

FALLING FOR TRUTH

CHAPTER 1—CONFESSION Loose Footing

“Know myself? If I knew myself, I would run away.” (Goethe)

I am dead. No longer a normal human. I guess that in some way makes me abnormal, but in this new way of seeing...

“Wait,” my editor interjects looking up from reading this manuscript. “You can't start a book by claiming to be dead.”

“Why not?”

“Well, you're obviously not dead. You are writing the book. And besides, you are sitting right there across the table in front of me.”

I purse my lip. “I don't mean dead from the standpoint of the body. The body is still very much here. I meant dead from the standpoint of what I have always thought of as me, or my personality. Maybe not dead. But those things that I always had total faith in, I can no longer believe in their totality.”

“You have to explain that at the start of your book,” he replies.

“I just did.”

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“Oh no, now we're in trouble.” I whispered those words after understanding the situation confronting us. Stupidly I got too close to the dangerous river within Johnston Canyon, just 20 yards from one of the largest natural waterfalls in Canada. Even more stupidly, I fell in. Ripped by the current I sensed the great danger and pulled my best Johnny Weissmuller imitation to swim back to my friend Kris on the shore. This Tarzan was in desperate need of help. Upon reaching him, I did stupid thing number two. I pulled my on-land saviour into the water with me, hence uttering the words, “oh no, now we're in trouble,” as the current of water ripped me down the canyon. Time was stilled, moving millisecond by millisecond. Thought ceased, and all that arose were what I would call clusters of information, bubbles of something that were complete understanding, but not thought itself. They came up complete and full, held still as if a painting before my eyes, then would fade or vanish—and the next cluster would arise. What I would normally think of as “my mind” was not there to be found, yet something else much deeper seemed to be working.

In that microsecond came the realization, “So this is how I am supposed to die. Who would have guessed it would be like this?” It seemed so laughable that of all possible ways one could die, this was the way that it was going to happen to me. And it was fine. There was no great wish to continue living. I was going to die in a few seconds, and all it would be was the end of my story, and I was going to have front row seats to witness it. Pure acceptance came over me, and something that I had always known as me, died. In that moment came what best I can describe as a sort of computer download. For one of the seconds, it was like a mass of data was placed inside me. It has been a long process to work through these “files” and find out what was in the download.

The next microsecond, as the water ripped me towards the canyon wall, my head turned to gaze at Kris, dog-paddling to stay still in the slower part of the current. A new thought cluster arose, “well if I don't get out, how the hell is Kris going to get out?” It was like some new force animated and took over the body, determined not to go over the falls. My right leg slammed hard into an underwater

boulder, deflecting the body off course a bit towards the bank. A lucky break. My feet grazed the bottom and I began to crawl out, all the while yelling at Kris “over here, it's shallow.” Reaching the shore, I saw Kris already crawling out as well. He hadn't needed me.

After sitting mostly quietly for an hour, we began to discuss and reconstruct the experience we both had. We were amazed with a few things. First was how perfect the experience was. Nothing could have been added to it, or been taken away from it, to make it any better. Even the falling in was perfect. Second was how different time was in the experience. We could explain an hour of perception experience in what in relative time lasted perhaps a few seconds. Third, we had, each in our own way, accepted our death in the moment, with no struggling to try to extend it. And we both realized that what crawled out of that canyon was not the thing that fell in. We were new things, and we had no idea what that meant. We still don't.

For eight years previously, I was on a search for Ancient Egypt's “secret,” studied most every tradition of spirituality and mysticism—and I thought I had found answers. Yet falling into the canyon turned everything on its head. It put my years of searching under the microscope and showed that I had spent most of it in a veiled search of trying to get my hopes validated. Falling caused me to re-look at everything. I have not been on solid footing since.

In the short term, for as much as a year, a deep clarity appeared, and many delusions of the world and spiritual community were recognized. Fear did not exist. However, there was a problem. As always, that problem is ego. A very deep realization damages ego, thus following any Awakening much false can be detached from, as calmness and clarity come in. But while egoic layers were damaged, they were not removed. It is amazing to see how fast the ego reorganizes itself into something different, then comes back in control with even more fear and self-importance than before. Sadly, this was the case here.

