

Interview with Richard Rose
WKSU Radio Kent State University
Kent, Ohio
1974

The following transcription is available in Richard Rose's book, *The Direct-Mind Experience*. The book is a compilation of lectures, interviews, and discussions addressing such topics as Zen, dreams, moods, miracles, psychology, perception, intuition, and many more. If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as speaker and teacher, please order *The Direct-Mind Experience* from www.rosepublications.net or www.tatfoundation.org.

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Question: First off Mr. Rose, how did your group develop, and could you give us a little of your background?

Rose: It developed actually as a result of a whole life's work. This is a result of spiritual diggings I had done over a lifetime, but had failed to record or describe in writing. Since the number of people that you can contact personally is limited I decided finally to put it down in writing. Prior to that I had no idea of coming to the public with it, but after I wrote "The Albigen Papers" the group formed.

Question: Could we have a definition of what the Zen group is?

Rose: Well, it is a brotherhood, an esoteric group that is aimed at enlightenment. Of course you'll have to define the word enlightenment. But I want to point out in the beginning that the group is not necessarily closed to any esoteric or religious system that would bring about that same result. A lot of people will think when they hear the word Zen used in the group that we are strictly of Asiatic origin and maybe addicted totally to oriental procedures or oriental Zen procedures.

It isn't that. The word Zen was involved because it indicates a direct system that is more explainable than any of the literature that we have about the same result, in any other major religion. So we use the word Zen, and of course, Zen techniques are used. But this does not rule out the fact that we do look into and even use certain mechanisms from other esoteric systems.

Question: Through your interest in spiritual development I'm sure you have probably studied the major religions, and found them deficient?

Rose: In my lifetime I have had my nose in nearly every religion that I could either visit personally or read about. And I found that Zen indicates a method of approaching the mind directly with the mind, rather than approaching spiritual values through emotional reading or emotional living. Emotional or devotional, we might say the two are tied together. Most religions encourage an emotional-devotional thing to find a spiritual value.

Whereas, I maintain that this same end can be reached by a very pragmatic common sense approach to truth. Through self-definition. And if I didn't believe that this method is more propitious, I wouldn't use it in the group.

Question: Do you consider the Catholic and Protestant religions to be of the devotional type of religion?

Rose: Well, yes, I would say at least for the layman. There have been Christian mystics, but they were not even always encouraged by their own church. They were treated similarly to the way Galileo was, although I'm not saying that I think Galileo was an enlightened man.

For instance, St. John of the Cross was a Christian mystic whom the church put in jail, because they thought he was stepping outside of the things they wanted the public to hear. He went outside the pale of the teachings that were prescribed for the layman, and he was put in prison for it.

The general teachings of all the Christian faiths are appealing, let's say, to the emotional part of the person. They prescribe faith. I have a note in my book on the inadequacy of Christian teachings. It was designed for medieval Christian peasantry whose minds at that time were both uneducated and uncomplicated. So faith was the natural answer.

Since people have emerged from the uneducated class in the last couple hundred years they have naturally become dissatisfied with just accepting things because somebody tells them, "You have to believe this." And this is the reason in my estimation that a tremendous percentage of European and American people, particularly the youth, are turning in other directions. Listening with an ear to some other country or some other religion, to find something that has more of a tone of common sense to it.

Now unfortunately, some of these new directions that they turn to are also emotional and devotional movements.

Question: So religion becomes an evolutionary process, -- the old religion is too uncomplicated for modern man?

Rose: No, I don't quite agree with that because I think that in those days there were people who thought more deeply, whose minds were more complicated. But they manifestly held no hope for the masses of the peasantry. There was an esoteric teaching to more or less keep the masses from doing damage. To keep them socially compatible, while placating them or soothing their fears about life after death or whatever the question was.

But there was also an esoteric teaching, -- this is where the word esoteric comes from. We find by some of the literature that is manifest down through the ages, from men like Pythagoras even before Christianity, that there was deep thinking. There were minds who had evolved.

