



Winter 2012

CHENG HSIN
NEWSLETTER



January 2012 Volume: XLV

Dear Cheng Hsin Students,

Our first Consciousness Apprentice Program was absolutely fantastic! It is the best program ever created, and the most rewarding. Certainly it wasn't always easy. Many challenges came up for the six courageous participants, but they plowed through admirably — learning so much about themselves and working hard to attain enlightenment. I truly hope there are other brave souls out there willing to put everything on the line to commit to the next Consciousness Apprentice Program in 2013.

This great experience spurred me to make some exciting changes to both the spring and fall Retreats at the Center, so that now there is an equal amount of time devoted to both consciousness and martial work.

The Spring Month-long Retreat will remain pretty much as it is but with a new addition to the last martial week. Now you can opt to continue to progress in the Art of Effortless Power, or you can choose to devote the entire week to learning and training Cheng Hsin Boxing.

What this means is that basically the Free-Fighting Intensive is being moved from the fall to the last week of the Spring Retreat. Of course, if you've studied enough of both Cheng Hsin boxing and throwing arts, as a more advanced player you can further opt to work on Choy Lin, our mixed martial art. So you now have three options in the last week of the Spring Retreat. You can either continue to progress in your work on the Art of Effortless Power, or you can work on Boxing and the striking arts, or you can choose to do a mix of these arts in our Choy Lin.

The biggest change is what's happening in the fall. Now the Fall Retreat will focus much more on Consciousness. We will still start off the first week with the essentials of the Art of Effortless Power, with emphasis on developing the use of intrinsic strength — the primary ingredient of effortless power — and we'll touch on the principles and philosophy that make this Art so universally applicable.

This is, of course, very beneficial for martial students or practitioners of any physical endeavor, but it also creates a valuable opportunity for those who are mainly interested in the Consciousness work. Training to be

grounded in bodily awareness is an excellent preparation for the intense consciousness work that occurs in the following weeks.

The next three weeks of the Fall Retreat offer a line-up of the three most powerful consciousness workshops the world has ever seen: Experiencing the Nature of Being, followed by the Consciousness Training Camp, and ending with the Contemplation Intensive. Imagine how powerful doing three weeks of progressive, complementary, and intense workshops will be!

I suspect that most of you have read *The Book of Not Knowing*. That's good, and recommended for this work. It's a must-read, really. Well, these three workshops will take this book off the pages and bring it directly into your immediate conscious experience. Of course, after seeing the joyful progress of the Consciousness Apprentices, I recommend doing all four weeks. After that, you certainly will never be the same!

The Fall Retreat line-up is now:

Effortless Power Training Camp
Experiencing the Nature of Being
Consciousness Training Camp
Contemplation Intensive



NEW DVDs!:

And these great changes aren't the end of the good news. Coming soon are a plethora of new specialty Instructional DVDs. At long last, *Boxing*, *Sword*, *Effortless Power*, *San Shou* and *Choy Lin* are all featured in DVDs. As for the consciousness work, for the first time — other than the massive ENB DVD home study course — we will now have DVDs: *An Introduction to*

Consciousness, and *An Introduction to Contemplation*.

A brand new DVD series providing in-depth study of the Cheng Hsin striking arts, or "Boxing," will be available soon. All of the essential principles and practices are laid out step by step; as well as the more advanced principles and methods never before shared with the public. This is truly the most intelligent and effective, not to mention effortless, fighting Art ever to be created. The depth and profundity of Cheng Hsin Boxing is staggering. Its philosophical application to life is extraordinary, and its principles are applicable to all kinds of interactive skills.

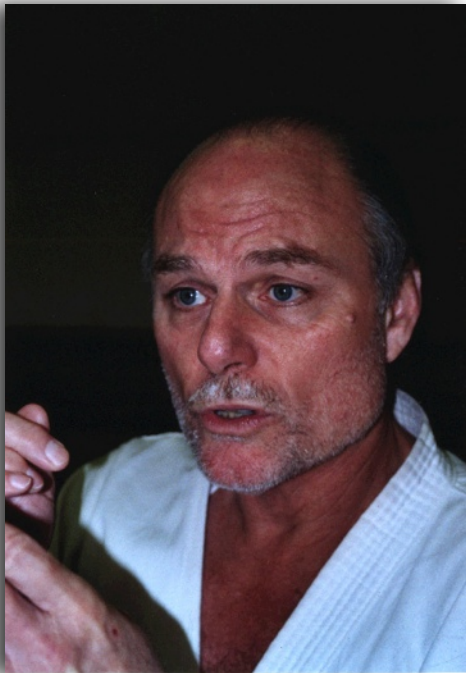
The development of Effortless Power will have its own set of DVDs as well, painstakingly walking you through every step and practice required for acquiring an effortless power. This is not just some fantasy practice promising only a pipe dream to be achieved some day when magical forces somehow collude to gift you with the secrets of internal power. This is a profound and yet extremely down-to-earth and practical study that — if truly taken on — will allow you to master effortless power.

Sword practice, both set and application, will also be available for those interested in learning to work skillfully with an object, a weapon, or just engage in the fun of swordplay. San Shou, our functional two-person choreographed set of interactive movements — ranging from uprooting and striking to throwing and pinning — will also be available as a series of DVDs. And Choy Lin, Cheng Hsin's mixed martial art, will receive some attention and instruction in both the Boxing and the San Shou videos.

We've had DVDs conveying the Arts for quite some time. It's about time that we create DVDs touching on the Consciousness work we do. These have been slow to emerge since it's been assumed that this kind of work needs to be done in person and in depth. There is no reason, however, that the basics and spirit of this work can't be represented in DVD form. So now you can be introduced to some of the foundation or preparatory principles and distinctions found in our Consciousness work, or instructed in developing effective Contemplation.

I could go on, but I don't want to overload you. The best news of all, of course, is that all of the upcoming Retreats and workshops will continue to provide the immense spectrum of excellent growth opportunities that are the hallmark of Cheng Hsin. As always, our commitment is to increasing Consciousness, and developing effortless and effective ways of being. If this is of interest to you, take advantage of these unique and precious opportunities.

Peter Ralston



**SPRING CHENG HSIN MONTH-LONG
RETREAT**

MARCH 31 — APRIL 29, 2012

If you can commit early, do so and save yourself some money! The last early deposit opportunity — which provides a significant savings over full price — is JANUARY 15, 2012, so don't forget to send in your deposit soon.

The CHML Retreat is divisible into four workshops. If you cannot attend the entire four-week retreat, you can do one, two, or three weeks. If you're new to Cheng Hsin, note that the first two weeks will introduce you to both the mind and body aspects of this great work.

CONSCIOUSNESS:

In the ENB (Experiencing the Nature of Being), March 31—April 8, you will engage in life-altering consciousness work, exploring self, mind, perception, and even the very nature of "being." You could not ask for a more expansive teacher than Peter Ralston. He is like a cross between a Zen master and a cognitive scientist, with a deep understanding of psychology and philosophy, recognizing both the value and limitations of each field. He will not ask you to believe anything, but instead will lead you to make your own personal discoveries of what is true. We sometimes refer to this work as "ontology," since ontology is "the study of being" (from the Greek: "Ont": being, and "ology": a subject of study).