The problem was I got lazy. Any realization is so strong, shattering, and overpowering—that it is easy to think that there was nothing left to do but be like a retired old man who just sits on his porch and watches the world go by. As Richard Rose might say, you can't just HAVE a realization, you have to BECOME the realization. The work has to continue, or as the Zen teachers say, “*When you get to the top of the mountain, keep climbing.*” To have a realization, on any level—without continued work to integrate it, is likely going to lead to egoic distortions. Much of spiritual work is on the physical and psychological levels; the areas most spiritual seekers use their spirituality to avoid. Part of the work is indeed to lift to the clouds for new perspectives and understandings, but to keep one's head in the clouds permanently is not to develop any grounding.

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My editor, Anders, again looks up from his reading and sort of stares at me.

“What?” I ask him.

“That's it?”

“That's what?”

“Your authority to write a book on spirituality comes from falling into a canyon?”

I think about the irony of that for a moment. “Ya I guess it does,” I laugh.

“Come on.”

“Well I mean there was like a decade of seeking and researching and contemplating before that—exercises, sacrifices, tests, beautiful moments, expanding awareness—but in the end, a few microseconds of time in the canyon revealed more than all of the 10 previous years of hard work combined.”

He shakes his head. “You know this is not what most spiritual seekers expect, or really want to hear. It is not what they read in the major books.”

“Exactly. In a sense, it was many years later when I began to realize that my experience and revelation in that canyon was genuine. I doubted it for a long while. It wasn't like anyone else's

experience, nor was it the wished for beautiful occurrence that would make me somehow more special than others. It came to me from being a careless fool, after many years of basically fooling myself that I had been “a very spiritual person.” Then those two fools combined, and for a split second between them, my death came, and so did a realization that I could have never expected. I mean if someone has an experience that is exactly what they read or what they hope for, you can never be sure it is genuine and not just a wishful projection, or a fantasy you made manifest to feel better. Really, until someone has an experience that, even though perhaps having some similarities to someone else's but still in some way unique and unexpected, they can never know for sure if it is genuine revelation or egoic projection. Actually, books like this are more valuable after an experience has happened, for it can help someone to understand much of the confusion that comes afterwards. But what is realized in the experience itself is all beyond words, and I am trying to spend 200 pages, and over 100,000 words to help shed light on those two seconds after being a fool. That is why it has taken me so many years to put this manuscript together.”

“100,000 words about being a dead fool,” Anders laughs.

“You know, there is a reason the Tarot Fool has been given the number zero.”

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I must confess. I rarely read introductions. I don't know why. The author spent just as much time working on the introduction, but for some reason when I start a new book I jump right into the first chapter. It makes no sense. I'm not sure what that says about me, but it did influence my reasoning to start with chapter one. However, and with great irony I know, I thought that I should introduce myself and this book.

It looks like you have a spiritual book in your hands. Just like any of the other thousands that are found overflowing on bookstore shelves. Spiritual writing and lecturing today is big business. Generally, they are written by people who believe they are special. Authors writing to show how you can be more happy, successful, important, loving, unique, or the case of religion—destined for a wonderful future once you are dead. You know special, like the author. Some even believe they have been chosen to be a divine spokesperson or wonder healer. The spiritual book marketplace brimming with expert after expert claiming to have “all the answers.” How then, can we trust that any of the information out there is genuine, and not just another game of delusion? Is there a way to test what someone really knows? And what reason is there for you to continue to read my book?

Modern spiritual books tend to come in two specific formats. The first is presented from the point of view of “I am the expert,” and is written similar to books on how to fix a transmission or grow your own vegetables. These books tend to promise that if you follow the formula being presented (usually something simple—meditate, be quiet, be in the now, think happy things) then you can reach a level of perfection where you can make all of your wishes come true. How they have gained such authority to write such a book is generally vague or not convincing.