And we still have minds today that will only, no matter which religion they go to, gravitate toward an emotional type of religion, rather than to what we might call the attempt at logical thinking, or the common sense approach to definitions.

Question: So is it okay then, for these individuals who perhaps haven't developed their minds to a great extent -- is it satisfactory for their state -- to stick with the emotional kind of religion?

Rose: They have no choice. There is a categorization that we read in Gurdjieff, of the different types of people. He mentions four different levels or categories. The first is instinctive, the second emotional, the third intellectual and the fourth philosophic.

For example, the people who are on the instinctive level doubt and very seldom pick up or understand the emotional motivations of those people who are so to speak a step above them. And the people on each of these levels have a religion that suits their level. So there is a purpose for every sincere religion, -- it answers the demand of quite a few people on a certain level.

We say that the spiritual evolution of man has a broad base of people on the instinctive and emotional levels, narrowing down then to the intellectual level. When it sorts down to the philosophic level, where a person uses direct experience to find his answers, there are very few people left. And this is the top of the pyramid.

So our group would not be too distressed if it did not have a large number of members, because we're appealing to these few people. We are trying to find things through direct experience -- mind-to-mind investigation -- rather than through reading, believing, or employing what I call gimmicks. We don't use physical gimmicks, prayer wheels, beads, or whatever, in attempting to arrive at a spiritual or transcendental end.

Question: In order for someone to even pick up your philosophy, he has to be willing to question some very long-held traditional thoughts or myths concerning religion?

Rose: Well, we don't get into that very much, because this could go on forever. This would be a theological or a dogmatic quibble. We basically bypass that, and I think that all genuine Zen does also. It just bypasses all individual concepts and goes right back to the thinker, -- and asks of him, "Why do you believe this? Do you ever examine yourself to see why you believe a particular thing?"

And from this you begin to understand that perhaps you were motivated by something organic or by a particular type of inherited character or nature. And if a person sees this, maybe there's a chance for him to progress from that point.

So we generally just ask the person to question himself, or we will question if he can't think of the questions. "Why are you hung up on whatever it is that you're doing?" Or, "Why do you cleave to this thing that you believe in?" And it's not only religious things, it's also social convictions. These social convictions tie us to what we consider to be inhibitory complexes, which keep us from thinking clearly.

See, I maintain that this is all a matter of thinking clearly. That you do not have to be a holy, ascetic-looking person, -- you can work in a steel mill. You can live a life like anyone else. You don't have to be a theologian, -- in fact, you can doubt all the theology that is ever written and still find the truth.

Because as soon as you start putting limitations on it, like saying that you have to have a prayerful attitude, you are doing just that, -- you're building a door with that limitation that you can't go beyond.

I believe that it is something any man can do. Any layman, with just plain determination and common sense, who can sit down and face himself. But he has to follow it up. Not just say, "Well yes, I agree that I have kind of tricked myself here or my head has outwitted me here." But face himself consistently over a period of let's say meditative sessions or confrontation sessions, in which he attacks and holds these up to view.

He realizes that maybe he has been into twenty-five years of self-delusion, that he's been kidding himself. He puts forth a certain posture to society -- first he puts it over on society -- he convinces them that he fits in, that he's a nice type of fellow and all that sort of thing. Then he convinces himself that all of his thinking is correct.

Then something happens of course to all of us someday, -- when we doubt everything that we have ever thought. The day comes when all of us come to doubt. But it's generally too late to do anything about it.

So the majority of people sort of slide along on a kind of egotistical conviction that because the public doesn't complain about their social behavior they must be on the right track on all levels. They pay their taxes, they get along with the fellow next door and they're able to perform their job, -- this seems to be to them the sign of a good theology. But of course that to me would be the ultimate sign of a successful utilitarian theology.

Question: Do you feel that existing structures which have developed in the religious/political scheme have been done so by those who wanted to control and mold other people?

Rose: This is what I contend has been the downfall of Christianity. I was born and raised in the Christian faith, precisely a Catholic, and I began even as a child to see where I thought they were refusing to answer my questions. That they were refusing to allow the layman to get into deeper levels of thinking, while at the same time trying to control the thinking, by just saying, "You're going to hell if you doubt."

