

The Seekers Forum Transcript

Presence, Passion, and Purpose: An Interview with Adyashanti

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Mark: Hello, Adya, it's so good to see you again.

Adyashanti: Thank you, Mark. It's nice to be able to chat with you again.

Mark: Thanks. I'd like to start with talking about insecurity, which is such a prominent issue for so many people these days. You say that the door to God is the insecurity of not knowing anything. How does that apply to what's happening today?

Adyashanti: That's actually an interesting question. It's a great question. It all goes back to what I really mean by insecurity. To not know is a kind of insecurity, in any situation, whether it's the big not knowing of whatever the greatest existential reality is, or it's just not knowing how you're going to pay your bills at the end of the month. All those have an insecurity as part of the component. Of course, I think what people are dealing with now, it's a little bit different, there is a lot of insecurity, but there's also a lot of-- it's more than insecurity. It's insecurity plus the anxiety that people have over what they often feel is certain existential threats even, whether it's the environment or the political situation as people kinda freaked out understandably so.

The [unclear] that was going around. These are just a few of the challenges we face. Inherent in any of those is unpredictability breaks down. In one sense and sort of a deep spiritual inquiry sense, we aim for that in a sense. We don't necessarily want all the structure of our lives to fall apart, of course, but we aim to enter into that unknown place because that's how we get beyond whatever our own conceptual patterns of thinking and acting and reacting are. Yet, at the same time, it's really important for I think any human being to have some resource internally of a stability. I guess you could even call that a certain kind of security that comes with the deeper sense of freedom. The both insecurities are related, but I also don't think they're quite exactly the same, but they're big issues, for sure, especially right now.

Mark: How does this move us toward the door to God that you're talking about, living with this level of uncertainty and fragility?

Adyashanti: Well, it's a fine line there. If we can step up to the unknown quality because that's really what's at the heart of what we're calling insecurity, we're all facing a whole lot of unknowns. To the extent that we can step up and step into that feeling of the unknown because we do have almost even a biological protective mechanism. When we're in insecure situations, we are biologically hooked up to go on hypervigilant mode. The adrenalin increases a little bit. Our vision gets a little more acute. Our hearing gets more acute, from a survival instinct really. Yet, most of us, we're not out there on the plains of the Serengeti wondering the next thing that's going to pounce on us, but we do feel, like I said, certain existential threats.

Each person is different, too, for how much insecurity-- A certain amount of insecurity is what gives you that feeling of adventure and leaning into something and discovery, a newness, that kind of childhood wonder. If you go a little too far, and what's too far differs from person to person, they go over this event horizon, and it doesn't feel so adventurous anymore, it feels dangerous. It doesn't feel like you're living in a state of discovery. You start to feel like you're living in a state of overwhelm.

I think that needs to be attended to in a way. From what I've seen, each person is actually quite uniquely configured to how much insecurity they're comfortable with. Of course, our degree of spiritual insight helps with that tremendously. When we can really experience and

feel ourselves to be something, we do like our labels, and I use them all the time, of course, but to experience ourselves to be something like a kind of living mystery, whatever we call that, whether we call it consciousness or spirit, because we give it a name doesn't mean we've actually got it nice, conceptually all worked out in our minds.

I do think to have some experience, deeper experience of the truth of our being makes that kind of insecurity land much easier because we ourselves are a living unknown. We get more used to that. Yet, the kind of insecurity we face in the world, I think it's also acting or can act, we'll see which way it goes, but it can act as a kind of wake up call. When things aren't going well, we really start to pay attention. That goes in a way that is conflicted and agitated, and sometimes it goes in the way of, we're actually open to new possibilities.

Mark: Aren't the conflict and agitation necessary? I like that you say that enlightenment is a destructive process. It has nothing to do with becoming better or being happier. It's about crumbling away of untruth. Isn't being in our discomfort zone a benefit?

Adyashanti: Sure, spiritually speaking, absolutely. Certainly, in a tradition I came from in Zen, they go out of their way to get you out of your comfort zone because our comfort zone is our conditioned zone. In that sense, sure, because when things are insecure and unknown and the future seems quite unknown, certainly we pay a lot more attention. Also, we're in an atmosphere where we can make these bigger leaps of insight.

