

## October 19, 2021 Tuesday Evening, Open Aaron Night

Karma is Grounded in Intention from the Separate Self; Co-Creating from the Place Empty of Self; Experiencing Our Oneness in Guided Eye Gazing Exercise; Sharing Experience

**Barbara:** It's just 7, we're waiting for people to come on. I'm just talking about the visit from my son in Seattle, and how hard it is to let go. It's been almost two years since we last saw him, because of Covid. I want him back! I don't want him to go away! Grasping.

And these mind states do come up. I think the difference is, when we practice, when we meditate and we become more mindful and we can watch these states come up, we can say, "Oh, here is clinging. Okay." We're not so invested in it. It's not a story of self. Just, certain conditions were present and clinging comes up. But there's no story about it; it's just clinging.

I see some new friends on tonight. Welcome to you. A few faces who I don't recognize, names I don't recognize, just a few. For those who are new, we have had these evenings with Aaron now for 32 years. Once a month; it used to be once a week, back in 1989. Now we have it once a month. It used to be stand-alone, just a meeting with Aaron with him talking to us. Now these are part of the ongoing class called The Eden Project. So it's stand-alone still, but it's also tied in to the ongoing class. For those who are in the class, Aaron each month is trying to pull together what we focused on that month and more or less weave it together. I'm glad he's doing it because I don't think I could.

Welcome to our new friends. Aaron will give a talk and we'll open the floor to some questions.

*(Welcoming new people and inviting them to introduce themselves...)*

In our September 21 Dharma Path class, Aaron talked about karma. Then we had the Eden and Mediumship classes focusing on connecting with our own higher selves, connecting with guidance, with the question, what is Eden to me? What is this state of an awakened world that we would like to see this Earth become; a place where there's not hatred, where people act from a place of caring for each other—what is this? How can we co-create it? These are some of the bases that Aaron will be speaking from, for the class tonight.

And then, of course, we had the nine-day retreat in the middle, and many of you were there. A very deep time of practice, of vipassana, pure awareness. Living from the open heart. Mindfulness.

So, we're kind of bringing all of this together tonight. Aaron is asking me to precede his talk by sharing something, and then he will speak from that base.

There's a game I play often with my husband. It's a two-person Chinese checker game. You remember how Chinese checkers works: my marbles here have to get across the board where your marbles are vacating, moving to my side. So this is a board just for two people, a beautiful wood board with red and blue pegs.

Hal used to be very good at this game, which we have played for 20 and more years. In the past three years since his stroke he's lost the ability to play strategy games as well. His mind just doesn't think in those directions, as it used to.

So, I see him struggling. He tries a move, gets stuck, and then we play a new game and he tries the same move; he does the same thing over and over. I point out to him, "Hal, you know, if you leave this one back in the far corner, you're not going to be able to get it out." "Yes." But then he goes back and plays it the same way.

So, I try to play around it, leaving him space to get out, knowing he's not as able to focus on strategy as he used to be able to. But Aaron pointed out to me, as we were playing tonight, this is how so many of us live our lives. We keep repeating the same moves and they don't work, but we keep trying those same moves over and over again. What does it take to get through to us, "This move is not working; maybe it's time to try something else."?

After we played the game, I sat and meditated for a while, looking at, where am I stuck in the repetition of the same moves? I mentioned the longing, when Peter, after a five day visit, had to go back to Seattle. Grasping. Now, I'm not that stuck. I could see myself moving into grasping and was able to let go of it. But there are still places where I'm stuck, where I have expectations that are more or less grounded in a solid self. This is what keeps the karma going. As long as it's coming from solid self, the karma becomes stuck.

Aaron, is there more you wanted me to say?... He says okay, he will take it from there. So, welcome everybody, and I'm going to give you Aaron.

**Aaron:** My blessings and love to you. I am Aaron. Some days I am clear; some days I am not clear (*speaking of burred screen*). Isn't it wonderful that you can see me from 10, or 100, or 1,000, or 10,000 miles away, clear or not clear?

