What About You?

E
ding and ends with you. To be useful and relevant and worthy of your time, it has to begin with you.

There is a reason why you showed up here at my place today. You could be doing so many other things right now. You could be watching *Modern Family* on your TV, reading *Fifty Shades of Gray*, gambling futures on the stock exchange, feeding the homeless, or visiting your parents. You could be walking in nature, or water skiing, or bungee jumping, or knitting a wooly hat for a kitten. You could be on Facebook, posting, and liking and sharing pictures of kittens in your small wooly hats. You could be drinking, smoking, eating, dancing, or pole vaulting. But you are doing none of those things, are you? Be honest with me. You are not skydiving right now, or scuba diving, or giving a speech at the United Nations. You are here, giving your attention to the Open Secret. And there is a reason.

Before you got here, you probably read the invitation on our website or iBooks or Amazon. You read “… describes the ecstatic art of Awakening Coaching: how anyone can be a support to anyone else in discovering the Open Secret that is an infinite source of stillness, well-being, and creativity, and bringing it forth in every area of their life.” There was something about one or more of those words that made you want to explore this right now, more than bungee jumping while knitting small kitten hats. What was it?

Imagine for a moment that you are walking on a busy street in a small town you are visiting. You pass the travel agency and see posters in the window for Corfu, or Hawaii, or the Grand Canyon. You hardly notice, and you walk on
by. Then you pass the flower shop. Bright yellow tulips, flown in from Holland. Orchids. A dozen red roses, going for a deal. But they do not move you, and you walk on by. Then you pass the clothing store. “50% off—latest colors and fashions.” Sweaters, pants, hats, shoes. Yes, shoes! All kinds and colors and sizes of beautiful, sexy, sophisticated, and on-sale shoes. But again, you walk on by, hardly noticing.

And then you come to a restaurant. You can smell the aroma of the food wafting out onto the street. You hardly notice what kind of restaurant it is, you hardly glance at the menu once you get seated, and you eagerly order the first thing you see.

Why?

Why were the flower shop and the travel agent and the clothing store all uninteresting, but the restaurant drew you right in, with only a minimal glance at the menu? You already know the answer. It is because you were hungry, right? If you are hungry enough you do not even care about the decor, or the customer reviews on Yelp, or whether the salad was locally grown. If you are hungry enough, you just want to eat, and as quickly as possible.

There is also another kind of hunger. It is not a hunger for food, or a thirst for liquid, or even a desire for anything tangible at all. I like to call it by a different word, to make the distinction clear. I call it longing. In my language, desire is for something that you have already defined in your mind. “I want more money.” That is clear. Take some action, and maybe eventually you get the money. But there is still desire, for even more, or for something different. “I want to be in a relationship. I’m so lonely, I want to find the Right One.” In the same way, either you keep on desiring, from one dating site to another, or you find someone to be in relationship with. But almost always, after a few months, the desire changes. “I want my partner to be different, to be more caring, more available, more like
I wanted in the first place.” And then a little later another desire appears, “I want to be alone.”

*I want chocolate.*
*I want my free upgrade.*
*I want a BMW.*
*I want to be famous.*
*I want to be a rock star.*
*I want to be powerful.*
*I want to rule the whole world.*

All of these desires lead to more desires. But longing is different. It can be very, very strong, it can eclipse the interest for anything else in your life, but we do not necessarily know, clearly and logically, what the longing is for.

**The Longing for Home**

Let me tell you a little story.

Fred goes shopping at Costco. Just like everyone else, he shows his membership card, gets himself a shopping cart, and begins to wander among stacks of TVs, tools, clothes, food, and books. But then Fred is a little careless, and he runs his cart into a huge display of basketballs, each in its own box. The whole thing comes crashing down on top of Fred, and he is thrown to the floor. For a few moments our intrepid hero is knocked unconscious. People come to rescue him from under the pile, and he soon comes around, with a sore bump on the back of his head.

Fred is fine, except that he cannot remember where he is, who he is, what his name is, or what he is supposed to be doing in this strange place.
Fred sits up. He looks around. “What kind of place is this?” he asks himself. He
sees people, almost all of them in a hurry, pushing carts down aisles, looking to
the left and right, and taking things from the shelves.

