

A Formula for Self-Discovery by Bob Ferguson

I'm often asked how a seeker can increase their progress along the path. Sometimes the person may feel stuck, or simply wants to know the most expedient way to increase their vector. Looking back over my own life, I've found that one factor stands out. When I became a conduit for realization, passing it along to others, things took off. It's as if we agree to become a link in a chain, and pass on down the line that which was handed to us from above. This is not only a theory, but something we can, and must, actively do in our day-to-day lives. One may argue that if all is one, then this is just another illusion, but the rationalizations of the ego come easy and keep us stuck in our own mud, while active work may put tension on us in a way the ego can't handle.

I can best relate how this works along the lines of my hobby with photography. I've spent a lot of my time in the great outdoors, and for years refused to share this experience with others due to a certain ego. I felt that if I took pictures of my trips, it would somehow cheapen the experience, take something away from the purity of the pristine settings. Somehow this changed, thank goodness, and I became willing and inspired to do the work to bring a bit of what I was seeing back with me to share with others. I broke down and bought a digital camera, and the magic began. Some inner part of me that had been denied came back to life, and with it a better relationship to everything involved. The entire experience of hiking was somehow changed for the better.

At about this same time, I also bought my first computer and entered the world of email and the Internet. I was able to stay in touch with fellow seekers from around the country, and to share my experiences in the search for definition, as with the photography. Somehow this changed the belief that spiritual work was a solitary affair only, and opened doors of opportunity I had never dreamed of. I started a web site, and became involved with an online confrontation group. I began to move within, the connection was made.

William Samuel talks about much the same thing. He describes getting answers from within as Glimpses, and stresses the importance of sharing these. It's a double-sided coin, much like the chicken and the egg dilemma, in that we must get answers in order to share them, in order to get answers. But the process is not that complicated, if we just make a move. We become a conduit, a transmitter of realization, and the more we give, the more we get.

One trap worth mentioning here is that of keeping this all in one's head. We may think that by getting a few answers in the beginning of our search, we are on the path and need not put out more effort. Being comfortable in our life, we may not wish to rock the boat of our habits, and

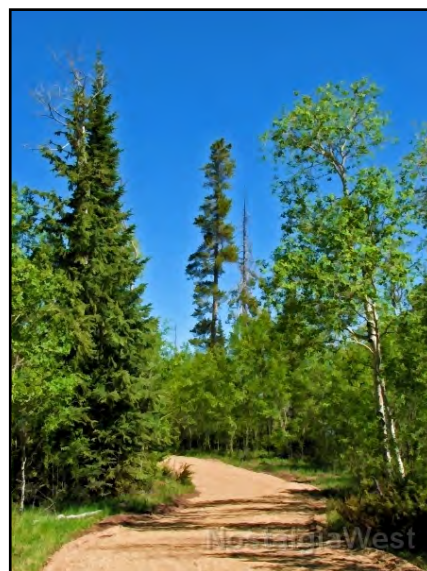


Photo: Bob Ferguson

thus keep whatever intuitions we receive to ourselves, thus miring our spirit in a dream world. Our intuitions bear fruit when they are put into action and tested in life, and when found sound, passed along to our fellows.

All of the above is what might be called a law of manifestation, an equation as Samuel calls it, and it will work for whatever desire applies it, spiritual or otherwise. If one wants money, success or security, this formula will work as well. This leads to a dilemma for some of us in that we may not consciously know what we really want, until we test ourselves by putting the formula into practice. This can be a paradox. If we believe we want enlightenment, and put it to the test through actions in our day-to-day life, we may find that what we really want is freedom from fear or a desire for power. While we have temporarily fooled ourselves, we have at least come to know ourselves better, and have thus made a move along the path of self-discovery. We may eventually uncover an intense longing for home, for something stable and real, which was only allowed to manifest as the mundane patterns of fear and worldly desire. This was long buried, and is what will provide the necessary pull to carry us farther within. To get real answers, we must come to have real and pressing questions.

One thing is for certain, if we do not make a move, a commitment to action, we will not leave the head-in-the-sand false safety of our dreams. A man asleep in his bed in a burning house may dream of oneness and ease as well as anxiety and need. On the other hand, waking up may take effort, be difficult and even unpleasant, but is most necessary, too.