Your technology is quite astounding and yet you want it to be perfect. What is perfect? Everything is perfect just as it is. And everything, yes, can use a little assistance. Good, better, best—what is 'best'?



When we met last week speaking about Eden, Eden is truly in your heart and your mind. You co-create that Eden. As long as you're approaching it from the position of separate self, it can never truly be Eden. When you step back from that separate self and begin to know your interconnection with all beings, and your strong intention to the highest good for all beings, service to all beings, then you have the possibility to co-create Eden.

As long as we are trying to get something that makes the separate ego self feel good, we'll never get there. But when we relax into holding everybody in this container of the loving heart, then together we can co-create Eden.

Last month I spoke about karma at some length. Karma is grounded in intention. As long as the intention is coming from a separate, grasping self, "I want this, I want that," then there's going to be the constant re-creation of karma.

When you live on the level of acceptance of the notion of a separate self but not stuck in it as absolute truth, that changes everything.

You really can't avoid the notion of a separate self; you're so conditioned into it. But when you can step around this telescope that's looking out at the world and see it from the other end, see how you as an ego are creating a story that has you in the center and the world revolving around, trying to maintain this, to change that, to fix this; and how the suffering arises because you cannot maintain this or fix that, suddenly the whole view shifts from a small focus to seeing the whole field. This ego is one speck in this field. Each ego, as one speck in the field.

Who is the one who is the observer of this? Who are you? Who is this one trying to get it right? Who is this one trying to co-create Eden?

Eden is already here. It has always been here. Take off the foggy glasses and look with clear eyes, the clear eyes that have been with you since Day 1, since you first came to have any sense of self-identity, and before that, long before that. Those clear eyes that simply rested, looking out at the universe and knowing, "I am that" with no idea of separation.

You are everything in the universe, everything. Then there was of necessity the picking up of the ego self, because that is part of the tool of the incarnation. You had to explore it. What does it mean to be you? To be you; any of you? Who are you?

In the September class we spoke of the idea of carrying heavy bags up the mountain to see the sunrise. If you are carrying very heavy baggage, you can't get there, it's too heavy. You have to stop and put it down. If you want to see the sunrise, you have to put the baggage down.

When you look at yourself up close, you often don't see that baggage. What baggage are you carrying right now?

One piece of Barbara's baggage these last five days was being the loving mother for the son who had not been home in two years. She had to keep stopping herself, saying, "He knows how to cook a meal for himself. He knows how to do this or that." Such an old identity, to be the loving mother.

With Hal, to be the good caregiver. It hasn't happened for two months, but this morning, for the morning caregiver, there was some confusion in the schedule and the morning caregiver did not come. She called the other four caregivers; nobody was free, nobody could come.

Then she had to get him up. Fortunately, Peter was there to help her. Peter has not done this, has not gotten Hal up out of bed and bathed and dressed, so he looked to Barbara: how do I do this? And Barbara said, "Well, I'm not really sure." She knows how, but she's not strong enough to really do it, not to lift a 200 lb man and move him.

If she was alone with Hal, she probably would have relaxed. But trying to demonstrate it for Peter, she could see herself wanting to get it right.

Finally, she stopped, and she said, "Peter, this isn't working. I'm trying to show you how to do it perfectly and I can't do it perfectly. Here, you come over and just sit him up. I'm going to step back. Just lift him up in bed so he's seated. Pull off his shirt."

Peter said, "I don't know how to do it."

Barbara said, "You know how to do it just as well as I do. How many times have you taken off a shirt?"

Peter said, "Thousands."

"Okay, take off your shirt!" As soon as she let go of trying to get it right, trying to be somebody who knew something and who could so it carefully, caringly, without hurting Hal in any way, as soon as she let go of all that, put that baggage down, everything cleared up. Hal really showed them what was needed, step by step.

I find it interesting her picture is blurry today (*they tried earlier to correct this in Zoom but it remains blurry*) because I think Barbara is a bit blurry today. I'm not, but she is. So yes, a bit blurry.

