

DR. TIMOTHY DUKES

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Awake or Free



The path of practice.



Being Free from Conditioning suggests that our life today is not completely a result of the life we lived yesterday. Conditioning, the interwoven patterns that preclude our ability to make new choice, is not a permanent state. By bringing awareness to what is in front of you, it is possible to find your own way of letting go of those patterns that are problematic. This freedom allows you to greet each moment as though the possibility for new life rests within the choices you make.

I think of the following story when I reflect on the conditioning of our minds, behaviors, and the burdens we carry that limit our freedom:

A young monk who was seeking “freedom” searched far and wide throughout all the countries in Asia. He traveled from India, to Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in search of the one who was free. In every country he would ask the villagers if they knew of this being that was free. Finally, near the end of his journey he heard of an old man who lived up on the mountain who might be the one he is looking for. So, with what energy he had left he started his trek up the slope. Nearly halfway up he noticed, as though by accident, an old man walking toward him with an enormous bundle slung over his shoulder. As he approached, the young monk asked,

“Excuse me but are you the enlightened one?”

The old man replied, “I don’t think so.”

“Then are you the one who is free, free of all suffering?” He queried.

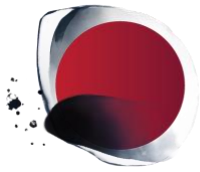
“No, I don’t believe that I am.”

“Then are you the Buddha?” he demanded.

“No,” replied the old man.

“Then what are you?” the young monk pleaded.

With this question the old man dropped his burden and replied; “I am awake.”



As the younger man stood watching, the old man picked up his enormous bundle and continued down the mountain.

— As remembered by Timothy Dukes, September 2004

Research

“When asked about the path of practice, Buddha explained that there are four ways for spiritual life to unfold:

The first way is quickly and with pleasure. In this, opening and letting go come naturally, like an easy birth, accompanied by joy and rapture.

The second is quickly but painfully. On this path we might face a powerful near-death experience, an accident, or the unbearable loss of someone we hold beloved. This path passes through a flaming gate to teach us about letting go.

The third form of spiritual progress is gradual and accompanied with pleasure. In this way opening and letting go happen over a period of years, predominantly with ease and delight.

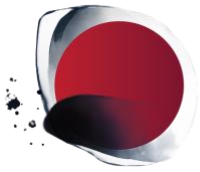
The fourth and most common path is also slow and gradual but takes place predominantly through suffering. Difficulty and struggle are a recurrent theme, and through them we gradually learn to awaken.”

“In this matter we do not choose. Our unfolding is a reflection of these patterns of our lives, which are sometimes described as ‘our fate’ or ‘our karma.’ No matter the apparent speed, we are simply asked to give ourselves to the process.” (Kornfield, 2000, p. 97)

Reference

Kornfield, J. (2000). *After the ecstasy, the laundry: How the heart grows wise on the spiritual path*. New York: Bantam.

Image Courtesy of: [Z @dead](#) artist



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The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today’s brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow’s wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.