That's why spiritual traditions have imposed a certain amount of insecurity, whether that was having people meditate on death or things that made them feel somewhat uncomfortable because it does put you in this very powerful-- I think almost like a pregnancy. I remember Rumi's teacher used to joke with him about being pregnant, which didn't make Rumi terribly happy, but there is a sense of that. Like you're pregnant with a mystery, you don't understand yet.

Yes, the great contemplative traditions have seen the very kind of insecurity that people are feeling as spiritually, potentially very advantageous because it is a destructive process, not in a destructive process when I say that awakening or enlightenment is a destructive process. I don't mean that in some sense that it destroys us, but it's seen through things that we thought were true and then realizing it wasn't.

Mark: It destroys each story.

Adyashanti: It seemed true who we thought we were, realizing we were wrong. It destroys the narrative, absolutely.

Mark: Right. Exactly.

Adyashanti: We do love our narratives.

[laughter]

Mark: We do. We live by them.

Adyashanti: We absolutely live by them. The thing is, everybody has one, even if you don't think you have one.

Mark: Oh God.

Adyashanti: You have one anyway.

Mark: Yes. I'm a memoir writer, so I know this very well. [laughs]

Adyashanti: Right, you know very, very well. Even to decide to get up and walk across the kitchen floor and get a piece of cheese rather than a cracker to eat, there's some narrative that's going through our mind that's dictating what we're doing. There's some evaluating mechanism, interpreting mechanism that's occurring most of the time. One of the nice things when we have moments of great spiritual clarity is we're outside that interpretive mechanism. We're not looking through it. It's like taking a pair of glasses off that you didn't know that you had and things look a bit different.

Mark: A lot different.

Adyashanti: A lot different, right.

Mark: I was speaking to someone yesterday, and he said something really provocative to me, and I wanted to ask you about. This is somebody who has been in the spiritual world for over fifty years. He was a Swami at one time, and he's feeling very demoralized with what's going on in the world, and he said to me, "What good is all of this enlightenment doing? Look at this suffering. Look what's going on. Look at this. What good is making a sand mandala or doing this? What is it really doing?" I said, "I really need to ask Adya that question." It's obviously unanswerable, but what does it strike in you?

Adyashanti: Well, first of all, I get it. I get that. However long these deep contemplate of practices and people have been having insights have been going on for thousands of years, and here we are in this particularly chaotic environment. It's easy to reflect and go, "Well, this didn't seem to save us from getting here," although I would question whether that's what the whole enlightenment impulse is all about to begin with. Of course, I think we want to have as nice of a place for as many beings, even more than human beings, with beings as possible.

I have always felt like-- I call it the spiritual instinct. I do that to differentiate it between the way that instinct gets interpreted by our egos as we receive that instinct and our egos. Our egos turn it into what I want from spirituality. That's understandable because people lead difficult, challenging lives, and they hope they can have the happy, free experience of being. We put on to the spiritual instinct, our personal hopes and dreams, but if we really were to just attend to the instinct itself, and I do think it is more like an instinct than a desire, that it is coming from our depth, whether we call that our true nature or consciousness as such, or whatever we want to call our deepest nature.

I think it is coming from that deeper nature, it has an instinct to be deeply conscious of itself. I think that's the spiritual instinct, that's what the spiritual instinct is aiming at. As many of us know who've been into spirituality for a while, it will put us through some really nice life experiences and some very, very difficult experiences in order to accomplish its task. On a human level, I think most people hope that the enlightenment thing will make their lives better, even maybe collectively, that would be a nice idea if it made it better, and yet, I don't know that as unspiritual as it sounds, I don't know that's really the agenda of the spiritual instinct itself, which doesn't mean that that agenda therefore doesn't have worth.

It certainly has worth, but I'm not so sure. I think it's also a good question because those of us who are into awakening and the work that I do as a spiritual teacher and all that, I think it is good for us to be reminded from time to time because it's easy to get caught in your little bunker and the way things look from where you are. I remember years ago, there was this prevailing idea in the spiritual communities and through the Bay Area, a place of compared to most of the world, great wealth and all sorts of advantages you might say.

