

Dear Jake,

My response below has my comments with regard to your paper on long intensives. In it I enlarge a little on what the alternate willful techniques might be to the long intensives. I'm sending emails out about it to as many Enlightenment Intensive masters as we have addresses for here. Feel free to send a notice or a copy to whomever you might wish.

Love,

Charles

The text [in blue Arial Unicode MS](#) is my comment on Dr. Jake Chapman's Manual on Long Intensives.

Charles Berner

## **LIVING FROM TRUTH**

# **A Manual for Masters of Long Enlightenment Intensives**

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#### **Acknowledgements**

I have written this Manual from a personal perspective and it is based on my own experience in running long Intensives. However I would also like to acknowledge my debts to other people who have contributed to my process with Intensives and to running long Intensives in particular.

First I wish to acknowledge a tremendous personal debt to Satyavati, now Catherine Betz, for running the two long Intensives on which I participated – a two week in England in 1981 and a six week in California in 1982. These events have shaped me and my life ever since, including my own personal commitment to running long Intensives. I believe it was also Satya who persisted in developing and running long Intensives after Charles Berner withdrew his support for them. In my view this was a major achievement and service on Satya's behalf and the hundreds of people who have benefited from long Intensives have her to thank for their very existence.

Second I wish to thank Skanda, now Lawrence Noyes. It was he who trained me as an Enlightenment Master and who supported me through the turmoil of the first dozen Intensives. He also encouraged me to take on running long Intensives. He has also made some very pertinent and helpful suggestions on an earlier version of this document.

Third I wish to thank my wife Eva. We have shared a long and fruitful journey with Enlightenment Intensives. I have ended up mastering the long ones for practical reasons, but without her support and encouragement it would have been impossible.

Fourth I wish to acknowledge a debt to Charles Berner, also known as Yogeshwar. It was he who developed the basic Enlightenment Intensive format and who refined it over a period of many years. He only ever ran one long Intensive, and was disappointed in the results. This is a shame. If he had seen the results that I, Satya, Skanda and others have witnessed then he would understand just how large a contribution he made to helping people discover, and live from, the Truth.

Finally I would like to thank those who read and commented on an earlier version of this Manual. In particular Barry and Emma McGuinness and Daniel and Ellen Dacre.

## Foreword

I wrote a preliminary draft of this manual after running a six week Enlightenment Intensive in 1998. Since then I have returned to it adding sections, incorporating material I wrote for other purposes and produced a second draft shortly after running a two week Intensive in 2006. On that Intensive I was joined by my wife Eva; we co-mastered it. Having her there showed me, for the first time, just how much I have learned in the twenty one years that I have run long Intensives. When I reflected on it I also realised that in this time I had also made the process ‘my own’. I do not mean this in any possessive sense. What I mean is that as I have learned, and grown, I have made changes to how I run Intensives. I have changed the schedule, I have modified how I interact with participants and I have developed my own ‘style’. It is the combination of this learning and adaptation that I wish to communicate in this Manual. I do not expect anyone else to adopt my way of doing things, but it does seem to me that others who want to run long Intensives can learn and benefit from the experience I want to convey.

Over the last few months I have come to realise that passing on this wisdom and experience is particularly important for me. When I Mastered my first two week Intensive in 1985, I read a story that required me to say the Bodhisattva vow. As I said it I was profoundly affected – to the point where I nearly fell apart. I now think that I took this vow in a previous life. The core of the vow for me is the statement “All beings, without number, I vow to liberate”. The essence of the vow is a deep love for others and a commitment to facilitating their enlightenment prior to any personal liberation. The wording of the vow has a megalomaniacal quality – one individual vowing to liberate all other beings! However I have come to understand that the way that the vow is fulfilled is for me to learn something about how to facilitate others being liberated and to then pass this on to others. By passing on both the understanding of how to, and the commitment to, liberate others, I fulfil the vow – and it remains alive with others serving its fulfilment. I have experienced a connection to the person who started the vow. I have felt his profound love for others and know that this is what motivates me, and always has done. It is the reason I am writing this Manual. Thank you for receiving it.

Jake Chapman

October 2006

## 1. Introduction

*The aim of this section is to set the scene for the remainder of the Manual. In particular it explains why I think running long Intensives is a worthwhile endeavour and the nature of the results obtained. It also outlines the issues that you will face if you start running long Intensives.*

An Enlightenment Intensive is a group process in which participants can have a direct experience of the Absolute, of the Divine – call it what you will. People without any prior meditation or therapeutic experience can have a genuine experience of enlightenment within a few days. This is remarkable and makes Enlightenment Intensives one of the most potent awakening processes ever devised.

The standard format for an Enlightenment Intensive is three days. This is the format described in detail in the EI Master's Training Manuals and is the duration recommended by Charles Berner. Over the last three decades people have explored Intensives of different lengths, incorporated other meditation practices and sought ways to make them more effective. This Manual is about one sub-set of all the different formats that have evolved, namely long Intensives.