And this is what I say is a common-sense reaction, -- not just myself alone but many thousands of people have said, "Well, I have had enough of that. I'm surely entitled to think. I'm surely entitled to doubt."

The thing was that because of this attitude of control there was a slump in the dynamism of the Christian church. They had become powerful. They were no longer persecuted, they were left

alone, they could build massive cathedrals. And it became a social institution, -- it became rather sleepy.

They no longer exhorted. The very backbone of any religion is the continuing search for truth, -- not just collecting funds and building buildings or amassing a big social structure.

Then when these Christian structures were threatened by the rebellion of large segments of the young people, who said many things including that God was dead to them, the church reacted by trying to placate or play politics with humanity. Posing now as a great social institution, wanting to be politically funded, indulging in things that were strictly social problems that had nothing to do with the church or with theology, -- much less a search for man's definition. (And when I say theology, this doesn't come close to what we are talking about.)

And this is what in my belief every sentient being searches for, -- his cause. If that is a Creator or if it's an accident, he wants to know it. He certainly doesn't want to be silenced or placated or converted into just a politically or socially-oriented group.

Question: So this marriage or mutual relationship between religion and the state became its downfall?

Rose: It seems to me like that. Now I could be wrong on the intentions of all good men, -- there may be lots of people who are trying to salvage some of this. I read recently of a priest at a meeting down in Florida who had talked quite openly of cosmic consciousness and enlightenment. And from the way he talked about it, he evidently knew what it was about.

But I've never heard of any campaign on his part to bring this to the people. To show them that there is something to look for besides the old concept of a personal god who protrudes from the heavens with an ancient bewhiskered head and looks after his little ones, -- or damns them forever for not being able to guess what he wants them to do.

When we talk about enlightenment we are talking about the knowledge of ultimates, -- the knowledge of the absolute state of being. This involves nearly everything in the line of knowledge, and yet it doesn't really involve knowledge. Because when you get to the absolute state of being you are dealing with absolutes, not relative things which we define as knowledge.

So we have to try to bear in mind when we hear this, that we are looking for absolutes with the full knowledge that when we reach that absolute state of knowledge it may not be describable. And consequently all the time that I have been talking to these various groups about enlightenment, I have dodged the word. Because it is not definable.

Incidentally, of the men I have met who were enlightened, only one was enlightened by virtue of the Zen practice. I have met at least two who were enlightened by the Christian process.

One of the most amazing cases was a man who was enlightened from Christian meditation. And he was not a Catholic monk, -- he was a hell-raising drunk before he reached this. But he was sincere. Part of his drinking was almost a furious dissatisfaction with himself, coupled with a

desire to find something out. And all through his despair and struggling and everything he continued to pray and read the Bible. And eventually something cracked.

The obstructions gave way, and he reached a state in which he was aware of the true state of everything. I talked to this man right close to here, in Akron in fact, -- he had come up from Texas to visit a friend of mine, and I was quite convinced that this experience was genuine. So it convinced me that the Christian procedures do have something to offer, -- if they want to take care of this fractional element of people who want to go this far in mysticism.

The average layman doesn't want to go this far. The average layman wants to go to church, he wants to be in a social institution, he wants utilitarian religion, -- something that will improve his business, that will keep his kids in line so they don't go to jail, and that will keep his wife at home. And he doesn't look for too much beyond that.

Then besides this he humanizes heaven, as the Christian faith does a good bit. As if God is a personal being and heaven a physical place. And he just thinks, "Well, by virtue of democracy we're all going to the same place. By virtue of human concepts of divine justice God is going to take us all there. He has to. He would be embarrassed if he didn't take us all there. So I'll just sit back and ride in to my capital 'S' Self-realization on the tide of humanity."

This is the majority. This is the base of the pyramid. And so this is what the churches cater to. Nearly all of your religions cater to these people. Richard Bucke wrote a book on cosmic consciousness -- he was a Christian mystic, incidentally -- and he states that only one in a million are able to reach this. This is the top of the pyramid.