There was this prevailing idea like, "The whole world is on the cusp of a great awakening." I used to say, "Maybe around here where you all have very little trouble paying your bills." You're paying your bills, you're not worried about your children getting murdered. There's a lot of things that you have going for you that other parts of the world might look a little bit different.

I do think it's healthy for us to, every now and then, just step back and go, "Okay, this awakening piece is perhaps the biggest piece for those of us who are called to it, that life orientation piece, but it's good for us to be reminded that it's not the only piece of human experience that's important." There are all sorts of different dimensions to us and things that we hold important. Enlightenment for me is at the top of my list, but it doesn't occupy the only thing on the list, if that make sense.

Mark: It does. Maslow's pyramid of survival, enlightenment is up here, but still you have to take care of the foundational levels to have the privilege to go off on a retreat or to spend that much time looking inward.

Adyashanti: Sure, it's helpful. You don't necessarily have to have everything together to have an awakening experience like some people in some pretty terrible life situations of how that happened, and yet, I think there is a kind of truth, too. If you're getting-- Your survival instinct is getting ramped up on a daily basis because you don't know where your next meal is coming from or can you make the payment of the house, it's going to make it a little harder to settle down into a meditation or contemplation when you're thinking like, "Where am I just going to get the next meal?"

I think all those considerations to where's your next meal to deep spiritual contemplation, all those and everything in between, those various agendas, they each have a part to play. Like I said, I think those of us who really-- spirituality is our life, it's like when anything's our life, the advantage of that is we get really focused and can channel a lot of intention and energy into it. The disadvantage is that we can get a little bit of tunnel vision, and we're looking at everything through our spiritual lens where, as challenging it is, I think it does get people, I'm sure, all over the all over the world to go like, "Hey, wait a minute. My spiritual pursuit doesn't seem to have solved this great human dilemma or many of them that we have going." I think that's a positive thing to consider because then it gets us from being stuck with wherever we might tend to get stuck in whatever point of view is.

Mark: You said that we can reorient our life trajectory toward divinity, toward our divinity, returning to the spiritual perspective, and then you say, "Imagine your human life as what you have come to redeem." Can you tell me what you mean by redemption?

Adyashanti: Sure. I actually looked it up one day because I had the same question. I was going to teach writing something on it, I found this word coming into my vocabulary, which hadn't been there for a long, long time, hadn't thought in that context, so I looked it up in the dictionary. I was really pleasant with what I found because it fit my experience that I was

trying to convey which what it said was, “It is to return something or someone to their natural condition of wholeness.”

Mark: Oh, beautiful.

Adyashanti: I was like, “That’s as good as I could hope for. That’s kind of what I was getting at.” When we get away from the theology around redemption and the religious perspectives, and we come back to, there is something that’s an actual, real, lived human experience, and that human experience feels very much like redemption. We can be hit with that sense of freedom and well-being, and all of a sudden, it just feels like everything’s that’s ever happened has been forgiven. It just feels that way.

Now, you can make a theology of that, but we don’t actually need to make a theology if we don’t want to. I think it’s good for us to acknowledge that it is a transformative human experience. It’s been around for thousands and thousands of years that people are trying to articulate when they use a word like redemption. Redemption implies that there’s something wrong or sinful. That’s the theology. That’s not the actual experience.

The experience cuts through even whatever narrative I could come up with between the two of us to talk about redemption. We could come up with a narrative or a story or an explanation, and yet, the experience of it is going to be something that doesn’t necessarily depend upon a narrative. I think awakening itself is a redemptive moment. It shows us who and what we really are. The feeling of that is it just redeems a whole lot of confusion, and for some people, it redeemed a whole lot of shame or guilt, a lot of things can be returned to their natural condition. That’s how I like to use the term when I do use it.

Mark: It has nothing to do with the original sin, it has nothing to do with being broken, it has nothing to do with being fallen, it’s about bringing our full value, remembering who we are.

Adyashanti: Yes. It doesn’t have anything to do with some ultimate existential sense of fallenness. Again, if we look at like even the fall or original sin and then you go to the East, they got karma, “Boy, you must’ve really screwed up in some past life because look at how terrible your life is today. You must have been a hell of a character before.” I know it’s much more complicated than that. I understand I’m dumbing down some of the theology around karma. Yet every, every tradition that I know has its own explanation for, again, something’s very universal.