A long Intensive is one in which the participants spend at least ten consecutive days doing enlightenment dyads i.e. working on the four questions used for awakening.

I disagree, any Intensive longer than three and a quarter days has the difficulty of Intensives of even longer duration. I will generalize this statement even further. The Zen Sesshin of longer than three days, which most of them are, fall prey to the same difficulty of all similar endeavours of spiritual growth that are longer than three and a quarter days. For example, Philip Kapleau in his sincere effort to have an enlightenment experience, went on for eight years and as it was had only a medium level experience. But it did have one virtue and that was stability. This stability generally comes from having the same or similar level of experience repeatedly.

I have participated in groups which have lasted seven days and found that these work well – but they do not have the same profound effect that is possible on Intensives that run for more than 10 days.

When an Intensive runs for more than ten days a number of things combine to make the process different – and produce different results.

The first difference arises as a result of the way that Intensives work. When a participant communicates what has arisen in their contemplation they are able to disidentify from the material. This disidentification enables the person to then continue contemplating, to be more open and to go deeper. However the disidentification is only temporary – and on Intensives that last ten or more days core material is very likely to reappear. However when it reappears the individual is more open and able to see the issue from a new perspective. This enables them to understand its significance and impact on their lives more profoundly. Sometimes the person can clear material by communicating it at this level. But whether clearing is achieved or not the deeper understanding changes the individual's relationship to the issue.

Your observation just above is quite astute. However, this clearing process has very little to do with the enlightenment process. In other words, what is happening is that the person has run straight into their mind and has to 'clear' it in order to proceed with the enlightenment process. But the enlightenment technique and intensive are not designed for clearing the mind. It is very inefficient in that regard and so 'progress' grinds slowly on and on.

The second difference is in the depth of enlightenment experiences that occur. The simplest gauge of depth is how long the individual is able to contact the state and report new insights from it. On a three day EI a typical experience is exhausted within 3 dyads. On a two week EI an experience occurring after day 8 usually takes a day and a half to communicate. However the point is not that the experience sticks around for longer, but that the impact on the individual and their mind is far greater. Deep experiences have the potential to completely realign an individual's approach to life and relationships – and they often do.

Again, what you say just above is true but it has very little to do with enlightenment, including increasing its stability, which the above does not do. No doubt, the therapeutic effects are useful, but so far as making evolutionary changes to new levels of enlightenment, such insights are of very little use and so should not be included in an *Enlightenment* Intensive. A clearing intensive, perhaps, but then the technique would be different.

The third difference that occurs in my more recent long Intensives is that over half the group have direct experiences. This was not the case when I started running long EIs, but with one exception has been the case since 1994. With such a large proportion of the group having experiences there is an additional quality in the dyads, a quality that further fosters deep experiences and profound sharing.

There are other important sources of difference, for example that the people likely to participate in long

Intensives are those for whom the process works well – so the group does not have to ‘carry’ many reluctant participants, so the energy is generally higher and cleaner. The fact that the process goes on for a long time means that the ego motives that drive people are likely to be exhausted, so they have to find a more real place from which to participate. It is also extremely likely that each participant will have one or more of their core issues engaged with the process and facing this will not be easy.

Yes, there are core issues and they are important, but not for the enlightenment process. The enlightenment process depends almost completely on the de-identification of the individual from what he has thought of himself as, not the resolution of core issues. One gets a long series of insights instead of enlightenment experiences of the Absolute Truth. Insights are relative truth. Enlightenment is of Ultimate Reality only.

It is common for participants on long intensives to go through a period of hating the Master and maybe some aspect of the schedule or environment. All these factors combine to make the experience of a long Intensive qualitatively different from short ones. And the core difference is in the depth; depth of self inspection, depth of sharing with others, depth of experience of the Absolute and depth of surrender.

One could say that striving for depth which began with Buddha’s first disciple, Ananda, is a substitute for an effective technique, or I should say, an attempted substitute for an effective technique. Buddha himself did not do that. Once he used the technique of self-inspection relatively quickly, he had deep enlightenment experiences. Wanting to generate ‘depth’ by long persistence is a substitute for the correct technique to the task.

In my experience these differences combine to the point where a significant number of participants start to seriously engage with living from the Truth that they have experienced. This is the unique benefit of long Intensives and one that I am now committed to fostering further (as explained in the later sections on Integration). The shift involved is substantially different from the awakening that occurs for many people on a three day. That awakening is important, but only rarely results in people reorienting their life. Long Intensives contribute to the maturation of people’s awakening by enabling them to become aware of what they need to do to serve or live from that with which they have been blessed.

Again, what you say here is correct but it is a question of the magnitude of what takes place as compared to the magnitude that is needed. That is, by your own statement a different thing is happening, but it is not something which the

technique is designed to elicit. I suspect this has not been recognized because an excellent alternate approach is not obvious. This will be dealt with under the section on Kundalini.

