat in my mind 'I'm walking', 'I'm walking'. At the same time I perceive the outline of my body, a tension between my upper back and shoulder blades. The sensing of walking fades out.

Kim: OK. Various objects in relation to your subject are already clear. So now, you shouldn't spend any more time analyzing the objects. Instead, analyze the subject.

Hannah: Is it real? What is it? Why is it? I can maintain the dungeon-like self-delusion, and I can equally cease maintaining it. Something that can be ceased, is not real. Remains to be seen how revolutionary this discovery is, and if I can really influence the existence of the cellophane in everyday life. I will continue to investigate.

Kim: A simple observation is insufficient, it does not have sufficient strength to prick the bubble. If you want to drop off the self, you have to be serious about the matter and sort it out for good. Follow the instructions.

Hannah: Based on these experiences, I'm convinced that the self-delusion causes a feeling of separation in my life. Because of it I lose the bright connection between me and my environment. Instead my attention is scattered. It's amazing how the self or thinking of the self wraps the body 'in cellophane' and turns the attention inward. It also provokes tensions and pains inside the body! Totally unpleasant! And amazing how clearly this difference can be sensed in different activities, for example, looking at a flower, breathing and walking! I look at situations with interest, situations where the film appears then disappears, and how this alteration affects the interaction with people and life in general. Yes, this was awakening!

Kim: Good, good. The fact is that the experience of your self is merely a dream. A dream... You are already free, but the self doesn't fit into the pattern at all. You are carrying a useless burden. Is this awakening!?

Hannah: I need more information about awakening, to be certain that it's really happened. What happens after awakening? Does the nervous system in the brain function differently before and after awakening? Is the state of my presence from the selfless mode the same after awakening? Is the nervous system and psyche ready to be awakened? If the curtain is pulled aside, can I handle the brightness?

Kim: 'Who' is afraid? Right? I know. We get confused and doubtful and the self gets under our skins. Without the self everything is natural and fine as it is.

Hannah: What is the self 'needed' for, and what is it not needed for? I know that I 'need' the self for fears, conflicts and negative emotional reactions. 'I need' the self for diluting my clarity, clouding the view and maintaining the separation. For this I am ready to shoot and

be serious! →It may be that I need the self for the protection of my psyche. Maybe I can't stand the constant objective observations without a protective veil. Maybe the clarity without the self would be too bright. I am sensitive even with a protective veil and my observations are deep and extensive. How do I endure it, if the observation gets stronger? It may also be that pranks of the self are required to stay humble and to feel compassion for other people. The self-less mode quickly gets me arrogant and omniscient, 'wise'. Maybe I would be an unbearable and arrogant nerd after awakening? This is why I do not dare to aim seriously. I know that I do not need the self to feel joy, beauty, love or connection. I do not need the self for rational thinking, actions and observing. For these I am ready to shoot and be serious!

Kim: Nonsense. You are caught in the maelstrom of fear and uncertainty that the feeling of self is maintaining. You are trying to rationalize things while the self keeps its grip. Excuses! This is no good. The root cause of your fears and worries is the feeling of separation caused by a self. You are in a deep sleep. Wake up, wake up! The self is not and never has been. It is just a dream you believe in and you think that you need it to live and survive. Life is much better after awakening. Life is life when you are awake! Continue!

Hannah: I am in a deep sleep - the true battle begins. It's tempting to go to sleep. I do not want to answer the phone, and I do not want to speak with anyone. I have been driven into a corner. This is such a familiar feeling, something I've had for decades! I hate this feeling, and I know that it is not anyone's fault or a result of conditions. It is in me! It's been a long time since I had the courage to face it. Yes! I have risen to the battlefield with all weapons. I am scared and unsure, but I'm also angry. Now I won't give up. Let the battle begin! The bubble is so big now and so tight that it is possible to pierce it. Teach me the surgical ways to do it! Observation is not enough, I know. I know that you have given me instructions. I can't proceed with them beyond the observations between self and selflessness. I need to watch carefully and seriously. I'm trying to identify the self, until I can say that it doesn't exist. Can you describe or instruct more precisely? Should I focus on the here and now, or do I think about the past, when I have had exactly the same feeling? I do not need any more evidence. I'm ready to go on.

Kim: To get driven into a corner is the whole point. But! The idea of a battle is misleading. The self can't beat the self because the self DOESN'T EXIST! Who's fighting? Who is getting a feeling been driven into a corner? Me, of course! But it's all a dream. When you look and watch there is only a vision, no one who watches, not a seer. When you feel it is just a feeling, not a self who feels. There's only direct experience, only that is real. The self is always extraneous, unnecessary. You can only awaken to the fact that there is no one... No one... No subject... Only freedom, space, emptiness... Vividness... Love...

Hannah: I create the dungeon, and I'm trying to uncreate it – a paradox. Do I let go? Do I indulge myself in a free fall? Do I pray? I still do not know what to do, even though I realized the paradox. The self-delusion causes fear and uncertainty and the self-delusion is trying to find a solution. I'm not going to get awakened with this strategy. How can I get awakened?

Kim: Duh, you fool. First of all, calm down. You will not lose yourself into any bottomless depth, dramatic heights, and certainly not in any dramatic way. So calm down first. Secondly, return to the Two-Part Formula of examining the self and selfless. It will solve the matter.

Hannah: The self and the selfless - I do not see any difference. I felt separate, I wanted to pull out. I was angry with the feeling of fear that I realized influenced my youth very much. God seemed distant. Chatting with my good friends of mine seemed far away. I proceed

with the Two-Part Formula. I focus on walking, then I repeat I'm walking, and then I just focus only stepping forward. I don't see any difference! I look at a flower, just looking at it. I think I look at a flower, I look at a flower. I don't see any difference! I listen to the clock ticking, just listen. I think about the clock. I'm try to command myself angrily to think about the clock. I do not see the difference! The dissipation of difference between self and selfless made the burden and the anger disappear. Relevance and connection returned. It felt good to laugh together with close relatives. Laughter came from my heart. I'm not tired anymore, and I no longer feel the need to be alone! Is this it? I can't sleep right away, but I wonder at the spacious emptiness and space. I fall asleep and wake up at night at half past three to marvel again spacious, gentle emptiness. I do not feel anguished, even though I know I'll get too little sleep because I have to rise early tomorrow. I'll take my daughter to a spring fete. The celebration goes to my bone. Meeting people feels comfortable. I am connected, naturally. I'm not in a hurry to tell my husband about this, even though it's amazing. It's hard to explain, as it feels so natural? Thank you.

Kim: Ha! I think you got the job done. Do you feel the change is permanent, final? What exactly has changed? Send me a photo of your face so I can see it.

Hannah: Here's the picture. I'll write to you later about the change and it's permanence, when I get more material. I am tired, as you can see. The head is empty and I feel calm.

Kim: Congratulations! No doubt you are awakened. Great! Send a narration when you have time.

After two days.

Hannah: Observations are so fresh, so wonderful. Birches have a stronger scent, the birds are singing more loudly, the children want to stay more on my lap. It is easy and good to just be, even if there is chaos all around. My head is empty and clear, and the basic state is calm, welcoming and spacious. I keep feeling the wonder of this natural presence. The operating system is updated and I wonder at all the great opportunities it will bring. Sure, I still get nervous and react, but it's over quickly.

In the work of a researcher, teacher and developer, this new operating system is smashing! Objective findings and natural interaction, what a luxury! Meditation and yoga exercises are more fulfilled, natural, not forced. Delays don't make me impatient anymore, for this moment is enough.

I am grateful to you Kim. I trust, respect, and appreciate what you have done for me. Only with trust was this possible. I have gotten a priceless gift. I want to practice hard and to spread the good news. I need your help and your support to do this.

Kim: Great. When the vanity is eliminated only the essence stays, freedom, clarity... Sure, it is possible to flare up, get upset, etc. but those states will pass in quite a different way than in the past. Tip: When you get stuck with difficult feelings, just look at them in the same way as you looked at the feeling of the self. This is *becoming aware of objects*, rather than analysis on the subject. You'll see through every seized thought, just like the I-thought. Thus all the mind habits drop off like dry pine needles. Gratitude is surely the strongest feeling when awakening happens. At the same time, there is usually a feeling of 'Yes, of course! This is what I've been looking for! It was here all the time!'

A brief note on mindfulness. Awakening makes the cultivation of presence very different because there is no 'self' taking you out of the moment. When the feeling of self disappears you are present without 'being more spiritual' or 'training'. From life's ups and downs, valleys and mountain peaks, to smooth spaciousness, naturalness and ordinariness. That's it!

Case 12: Tom

Tom is a scientist and Hannah's husband. The following dialogue lasted 5 days.

Tom: I would be interested in taking up your guidance. Have you got a chance to help me? In any event, I am writing with a bit of background information so that you can assess whether or not the time is right to help me awaken or not. For my part, I'm motivated in this process, and I could start it at any time that suits you.

Kim: Yes, let's start. Take this matter to hand now and don't let it go until the sense of self falls away completely.

Tom: I have been doing daily practice of meditation about a year and a bit now, and also standing meditation for a year. In addition to standing, I have done some meditative self-inquiry as described by Gary Weber, during which I have been asking myself, 'Who hears? Who sees? Where am I? Who am I?' and so forth. Likewise, I have tried to focus my attention on my awareness throughout the day, keeping a small awareness on what my body feels at each moment and noticing when the self arises or when I zone out day-dreaming. As a benefit of meditation my thoughts have calmed down and my mood has improved during the year. All in all, I feel more balanced and clearer. Also, the feeling of self has faded slightly. I think this is because I'm no longer associating as strongly with what I own or with my physical or mental states. Sometimes I succeed in staying very present while working, without getting distracted or lost in the past or future. I usually don't feel stressed out, even though I have stressful areas in my life: my doctoral thesis is in progress, I don't earn money from it, and I don't have a permanent job either. Instead, I have a family. You've already been in communication with my wife for some time.

Kim: You obviously have the ability to focus quite nicely and you are calm. These are great aids in this process. The feeling of self fades somewhat with the help of meditation but rarely disappears completely without a specific practice.

Tom: What, then, is the issue? My feelings still vary for no good reason from day to day, even though the range is smaller and my being is clearly happier and calmer. My self bothers me, I bristle and I am often tired and I'm bugged by a feeling of meaninglessness. It is as if I am stuck in a limbo. The course of life seems somewhat false, uninteresting and shallow, and it's difficult for me to get interested in or excited by anything. I'm completing my thesis and it neither stresses me nor interests me. During daily work I experience mainly mental distractions, similar to those that have bothered me during my college work. Some part of me still focuses too much on the results of my work and ties itself up with my feeling of self worth. It's hard to enjoy daily activities. Striving for perfection has been my burden in some ways, and I often get troubled by the thought that my achievements are not 'good enough'. Therefore, the doing and achieving of something feels dull, even when I've succeeded in my own opinion. It is as if the self-filter is colouring everything with an even, brown and silent film, when in fact the unfiltered image would have originally been a complete multi-coloured experience with smells, tastes and sounds. Can I not get rid of this?

Kim: 'The self' is like a stone in the shoe. Usually, people try to compensate for it by any other means apart from removing the stone itself! It is unfortunate, of course, and is due to a number of factors. A primary factor is that our culture celebrates the self and doesn't know the truth that the self is the root cause of all conflicts. I guess you could say that our

culture is a song of praise to the self. Ha! A spiritual path can become the same type of tragicomedy if the sense of self isn't dropped properly. As long as the sense of self remains, one's experiences are inevitably unfulfilling and one will be unhappy no matter what one does, acquires, achieves, and so on. The cure itself is incredibly obvious and easy to take. It can be understood after the fact.