For me, the universal thing begins when you and I become self-conscious. The moment we’re aware that we exist as a being in life at that moment, that moment is both a great discovery. Because it’s exciting, if you can remember back to recognizing yourself in the mirror as a kid at two and a half to three and a half and going “That’s me,” man, do kids get excited when they can do that. It’s this great discovery, but it’s also a great loss. Because now you’re separate, now you’re isolated, and now you can reflect upon the separate being that you think and feel yourself to be, and you can make value judgments and that’s the fall.

It’s not an actual existential fall from some other worldly heaven, divine place. It’s something that everybody that’s ever developed self-consciousness or nearly everybody is going to go through. That’s what they’re going to go through. Then they’re going to wonder “What’s wrong with me? Because everybody else seems to be doing this thing a bit better than I am or has more together than I do.” Then you grow up and if you’re lucky, you start to realize like,

“Hmm, the adults in the room don’t really have it as together as I thought they did.” That’s kind of liberating.

Mark: It is liberating.

Adyashanti: And then you’re one of the adults that doesn’t have it together as you thought you would.

Mark: Adya, in this time, a lot of folks feel stuck as the uncertainties we were talking about and the way that we’ve become circumscribed in what we can do. You talk about making effortless effort. How can we be in a moment like this making effort without getting into struggle, because there’s so much that we can’t control? People want to feel like they’re empowered and there’s agency, but not that old struggling, clinging feeling, what would you recommend?

Adyashanti: Another really great question, I think because it has a paradox. The resolution point is a paradox. I think it’s a few things. I think it’s starting off realizing that, especially now, probably always, but especially now, it’s important for everybody to have a little bit of spiritual hygiene each day. We brush our teeth, we clean our bodies, we do all this kind of physical hygiene. We try to eat pretty good food, lots of things, but then it skips our mind that maybe a little spiritual hygiene would be useful because we’re getting so much incoming information and so much of that information right now feels threatening or scary or de-stabilizing or whatever it feels like.

I think an acknowledgment like a little bit of taking care of your spiritual business every day, some clearing exercise, whether it’s Qigong or Tai Chi or a little bit of meditation or something to clear out the field a little bit. Also, Mark, because I’ve really been contemplating, actually before the coronavirus. I was starting to teach on orienting your life in a certain way because what I’ve seen for years, I’ve seen lots of people have some and some of them, some pretty deep awakening experiences and sometimes things fall together when that happens, and sometimes they just end up sort of more disoriented than they were when they began with this.

This goes back to a narrative a little bit. I’m not a big fan of narratives of course. But I think especially now what we really need to do, you realize that number one, because of so much happening so fast and so much insecurity that it’s going to be easy for most people to feel somewhat overwhelmed. What I did, I did this about a month ago. I realized, “Okay, Adya, you’re watching the news.” Because I like to keep up with going and I like to watch the news of the world. I’m well, and more well-informed than I think most people would imagine that I am. They think I’m up in some little cave at the top of a mountain isolated from anything difficult in life. That’s not the way it goes for anybody.

What I realized, Mark, is, and I thought, okay, what I seem to be hearing after I’ve ingested about forty-five minutes of news, whether it’s newspapers or TV or Internet or whatever I realized after that, it’s pretty much all a repeat. The repeat is usually a directed, conscious intention to inflame outrage.

Mark: That’s right.

Adyashanti: Whatever side of the aisles you may be on, but that’s what pays the bills, gets the advertisers in, gets people watching. I just made a conscious intention decision. I thought,

“I’m not going to be part of that.” I’m going to take in enough, because I want to be informed. I think it’s important to be informed because that can dictate activity or changes for myself and yet, forty-five minutes in any given day is plenty amount of time to know what’s going on and do a pretty decent job of it.

Part of that, it was a hygiene. Just bombarded with this stuff for six, eight hours a day that I know a lot of people are, all you’re doing is just re-triggering your survival instinct over and over and over. Hey, if there was something good for society that was going to come out of that, great. Sometimes you got to make sacrifices, but for the most part, it’s just making people feel more anxious than they need to, more out of control, their lives feel more meaningless.