The second type of spiritual writing tends to run in a semi-novel form (either fictional or autobiographical). In this model, the story follows the standard format set up by Carlos Castaneda in 1960's. The book *Beauty of the Primitive* explained it as,

“Many fictional and semi-fictional tales of power follow a certain pattern. First the narrator/author feels over civilized or experiences a shattering misfortune or life problem. Then the individual meets an indigenous spiritual teacher who immerses the author in the ocean of spiritual wisdom. The author/narrator embarks on a spiritual quest and goes through stages of an initiation, which are usually accomplished by difficult physical or moral tests, which the candidate generally passes. The end result is the total transformation of the apprentice's conscious. Eventually the shaman/spiritual teacher tells the author that he or she has become a chosen one endowed with a certain esoteric wisdom that should be shared with the wider world. After this,

the newly minted spiritual teacher/author goes into society to help solve the problems of Western Civilization, which faces perpetual spiritual and ecological crisis.”¹

The authors generally claim that they are taking old practices and updating them to be used in a modern context (which is simply another way of saying that the practices are made up). They miss the key foundations of what the old ceremonies were based on: connection to the whole of manifested reality. To just make up something new and claim it has an ancient lineage is, quite frankly, insulting to the wisdom holders of the last 100,000 years. Why did the authors go to so much trouble to make up a fantastic story about meeting with the so-called bringer of knowledge? It is likely because if they told the truth, no one would buy their goods—so they created a fanciful story to make themselves what they narcissistically wished they were -a wise and important guru. In both types of books, the author claimed to be a very materialistic person before they had their “encounter,” but now afterward, they are “spiritual.” However, when you examine how these people run their current lives, they seem to have become far more materialistic than they originally described. Especially as they peddle workshops, cds, dvds, crystals, healing baths, psychic readings, nature schools. Some even go so far as to sell ceremonies such as sweat lodges or sun dances. And it saddens me to realize just how prevalent this is. Fairy tales sell. The bigger the promise offered—the bigger the following. Only a very few seem to write in an honest and open manner, not looking to get anything or convince anyone, but just to put down some ideas on paper before they die. These are the texts and people that I hope you will seek out.

I want to be clear. My book is not a book about me. It will not portray me as an ancient master, or list the tenets of my modern mystery school, or detail my revelations as a shaman, Tibetan monk, Gnostic priest. It won't even necessarily portray me as a nice guy. This is the presentation of my fifteen-year attempt to understand the bizarre modern world by looking back to the ancients. There was a past that built pyramids (which cannot be done today), by raising and placing 200-ton blocks of stone like they were Legos. Ancients who built monuments that thousands of years after their abandonment, still resonate with an energy unlike anything in the modern world. A time where sacred geometry, mathematics, astronomy and nature intermingled—creating a giant soup of knowledge, art, architecture and daily life. However, within the remaining symbolic texts is something quite magical, something that most modern spirituality glosses over in a New Age covering of sweet sugar. Attempting to unravel what they knew became my obsession.

The ancient world (continued through various Native, Eastern and Alchemical Hermetic traditions) held two key pieces of information. The first was that this world that we experience is nothing but a description based on erroneous perception, and that perception has been/and is conditioned and manipulated by an outside force that they described as a parasite. The world we think that is here and solid, is not really here or solid at all—that we are born, live, and die in a kind of dream world. We, too, are as much of a dream as the world we perceive. Secondly, that there is a doorway to move past much of this, but to reach the gate (that paradoxically turns out to be gateless) becomes the task of a lifetime. Their art and architecture were not to look nice, but were to reveal their message.

A spiritual vacuum exists in our modern world, which is getting more “spiritual,” yet more distracted and delusional. No one is really going within, just playing a game of pretend happiness staring at their I Phone. It is the reason that I kept working on this manuscript, which began first as a series of notes twelve years ago, kept during my research on Ancient Civilizations. As my own experiences in these realms increased, the notes got more detailed—while more spiritual texts and teachings were seen as misleading. Perhaps I could put a few things down in a way to help save a few seekers years of wasted effort. Or at least to use my own mistakes to not fall into similar traps as I did. Each path one takes must be individual because each person's egos, personalities and past traumas will be packaged uniquely. People can only share what they did and what they passed on the road, with hopes it can be useful to another. Delusion sets in when someone thinks they have a specific formula

1 Znamenski, Andrei, *Beauty of the Primitive*.

(often believed to be the only way one should walk the spiritual road).

