

## **The Realization of Suzanne Segal**

~ An excerpt from the book *Collision with the Infinite*

As I drove through the wintry landscape on my way there, everything seemed more fluid. The mountains, trees, rocks, birds, sky were all losing their differences. As I gazed about, what I saw first was how they were one; then, as a second wave of perception, I saw the distinctions. But the perception of the substance they were all made of did not occur through the physical body. Rather, the vastness was perceiving itself out of itself at every point in itself. A lovely calm pervaded everything—no ecstasy, no bliss, just calm.

At the same time, something else began emerging which continues to this day—something I can only describe as a "thickening into unity" that was both experiential and perceptual. From that day forth I have had the constant experience of both moving through and being made of the "substance" of everything. This is what is experienced first—the stuff of unity, its texture, its



flavor, its substance. This non-localized, infinite substance can be perceived not with the eyes or ears or nose, but by the substance itself, out of itself. When the substance of unity encounters itself, it knows itself through its own sense organ. Form is like a drawing in the sand of oneness, where the drawing, the sand, and the finger that draws it are all one.

On my own with the vastness, I had encountered the very insight that did the work of exposing the fear and releasing its hold. I realized that the mind had been clinging tenaciously to the erroneous notion that the presence of fear meant something about the validity of the experience of no-self. Fear had tricked the mind into taking its presence to mean something that it did not. Fear was present, yes, but that was it! The presence of fear in no way invalidated the experience that no personal self existed. It only meant that fear was present.

Fear didn't need to go anywhere for the personal self to be seen to be non-existent. After all, where could it possibly go? It had never existed. Nothing needed to change or be eradicated; nothing needed to do anything at all but to be. Everything occurs simultaneously—form and emptiness, pain and enlightenment, fear and awakening. Once seen, it seemed so incredibly simple.

Fear's grip now broke, and joy arose at once. The experience of emptiness had given up its secret. The emptiness was seen to be nothing but the very substance of everything. I finally saw what had been in front of me the whole time but had been obscured by fear: There is not only no individual self, but also no other. No self, no other. Everything is made of the same substance of vastness.