What does it mean to put the baggage down, and what is the baggage? And that will be different for each of you. But you cannot resolve karma until you identify the baggage that you're carrying, the habitual patterns of it, and realize, "I choose not to do that. I choose to put it down." And even then, it's so hard to put it down because you've carried it for so long.

Who are you without all the old areas of self-identity? Letting go of everything you've every thought you were—a kind person, a capable person, an unkind person, an incapable person, a wise person, a not very wise person, a loving person, an angry person, a sharp person, a confused person. Who are you? What remains?

As long as you are holding onto being this or that, you cannot really resolve the karma because you're looking through this odd lens of being this person or that person rather than knowing the true self.

At the retreat, in the small groups we heard many of you talking about something related; coming into the awakened heart, really opening to that true self. You had no words for it, just a sense of presence, joy. People didn't know how to talk about it, only to say, so much old conditioning seems to have dropped away and here I am, just present with my open heart, without a lot of thoughts about this should be this way, I should be that way. Just present. It is only here that we can really access the roots of the old karma and see them fall away as the awakened, true self comes into focus. You are that.

If we were here live in the room together, I would have you break into pairs at this point and spend a few minutes just looking into each other's eyes. When you look into another person's eyes, the one who can look deeply and directly into somebody's eyes is not the ego self. The ego self can't do that, not with honesty. The one who can look deeply into another's eyes is the true self. And the other sees that true self, you see it reflected each into the other.

*(To Zoom host)* You can make 20 breakout rooms without a lot of disruption—is this correct? Yes, it's no problem. Well, let me talk for a few more minutes and let's explore this. I didn't know we could do that; let's explore it.

If we hope to co-create an Eden on this earth, it can only be created by one who looks through a clear lens empty of the ego. I am not suggesting there will be no ego; I am suggesting that the one who looks through the lens can see the ego and just gently put it aside, not get caught up in it.

Barbara did very well this morning with Hal after the first few minutes. She was frustrated that none of the caregivers (were available). Usually somebody can come in,

albeit late. But nobody could come to take the place of the one who had misread the schedule and was not available.

There was a lot of consternation. “It shouldn’t be this way. I don’t want this.” Etc. And I asked her to just sit and breathe. Let go of that baggage of what she wants or doesn’t want. How is it, in this moment? Pleasant, unpleasant, neutral—it doesn’t matter. Sometimes it will be one, sometimes another, sometimes a third. If it’s pleasant and grasping comes up, if it’s unpleasant and aversion comes up, can one see these as arising and part of the baggage, the stories of the self? Even the further story, “I shouldn’t be grasping. I shouldn’t have aversion.”—that’s just one more story.

So I asked her to sit here at her desk, after trying to make these phone calls and coming up blank. Feeling the tension in her body. I said, “What are you afraid of?”

She said, “I’m not afraid, really, I’m just annoyed. I don’t want to have to get him up and dressed. It’s hard work.”

I asked her, “What is your highest priority here? Is it to avoid hard work?” No, and I know that about her, and you know that about her.

So, if it’s not about avoidance of hard work, what’s it about? Now we came down to it: the discomfort of feeling out of control of her world. She can’t make it happen the way she wants it to happen, the way it’s supposed to happen. No matter how hard she tries, sometimes the whole schedule is going to break apart, the person is not going to be here.

Feeling out of control. Again, my question to her: who wants to be in control? Barbara. And, looking through the Barbara lens, you can see this wanting to be in control. Looking through the pure self, the loving awakened self lens, can you hold Barbara in compassion for wanting to be in control? Yes. Relaxing into watching Barbara wanting to be in control.

And again, that climb up the mountain. Not immediately; giving a few minutes for some karuna meditation. And then, can you put this baggage down? Not you—can love put this baggage down and just go out and do what needs to be done? Get Hal up. He’s still lying in bed, uncomfortable, needing to be helped because he is quite helpless. To be lifted up, to be bathed and dressed, given breakfast. Can love do this?