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“People should think less about what they ought to do, and more on who they ought to become.”
(Meister Eckhart)

I have met several powerful and very direct people in my life. One was Bjung Chul Park (who we called Mr. Park), a Korean Zen teacher that I met in 1998. While Mr. Park referred to himself as a healer, he claimed that he was not interested in fixing the physical, but what he called “healing the soul,” to cleanse what he called “darkness and poisons from our heart.” Doing so would allow us to come to a place of knowing that he described as “nothing but nothing.” Richard Rose also claimed that miracles come when the mind is thinking of “nothing but nothing.” Of course, when we were studying with Mr. Park we all tried to “think of nothing,” which just caused him to laugh at our foolishness. This statement is like one attributed to Socrates, whereby the word Nothing that is being used, is not anything what our normal egoic mind believes it is. Such statements can only be understood or entered from beyond the normal mind. I also was lucky to encounter and spend time with several Native Indian medicine men. I will share stories of all these people as this book continues.

Several authors were extremely helpful in my seeking, foremost are the writings by and of Richard Rose. The honesty (and in fact shock) of his writings felt like a gift when I came upon them after the canyon. He was about the only one out there not trying to seduce the masses with false promises, so they would give him money, prestige and devotion. He was just saying things as he saw them, knowing most were not going to like his message. He concluded early on that his life was not worth living if he did not know who was living, why, and who dies. How could either life or death have any meaning without knowing these answers fully? He used every second of his life to search for these answers in any group, idea, or avenue he thought could be of value. The results of his search can be found in such books as *Psychology of the Observer*. Rose was also unique in not just being able to present this material, he lived it. Totally and completely. Rose was so enticing to me in that he is the closest representation that I found to the teachings of Mr. Park.

However, I find Rose much more clear and direct in his recorded lectures than his writing. Other members of the group Rose founded (TAT Foundation) have a wealth of pointers and insight in print. The Ph.D. thesis *The Path to Reality Through the Self*, by John Kent,² that overviews Rose's system, I consider the best and most accessible spiritual work published in the last 100 years. No matter the problem or challenge, a good place to start a spiritual examination is to first read the work by Kent. Other books (and lectures), by people like Art Ticknor, Bart Marshall or Shawn Nevins may help to bring the message presented by Rose into easier to understand language. My book is but an addition to these texts.

I found that Rose's message was also remarkably similar to the famous Gnostic writings known as the Nag Hammadi Codex. This group was not an early Christian organization as usually presented, but more the opposite of modern religion—like a hardcore Zen or Advaita. I feel that sharing the Gnostic viewpoint through this book will help give Western seekers an ancestral foundation in this spiritual material (the appendix has an overview). Rose named his first book *The Albigen Papers* after the Gnostic Cathars (Albigens) of 12th century Southern France, burned at the stake in the Western World's first genocide, for believing that average men (and shockingly at the time, women) could reach the Truth of oneself without the need of a priest or saviour as a go-between. It is likely the Cathars were a last remnant of Ancient Egyptian Mystery Teachings, direct descendants of the Nag Hammadi Gnostics, and perhaps even held the sacred mystery known metaphorically as the Holy Grail. Their home area of Southern France is the focus of my most recent study. Both groups (Gnostic and Cathar) compared reality to a trapping holographic simulation, and that one needed to gather all of one's energy

2 It can be found for free at the download section at searchwithin.org

with their inner guide (called a Christ) to break free of it. They both claimed that people in the dream world were asleep (Rose called us hypnotized robots) for we believe a false reality. Only by turning away from this false could one begin to see what is “not-false.”