Tom: I've practised the Two-Part Formula. In the first phase, direct observation, I agree with your view that for seeing or hearing to occur is not necessary to have a sense of self. At times I have had moments of just being. Times pass, and I haven't necessarily done anything special. Sometimes I've been playing with the kids, sometimes just potted about, sat outdoors on a cliff and enjoyed nature. However, those kinds of moments are still more of an exception than a rule; the self of mine always seems to be lurking closeby, regardless of whether it's needed or not, and sneaks in to disturb me. When I try to find the location of the self, however, it is hidden from me. How come something that does not exist, can still bully? To the question 'where am I?' there is no proper answer. 'I am when?' produces a response 'now'. How can I be in time without being at some location?

Kim: I-sense is needed neither to think nor to feel. One can't escape the self. One could meditate for hundred years and cultivate one's presence but one still wouldn't awaken to the truth of the non-existence of the self; it will always keep coming back. When you try to look for the self, it can't be found anywhere. And as you correctly observe, it's always ready to exploit any given situation, to bully. It is therefore clear that the self isn't a fixed entity, but is a forever changing impulse. What is an impulse? It is a stubborn habit, an obsessional thought, some sort of accidentally evolved obsession, a mental disorder. The sense of 'I' really is a mental disorder - the worst of them.

Tom: During the second phase, the 'I, mine' opens up a little. Some of the stuff resonates a little with 'me', but most of the earthly things feel either indifferent, or somehow restrictive. I, mine – I don't care, I'm not inspired. Without a target this exercise feels quite monotonous, fairly restrictive and oppressive, and I can't really think of anything in my imaginary self that I would like to hold on to. Some kind of unconscious bond exists because the self stubbornly remains, and doesn't disappear, even if I'd like it to. Earlier in my life I spent days day-dreaming, where I desired all the latest gadgets, from motorcycles to Japanese kitchen knives. I identified heavily with my desires and at the same time I fantasized about all the things I could purchase. A certain degree of realization, after which this tangle started to unravel, happened a couple of years ago when my little daughter presented one of her baby toys and told me it was her 'favourite'. I realized that almost everything I had purchased I had hoped to become 'my favourite toy', just like my little daughter had her 'favourite'. I still surf the internet as a method of escape, but I no longer feel as strongly as before the desire to buy something new to amuse myself. It more like just reading interesting stories; I get a sense of escape without actually having to purchase anything, when having these things doesn't really satisfy me. But what am I escaping, and why should I escape? I don't really know what else to say. Would this be good enough to get the process started?

Kim: Exactly. You attempted to remove a stone from your shoe by putting something else in there with it. I did the same thing and it didn't work, it wasn't a cure to finding lasting happiness. The intention here is to frame the self-feeling, the subject causing a feeling of separateness, without adding any other external objects, such as all of those things you listed. When you repeat yourself, 'I, I, I', just notice what it feels like in the body, mentally and emotionally. When this feeling is activated, then look at it straight in the eye, and try to discover what the ultimate truth of the self is. On the level of thought you already know that the self is not to be found anywhere and it is not a solid fixed entity, but you'll need

further investigation motivated by an internal resolve to awaken to this fact. You need to awaken to the fact that the self does not exist, except at the level of an idea, as a mental habit. You exist, that is clear, it's an undeniable fact, but the sense of self has wormed its way into the equation. The ears can hear, the eyes can see, there is laughter, there are emotions, there is work, there is a partner and children of course, but the self-entity doesn't exist, nor does anyone else's self. Isn't this the case? Don't give me any half-baked answers. Get to the bottom of this.

Tom: Thank you for catching my self! If we can get rid of it, you can have it. It is a stone in my shoe, but who knows, it might one day turn into a diamond. I will continue to comment.

When I repeat the affirmations, I feel slight sensations in the sinuses of the head, lungs and the heart area. If I repeat it quickly and angrily, I feel pressure at my temples, but it feels more like anger, rather than being 'I'-specific. If I think of some of my failures while repeating 'I', I feel a subtle pressure at the chest and heart area. If I think of some of my 'great' achievements and compare myself to others, I feel superior, but still worthless - after all, even this small success is only temporary and accidental, and nothing that I myself can claim credit for. All in I don't feel a strong connection to my body. My body doesn't react strongly to my mental states, e.g. I do not feel pain in my body (abdomen, back, head, etc.), when I'm anguished or dispirited, and on the other hand pain doesn't cause an immediate shift in my mental state. In fact, even if I replace the word 'I' with the word 'chair', the feeling in my body is pretty much the same.

Kim: OK, good observations. It is quite likely that that this disconnect with the body, or numbness, is done by your standing meditation. It makes your body sturdy but insensitive.

Tom: This is often pretty obvious when observing others. It's how your friends or strangers rant about whatever trivial setback they have experienced or are blabbing on about something, it looks subjective and meaningless, unless of course there really is something difficult in their lives. Usually it's just more tricks of the self. My self appears to be pretty evident in the things I've done. How I'm arguing about some trivial matter with the kids, how I decide things on their behalf, what is to be eaten and drunk, what to have for dessert. I'd like to believe that a major part is caused by weather conditions and nutritional needs not being met, but a big part is a reflection of my own self, with its longing to boss the children.

Kim: Yes, yes, a petty tragicomic dictator.

Tom: I haven't figured out how to get rid of the self completely, but that's what I'm currently doing, and I hope I will succeed at the job. I can already muffle the self a little, if the conditions are not too challenging. For example, the 3½-year old child gets hungry and tired, and gets cranky when eating and nothing will do, refuses to eat anything, at least not unless his mother comes to feed him. The anger may take a half an hour, and it's not over, until he eats something. My patience is put to the test, and I'm tempted to get provoked, but somehow I keep myself calm, even though under the surface I'm bubbling over with anger. Objective observation is the fact that the child is hungry and tired and a lack of energy is the root cause of the anger. The subjective feeling is that the child does not want to submit to my authority, even though according to my 'self', I am being so exceedingly reasonable and patient with the child.

Kim: 'You' will never come up with a way to rid yourself of the 'self'. This contradiction is what 'you' will never realize. No matter how much you try it's not going to happen. Unbearable, isn't? We are not 'muffling the self'. Why would you try to muffle something that does not really exist? Absurd! This is the same as saying you are willing to endure just

'a little bias,' but not too much. This won't do. Self-identity is a misconception. A dream. A Dream! Wake Up!

Tom: As you can see, I have trouble getting rid of the feeling of the self, its manifestation in my body. The feeling is like a shadow in my field of vision which disappears when trying to focus on it. Do you have any ideas on how to observe the I-sense other than directly when at rest? Would it be possible to look at it in various other contexts in which the response would be more powerful, more clear, so that this insensitive fellow can get the idea better?

Kim: Do not worry about what you cannot feel. Work with what you feel. Any sensations will do. In my experience, the feeling of self is felt strongly behind the eyes, where the self is seated on the dictator's throne, and from there it also falls off. Read the instructions of the Two-Part Formula carefully again. Then apply.

Tom: If you had asked me to describe where the consciousness was located, you would have received in response that it was precisely the place behind the eyes, above the ears. I would have also have argued that I am able to move consciousness anywhere inside the skull and also down to my chest, to the region of the heart. I guess that I do not know how to distinguish awareness and self-delusion from each other. Does consciousness even have a physical, movable locus?

Kim: My instructions about the perception of the self are clear. First do the affirmation and then you explore what it feels like. Selflessness as an experience and its nature is quite different from the self.

Tom: When I say the affirmations in my mind, I hear myself saying it more or less where I assumed my consciousness to be, that is, in the same place where your voice would appear to sound whispering inside the skull. And further, merely saying 'I' doesn't make me feel any strong reaction one way or another, the response is pretty weak; 'boring, I'm not interested', is what I experience. The things I own characterize an experience of a freedom-limiting nature. I have some wonderful gadgets and widgets, which are a burden, although many of them I actually use on a daily basis, such as my bike and a couple of pocket knives. Bicycles, for example, require maintenance and break down and it is annoying when I lose money: If the bike breaks down, I've made bad choices by buying cheap parts. This is a reflection of the I-sense, too.

Kim: Lack of freedom fits very well as an indication of a limited and narrow scope of the sense of I!

Tom: I'll try to continue the repetition of 'I, mine' in different situations tomorrow and have a look so see if I can generate a stronger reaction somehow. It might be challenging, as even thinking about my kids tied up with the thought of the self does not produce a strong reaction, just something more like an echo, which says that children can't be owned, that they not my possession. On the other hand the amazing things my children sometimes do evoke a sense of I easily; when your child does something that other adults find astonishing, instinctively I think, 'that's my child,' and after that, 'talent inherited from me'. Currently I've spotted this reaction pretty much immediately. For example last weekend, when my daughter realized something a 7-year old could not be expected to be mature enough to understand, I and my wife were really pleased, and I noticed how the delight in my child's talent contained a large amount of self-love. But I also felt pure joy for my daughter, even though my joy was clouded with a feeling of self-love.

Kim: If you really want to get a strong self-reaction, think about a situation or a person that you find particularly irritating or scary. If that does not work stay awake longer and try not to eat for longer than usual. This recipe will get the self to arise almost certainly.

However, as I said the limited feeling of freedom works just as well. It reflects the existential pain.

Tom: Considering muting the self - you're right that the self can't be muted or suppressed, but that instead what do I have to do is get rid of it completely. I don't fully understand how the concept of getting completely rid of the self fits the concept that after it's gone I will see (or imagine seeing?) the mischief of the self more clearly? What part of me senses when the self has been involved and when an activity has been selfless? Can the self be involved at times and illuminated like when the electricity is on for the lamp and sometimes not? Or is the self like a lamp dimmer allowing some of the light out and filter some of it? If I can't come up with a way to turn the self off permanently, who or what comes up? Someone is guiding my actions. Similarly, what is it that realises that I'm overreacting and helps me to stay calm when my daughter starts to misbehave?

Kim: Ah, now I understand what is not yet clear to you. Every human experiences the variation between the self and selfless; it is an ongoing, continuous movement between the two. If we only had the sense of self I could almost certainly say that the average life expectancy would be about twenty years shorter all over the world. That kind of constant stress would send us to an early grave! Thankfully, it is not like this. However, it is another matter whether or not one is actually aware of the selfless moments, until the self again enters the picture. This is what even the wise in our culture do not realize. What or who is aware when there is no self? Does it even need to have a name? Is it unborn? Beyond birth and death? People talk about God, consciousness, Buddha Nature, and so on, with many names. These are all OK but it is essential that you don't conceptualize the experience in such a way that it becomes a dead and lifeless mental concept! It is a part of our human minds! One thing which is essential to realize about the self is that even when we are in the selfless state, direct experience, direct observation, the selfless cognition doesn't go away. We don't lose our mental faculties. In the selfless state our direct experience, our cognition and rational mind is maintained. And it is stainless, clear and lucid. This is what you need to understand.

Tom: When I try to experience something in real time, or I look at what is happening in my experience right at this moment, there is no room for the self; it seems to need either past or future to manifest.

Kim: Instead of trying to experience something just drop the attempt to experience. Don't try experiencing anything. Things will resolve themselves naturally.

Tom: I continued the analysis of the self. Please accept my apologies that these responses tend to become so long winded. I'll try to balance a little between crystallizing my thoughts and writing my experiences directly, instinctively. I think that by writing in a relatively brisk pace without too much censorship something useful may emerge from my subconscious. I'm definitely still not fully grasping the issue, but since I don't still properly understand what is essential and what is not, I can't focus more in detail.