The rest have no desire to even comprehend that there is an ultimate state, a state beyond the relative, that a person can experience. Not know, but experience. And of course he arrives at this not by a state of education so much, but a process of non-education. Dis-education. Plus becoming.

Question: Of the million people who don't make it, -- in this universal order it seems that they should have more than one chance. Does the concept of reincarnation fit in with the Zen philosophy?

Rose: Of the two Zen teachers that I knew, I have never heard them discuss the question of reincarnation. The question would be put to them, but they would refuse to answer it. They would say, "If we told you that you had another chance, you wouldn't even try this time." This is one reason. The other thing is that you should answer your own questions. As soon as I would tell you that there is such a thing as reincarnation, I institute a dogma.

You will probably notice that I more or less say that things should be retreated from. For instance, that we should get away from this emotionalism in religion if we're wanting to become philosophers, or philosophic esotericists. But I will very seldom say, "We believe in this concept."

We believe that man is largely helpless, that he must become strengthened. These are things which we believe. But when you get into the business of reincarnation and so forth, these are strictly speculative. And, -- I believe that every man should answer for himself.

I will say this, -- that as an explanation of the inequities that you see in society and in human suffering, the idea of reincarnation would be a more easily digestible system to the human intellect than would this thing of one chance and then down to hell forever. But regardless, just because it is more easily digestible means that it could also more easily have been created out of the wishful mind of mankind.

Question: Are you familiar with Edgar Cayce?

Rose: Yes.

Question: He speaks of reaching the book of universal knowledge. Is this an allusion to what perfection might be, or enlightenment?

Rose: I think so. You run into this reference in many of the books that you find today. Even in Carlos Castaneda's books there is a vague reference to total knowledge. Knowledge that is beyond the world, that is. The knowledge that appears when the world disappears, or something of that sort. Of course, those are vague references.

I did quite a bit of study and research into Edgar Cayce when I was in my twenties. I visited his place, in fact. Of course, I consider that Edgar Cayce was primarily a healer and secondly a prophet. A man of talents that he could not explain himself. I failed to see a real dogma that he ever expounded, although I understand from later writings that he did believe in reincarnation and some of these concepts of lost continents and so on. But I never quite placed him in the category of esoteric philosopher.

Question: What about Atlantis, -- supposedly a well-developed race or society, dispersing and becoming like gods to the people on other continents.

Rose: This is what I was referring to. I have never tinkered with the idea too much because I could never see any great significance to it. Basically I am not a historian, although I do look for and compare a lot of common denominators. But it never occurred to me that this would be significant.

However, I have heard that concept, not only in regard to Atlantis but also in a story in India which Blavatsky refers to. The Hindus believe that they were once a race of rather primitive people that were invaded from the skies by a race of blue people, who were super, so to speak. This was the descent of people like Krishna, -- these were the avatars.

Now, -- I wonder how much of this is just a bit of nice thinking. It makes...

Question: Good fiction.

Rose: Yes. It's like we hear now of the study of flying saucers and the marvelous things that might have resulted from their coming into Mexico, leaving artifacts.

I believe this about all these phenomena, -- I've got quite a little scrapbook of clippings of these things, -- but I don't get into it except to just look for common denominators. Because we only have so many years in our life. And after you're on the path a little while you realize that it's impossible to sift all of the phenomenal data that has cropped up.

For instance, there are several volumes published by a man by the name of Charles Fort. (I don't know if he's still living or not.) "Lo!," and "Wild Talents," and "The Book of the Damned" are the names of them. These are compilations of things like flying saucers, flying horses, all sorts of sea phenomena, monsters at sea, and this sort of thing. Things which defy our scientific writings or our scientific beliefs.

So we can study those, and sometimes they will give you an idea. But we couldn't begin to catalogue them -- an individual couldn't at least -- and try to deduce some great truth from them as to our relation. Because when you get down to it, for instance if you want to get to the core of Zen teaching, or the culmination of the Zen training which would be an experience, -- you have a certain conviction that this entire physical world is a projection, not a reality.