“Batteries. I want more for me.”
“Five-pound bucket of guacamole. I want that for me.”
“Jeans. Give me five pairs. Five for me.”
“Shampoo. A gallon for me. More, more, more, I want more for me.”

Fred also sees other busy people, dressed in white coats, some driving forklifts,
putting more things onto the shelves.

“Where am I?” Fred asks himself, rubbing his head. “What is this place?” He
struggles to his feet; he steadies himself on his shopping cart. Fred wants to fit in,
so he also starts to walk down the aisles. Somewhat mechanically, he also starts
to take things from the shelves and put them in his cart. When in Rome, do as
the Romans do. But inside himself, there is a small voice. “I want to go home,”
the voice whispers. “I don’t really like this place so much. I don’t mind the TVs or
the food or the books or the clothes. It all looks very nice. And useful. But everyone is
in such a hurry. I want to go home.”

The problem for Fred is that he has lost his memory. He cannot remember where
home is, or what home is. He just knows that home is not this place. He has an
intuition, a memory in his cells, that home is peaceful, home is relaxed, home is
comfortable, home is familiar. He knows that at home he needs nothing, he is
missing nothing. At home his cart is always already full.

Gradually, Fred is taken over by this longing, this yearning for something that his
mind cannot remember or describe, but his heart cannot forget. It haunts him.
“I want to go home so much. I am tired. I want to rest where I belong. I want to go
home so badly, but I don’t remember the address, the street, even the area of town.”
Fred is deeply, painfully homesick.
Is there anything about that story that feels familiar to you? Do you ever feel this same way, living here on planet Earth? Just like Fred? Do you sometimes step back and look at everyone rushing into their future, that same rush in which you get caught as well, and feel homesick, even though you may not consciously remember home at all? Once it takes hold of you, this longing can be confusing and disorienting. It will not let you alone; it will no longer allow you to get fully immersed in the feeding frenzy. Yet at the same time it is vague, it is undefined.

It is this feeling of vague longing that leads Fred to Aisle 387, where they keep the self-help books and CDs, the DVDs, and the tickets for seminars and retreats. Because Fred feels such a deep longing, and because he has lost his memory and cannot remember his home, he feels very attracted to all of this merchandise. He loads up his cart with many things. Fred may find a teacher, or a teaching, or even several that appeal to him. He may discover maps and concepts about where home is, and how to get there. He may join groups, and learn a new vocabulary and way of behaving. He may find fellow travelers on the path home. Fred may create a brand new identity as a “seeker,” and start to feel more comfortable with others who feel the same way.

But even after all this, Fred discovers that the feeling of longing still remains. It may become dampened by these theories, and maps, and fellow travelers. Fred may start to feel more at ease. But still the longing for home is there.

Have you also been shopping on Aisle 387? Have you found maps to follow; concepts about your peak potential, about “Enlightenment” and ultimate reality? Have you ever fallen in love with a charismatic teacher? Have you sometimes found a group to be part of, and belong to? And have you also found that all of those things may leave the longing for home just as strong, in the innermost part of you?
Follow the Longing

There have always been a few people, in every culture, in every age, who followed this longing back into themselves with enough passion that they found their way home. They found the Open Secret beyond the mind, beyond the endless procession of thoughts and feelings, beyond the automatic machinery of desire. These people became the peak of what we see as possible for a human being. Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu, Thomas Jefferson, Albert Einstein, William Blake, Michelangelo … Britney Spears (just checking if you are paying attention). Today there are millions of people who have tapped into the Open Secret that makes everything sparkle. They may have found it only in snapshots, or they may have found it in more sustained ways. I have interviewed hundreds of people who have shifted their consciousness in this way, and who are now leading creative lives, overflowing with contribution, making a huge difference to the world. Here is the single most important thing I can tell you about these people:

Many of them had a teacher, or even many teachers, at one time or another. Many did not. Some were part of a group, read books, and went on retreats. Many did not. Some were vegetarian, or did yoga or meditation. And many did not. Some wore Birkenstocks, ate granola, and got Om tattoos. Most did not. What every single one had in common, without exception, was that they found a way to follow their natural longing. Getting in touch with this longing, and following it home, is the single key that works every time. It may lead you to peaks of worldly triumph, it may lead you through valleys of grief and despair, but it will always bring you all the way to the Open Secret that is your true home.