Now my point here: this is not just about Barbara, it’s about all of you, but it’s also about old karma. The whole self that says, “I don’t want it to be this way,” it’s so old. “I should be able to stop it from being this way.” Why should you? Where is that coming from?

Sickness, old age, death, inconvenience, pain, joy, wonder—all of these will arise with conditions. There is no “you” that should be able to stop it from being *this* way or should be able to keep it *that* way. Just to open your heart to the human situation.

And then take the next big step: seeing the self that is grasping or experiencing aversion, seeing that self with compassion so that the—let me try to say this very clearly.

As long as there is a strong self-identification, no matter how loving the intention to be the caring one, to take care of, to co-create a world of joy and so forth—

When you perceive the self moving into a solidification and can shift back into the one who is perceiving that, this perceiver is empty of self. This perceiver is simply love and presence. There’s nothing to which the karma can stick.

Do you understand where I’m going? The second question is how do we come back to this place that’s empty of a self?

There are two parts to this: mindfulness to watch the self re-forming and then going away again, re-forming and then going away again, and the intention, starting with the intention not to be a somebody, simply to come around the other end of the telescope and look back at the self. Just to be there and present.

What is presence? What does it mean? To watch, I can’t say impartially...

*(tape paused; Aaron has needed to pause frequently as the image became very blurred)*

I apologize for the brokenness of this dharma talk. On the other hand, it’s good practice. “I don’t want this! I don’t want that! I want Aaron’s direct dharma talk!” Ah, but it has been a direct dharma talk, with frequent divergences. Who doesn’t want it this way or that way?

Now let’s try this. Can you see me looking into your eyes? Let’s just rest here, looking into each other’s eyes... *(with long pauses, not written in )*

Who is looking at me? Who are you? ...

Just looking, just resting...

Who is looking at me? Are you willing to let yourself be seen? I don’t mean the ego self, I mean the true self...



How far in will you let me come? When we come to that center, when you are there and I am there, we are not separate.

From that place of non-separation there is nothing to which karma can stick.  
In this moment, karma is released.  
In this moment there is only love, presence, the awakened heart-mind.

From here we co-create this Eden together, my no-self and your no-self, all of us just as one, no separation.

Let yourself fall into my eyes and dissolve...

Falling into each other's eyes and dissolving...

But something is still here. You have not annihilated yourself by dissolving into my eyes. What remains?...

Can you point to a somebody that remains? What remains?...

Don't try to figure it out, just rest there...

What remains? Feel it in the heart center. Breathe in spaciousness to the heart. Feel yourself floating in the universe, untethered, part of everything. Something remains—I don't see you blanking out on the screen. Just the aggregates there, that I see. But there's something much deeper—not the form or feeling or the thoughts, not even consciousness. What remains?...

One heart, that heart we all share. One awareness. Right here, there is no karma. I know you cannot hold to this, but if you could, all karma would be washed away...

All of us together, one heart, one awakened heart-mind...

*Aaron backs his eyes away from the camera.*

Coming back... Who has come back? How can there be anybody other than what you were just moments ago? You pick up the vestiges of self as tools—the body, the intelligence, the ability to plan, the ability to act. These are just tools. There's nothing else.

Why are you so invested in there being something else? You don't need the rest of it. You're perfectly capable of preparing a meal or going for a walk or feeding a cat from that place of emptiness.



But if you must pick it up, be aware you are picking it up, and come back to, what is my highest intention here? Is it to hold onto being a somebody, perhaps for the sake of just you're used to it, or perhaps for security's sake, or for why? I don't know. Or are you ready to say, "Ah, I'm picking up the somebody; now I'm just going to put it back down."?

It is only from this place of emptiness that we can truly co-create Eden together, co-create a world and a universe that is fully grounded in loving kindness and awakened mind, with no idea of duality.

And you can do it— that's why you're in this class, those in the Eden Project, and that's why you're here with me tonight. Those who are just dropping in for tonight, something called you to come tonight. I think you're ready to more fully wake up to the truth of who and what you are.

