

Between-ness Opens the Mind to Grace
by Mike Gegenheimer

After being introduced to the search for Truth within by Richard Rose in the fall of 1972, my questions were answered 46+ years later, April 7, 2019, during a rapport sitting with friends at the TAT Foundation meeting.

As a college freshman, I held the belief that the truth was to be found in science, and that fundamental paradoxes in physics could be resolved by knowledge of first principles. After meeting Rose in the fall of 1972, my search for Truth quickly turned to a search *within* for answers.

Working increasingly closely with my friends on the path and Rose during the ensuing four years of college and several years after, I found "rapport sessions" to be times of insight. Rose encouraged sitting silently with other seekers with whom one has a feeling of rapport, and then feeling for others' minds without focusing on self or on others, feeling for what is "between." Rose wrote about this topic in his book, *Energy Transmutation, Between-ness and Transmission*. He also believed that such rapport sessions could prepare the mind of the seeker for Transmission. Between-ness opens the mind to Grace.



Richard Rose (right) and TAT friends

Three and a half years into the search, in the Spring of 1976, a partial realization occurred unexpectedly and simultaneously to me and a friend (Dan P.) with whom I had sat in rapport almost weekly for several years. Following intense contemplation of something Rose had said, we began a silent rapport sitting with others. At the end of the sitting we were suddenly and instantaneously Aware, immersed in singular, undifferentiated Awareness wherein no-thing and no person is present. Only Awareness. He knew that I knew, and I knew that he knew. Aware as one, we witnessed in the periphery a roiling dimension of thought—all that ever is or ever will be, present in a roiling dimension of thought, all present at once.

The immersion in singular, undifferentiated Awareness lasted perhaps twenty minutes, until a thought attracted curiosity and attention, whereupon our minds instantaneously separated. In the ensuing twenty minutes we sat astonished, observing thoughts, feelings and emotions passing back and forth between our minds, the source of which was unclear. We were watching life unfold in the mind dimension as we slowly returned to identification with the world experienced by our separate minds. The phenomena of ESP are trivial by comparison.

I found similarity in Ramana Maharshi's description of Kevala Nirvikulpa Samadhi, and his analogy of the bucket being lowered into the well and back out again. The bucket—the mind—holding onto its identity while being fully immersed in Awareness.

For many years, my immature mind held onto its identity, believing that *it* had "experienced" Awareness. Despite what was witnessed, the mind believed the relative mind was real, had an "experience," and returned to reality. But this is exactly backwards.

The partial realization was a prelude to a rapport session a little over a year later in 1977, when my 22-year old immature mind observed its imminent potential to die or go insane. Face to face with death of the mind caused an intensive reaction by the body and mind to "LIVE!" And, an equally intense reaction of fear of death, which took years to face. Over two decades went by, during which these events kept returning the mind to the questions of meaning, and life and death.

During a period of several months of freedom from work in late 2000 to early 2001, I recognized my inability to articulate or understand what had happened in 1976 and 1977, and the search began again. Now, in my late forties, there was no teacher. Richard Rose had declined into Alzheimer's.

In April 2019, during the third and final day of the April TAT meeting, all questions were answered. And again, it began with a rapport session.

The April 2019 TAT meeting agenda was inspiring, including speakers Bart Marshall, Paul Hedderman, Norio Kushi and Paul Rezendes, with Paul Constant leading rapport sittings.

Early Saturday before his talk, Bart and I caught up, and he asked if I prayed. He reminded me that realization comes from outside the mind, the prayer is for the Truth, and the answer is not in the mind. Bart noted as he does in his talks and writings, "be careful what you wish for" and "strap on the seat belt." Paul Hedderman pounded away in his talk that evening about what he calls "selfing," emphasizing that the self does not act as it thinks it does. Rather, thoughts and action proceed first, and the mind takes credit for it.

Later Saturday evening, I spoke to Norio about the partial realization of 43 years prior that is briefly described above. Norio began talking about the "space between two people." "That space," he remarked, "is a creative space, where such things can occur that are beyond the mind." Only weeks later did I realize Norio was talking about Between-ness. Norio's comments reminded me that in rapport sittings one simply observes the feeling that arises. I determined to trust completely the feeling of rapport, to *absolutely* trust the feeling in that "creative space." Somehow, the next morning, doing so invited Grace.

