

# Enlightenment Traps

## How To Not Get Enlightened

by Robert Sniadach

What is enlightenment?

Can't really say what it is, only what it is like. And what it is not. One can describe the effects, the feeling of it, the daily reality of living it.

Enlightenment:

- The Light coming on; darkness gone.
- Direct knowing occurs; ignorance gone.
- Simple awareness exists; illusion gone.
- Unbroken wholeness is; separateness gone.
- A profound experience of having awakened, as if you have been sleeping all along and didn't know it. This new consciousness state does continue to evolve in its own way, but it does not disappear; it is not temporary.
- All sense of, and desire for continued seeking completely disappears. All questioning stops.
- A million free side-effects, such as inability to worry, inability to attach importance to anything, no concern about results or goals, continual present moment awareness and activity, zero regret about the past and no concern about the future, profound relaxation of the body, greatly improved well being, automatic ease with anyone at any time, and many more.

Who or what can give you enlightenment? What must I do to get it?

There is no one and no thing, no practice and no knowledge that will give it to you.

And yet, pretty much everyone seeking it is trying to get it though some one or some thing or some practice. And the failure rate is 100%.

For example, what are some approaches that do *not* deliver enlightenment?

### **Meditation does not produce enlightenment.**

Meditating for hours every day does not bring you closer to enlightenment. No matter which style of meditation you practice or how much you practice it, it will not produce enlightenment. Meditation is an excellent practice to relax your body, balance your breathing and calm your mind, at least a little bit. Marathon meditations may produce captivating altered states of consciousness and strange sensations in your body. These may be pleasant or painful, profound or just weird. All these experiences come and they go, which should immediately tell you something very important to your quest.

All of these things are fascinating to experience. But they have nothing to do with enlightenment and do not bring one any closer to it. At best meditation improves your overall health and well being to some degree, and that is a good thing. However, from the getting-enlightened point of view, meditation keeps you idling in place, if not actively taking you further from it.

## **Chanting does not produce enlightenment.**

Toning, chanting, devotional singing, repeating a mantra, drumming or speaking in tongues does not produce enlightenment, or move you closer to it. They only take you further from it.

These practices are lots of fun! They can produce sublime states of consciousness and even more strange and delightful sensations in your body. You can have feelings of being tuned in to a bigger flow of life, feelings of connection and rhythmic unity with All That Is. You get into the Groove and it is a blast. Use these practices for having fun and for seeking out cool altered states of consciousness. But don't fool yourself into believing that they are transporting you to enlightenment.

## **Religious practice does not produce enlightenment.**

Dozens, maybe hundreds of religious belief systems are on display for the avid shopper at the Religion Super Market. You can pick and choose from a wide assortment of beliefs, involving one god or many gods, the universe within or the universe without. You may wish to worship devils or saints, mother nature or heavenly father, stars, constellations, archetypes, gurus, priests, statues, paintings, animals, philosophies, concepts, theories, your belly button, your third eye, sexuality, your body or other peoples bodies.

Tradition may be your calling, and there are a few well-worn religions that have many centuries of thinking, elaboration, fine-tuning and tinkering included in their history. Sacred books containing many layers of translations and mistranslations of special words from a guy who lived way back when. Very specific practices and rituals are prescribed, and these are mandatory if one is to progress up the ladder to salvation. Lifetimes can be spent mastering all the details and intricacies. At the end of it all you may find yourself to be learned, pious, saintly, compassionate and kind. A highly evolved human being!

Enlightenment, however, is in the other direction.

## **Special diets and lifestyles do not produce enlightenment.**

There are countless diets advocated, physical exercises recommended, purification rituals encouraged, endurance trainings promoted and rejuvenation elixirs prescribed in order to help you to become the perfect vessel to receive and embody the highest teachings. Only by achieving the utmost fitness and purity can you become a light body: one who is worthy of being a holy person.

These physical states of being are indeed wonderful, and the internal feelings of energy and aliveness are the rewards. But, like every other experience, they are temporary and fleeting. To try to maintain them permanently will keep all of your attention and efforts completely involved in them. Seeking body perfection is not seeking enlightenment. Seeking

body perfection is seeking body perfection. Enlightenment doesn't require it.

That said, there is merit to having a high level of health... why not?! If you are going to live on this world, might as well have the health to fully enjoy it. But you must be extremely careful where you place your energy and focus. If you can learn that the physical body has definite and specific biological needs that can be provided for in definite and specific ways, then you can supply those needs in a most direct and simple manner. As you might expect, if you consider yourself an average person, then pretty much everything you currently believe and do to your body is completely wrong. Your lifestyle and dietary habits do not provide for your biological needs in the most positive and natural way. Learn the basics about your body and how to feed and care for it, and it will give you years of trouble-free operation. An excellent bargain!

Anything above and beyond this, however, is missing the boat. If enlightenment is what you want, then your body should be kept in good condition - enough to keep your mind strong and focused, and your desire strong and focused. Do not get distracted by detouring all your attention into ultra-purification of the body, ultra-fitness of the body, ultra-health of the body, immortality of the body, or other perfection of the body. Remember: you must die. Your body will return to dust. All body perfection practices have absolutely nothing to do with enlightenment. Get your body and mind into good shape by learning and doing the things necessary to get it there - simply and easily - and then don't give the subject any more concern.

