

## September 13, 2022 Tuesday Evening, Living Awake Class

The Ox Herding Pictures: Seeking the Ox, Seeing the Footprints, Seeing the Ox

**Barbara:** If anybody doesn't know me, I'm Barbara. To all of my dear friends who've known me for so many years, I love you, and I hope you had a wonderful summer. It's good to be back together.

Awake! Are we awake yet? What does it mean to be awake?

On the relative level, we're not yet awake, and we certainly won't be fully awake in this lifetime, or at least probably not. On the ultimate level, we're already awake. How do we live this balance?

I had a funny experience this morning. I was sitting at the table on my deck eating breakfast, when a very tiny chipmunk ran up on the big Buddha statue that's next to my pond. He has a high head, one of those high hair toppings. This chipmunk looked around, scurried up on top and just sat there, eating, very happily. All I could think of is, "I take refuge in the Buddha."! There he was, feeling very sure of himself, and comfortable, enjoying his meal, sitting on top of the Buddha's head.

I asked myself, what is that feeling? What would that be like to literally sit, breakfast with the Buddha, to sit there with the Buddha? Sit there with the awakened part of myself?

For this chipmunk, my dog was running around, squirrels and things much larger than himself were running around, but he seemed very safe and comfortable.

And then when finally he got down, he did not scurry off like chipmunks tend to do. He very leisurely walked down, looking around, stopped and took a sip from my waterfall, and then climbed on down into the greenery. Awake and present. So, I thank that little chipmunk, my teacher from this morning.

I'm going to hand over Aaron at this point. Aaron is going to take the body and talk, after which John will come in.

For me, I have a request from all of you. When I planned this class, I knew it was on Hal's birthday; he's 86 today. So I asked him back in May, "Is it okay if I hold this first class. on your birthday? We'll have plenty of time earlier in the day to have a meal together." And he said, "Fine." But he was sound asleep all afternoon, and the caregiver for this evening is sick. I can't just say to him, "You go have your birthday dinner alone."

So, John, when you come in, in half an hour or so, I'm going to step out for that 45 minutes and sit with Hal while you all work with John and meditate and then I'll come

back. I'm not asking your permission; I'm offering you my appreciation that you understand that I can't really desert Hal.

For those who don't know Hal, he had a stroke four and a half years ago. They gave him only a 3% chance to survive that first week. And if he did survive that first week, only a 1% chance that he would have any kind of meaningful existence, other than just being in a vegetative state.

Well, here is this vibrant man. He has aphasia. His body is partly paralyzed, but he's very alert, very with it. So I'm not going to abandon him to CNN for that hour; I'm going to have his birthday dinner with him.

That said, Aaron is going to come in...

**Aaron:** My love to you all, and my blessings. I am Aaron. I love you very much, and it's a real joy to be with you.

You are beautiful. You ARE awake. You may not know that you are awake, but you are.

Did you ever have a dream in which you were asleep and then woke up? You were still sleeping, but in the dream, you woke up, looked around, and said, "Yes, I am awake." But at some level you knew you were still asleep.

This is the reverse. You are awake and believe you are sleeping, but you are not really sleeping.

What would it mean to know you are awake? What blocks that knowing?

Almost all of you were in The Eden Project class last year. We spoke in that class of the earth as that Garden of Eden. How do we transform our present world into the Eden we have been promised? It already is that Eden because it has the potential to be that Eden, but it has not yet manifest that. The manifestation comes from all of you.

We're going to work on different levels this year. I've chosen the Zen Ox Herding Pictures as a ground for our work together.

Let me ask a quick question—can you all hear me well? We have a new microphone, this little black dot. And also, Barbara had speech therapy for six weeks this summer, twice a week. This therapist was wonderful. Barbara explained to her that part of it is *her* speech, but a good part of it is also my speech. Who is Aaron? For that matter, who is the Mother, or Mary? And she listened, and she thought, That's interesting.

So, she said, “I’d like to hear each of them speak.” We each talked to her for about ten minutes. She said, “They each have different speech peculiarities. They each have parts that are strong and parts that are weak, so I’d like to work in speech therapy with each of them.”