MASTERY:

Following the ENB are the three, week-long Cheng Hsin internal martial arts camps from April 8—29. Dive into three weeks of the Art of

Effortless Power! Week One of this Mastery segment also consists of a full course in Cheng Hsin Body-Being and some T'ai Chi. Continue into Week Two and you can expand the very base of your physical capabilities with a course in the Principles of Effective Interaction, and also Swordplay to train your proficiency with objects. In Week Three continue to advance in the Art of Effortless Power with the addition of some San Shou, or you have the option of studying Boxing, or Choy Lin (Cheng Hsin's mixed martial art).

Each of these four events can be done separately or you can stay the entire 4 weeks and do them all. However, only more advanced practitioners can begin at Week Two or Three of the martial section without doing Week One (except for Boxing which can be done in Week Three without prerequisite, although you may be a bit over your head at times). Treat yourself to a month of study with a real master.

~~~~~

For a BROCHURE:

~~~~~

For more information, go to:

www.chenghsin.com/workshop-chenghsin-retreat.html; or contact us at:
Ralston@ChengHsin.com

~~~~~

To sign up:

~~~~~

Send:* \$395 made out to "Cheng Hsin" to: Peter Ralston, PO Box 63080, Pipe Creek, TX 78063. Let us know exactly what you are signing up for, and provide your full name, address, phone, and e-mail information. (If you have a brochure include the registration slip.)

Special Note:

Students living outside the US: DO NOT SEND CHECKS! Register online at ChengHsin.com, or ask us about other options for payment.

**PACIFIC RIM 2012 WITH PETER RALSTON
COMING SOON!**

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

February 4—12, 2012

Nine day Camp in the Art of Effortless Power, with Cheng Hsin Boxing during the last weekend.

Contact: Alan Roberts: info@chenghsin.co.nz

DARWIN, AUSTRALIA

February 15—21, 2012

Week Camp in the Art of Effortless Power, with Cheng Hsin Boxing in the evenings.

Contact: David Rossi:
davidrossi1@westnet.com.au

TOKYO, JAPAN

February 27—29, 2012

Three day Body-Being workshop developing an effortlessly effective and functional body-being.

Contact: Travis Johnson: travis@somatic-systems.com

KONA, HAWAII

March 2—4 or 5, 2012

Weekend workshop in the Art of Effortless Power. This workshop will be held on the beautiful Kona side of the Big Island.



For more information or assistance
Contact: Miles Mulcahy: miles@aloha.net
Or you may contact me for a brochure or
questions about the workshop:
Ralston@ChengHsin.com.

CHENG HSIN year-long eCOURSES

THE NEXT ROUND OF eCOURSES BEGIN ON
APRIL 20:

There are five, year-long eCourses:

- **Transcending the Self**
- **Transforming Your Experience of Relationship**
- **The Principles of Effective Interaction**
- **The Principles of an Effortlessly Effective Body-Being**
- **The Power of Contemplation**

CHENG HSIN MINI-eCOURSES

And two six-week eCourses:

- **Increasing Consciousness**
- **T'ai Chi Body-Mind**

Tuition for all the fall eCourses is due by:
APRIL 20

For detailed information about any of the eCourses, go to www.chenghsin.com/ecourselist.html. Or, contact us directly at: Ralston@ChengHsin.com

2012 MARTIAL APPRENTICE PROGRAM

There is some room left in this program, and a small window in which to get into it. If you are interested, contact me immediately and we'll see if we can work you in. The program begins March 15 and runs through October 28, 2012.



2013 CONSCIOUSNESS APPRENTICE PROGRAM

The Consciousness Apprentice Program is the best program I've ever created or been a part of — the 2011 program was fantastic! If you are serious about the Consciousness work, I highly recommend finding a way to be a part of the next CAP.

All apprentices are empowered to become responsible, clear, conscious people who understand commitment, and are able to push through their own personal limitations, attaining a deeper understanding of themselves, as well as new insights into the nature of reality. All this, of course, leads to personal transformation.

The Consciousness Apprenticeship has some body-being development and a little training in the Arts, but the vast majority of our time is devoted to consciousness training, personal growth, and contemplation. It is a very intense and effective seven months. Enlightenment and real growth are pursued and accomplished.

You will live like a monk in the Cheng Hsin "monastery" and work on consciousness every day. Make no mistake, it will be highly disciplined and challenging, and you will be confronted with a number of issues: personal, social, mental, and emotional. If this is something that calls to you, and you feel up to it, let me know and we will begin the process of making it happen for you.

If you've ever wanted to devote yourself, day after day, month after month, to enlightenment, or immerse yourself in the work of taking on real personal transformation, this is the

Program for you. It is only available every other year, and only then if enough brave people commit to it early. The next Consciousness Apprenticeship is scheduled for March 17 through October 27, 2013, but if you're interested I need to know long before then.

Contact me at: Ralston@ChengHsin.com

If you 'd like a pdf flyer detailing the Consciousness Apprentice Program, let us know and we'll send you one. You can also find this information at: <http://www.chenghsin.com/apprentice-program-consciousness.html>

No one finds it easy to leave their life for 7 months. With commitment, somehow it becomes possible. The following quote captures the creative power of this possibility quite well.

THE POWER OF COMMITMENT by Goethe

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth — the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves, too."

"All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no one could have dreamed would have come his way."

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."



Consciousness Apprentices 2011:

William Sime, David Spivak, Kevin Magee,
John DuGene, Brendan Lea,
and Kistina Watanabe

APPRENTICE FEEDBACK

For those of you who'd like to hear what it was like on the "inside" here are a few snippets of communications from some of the 2011 Consciousness Apprentices:

Hi Peter,

Firstly, thank you so much for your efforts in creating the CAP. You created a program and provided a special environment where I felt safe, supported, and encouraged to go deeper into all aspects of myself.

I felt I also got to know you more! As you have said yourself, you take on different roles to facilitate different learning in others, being the CI master or the martial master have different

feels to them, and in this program I saw you in another inspiring role. However, it seemed to me that this work is really where you shine brightest. I was amazed at how you could come night after night and talk fluently and deeply on something that we hadn't discussed before — there were no two alike.

My relationship to the work has deepened immensely. I no longer separate Cheng Hsin from me. I deeply thank you for all that you have taught and shown. I have new possibilities in my life which would otherwise not have been but for you. I think that a life of sharing this work is truly a life worth living, and I have your example to aspire to.

Kevin

Peter,

I have studied martial arts with you and others for many years now. Though you teach martial arts in a way that far surpasses anything I have ever seen, the work I have just done at the Consciousness Apprentice Program has completely blown my mind. The value I have received from the CAP is beyond compare.

The work you do has profoundly changed my life. At first the martial arts drew my attention and will continue to be my main focus, however, the doorways you have shown to me in the consciousness work have educated me beyond anything I could have imagined. You have my deepest respect and love.

Thank you.

Brendan

Hi Peter,

The experience was very rewarding for me. I admire your depth of understanding, skill at facilitation, and commitment to both the work and the truth. Words can't express what the program means to me.