Mastering long Intensives also introduces new issues and requires the development of new skills. One of the new issues that arises is the possibility that people will have their kundalini awakened to some degree. This can be of benefit to an individual's growth, but it is also often an uncomfortable process. The fact that participants face deeper levels of their mind means that the Master has to be willing and able to engage with people at that level. This requires that the Master has mastered their own deepest material well enough to be able to put it aside. It also requires them to be able to distinguish the 'real person' from their 'stuff'.

I found that mastering Intensives, particularly long ones, became my spiritual path. Participating in intensives is not a viable path – it does not provide enough basic information for an individual to make the adjustments to their life. Also because it is a wilful process the gains made on one Intensive will be largely lost by the next. However mastering several Intensives a year and developing the skills to master long Intensives is certainly a path. On each Intensive the master will be confronted by participants – and whatever buttons the master has available will be pushed by participants until the issues are resolved or adequately dealt with. On a three day it is feasible for the master to put stuff aside – in a similar way to the participants disidentifying from material. But to master a long Intensive you want to have the issue sorted so that you are not stressed or unreal. I did not have much sorted by the time I started running long Intensives and running them certainly accelerated my process remarkably.

This is the way Zen has taken and is natural since no alternate is usually available.

I have noticed that many people who train to be Enlightenment Masters will run a few Intensives and then stop. I have understood that there are two basic reasons why they stop. One is that in some way they break their connection to the Divine – usually by acknowledging experiences as direct when they are not. The other is that the rate at which their stuff is surfaced and confronted is too much for them to process or tolerate. So be aware that although this is an extremely rewarding process to facilitate, it is also extremely demanding.

Yes, it is true that only the best masters carry on doing Intensives. Many attempts have been made over the last 1500 years to train masters to be able to guide people over long periods such as in sesshins or monastic life, but very little success has been found. Your suggestions are better than most. Again, the problem is not to refine the technique, the lecture material, or the master's

qualities, but to use the correct technique to deal with the other factors that the standard three day Enlightenment Intensive method does not handle.

One aspect of mastering long Intensives that I had not appreciated until relatively recently was that it requires the Master to be willing and able to accept the role of being a spiritual teacher – at least for the duration of the Intensive. What I mean by this is that the Master must be willing to engage with each and every participant at a deep level – confronting their mind and honouring their openness and progress. It also requires the Master to be an example of someone who has had deep experiences of the Truth and is succeeding in living from that Truth to some degree. In my estimation the increase in the percentage of people having experiences on long Intensives I mastered was largely due to an increase in my ability to surrender. And in turn that was down to the degree that I was able to trust myself. This, in turn, was down to the authenticity I had gained by living more in harmony with both my own experiences and those I witnessed in others.

In order for you to be able to assess this material it seems important that you understand something of my own personal experience participating in and mastering long Intensives. The experience I am drawing on is based on Mastering nine two week Intensives and one six week Intensive. All the two week Intensives had between 17 and 20 people except one which had 14. The six week had 22 participants. A few people have come back time and time again, but generally there has been a steady throughput of participants. In all I have interacted with about 200 people on long Intensives. These cover the complete spectrum of age (from 20 to 70) ability, experience and personality.

I embarked on running long Intensives because of the enormous benefit they gave me in my own personal growth. I took a three day Intensive (with Jeff Love), then a two week (with Satya) and then a six week (also with Satya). When I came back from the six week I was in a state of love for almost a year afterwards. I transformed in all sorts of ways – and I was able to stay in touch with the deep experiences that I had had on the six week for at least a decade. I attributed all the change to myself and my life to the experiences and the prolonged period of self inspection (I worked on “What am I?” for six weeks). Recently I have come to question this view. The reason is that it is possible that it was the kundalini release that I experienced on the six week that propelled my growth so much. From what I have learned about kundalini since then, I am confident that I did experience a major release and that it was the cause of the ruptured colon that put me in enormous pain for a year. Indeed I think it was the anaesthetic in the operation to correct the ruptured colon that finally stopped the kundalini. What I cannot assess is the degree to which the three components, kundalini, self inspection and direct experiences, enabled me to change my life so profoundly.

It seems to me important to consider the issue of kundalini because it is a serious issue associated with long Intensives. Charles Berner regards it as a good reason for not running them. Each time I have had a major kundalini release I have suffered a serious physical or emotional consequence. Since participating in the six week Intensive I have had three further episodes I have attributed to kundalini, two as a result of mastering a long Intensive and the last from mastering a three day Intensive. The second release caused me to collapse physically and since that time I have been allergic to wheat and dairy products. The third caused me to cry for three months. The fourth caused me to have a frozen shoulder. I saw a participant have a major kundalini release after a three day Intensive – she ended up

in a psychiatric hospital for ten days – she was fine once the kundalini subsided, but it was an extremely serious problem until then.