When I look at or listen to something, it is true that the feeling of self, a subject, is not necessary, rather that it is a disadvantage. Seeing and hearing take place by themselves, effortlessly. It requires no effort to see or hear. This does not mean that feeling of the self isn't still teasing me. Even now, as I sit here on the couch and roll my head, there is the illusion of an observer, as a shadow inside my head. It is as if I would watch through the windows of my eyes from inside my head, except that instead the tiny holes of my eyes it seems as if the whole face would be flat without any other restriction other than my glasses with rims. The fact that I can't see my eyes or the inner surface of the head indicates that it is a delusion, that vision is just forms in my eyes and brain.

Kim: Yup.

Tom: The self has been appearing most clearly when I've been playing with my kids today. For example, in the morning the self was annoyed when the older kid used his age advantage to bully the younger one. This happens every day. My self identifies with the smaller one, the child in me, a projection of myself, and is offended by her being bullied. I feel like my ego is being bullied, when my child's ego is bullied. The same happens, of course, if someone outside the family teases my child, but inside the family my smaller child often plays this role. They both also rebel against my rules, which annoyed me a lot today. How dare they continue their tricks, when I've already forbidden them twice, first kindly, and then more aggressively!

Kim: Yup.

Tom: Just repeating 'I, mine,' I still don't feel any particular change in the self, but now I can locate the self more easily while repeating. The self is where it always is in the middle of my head. On the other hand when I don't think about the self, it does not appear to be in any location.

Kim: You need to be serious when thinking about the self.

Tom: I wonder where I feel the self the clearest when I analyse it? When I admire myself in the mirror, or the neighbour smiles at me admiringly, the self becomes immensely proud. I feel proud that I'm in good condition for my age and at the same time I feel fear and self-pity, because I am no longer young - the inevitable decline has already begun and the final destruction is just around the corner. It is amusing that the situation has remained exactly the same throughout my whole adult life; all the time I've been worried that things will deteriorate, without being able to enjoy the present moment. Pride and fear, past and future, shame and despair. The benefits of meditation have been considerable in the sense that I can now see my behaviour with more perspective. Things no longer seem so strong and real. Rather, I am able to say that I react in exactly the same way as before, but the reaction is not so strong that it would make me panic. I still react, all the same, these kinds of things still 'piss me off'. This kind of empowerment of the self, narrows the feeling of the self. Pride and self-righteousness get the bars of my cage to glow brighter, but at the same time they squeeze me painfully, burningly. The bars appear clear, but beyond them everything is out of focus. This pain also includes a masochistic pleasure: the self is squeezed and tested with fire and brimstone, but it only gets stronger being attacked under pressure, it just laughs and gains strength! If this perverse pleasure didn't exist, why would I do things which I know hurt me and others? How can I get out of this hellish whirlpool? This lack of a sense of freedom is a big thing in my life, I would gladly be free and at the same time I am afraid of it - the walls of my cell have become familiar, and the world outside is scary. Under the spell of the self, I've denied myself. Thanks God my family doesn't know what's going on inside my head, and what I would do if I didn't control the self. I need to get out of this! The feeling of the self varies between different kinds human interactions. I've already described how I am with attractive women. Among people in a higher social pecking than me, I am a bit provocative and feel inferiority and shame, depending on whether they act friendly or superior towards me. Towards people seemingly more vulnerable than me, I either feel friendly or neutral, or at worst sticky with patronising pity. Some people on the other hand don't provoke strong reactions in me despite their seeming social status. Maybe it's because they don't project a strong self?

Take my friends. There are people who I have known for a long time and with whom I do not feel the need to show off any longer, just to be. Communicating with them I often get a good connection, I listen to what they have to say from the bottom of my heart, in

accordance with my ability. In such dialogues I realize that it hasn't been my self listening, and that my replies have come without a feeling of self. I have also noticed that I don't always need to tell the funniest stuff and assert myself around friends, but that things can be left unsaid and that I actually know when some matters are better left unsaid. I've gotten the feeling that things are the way they are, and that is ok. This feeling of equanimity is not all I feel, otherwise I wouldn't experience the constraints of the self we are discussing, but it includes the state of the world at least outside the immediate sphere of my world. E.g. the the planet is being destroyed and things have been going from bad to worse for a long time. It might end up with the destruction of mankind and all of life. Nevertheless, I do not feel anguish for the world, even though I objectively think the risk is very high. I also do not feel the need to blame anyone or anything for this situation, even though the 'culprits' are easy to point out. We, the people, and I amongst them are unconscious, and unconsciousness causes suffering, not some conscious evil or 'devil' that I don't think exists. Many things naturally irritate me intellectually and I try to avoid the worst of them with my choices. In many such cases when I feel that the situation is miserable, I accept it for what it is. It would be absurd to deny its reality and not guide things in a direction that feels better. At the same time I realize that what I feel may be a better direction now may not turn out to be better at all. I do all I can do. I can't think of anything else now, so I'm going to bed for the night, to be fresh for our guests in the morning.

Kim: Well, I'm bored. This is such tedious drivel that I can't be bothered to even finish reading it. You ramble on and on and then state that I definitely need to do something about this matter! How do I do it!?' This is just another way your ego attempts to prolong and justify its existence. You already know that the self is an illusion and you already know how it haunts its victim in all situations. Do not write long posts about all of those tedious situations! There is nothing new in them; you are playing the same crackling record over and over! Now listen to what I say, be serious about this analysis. Be bloody serious! If you stay in this spiral of zingers and keep telling yourself you're never going to awaken from the dream, the self will never fall off. For me it's not important, but what about you? What do you need to do? The Two-Part Formula! Is the 'self' real and genuine or not? Is it!? You've carried on in this matter for pages. If you miss the chance to take the analysis up to completion it is impossible for me to do anything more for you. You are asleep. Enjoying the dream? No fucking way!

Tom: Thank you for your message! I squeezed the feeling of the self for a long time, intensely and with as much energy as I could. 'I' and 'me' appeared in a variety of formats and in all sorts of random situations in my thoughts and 'leave me alone,' was repeated often. The feeling I felt behind the eyes, near the eyes and my entire face became tight. I felt angry and aggressive, my cheekbones strained and my teeth tightened together, the forehead wrinkled. When I gave up and consciously relaxed my facial muscles, the feeling of self was lost and rage was only a distant echo. Now, when I turn my head, seeing just happens and various sounds can be heard in the apartment, by themselves. It is night, and, of course, quiet, but now I feel somehow strange, quiet and empty, as if I were somehow alone, even though I know that there is a room full of sleeping people next door. I think about the inner voice in my head. When I think about the day's events, I can hear my friend's voice as real in my head just like my own voice. Both are apparently only an echo, an illusion, a combination of real and false memories and events. The same is true even for the lyrics of songs. By thinking (familiar, ones I can remember) I hear the songs of the artist singing them just as (un) real as I can hear my own inner speech. The hearing does not occur, the sound does not exist.

Kim: Did you become awake? Did the self fall off? How do you know that it will not come

back? You know it intuitively. Do you feel that there was a self but now it seems to be gone forever? If you are not awakened you obviously got at least a taste of it. Send me a photo, please. I can see immediately whether the awakening has taken place or not.

Tom: This morning I didn't feel particularly strange. Now, on the other hand I feel pretty strange. It seems that the head is empty, and when I look at something, 95% of any of the thoughts or sounds don't arise. I also can't locate the self - utterly strange. Looking back, this day has been very quiet, it has been easy to be, and I have not lost my temper with the children, but felt that everything is OK. I do not feel blessed, sad, or anything, mostly just empty and quiet.

Kim: It sounds familiar. I look forward to your photo before I can say for sure whether the awakening has occurred or not. However, it seems so. Your description has the classic tone. Do you feel that the burden has fallen off? Do you feel new? Fresh? How would you describe the change? How does it feel?

Tom: I don't know if the issue is related in any way, but the other night (Friday), after I sent you the long mail full of bullshit, I had a very special experience. I will briefly describe it the way I remember it. I was pretty much asleep, but not totally asleep, because I was able to analyse it, and I experienced the matter while still being awake for some time before I fell into sleep. It went like this: I thought about the upcoming party of my closest colleague, Anne, and what kind of speech I would write for her. Things came to my mind, a real story from our early days together, when we first met, and as such, I felt strongly that it came straight from my heart. Anne has been an important co-worker and a good friend to me. We have worked side by side on a thesis of a very closely related topic practically as colleagues. Now she is going leave to possibly work in Norway and thus I'll lose my close friend. Practising the speech in my head, which seemed the most direct and real I've ever made, I felt how I was able to let go of my friend and felt only happiness and joy for her. I felt strong happiness and bliss as if everything in my life would be clear and well, and I had a ridiculously good feeling. The feeling remained even after my virtual speech, even when I was lying in my bed afterwards and waited for sleep. In the morning, there was no longer the same feeling, but the day itself went OK. Silence is the prevailing feeling and the sense that no burden ever existed. A little surreal feeling.

After seeing Tom's photo.

Kim: Yay! That's it! No doubt about it. Warm congratulations! I already wondered if I was too hard on you yesterday but it seems like it was worth it. It was just for show. Of course, I was not indifferent as to whether or not you get awakened. Excellent! You are awakened now. Depending on the perceptions and expectations of what awakening is the actual change may also take some time to settle into. Awakening is never what you imagine it to be. After awakening you've dropped a significant existential burden but this doesn't mean that the rest of life will be a bed of roses. It may seem like this for some time after awakening, and that's great. I have written and spoken a lot about post-awakening practice. The subject-self has now been dropped, but the countless object-selves in different forms, such as strong negative emotions have not yet been released. There are many techniques to achieve this release, I favor tantric practices because they are easy. But for now, just enjoy the ride. My warmest congratulations to you and your entire family! You and your wife are the first married couple who have awakened in my guidance. Share your thoughts and feelings if you have something on your mind. Now you have my permission to write as much as you like. Ha!

Tom: Thank you very much for your help! Not to worry, I understood why you provoked me, and it made me take this issue seriously. The main difficulty I had was that I couldn't

make the connection between the psychological sense of 'I' and how it physically manifested in the body, so I nearly failed to come up with a 'way in'. I feel a little relieved and also some disbelief; Is this really it? Something seems to have changed, and yet nothing has changed. I feel quiet and a little bit unreal. My mind feels calmer and when I feel something rising to the surface of my mind, some story that my mind is inventing, it is possible to silence it again without much effort. Keyboard, telephone, work desk - the thoughts can be set anywhere and they stay in their place, they don't get out of control. Writing at work is straightforward and does not vex at all. Surfing the net does not grab me in the same compulsive manner that it did in the past, even when I'm doing laborious measurements in the lab, where nothing much happens for almost an hour. I just read my favourite pages, news, etc.

Kim: Exactly. The newly awakened always wonder, 'Is this really it?'. And on the other hand, 'Yes! This is it!'. It will take some time to get used to the new experience. It's new for the body, too, for a stone that's been in the shoe for the whole life has suddenly disappeared.

Tom: Anyway I don't feel particularly blissful and I'm not absolutely sure of the stability of this state. Standing meditation seemed a bit flavourless last night - I wasn't really interested in it and it didn't result any tranquillity or meditative silence because I was already so at rest. What should I do now, so that the situation can be stabilized as much as possible? By stabilization I do not mean that situation would be static, but rather that the trolley doesn't roll back to the ravine, just when it has reached the edge. Further practice interests me.