The first event on the Sunday agenda was a morning rapport session. A lot of energy was in evidence, and at one point very intense sustained energy. What was absent and unseen seemed more real than what appeared present. It was building in intensity. With absolute trust, abandoning all mental reservation, following the feeling of rapport "inward" with all those present, Grace intervened.

Intense Awareness accompanied by intense energy, revealed Absolute Emptiness, Nothingness. The biblical "rending the curtain of the temple" describes the feeling. I do

not exist nor ever existed—Richard Rose did not exist nor ever existed—the world which appears through the mind does not exist. Awareness and intense energy present in wave after wave. Only Awareness, Only Emptiness. Various phrases from sutras and poetry spontaneously came to mind, now fully revealed in new meaning. The energy was so intense my arms and legs felt like electrical current was flowing through them. I was weeping uncontrollably. Nothing mattered.

Several friends sat with me for a while (Chuck W. and Leesa S.), and then seeing the weeping, Bart Marshall came over and sat with me, understanding immediately what was happening. Leesa S. spoke to me, and her comment revealed with absolute clarity the abyss between the mind and Awareness. Sadness was overwhelming. There is an "abyss" the mind does not cross to what IS. The mind cannot touch IT.

Intense Awareness and energy continued in waves of intensity for nearly an hour; Emptiness prevailed. I eventually was able to rise to walk and leave the room before the next talk. Bart, steadfastly with me during this time, helped me up and we walked upstairs to a quiet library room upstairs. On the way, each step I took was as if stepping into Nothingness.

Awareness and energy continued in waves, and began to lessen in intensity and frequency, Bart left to allow space for solitude. After a while, I rejoined the meeting in the back corner of the room. When Paul Rezendes finished his session, he came over to see how I was and mentioned we could talk later. The compassion and love in this simple gesture by Paul began another crescendo of Awareness and energy. Out of exhaustion, the mind and body resisted slightly, and the energy did not again become overwhelming. Awareness remained. When the self is gone, Awareness remains.

Life seems to creep in. An hour later, when trying to help settle TAT's bill with the host of the meeting facility, I could not add up a column of "1's." The mind was still in shock, and an element of shock remained for months afterwards.

In retrospect, nothing "happened." Only a false belief in self was *taken away* by Grace and All that IS was revealed. No one was there or ever was there—me, Rose, anyone. In *The Three Books of the Absolute*, Richard Rose used the phrase, "All that remains is All." IT, Awareness, Source, the Absolute, simply IS.

Having heard many talks over the years seeking to convey the perspective of realization, it really does little good to talk about it, unless it inspires to action. We are not what our mind believes itself to be. For each person, what it is about their presumed identity that stands in the way of seeing what IS, is likely quite different. Different from what needed to be subtracted from me, or more accurately, seen through and taken from me, and different from the path of others whose accounts may be read.

There is a great paradox here, which makes no sense to the relative mind. I can't express fully the mystery of Awareness and Absolute Emptiness. Both exist forever, in an Eternal Moment. Nothingness, just as Awareness, defies words.

Bart Marshall addresses this paradox in his book, *Verses Regarding True Nature*. The 29th verse provides great insight into this paradox:

Why is there something rather than nothing?
Awareness.

Presence, Life, Aliveness, God...
It has many names.
Timeless, ever new—
It can be called Eternal Life.
There is no reason or explanation.
It just is.

It is not ancient—it arises only Now.
It is not distant—it is nearer
than you are to yourself.

It is the substance of Void
and Everything is made of it.

For those seeking to know the Self or the Truth, there is hope, there is a subtractive path that involves working with others and on yourself, to find Truth for its own sake. Your efforts are not in vain.

There is no formula. There is nothing to fear. It is always there, waiting, present at every moment, waiting for a moment of Between-ness, where Grace intervenes.

May Grace befall every seeker who seeks Truth without reservation.

Many words for something so simple, and something the mind cannot understand.

~ Mike Gegenheimer, November 2019