

**This Above All:
A Journey of Self-Discovery**
by Tess Hughes
~ *An excerpt from the book*

What I learned from Seamus was how difficult it is for the ego to give up. "My will" defies and competes with "thy will" down to the last. I don't think any of us can give up by ourselves, only by Grace is that final step taken. The final step is nothing short of acceptance of our personal death, and this, as I found out, turns out to have been the root cause of all my suffering, fear of death. There is ultimately no death. All that dies is the belief that we were a separate something, which is the root cause of all our suffering. With the death of the ego, the death of the belief in ourselves as a separate entity, the identity shifts from the ego to what we really are, Awareness. This shift is not an intellectual understanding. It is much more than that. One's total being undergoes a profound shift. Life after this shift is experienced as peaceful.

This path has no guarantee of success, but we can, I think, make ourselves "vulnerable to grace," to use an expression I heard from Bart Marshall. Taking the energy we usually invest in ego and investing it intelligently and with determination in non-identification with ego makes us vulnerable to grace. Nowadays, I get mail from seekers, amongst them people who have been for a long time following the Non-dual path. The general pattern I see from them is one of denial of every experience they have, especially the negative ones. They tell me of some event that upset them and then write, "...but I know it didn't happen. It's not real. I know I don't exist." It strikes me that this is a refusal to look deep within themselves, to take their own experiences seriously, to take themselves seriously. The difficult thing for everyone is to start taking their relationship with themselves seriously, regardless of what teachers or anyone else says. It is sad that such sincere seekers are not getting the idea that we can't bypass ego or simply ditch our suffering but that we have to go through it. Of course, it would be wonderful if we could simply drop it, or wait to win the Enlightenment lottery but this, is a loser's game—magical thinking.

In Christian teachings they talk about two phases of the path: the active phase and the passive phase. The active phase is when we have to do everything we can to promote our own journey. A point comes when the path is taken out of our hands and this is the passive phase. But, you can't bypass the active phase. This is a process of coming home to one's Self, not to somebody else's Self. The way out of suffering is through it, and this means noticing and accepting our every thought, experience, and feeling, action, and so on and examining them to see what the driving force behind them is and where we picked it up. It means undoing our conformity, liberating ourselves from the shackles of conditioned thinking. We have to undo the straightjacket of learned thought we have been packaged into. And we have to start doing this ourselves. After a time it continues to unravel itself.

Richard Rose said "Beyond the mind is a golden find." All the true teachings are trying to point us in the same direction, to find what we are over and beyond our relative aspect. But we cannot deny or overlook the relative aspect of ourselves. The relative aspect continues as it had prior to the transformation—same personality, same preferences, same

circumstances and so on. This journey is not about fixing the ego, personality, circumstances and so on; it is about finding what we truly are, and this includes incorporating our relative aspect into the whole. My experience is that this happens automatically. As I said above, there was a period of adjustment to the different perspective on life.

Back in the marketplace! As I said earlier, it seems nobody around notices the transformation and this is fine. I don't like being the centre of attention anyway. I am still in awe of how great some other teachers are at articulating things about this journey, the process and the aftermath to the final realisation. I don't see myself as a teacher in the traditional sense, but at the same time I can't stop talking and writing about it. It is the only thing that interests me really. I am sure that this is the most important thing that I can share with the world, in whatever way I can. This book came naturally and easily to me.



***This Above All: A Journey of Self-Discovery* by Tess Hughes**

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What readers are saying....

Tess Hughes' long awaited spiritual memoir, This Above All, is a book of many rare qualities. The author, having preferred relative anonymity for several years, is increasingly becoming well known and influential in spiritual circles for her singular teachings. And this book will seal that reputation. This Above All is an antidote of sorts for the current age in that it does not take the easy road of diluting the message for mass appeal. ~ PS

There's a great story, here—but more importantly, there are clues to both the pitfalls on the path to Self-discovery and some gems about what might be the key—mainly self-inquiry. Tess is open about her experiences and her self-doubt along the way. You can palpably feel the trust that begins to develop as her intuition guides her all the way Home. She shares what she felt were the best practices, the ways and means, of getting there but is very clear that she had to go the last few steps alone. She is quite clear and direct but with a down-home charm that's very endearing. ~ LW

What a great book! It is courageously written with such care and clarity. This Above All is full of very practical practices to help focus the spiritual seeker. I feel enlivened by her 'trust and faith' as she supports and encourages others. It is a must read...again and again! ~ Ann