So I do not take this issue lightly – and I recommend that you take it seriously. My own understanding of kundalini is very limited, you may be able to add more information or experience to guide you as a Master. I will return to the subject later on in this Manual. You have to understand the risks and probably share that understanding with participants. My recommendation would be to receive enough training so that you can administer some energy management technique so as to be able to bring someone “down” from a release. But if someone had done that to me in California after my kundalini release I may have missed out on all or part of the growth opportunity of a lifetime!

As you read through this Manual you will find that certain themes are repeated and crop up in different contexts. I have not sought to eliminate these repetitions since they are concerned with issues that are central to Mastering long Intensives

I agree with your points on Kundalini and will make appropriate comments under that section, section #8 below.

## **2. Preparation**

*This section covers all the issues that you have to think about or do in preparation for running a long Intensive. This includes material on the schedule, rules and other aspects of the Intensive that are subject to your choice.*

Throughout this Manual I am presuming that you are already an experienced Master of three day Intensives and that you are familiar with all the material in the Master's Training Manual. You will already know the importance of preparing well for a three day Intensive; the significance of your preparation increases about ten fold for a long Intensive. Basically you need to prepare yourself, the participants, and particularly the venue, so that you can devote all your energy and attention to the process of helping people get enlightened. And when groups go on for a long time the general rule is "anything that can go wrong will do so". So be prepared for the worst.

### **2.1 The venue**

It is hard to overstate the importance of using a good venue for a long Intensive – and the need for carefully thinking out how the venue will work and checking all the details. I have run long Intensives in three commercial venues and at my own home. I had a better experience using my own home. However it added a considerable preparation and clear up workload and also added an additional layer of responsibility that commercial venues can take on. Probably the most important advantage was that it enabled me to run long Intensives at modest prices and still have some financial return. The biggest disadvantage was the disruption to normal family life and the sense that our home was not actually ours!

The commercial venues I have used all had different benefits and issues. What was common to them all was that in order to survive as a venue they have to charge a high cost per person per day and this makes long Intensives expensive. In 2006 a typical cost is £50 per person per day. This makes a two week cost £750 before any charges for the staff accommodation, advertising and financial return. In practice I did not make money running long Intensives at commercial venues – but nor did I lose money.

It is absolutely critical that you carefully check out any commercial venue that you use. The last venue that I used I checked out by participating in a week long group there – and it showed me a number of important problems.

Satya did not check out her venue for the second six week (in Austria in 1987) and that caused her and the participants difficulties. She was stretched by the poor facilities available. The participants were justly very critical of the environment and Satya had to absorb that – which did not leave her with much capacity for then dealing with other parts of people's minds. Despite all this many people gained a great deal from that Intensive.

Any Master can only handle a certain amount of nonsense at any one time. So if too many people are freaking out with their minds running at the Master then he or she will have to retreat to absorb as much as they can of the irrational nonsense. This means that the Master will have less capacity left to deal with participants' minds.

The way to have as much capacity available as possible is to

- (1) make sure the environment is good and up to coping with the number of people for the duration of the Intensive
- (2) make sure that you do not have too many crazy people on the Intensive and
- (3) set up a support system for yourself

The two week on which I participated had all the men sleeping in the group room on mattresses that they took in and out each evening and morning. This worked, but only just. It is much better if participants have bedrooms in which they have a small space around their bed that they can regard as their own. On six week Intensives it is preferable to give each person a screened off area to themselves. Beds and mattresses need to be good enough to be comfortable for a long period. Generally harder mattresses are better than soft ones, though people do differ on this.

The group room needs to be able to hold all the people comfortably. You need to be able to regulate the supply of fresh air and temperature – preferably independently. If the group is in the summer then heating may not be a problem – but its better to make sure you can provide warmth if necessary. Lighting should be sufficient to enable everyone to clearly see their partner – and for you as Master to see into all parts of the room. Very bright lighting needs to be subdued since it can be very wearing on people's eyes. Some people are also sensitive to sunshine coming in through windows; if you can arrange the rows so no one is blinded by sun then so much the better.

You should also check that the venue has enough chairs, cushions and back supports for your group – you'll need more cushions than you expect! As the average age of people taking my long Intensives has increased I have found that more people want to sit on chairs. To be comfortable for long periods, chairs need to have straight backs that extend up to the shoulders. You will also want a really comfortable Master's chair. These are not easy to come by, for the six week I invested in a really good chair and it was a superb investment.

If you are in a commercial venue then you should have a liaison person whom you know how to contact 24 hours a day (emergencies can happen at night!). It is important that you instruct the group to direct all requests relating to the environment or food through yourself (or perhaps your monitor if you have one).

The last venue I used was very large and to meet their costs they needed to allow another group to be in the venue for the last part of the Intensive. This is an arrangement that I would not enter into ever again. It worked, in the sense that the Intensive was successful and the second group did not disturb the participants very much. But it was a source of stress and disturbance that could easily have undermined

the whole group. My advice is to steer clear of such an arrangement.