Interestingly, I found another modern writer saying similar things, and that was Carlos Castaneda. Castaneda, though presenting his encounters through the interaction with a fictional character (Don Juan), had access to deep teachings on the makeup of reality. Unlike the writers who came after him who used his basic format to make up a story for themselves to justify their un-earned specialness, Castaneda was not following a blueprint, he was creating it. It was first book that made him famous, *The Teachings of Don Juan*, which I feel is not only the worst book of the series, I rank it as one of the worst spiritual books ever written. That it is held in such high regard (mostly by the 1960's drug culture) is a reminder not to blindly follow what the majority believe is good or of value. However, something it seems happened to Castaneda after writing that dissertation. A few years later he published *A Separate Reality*, *Journey to Ixtlan*, then *Tales of Power*, now dropping the need for drugs in the spiritual search. Somehow Castaneda came into the ancient wisdom that he had been pretending to know in his first book. How this occurred, why, or from whom is still unknown. What he did do is take his new found understanding and fuse it with the format of his first book (his fictional teacher). If one does not take the writings as literal, but as pointers within a novel (the same as found in *Moby Dick*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or *Sherlock Holmes*), then the value within can be unearthed. Castaneda did not seem that he was able to live what he wrote personally, as his life became quite strange over time. Like many people who touch wisdom, if the egoic structures are not dealt with, they can boomerang back with devastating effects. But his work was a catalyst for me to ask a very powerful question, “If the world around me is just the way I think it is, then what would happen to the world if I stopped thinking?” Not to have a nice mind or happy mind, but no-mind. What happened when that occurred will make up a chapter in this book.

The more I studied Rose, Castaneda, and ancient manuscripts, the more they strangely confirmed each other, and (or at least partially) my own experiences. As such, I felt that my small contribution within this field was to present to those interested how these related sources, separated over thousands of years of time, point to the same subjects, just from slightly different angles. Each was not afraid to discuss as much about the dark half of duality as they are the light side. That to me is why their teachings become even more valuable, you can't hide from a part of reality just because you may not like it.

“There is no coming to consciousness without pain. People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own Soul. One does not become enlightened merely by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.” (Carl Jung)

Part of what has taken so long for me to finish this book, was not just how write and present clearly, but also to determine what made it into this book or not. To put in all of the details, personal stories, and exercises would have made the book over 500 pages. I had to choose. As such there became a primer book, of around 80 pages (chapters 1-4) in which I attempt to present my viewpoint as clearly as I possibly could. Next comes 5 later chapters of around 100 pages, which is my attempt to provide a depth to the work. Lastly in this book is an appendix of useful information that might have disturbed the flow of the reading if it were placed in the book proper. It turned out to be around 70 pages. Lastly are 150 pages that did not make this book, but which I have collected as an add-on work that can be ordered called “Additional Material.” Hence the story of what you now are holding in your hands and reading.

chapter. “You know, why did you write this book?”

“My point was to waste your valuable time, and keep you stuck on the back porch for a whole afternoon.” He frowns in mock disgust. “The book comes from years of the search to see just how most of spirituality is—well not of no value because there is some—but let's just say very limited value. That the teachings and the teachers are really grade two or grade three, but they pretend and sell like they are at the university level. The spiritual world out there is a kid's game of basic math compared to how the few who have really gone past present it. How the canyon presented it to me. That modern spirituality and religion are there to keep a hypnotized population hypnotized, not snap them out of it as it claims.”

“So spirituality is just sleepwalking through life?”

“Pretty much.”

“Then what else is there?”

“Going from a sleepwalker to someone who gets tired of the whole movie and theater and popcorn stand—and decides to finally go outside and see what's under the sun. Along the way to do this we have friends and helpers, but in fact the only real teacher or helper that we ever learn to trust is ourself. But who exactly is this “self” that we should learn to trust? What if the self we are listening to is a false self? Then what good is any of the information we get from a self until we are sure if it is true or false?” I smile.

“And that is what your book is going to explain.”

“I guess. Slowly.” I grab a full bowl that is beside me and offer some to Anders, “want some popcorn?”

Now it is his turn to smile.