Thank you so much! I would have just have wandered around in the dark without your guidance!

Kim: You're welcome. Thank you for your effort.

Case 13: Monica

Monica is a young woman with some prior meditation training. She arranged for a guidance but ended up not needing it.

Monica: Hello Kim. I have been doing meditation and various other practices for many years, and it has resulted in some nice experiences and expanded consciousness, but also a lot more anxiety. I now fluctuate between different states and it's confusing. I also have a lot of kundalini activity going on in my spine and head.

I don't know what more to write. I am tired of feeling like I am waiting for 'something' to happen and being anxious. I am torn between now and mindstuff. I feel disconnected from people around me and scared to 'go crazy'. I am not sure what you could do for me, but you clearly helped my friend.

I have been keeping a little journal since I started reading your book, because something unexplainable happened. I would appreciate your view on this matter.

Monica's diary, 24th January 2016:

I was laying on the couch reading your book. As I was reading the first dialogue, my body felt funny and my heart started racing, as if it was opened up or somehow activated. I stopped reading at page 12. I sat up and looked around the room. I repeated

'Me, me, me, me..' several times, but I could not find that little annoying, bossy, victimized monkey anywhere. I had to laugh.

I do not feel impatient. Just strange and as if nothing could throw me off balance. I feel steady, like a rock or a tree. Thoughts bubble up and disappear like dew in the morning sun. I do not feel particularly happy or sad, just very neutral. Not in a passive way, but in an alert attentive way. I no longer feel the need to prove anything to anyone in the way that I had previously felt my whole life. It is like a beginning, not a destination.

There are a lot of vibrations in my head and sometimes the rest of my body. A pressure on the 'third eye', in the forehead. For the past two weeks, I have been trying to ground myself more to not get too much anxiety and energy in my head, but now I am grounded without much effort. The energy in my head and body can do their thing. I don't feel like seeking to get anywhere, but whatever may come, I am curious about it.

Going to bed now. Will see how I feel in the morning.

Monica's diary, 25th January 2016:

Getting used to this new perspective. Still feels strange. Things don't seem to bother me as much. I just deal with it. Still have to see how I react around people.

When emotions and memories pop up, I don't get so invested. I do, however, still have many strong emotions, but there is more space around them and I breathe more easily. In addition, I have noticed my jaw is not chronically tense anymore. Like it's not 'chewing' on any stressful thoughts. So I have less of a headache!

Monica's diary, 26th January 2016:

The cat threw up on my carpet. I just cleaned it up without getting involved. I didn't get angry with him like before, just curious to see if he was okay.

Kim: I read your notes and checked your photos. No doubt about it, an awakening has taken place. Congratulations! Very good. As you already noticed yourself, there are still thoughts and emotions flying around in the mind. These come up because there are imprints in your subconscious mind. These imprints are like mini programs causing psychological reactions, in a similar way like I or me was a program before. Warm congratulations to you again!

Case 14: Pauline

Pauline is a mother of small children with little meditation background. The following dialogue lasted 5 days.

Pauline: I need some help so I would like to ask guidance from you. I have investigated me-ness according to your instructions for sometime and I think I have grasped it relatively well. At first there was some progress but then it felt like hitting a wall. Now I'm stuck. I know that the self is just an old pattern but it just doesn't become transparent. I have postponed contacting you and just figured out that finding many good reasons for not doing that as well as the postponing itself are probably caused by the sense of me. I would be eager to see whether I can finish this as I have sought this for at least all my adulthood. Would you be able to guide me?

Kim: You have read and familiarised yourself with the instructions so let's get on with it. Always try to answer me as simply and honestly as you can according to what you are experiencing. Take the first photo of your face now. When the awakening happens I'll ask you take another photo and send me both for analysis. All right. What do you understand of the Two-Part Formula? Or what are you not getting?

Pauline: Thank you for accepting my request. In the Two-Part Formula there isn't anything that I wouldn't understand. I have practiced it and would describe the subject-me in the following way: The subject-me has gathered sort of like a dark-greyish cloud inside my head that has sucked into it all kinds of junk like memories, emotional states and conditions for years. This cloud spins recklessly and every time when the opportunity arises, it brings some old conditioning onto the surface that become a cause for reaction. I am able to notice the presence of the subject-me for example in my facial expressions, as a sensation in my stomach, in the chest and at the throat. Reactions caused by the subject-me are stubbornly automated. At first it was easy to catch them when the I was reacting when some negative reaction came up, for example getting irritated by some regular topic. Lately I have been able to figure out that the 'me' is in the game constantly and affects in the background also during innocent situations. For example, when I am helping some person in the yard, the 'I' is in the background hoping that some neighbour would see that. It is clear to me that everything happens and flows perfectly well without the subject-me making its interpretations of things. The tornado just spins there inside the head, makes it's interpretations, gives explanations and knows everything about everything and yet none of this has absolutely no basis in reality, none whatsoever.

Kim: Precisely.

Pauline: The second mode is a bit more challenging because my sense of me-ness is quite hard to strengthen. I can't get it to strengthen because the sense of it has become so fragile and artificial. I can see the mechanism how through repeating 'me, me, me' or 'mine, mine, mine', these coloured thought patterns can be fortified but as I said, it doesn't seem to work anymore. Or I can not find good ways of alluring it anymore.

Kim: You seem to be well aware of the sense of 'me' so the fact that you cannot fortify it anymore with the affirmation doesn't matter.

Pauline: I feel like I have grasped me-ness even though I don't see even nearly all of its hooks. I can observe it but there has been no realisation because it is still around. Deluded reactions caused by the sense of self come up so quickly that the identification happens before I can be aware of it.

Kim: Do you understand the difference between subject and object-selves? For example when 'I am angry', the 'I' refers to the subject and the emotion of anger to the object. This analysis doesn't concern objects. Try to aim your attention to the subject-sense. Can it be found anywhere? What is that dark-grey messy cloud? Look into it. Study whether it is an actual thing or merely an illusion.

Pauline: I understand the difference between subject and object selves. I have the subject-feeling quite nicely in my fingers and it can be investigated. It is an illusion, no doubt about that. During the time I have done this research, a big part of the subject-sense including fear, stress and shame has already been released. It's actually a bit surreal to know that the subject is an illusion but for some reason it is still hanging around. I need a kick at my butt,

some kind of a extra boost. I feel there is something that hinders this process. I keep at it.

Kim: Is there a need for awakening or not? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Make it your business and look through it!

Pauline: There is a need for awakening. I am satisfied and dissatisfied in turns but what I want is the truth. I wish to live in truth. When I am in the selfless mode, I also feel like being in truth. But very often I still have fuzzyness caused by me. There is still a lot to clarify.

Kim: Good. Just stick with it.

Pauline: Today I have had a few new experiences that have allowed me to see through me. After a long time, I talked on the phone with an old friend. My relationship with him is the other one of two very challenging relationships in my life. Unknowingly he is a good teacher for me. For the whole phone call I could stay in the truthful state and I could see things that came up as they are. A couple of hours after the call, the subject-me came back into the picture and began to put words into my friends mouth which he never said. It tried to colour him because our mutual history leads me to assume that there'd be a reason for that. But at that moment I saw through those lies. I'm keeping at it. I am optimistic that I'll get rid of this subject-scum but at moments I doubt whether I am waiting for some unrealistic outcome. Fireworks and confectioneries falling from the sky, ha.

Kim: Sure, I can buy you a box of chocolate when you wake up, ha. Just keep getting to the bottom of it. The instructions are clear and you know how to apply them. Just use the formula. Plow the field upside down.

Kim: I haven't heard of you for a few days. What is going on?

Pauline: I've kept boiling it. Today the view into the reality has been clear for the whole day. At moments I have felt the subject-me as a shadow next to me but I've kept in the present moment. If the self has started to brood on something, immediately it has felt that only what is present is real and the brooding is delusion. I haven't needed to watch through it because there has been a knowing that there is nothing there, that the whole subject is filled with emptiness. In the evening and at night when our home is quiet, I can easily access an empty, black and calm mind. During the day time when there is constant activity, I easily get lost in repeating the same patters and the subject-me gets a foothold in it. I don't know how much physical exhaustion affects this investigation but I'm pretty tired. I've also had headaches more than usual. Maybe all that cutting through gives me pains, haha.

Kim: The breakthrough is close, right on your tongue. Continue with determination, without romantics. It is tiring but it's worth it! Finish it! Then you can rest.

Pauline: I feel good. I keep watching and listening. I am still waiting for the day when I have woken up with absolute certainty but whether it comes or not, this processing is really worth it. I'll send you a message when I have something to say. Or should I send you a daily report anyway?

Kim: Yes, every day. You do not yet know how good this is. You don't know yet!

Pauline: OK, had a day like this: right from the morning, the subject-me squeezed it's

claws in, caused the feeling of unworthiness and tried to argue that this guidance won't ever get finished. I let it hang around, kept observing it, didn't get agitated. At this point I hadn't yet read your encouraging message. In the afternoon I was reading your book by myself over tea. There was something that lit a wide smile on my face. A smiled like a moron and at the same time started crying. I looked at my kitchen and somehow saw it in a new way, sort of as an image before me, in all of its honesty. It kept making me smile. Then my child woke up crying in the middle of his nap so I had to go put him back to sleep again. Even after this I somehow kept smiling, as if newly fallen in love. For the whole evening it has felt calm and well, peaceful and unobstructed. I don't feel the need to look into the 'I' and there hasn't been moment when it has come up, either. This new mode needs to be experienced with time but for now I am not sensing an 'I' anywhere. The mind is calm and quiet, and it simply feels good. I don't even feel tired even though it's time for bed!

Kim: I see, I see. Feel into it and then explain in the best of your words what has changed. Also take a new photo of your face and send me both for analysis.

Pauline: The change is subtle. I assume no one would notice a difference from outside. The greatest difference to myself is that I don't have any need to look into the self anymore. It doesn't exist so there is no need to analyse it. The mind is wonderfully quiet, thoughts appear a little but they can be put down, if wanted. This is wonderful... That noise has finally calmed down! It's funny to notice how everything works without me thinking anything, thoughts are not needed for action to happen. My whole body feels calm and tensionless. If it felt before that almost always there has been clippers here and there pinching the body, now all those have been released. There has been no spiritual bliss which I have also experienced before while meditating, it's just good, steady, ordinary and truthful being. In my previous message I said that something is still hindering me, now it's gone. The change is both big and small, subtle and clear at the same time. I'm not confident whether this state is 100% permanent while on the other hand there is no worry that the me would come back either. You tell me whether this is the real thing or not.

Kim: Yes, that's it. You came through the gate with style, no hastiness, no hurrying. Great! Congratulations! I remember how in the first message you told me about your familiarisation and postponing contacting me. In the end we managed to wrap this up in the few short days. There you have it. It works!

You probably have read my texts of what is ahead of you after awakening. But before diving into post-awakening practice it is a good idea to take it easy for a while, especially if you feel tired. Let the effect of awakening become revealed to you through every day life. After some time off, get back to practice, for further mind purification. Well done. Congratulations!

Pauline: A huge, warm and sincere thanks for your guidance. The whole package supported the process perfectly: the Two-Part Formula gave instructions how to get my hands on the subject-sense, the book deepened my understanding about awakening a lot and the guidance finished it. Without your confirmations that my processing is going in the right direction, I might have given up just before the solution. What really has changed is being exposed to me little by little. The change is small but on the other hand completely groundbreaking and all-encompassing. I am really grateful to you.