### **Acquiring special powers and knowledge or seeking them out in others does not help you toward enlightenment.**

Whether having been given special powers or inquiring of others who have them, these sources of information will not help you toward enlightenment. If you have the ability to see the future, find hidden objects, channel the presence of discarnate entities, penetrate the hidden meanings of esoteric knowledge, know the thoughts of others, manifest objects, control your dreams, exude charisma, hypnotize crowds, make other people nervous or lovers swoon, then you may indeed be quite special and talented. But not enlightened.

And even if you are just another guy or gal seeking answers to the biggest questions of Life, you will get no lasting help from psychics, astrologers, numerologists, tarot readers, prophets, priests, channelers, gurus or wise men.

### **Aspiring to, or arriving at "holy" status is not the same as enlightenment.**

Are you seeking sainthood, guruhood, priesthood, pundithood, any other 'hood, or highly evolved state? Then you need more and more knowledge, more and more practice, more and more wisdom, more and more questions answered, more and more discipline, more and more purification, etc., etc., etc. All of these things are wonderful, of course, and highly treasured for their benefits. Supposedly, once perfected enough, whatever "enough"

actually means, then you get to be a high-ranking member of the 'hood of your choice. Now *you* are the Guru, the Master, the Swami, the Avatar, the Learned One, His Holiness, Her Highness. And, now you've got standards to uphold, appearances to maintain, rituals to preserve, lineages to honor and revere. It's all quite detailed and involved. Rules and regulations and traditions and disciplines and meetings and teachings, and, and...

Does that sound free and liberating?

Seems to me that all of these approaches to spirituality are all about attempting to perfect the ego by *adding* new beliefs and knowledge to it, and by practicing again and again, habituating it to act in specific new ways. By trying to erase old habitual mental grooves and replacing them with new habitual mental grooves; new beliefs to replace the old beliefs. New morality, new rules, new "shoulds and should nots". In the end you've still got beliefs, rules and morality, and these are the very filters that obscure reality, generating illusion.

Beliefs are untested assumptions, unproven opinions, unverified points of view. Beliefs are not true, they are only hoped to be true. Indeed, they are actually false, temporary mental constructs, with no certain truth to them whatsoever. Like pixie dust, they appear, they dazzle, they get believed in and then they fade away, eventually. You can easily verify this for yourself: Are the beliefs you hold today the same beliefs you held 3 years ago... 10 years ago... 20 years ago... 50 years ago? If those old beliefs you had were that flimsy and impermanent, what makes you believe that your new ones are any better? What will you believe 10 years from now? And most importantly, how will you know that your new beliefs are true - or not?

Do you seek Truth? Or do you just seek new and more exciting beliefs to replace the old ones when you get tired of them?

Since your beliefs are not really known to be true, only believed to be true, you never have total trust in them; you never have solid footing with them. Your perceptions and your beliefs *are* you. If challenged, they must be defended, and the only reason you need to defend your beliefs is because you have strong attachments to them. Attachments are beliefs with strong emotions tied to them. Emotions keep your beliefs alive, thereby keeping your ego alive, which keeps *you* alive, and everyone you see is expending nearly all their life energy keeping their beliefs energized 24/7/365.

Exhausting!

Everyone keeping their egos alive, wearing their costumes, playing their roles, completely in character. Each person completely believes in their own character and script, everyone else believes everyone else's character and script is legitimate, and the Grand Illusion is complete. Everyone reinforcing each others pretend reality.

This being so, if one *really* wants to break out of this incredible, wonderful and bizarre Game, the answer is *not* to add to the character, *not* to add to the script. Not to add beliefs, knowledge, practices, purity, or anything else.

The answer is to *subtract*. Subtract everything. Subtract, remove, burn away, jettison, detoxify, get rid of, eradicate, disintegrate and eliminate both the character and the script, and all the beliefs that created them.

How to do that?

Use your mind ruthlessly, like an ultra-sharp knife, to slice and dice every single belief you hold to be true, to be *you*. Challenge what you call yourself - doctor, teacher, student, engineer, artist - and the roles you play in them. Why do you play them? Whose rules are you following anyway? Challenge your secret cherished beliefs about the kind of person you believe you really are. Think you are a nice guy, a sweet gal? Think you are smart, beautiful, ugly, sickly, wild, crazy, cultured, refined, obnoxious? Who says so? Who told you these things? Who sold you on these opinions? Why do you believe it? Why do these other people and their opinions matter? Where did you come up with this idea?

Take away your name, your career, your relationships, your credit cards. What is left?

Imagine you've just gotten bonked on the head real hard and now have total amnesia - you don't remember *anything* about your past. Now here you are, a week later, a healthy functioning grown human being with zero past history. No name, no job, no address, no identity, no nothing. Don't know who you are, what you are, where you are, when you are, why you are or how you are. Now what? What is left? Who *am* I? What is *me*?

Enlightenment requires no knowledge, requires no practices, requires no beliefs. It only requires ridding yourself of that which creates your filters, creates your illusions, creates your beliefs about who you are. Subtract all beliefs (falseness) and truth will remain.

Enlightenment is utterly and completely about asking yourself your own questions and getting your own answers, for yourself, by yourself. You *must* be your own authority. Accepting answers from anyone else makes you lazy. Doing so will only weaken your own ability to find your own answers. Cast aside all books, beliefs, theories, scholars, priests, gurus and deities and find your own answers from within you. You - your mind and your desire - are all you need for the journey; no one else and no thing else whatsoever is required.

If Buddha did it, Jesus did it, Krishna did it... then you can do it.

If all the other rare enlightened human beings from way back when up to today can do it, then you can do it.

Sharpen that blade. Lock and load. Saddle up, jump on that horse and ride. Keep going. Stop for nothing and never look back.

You literally cannot imagine what awaits you.

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