Did the restaurant give you the hunger? Of course not. The hunger was already there. It was in you before the restaurant appeared, and it was the hunger that
made the restaurant interesting. The hunger is yours; it comes from you. It is not learned, or imitated, or conditioned.

It is very, very important to see this. To claim this. To own this. It is the difference between being a walk-on extra in someone else’s movie and being the star of your own adventure.

The feeling of “I want to go home” was not given to you by any teacher or teaching. You did not get it from any book or CD, and you did not learn it from any seminar. It is yours. It was this longing, already alive within you, that made all of these things attractive. It is because of this longing, whether it is a flicker or a fireworks display, that you are interested in what I may have to say to you today.

Now, truthfully, not everyone on the planet has this sense of longing alive in them for the Open Secret. Many human beings are not really interested in this longing at all. It has been too deeply buried. Their primary interest is in accumulating money, driving the fastest car, having more power, and more sex, with more people, in more unusual positions. There is nothing wrong with any of those things. We can all live this life however we want to. But once the longing takes hold, it becomes important to attend to it carefully. It demands that from us.

I have been guiding people into the rediscovery of this Open Secret since 1991. I have worked with hundreds of people individually, and tens of thousands of people in seminars and groups. I have trained more than 1,300 people in how to become facilitators of the Open Secret themselves. In every case, for any of this to have any real impact, we have to awaken this longing, and give it expression. If we approach it in this way, then this conversation is serving you, and you do not need to serve or follow anything outside yourself.
Try it for Yourself

So let us start here. Please put everything aside for just a few minutes and ask yourself this vitally important question:

*What is my deepest longing?*

Don’t think about it too much. Write the question at the top of a piece of paper, and then just let rip. Write as many answers as come to you spontaneously in five minutes, and then let us pick up again.

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All done? Great. I would be interested to hear what your answers were. You can type them in the readers’ website we have created for you. I have asked this question of thousands of people from all over the world. I ask it at the beginning of every session with every new coaching client. I ask it at the start of every weekend seminar, from Maui to Munich to Memphis. And I ask this question of everyone at the start of every course to train new Awakening Coaches. This question is the beginning of Awakening Coaching.

It is a different question from “What do you want?” See the difference? “What is your desire?” asks: as you have been walking down the aisles with your shopping cart, what are the things you have been taking from the shelves? “What is your deepest longing?” asks: what is that deeper whisper that is not wanting any thing at all, but that reminds you of the sense of home?

Here are the most frequent answers I hear from people. Please check them out and compare them with your own.

My Deepest Longing is for:

Peace.
Stillness.
Freedom from the mind.
Finding my unique gift.
Love without fear.
An end to worrying.
Opening my heart.
Doing boldly what I came here for.
Belonging.
Loving deeply.

3 http://better-than-sex.kajabi.com/groups/9765
Let me Serve You

In this book I am going to show you how to bring this longing alive, and how to follow it all the way home to the Open Secret that is your true nature. I am going to show you ways to live your day-to-day life in a way that honors the Open Secret. And, if you are interested, I am going to show you how you can become a support to anyone else to do the same.

I am not a teacher, or a guru, or a philosopher. I am not here to deliver a teaching, or give you anything, or tell you what you should do with your life. I do not represent any group or tradition. I am here in service to the hunger, to the longing, that is already in you. You have the longing. You have the hunger. I have a small restaurant. Nothing fancy. Just some rice, some vegetables, maybe a little chicken, some fish. A very simple restaurant. If you come with your hunger, I can honor it. That is my job. I am an Awakening Coach, and I train other people to become Awakening Coaches, too.

I want to talk with you now about what that means, and why these words are important. What is awakening? What is coaching? And what happens when you bring these words together? The best way to answer this question is for you to meet some of my friends here at the party. So c’mon down now, follow me to the basement, and I’ll introduce you to some very interesting people.