And that’s what we did this summer, which I thought was absolutely wonderful. What are the chances of finding a speech therapist who is willing to offer speech therapy to a discarnate spirit?

So, I have my work cut out. I am trying to remember to breathe, not to drop endings, and to correctly pronounce certain sounds that I had trouble with. Please continue to give me feedback, to give all of us feedback.

The Ox Herding Pictures start with looking for the ox. What does the ox represent? Really, the awakened mind.

You all know your basic Buddha dharma— just the fact that suffering exists; the causes of suffering; the path out of suffering.

You all as human are heir to physical body pain, to emotional pain, to grief, loss, confusion. When these arise, they will be unpleasant. The human habit is usually to wish these to go away, and so you grasp at getting rid of them.

We’ve been through this in depth. Dependent origination. Contact. Consciousness of the contact. Feelings and perception—those feelings of pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. And then mental formation, which may be dislike of what has arisen and aversion to it, wanting to get rid of it. Then you’re deeper into the suffering.

At a certain point—and all of you have reached this point—you are ready to say, “How do I move out of this old pattern?”

You can move out through a lengthy linear practice that leads you gradually to open into the awakened mind.

Or, you can move past through some of the practices, like pure awareness, that just open in this moment to be awake, to know the part of you that IS awake.

That doesn’t mean it’s sustainable 24/7. But as you catch deeper glimpses of the part of you that IS awake—and also the part of you that is not sure it wants to be so responsible as to be awake, that avoids knowing you’re awake—as you understand all of this better, you start to remember who you are, that you are awake, sacred, beautiful spirit. This, to me, in the Ox Herding Pictures, is seeing the footprints.

And then, finally seeing the ox. “There he is—that awake mind. Oh! They’ve been telling me about that. I didn’t believe it. But in this moment, I really see clearly. And then—whoops! Where did it go? I’ve lost it. I’m all confused again. But I had that glimpse.”

Getting to know the awakened mind. Getting to know the true self. And committing—this is the second vital part. You can keep working at this forever, plugging away at it. But unless you have a heartfelt commitment to help release this whole world—this whole universe, really—from suffering, doing your part of the work, you’re not going to have the energy to follow through. It is insufficient to act from the personal desire for freedom.

Barbara and Hal this past week, ten days, watched the entirety of *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy. I’m sure many of you have read the book thirty or more years ago. Probably some of you have seen the film. Most of you are at least familiar with it.

Frodo was asked to do a superhuman task: to carry this ring of darkness and heaviness that was grabbing him into his own darkness, to carry it and drop it into the fires—I don’t remember what it’s called, Temple of Doom?; whatever it might be—to destroy it. To destroy the power of negativity, the ego mind, the me-first part of ourselves.

But we don’t really destroy it. We begin to know that it arose from conditions, that it is impermanent, and that as we attend to those conditions, they will dissolve leaving only the clear awake mind. Our power must be consecrated to the highest good of all. Negative polarity consecrates that power only to the self. This is why in an ultimate sense, negative polarity can not win.

It’s a gripping film—a lot of violence, a lot of love, trust and faith. I quite enjoyed it.

Why are you in this class? Why are you meditating? And I think for all that I know of this group—there are only one or two of you I do not know—for all of you, it is not just to move past personal suffering but to help the whole earth in its transition into a higher density. To help the whole earth wake up, and all sentient beings on the earth. To help the earth be a leader in this move into a higher density, that makes such transition more available for beings everywhere. This, of course, is what we spent the year with last year in The Eden Project.

So I ask you to look at your own personal reasons for meditation and spiritual practice, for taking the class, for doing the hard work you are doing, and to recognize it’s not just to move past your own personal suffering but because your heart so deeply moves you to that which is for the highest good of all beings everywhere. And for Mother Earth, and for beings on other planets who are watching to see, “If Earth can do it, maybe we can do it. Maybe we can wake up.”

We'll start, then, with seeking the ox, seeing the footprints, seeing the ox. That will be our focus for this week and for your practice this coming two weeks.

Then we will move ahead. Next is a much bigger category: catching the ox and taming the ox. I'll be talking about that next class.

So, let's just settle in for this week to seeking the ox, and why we seek the ox. What propels you? What energizes you? What signs do you have, what are the footprints for you that help you to know, "I have the capacity to awaken. I am awake," even a glimpse?

