

## **The Degree To Which You Do Not Exist** ~ An exchange between Bart Marshall and Paul Constant

For some seekers, one-on-one correspondence with a teacher offers invaluable advice and unforgettable insight. In September 2006, the following email exchange occurred between Bart Marshall and Paul Constant. The correspondence was reformatted and some extraneous text was removed. The final version is presented below. To read more of Bart's material, visit [www.richardrose.org](http://www.richardrose.org) or [www.tatfoundation.org](http://www.tatfoundation.org).

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**Bart** (after answering Paul's question regarding Bart's published writings): What's been going on for you lately—spiritually and otherwise?

**Paul:** Life is moving along, and I am satisfied with things on the home and work fronts.

Spiritually, I ran out of pavement a long time ago. By that, I mean the road is gone but I'm relentlessly determined to understand the Awareness that watches Paul and his robotic motions each day. To put it into words seems to trivialize my yearning, but *I am not satisfied with me*. It took years to figure out intuition as it relates to logic, from the perspective of the Process Observer. However, I do not see the polar opposite of the Observer; I am not individually conscious of Awareness, nor do I see what I'm looking out from. Sometimes, an intuition tells me the reflection I witness might be me, but alas, *I do not know* because I have not experienced it.

In the latest [TAT Foundation] Forum ([September 2006](#)), Anima's comment resonated: "In the final mile...even the desire for finding the Self burns off. You continue your search for the sake of search. Ego is pretty much shriveled by this time and any desire for self-enhancement is gone completely."

Also, your comment (from Heidi) in the TAT workshop still rings through me: "God is just waiting for us to ask the right question."

Though I tremendously value TAT friends, I depend on no one (as a crutch) to help me. I have neither given up hope or hold an ego that says I deserve Grace because I've done my time. Rather, Grace will fall if that is the way it is meant to be. The best thing to do now is to open a few doors for others through SearchWithin and TAT.

**Bart:** I was moved reading your description of where you find yourself these days, and think you are in about as "good" a place as we seekers are capable of maneuvering ourselves into. From here it's not up to you—and of course never was anyway. I might only suggest that as you struggle to become "individually conscious of Awareness" and "see what I'm looking out from," that you allow for the possibility that those are impossible tasks because there is no individual consciousness, and there is no one looking out from anywhere. The degree to which you do not exist cannot be overstated. No one has ever become enlightened or Self-realized and no one ever will. No matter how "deep" we look, there is no one.

There is, however, what might be called the “ante room” to the Absolute—a realm between, say, no-thought and pure undifferentiated Awareness—where Awareness is somehow witnessing itself as Void. This is as good a description of the “experience” of Self-realization as any. The observer we think we are somehow stumbles into the ante room to the Absolute and “witnesses” No-thing being aware of itself as No-thing, simultaneously realizing that (No-thing being what it is) there is no possibility of there being an observer separate from it.

The idea/metaphor that I wanted to emphasize with the Heidi quote was not God waiting for us to ask the right question (because there are no answers), but God waiting for us to ask for Truth at all costs—and mean it, with all our heart and all our mind and all our soul.