For now, let's just open the floor to a bit of feedback. I'd like to hear what you experienced. You are not supposed to have had some kind of specific experience. That's only the ego's story. Right there with the ego story, what did the heart-mind experience? What did your awakened self experience, even just for a moment?

Q: At the retreat I had the experience of being in that space of the oneness of awareness and seeing the karma that arises. When I think back on that—and the thing was, in the awareness there was nothing, there was nothing, and it kind of scared me and confused me. What do you do with nothing? But there was also, as I remember back, a sense of power. And in this exercise now there was again—although there was nothing, there was this power. And I'm thinking that if we are to create, there must be intention. And that thing that's there must be able to create intention. And that's where the power comes from. I'm wondering, does that make sense at all?

**Aaron:** Thank you, Q. I am Aaron. It makes sense, but I would flesh it out a bit. It only makes sense when the intention comes from the place of emptiness of ego self, where you feel your interbeing with all that is throughout the whole universe, and therein is the power. Because you can only connect in that way from the place of love, not from a place of fear.

Fear creates the separation. Love ties you back into the everything.

Barbara was sitting on her deck earlier this evening. She watched some squirrels climbing up into these 60-to-80-foot trees. In the higher branches, they caused the tree tops to sway a bit. The breeze also caused the trees to sway a bit, and the sky was shining through. As she sat there meditating, just resting in awareness, squirrel, tree, breeze, sky, leaves, branches, all stopped being separate. She could see so clearly

how each time the squirrel moved it leaned the branch a bit, and that prompted the other squirrels to move. That movement changed the openings of sky that were visible. She could feel the energy coming all the way down into the roots and into the earth.

There ceased to be a squirrel or a breeze, or even a tree. There was just presence. Within that presence is your true power. Does that make sense, Q?

Q: I understand the logic. I need to <>, I think.

**Aaron:** I am Aaron. Intention is just intention. It arises either from the ego self or from that awakened heart.

Any intention that arises from the ego self carries karma. Even wholesome karma is still karma. Intention that arises from the awakened self has nothing to which karma can adhere. It carries enormous power because it arises from the pure heart of everything.

I know you cannot stay there in that kind of intention; that's okay. Just become increasingly mindful when that space is open to you. Just, "Ah, yes." Who acknowledges it? The ego, probably. It's almost funny—"Ah, I get it!" "I!" It's just ego; let it go. Come back.

Practice Pure awareness meditation. You know I love vipassana, but here is a place for pure awareness. Just resting in presence, resting in the true self. And resting in the place where you're connected to everything and feel not your power but THE power. So, Q, just go back into your pure awareness practice and see where it takes you.

Know that it will waver. You're probably not going to sit there for an hour. And you said it's almost scary—yes. So as soon as scariness arises, note fear. Come back into the vipassana practice. Step back from the pure awareness practice. Note arising of fear. Breathing in, I am aware of the fear. Breathing out, I hold space for the fear. Don't try to analyze it as "What am I afraid of?" or "Who is afraid?" Just noting the direct experience of fear. Hold the fear until it drops away and the spaciousness returns. Then you are not doing pure awareness practice; you are simply returning to awareness and resting there again, until something pulls you out. Does that make sense? (Yes.) Thank you.

Are there others who would like to share anything of their experience?

Q: There are a couple of levels of experience in the eye gazing. When we started and the "I" disappeared into awareness, or merged into awareness, what I thought was all that's left is the clay, the body. Just, that was pulling back from that; almost seeing behind myself, seeing this clay.

And then when we were eye gazing, I was also imagining yourself, Aaron, looking through the clay that is Barbara, through the clay that is me, behind me to where awareness merges separate of these forms.

And then the most profound thought came, which was quite overwhelming: It's myself looking back at myself. It's quite a dramatic feeling.

But that was my experience, my thoughts.

**Aaron:** Thank you for sharing that, Q. Very beautiful and clear—thank you. Others?

**John:** When we did the eye exercise, looking into your eyes I experienced non-separation, no sense of myself and you. There was just the seeing without any self in the seeing. No sense of separation between myself and you. That's all.