And immediately when this becomes apparent to you, you sort of lose interest in the mundane phenomena like levitations or haunted houses. These seem to be just strictly more of the same phenomenal world. They are a little bit more tenuous or gossamer, but they're still just parts of a phenomenal world which in itself is not too real.

Now I had a very difficult time even delivering a lecture, because I had to deliver it to people who thought in objective terms. And I think I still have trouble with that. In trying to get to people who are thinking in terms of very objective things, like tomorrow's paycheck, or pleasure, or compatibility, or conventional philosophic attitudes, conventional psychological attitudes, this sort of thing.

I have a lot of trouble communicating with that because when you find out that the whole thing is a projection, it makes you more or less lose enthusiasm about the significance or glamour of this projection.

Question: I'm sure you can't break down twenty-five or thirty years of conditioning to society's ways and tell them, "Look, this is the way you should think about it."

Rose: Right, and this is the difficulty that we run into all the time. For instance, a person will come in to a lecture and ask a question, and you are torn between trying to reply to that person in his language, or being as truthful with him as you would be in approaching total truthfulness. If you give him a totally truthful answer, he may be insulted or think that you're making fun of him.

So we're continually faced with that, -- trying to still talk to that man in an objective manner, to reply to him or pick up his head where it's at. The terminology in the Albigen system, as we call it, is continually difficult to translate, because people are asking such questions as, "Is it good to

do this?" And of course your immediate reaction would be to say, "Why do you say 'good'? What do you mean by 'good'?"

But yet you don't like to do that because then they look at you rather amazed: "What's he doing, evading me? Playing with my head? I asked him a simple question, why doesn't he give me a simple answer?" So in some cases I'll try to come at them from their viewpoint, and lead them back to perhaps more clear thinking.

Question: What about those individuals at the base of the pyramid, who seem to have been locked into a religious belief which says, "You will believe or else you will go to hell." Are these people inhibited from breaking out of those frames of thought, or can they be lifted to a higher stage?

Rose: It isn't "inhibited." I call it trying to put three pounds of, let's say, material into a two-pound bag. A person on the instinctive level cannot comprehend the person on the step above him. And we find this in all levels of spiritual work. If you encounter a teacher who is what I call two rungs on the ladder above you, -- you'll reject him.

We find this all the time. Where people come into the group and their intuition picks up that we are people outside of this appreciation of the glamorous and the bizarre part of life. And people on other rungs, -- if they have been imbued with the game, the dance of life, and they find it all wonderful and joyous and all that, and they make the mistake of coming in and thinking that we're a bunch of joyous people who are going to enhance their joys even more with some new gimmick that will titillate their mentality -- when they get the picture that we are very sober -- they disappear as quickly as they can.

Because their instinct tells them, "Either you're going to get out of that place, or these bizarre pleasures that you think you have been enjoying are going to disappear, -- and are you ready for it?" And I'd say that ninety percent of them will leave when they become aware of this.

The instinctive level is basically just what the word implies, -- that there is a certain segment of people who move from the cradle to the grave in reaction only. They just react, -- their DNA molecule or genetic plan, their inheritance characteristics, plus their environment, cause them to function in what is a maze or groove. Which they think that they are functioning in very deliberately, that they are doing it themselves.

And they are the people who think that they are really the most alive. They more or less look down their noses at people who are devotional even and say, "That's a fool. I'm living. I'm having my fun, I'm reproducing. And I'm having my fifth of whiskey on Saturdays." These are instinctive people.

And they have no exaltation, to use one of Huxley's words, until they get tired of that (the instinctual life-style.) And this may take years of their life. If you look at people over a span of forty years you'll witness some of your friends who were instinctive, very down to earth with just you might call an animal existence. And then one day they said, "Hey, there's more to life than this, there has to be. I've been an idiot."

So they go down to church and they beat their head on the floor and they get salvation. And then they have an experience, an exaltation. They lose themselves. They give up this ego of being proud animal. And they change to devotion to someone who has sacrificed, or to a noble movement. They do it for a person, like Jesus or Buddha or any major head of a religion, or they may do it just for the religion itself.

