



## Warnings for the Return to Enlightenment

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Many seek to "walk the path to enlightenment" but do they know what it really involves? The destination is commonly described as a state of "full awareness", a feeling of "non-self" or "oneness with all", the "unmanifested" or even constant happiness. For this article, we can simply state that enlightenment is a state of "full awareness".

One should consider and prepare for some of the potential discomforts when striving to attain enlightenment. These discomforts are due to the mental, emotional and even physical "growing pains" that emerge with progress. Since each person is different, the content, intensity, and duration of the discomforts will vary but everyone is always able to stop and rest or just stop along the way.

### **Determination, courage, faith and attention are requirements for full awareness**

One needs great determination to attain full awareness and the courage to do all that is necessary while having only the faith that they will be better than before. Attention is vital since it enables one to become aware of the sparkle of "light at the end of the tunnel". That sparkle fuels the determination.

Courage is necessary to "rise to the challenge" to fully "face oneself" in all capacities and resolve conflicts in themselves and their environment. One progresses when solutions eliminate obstructions to full awareness. For example, in the common story of the Buddha, there is practically no mention of the emotional turmoil that Prince Siddhartha may have felt while deciding to leave his family to become an ascetic on his pursuit of enlightenment and Buddhahood. As obstructions fall away one may feel a sense of increased freedom, "largeness", peace and clarity.

### **Prepare for conflicts and unexpected realizations**

Conflicts will likely arise as one becomes more aware of themselves and their environment. As one becomes more self-aware from different perspectives and contexts what normally brought pleasure may instead bring suffering. An avid sport fisherman may see their fishing pole as a tool of suffering or nourishment instead of harmless entertainment. One may realize that once beneficial relationships are actually detrimental then actually feel thankful for those relationships because they contained valuable "lessons". One might see themselves as hindering and/or being hindered in other relationships via a "comfortable" routine.

Essentially, as one becomes more aware and consequently happier they also become more aware of how unhappy they truly were.

There are three options for conflicts: 1) eliminate the blockage and attain increased awareness 2) avoid deciding and live in conflict 3) accept the condition, return to "comfortable" life and cease progression.

One will change regardless of the decision. Option 1 leads to progress, option 2 can not be maintained very long and option 3 does not mean a true return to the previous condition. Option 3 causes one to deny, repress the conflict or leave them with the haunting curiosity of "what could have been" and resentment will likely emerge.

### **Prepare for apparent contradictions**

As awareness increases contradictions become apparent. They may appear in self-awareness, environmental awareness as well as one's studies and practices. These may be considered a sign of progress. The bothersome feeling of a contradiction is the feeling there are concepts or information that is missing to resolve the disparity.

For example, if someone were to state "a square is a rectangle but a rectangle is not a square. The statement seems false yet one may sense some hesitation when declaring this statement false. But gaining an understanding of the "underlying" information resolves the contradiction. Both are four-sided objects where opposite sides are parallel and contain one right angle. However, all four sides of the square are equal length but only opposite sides of the rectangle are equal length. Thus, one may consider a square to be a "short" rectangle.

### **The journey is actively passive**

One actively seeks a mental and emotional state that allows for acceptance of full awareness. Humans participate in a variety of practices to enable them to become enlightened. They choose among options as meditation, prayer, dietary regulations and seclusion. These practices do not guarantee full awareness or enlightenment but encourage the mental and emotional state to accept it. This is comparable to straining to raise one's eyelids to "see the light".

### Full awareness includes full awareness of emotions

The destination of full awareness is happiness and joy. But to fully experience those emotions one needs to feel and feel "through" all of their emotions. Feeling and releasing all accumulated and repressed emotions can be a very painful process. "Feeling through" involves fully experiencing the emotion and letting it pass in until only happiness and joy remains. These accumulated emotions may or may not have memories attached to them.

It is in the darkest of the dark that we can see the tiniest light. But when fixed on that tiny light it grows and becomes all encompassing.

### Clear Motivation

If one finds happiness in the pursuit or preparation for enlightenment and full awareness but avoid the conflicts or potential personal changes thus they will continue to enjoy preparation without progress.

If one seeks "freedom" from discomfort and includes "detachment" from their emotions. They will likely find more discomfort as their awareness increases. They also risk becoming unaware emotionally to avoid the discomfort thus preventing full awareness.

If one who senses a profound form of happiness that is beyond the material and situational is possible then they ready for the journey. If they are willing to evolve, knowing without a doubt that full-awareness waiting for them and having a steadfast determination to receive it will likely find it.

### Full awareness in daily living

When becoming fully aware, life and the world begin to appear different as well as one's place in it. Living a life of full-awareness is often not compatible with one's unaware life. As a consequence, life begins to change in unforeseen ways. Change may be uncomfortable but what drives one "forward" is knowing that all is good, the journey was worthwhile and faith that life can only get better.

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