**Aaron:** Thank you, John. May I ask, was it pleasant, or was it beyond pleasant?

**John:** It was beyond pleasant. It has some quality of pleasantness to it, but as the experience of non-separation deepened, it was more of a neutral feeling.

**Aaron:** Thank you. I ask this because from the human perspective, and there's still humanness in there, it's pleasant. And from the emptiness perspective, that pure being, no self, it's beyond pleasant/unpleasant. That pure being can watch sometimes, as the human comes into a pleasant/unpleasant; pulled a little bit by it but not sucked into it. Just noticing it, and then moving back into the emptiness again. And it seems to me that's what you were experiencing.

**John:** Yes, that's what it felt like, what you just described.

**Aaron:** Thank you. I'm just bringing this out for others. I want to turn my camera here a minute... well, it's too small to see—can you see the full moon out there? It looks 5x, 10x that size, sitting here and looking at it. So, after we're done here tonight, some of you might like to go outside and just spend a few minutes gazing—as you looked in my eyes, gazing at the moon in that way.

Others with experience you'd like to share?

Q: Hi, Aaron, thank you for that experience. I had a few different experiences there. What I noticed initially was, when I allowed myself to be with you, I felt longing come up in me, and it was really tender. I allowed myself to just express and feel that longing and the grief and not try to think about what part of me it was coming from.

And from that experience, from expressing in that way, then I felt I really came into that moment with you, looking at you, and was in that space, that presence.

And then I noticed, after a little bit of time, a part of me that was kind of wanting my self again, from myself. So, there was some fear, almost my inner self grasping for my attention. And it was interesting just to notice both my desire to stay with you, but also my desire to come back to myself. Kind of like what you're speaking to—if fear arises, coming back. So that was my experience and thank you for that. That's all.

**Aaron:** Thank you, Q. And let me remind you: the ego self wants to hold the connection and yet is afraid, losing the small self. Will I annihilate myself? The awakened self knows, where would I go? Where would you go; where would I go? We're always together. All of us, where would we go? Nothing is ever annihilated. Here is that quote from Vimilakirti. "...do not teach an ultimate reality endowed with activity, production and destruction! ... nothing was ever destroyed, is destroyed, or will ever be destroyed. ... That which has no intrinsic substance and no other sort of substance does not burn, and what does not burn is not extinguished; such lack of extinction is the meaning of "peace."

Where is, if I might call it God/Goddess/Divinity/All That Is, in all of this? Can you feel how much you are an essential part of that, and it is a part of you? Finally there is nothing to obtain!

Here is where we co-create from the place of Infinite Creator, Co-Creator. Here is where you have true power.

Something wonderful here is that the loyal opposition, the strongly negative aspect of the universe, because it can never step out of its small ego self and its service to self, it cannot come into that place of true power. Negativity cannot co-create; it can only create from its own negativity.

This is what gives me such strong faith that ultimately positive polarity will win out through the universe, because negative polarity is a one-way street.

Let me hear from others of you.

Q: Hi, Aaron. All I could feel is I... Am... You... and you are me and it was such a relief to not feel any wanting, longing, nothing. I am you, I am YOU... you are me, and that's all. And it's wonderful. Thank you.

**Aaron:** Thank you for being me and allowing me to be you! It's such a relief to put that ego down, even temporarily.

Now, being me and me being you, but we're part of something much bigger—call it God, Goddess, Divinity, the Dharmakaya, That Which Is—whatever you want to call it, this power of love and light. And knowing and resting in this power and being able to function from this power is how we co-create Eden.

Again, welcoming anyone who would speak. It's very helpful to hear other people's experience. But I ask you please not to compare your experience to someone else's and say, "They had a better experience. Why did I not have a better experience? What's wrong with me?" Just keep practicing with it.

Q: So, when I began looking at your eyes, first just this wave of yawning. Deeply tired. It reminded me of when we were at Emerald Isle and on the beach, and Ariel incorporated and there was such a heavy sense of that presence.