There’s that. There’s doing a re-evaluation and then the second thing I really looked at, Mark, was I think it really when there’s so much negativity going on, right, in the world and challenges are great and they’re big and they’re real, we can’t just hide from them, I think it’s really important that we know what we stand for. I don’t mean necessarily in the sense of some great ideology we’re going to impose upon the world. I mean more in the sense of principles if that makes sense. In the last couple of years, I’ve called them soul values.

When you check into the deepest part that you know, that whether you’ve had awakening or no awakening, but whatever, the deepest place, the most centered, clear, open, wise place that you have experienced and then you look at that and go, “Okay, what does that dimension of being, what does it value, what’s important to it?” What I always find is from that level, it’s not only, what’s important for me, it’s what important for us, for everybody. It has these trends, this self-transcendence aspect to it.

I looked at this many, many years ago, and found that my two, what I now would call soul values have always been truth, that’s what I want, who am I, what is life, what’s going on, and love. The love part, that sounds very spiritual and in one sense, maybe it is. The love part really came out of a recognition as a twenty-year-old kid that my life was going to have impact, like anybody’s life has impact, you meet on every given day. I thought there’s a lot of insanity around this place and I would like to have be it as benevolent of a presence as I could be in this life. That seems like a worthwhile thing to aim at as long as it’s true.

These two things line up and, and those were life orientations before I even consciously knew they were life orientations. When I reflected upon them, I went, “Oh, those have been life orientations since I was a child really.” Then they kind of rolled over into my spiritual life because they fit really well and they still are today. And the reason I say that when we connect in with these principles, because first of all, the things that used to give us these orienting principles in life, the religious structures, or sometimes even political structures, like we were, I mean -- In my generation, we were grown and taught to almost worship, the Constitution. Right? It was almost a religious article of faith and there’s a lot of good stuff in that constitution, I think.

We had this sort of orientation towards it but when the things that gave us our sort of moral structure were from the outside and all that’s being torn apart now. Well, where are you going to find that? You better be able to look in inside and this isn’t like a five minute thing. I’ve had people contemplate this for six months and say, “I’m starting to get the hang of it now. I’m starting to get what my true nature or my soul that soulful part of that deepest,” however you want to find out. “I’m starting to get a sense of what it values and in every moment,”

right, because if you have like, truth, or love, let's say, the nice thing about that kind of principle is it's relevant in every moment in every situation until the last breath.

I think right now, when we have so many challenges, number one, if you don't have your own center, the world's going to define it for you, but your psyche is going to almost unconsciously go out there and it's going to attach at whatever gives it meaning, because that's what we're hooked up to do. And I'm talking about bringing conscious attention to a process that's often surprisingly unconscious, automatic. Then referencing that, every day you watch that news, and you see the next challenging thing, and you look at that, and you could go into the fear response, you could go into the anger response, you could go into many responses and you can also go, "Okay, what if I looked at this and took in this information and related to it from that deepest? What if I was going to relate to this in the most truthful, loving way that comes to me, whatever that might be?"

That might be, "Hey, I just need to sit down right now mellow out on the couch so I don't drive my family crazy," or it might mean going out there, getting your protest sign and fighting a good fight. It can mean a lot of different things for a lot of different people, but that's what I see right now. A lot of human beings unmoored from the traditional structures that define their lives, and then players coming in that know how to play that game and they'll create it for you around their own advantage. Yet, it also for the people who will be listening to this program, I think, and hopefully more as well, but it really, if you reflect upon it, it does become really important to do this in a really conscious way because I don't find it, I find that even our true nature has it's paradoxical qualities.

Part of it is sort of very much sort of a transcendent witness, uninvolved, 'whatever happens, happens,' that whole sense of, of non-attachment and that's very, very, at least in my experience, that's part of the dimension of being that comprises us. What I also find strangely and paradoxically, is that almost right in that the middle of that transcendent, kind of very witness place, it's very unattached to what's happening, there's also, almost, it's not quite its opposite, but something that feels-- I mean, that's the unity right? Where you feel a deep, intimate connection with existence. I caught the eye of the gaze of eternity, is that which is never caught and defined by what's happening in the world of time and space. Boy, is that a great thing to run into.