You have created something that is very important, and you've done an excellent job. I'm sure it will improve as you continue, and I'm honored to have been a part of the inaugural run. There's no one else in the world I'd trust with this job. I feel your love for me, and I appreciate all you've contributed to my life.

With love and appreciation,
David

Dear Peter,

I experience freedom from stuff that I have been carrying around most of my life. I feel most of the heavy burdens have been washed away, they have ceased to exist.

There is a sense of lightness in the absence of the traumas and dramas that had been taking up so much space that they'd created separation and distance to both my experiences and to other people. People comment that my eyes are gentle, that they are surprised by how positive I am, and that it is much easier to communicate with me now. They say that I have a strong energy but underneath I seem to be very calm. And that I appear much younger than before.

As for you, I think you are a genuine and loving person of an old school that is increasingly hard to find. You can be ruthless for the purpose of growth. I LOVED our meetings and I feel a deep appreciation for what you shared and gave us. You serve as a good example of what is possible for one to do and achieve in life. Even though you have reached so far compared to most people that it sometimes seems impossible to reach similar levels. Nevertheless you are a living example of what is possible. It has been a great privilege to be able to work with you.

THANK YOU!

Kristina

EUROPE WITH PETER RALSTON

HAMBURG, GERMANY

June 22—25, 2012

Another 3.5 day workshop in the Art of Effortless Power in lovely Hamburg. Join us for some great training in the Art and Body-Being.

Contact: Klaus-Heinrich Peters:
khp@chenghsin.de

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

June 26, 27, 28, 2012

Three evening seminars in Copenhagen investigating the basics of the Art of Effortless Power.

Contact: Torben Bremann:
t.bremann@mail.dk

DeGLIND, HOLLAND

June 30—July 13, 2012

A two-week live-in camp held in the relaxing countryside of central Holland. We'll progress through the Art of Effortless Power, touch on Body-Being and T'ai Chi, and do an entire weekend of Boxing.

Contact: Epi van de Pol: epi@taijiquan.nl,
or Regina Smulders:
regina.smulders@upcmail.nl

AUBETERRE, FRANCE

July 15—20, 2012

A live-in camp in the Art of Effortless Power in beautiful Southern France, north of Bordeaux. Come join us for study in the lovely little village of Aubeterre.



Contact Bruno Cointrell: guiwuji@no-log.org

STOWE, ENGLAND

July 22—28, 2012

A live-in camp in the Art of Effortless Power and some T'ai Chi and Body-Being, in the gracious countryside near Oxford, England.

Contact Kevin Magee: kvn.magee@gmail.com



WORKSHOPS WITH PETER IN THE US

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

August 24—26

Contact: Stewart Breslin: spbreslin@comcast.net
Or Peter Ralston: Ralston@ChengHsin.com

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

September, 14—16

Contact: Frank LaManna at:
fl.kodi@frontiernet.net

**A NEW WORKSHOP:
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

September, 21—23

Contact: David Zucker: chiwizdz@gmail.com



Our man in Australia, Andrew Nolan, showing Ralston the Blue Mountains

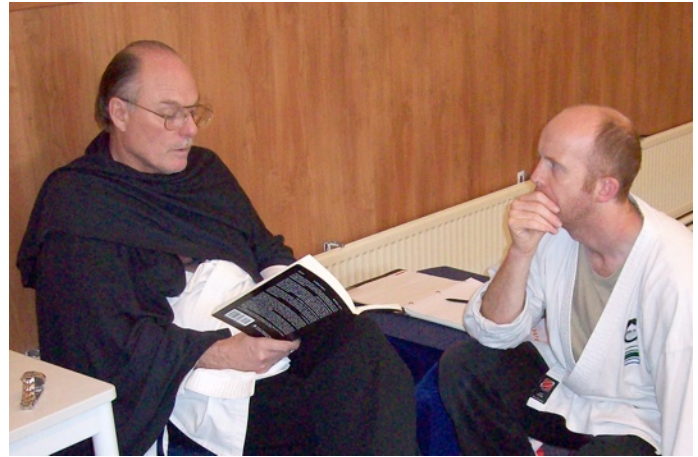
THE FALL RETREAT AT THE CHENG HSIN CENTER
SEPTEMBER 29—OCTOBER 27, 2012
which includes:

THE EFFORTLESS POWER TRAINING CAMP
September 29—October 6

EXPERIENCING THE NATURE OF BEING WORKSHOP
October 6—13

CONSCIOUSNESS TRAINING CAMP
October 13—20

CONTEMPLATION INTENSIVE
October 20—27



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

~~~~~  
Mike Stancato  
Racine, Wisconsin  
~~~~~

***DEPOSIT AND ORDERING INFORMATION**

Sending tuition for eCourses, a deposit for Workshops, or ordering a DVD:

Make checks out to "Cheng Hsin," and send to Peter Ralston, PO Box 63080, Pipe Creek, TX 78063. Or, pay online.

Special Note: Students living outside the US: DO NOT SEND CHECKS! Register online, or write to Ralston@ChengHsin.com and ask us to send you a Google Checkout invoice so that you can pay online – provide your full name and email address.

(Otherwise, you can send American Express Traveler's Checks made out to "Cheng Hsin." Other options are available (wire or Western Union). If you need to use them, ask us how to proceed.

Peter,

I read several times, with enthusiastic interest, your article "Peter Ralston on Double Weightedness" in the Summer 2011 issue of T'ai Chi magazine. You present your case with order, organization, and a hint of practical application. Thank you for disseminating your insight to those of us who have been puzzled about "double weightedness" for a long time. Your clarification of a more likely translation that "...divided attention is to blame," guides us to focus on that counterintuitive transformation of our nervous systems that you assert is essential to "...remaining constantly balanced and relaxed even under pressure..."

Regarding Wang Chung Yueh, you mention that "...even in his own time and culture he was communicating something that no one grasped..." This is especially

perplexing. Was Wang referring to his students or to “boxers” in general? If Wang was referring specifically to his own students, does this mean that his teaching methods were not sufficient to the task? Or, does failure to master the “correct principle” have other causes?

I am, of course, primarily interested in my own mastery of the “correct principle” and “effortless power.”

For its own sake, though, I’d like to see strong assurance that five decades of your work will continue through the art of Cheng Hsin. This will require mastery & dissemination of the principle of “effortless power” by a large number of your students. Leaving your legacy of “effortless power” with only a few students greatly increases the risk that that part of Cheng Hsin will eventually die out. Can you do what Wang Chung Yueh did not do, and develop a teaching process that assures mastery? It seems, by a superficial reading of your books and the curriculum you developed for rank advancement in Cheng Hsin, that you have attempted to do that (develop a teaching process that assures mastery). You have broken down your lessons into small, manageable exercises. Everything seems to be in place for mastery except that (correct me if I’m wrong) few, if any, of your students have attained “effortless power?”

Regards,

Mike Stancato

Mike,

Just to be clear, I did not mean to imply that “divided attention” was the answer. It was just another translation of the same characters, showing the variety of interpretations available in one phrase.