Kim: You are welcome.

Case 15: Kim

This is the author's description of his own awakening.

I meditated and did various spiritual practices over 8 years before my awakening. During those 8 years I practiced a lot of sitting meditation, approximately 8 hours every day. During that time I lived in a zen monastery in Japan and spent a few months at a time in meditation centres in India. Despite my keen desire and effort I hadn't awakened. Even though I had used over 20,000 hours of meditation, my sense of self hadn't fallen off. It kept disappearing and reappearing. Of course my ability to focus and relax both in body and mind had developed greatly. For example, I had periods of months when my sleep was entirely lucid, when I didn't succumb into unaware deep sleep and saw dreams. In the same way my mind was quite calm during the waking hours but because there was no shift, the self kept coming back.

My teacher attained her awakening, and more, through tantric yoga practices. It is common that certain sound formulas or mantras are used in tantric yoga. Mantras present energies that correlate to various aspects of our mind. Mantras usually require an empowerment from one's teacher which activates the power that specifically addresses some parts of our psychology with the outcome that that area of mind becomes illuminated and is no longer in the shadow of the subconscious mind. In tantric yoga the student receives different empowerments that are then cultivated in practice by the repeating and chanting of the mantras. The purpose of this is to illuminate, bring to light, and purify the whole of the mind so that eventually the whole of subconscious is uncovered and hence, the negative karmic seeds become fully neutralised.

My awakening happened through tantric practice. I had received a mantra empowerment of a certain deity from my teacher colleague, who is a senior student of my late teacher. When for the first time I practiced this mantra my sense of self dropped off and since hasn't returned. My colleague verified it, as my teacher had already passed away. The deity that I practiced was Muruga, who is known as the son of Lord Shiva in shaivism, which is a branch of tantric hinduism. The primal location of the subject-self is behind the eyes inside the head which is also the location where Muruga's enlightening power hits the strongest. In buddhism, Amitabha Buddha has the same effect. With the repetition of the mantra, the power in it simply dissolved the energetic knot, that was my sense of me-ness. Simultaneously I also experienced how the root energy known as *kundalini* rose from the root of my spine high above the head, descended back down to the heart area and dissolved for good. Before that I had had many sensations of kundalini going up and down the spine but this insight got it going higher than ever before to come and permanently resolve in the heart. This ascent and descent of the root energy happened in few seconds time, it didn't take longer than that. The sensation was not dramatic, flashy and didn't feel like a powerful explosion. There was no fireworks or heavenly trumpets. It was just an event that happened with clarity, calmness and expansiveness of natural awareness. My teacher described the same kundalini sensation in the case of her own awakening. It has also been described by the famous hindu *guru* Ramana Maharishi who is well known for similar self-inquiry. Buddhist tantra knows this too.

I had meditated quite a bit before my awakening and therefore I was already familiar with spacious awareness that is never affected by selfing. For this reason awakening was not a big change for me. Nevertheless I consider awakening as one of the few most significant

shifts of my whole path. Since the event of awakening, I've had 15 more shifts which in buddhism are known as openings of grounds or *bhumis*.

Pointers to Awakening

Bits and pieces from various dialogues.

- You just have to keep marinating in both modes, selfless and self-based, one at a time. The idea of the self-affirmation mode is to meet it, experience it, be aware of it, be aware of how the I feels like, what it is and how it exists. It is simply looking, seeing, feeling, perceiving, tasting how the 'me' feels like. You know, just being aware of it, from the selfless space. Zoom into the I-sensations and zoom out, zoom in, zoom out. Just looking at it, not blankly, but with interest like a scientist investigates an organism under a microscope. See what is this 'I' that I've thought myself to be. I am saying 'What is this 'I'?' This means that the I/self is being objectified. The subject self is being objectified so that it can be seen as an object in the space of awareness. It is very simple, nothing complex. It's just that this study has to be done carefully and fully though, until there is no more doubt or unclarity. There is nothing solid or permanent about the 'I'. It's just sensations and impressions, stuff. What is found from the center of the strongest I-sensation after affirmation? Is there anything there? Look straight into the bull's eye. This is complete instruction. Just continue.
- The thing is that selfless awareness cognises itself. There is no me, I, self or anyone there. OK. This selfless awareness is in connection with the body and mind. Through the body and mind it can feel and act. But for action it doesn't need an 'I'. In essence we are selfless awareness, brimming with life and aliveness, expressing itself through this vehicle of human body. Awakening is a glimpse to that but it can take a good while to actually get to this experience 100%, so that it is uninterrupted.
- No hurry. Being in a hurry is a great evil. Hopes and desires are useless as well. This formula will do its thing when you keep applying it. Twist the steel wire, make these questions clear to yourself by studying what you experience.
- Sometimes people don't notice a special event of awakening, they just realise that 'Oh, it's a bit different now. Simple. Easy'. See how it is, apply the formula.
- While using the first selfless mode, it assures that there is clarity of mind, at moments it might get quite dark and uncomfortable. This happens because the formula digs into the core of self-delusion which is a dark place. But no problemo, just be aware of whatever comes along. One small moment and observation at a time.
- Good. The tension in the head, perceiving of that, is crucial. 'Me' or 'I' sits behind the eyes, inside the head, looking out through the eyes and hearing out through the ears. Be aware of that, and doing just this you objectify your 'I'. As this is done (or conventionally put: when you do this, although it is not really 'you' who does this) revelations about the nature of this self start coming.
- Don't try too much. An observation can be made just in few seconds. Small

moments, small observations. It's sort of like taking down a pyramid one stone at a time. A mature craftsman does things one thing at a time, not all at once.

- For an awakened person, saying the 'I' or 'me' doesn't do anything, energies don't get stirred up, and particularly the tension inside the head behind the eyes. That simply does not arise no matter how hard you summon the self. Do this: Relax thoroughly, marinate in the selfless space with time, without hurry. Then as your mind is clear like the surface of a still mountain pond, introduce the affirmation. Do this carefully, in detail, to find out whether this tension comes up or not. If it doesn't you might be awakened already.
- You will never get awakened. 'You' will not. The awakened state is already here and there and everywhere. There is no place where wakefulness is not, except in the mind that goes around in circles. Are you getting my point? In one sense you are your history and persona but in other sense you are not. We get fooled by appearances. You-are-awareness-without-location... 'You' exists only on the level of thought. 'You' are a thought! A thought! Hahaha... Isn't that funny!? Listening... no location, unbounded awareness... Seeing... so free, so direct, so immanent, so intimate! Yes?
- Stop trying to 'get it'. Become a fool instead. What we are doing is not highly intelligent or sophisticated. We cannot figure out our being, because being is not thinking. OK?
- I think that you are quite used to, or have become a bit attached to sitting practice. I am like that too. But both, recognition of the selfless state as well as self-based state can be done any time. It is small observations of a split second or few seconds that matter. Yes, we use concentration and mindfulness in this processing but it's not like one has to stare at one's breath or navel as in common meditation. Do the analysis, observe the modes bit by bit, moment by moment. 2-3 minutes is a long time when doing this practice correctly, and such a short period can be all that is required. It is a matter of processing, keeping the water on the heater for it to become warm and to start boiling. This means digging the subject-self out into open so that it can be seen in a correct way. What is the correct way? 'I' doesn't stay and it doesn't have a fixed, firm, solid shape. 'I' is just a bundle of stuff, emotions and impressions on top of each other. 'I' is deeply imprinted continuous associations and we 'believe' it. We have a fixed belief in this entity. 'I can not do this... I can do this! I am poor. I am great!' and what thought-associations have we. But this is just being identified as concepts and thoughts... Are 'you' anything else than a stubborn idea? Look at yourself and find out.
- Regarding 'more of selfless space'. You are talking about three dimensional space, that between your head and pelvis. Yes, we observe the bodyspace, 3d space, but actually selfless space is zero-dimensional, non-dimensional. Selflessness means non-locational, not located in three dimensional space or time. Thoughts, such as the I-thought on the other hand are very much located in time and space. If you affirm the 'I/me', make the self apparent momentarily on purpose and watch the clock, you can observe through, or based, on this illusory self, until after a moment it again disappears. So, through this experiment we can see that the 'I' is bound to time and place. And yet we are dealing with a phantom because it always mysteriously disappears when it is sought after.

- We can talk about other stuff later but now we need to take a gun, fix the aim and pull the trigger. Go back to instructions that I have given you in the first message. Then take the Awake-book and read a few dialogues from there. Then shut the door, sit down and do the two part formula. First, relax, relax, relax and recognise the open mind space... See if there is a me there or not. Look ahead and behind, left and right, up and down and the center. Am I here? Check. Then marinate in that like a piece of meat in BBQ marinade. Then after the selfless is thoroughly felt through your whole body, muscles and bones, bring in the self by doing the affirmation. Punch it in: 'I! I! I! I!...' Me! Me! Me! Me!...' Some sensations will come up, then don't try to do anything, only watch at the sensations. Don't watch away from these sensations! What is this I-stuff? And where? Be deeply aware of that. Deeply! Alert! Right in the center of the strongest I-sense... Drill, drill, drill. Eventually the sensations will subside. Then start over.
- There is this thing called 'work horse mentality' which means that some people, like you and me (before), when we learn a practice or a new thing we start working with it brutally like an animal, forgetting that we can also use reason and think logically which is the faculty that separates us from animals. I've sometimes seen people with this work horse mentality practice the Two-Part Formula until they overdo it and get stuck. And its always men, never women. So what needs to be corrected is the view and understanding of the practice. First we need to have experiential context for the technique to work properly. That is the space of mind that is selfless, me-less. You relax your body and nerves thoroughly and at some point this spaciousness reveals itself. If relaxation is not enough, jump up and down, shake it off physically, and yell loudly for a few minutes and then suddenly stop moving... And it's there. Impossible to miss it like this.
- Vipashyana means liberation through seeing things as they are, not as how we think or interpret they are. The sense of me-ness is a tight bundle of thoughts, impressions and emotions. The sharpest tip of it, subject-self, you bring up purposefully by doing the affirmation, 'I,I,I, me, me, me' and it comes up. And when it does, you locate it, you feel its location, by pointing with a finger if wanted and you try to get a sense of it's shape, colour and feel of it. At this point, you will feel narrowing of vision, tightening of chest, the classic signs of the self-based mode. All this is OK, it should happen. That is what the self and self-delusion is. It feels like shit. So you bring it up, without losing the spaciousness, locate it and then you compare the two: the space and the knot. See and feel the space.. See and feel the knot in the space... See the different feel of the two... How do they feel together? Feel the edge of the knot. Feel the open space immediately around the knot... From spacious awareness, probing into, inside the knot, right at the heart of it. In the beginning of the process, the subject-self may rise as sensations all around the body but eventually everyone ends up with a knot behind the eyes, inside the head. That's how we subconsciously feel, that we are this being or a little man inside our heads, looking out through the eyes, listening through the ears and living through the body that is down there, below our sense of 'I'. So, at some point through doing this practice, you end up with the know in the head. This applies to what I have said above. Spaciousness is not located in the body space, nor defined by the body space. It does not have a location, shape, colour or self, me, in it. But the 'I', on the other hand, is there inside the head, behind the eyes. Bring your attention

there, together with the spaciousness, and repeat, work it out constructively and creatively, not like a work horse. Use muscle, your body but also have intelligence. 'Me' or 'I' is just a belief, but a stubborn one! Becoming aware of it like this wears off the belief. Eventually the belief, the energy bound in to the knot will release, and there will be an insight, aha... And you will see clearly. This is the outcome of vipashyana meditation getting liberated by the force of samsaric thinking. Simple as that.