And from that, when I closed my eyes, the words that you were saying kind of faded to the background and I just went to a place of, I guess you'd say emptiness, because there didn't seem to be any self, there didn't seem to be any you or anybody else. But it was like a tremendous sense of union, at the same time.

And so that sense continues to be with me, at this moment. And it's not something I have to reach for. So that was my experience.

**Aaron:** I am Aaron. Thank you for sharing that, Q. It brings me joy that you experienced that. And the tiredness comes from the very high energy, which the human is not used to holding. The more you rest with that high energy, the less tiredness there will be.

Q: I had a fascinating experience looking into your eyes. I often have great difficulty looking other humans in the eye. I was just stunned at how connected our eyes were. I don't have any descriptors to add, other than it was an amazing experience and surprising. That's all.

**Aaron:** I'm happy that it happened that way for you. Notice our language doesn't even give us a way to talk about it. "I'm happy it happened that way for you"—Who am I? Who are you? I'm happy it happened that way, for the awakenedness in both of us.

That beautiful word "namaste"—the awakened heart in me bows in reverence to the awakened heart of you. Namaste. It's about the only way I know to express it in words.

Now, what I would like us to do is, I need to let this body go into the other room for just a minute. I'm going to ask you if you have access to a window and clear sky, to go and look at the moon for 3 or 4 minutes. And if you don't, to just close your eyes and meditate. And then we'll pick up...

(break)

Anyone who had the opportunity to look at the moon—similar experience? Just merging with the moon, being the moon.

Again, opening this to any sharing, from the earlier experience, from the moon, from anything.

Q: In that experience of looking into your eyes, I did not see anything different (*audio is not clear*) My experience was this being, this looking into your eyes, that was it.

**Aaron:** That is all it needs to be, just looking into each other's eyes. Ram Dass said, "We're all just walking each other home." We can watch that looking and see if it changes at all. We can very gently ask, who is looking? And as that somebody, that ego fades away, does it change? When we ask the question, does it change the looking, you're not trying to make something happen, you're just choosing to stay present, open to whatever is. There is no right or wrong experience here.

Anybody else?

Q: My initial experience was one of awe and gratitude. And then I started to kind of go in my head and think about it, and analyze it, and I was thinking, "Well, if it's this simple, why don't we all do this everywhere we go!" So, I kind of went back and forth between that, catching myself thinking about it, you know, it could be this simple. Anyway, getting carried away. Thank you, Aaron.

**Aaron:** Thank you, Q. If it were that simple, to just rest in emptiness, you would all be awake! You are so deeply conditioned to being in the small self. We gently pry loose the conditioning, just gently opening it a little bit, releasing. Starting to realize there is a different view; I don't always have to be caught in this small self and its preferences and its opinions and so forth. There is a different view possible.

Then you come back to your meditation practice. And one of the best reasons I know for practice is the opportunity to let go of the old way of looking, even just for a moment. To wake up to something different, so you know it's possible.

Then—many of you have looked at this with me in the past—looking at not only the wonder of this new way of being but also the fear that comes. "Will I annihilate myself? What if there is no self?" But of course there is a "self," just as there is a body. There is a mind, there is opinion, there is consciousness. Simply, this is not the essence of you.

You're so used to seeing the aggregates that you lose track of the essence. We've done this exercise many times. Holding the hand up. Wiggle the fingers and look at the

fingers. Focus on the fingers. Think of one finger as being form and one being the mental body, thoughts, one the emotional body, one even the spirit body, which is still a something, consciousness. They're all moving, there. Now keep moving the fingers and look past them at me on your screen. Look out the window at space. The fingers keep moving, but there's a space beyond them.

We can be present with the fingers and with the space. We don't have to lose the space because we focus on the fingers. Move the fingers again and see how they can be moving and still the space exists.

As human there will be the fingers, the various aggregates of self, the heavy density aggregates. And the space exists not just out there but in here. You are that space.

**Q:** Almost immediately, I began to hear a refrain of— the title of the song is “There Is Only Love”. It's done by Karen Drucker, an artist that I know personally, and I know the song. But as we melded, this music just, it was everywhere. It wasn't a hearing of it; it was just an experience of the music while we were melded with our eyes together. A very precious experience for me tonight.