When I said that no one in his time and culture grasped this principle, I was only suggesting that it wasn’t something already understood even in his culture and at that time. It was something new and likely difficult to convey. I wasn’t trying to say that he then failed to get it across to some. I have no idea who Wang was referring to in his comments, and his methods may have worked just fine. There’s no way of knowing since whatever was passed down may easily have been lost centuries ago. Some of it could have survived, but it is probable that none of it survived intact. Certainly failure to master the “correct principle” can be with the student. The teacher bears responsibility for getting it across, but the student bears responsibility for mastering it.

There is no guarantee that the Art will survive. Having made a record of pretty much everything that can be recorded, I must leave the legacy of Cheng Hsin entirely up to you, the students. It is almost certain that the whole range of skills and understanding that I possess will not survive. It is nearly impossible for one person to master such a scope. It requires that so many elements be combined and mastered, it’s unlikely to occur for very many people. But that doesn’t really matter. Each person will contribute what they can, and as anyone makes the work their own, they will pass on what they pass on. It is also possible that someone will surpass me if their will and commitment is strong enough. It is more likely that people will invent their own versions and contribute that. It doesn’t really matter. Nothing survives in the end.

There is a lot of information available in Cheng Hsin, and well thought out stepping stones toward mastery are offered. Yet it is up to you

to commit to mastering it. I really think that if people could deeply grasp what this work is all about, most would throw themselves wholeheartedly into its study and work hard to incorporate it into their being and their lives. Unfortunately, the depth of understanding required to grasp the significance of this work usually takes years of committed study to attain, and so the rub. Take my word for it though, it's really worth the effort.

The Art is a process that is fun to play with, the mastery of which assists in transforming the person if they care to use it for that purpose. This is more important than whether or not anything survives over time.
Thanks for your concern.
Peter

~~~~~  
Paul Hinton  
Windsor, England  
~~~~~

Hi Peter,

As a complete newcomer to Cheng Hsin I have a very basic questions for you.

For the last 8 or so years I've been trying to take a mind, body & spirit approach to life and my own development, but I've found spiritual development the most difficult as I haven't found a satisfactory definition of it and as a result have never really known what direction to head in or whether I'm on the right path. In your work you obviously talk a lot about mind and body, but I haven't yet found any reference to spirit, despite the fact that you refer to Cheng Hsin as a religious organization. Can you explain why this is the case?

Any guidance that you can give me would be very much appreciated.

Best regards.

Paul

Paul,

Mind, body, and spirit are all simply distinctions made within your experience. The experience in which you are making these distinctions is referred to as "being" or being a person. If you didn't make these distinctions you would not and could not experience them, or even think about them. You experience and observe a body as an object, and similarly you experience and so "perceive" a mind. You assume this distinction of mind exists in others and so you see it occurring in their actions. You also apparently make a distinction you call "spirit" but, since this isn't universally shared in our culture the way body and mind are, I can't say what that distinction is for you. But let me say something in a direction that may be useful.

Cheng Hsin as a religious organization, relative to our culture, is really more of a legal distinction than a practical one. As a religion we would be considered considerably outside the box of what passes as religion in most cases. Our goal is to directly experience what's true and what's absolutely true, rather than to adopt beliefs about anything. Although this is applicable to a religious context, it's unusual within in our culture. The inventions that are generally created as religious organizations are almost always based on beliefs , such as believing in certain claims about the universe. Cheng Hsin, on the other hand, is founded on the principle of not taking things on faith, and not relying on hearsay or beliefs. We work to go

beyond believing and instead discover for ourselves what is actually true.

So what is spirit? Our first goal here would be to work out what you're actually talking about. Since I can't dialogue with you about it right now I'll just have to make something up. For example, it might be that there is no such thing as "spirit." If that's true, what would you do now? It would then be recognized as merely an idea or concept or some such, and so you'd have to experience that that is what it is. Or maybe it's a concept of something that exists but is hard to grasp. If that turns out to be the case your goal would be to grasp whatever that is. This will lead to some insights or breakthroughs about the nature of this matter, and that in turn would change your relationship to and your concepts about it. And on it would go. Everything is based on what is discovered as true, and each discovery or insight arrives as a conscious experience.

When I use the word spirit, it most often describes a disposition or attitude: "a spirit of honesty," or "a spirit of open inquiry," both of which are necessary for gaining real insight. In the way it sounds like you use it — as a distinction within the self, or an aspect of one's self — the term spirit is much too ambiguous to be useful. Instead, I speak of Consciousness. I capitalized the word consciousness to indicate that what I'm referring to isn't found in the commonly shared ways we use that word, and yet is still somehow connected to what we call and experience as consciousness.

In Cheng Hsin, consciously experiencing what's true is the goal, and beliefs are, more often than not, barriers to this goal. My "direct experiences" about the nature of Consciousness

— which in themselves are impossible to convey — provide a very different relationship to the human condition, as well as the nature of reality. Yet, although I try to communicate about this matter, and invite others to consider beyond their given assumptions, I don't ask anyone to believe anything I say about it. I invite them to discover for themselves whatever is true.

What else is true is that no matter what I assert in this domain, it will be misunderstood because it can only be "understood" through one's own direct conscious experience. So asking someone to believe in something I say about it would be ridiculous, since they'd be believing in something that is not "it." It would be like asking someone to believe in god, and yet, shy of becoming directly conscious of god, what would they believe in? It would be some idea that is made up to fill the space of not knowing what god is or is really about. What does that have to do with the reality or lack of reality of the matter referred to as god? See how this works?

In any case, this gives you an idea of what Cheng Hsin is about. Sorry to be so abstract and speaking in such a way that can be hard to follow. You opened the door for such speaking, however, since you were admittedly vague about your subject matter. I hope this provides at least a beginning to a direction in which to proceed. If you continue with your exposure to and study of this work it will unfold rather rapidly, and one insight will lead to another. Consider participating in the consciousness workshops, which offer a far more grounded and interactive encounter of the work.

Peter

~~~~~  
Sam Rutherford  
Canberra, Australia  
~~~~~

Peter,

Along the same lines as my question about commitment, can you please give me an idea of what you mean by 'integrity'? I have this: (admittedly dictionary definition but I don't have an Oxford or Macquarie dictionary to hand):

In·teg·ri·ty:

1. adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.
2. the state of being whole, entire, or undiminished: to preserve the integrity of the empire.
3. a sound, unimpaired, or perfect condition: the integrity of a ship's hull.

The 'adherence to moral or ethical principles' bit doesn't mean much to me. Is it essentially about keeping one's word? There doesn't seem to be a verb for 'integrity'... how do I 'do' it? Is it the same as 'authenticity'?

Sam,

You ask three questions, two too many to answer at once, so I'm going to divide them up into separate parts and respond to each on their own.

First, about integrity. The dictionary's contributions are just fine. Numbers 2 and 3 provide the foundation. It means to be without break or discrepancy, to be whole and unified; and as stated, this means the object or organization is sound and bound together in a unified or homogeneous way. What this

provides is a stronger substance or union, and this adds clarity and power to the thing. Something with integrity is what it appears to be; it works as it was intended to work.

