

## WHO WOULD I BE WITHOUT

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### *Awareness Log*

*This morning, while being still and quiet, I began an internal dialogue with intuition and the soft voice for God. I let the dialogue flow wherever it went without filtering or censoring.*

*I rested in observing for a while and eventually noticed a sentence beginning to form. The first few words appeared in solid confidence in front of the usual chatter—"The precipitous nature..."*

*I watched as I mentally stopped it because the words were not mine. My immediate reaction was to tell myself, No, I don't talk like this and these words do not make sense, I don't even know what they mean.*

*This all happened in an instant (I am still amazed at the speed of mind).*

*I realized I was resisting. The words persisted and held my attention in the foreground. I let go of my resistance—I wanted to see what would come next. I saw, or heard:*

*"The precipitous nature of your fear is insidious."*

*I had to look the words up in the dictionary.*

*The "quick and without thought" nature of your fear is "slowly and subtly harmful or destructive."*

"So, let's do a check-in. What are you feeling right now?" William sat across from Nathan as he did in every session, watching as Nathan shifted his attention inside.

"There is frustration and some fear in me right now," Nathan said, carefully wording his response in the manner he learned from the CD.

"I noticed the way you expressed your feelings, Nathan; are you willing to talk a little more about that?" William said.

"Sure," Nathan replied. "The frustration is around this music in my head that keeps playing—"

The therapist interrupted him. "No, I meant I wonder if you could tell me about why you said it the way you did. We will get back to the actual feelings in a minute."

"Oh." Nathan shifted in the purple chair and reached up to take off his glasses as he began to explain. He felt validated in some odd way because he was now teaching the teacher.

"I'm beginning to realize that I am not my thoughts or feelings. They are a part of my experience, yes, and they are genuine. In no way do I mean to imply I wish to stop them or deny their existence, not at all, but rather, I realize they are not me. When I say, I am frustrated, or I am angry, in my mind it implies that is all I am. If I remember to word it the way I did just now, it helps me to get in touch with the part of me that is beyond the feelings, the being in me that is always there, always peaceful. Somehow saying it the way I did serves to help me see the feelings more clearly, and they don't control me as much. Does that help?"

"Yes, thank you. So, you said you were frustrated and you began to explain before I stopped you, would you like to go back to that?"

"Yes," Nathan said, pausing to look inside for the frustration he felt earlier. "I said frustration and fear, right?"

"Yes," William said.

"There's this song playing in my head and I keep repeating one phrase over and over. It's been there all day and it won't stop. It's kind of pissing me off today and I'm afraid because I don't know how to make it stop." Nathan hesitated as the song got louder.

"I've realized in the last few months that it's been there most of my adult life—"

William interrupted Nathan in mid-sentence. "You've talked a lot about being quiet and still the last few months; do you think that has anything to do with what you are experiencing now?"

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"Yes," Nathan said without thinking, "the experience of being out of work and having time to slow down inspires me and has made me much more aware of the natural state of peace I seem to be glimpsing more and more often. I have been looking at log cabin magazines and yearning to leave for somewhere softer. The city doesn't feel natural for me anymore.

"I think I liked log cabins all along—at least I have a sense of that, and just blocked it out. I see now that I felt resentment toward people who were able to live like that, and I can see that was my way of covering over my envy.

"I walk in the park and woods a lot now, longing and yearning for stillness and quiet. Some days I just sit on a bench or log for hours. I really hope things are going to change and I think the hoping is adding to my resistance of my current situation. I really want to learn and see more about why I have this background sense of discomfort."

Nathan was sure there was more to it than he was able to realize.

"Can you see that things are changing?" William said. "Your recent and increasing experiences of stillness and quiet are contributing to your sense of being lost, or trapped between two worlds. And the inability to go back to corporate work you've expressed is simply another manifestation of the internal shift you're experiencing. I think all of these factors are quite real for you and they all play a part in your current state of frustration and discomfort. I am confident though, that you will eventually become more peaceful if you choose to stay on this path."

"Okay," William continued. "Let's get back to what you are feeling now. You were telling me about the song in your head?"

"Yea, I was saying, it won't stop. I realize now it was always there, every day for so many years. I remember joking with Kim about it a few years ago. Every morning I would wake up and one of the first thoughts in my mind was a song. Each day the song was different. Now I hate it. It scares me because I can't control it. It was fine all those years, I think, because I didn't know anything different, but over the last year or so I have had periods where there was no music. Anyway, I don't like it and I really want it to stop."

"Well, Nathan, this goes along with a few other things we've explored before, your experiences of going blank for example. Both are automatic responses your brain and body activate as a way to keep the brain occupied and unavailable to go or look somewhere you are afraid to look. Now, I'm keeping this simple naturally—there is a lot more to it than this—but for your understanding right now, does that make sense for you?"

"Yes, I think so," said Nathan.

"It is repetitive activity in which the brain engages to block out other things."

Nathan stopped listening and drifted off, thinking about the many times he went blank or stared at something with no thought at all. Within a few seconds, his attention returned to the room and reconnected with William's voice in mid-sentence.

"...like a child. The brain goes into protective mode or repetitive patterns. It is a learned behavior often stemming from trauma. Many people, including myself, believe that everyone experiences some level of trauma in their life. We each respond differently, and you are simply realizing and working to let go of the response mechanisms you developed that you no longer need.

"Do you remember the session when you said you were looking at the couch, staring at the patterns in the material and noticing all the detail in the fabric?"

Nathan nodded.

"Well, at that moment, I was asking you to search for painful memories from your childhood. If you remember, you did not respond to me with memories, you only spoke of how the couch was all you could see and you were unable to take your attention off of it. The music is the same kind of thing. As you are beginning to see, you can overcome it." William paused.

"More accurately, you are learning that if you acknowledge it is there, sit with it, and allow yourself to ease into whatever it is you are avoiding, it stops. Would you say that is true for you?"

"Yes," said Nathan, occupied in mental analysis. "I can see how in the past, especially early on when I was working with Miranda, I would go blank. I couldn't even remember the question she asked five seconds before the blankness came. I did learn that if I stayed with it, eventually the blankness went away. Even though I may have music in my head or I may go blank, I really do want to step into whatever it is that I am afraid of. I've gotten a lot of good out of each time I have done that."

"Yes, Nathan, you have, and I have watched you courageously take those steps. So, let's see about this music." William paused to consider what he would say next. "Try this, close your eyes..."