- Awareness is present by itself. It is said to be self-cognizant which means that it cognizes itself, it knows itself, it perceives itself. This means that there is no entity, 'me' or 'I' to recognise it. In fact, the I, or self, cannot recognise it. Recognition of awareness/buddhanature/rigpa takes place when the self is absent and when there is knowing of that awareness. Recognition of the natural state does not happen in deep sleep because that cognizant, knowing aspect is switched off, although the usual sense of self is absent too. So, this knowingness is the most important thing. Putting one's attention to the space behind the eyes inside the head is the easiest location to get this through experience because the center of cognition is located in between our primary sense organs, namely eyes and ears. That is where it is easiest to recognise the I-less, selfless awareness, or to be exact there the sense of entityness drops off and the selfless cognizance can recognise itself. This might sound complex but actually its the simplest thing. Once you get it, there is nothing more obvious than this.
- Here's a little exercise for you: Look at some external object in front of you. What happens here is that your attention becomes extended to that object, sort of like the energy from your eyeballs extends, reaches out to attend the chosen object. Its like aiming a spotlight on the object. It travels fast, at the speed of light to its destination, so fast that it's challenging to discern it but if you get the idea, that's enough. We are very accustomed to doing this. Usually our attention constantly seeks and looks for something outside ourselves. This strikes right at the core of the way how samsaric mind works, looking for happiness from outside of us with the miserable outcome of always getting disappointed and more bound to the sense of self. But, the beam of attention can be aimed back at its source, instead of it running around in external things. Where is the source of the attention? Its behind the eyes. So do this: Instead of actively looking, actively attending that object in front of you, imagine that the beam of attention returns to the source behind the eyeballs. Then let it rest there. How is it? How does it feel? What is the condition of your 'I' when you do this? How does doing this affect the mind made of thoughts and ideas? When you learn to return your attention to the space behind your eyes, and it's not at all difficult to learn that, you can relax the attentiveness, relax that sharpness, relax the looking and hearing with attention. What happens with that release? We land on plain awareness, the selfless mind that is wide awake. Utter clarity, immaculate purity that is alive. Do this exercise, as many times as necessary to get to your own conclusion.
- Thoughts are no problem as long as we know the nature of them. Verbal inquiry about the object is fine if it helps us to understand the nature of what we are studying. Thoughts are not the enemy, you know. When it comes to the I-thought which is what we are dealing with here, it is the distancing from it that causes spiritual bypassing, bypassing it again and again. The outcome of this is duality

between the I-less and I-based. However, if you do the 2PF properly the charge from the 'I' becomes emptied like a ballon is emptied of air. So you need to engage with the 'I' and probe into it, go into the heart of it and light a match, figuratively speaking. What is there at the centre of it?

- When you read my instructions, let them speak to you, let them sink through your body and mind, not only mentally reading or repeating my words and then trying to figure it out in your head. Use your body made of flesh and bones. Do the practice with your body.
- This is vipashyana practice. It means investigation of the mind, investigating the knots that cause us to regard ourselves as separate entities, or beings. It is essential to understand that no one can 'get rid of the I-feeling' like discarding clothes. The only way to come to satisfaction is through looking into, investigating and making observations. That is the only way. So stop all that wishful thinking and gigantic expectations because they do not help. When I say to get serious about the process I mean becoming one-pointed and committed about it, you know, cutting everything else and making it a priority. I certainly don't mean losing calmness or becoming highly emotional.

Chapter 2

A Look at Awakening and the Two-Part Formula

Until now the world has not known a way that would help anyone get awakened. Various teachers and traditions have offered a wide range of practices for this single purpose but very few of them actually do the job, especially within a realistic time frame and effort. I know from my own experience and from the accounts of many others that with most techniques that are said to produce awakening, only a marginal group manages to do that while for most techniques simply don't work.

The Two-Part Formula is not a new invention. Despite of me having come up with it, I did not invent it. I merely remembered it from my previous life. The Two-Part Formula has been taught as a preliminary exercise within some lineages of Tibetan dzogchen. Also some forms of buddhist meditation and advaita have a lot of resemblance with it, yet aren't exactly like it. Traditionally this practice would be called *semdzin*, which means to see or to hold the natural state (tib. semnyid). This technique has actually been practiced and used for many hundreds of years inside Tibet and before that in areas where dzogchen was taught, but because it has been guarded by the vow of secrecy, it has only been taught to few inside the tradition. I am happy and humbled to be able to help others through offering this teaching. I am well aware that the world really needs it. I have heard over and over how people have struggled with various teachings that have been said to lead to awakening, without it ever arriving even after *decades* of practice. I find that very unfortunate.

I have kept statistics since people started to ask me to be guided. Now, when 140 people have undertaken the guidance, 138 of them have awoken by using it for 5 days on average. This means that 99% of those who sincerely tried it awoke. The age of these people ranges from 20-75 years. The group includes both men and women, from highly schooled academics and doctors to common workers from many countries. Among this group of people there were many who had never practiced meditation before. On the other hand there were many who had done extensive meditation training. The shortest duration of guidance was 6 hours and the longest was 5 weeks of continuous exchange. 8 people awakened while they were preparing for the guidance. Not getting a desired result in two cases was caused by the lack of expertise of the guide, yours truly, during the guidances early on.

For all these reasons I think that the Two-Part Formula is suited for all kinds of people, whether spiritually, philosophically or scientifically orientated. The Two-Part Formula doesn't belong to any religion, nor does the result of awakening pertain to a particular group of people. It is applicable by anyone who suffers of the dilemma of existence. It is universal.

Self-delusion

I've been told by people that the simplicity and directness of the Two-Part Formula became too obvious for them after the insight but before that no one ever came to think of joining the two modes of the formula. It is indeed interesting how people in the seeking mode never come to think of joining the two modes: **1**, first recognising open awareness,

especially behind one's eyes, and **2**, then comparing open awareness with the I-thought by bringing it up by thought. The term *self-delusion* is widely used term, and still techniques where one brings back the I-thought by *thinking it* are very rare. The self, which means our sense of me-ness or I-ness exists largely as thought. If we have no thought at all in our minds, we don't have an existential problem either. Therefore, the logical conclusion is to bring back the I-thought repeatedly and simply be aware of it, until it loses its meaning, the charge stored in it. The Two-Part Formula is a simple little technique that really is the selfing mechanism itself.

Selflessness

As it has been described in the dialogues of this book, when awakening happens, people tell how all of a sudden they feel freer, clearer, more peaceful, more creative, more relaxed, more healthy, less stressed and so on. Awakened people say that the shift brought them all the good things, so to speak. With awakening, the investment that we have put into our self which creates our sense of me-ness, becomes deflated. With awakening, the self that is like a balloon is purposefully emptied of stale air.

In buddhism this is called an insight into the empty nature of the mind. Emptiness (skt. sunyata) or no-self (skt. anatman, p. anatta) refer to the selfless nature of any mind phenomena. It means that once we have the realisation, we no longer believe that we, 'me' or 'you', exist as an entity, and the entityness, belief in the solidity of ourselves becomes deflated. Before the insight it is common for people to believe in the concept that they actually exist as entities that live inside their bodies. If people are asked to find where their 'mes' are located, people always end up pointing their fingers to their heads. Without noticing it we gain the belief that there would be this small being, 'me', inside our heads looking out from our eyes, listening through our ears, thinking through our brains and living through our bodies. But once we start considering this belief, of there being some kind of a small being or entity inside our head, the belief begins to seem absurd.

Shakyamuni Buddha says in the Bahiya Sutta:

*In the seen, there is only the seen,
in the heard, there is only the heard,
in the sensed, there is only the sensed,
in the cognized, there is only the cognized.
Thus you should see that
indeed there is no thing here.*

If we listen to a sound, there is no me or I listening the sound, there is only hearing of the sound. If we look at an object, there is no me or I looking at the object, there is only seeing of the object. When we see, hear, think and live through our entityness, we inevitably become deluded and cannot experience things *just as they are*. Our self causes us to push and pull. Once we have deconstructed of our entityness, we are able to see, hear, think and live directly without the self twisting and falsely interpreting everything that we come to meet.

As the dialogues testify, one's life becomes freer, healthier and more spacious with awakening. The buddhist term 'emptiness' is a bit misleading, but what the emptiness means is absence of selves, in whatever form they come. And once we start taking chunks of emptiness, start having glimpses and shifts of the natural state (tib. rigpa), we

automatically feel freer and more natural, which is just what we have been wanting and looking for all along.

Ideal circumstances for awakening

In my analysis I have come up with five key factors that create an ideal situation for anyone to wake up.

1. The teacher is awakened and knows exactly what it is and how it happens.
2. He has clarity and skills to convey it through exact verbal pointers.
3. He has particular techniques that are succinctly meant for generating awakening.
4. There is enough one-on-one exchange between the teacher and the student so that the processing can be finished quickly.
5. The student has recognised that his problems are essentially caused by self-delusion. Therefore he is motivated to go through the process.

The opposite of these five key factors are:

1. The teacher does not exactly understand what awakening is or how it happens, even if he himself is awakened.
2. He doesn't have clarity and skillfulness to convey it through exact verbal pointers.
3. He does not know distinct techniques for generating awakening. In fact his techniques might be completely irrelevant or only vaguely relevant.
4. There is not enough one-on-one exchange between the teacher and the student which is why getting to the result is needlessly delayed.
5. The student doesn't have correct motivation, no real need for awakening.

I have had discussions with many teachers and practitioners from many traditions. When hearing about issues that hinder the understanding of the students or the teachers, I am often reminded how fields of secular education are passed to students. For example. If we consider the above five points in the case of learning mathematics in school, we can be certain that the education system guarantees these key points. However, in spiritual education (skt. dharma), this rarely is the case. When one starts to think about it, this doesn't become as a surprise to anyone who has spent a decade or more in the dharma scene. It is absolutely certain that the old traditions have a lot to improve in their old ways.

Comments from the awakened

Here are some comments from people who got awakened by the Two-Part Formula. These comments have been given by them one year or more after their awakening event.

Question: What awakening has meant for you? What kind of change has it made in your life?

Answer: Awakening is the most impressive and profound change in my life. There is no longer a need to imagine me being this or that. I have no need to seek explanations and relief from books, or to take treatments. I have no need to forcibly alter the ways of thinking in any way, either. There is no need to grasp at self-importance or in some way define what I am, what I like and what I don't like. It is enough to be. There is no need to seek anything. There is a natural distance to emotions, thoughts and events that formerly

created a chaos in my mind. Being calm has increased in my life and the extremes from the height of blissful happiness to gloom and depression has evened out.

Answer: Awakening has brought clarity to my life. Meditation is easier. I feel more relaxed. Inner peace has increased. I understand the things happening around me better. Acceptance and tolerance have increased. I am able to notice the happenings around me in more detail as if my ability to be mindful has come better. It feels as if the state of meditation is switched on all the time.

Answer: Awakening has removed the constant and never ending search for the truth. Awakening has brought more humour, relaxation, patience, courage and also a sense of responsibility and compassion towards others.

Answer: I've stopped complaining. Satisfaction has increased. Everything I have in my life is enough and good. If there is some resistance, unpleasant feelings or even anger, the first thing that comes to mind is not that this nasty thing has to go away. Instead, this emotion may be calmly looked at, and seen from where and how it arises and how it ceases. There are no instant reactions as before, mental phenomena can merely be witnessed. It is a great relief that nothing is so serious or personal anymore. If one has lived 30 years feeling guilty and shameful, the dropping of that load is an immense relief. Awakening has made my life straightforward, natural, even easy. Meeting people has become easier as the inner voice is no longer judging myself or the other person. The other person may have his or her space. A need to control things has decreased. Acceptance and trust to life and people has increased.