And just as important, what holds you back? What are you afraid of?

People have often told me, "I am afraid of taking such responsibility. I'm not strong enough, not big or wise enough."

Well, you are what you create yourself to be. When you know yourself to be strong, wise, compassionate humans, you move so far beyond the previous limiting concepts you have had of yourself.

This is a brief introduction from me. Barbara and I have been talking about this class a lot, and I've asked her to provide a human example. So I'm going to give the body back to Barbara for just about ten minutes. She will talk and then hand this over to John for the meditation instruction and meditation.

In your small groups—beside deciding whether you want to meet all fourteen or just seven and seven—and remember, it's going to be rare that all 14 are there; perhaps only 10 or 11, so maybe it's manageable, maybe not—you decide.

But beyond that need, I would love to have each person in the group speak for a few minutes: What draws me to this class? Am I open to the possibility that I am already awake? And if not, what might block that understanding? So, I'd like each person to share something about that with their group.

I don't see any questions. I'm going to give the body to Barbara...

**Barbara:** Hello to you all. This is a bit challenging, because after Aaron has been incorporated I'm fully not here, and it's hard to talk in a clear way for at least ten or fifteen minutes.

He said he needed to speak first—would I try it? Okay, I'll try anything! I don't know how it will work.

I've been looking at something that I know touches all of you, as it touches me. Throughout this lifetime I have had experiences of seeming abandonment, feelings of unworthiness. And through over thirty years—close to thirty-five years of working with Aaron at this point—I really don't experience this pain anymore. I don't experience feelings of unworthiness.

If something triggers something for a moment, the awareness mind steps in and says, "Oh, this is just old conditioning. It's not an ultimate truth. Let it go." And it does go! I don't contract with these feelings anymore.

But I've become aware that this has become a comfortable place for me to be. Ah, I don't have to deal with feelings of unworthiness anymore—hurray!

But of course, as humans we continue to deal with different kinds of difficult emotions.

As I was preparing this summer to lead this class with John and Aaron, I began to ask myself questions in two different areas—one in the area of co-creating: We truly can co-create our world; am I bringing a pure, clear energy into that co-creation, or am I still carrying some hidden—or not so hidden—distortions? Am I willing to look at those?

I could see the part of me that said, "Maybe not; rather not look so deeply at some distortions." But of course, we really have to be willing to go everywhere.

*(interruption. Hal has no caregiver and needed Barbara)* Manifestation. How do we co-create? This is a perfect example. We plan something. We invite. Sometimes it happens; sometimes it doesn't happen.

As I was saying, I was asking myself: if I'm going to be leading this class, I really have to be honest with my experience and not try to lead people in places where I'm not yet capable.

So, I was looking at those bits and pieces of feelings of unworthiness that come up very rarely, that don't take a strong grip. I realized I've dealt with it in this life, but I've not really resolved this energy in two very important past lives. And those past lives are probably influencing this life, at least a little bit. What do I need to do?

I had the blessing recently to talk to Anna, of the book *Anna, Grandmother of Jesus*, channeled for me very clearly. The basic thing she said to me is to allow myself to rest in unconditional love.

That startled me, because of course we all say we want to rest in unconditional love, to be held in unconditional love. But do we? Are we willing to allow ourselves to be seen that deeply, to be loved that deeply?

If you're unconditionally loved, it means that the person loving you really sees all the beauty and all the flaws, all the warts. They're really seeing you. Do we want to be seen that deeply? Are we willing to be seen?

So, I've been meditating with this and looking at the places that say, "Hmm, maybe not." How can I be more honest with myself? What is there in myself that I'm not fully loving?

At Aaron's request I'm tossing this out to you as a challenge. I don't want anybody to put me on a pedestal; I'm learning right along with you. I'm not caught in so much of the old stuff anymore and yet still I get caught. We all get caught because that's what it is to be human. And that is part of the ground of compassion for us.

So, Aaron, is this what you wanted me to talk about? He says yes. He's not reincorporating. He says, just please consider for yourselves: what would it mean to allow yourself truly to be unconditionally loved, and to love yourself?

That's it for now, and I'm going to pass you on to John...