If you use your own, or someone else's, home then you will have the same level of responsibility, preparation and clean up that I experienced running Intensives at our home. Do not under-estimate these additional burdens. I am pleased that I did not start out this way. You must make sure that you know how to cope with normal emergencies, like leaking pipes, blocked toilets, fuses or trips switching off the electricity and so on. If you do not know, then make sure that at least one member of your staff knows and that they are competent to do whatever will be required. You have to be Master of the physical environment, even though you may delegate details to staff.

## **2.2 The staff**

If you use a commercial venue you may not need any staff. The cooking will be done by the venue and the liaison person at the venue can organise things like shopping and washing for participants and working contemplations. Whilst this is feasible I always had someone on site assisting me – usually as a monitor. It is also very helpful to have someone you know with whom you can talk over issues and difficulties.

Of the three commercial venues I have used the ones that worked the best were where the staff of the venue understood the requirements of Enlightenment Intensives very well – usually because they had participated in one themselves. The venue where there was no prior experience meant that the first few days were problematic as each error by the cook or liaison person had to be corrected and resolved. The best strategy is to use a venue where you have successfully run 3-day Intensives, then you'll know that the staff are familiar with your needs.

If you are using your own home, or someone else's, then you will need at least a senior monitor and a cook. The monitor will assist the cook, take care of the physical environment, organise and process washing and the working contemplations. The cook should be responsible for all the food, this includes ordering food and organising or doing the shopping. You should have people who have worked on Intensives before; you will not have the capacity to teach someone how to cope with a long Intensive when you are mastering the first few – all your attention will be on the group and how you are going to survive as a Master.

I strongly recommend that you organise at least one day off per week for both the cook and the monitor. People can cope with two weeks non-stop cooking, but they will be showing signs of wear towards the end. A half day or whole day break will rejuvenate them and give an extra input of energy to the process.

Remember that the first rule for a good group is that they are well fed. If they are not well fed then no matter what you do the group will not be good – their energy will be off into wanting to be nourished more. I encourage cooks to relax and cook what they enjoy cooking and to occasionally spoil the participants with special snacks or whatever. Also encourage the cook to repeat favourites, it cuts down

the stress on the cook and the group love it. I cover other issues around food in section 2.7.

You must have a very good relationship with the cook and the monitor. If there is any doubt about it, spend time before the Intensive working on the relationship. If it is not right do not use the person. You can survive without a monitor – if the cook is very good and the participants able to take more responsibility for work periods. I ran a whole two week without a monitor and it was OK – but it was also the 6<sup>th</sup> one I had run.

I have figured out how to run a long Intensive without a cook – but with a monitor. But I would not recommend it. You take responsibility for the food and have it prepared in the work periods (so people have to complete the tasks allocated, even if that means they cannot contemplate much). The monitor watches the stuff cook and serves it up (though the participants can serve themselves too). I think Charles Berner ran his long Intensives solo – but this is very stressful and unnecessary.

## **2.3 The participants**

Appended to these notes are the notes I send to two week participants (see Appendix 1). There you will see that I make it clear that undertaking a two week is a serious proposition. In particular I warn off people who are simply out to increase the probability of having an experience and people who have experienced difficulties after taking a three day. I strongly recommend that you prepare your own introduction and make sure that all potential participants read it before signing up.

The first problem group, those who are just after an experience, are people who are sincere but for whom the process does not work – usually because they are not open enough. I have had people who have attended more than fifty days of Intensives without having an experience. They get to know the technique really well and go through the motions perfectly – but they are unable to be open. On a long Intensive the lack of openness will be even more of a burden and they will waste most of their time. In practice the proportion of people having an experience was consistently higher on my later long Intensives, up to 60% and averaging 50% - compared to 25-30% on 3-day events. However I did not want this widely known because I knew it would attract the wrong kind of participant. You want people for whom the process has already worked and who want to take their experiences to a deeper level – not people so stuck in their mind that they cannot be open to the Truth. Incidentally one of the reasons for the higher percentage of experiences is because the participants are better than average (in the sense of more committed and more open).

The second problem group, people who have found it hard coping with the stress of a three day, will cause you a lot of anxiety about whether they are about to crack up or not. In fact even people who could cope well with a three day may experience difficulties on a long Intensive if their grasp of reality is not very strong. For me this was the group of people that I found it hardest to turn away and yet caused me the greatest worry and stress during the Intensive itself. My strong recommendation is to exclude all marginal people from your first few long Intensives – you'll be stretched enough in other directions.

For the six week Intensive I wrote to participants before (and after) the group on a regular basis. The letters before the group were to increase their motivation and get them started on the process – this was useful because more than half the group booked more than a year in advance. The regular letters also meant that there was a steady build up towards the Intensive (with people freaking out months before it started). I also confronted a number of people with whom I had had difficulties on previous Intensives. Basically I said – either accept my authority or do not participate. I also outlawed special diets to protect the cook and to enable me to avoid all food trips (well almost all!). This confrontation and selection of participants is difficult when you do not have many people signed up. But never ever duck it. It is crucial. If you duck it at the beginning it will come back at you again and again during the Intensive – when you have less capacity to handle stuff.