Answer: After awakening, the inner peace and stability are apparent in my daily life.

Answer: Awakening has put the whole spiritual path into a proper context. In many ways it has brought lightness and clarity to my being. It is easier to experience and accept everything that arises in my experience as there is no longer a personal connection to it. There are still many sensations that make my being feel difficult and personal but they become accepted more easily. Life is what it is. If there is an embarrassing situation, for example, which previously would have felt shameful, it doesn't feel as strong anymore. Instead circumstances like this just make me smile. Old fears and all the thoughts in connection to them do arise but these are also seen as natural bubbling of the mind and they don't create despair. Seen from the outside, I may appear slightly absent but nevertheless I am not, it's just that there is no hurry anymore. In overall I'd say that my actions are more uninhibited and creative. Being with people is more direct.

Answer: Awakening was a moment among other moments but what makes it special is that it was an entry point to a spiritual path. Through it I have been able to live my life more in a state of truthfulness where the conditioned thoughts don't colorize the direct experience. This means everything.

Other comments

Comment: The Two-Part Formula is too good to be true, except it really is true! This is so wonderful. The distinction between the subject-self and the object-self is such an important distinction to make, something I never understood until I came across the

book. It's really crucial to awakening. I spent 18 years working with the object-self doing vipassana which would have knock on effects on weakening the subject-self, but left it still alive and kicking, whereas after two weeks looking at the subject-self I finally woke up! I feel so grateful for this - it's been life changing for me. I don't think there are many teachers out there that understand the subject versus object self distinction. In terms of Buddhism in general, this really is ground breaking stuff. It is a blessing that awakening can be generated so soon with the Two-Part Formula (2PF). It literally takes most practitioners years to awaken with traditional practices, whether theravada or mahayana buddhism. So much of the struggle of the practitioner working with the self, and the paradox of practice is circumvented by generating awakening so early. That's why I'm so enthusiastic about the 2PF. That tool could be employed to great use in so many other schools of buddhism, since awakening is pretty much a universal goal for all dharma practitioners. A massive boost.

Comment: Awakening is still very rare, all across the world and pretty much in every tradition of buddhism. The Two-Part Formula has literally cracked the code of awakening, something that as far as I know has never been done before.

Scepticism

by Kim Katami and Karl Eikrem

Within the various schools of buddhism that considers awakening by different terms such as stream entry, kensho (jap.) or satori, awakening is relatively well defined. However, when stepping outside buddhism, awakening gets a wide variety of meanings that from the buddhist point of view can be entirely irrelevant. The way that awakening is defined in this book comes from buddhism, which clearly is the strongest, most reliable and systematic of all the religions and philosophies of the world on the topic of mind training.

One of the problems that the authors have come across while making the Two-Part Formula public is that quite often it is met with great suspicion and disbelief. Initial suspicion has sometimes been mentioned by people who have later taken the guidance. The main reason why people might initially have such reactions lie in the present spiritual culture of the world, that in its history hasn't had a reliable way of generating awakening. When this stubbornly rooted belief is combined with all kinds of associations that one may have of the meaning of awakening, instead of pragmatism, in some cases it seems to be enough to shut themselves inside a barrier of denial. This denial is often supported by orthodox religious beliefs. However, if we honestly look at the condition of the human mind that has had the assistance of all the main religions for many hundreds of years, it really becomes evident that we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

As an attempt to understand this scepticism, the authors have talked to several people who have undertaken the guided awakening process and asked them to share their experiences with us.

Can it really be that simple?

Karl: When I encountered the method, I experienced some kind of instant recognition of the validity of the method and the authenticity in the eyes of those who had supposedly awakened. Still, the question whether it really could be that simple, lingered with me subtly all through the guidance. A friend of mine, Monica (Case 10), told me that she simply could not believe that awakening could be so simple. She was taught, she said, that either awakening happened spontaneously to people enduring immense suffering, or gradually through long term meditation practice.

Nick wrote to me: *Everything I had read or heard about awakening previously was that it required years of strenuous yoga, kundalini practice, meditation, breathing practices and so on. And then one day, if you were lucky, POP, you would get self-realization. A simple method of self-inquiry seemed at odds with that.*

This confusion can be easily explained. Engaging in practices means that we begin to do or perform some exercises that we believe at some point will do the job of illuminating our sense of self. However, when we are in the mode of seeking this always to brings about a seeker, a subject, 'me who seeks'. The Two-Part Formula deals directly, and exclusively with the sense of being a seeker or 'me', the subject for the person to see through it and have the epiphany that all seeking is futile, because we do not exist the way we think we do. We may assume that our existential confusion can be resolved by dualistic means but that is actually impossible, because the sense of self that seeks or engages in practices is merely an illusion. For this reason inquiry into the nature of the self is the most direct way to go.

Often people with long histories in spiritual practice seem to be most sceptical to the point of not even doing research. T, when explaining his initial scepticism, pointed to his years of meditation as a possible reason for it, mentioning that his practice had, 'not made promises of speedy awakening'. Soon after awakening, he says, the amazement, whether it really can be that simple, lingered in his mind.

Another form of scepticism is self-doubt. Some people worry that perhaps their egos are too strong or too weak for the process, or maybe they aren't spiritual enough. P wrote she did not think the formula would work for her because she felt she had too many problems. After having gone through the process, she admitted that in the end it wasn't really that complicated.

The presented statistics, while indicating scientifically how well the Two-Part Formula works, does seem to have side-effects. In some cases they seem to have lead to increased scepticism, of scepticism to the authenticity of the statistics themselves. For people who cannot see the basic logic of the technique, the high success rate seems to tell them that is too good to be true and therefore is not true.

In the instructions it is said: *Before you read on, I have a request for you: Drop all pre-assumptions you have of awakening and spirituality. Forget that you ever practiced meditation, read spiritual books or received spiritual teachings. This is an essential requirement. Have a totally open mind. If you can do that, then read on.*

Helen wrote: *When I first contacted Kim, I really did not even know what it was all about. I did not have any experience of meditation or spiritual development, nor did I know about the dual nature of mind. I mostly felt curious about the process and what*

was to come, it was diving head first. I did not have a chance to doubt my ability, as I kind of did not really know what I was doing. After awakening I was really happy to have stumbled on these valuable teachings.

Nick wrote: Looking back on my experiences I would say that I was wrong about what to expect – there was no great mystical experience. No trumpets and lights, no chorus of angels, no heavens opening up. It is all very ordinary, but in a profound way. It is a shift in awareness; the first step toward clarity of wakefulness. The change is a significant one in that you are suddenly free of yourself. You get a chance to deal with experience mindfully and vividly without habituated self-referencing obscuring the directness and crispness of the direct experience. In that ordinariness you discover how extraordinary life really is, this precious chance to be alive and breathing.

Frank reported: Afterwards the prejudices and thoughts about awakening are seen as fear of the unknown. Also the word 'awakening' itself raised prejudice in my mind. I thought it concerned only some very special, spiritually oriented people, who keep themselves higher than others. This thought has turned upside down. Awakened people are tolerant and they don't need to bring themselves up. It feels so great that an ordinary person like me, with normal daily routines, with family and work, can be awakened. And every day I'm so happy of the change the awakening has brought.

Analysis of Attainments

I was trained in the Japanese Rinzai Zen buddhist tradition. My studies included meditation training in a monastery with daily meditation interviews (jap. *sanzen*) with the master, Shodo Harada Roshi, and also extensive studies of zen art and specifically zen calligraphy with another renowned zen-master, Terayama Tanchu Sensei. I also studied *reiki*, a form of healing and meditation quite extensively.

It is not the case in all schools and lineages of zen buddhism, but it certainly was with both of my masters, that they put a lot of emphasis on non-verbal examination of the student. The master would look straight into my eyes, feel me thoroughly (and I would feel them feel me), examine me and then either verify or falsify my awakening (jap. *kensho*). As far as I am aware this skill of looking and feeling into the student's mind has become near to extinction in buddhism today, not only in zen buddhism. I hope it will be returned because it is highly useful.

The Spirit and Energy of Zen

My zen calligraphy master, Terayama Sensei, was also a master of Rinzai Zen as well as yoga and martial arts. He had done traditional training with his masters, including Omori Sogen Roshi, one of the greatest masters of the 20th century in Japan, but he also studied a large number of other paths. The large body of his knowledge led him to review what he had learned. For example, he did not teach *koans*, although he would have been eligible to do so. He neither taught martial and health arts as he had learned them, but formulated his own approach which brought together the beneficial aspects of all of them.

The main thing in Terayama Sensei's teaching of zen art was that the art piece should

embody the spirit of zen and that it should have an uplifting effect to the viewers. He explained this in great detail and gave many examples, not only from Oriental art but also from Western art. The main idea is that if a painting, for example, is brushed by someone who has had an awakening and is a long-time meditator, the ink will automatically catch the awakened mind-energy of the artist and is transmitted on to the canvas or paper. In this way the awakened or pure energy is caught in the art piece and it can be appreciated even centuries later. Excellent calligraphies done hundreds of years ago by Zen, Pure Land, Shingon or Shinto masters all have this function of transmission. When a person looks and feels into an authentic piece of zen art it transmits a blessing, a subtle charge, and through that clarifies the viewer's mind. This is the reason buddhist masters, nuns, monks and priests have presented dharmic art to their students and acquaintances, which they can hang in their homes. This tradition is thousand years old in Japanese and Chinese buddhism.

Ordinary Art

The idea is that an adept of meditation who is skillful enough in his use of brush and ink can make 'zen art' that will uplift those who view it. On the other hand, art made by a person whose mind is clouded with thoughts, emotions and fantasies is unable to produce zen art and his ink trace will look and feel messy and scattered. Most art is like this, perhaps coming from a certain conceptual or philosophical viewpoint but without the clarity of mind acquired through meditation, the result will be more or less messy.

Terayama Sensei actually conducted studies where authentic pieces of zen art by masters such as Hakuin and Tesshu Yamaoka and skillful forgeries of their works done by forgers who were skilled calligraphers were investigated under an electronic microscope. The photos revealed that in authentic works the tiny ink particles were organised in neat lines while in forgeries the ink particles were scattered.

People and Energy

People, like works of art, carry an energetic feel. For family members and close friends it is common to sense and feel what the other person might be thinking or how he might be feeling emotionally. A person who is greatly joyful can infect his joy to those around him. In the same manner, someone who is depressed or angry can also transmit this emotion to others, even without saying a word, and the other person can become angry. In the same way in the company of a meditation adept, a spiritual master or a saint, the same effect happens, and the minds of those with lesser meditation experience becomes clarified because of the presence of the adept is carried to others by his or her energy. The point is that our mind, made of thoughts, emotions, energies and thoughtless space passes on to others.

Reading the energy, mind and awareness of a person can be developed to a high degree. I have often heard fellow dharma teachers and practitioners say something vague like the eyes can reveal stability or lack of it but it never goes deeper than that. Why? I am confident that at some point of time and history this skill has been highly cultivated with some dharma traditions but unfortunately it doesn't anymore. Anyhow, this study can go into a lot of detail and can be very beneficial in many ways.