When a ship's hull or a porcelain vase is cracked or broken, even if repaired, it never has the same strength and is more easily broken apart. It lacks integrity. The sword that is melted down, folded, and pounded out repeatedly, is a much stronger sword since the molecules of the metals used become homogeneous and evenly bound and so suffer no breaks or flaws. The sword becomes very hard to break and also more flexible. This is integrity. You can see that if a chunk of wood fell into the mix, the sword would easily break at that place since it would be broken up and inconsistent within its own structure, and so lack integrity.

When we apply this principle to a person's word or behavior it is the same. If one's word — which is a "speech act" and so is action charged to represent intent and commitment, commonly called a promise — is broken, meaning the promised action is not taken, there is a lack of integrity. This lack is the same, metaphorically, as the sword, and the consequences are the same. When your actions don't match your word, there is a crack or separation in your "self" manifestation, you will lack cohesiveness in your relationship with others and in your relationship to yourself. You can't be trusted, much like a ship with a cracked hull can't be trusted to perform as was intended or promised. This discrepancy between your words and actions will become known as an aspect of your character — what becomes perceived as 'true' of a person through repeated behavior patterns — and so people (including

yourself) will relate to you in a manner consistent with this condition. As a consequence you will lack clarity and personal power.

One thing to pay close attention to is that this consequence won't just be in your relation to others. You will experience this as an aspect of your self. You will identify yourself as someone who can't be trusted and whose word is worthless. Since your word doesn't show up in your actions, what you say obviously doesn't represent your internal state or intent. This will create a "fragmented" experience within your self-sense, as well as your relation to others.

On the other hand, the more you keep your word, to others and to yourself, the more you can trust in what you create as your word and the more power you'll have. Instead of fragmentation, you have integrity. You can see how this relates to honesty and an adherence to moral and ethical principles. What those principles might be is up for grabs, but that you have integrity in relationship to them is not.

Peter

~~~~~  
Sam Rutherford  
Canberra, Australia  
~~~~~

2. I just tried one of the contemplations that you talk about in NK, about getting to the source of a particular emotion or behaviour. The behaviour in question is a chronic level of procrastination, especially over university work but also other odd things like paying bills and doing other tasks that are simple but have pretty serious negative consequences if they're not done. It went something like this:

I have this huge resistance to studying for my International Law exam (that's just the immediate example). I just want to go and get drunk and smoke, or even do the dishes, anything except sitting down and studying. Why?

I felt like I had a brick sitting in my chest — this concrete block of 'don't want to.' After I'd sat with that for a while I got that I procrastinated over doing things because I wanted, actually wanted, something bad to happen. Odd. Why do I want something bad to happen? I realized that I didn't want to appear competent and capable. Why would that be? I didn't want to appear competent and capable because if I did, people wouldn't care about me any more, or be interested in me. Why would I believe that? Then it came to me that if I was competent and capable, there would be nothing wrong with me. And, here's the crunch, if there is nothing wrong with me I'm not real, not human. On some level I believe that I am only real if there's something wrong with me. But I got stuck there — I'm having trouble letting go of that. Why would I believe that I'm only real if I'm defective somehow? Because if there's nothing wrong with me then there's no reason to BE, nothing to struggle with and angst over. I'm still sitting with that. I guess having a fundamentalist Christian upbringing it's not so surprising that it would be a deeply ingrained assumption.

What worries me is my lack of trust about some of these things. They seemed real, and arose naturally, and have had an impact on my behaviour already, but there's still some bit of me going 'how do you know it's real?' Does that mean it's not? Is insight always unquestionable?

Sam,

You are doing what we call a “bottom line” contemplation. And it sounds like you are doing just fine. You haven’t reached the root bottom yet, but you’ve made good progress. As you indicate, regardless of what you discover as true, when you unearth some aspect of your unrecognized experience, it doesn’t have to sound logical or reasonable, nor does it have to adhere to cultural norms. It is the foundation for your feelings and behavior in some matter, and that’s just what’s there, what is programmed in. It is not what “should” be there, or what you logically think will be there. So it’s best not to contemplate from that point of view.

You’ve uncovered quite a bit, especially if this is all experienced rather than just thought. And you’ve noticed some assumptions that are the foundation for your perceptive-experience and interpretation of things. One of the hardest things to grasp is that the bottom of this matter — the foundation program or conviction that operates as a “principle” for your reactive behavior in relation to certain stimuli — is always and only about YOU. It is what you think is really true of you and of you in relation to others and life. I think you’re close, but something hasn’t fully clicked yet.

An area to look further might be in your relationship to “real.” You bring it up twice. First, you confront a sense that somehow you may not be real if you’re not defective, but then you draw conclusions about it, which takes you down another road. These conclusions may or may not be correct. You need to go back to the place in you that drives you, and continue to open up to it: what is it really? Try not to jump ahead with conclusions. Instead, find out

what’s true experientially. The other time you bring up reality is in not trusting your discoveries and conclusions. One reason you may not trust them is that, like I said, you’ve confused some conclusions with what you experienced. In any case, it seems you have some issue with “real.” It is worth more contemplation.

Questioning serves to lead us to the truth. It is always appropriate. The truth is what is. Directly experiencing this, no question needs to be asked. If there is a question then something is still unknown, isn’t it? And there is always something still unknown. The goal is to be conscious of what’s true; the goal isn’t to be certain about some conclusion or other.

Peter

~~~~~  
Sam Rutherford  
Canberra, Australia  
~~~~~

3. Is there value in practicing self-denial even if I'm not clear about the base-level motivation for why I'm doing whatever it is that I want to not be doing? I'm saying this mindful of your comments in NK about beginning something like a “noble war against the self” which can only lead to a loss/win for the self, rather than any other kind of increase in consciousness. For example, I smoke cigarettes and wish I didn't. I'm obviously not clear about exactly what it is that causes me to do it because I find it very difficult to stop. Is there value in doing it the hard way and beating myself into quitting — which has (historically) led to multiple failures but not to say it couldn't work at some time... I'm just using this as an example, I could find plenty more! Can forcing yourself into acting in a

particular way (with the self kicking and screaming the whole way) lead to a breakthrough? Is it worth the effort?

My apologies this message is much longer than I intended - let me know if it's too long and I'll try and crop more in future.

Regards,
Sam

Sam,

Yes — to all these questions. If you want to stop smoking, stop smoking. Period. You smoke because you are addicted and because you are neurotic in some way and the drug and smoking action seems to help pacify your inner turmoil. Thus the motivation to smoke. The action is the action. Stop it. Once you stop the action, the force of the drive to do it will increase and this helps you become clearer on what it is and how powerful it is. Yet even if you stop the action, you will still have the motivation. If you don't want to be driven by this motivation, don't be. If you want the impulse that drive you to stop, then get to the bottom of it and give it up. Giving up the action is a very good first step, since then the impulse isn't mollified with some drug or behavior which manipulates your experience so that you aren't driven so much for a time. Refusing to yield to the temptation to act on something pushes your face — if you are courageous enough to look — right into the uncognized internal condition that presses you into that reaction, and this is the best way to contemplate it, get what it really is, and transcend it.

Peter

~~~~~  
Tommaso Rossi  
Mosta, Malta  
~~~~~

Peter,

Basically I was wondering about motivation — in the context of my pursuit for more discipline and also regarding reaching objectives in life. It is clear that one of the problems that I have in reaching objectives is the lack of commitment. I face the hard part of the trip, and I stop. By the way, is commitment a synonym of discipline, even though discipline seems composed of more than commitment?