Ideally you should already know and have shared an Intensive with all the people on your first few long Intensives. Knowing the people is the best way of screening them. I used to accept people from abroad that I did not know but who were recommended by someone I did know. The biggest issue with overseas people is making sure that they speak good English; I have had people for whom language was a serious and impenetrable barrier. I insist that everyone speak in English all the time so that I can track their process and check whether they are laying trips or not. I have received reports from people on long Intensives where other languages were allowed and where, unbeknown to the Master, people were laying trips on other participants in a foreign language. This is very unhelpful and leaves the Master in an impossible position for enforcing the most important rule of the Intensive.

Skanda allowed people to speak other languages and ended up with a psychotic participant – partly because he, Skanda, could not understand his communications and hence had missed the fact that the man had not slept for 3 nights and now considered himself to be a frog! Lack of sleep is probably the greatest danger on a long Intensive (See Section 7 on kundalini) and you should keep a sharp ear out for communications about sleep in the first two dyads each day. The person on Skanda's Intensive was taken off the group and after a few days completely recovered and the experience profoundly affected his spiritual life (for the better).

I have had participants as young as 20 on long Intensives, and they get on very well. Generally younger people are less stuck in their mind and therefore freer to be open to something different. The oldest I have had is about 70 and for people this old the physical stress of the group is tough. I always make sure that they have the most comfortable bed up the least number of stairs – and give them extra rests if necessary.

On most of the long Intensives I have Mastered I have had several couples or intimate relationships within the group of participants. Although it complicates the process and causes a degree of inhibition in the partnerships, overall I think that the benefits far outweigh these. The primary benefit is that it provides an opportunity for both partners in the relationship to reorientate their life. It is quite hard if the desire for reorientation is on only one side of an intimate relationship – it means that one person is put in the role of being the reluctant one, the one being coerced to some degree. Having both partners opened up may still cause differences to arise, but they will be resolved with both partners starting from a more open position.

I prepared guidance notes for couples wanting to participate. I recommend you do the same. I specified that they had to suspend their relationship entirely for the duration – this included not making eye contact or trying to communicate in any way. I also instructed them to not work together and to aim to sit as far apart as possible. At some point during the Intensive I would give a lecture on the fundamental importance of relationships, and how they get in the way of seeking Truth and being completely open.

## **2.4 Yourself**

It is extremely important that you prepare yourself for a long Intensive. Satya and Skanda said that running a long Intensive is like putting yourself through a meat grinder – and it is! I'll describe more in section 9, but basically you have to be able to put your own stuff aside for the duration of the Intensive under the most extreme provocation. Not only that, you have to give positive instructions and be open and loving to everyone – including those who want to kill you or defy you or just piss on the process. And you have to keep your attention on the group and give inspiring lectures and spot subtle technique errors and nurture the cook and monitor through their crises ... and you need to be in good shape to cope with it. The most important thing is to start the process well rested.

Once I did not. I was exhausted with getting work things finished when I started the two week – and it was a disaster. There were not many experiences and at the end of it I physically collapsed – literally, I got home and fell down as I walked in the front door. I had to stay in bed for about a week. (This was also the time when I had my second kundalini release.)

I am presuming that you will have participated in a long Intensive before mastering one. If you have not then find a long Intensive anywhere in the world and go do it. You will not be ready for mastering a long Intensive until you have taken at least one, preferably a few more. In particular it is only after you have experienced a long Intensive that you will appreciate the way in which the technique changes and unfolds, the depth of self inspection that occurs, the criticalness that can arise and so on. Do not imagine that these notes are a substitute for participating.

If you are well rested, have staff you trust and have selected the venue and participants with care, then you will have done all you can. You probably will want to have some ideas for lectures (see section 5), but do not overdo this – you'll be surprised at how much you have to follow the group process with your material. It is important how you start the group – the first three lectures (introductory talk in evening, first morning and lecture on day 1) will set the tone of the Intensive to a large degree. I used to contemplate on this and come up with a theme that was rooted in my own process – stuff like getting to know your mind better, the liberation from suffering provided by experiences, wanting one's life to change and so on.

## **2.5 Lecture Material**

Sections 4 and 5 of this manual are largely concerned with lecture material and should give you a good

idea of what is involved. Here I want to cover the preparation work that I have found useful ahead of the group. As indicated in the last section I usually contemplated on a theme for each long Intensive that I was planning to run – with a view to having a slightly new angle on it. This was useful for several reasons. The most important was that it made each long Intensive unique for *me* – so I was energised about it and not regarding it as ‘the same old chore’. I know this will not be the case for your first few Intensives – but you may still gain significant benefit from choosing a theme around which to frame a number of the early talks.