I was introduced to analysing energies through zen, zen art and *reiki*. After this I was taught further by tantric and dzogchen masters and learned about analysing different

levels of attainments or 'grounds' (skt. *bhumi*). It is the same principle that the zen-master uses in meditation interviews, that is essential in zen art and is what I have applied in photographic analysis when verifying or falsifying awakenings.

Photographic Analysis: Before and After Photos

It has been widely debated between various schools of buddhism and hinduism what an awakening is. This debate is largely verbal, where definitions from the classic texts (skt. *sutra*) and commentaries by different masters are quoted. We can easily see that theravada buddhists (*stream-entry*, p. *sotapanna*), zen buddhists (jap. *kensho*, *satori*), pure land buddhists (jap. *shinjin*), vajrayana buddhists (tib. *semngo tropa*) together with hindu nondualists (skt. *advaita*) have a lot of similarity when it comes to descriptions and first hand accounts written by those who have been verified awakened by their respective teachers.

The reason why a zen-master stares intensively into your eyes, especially if you claim to have awakened, is because by looking into your physical eye balls, he can get a sense of what is going on in your mind. He makes the connection with your mind through your body to see whether you have broken through the barrier of self-delusion into the natural state, or selfless awareness. If the insight is valid, the master will feel fresh and elated just like you will, if you had an authentic awakening. On the other hand if the insight was not a clear irreversible shift, the master will feel hindered, stuffy and weird in his own bodymind. In this case he will kindly tell you to stop fantasizing and to continue your practice, perhaps accompanied with a sharp shout!

When someone, regardless of their spiritual denomination wakes up, something changes permanently in his or her energetic body. It is that *something* that I have studied with great keenness. The logical train of thought is that if an insight is irreversible, doesn't go back to how it was before, then something permanent has happened in the mind. The mind is made of energy and energetic organs that are commonly called channels (skt. *nadi*) and centers (skt. *chakra*). As the bodies and minds of all of us are essentially the same, it should be possible to learn to discern these shifts. And it is possible.

You can try to detect these factors in the following before (pre-awakening) and after (post-awakening) photos.

Pre-awakening criteria:

1. Feel the sense of 'me-ness' or in other person's case 'you-ness' as a knot in between the eyes, behind the bridge of the nose.
2. Feel the general energetic feel, like lack of clarity, harsh or subtle dullness observable through the eyes and the face in general.

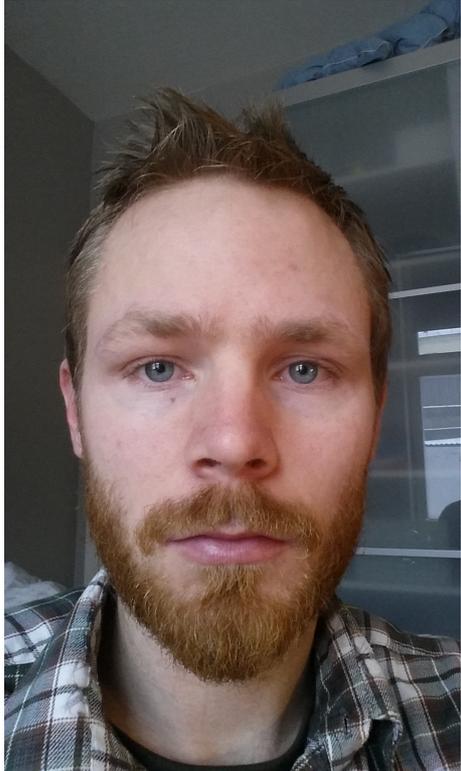
Post-awakening criteria:

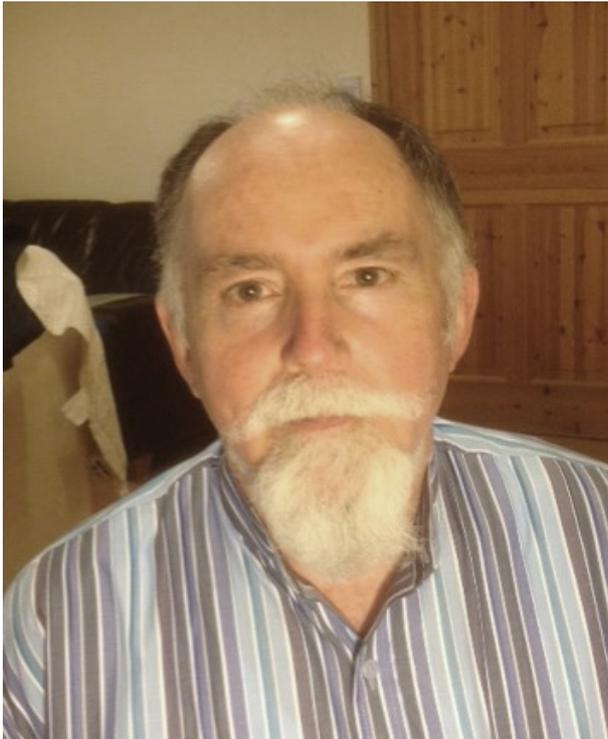
1. Feel the sense of 'I-lessness' or in other person's case 'you-lessness' as an openness, absence of the earlier knot in between the eyes, behind the bridge of the nose.

2. Feel the general energetic feel, like the increased clarity, freshness and purity observable through the eyes and the face in general.

Above: Before (pre-awakening). **Below:** After (post-awakening) :











Awakening Statistics

- People who awakened in this guidance: 98/100
- Percentage of people who attained awakening in this guidance: 98%

Since April 2014, when I started giving live and online (email) guidances to awakening, I have kept statistics. My purpose was to gather data from the first 100 cases (4/2014-10/2017) to see how well or poorly the technique, The Two-Part Formula, and the instructions would do. In the beginning I didn't know how the success rate would turn out and whether the percentage of success would be very low, high or something in between. Here are some facts, and my thoughts about the statistics from the first 100 cases.

Why compile statistics?

An important reason behind compiling this data was that I was informed that reliable data about how well or poorly a practice or a system does is extremely scarce. If you start thinking about it, the field of spirituality is the only one not to do so among all other fields of human endeavour and expertise. If data about functionable and beneficial applications were not made available in science, education or culture, it would be seen as suspicious and unacceptable. It is not common to find statistical data regarding awakenings, or other levels of attainment, but I think it should be a standard.

Doing this would illuminate a lot of corners. The most obvious concern is, of course, whether practitioners of a system do or do not wake up at all. And if they do, the next logical questions are how, within what time range, with how much effort and time put into the practice and how much help was needed from a teacher or a guide. This is simple logical reasoning.

Guidances given by myself or other teachers

The statistics include the first 100 guidances that were given by myself or a couple of other Open Heart-teachers. The number of cases done by other teachers were 9 in number, which included 7 successful cases and 2 unsuccessful ones. At their first try (also the teacher's) two persons didn't get awakened through the guidance. After participants had failed to get awakened, I offered to do the guidance with these people for a second time and they succeeded. In the beginning, in all arts there are failures until the art is mastered enough for keeping the standards where they should be. This is a natural part of the learning process.

During my first 10-15 guidances, I had two cases who didn't awaken. These failures happened due to my lack of expertise in giving guidance with the Two-Part Formula (2PF). Unfortunately I didn't have a chance to do the guidance with them for second time.

Even though the 2PF hits precisely at the core of the selfing mechanism, it requires skillfulness from the guide to both give helpful pointers as well as to intuit what the person needs. Just as people's personalities differ, guidances differ. An advice that works for one person might not work for another, even though they are using the same technique as the basis for their processing.

Through doing these 100 guidances I've noticed that my way of doing it has changed and

developed along the way. I have always put a lot of emphasis on the preparation of the person involved and as a general rule I always require 1-2 weeks of preparation, going through the materials and doing the 2PF on their own, before the guidance begins. One reason for this is that if the preparation is not well done, then the teacher has to work needlessly hard and repeat the same points over and over, from one guidance to another. A more important reason of the preparation is that the responsibility of the process is mostly on the seeker, as it is his problem that the guidance seeks to solve, not the teacher's. The person involved needs to understand his responsibility and make the commitment. There were a couple of cases who started the process too casually but who understood the importance and value of the opportunity once it was pointed out to them. The teacher is there only to give pointers, and even though they are crucial, the work has to be done by the person himself.

Three kinds of cases

12 cases of the total number awakened without any one-on-one attention from the teacher. These people include cases who joined public lectures (30-60 min in duration) given about awakening, where the technique was taught to them, and people who studied online materials and did the 2PF on their own. All these people contacted me to ask what had happened to them or whether they had awakened. I verified their awakenings, as in all cases, through reading their verbal descriptions and by analysing their photographs.

Some people, perhaps about 15% of the total (15/100), needed very little help from the teacher. When learning about it, these 'easy cases' realised the usefulness of the technique and did the heavy lifting by themselves, without much help from the teacher. In these cases the guidances lasted from a few hours (the shortest was two emails changed within 6 hours) to few days. The average duration of all guidances was 4-5 days of emailing. The longest guidances, less than 10 cases, lasted for 4-5 weeks, where a break of two weeks was held in the middle.

In general

In the beginning I didn't expect the success rate to turn out as high as 98%. As I also was identified with some of the many mistaken views about awakening out there, I became convinced of the effectiveness of the Two Part-Formula and the guidance only after 30-40 cases.

A cynical attitude towards the Two-Part Formula has been extensive. While witnessing the peak of people's delusion disappear first hand over and over again, I have come to see this foolish critique as an indication of a low level of understanding about awakening in our present spiritual culture, whether hindu, buddhist or otherwise. To date, I have not received a single disappointed email from anyone who took guidance or were verified awakened by me, obviously because (one of) their problems was solved for good.

It has become apparent to me that most old traditions, who are the main proponents of awakening, usually know only a little about it and their knowledge may be corrupted. I have discussed problems related to this elsewhere in this book (A Look at Awakening and The Two-Part Formula).

I am genuinely woeful for having to say this, as it always upsets people who have invested in the old traditions but I have to speak my mind. I'd like to remind people that in my own

case it took 8½ years of 8 hours daily sitting, following old ways and views with full dedication, until I woke up. Awakening certainly doesn't replace long-standing practice but I, like many, was a victim of false views of what awakening is, how it fits in the big picture and how it is achieved. I hope it need not be so for future generations.

Thank you to all those who took this teaching seriously, worked hard and burst their bubble of self. Thank you also to many dharma friends and teacher colleagues who have given their support to my work in regards to the Two-Part Formula.

About the Author

The author of this book, Kim Katami, is a teacher of both buddhist and hindu dharma, specifically tantra and natural state. He is the founder of the Open Heart Sangha based in United Kingdom, Ireland and Finland.

When he was a small boy, he experienced meditations and yogic practices spontaneously. Upon finding buddhism as a young adult, he embarked on the meditative path in order to find answers to his existential questions. He received training from notable teachers and was asked to teach by his teachers of rinzai zen, shaiva tantra, tantric buddhism and dzogchen. His teachers helped him to understand what he had experienced spontaneously since childhood and approved his mystical experiences connected to great masters such as Padmasambhava.

Kim was asked to teach by his masters in 2008. Since then he has taught numerous courses and retreats, mostly in Europe, based on the teachings he has received. His fields of expertise are tantric practice, and nonmeditation but also zen art, yoga and healing. Due to the nonmystical, direct and easy going nature of the presentation, Kim's teachings draw the attention of both ordinary seekers and of teachers of various traditions.

Find out more about the author from these websites:

Open Heart, www.openheart.fi

Open Heart-blog: <http://www.openheartopenheart.blogspot.fi/>