The problem seems to be motivation — the motivation to embark on the trip, or simply motivation to put more awareness in what I do, motivation to decide to live in a more disciplined way. First of all: am I right to consider that motivation must be at the beginning of a (spiritual) journey? That it is necessary to have a motivation in order to commit to something?

Often I discard my motivations because I consider them too stupid or too egocentric. For example, my motivation to do push-ups every morning would be to become stronger and have a better body, and all the narcissism that comes with it, like be more attractive with girls, etc.. Or also: my motivation to meditate every day would be to reach some kind of idealization (to become "enlightened"). Are there "good motivations" and "bad motivations"? Are there motivations that are better than others?

Also, when I decide to make a commitment or embark on a journey (and can you embark on a journey without some amount of commitment?) it would be better if I was clear about my motivations to do so, right..?

You see, sometimes it seems like I'm just pursuing some illusion or idealization... the

idea of getting better, etc. Then the best discipline must be to be present in the moment ... as long as I don't idealize that too.

Thank you,
Tommaso

Tommaso,

Of course my response to Sam above relates to your question. But let's air out a few things. Discipline is taking on something that doesn't naturally befall you. In other words, any time you want something to occur that doesn't arise from what you're already motivated to do through your programming — be it losing weight, contemplating, pursuing some path or taking up some practice —then you need discipline. Discipline then is simply taking on something different from what's habitually created by your programmed whims and fears, distractions and impulses, reactions and desires. As we've heard, those motivating impulses occur to serve what is already identified as one's self, so those activities seem to come naturally. For something to occur that does not arise from what's already running the show requires discipline. Taking it on or making it happen is commitment.

Commitment is simply giving your self over to pursue some action or result or process, period. There is a relationship between promising to do something and commitment. This is true whether you give your word to another or to yourself. Once you've promised some action then you are bound to the action that you promised. That's what a promise is!

People often don't want to be bound by their word because it means they must forego any behavior that is inconsistent with what they've

promised. This includes behavior that may arise from one's self agenda. Those whims, desires, or fears that continually push you or tempt you toward inconsistent behavior cannot be acted upon. You don't get everything you want, and you may have to confront some things you don't want. Such situations can easily arise when you give your word. Yet this is what being committed is all about, including being committed to keeping your word. Commitment is devoting your life energies, your beingness, to making something happen.

Given that's the case, you often have to choose one act over another, because some acts are inconsistent with what it is you're trying to bring about. But, remember, you don't have to give your word, nor do you have to commit to something. You should know what it is and what it requires, and give your word accordingly. If you do, then keep it. Otherwise, don't give it. It's that simple.

If you don't give your word, then, in this context, you don't get those things that only discipline or commitment can provide. What you do get is to answer to all the minor whims you may desire. Whether these whims provide what you want or not is up for grabs. Yet, even if they do, it is always temporary. Committing to something "larger" than yourself, however, actually tends to dissolve most of your life problems and dissatisfaction. It makes your life about something greater than pursuing all the little ups and downs of a self agenda.

In your own case, you can witness that your failure to commit creates massive dissatisfaction. You obviously can't take a stand, and when you do, you fail to keep at it. You do get to do what you want when you want, but

you are endlessly bound to the force of a self-agenda and its limitations and whims, without really knowing what that is all about. So your commitment is solely to your self. Note that it's not actually a commitment to your being — which remains unknown to you — but to something adopted to serve survival. Living life in relation to excuses, second guessing, and confusion is not a recipe for satisfaction. Committing to something that you consider worthwhile and then sticking to it, even if you change your mind later on or you find it difficult, will create far more satisfaction in your life, regardless what it is you commit to.

Do you need motivation to commit? No, actually you don't. Most people think they do, however, since they can't imagine committing to something unless they strongly desire to get something from doing so. This makes sense. But you don't actually need motivation, you simply have to do it. You could just commit to something without any internal impulse to motivate you. The internal impulse — such as desire, fear, greed, guilt, shame, lust, and so forth — that motivates you toward some end, is something that relates to your self identity and self image. That's why it motivates you. But you can create something just to create something without any such motivation. You could commit to wearing a green shirt every day for a week. Or you can commit to something just because you think it is worthy, independent of what it might do for you personally.

Because motivations related to a self agenda rely on identity and programming, the question of better or worse is irrelevant. Your program already classifies and evaluates what is good and bad and so what is better or worse for you.

If you try to create something outside of your set agenda, then you will probably come up with some idea of a better way to go, something to accomplish. And this is likely to be an ideal and so a concept, and this concept will relate to your programmed interpretations of reality. But what else can you do? Either you work to create something that's not already given or adopted, or you follow your impulses.

When you try to create a new direction for yourself, you are likely to go through many challenges and to proceed in stages. Your first attempts, although well-meaning, will be limited to what you already know and can envision. This is all right since you have to start somewhere. As you grow and progress towards this goal, you will need to become increasingly conscious of what stands in your way so that you can get past it and proceed. In turn, getting free of the programs and assumptions that stand in your way will allow you new insights and you will realize that your goal isn't actually what you want or need. When this happens you will need to change your "idealization" — how you picture or imagine what your goal should look like — to something more accurate and aligned with what's true, as best you can ascertain what that is at the time. This will go on as you continue to grow and become more conscious, until at some point you can give up your ideal completely and replace it with new goals that are consistent with your real and created commitment — for example, real personal transformation.

This process needs commitment and discipline. And you can't let doubts or second guessing stand in your way. You have to clarify for yourself what you want to really be up to and undertake it soberly. In simple, I'd say, do the

best you can, and as you grow do better.

Hope this helps in some way.
Peter

~~~~~  
Robert Ludden  
Chatsworth, CA  
~~~~~

Dear Mr. Ralston,

I'm going through your book on the power of Unknowing, for the second time. I am particularly interested in the chapter on pain management. I think I have made it work A BIT, but before I go further, I am wondering about a couple of things. I seem to be only scratching the surface. Since I am now an older man, I do have different pains cropping up from time-to-time but I need further guidance.

- 1. Have you been able to apply it in other pain situations beyond visits to the dentist?
- 2. Why does it seem to "work" at one moment, and fail the next?
- 3. When testing it, is it possible to "turn it off for a moment" and then return to a painless state again the next?

If you could comment on these for me, and perhaps include some further advice beyond "refusing to manufacture pain" when it is experienced, I would certainly appreciate it. I am enjoying and appreciating your thoughts so very much, and will certainly read more.

Thank you, sir!
Yours in peace,
R. Dean Ludden

Robert,

Of course it is applicable to other situations besides the dentist — it is applicable to every situation. Pain is always available and in many, many different forms. It is at the heart of all suffering.

You are looking in the wrong place, caught in the understandable desire and so loop to eliminate pain. But this is the very activity that creates pain to begin with. When you think of it as a "technique" to avoid pain and feel better, it is a minor accomplishment and simply a part of the same pursuit you are already in with self survival, just with an added piece of knowledge or a new skill.

