

# Session 2: The Greed for Knowledge

This deadly estrangement is characterized by the delusion of the mind that **there is such a thing as final certainty**. Even when we know that our scientific knowledge is approximate and changing, we are prone to defend our current knowledge as if it were absolutely certain. We do the same with our experience of our inner consciousness. Whatever we have learned so far, we are prone to claim this as the final truth about life, or at least the truth good enough to close down learning anything more. Or perhaps we have stopped thinking with what our parents told us, what we learned in college, grad school, or church. Surely there is some authority, my favorite peers, my religious group, the doctor, my last mentor, my uncle X or my aunt Y who can be trusted ultimately to tell me the truth.

This deadly estrangement is characterized by the addiction of the heart that cries out that **I want the answers**, and I want them now in order to be confident about my living, to be safe, to be successful, to be loved, or to simply to be happy with myself. For some deeply felt reason, I need to know, I need to possess in my mind the certainty that I know what I am doing.

This deadly estrangement is characterized by this trap of the will: **I fight being corrected**. When I say something I want my peers to respect but instead am shown my error or limitations, my “will” automatically fights to protect my view. Or when someone says something I don’t agree with, rather than listen deeply to that person, I fly away into my own way of looking at that topic. Even when I don’t speak back to the situation, my psyche speaks in me this deep and automatic fight with being corrected by anyone or anything at anytime.

## **This deadly estrangement is the typical mode of Escape from Reality by Enneagram Personality Type 5**

As a mode of escape personality type 5 is an escape from the *Transparent Attention* aspect of authenticity.. Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a gift for it – even a passion for it. Personality type 5 persons are the shy wallflowers, the recluses who are also busy-minded people. Their busy mindedness can be busy about almost anything. A personality type 5 might be like Howard Hughes busy with airplanes and old movies. A more moderately talented 5 might spend most of his or her waking time with face-in-a-book or scanning six news magazines every month. When challenged to begin an intense, intimate relation these shy ones experience a discomfoting demand to come out of their shells. This is especially hard if the challenge includes emotional honesty and accurate reporting on their secret lives. The 5’s escape has to do with hiding in the forests of the mind. The

typical 5 tends to come out energetically only in groups that express interest in whatever is the preoccupation of that 5's mind. Often that mental preoccupation is so specialized or so unorthodox that only a few satisfying companions can be found. And even those companions may feel it necessary to provide most of the initiative to have a real relationship. Type 5 persons may be talkative on many subjects, but they tend to be postponers with regard to putting their talk into action. The exceptions to this, like Howard Hughes or Georgia O'Keeffe, move out into the world in a whirlwind of genius and then retreat almost completely from participating the celebrity they may have occasioned.

Having a personality that overemphasizes mental gifts need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their intellectual gifts in compassionate ways. A. H. Almaas is a good example of a 5 with such intelligent compassion. The escape is identifying with the mental gifts and the mental products of those gifts as a substitute for the type of knowing that is transparent to the deeper matters of consciousness. Living in their minds rather than in their whole mysterious being results in being functionally stupid and also cruel through a neglect of other people, social concerns, and even one's own self.

*Greed* is a quality of this estrangement because the 5 is hoarding information and because living in the mind requires protection from the slings and arrows of ordinary life. This mode of escape requires some sort of ivory tower in which to retreat from that those aspect of life that challenge too deeply a treasured mental construction or perhaps my lack of thoughtfulness in an arena where wisdom was assumed. The 5 personality fears the insecurity of ignorance.

## **The Authenticity of Transparent Attention**

Curiosity is a type of trust in Reality; curiosity is a willingness to be open to an ever-deeper vision of Reality. "*Transparent Attention*" is a phrase that indicates a very profound curiosity, a curiosity that begins when we are infants and can remain throughout our lives. Our awareness makes discriminations before our mind begins its work. Before an infant's mind has a name for toe, infant consciousness begins to be aware that its toe is *me* in a way that the crib slat is not. Awareness makes a differentiation between *my* being and *my* mother's being before *my* mind has a name for mother or for self. As the mind learns names and learns to use them, consciousness has a capacity to remain clear that the names are not the experiences named. Consciousness can remain connected to the all-encompassing Reality that is more than the named things. As adults we typically confuse our naming process with the process of Reality, but it is still possible for us to experience *Reality beyond the naming*. This is *Transparent Attention*.