Then there's spirit as it shows up as the world and as our human life and our human existence and when we get that part of the spiritual, the imminent as well as the transcendent, then there's a real caring, it's a neat caring for what's- but the nice thing is, it's caring, but it's still connected to the gaze of eternity. It's caring with all the terrible anxiety or, "Gosh, it might not end up the way I want it to," but almost assuredly. Let's just get over that and move on. That's a given. I hope the world ends up in a better space than I can imagine. I want that to happen. I want myself to come up limited and short when I can see what's possible.

Mark: Effortless effort comes from making effort and remaining connected to the transcendent.

Adyashanti: That's the thank you for that tie in, Mark. Thank you. Actually that's a great way to tie it in because the effortless part is having some connection to that sense of transcendence. The peace that surpasses all understanding, right, they're just like, "Oh, everything seems okay, even though it's a disaster."

Mark: I still want to take action.

Adyashanti: That's it -- And I might still be motivated to take to take action. It's easy to talk to you about this, because I can tell just intrinsically, in your experience, you get this, this is a very hard thing; paradoxical truths are very hard to explain to somebody who's not quite at the place where they can hold two opposites at the same time, that's what I find, that every deeper experience of reality I ever bumped into, had this wonderful sense of containing total opposites, but with no sense of conflict at all. We can be in that sense where we're kind of abiding just in the will of the world or in the little bit older few decades ago, they might have been abiding by the will of God, something like that.

What happens is what happens and the sense of peace that comes with that, without disconnecting yourself from the sense that you care. And this world is also divine. Divinity won't disappear if the world disappears, but that doesn't mean that I want the world to disappear. This is about the most extraordinary manifestation I think anybody could dream up. I would hope that that people can, in their own ways, touch upon those two places, like the place that cares, I don't think that's hard for most people, the place that cares, but just underneath that almost, a little bit deeper, a little more subtle, is also that sense that, "Okay, all is well. It's a disaster, but all is well."

Mark: Both are true.

Adyashanti: Both are true. You understand this, because you've already experienced this. Anybody that's experienced it, they almost immediately recognize it, and then if you haven't, then it's really hard, like, "How the hell can two totally opposite things occupy the same space and be true at the same time?" Well, that's the wonder of reality.

Mark: Welcome to real life.

Adyashanti: Welcome to real life. That's so true and we're all living examples of this. I mean, we're living out this principle. We can have totally opposite characteristics simultaneously existing.

Mark: Cool. That's what it is.

Adyashanti: That's pretty cool.

Mark: A couple more questions, Adya. I want to ask you about grace. Is grace something that we participate in? Is grace something that arrives of its own accord? Is it a combination of those? How can people recognize grace in their lives in the midst of this mess?

Adyashanti: Well, this is another one of those terms that I went and looked up. I was using it so much, I thought, "I know what it means for me, but I wonder what it means, for the rest of the world." And the first thing that I found when I looked it up was unearned merit; and I thought, if we could get out of there like the narrative about what all that story might be, and get back to the experience, the experience of grace is that something happened that you feel like you didn't create, you didn't manufacture, you couldn't come up to the state of being fully worthy of it, but neither are you unworthy of it. It's kind of back to that paradox.

In my experience, yes, grace can hit at any old time. We hear stories of it all the time in lots of different contexts where someone's stuck in some difficult internal place and sometimes almost out of the blue, some lightning bolt of clarity strikes them. Well, you can't take much responsibility for that happening.

Then there's other times I think where we really participated in something, let's say, in our spiritual practice, we've really done what we can do, we've stepped up to the plate of our own experience in as full a way as we can. Then at some point in doing that, we will all recognize our own limitations. We recognize places where we'll feel like, "I can't break through here. I can't make it happen. There's some deeper thing that I can feel is right around the corner I need to see, and I cannot make it happen." That's pretty common in spiritual practice too. Yet something about getting yourself to that place is part of what evokes grace too. Part of sometimes getting to our limitation is part of the old saying with alcoholics, it's darkest before the dawn and things tend to turn around right about the time they're catastrophically falling apart.