As such, any skill has to be applied. It doesn't arise on its own since it springs from the domain of knowledge and will. Pain though seems to arise on its own since it is simply answering to the dynamics already set in motion through the fundamentals of self survival. If you still "need" pain, meaning if the self still needs to be a self and attached to all that you identify with, then you will continue to create pain. This is why it seems like pain simply arises, as does every other reaction and interpretation.

Why do you need to know a flower is a flower, or that the light switch turns on a light? You certainly don't want to do away with these interpretations — it wouldn't even occur to you to do so, would it? Because you need such interpretations to manage life and know what's around you so that you can relate to it properly. Just so with pain. Reactions such as pain and pleasure are "doing" something with what's interpreted. Just as you want to know, you also

want to manage what you know so that you relate and act consistent with your self needs. This is the function of pain and pleasure.

I know this is all hard to grasp experientially. Try not to relate to pain via a technique to eliminate it. Work hard to understand the nature of pain and why it exists. When you become deeply and experientially conscious of what pain is, then you'll have a better idea of how to relate to it. As long as you identify with a self — and undoubtedly you will continue to create that reality — you will experience pain and suffering, just as you experience pleasure and joy. They go together. Yet you can change your relationship to all of this, and you can eliminate a lot of pain which is just a confusion and unnecessary. But I go into this a bunch in my book, and you'll likely hear it better in your next read.

So, beyond becoming more conscious about what's what, I'm afraid my advice is the same: either refuse to manufacture it, or enjoy it.

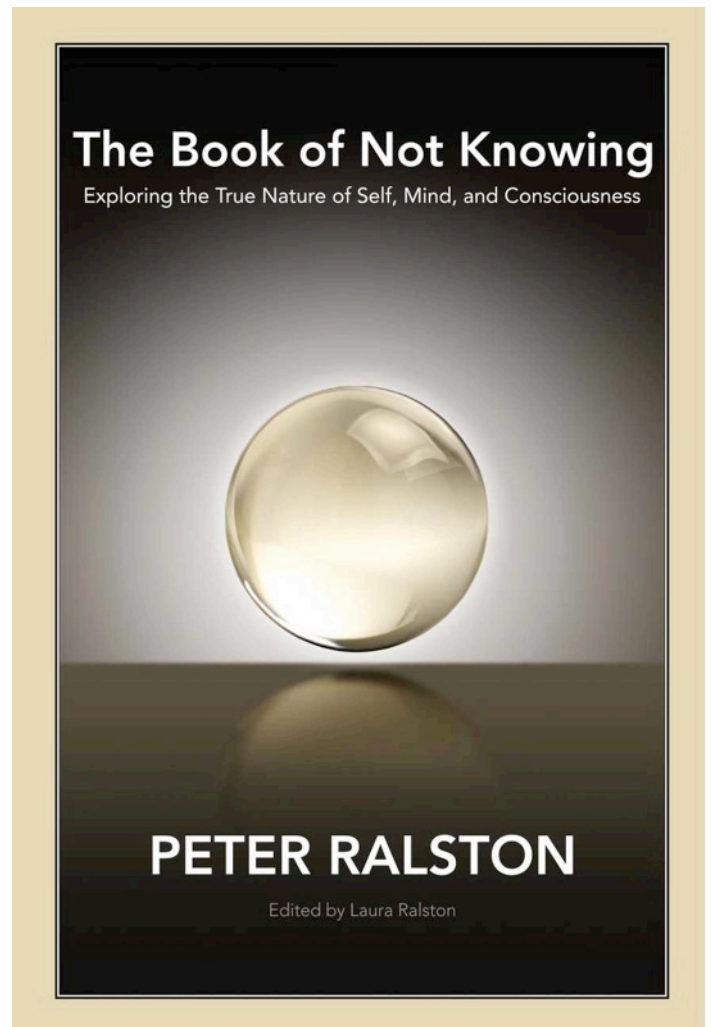
Peter

NOTE TO READERS:

I understand that my responses to the questions up until now may have been challenging to understand, especially if you have no deep background in this work. The following questions and responses, however, are even harder to grasp. Without certain understandings they can be almost impossible. Metaphorically, it is like trying to understand quantum physics without any background in physics. Even with a physics background it is hard

enough, but without it, it will sound like gibberish. I don't mean to be heard as gibberish. I strive to make my responses as understandable as possible, but rarely not without consideration and contemplation. Yet when these questions are asked I need to respond to the question as best I can.

If you would like to understand these things better I recommend doing or reviewing the ENB workshop (Experiencing the Nature of Being) to get a stronger foothold, and increase your depth of consciousness on the nature of yourself, experience, perception, reality, and Being.



~~~~~  
Sarah Budde  
Port Orchard, WA  
~~~~~

Hi,

My name is Sarah Budde. I've been reading your books and they have been helping me on my journey. I started out only interested in the effortless power books to help me with my T'ai Chi studies. But then my teacher recommended your Not Knowing book and you talk a lot about mind work in the other books, so I started reading it too. I'm just about through it for the first time. I'm sure I'll have to read it several times to get even a fraction of it.

I just finished reading about distinctions. I thought we would further go into this subject but now the book has moved on to something else and I am left wondering what you meant by freedom. I feel I understand the first part of the phrase, power and ability come from distinctions, but I fail to understand what you mean by freedom comes from ridding myself of distinctions. I got a little excited with the first part about distinctions and power and ability because it helped me to see why sometimes my form is pretty good and sometimes not so good yet I think I'm doing it the same way. I fail to make those small distinctions in position, balance, breath... and I could see where being really good at making fine/subtle distinctions could really help a person not only with the physical world but with the social world as well. But the freedom part is throwing me for a loop. I'm not clear on what kind of freedom you are talking about.

I have pondered the ignorance is bliss kind of freedom...but I fail to see how that would necessarily be a good thing. My teacher and I talked a little on it last night but I'm not sure we were on the same page. His take was

that once I learned the principles and could abide by them, then I could transcend the form and be free to do what I wanted. We were talking in terms of T'ai Chi but I'm thinking the Not Knowing book is talking of something more, more about life in general. I'm curious to know the definition of freedom or context you are using in regards to distinctions.

Do you have any plans to visit the Pacific Northwest (Seattle area) anytime soon?

Sincerely,
Sarah

Sarah,

Ignorance is ignorance. If you don't know of something that might be disturbing to you, then of course you aren't disturbed by it. But this isn't freedom at all. You are just as bound as when you know of it, you're simply not affected by it.

You're right, the attempted interpretations your teacher came up with may be useful in terms of that limited scope, but are shy of the mark in this case. Here we are talking about the nature of what you experience, and so the nature of what you perceive as reality. Without making a distinction within your perceptive-experience you cannot perceive or "know" anything, since what you experience is that distinction.

What I just said won't clear up anything because you have to grasp the nature of distinction in order to understand the sentence. The problem is that you are trying to grasp this within the framework of reality that is the context for your experience at present. In other words, you think reality is what you think it is. This doesn't allow you to grasp what I'm talking about, since what I'm talking about

can't be found within that framework. You need to have some "nothing from which to come." You need to be able to see beyond any assumptions that you and our culture have about the nature of reality and experience. Only then could you consider distinction in a whole new way.