In whichever case, they lose themselves. All exaltations are accompanied by the giving up of part of your foolishness, which we call egos. So then this person becomes, you might say, a real fanatic. He gets into this emotional religion, and he will tell you that he's right in there talking personally to this god, communicating personally with him. And they go along on this track maybe the rest of their life.

Or maybe you'll find a person born into this particular category. He seems to be emotional or devotional right from the start. He goes to church, and some day he'll tire of it. And his intellect will reason (we're talking about the intellectual level now): "Well, according to the history and the scriptures and all this, there's not too much evidence of this personal God."

It will become apparent to him that for instance the armies who supposedly thought that they were doing God's work were destroyed. Individuals who lived good lives according to what someone else told them was good were destroyed. That the people who seemed to live by no rules seemed to prosper. And he begins to wonder then, "What is this? What's going wrong?" And this doubt brings him into a search, a mechanistic sort of search such as logic and reading and so on. And this is when he in turn moves out of the emotional level.

But these are people who cannot even hear you if you're a step above them, -- until they get hungry for it. They get tired. Their computer more or less gets overwhelmed by its own sluggishness and decides to kick out a whole gob of material and reevaluate the thing. That's my estimation of the method or procedure that goes on inside them. But it's very difficult for a person from the outside to come in to them, unless you're getting there at just the time that, for instance, the instinctive person is ready to break loose from his instinctive stage and join an emotional stage.

I believe that the only thing that anybody does, anyone who has a genuine spiritual message for any segment of mankind -- the only thing that he can do -- is to be there when someone is ready. I think that one of the most foolish things to do is to proselyte too much. I think that it's all right to put a little article or an ad in the paper or something like this to say, "I'm here, and I'm talking." But when you feel that you have to go out and convert people, -- I think that this is an ego in itself.

Question: That's when you start forcing something on people or forcing them to make a decision.

Rose: Yes, trying to force by virtue of intense emotion, by a charismatic appeal, or by a pretensive logic, -- that is nothing more than sophistry. Trying to get people to go along with you. And it becomes an ego trip for the preacher.

But I do believe at the same time that you are obligated, if you have something. Now this is paradoxical. If you have something to offer which you think could help somebody transcend one of these levels, then you have to make yourself known. Because of the simple fact that this man is blind to this level he is entering and he can't find you. But if he bumps into you at the right moment you can help him out of it.

And I believe that there is an esoteric law involved in this. That we have to help someone. That it's not just, let's say, a game or a profession. But I believe that the whole spiritual evolution of man depends upon people going out of their way to be available. To help somebody through a difficult problem or analyzation, or to reassure them that they are not the only fellow to come to a certain conviction.

Question: This communication is interesting to me because -- I can see how there are different levels of communication -- I can say a word or a phrase to you which would trigger a response, whereas somebody else possibly wouldn't even catch what I said.

Rose: Absolutely.

Question: And this then is what you're saying about people bypassing or just not picking up what the other person is saying because they haven't developed themselves, or haven't attuned their attention to that type of thought level.

Rose: Yes. You may have the same vocabulary but not the same meanings for the words.

Question: Very interesting. Now another thing, -- with this dissatisfaction with contemporary religion, young people are turning to other sources such as transcendental meditation, or anything like this where you get a temporary sort of therapeutic relief. How does this differ from the techniques used by your group?

Rose: Well, we state quite bluntly that we are not desirous of bringing anyone peace of mind. We want to bring you trouble. We want to stir you, to shake you. Because protoplasm tends toward inertia. You have to keep irritating it, to keep it alive so to speak. It has to be continually stimulated. So complacency for a person who wants to progress in his mental capacities, is negative.

Now again, let me give you the other side of the paradox. There are people for whom reaching this (complacency by way of soothing chants or visualizations) does a world of good. These are people who are burnt out, or wore out, or who have fought a tremendous battle, a psychic battle, and they are tired. They have to recoup, -- and this is ideal for them.