As adults we can find ourselves in a state somewhat like the state that an infant experiences before the symbol-using mind goes to work naming things and building sentences. With the aid of language and the consciousness that the language capacity fosters, we can live our lives more consciously than the infant. But it remains useful to

imagine ourselves having a lasting infant capacity to be a consciousness noticing consciousness without a word for consciousness. When we as adults rest in such raw consciousness, we can watch the mind do its work of distinguishing things with names and relating those named things in useful patterns for our living. Such differentiation of individual things from the whole may be relatively true, yet the naming might have been different, and the whole does not disappear. *Transparent Attention* pays attention to the fact that the names are not the realities named. Furthermore, in *Transparent Attention* we can see that the names only imperfectly reflect the realities named.

Let us notice that *Transparent Attention* is taking place within the contemplative or “I” approach to Truth. We are not being outwardly-focused empirical scientists, but contemplators when we describe how *Transparent Attention* can differentiate specific things from the enduring Every-Thing-Ness without losing the awareness that all things participate in an overarching Every-Thing-Ness. As we continue to pay attention to our named things we can also notice that all these things come into being, stay a while, and go out of being. This is true even of our ways of naming things. All things and all perspectives upon those things come out of an enduring No-Thing-Ness and return to that No-Thing-Ness. This No-Thing-Ness can also be seen as the Every-Thing-Ness in which all things coexist. Such awareness is a deep adult experience of *Transparent Attention*. If, however, our awareness focuses only on our mental representations, we can forget that these separately named things are also connected in an all-encompassing expanse of Reality. Forgetting this connectedness is most serious when we assume that the “I” who rationally knows things is separate from the things we know. It is a delusion for us to assume that I am “over here” and the things known by me are “over there.” I the knower and the things I know are interlaced. So, “here and there,” “them and me,” are mental discriminations within an overall inclusiveness. In Reality, each of us is an inseparable, ongoing, flowing part of an All-encompassing Every-Thing-Ness. This awareness we can have, not by mental effort, but simply by paying attention.

Here is another clue for describing *Transparent Attention*: If we read or write perceptive poetry, we can notice that our mind can be used to assist our consciousness to see past the mind into something deeper. An accomplished poet works with the realization that the reader of the poet’s poems must see for himself or herself the vision that inspired the poems. Through creating poems, the poet can make contact with the “No Self” of the hearer or reader of the poems. The poems themselves are imperfect vessels of truth, but the fragile poem of the poet can establish an “No Self” to “No Self” connection with the hearer of the poem. Such connections reveals a *brilliancy* of “knowing” that is beyond the ordinary sense of simply sharing between two minds some acquired knowledge that can be stored in another mind.

The phrase “*interior dialogue*” is useful for indicating the communal quality of *Transparent Attention*. Many voices speak to us. Many writers and personally known persons grab us with bits of vision into our own lives. This inward community of voices have a life of their own – speaking to us constantly. And yet this is a solitary experience. These are our community of voices and we have some power to choose who to listen to and who to “cast back into the abyss.” Further, we speak back to these

persons of our interior dialogue. And we can talk with them about what they know about experiencing and living the “No Self” of profound humanness. Though this sea of voices come to us without our consent, we are not their victim. As the facilitator of my inner council of voices, I have considerable power to choose who to talk with and how to talk back to them. I live with a surprisingly large inward company of companions who travel with me into the realization of the “No Self” that we “all Are.”

This dialogue of *Transparent Attention* sees both the qualities of the “No Self” and our many escapes from those qualities. We can come to be aware of our own unconsciousness of our “No Self,” and we can become aware of our resistance to consciously being the being that we are. In *Transparent Attention* we can also come to notice the trustworthiness of Reality and the futility of our despairing flight from or fight with Reality. Both trust and despair are core topics of *Transparent Attention*.

*Transparent Attention* can break through the habits of our personality-controlled mind and manifest as a *state of being* that happens to us from time to time. We can also journey into an enjoyment of *Transparent Attention* as an ongoing dynamic of the “No Self” that we never need to leave.

### **Exercises:**

1. With what descriptions of estangment do you identify in these readings?
2. What descriptions of authenticity most caught your attention.
3. Do with a partner (or by yourself) the following repeating-question exercise: (One partner asks the question, listens to an answer, says thank you, and repeats the question. The exploring partner keeps answering this same question over and over. Do this for five minutes. Then switch questioner and answerer and repeat the process.)

#### **What answers in life do you want?**

Repeat the process with this question:

#### **When do you resent being corrected?**

4. Share or write your reflections on this session.