They don't always turn around so we shouldn't depend on that, but this is a sort of universal experience. Then we wonder like, "How did that happen?" I didn't bring it about, but I also don't agree with the people who would say it's all grace and so it doesn't matter what you do and spiritual practice is a waste of time and you're some sort of rookie amateur if you're doing any meditation. This whole idea that it's so much grace that you don't have a part to play, but of course that takes you out of the picture. You are a part of that part that is playing.

The way I think about it, Mark, is there's no direct relationship between like, "I'll do this and this and this spiritually and it will end up in my great enlightenment." That apparently doesn't work that way. It's also true that you do whatever you do, so let's say spiritually, and you do a few things, you practice practices in a few ways or inquire or whatever. Even though it's not direct, it will equal the outcome you want it, it has an effect. It's just not direct, it's indirect cause and effect.

Most things or almost everything in life is indirect causes and effect because the causes of any one moment are literally every other thing, every other moment. Our spiritual practice is part of that moment. There's a relationship, but it's not directly causal. Back to paradox again. It just so happens that seems like about 95% of the people that have some sort of deeper experience, spiritual awakening experience were in some way pursuing it or interested in it. Then there's the 5% that fall off a bar stool, hit their head on the ground when they land, and oh, see the face of God everywhere. Good for them.

Mark: You can't count on that.

Adyashanti: Right. You don't want to count on that. You might just end up an alcoholic in a bar, falling off of a stool.

Mark: Waiting to fall off the stool. That's a metaphor for life. Just one more question, Adya. I'm just curious to know, how has your life changed during this time?

Adyashanti: My life is in the process of huge change. Obviously, the means that I can articulate my teaching has changed. Most of it's happening like this now. That's a big change. That's a big change with our office and reorganizing our whole staff. That's a big change. Me and Mukti sold a house about a month and a half ago and we bought a new house, but we're not in the new house yet. We're staying in the back of somebody else's house. That's a change, so that's very much up in the air, as well as what everybody else is encountering. Just the fact that you wake up one day and you never know what the world's going to have in store for you on that day.

There's been a lot, a lot of change and yet it's funny, just for me, the changes that are happening in my life and Mukti's life, my wife. I think we both feel very, very up forward and ready for it. It seems like a good time to be making changes. Part of the change is the question that we carry through these changes is what might deeper alignment look like? It sounds since we are changing, since we're moving, since we're restructuring our whole office and staff, and you can look at that really negatively of course, and get scared and all that kind of stuff or it can be each one of these changes is an opportunity to re-examine, can be something that comes into a deeper alignment.

That's how I tend to be trying to show up for a lot of the changes that are happening. I think that even when the challenges that are going on in the world and how we try to participate in all of that. I do reflect upon it of what can I do that could be of some benefit? Because if it's not of benefit, I'll just keep my mouth shut. I don't want to be part of the problem. When I find I can do something that feels beneficial, then I'll do that too. There's a lot of change in my life right now, for sure.

Mark: From having followed your teaching for many years, I can say that everything I know that you do is beneficial.

Adyashanti: I'm glad you think so.

Mark: I really do believe that. Thank you so much for talking to me, Adya. It's wonderful to see you and I think this is going to really benefit people a lot.

Adyashanti: Thanks, Mark. It's great to see you again and chat with you. I know a lot of people feel challenged, but it is also, or can be, a very spiritually rich time, because, back to where we started, when you feel like the structures that you've known and dependent upon are shaky or moving or crumbling, spiritually if we can step up to that and go, "What's the deeper truth," or "Okay, maybe this is an opportunity for my life to come into a deeper alignment with your own depth." I think we can meet these things, meet the moment, meet the day in a way that makes us feel less overwhelmed and that life actually has more meaning than it appears to have right now.

Again, I don't even mean the meaning that you or I could write in a book and go, "This is the meaning of life." I don't relate to that. To me, the experience of meaning is the feeling of being at the right place at the right time, doing the right thing. That always feels significant and meaningful and I think that's what people are looking for, rather than just a slogan to have it in their minds, they want that feeling of right place, right time, doing right thing.

Mark: Absolutely. Yes, sir. Well, thank you again.

Adyashanti: You're welcome, Mark. Pleased to be with you.

Mark: Take good care.

Adyashanti: You too, take good care my friend.