But the mistake that we make is in thinking that any one of these systems is in itself unique magic. For instance, TM is no different from say the chanting of the Krishna people, which will bring peace of mind and contentment. It is no different from the saying of certain prayers by the various Christian religions. Repeating certain prayers can bring peace of mind.

The thing is, I'd say, that we got disgusted with our Christian religion, so we're going to buy the same article with a foreign stamp, that's all. We're still going in for an emotional answer.

Now there is a big complaint that I have about this in regard to people who are deeply esoteric. If it's peace of mind that a person wants, I'd say that TM is as good a thing as any. I think it's a very efficient system; it does the job. But if you are interested in finding your self-definition then you want to abandon any system that quiets you down. You want to become turbulent. You want to continue to waken yourself, to arouse yourself mentally, to attack your systems of thinking. Because you want an answer.

In other words, invention is parented or fathered by adversity. If you don't have trouble, you're not going to think.

Of course, there are many religions and many approaches to religion that just give you an answer. This is what I call a concept structure. They say, "Look, this is the way it is. Heaven is such a category. And this is what happens to you when you die. But of course, it depends on how faithful you were to the church or how many sins you committed. Naturally, all are not going to go to the same place exactly. In heaven there are different pigeonholes, limbos or purgatories or whatnot, for different categories of people."

And this is all a concept structure without any basis in proof. We have no data -- and people never stop to think about this -- we have no knowledge of anyone returning from purgatory with his wing feathers burnt. We have no data on any of this, but it's all accepted as faith. And some people are content with this. Others are content with the religion if it is a utilitarian thing, as I said before.

Now there are a few movements today that are more or less encounter groups, and some people will join these movements just to get a better understanding of what I call the small 's' self. These are a lot of people realizing that as society becomes more complex the individual human becomes more mad, especially if he starts off by kidding himself.

So we are entering an era of truth, there's no doubt about it. These numerous encounter groups that you have over the country are aimed in this direction. The people are going to go in there and sit down and say, "Let's re-examine our values. Our definitions."

Now I go a step further than this. If it's possible to tell something about our group, I'd say that we talk about capital 'S' Self-definition. We realize that you have to start with small 's' self-definition, that is, just the mundane self. But then after you look awhile -- follow a process of looking directly within yourself -- you then begin to understand that there is a more total self, a more real self. And this we have to define.

And when you define this you are answering the old directive that has come down through the ages, which very few people paid any attention to. That is, "First know thyself," And that's what they meant -- not just to know your shoes or your hands or your ears -- but, to know actually your essence. But this is all brought about by starting with the mundane self.

Question: So if we are in an era of enlightenment, as evidenced by these numerous groups and the interest in Eastern religions today -- which is bound to bring about some change in the intellect of the populace -- what happens when the masses cannot handle the new values, the new questions that the small minority are starting to ask? Will this minority become persecuted? Does history reveal things like this happening?

Rose: I don't know how much of that will happen in our lifetime, in our era. But this was a threat in the middle ages and maybe in ancient times. Even Pythagoras was supposedly attacked. Socrates was executed. But the hint has always gone out among the esoteric groups that you should never instruct openly. You should never go out and try to let the masses hear this knowledge, because it has an effect of irritating them, and they will attack you.

Some people blame that for the killing of Christ. That he was basically lynched by people who had heard him talk and who somehow just turned against him. Because this was something which just might destroy their entire pleasure patterns, or their political patterns.

There is an esoteric maxim that you'll come across if you get into esoteric reading: "To know, to dare, to do, and to be silent." And we wonder about that.

And of course, I was silent for many years. But I believed that the percentage of ears was increasing. Partly because more people were getting educated, -- plus the fact that some people's ears had been opened by perhaps a fractional drug experience. (I'm talking about intellectual ears, not physical ears.) This has an effect of giving a person the perspective of having a new state of mind. You see that it's possible to have more than one state of mind, more than one way of looking at things, -- a new perspective.