**Aaron:** Thank you, Q. Perhaps at the very end of our discussion, and John it's fine to say no, but if you feel comfortable doing it, you could lead us in “All I Ask Of You”.

**John:** I'd be happy to lead it. I don't have my harmonium here.

**Aaron:** No problem. We just need one person with a voice who can lead it. And then each person can sing it themselves. Everybody looked into my eyes; everybody can sing with your voice, feeling themselves connected that way and looking at everybody's eyes as they sing it.

We have a few more minutes—are there others who would like to share?

When we practice in this way, coming to this place of deep connection, instead of pushing at each other we start to interrelate with each other in such a beautiful way. Our energy draws the other together with us to co-create.

Ahh, I'm thinking of a wonderful story here, that exemplifies this. I wonder if I might share, Q, your experience with your neighbors, so many years ago. Would that be okay? (Yes.) Thank you, Q.

Am I right, this is 20, 25 years ago? A long time ago. He had a cottage on the lake. The lake shore bent sharply so his shoreline was narrow, the back of his land much broader along the road. His neighbor had a long shoreline, but Q was right in the corner. He had new neighbors. When spring opened, his neighbors had come just the day the ice broke



up and put their dock—(demonstrating) a circle, a curve. So Q's dock would have to come out this way, but the neighbors put their dock that way, so there was no place for Q's dock to go.

He politely asked them to move it and explained the situation; they were very self-righteous and said, "No, we have the right to put it here." Q, correct me if I tell this wrong. Did it go on for several years, Q? yes; So every year they got the dock out, they were breaking up the ice to put out their dock, blocking Q's dock.

He tried everything. He brought them pastry in the morning for breakfast. He played football with their sons. He did metta himself with them, holding them in his heart. It was still Q trying to do something.

But finally Q let go. He understood, "I cannot force this." And then the neighbor on the other side said, "Q, I see what's happening. Why don't we share a dock? Their dock is like that, but our dock can go like this. There's plenty of space. We'll put up a dock together."

Q let go and then the whole struggle collapsed. And then the next year they picked up their dock and moved it way over on their shoreline.

Is my memory correct, Q? Anything you want to add? What did you experience with that? I don't want to put you on the spot, but feel free to share, if you wish to?

Q: I really did have to let go. My experience at the cottage was much more relaxed and deep, a much more rich experience. That was the reward.

**Aaron:** And a sense of non-separation, I think. Your neighbor stopped being "other". They were in your heart. There was compassion for their pain. One. So that's a real-world example of how this happens.

John, the song that we're going to sing many of you know. "All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you." Repeat it. "All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you." And then the Arabic, "Ishk Allah ma bud lay la," repeated. "God is love, lover, and beloved."

Let me thank you all for your presence here tonight. Practice this in your lives, looking at the one who feels separate. Turn the telescope around and look from the other end, looking back at the one who feels separate from the place of love and awareness. Hold that one who feels separate with compassion. Look into your own eyes. Stand in front of a mirror and do this, just gazing into your own eyes in the mirror.

And you can sing to yourself, “All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you.” What would it feel like to sing that to yourself?

I love you. I’m going to give the body back to Barbara so she can enjoy the singing. Thank you, everyone, for your presence here tonight. I am Aaron.

**Barbara:** Thank you, Aaron. John is going to lead this. I know you will need to stay muted because otherwise it just makes a loud mess of sound. But listen to John, who you’ll be able to hear, and sing with him. The same way you merged with Aaron’s eyes, merged with the moon, now merge with the song.

I love you all and I’ll say goodnight. I’m going to stay here and sing, too...

*(John leads the group in singing)*

**Barbara:** Good night everybody. Thank you, John, for the singing. So, we merged in each other’s eyes, and with the moon, and with the trees, and with sound, just letting go of the small self and becoming one. —Knowing, not becoming; knowing our oneness. Good night.