But let's consider your concern about freedom. Freedom doesn't mean the absence of what you don't want — which is often an ill use of that word. In simple, freedom means that you can have "it" or not have "it" in any moment. "It" can be anything you experience — a feeling, a thought, an object, a situation, a condition, or what have you. This means that whatever it is — and "it" will be a distinction no matter what it is — you are free in relation to it. It both exists and doesn't exist. It is not necessary or meaningful except in the context in which you hold that it is.

When you can destroy distinctions, you don't have to hold "reality" in any way at all, and so you are free of any influence that anything might have on you. At the same time, you can create it as easily as not create it. This is freedom.

Power, reality, experience, existence, ability, etc., lie (or come to exist) through making distinctions. Freedom exists in knowing what "existence" really is, and so knowing what distinctions really are, and therefore being able to not create (or "un-create") any and all distinctions. Destroying a distinction means letting it be and letting it go, or realizing its true nature and so experiencing that it really doesn't exist already. Destroying a distinction means realizing that in essence you are already free.

But when you are bound to what amounts to an illusion, you are not free.

I don't know if this clarifies anything for you at all, but it might contribute to your contemplation. Remember, it's not useful to believe anything I've said. It is only useful to experientially understand it. These matters are very challenging to understand because you can only experience them directly. It can't be figured out through logic or found within any knowledge. Sorry about that.

Peter

~~~~~

Richard Allan  
Southampton, England

~~~~~

Hey Peter,

Hope this finds you well. I have been working through the Book of Not Knowing pretty damn slow. I'm still only halfway through it! 3:28 to 3:47 alone took about 2 or so months to get through effectively, and when I say get through, I mean get familiar with.

Most of what I'm finding recently is that my experience of my body is limited by my thinking. For example, that the central nervous system and cardiovascular systems are just that: separate systems, rather than one interacting system where the system that creates the beating, is the beating, feels the beating and then analyses and classifies the beating as systems, are just part of a wider unit. As I noticed these ideas frame-working my experience, I increased my ability to feel my heartbeat. Nothing profound, more an example of how the lines I have drawn between "this" and "that" which are totally arbitrary, and when removed, have led to a deeper experience.

The only questions I have, in the light of this, are:

These seemingly arbitrary lines between "feeler, feeling and felt", are there any actual lines at all? (I mean, I know if I run at a wall, I'll find a pretty definite one, but in outreaching, the fewer lines, the better the result seems. So how to extend this but not over-reach or possibly lose the center in the process?)

How to get to the actuality of this experience, when all I seem to do by removing these preconceived ideas is move to another slightly more subtle perspective which later becomes irrelevant itself? I know the mind likes "cooling the lava to rock" as you say, but can one ever get to the "core"?

How to know that what I have found/uncovered is the Truth of the matter? For example with a mind on interaction, how can one know that they have found the most effective way of interacting with this truth, and not just a *more* effective way?

I'm likely missing obvious points, and will look back at these questions myself after some more investigation and have a "face-to-palm moment." In fact I'm doing that already as I read back, but as much as anything, I thought I should get in contact with you, and it seemed foolish not to ask some current questions as I did.

Once again, hope all is good with you
Richard

Richard,

Good to hear from you. It can be challenging to avoid what could be called "second-guessing" everything while working to create openness. It is important to question all assumptions, and stare into the open face of the truth regardless whether it fits into any reasonableness or

familiarity. One way some people go about this, however, is to ask "doubting" questions, using extrapolation as their method of consideration. This gets them into trouble. Although it's fine to do this now and again just to see where it takes you, you need to grasp that an extrapolation isn't an experience. It is a thought that goes something like: 'Well, if I keep going in this direction where will I end up?' This might be a thought to have, but it's not an experience of the truth.

In the old days, during the Pleiades — a two week ontology workshop — I had a few "rules" in the form of repeated sayings. One was: "No extrapolation," which points to the fact that you can't base experiential consciousness on concept, and extrapolation is always conceptual. If you have an insight about something and then say, "If this is true then such and such must be true . . ." or "If this is true and I follow it out logically, I reach such and such a conclusion . . ." then you are not experiencing what's true, you are imagining what might be true.

For example, you said you removed some arbitrarily created "lines" and you had a new experience; from this you considered that there may not be any lines at all, and wondered what that might be like. You could have also come up with: "If I removed all lines, I would experience a universal absolute." But you see, these are both extrapolations, although one is a question and the other a conclusion. As you proceeded, you seemed bent on continuing in this vein. You're asking questions about things you haven't experienced but imagine you might, and worrying about problems you might run into given that things unfold in the way you suspect they might.

In the end this is a fruitless activity, since you don't know. There is no use drawing a conclusion or worrying about an imagined possibility, since the truth of the matter may well be different than whatever you can imagine at present. Like I used to say in the Pleiades: "Don't extrapolate. If you think something is true, then go there and experience the truth for yourself. Otherwise it is merely an intellectual exercise and doesn't count. Don't imagine what's true, experience what's true." Do you see how this applies to your questions?

About the lines. The question you should be asking is: "What are the lines?" There is no need to ask: "Do the lines exist?" Since, once you know what they are, you will know if they exist and how they exist. We're really talking about distinctions here, and this is a wide open field, since everything is a distinction. And the framework or context in which you are making those distinctions — in this case, the distinction of "lines" — determines what that distinction is, and so how you will experience it. Once you get this, you see that changing your "view" on the matter will then change what you experience. This changes what you will ask and how you ask it.

Once again, don't know if I've helped much, but perhaps some food for thought.
Good luck.
Peter



~~~~~  
Charles Welborn  
Ft. Collins, CO  
~~~~~

Hi Peter,

Are complete awareness and complete consciousness the same thing?

Thanks,
Charles

Charles,

No, not at all. People confuse awareness — which is dependent on "experience" or perception — with consciousness, because very few of us grasp the nature of consciousness. They also use cognize, which is dependent on mind, interchangeably with "becoming conscious," and therefore confuse the word consciousness with cognition. This is to be expected since in our culture we don't make fine distinctions between these words. What's more, we completely misunderstand the true nature of Consciousness.

When we are aware, we are "conscious" of something in our experience, even if it is abstract or completely non-objective. We're aware of, say, an idea of being thrifty in much the same way as we're aware of the boss walking into the room. This is simply being or becoming aware of something. It is similar to recognizing and interpreting something within our experience which I call "cognition." Being conscious of these things means we "know" of them, identify them, and know them as something. This is really cognition or awareness — both of which exist within Consciousness.

Consciousness, on the other hand, is what's there, and at the same time doesn't exist in what's there. It is the foundation, space, and possibility for both awareness and cognition to occur. It is the "mother" of mind, intellect, intuition, perception, knowing. Consciousness both doesn't exist, and is existence. So do you see where I'm going with this, and the direction or distinction I'm making? Really grasping it can only be done directly, to be "one" with Consciousness, so to speak. And that's not common.

So to answer you question: no.
Peter

That's it for this Newsletter

Let your friends know about our website:
www.ChengHsin.com

Keep the e-mail questions and contributions coming! (when you write, please include your full name and location)

Until next time,
Peter Ralston



**Ralston on stage 6 months after World
Tournament at a demonstration in 1978**