

10 Steps To Enlightenment

by Richard Dupuis

So, what will it take for you to awaken to the truth of *who you are*? Are there actual steps to assist you in the process? The answer to this question is yes and no. What I mean by that is, there are no actual concrete steps to follow that will guarantee your enlightenment. If, however, you take the time to contemplate the steps described below, and embody them, you *will* begin to awaken.

Step 1: Begin with the realization that you are already awake; you just simply are not aware of it. You currently identify with who you are *not*. You believe you are your mind and thoughts. As you contemplate this dilemma, you will begin to let go of your belief that you are not yet awakened. Some of you will *immediately* realize the truth of this statement.

Step 2: Conditioning. You don't know who you are because of your conditioning.

The highest level of spiritual teachings known to us is the Advaita Vedanta. These ancient spiritual teachings are also referred to as the *teachings of non-duality*. I strongly encourage you to immerse yourself in these teachings. I've personally found the writings of Jed McKenna, Robert Adams, Gangaji, Adyashanti, Tony Parsons, and Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj to be particularly meaningful.

Step 3: Meditation. If you don't already know how to meditate, it's about time you learned. You don't have to do a lot of meditation; 10 minutes per day is enough to start with. It is important to note that most styles of meditation will not help you to awaken. Most meditation techniques focus on calming the mind, yet when your mind is involved in your meditation, you are focused on who you are *not*.

Step 4: Surrender. Surrendering is yielding to the flow of life, instead of resisting it. Here are some things you can do to assist in the process. Take your attention off the past and future. Take your attention off your thoughts. Focus on the present moment. As you do this, you are actually surrendering to the flow of life, moment by moment.

Step 5: Illusion. Give up the idea that anything you can feel, taste, touch, smell, or hear is real. It's all simply *illusion*. You have probably heard this before and wondered what it means. In *The Course in Miracles*, it says, "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists." In other words, nothing real can be changed or harmed by anything. Unreal is anything consisting of a beginning, a middle, and an end. Nothing that is temporal is real.

Step 6: Ego. You are going to have to learn to deal with your ego. It will resist even the smallest of changes. Just imagine how it will resist your

desire to awaken to the truth of who you are. Actually, it's pretty easy to deal with the ego when you know how. First, do not confront or try to control your ego. That will only make it stronger. Your ego is truly an 800-pound gorilla and no puny human can overcome it. Just simply explore it, acknowledge it, embrace it, then turn it over to Consciousness. Your ego will tell you it's impossible for you to awaken. When that happens, call in Consciousness and let it deal with your resistance.

Step 7: Stay Present. Stay in the present moment as best you can. Stop dwelling on your past mistakes and stop telling your personal story to yourself and to anyone who will listen. Enlightenment is right here in the present moment.

Stop dwelling on time. Fear, anger, and lack all exist in time. As Eckhart Tolle says, "You are the eternal present moment which exists outside of time." Will you always be able to stay in the present? Probably not, but the more often you are in the moment, the sooner you will awaken.

Step 8: Techniques and Practices. There are no practices that will actually awaken you. Paradoxically, there are a number of powerful techniques that will help you to jump-start your awakening. I recommend self-inquiry. Self-inquiry was developed by Ramana Maharshi, an Indian guru and saint. One of his students was Robert Adams. There is a great deal of discussion about self-inquiry in his book, *Silence of the Heart*. Self-inquiry actually begins with the question, "Who am I?" This question is important because the mind cannot answer it. So, sit back, close your eyes and ask the question, "Who am I?" Let go of any preconceived expectations. You may receive an answer right away, or it could take days. Your answer will almost always come as a

feeling.

Step 9: Stop Thinking. There are likely only a few living masters and enlightened beings who have totally stopped thinking, but you can stop thinking and shut off your mind for at least a few moments. And, you can also stop believing that you are your thoughts and that they are meaningful. One definition of enlightenment is the separation of awareness from thought.

Your thoughts keep you from experiencing *who you are*. Stop thinking for a moment and notice what is there. As you do this, you are experiencing who you are; pure Consciousness. Each and every time you do that, you will become more conscious and enlightened. It's like strengthening a muscle, the more you exercise, the longer the gaps and the more awakened you become.

Step 10: Stop Suffering. Stop looking to the past for your identity and the future for fulfillment. As long as you are focused on the past or the future, you will not find peace; you will continue to suffer. You will remain separate from who you truly are. Buddha said, "Enlightenment is the end of suffering."

As I said at the beginning of this article, you are *already* awake. You are simply not aware of it. You are looking for God through His eyes.

Richard Dupuis lectures and teaches nationally and internationally. He is available for private phone consultations and may be reached at (206) 933-5899 or by e-mail at richarddupuis@juno.com. Workshops may be sponsored in your area. He is author of the books: *Creating Your Light Body*, *Ancient Wisdom, From the Mouth of God*, and his forthcoming book, *Prosperity Boot Camp*.

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