So if they didn't get really destroyed by the drugs (LSD), some of the people who had a slight taste began looking for spiritual values. And I ascribe the biggest part of this spiritual drive that we have today to half a million or a million people who picked up a little sentience of it under some experimental drug routine. It just cracked the door for them.

Now unfortunately this doesn't open the door. But these people are the ones who flock to a lot of these movements, especially if the leaders are charismatic or if the thing is emotional. And again, a microscopic few of them will gravitate toward something serious, once they become disgruntled with what they finally find out to be not the final answer.

Question: Mr. Rose, would you mind in our final few minutes to maybe recap your development, let's say your achievements, and then the disappointments, that kind of thing? Maybe give us a background where you started, -- would you be interested in that?

Rose: Yes, all right. I considered myself to be a very devout Catholic when I was younger, and I was looking as a child for an objective God. I studied to be a priest, in fact. And I left that institution because ... I began to be uneasy about my convictions, in relation to the people in the seminary.

I left the seminary when I was in my teens yet, and I went to college. I joined or went to different churches because I still had this direction or vector in my system. This was my business, -- I wanted to find out who God was. And I accepted a priori that God was a person, -- it was somebody I was going to meet.

So I looked high and low. I joined all sorts of cults. I got initiated into any one of these Asian groups that would initiate me. I went to Spiritualist churches and I thought that this was a very good approach, -- because here I might be able to talk with people who were dead and who were now themselves talking to God.

Well needless to say, I didn't find the answer there. Every place I went I was disillusioned that much more. I found fraud and trickery at every turn, and I found that the people who were telling us that they had God in their hip pocket really had money in their hip pocket. And I became very discouraged.

But as a result of this intense effort -- I think as a result of this intense effort -- when I was around thirty years of age I had an experience. And this experience answered my questions for me. And it has not diminished. I have not outgrown it, -- I don't think you could ever outgrow it when you have that type of experience.

But I was unable to communicate it. And with what few people I did try to communicate, I realized that they had no cognizance of what I was talking about. So in most cases I gave up. And it wasn't until I met one man, Paul Wood, and read a book called "Cosmic Consciousness" that I realized that other people did have these experiences, and they did talk about them.

Question: Prior to this you had a feeling like you were a little bit odd or you didn't fit into society?

Rose: I felt that there was no use talking about it, that's all. No, -- I fit into society very well. I had learned when I was among a certain group of people to talk their language. And I could hold a job. I've raised a family. I've been a contractor, I have worked at many things such as a chemist, a metallurgist, an engineer of sorts, and I've held all sorts of jobs.

But one thing I'd say as far as its effects upon me, -- I never had any desire to own the world, or to really make history.

My big desire was the hope that I would find somebody. And I would curse the darkness when I was a kid about 21 years of age and say, "Boy, every place I look I find these phonies, these hucksters. And I'm wasting the valuable years of my life when I could possibly be out raising a bunch of kids, or getting drunk and enjoying myself if such is enjoying yourself."

The temptation was always there naturally, and I was putting it aside saying, "Wait, -- maybe you'll find this thing someday." But everywhere I went I ran into hucksters. And not only hucksters but people of really bad intentions.

So I came to the conclusion as I was cursing the darkness that if I ever found anything, my next step would be, -- if I ever found anybody that wanted help, I'd try to help them. That was my obligation.

Consequently I try to balance my efforts today. Not to be too evangelistic but nevertheless to go out and say, "If there's anybody out there who's got this problem and a little bit shaky about it, a little bit lacking in conviction that he's on the right track, why maybe I can give you a few hints. I've been down the old trail and I know a few hazards and so forth. And maybe we can accelerate your search a bit, -- this is advisable if it's possible."

Have I covered what you wanted?

Question: Yes, I think that sort of sums everything up. And I really appreciate having you here today.

End of interview.

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The above transcription is available in Richard Rose's book, *The Direct-Mind Experience*. The book is a compilation of lectures, interviews, and discussions addressing such topics as Zen, dreams, moods, miracles, psychology, perception, intuition, and many more. If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as speaker and teacher, please order *The Direct-Mind Experience* from www.rosepublications.net or www.tatfoundation.org.