One aspect of preparation that I did prior to every long Intensive was to read a number of new spiritual books with a view to uncovering stories that illustrated some aspect of the long Intensive process. By the time you have finished this manual you will know – if you don’t already – the many headings under which stories are useful. As I read the spiritual books I would mark any appropriate stories and make a record of them (page number and key theme) on the inside of the front or back cover. That way when I wanted to search for a story (during the Intensive) I only had to look on these summary pages of each book.

Another benefit of reading these books was that it often gave me a new perspective on some aspect of experiencing Truth or delving deeply into one’s own psyche. I valued most reading about other people’s experience of participating and breaking through. But I was also often impressed by books that included lectures by Masters in other traditions. (Some of these books are referenced in section 5.)

The final preparation that I would recommend for lectures is to make notes of experiences and events in your own life that you can use to illustrate relevant issues. Participants love to hear about things in your life, times when you had to persist, or surrender or communicate difficult material. They love hearing how you overcame difficulties, or things that happened to you in long Intensives. It is easy to overlook these, so making notes of them ahead of time – and maybe having a summary page to remind you – is excellent preparation.

## 2.6 Schedules

When Satya and Skanda used to run two week Intensives in the UK they combined the first three days of the 2-week with a standard 3-day Intensive. I think they did this in order to make the group more viable financially – they had a large air-fare to cover as well as all the other costs. I did the same for the first two 2-week Intensives I mastered – and vowed to never do it again. There are, however, advantages and disadvantages with this approach

The advantages are that the process makes a lot more money. Also the two week people get off to a flying start. The more money comes from the fact that for the first three days the group may be as large as 40 or 50 people. The flying start arises because at the outset the two week people are on a tougher schedule and infected with the high energy of the three day process.

The disadvantages are that I was wiped out at the end of the three days and found it hard to manage the

separation and changeover of the two groups. The three day schedule is a lot more strenuous, even though it only has a couple more dyads than the two week schedule. The high energy “sprint” of the three day also leaves everyone, including monitors and master, feeling exhausted. And if the three day group is as large as 40 or 50 people the exhaustion is even greater. So beware of this.

The separation of the two groups at 9pm on day three works as follows. The combined group has the last dyad for the day ending at 9pm. The combined group then says goodbye to each other. After about 15 minutes the three day participants are herded off into a separate room, the two week group remains in the group room with the monitor and are told to quietly contemplate their question. The Master then goes to the three day group and gives the closing talk. He also stays with the group for the start of the party and says goodbyes to people for about 10-15 minutes. The Master then returns to the two week group and gives an introductory talk to them; including stuff about how the rules and schedule are different, the seconds for lunch and so on. The two week group is off to bed by about 10pm and woken up at 6am the next morning. The three day people are encouraged to leave on the night of day 3, if they do stay over they have to remain in bed while the 2-week people get up and have to depart before breakfast. So it can be done, but you can see that it is quite messy and stressful.

So now to the two week schedule itself. The standard two week schedule is shown below (incidentally I set up a spreadsheet to generate these schedules so that as I play around with them the timings are automatically adjusted. If you require details on how to do this please contact me and I will forward the spreadsheet or formulae to you. It is a very useful tool for adjusting schedules). I used this standard schedule for the first two two-week Intensives I ran and found several problems with it. These are as follows;

- (a) the one hour work period in the morning is disliked by participants
- (b) there is not enough time between the end of work period and lunch for the cook to get it all done – especially if the participants have been slow during the work period
- (c) there is no sitting contemplation

6.00	6.15	Get up
6.15	7.00	Enlightenment Exercise
7.00	7.15	Physical
7.15	7.45	Breakfast
7.45	8.30	Enlightenment Exercise
8.30	9.15	Enlightenment Exercise
9.15	10.15	Working
10.15	11.00	Enlightenment Exercise
11.00	11.45	Lunch
11.45	12.30	Enlightenment Exercise
12.30	13.15	Walking
13.15	14.00	Enlightenment Exercise
14.00	14.45	Lecture
14.45	15.30	Enlightenment Exercise
15.30	15.45	Snack
15.45	16.30	Work
16.30	17.30	Rest
17.30	18.15	Enlightenment Exercise
18.15	18.45	Dinner
18.45	19.30	Enlightenment Exercise
19.30	20.15	Enlightenment Exercise
20.15	21.00	Walking
21.00	21.45	Enlightenment Exercise
21.45	22.00	Snack

22.00      22.15      Sleep

So the basic changes I made were

- (1) shorten the morning work to 45 minutes
- (2) add two fifteen minute sitting periods, one after breakfast and one after lecture
- (3) increase the length of the rest period to 75 minutes
- (4) shorten the evening walk to 30 minutes
- (5) switch the morning work so that it is followed by the back-to-back EIs

The net result is a schedule that is fifteen minutes longer, but which participants and staff like a lot more. The extra fifteen minutes on the rest period seems to make a lot of difference, it means that people are more ready to wake up and feel more refreshed by it. The final version that I used on my later two week Intensives is shown below. I was satisfied that this is about as good as it can get for a two week schedule – until the changes I made in 2006 (see later). By the end of the Intensive most participants are tired, indicating that the schedule taxed them just enough – and not too much. People who find the schedule too light usually get up early and give themselves an extra meditation period.

## **Final 2 week Schedule**

6.00	6.15	Get up
6.15	7.00	Enlightenment Exercise
7.00	7.15	Physical Exercise
7.15	7.45	Breakfast
7.45	8.00	Sitting
8.00	8.45	Enlightenment Exercise
8.45	9.30	Work Period
9.30	10.15	Enlightenment Exercise
10.15	11.00	Enlightenment Exercise
11.00	11.45	Lunch (main meal)
11.45	12.30	Enlightenment Exercise
12.30	1.15	Walking
1.15	2.00	Enlightenment Exercise
2.00	2.45	Lecture
2.45	3.00	Sitting Contemplation

3.00	3.45	Enlightenment Exercise
3.45	4.00	Snack
4.00	4.45	Work Period
4.45	6.00	Rest
6.00	6.45	Enlightenment Exercise
6.45	7.15	Dinner
7.15	8.00	Enlightenment Exercise
8.00	8.45	Enlightenment Exercise
8.45	9.15	Walking
9.15	10.00	Enlightenment Exercise
10.00	10.15	Snack
10.15	10.30	Retire

For six week Intensives the schedule has to be lighter. The two week schedule is not sustainable for more than two weeks. When Satya ran 6-week Intensives she would reduce the number of enlightenment exercises by two, so there were only nine per day. This also meant that the schedule ended around 9.00pm. I remember finding this much too light – as indeed most other participants did. After two weeks of this light schedule Satya added one dyad back per day. I thought this was a better schedule, so when I ran a six week I dropped one dyad and pulled the morning walk back before lunch. The six week schedule is also shown below. There was one problem with this schedule, namely the longer gap between breakfast and lunch. To keep participants from getting very hungry the portions for breakfast were increased. But it might be better to try to reduce that gap by pushing the walk back after lunch.

### **Six week Schedule**

6.00	6.15	Get up
6.15	7.00	Enlightenment Exercise
7.00	7.15	Physical
7.15	7.45	Breakfast
7.45	8.00	Sitting
8.00	8.45	Enlightenment Exercise
8.45	9.30	Work

9.30	10.15	Enlightenment Exercise
10.15	11.00	Walk
11.00	11.45	Enlightenment Exercise
11.45	12.30	Lunch
12.30	1.15	Enlightenment Exercise
1.15	2.00	Lecture
2.00	2.15	Sitting
2.15	3.00	Enlightenment Exercise
3.00	3.15	Snack
3.15	4.00	Work
4.00	5.15	Rest
5.15	6.00	Enlightenment Exercise
6.00	6.30	Dinner
6.30	7.15	Enlightenment Exercise
7.15	8.00	Enlightenment Exercise
8.00	8.30	Walk
8.30	9.15	Enlightenment Exercise
9.15	9.30	Snack
9.30	9.45	Retire

The last two week that I ran (before preparing these notes) was at a venue where there were constraints on the meal times. I therefore approached the whole schedule from a different perspective and thought about what would work best. I came to the conclusion that the best time for rest was shortly after lunch – when people were really sleepy anyway – and that it would be better to have more physical exercise. To make room for the additional physical exercise period I dropped the afternoon work period – it was never popular and did not contribute much anyway. The resulting schedule is shown below, and it worked extremely well. Indeed a few of the old hands who had done many long Intensives with me

thought it was a significant improvement. I would use this, or a variation that had breakfast earlier, on a two week.

## **Two Week Schedule 2006**

6.00	6.15	Get up
6.15	7.00	Enlightenment Exercise
7.00	7.15	Physical
7.15	8.00	Enlightenment Exercise
8.00	8.30	Breakfast
8.30	8.45	Sitting
8.45	9.30	Enlightenment Exercise
9.30	10.15	Work
10.15	11.00	Enlightenment Exercise
11.00	11.45	Walk
11.45	12.30	Enlightenment Exercise
12.30	1.15	Lunch
1.15	2.00	Enlightenment Exercise
2.00	3.15	Rest
3.15	3.45	Physical
3.45	4.00	Snack
4.00	4.45	Enlightenment Exercise
4.45	5.30	Lecture
5.30	5.45	Sitting
5.45	6.30	Enlightenment Exercise
6.30	7.00	Dinner

7.00	7.45	Enlightenment Exercise
7.45	8.30	Enlightenment Exercise
8.30	9.15	Walk
9.15	10.00	Enlightenment Exercise
10.00	10.15	Snack
10.15	10.30	Retire

Incidentally in 2006 the Intensive started on the evening the people arrived; there was an opening lecture and one dyad before they went to bed. The dyads then ran for a full 12 days. On the morning of day 13 there was a closing talk and then an introduction to a series of integration exercises. The Intensive rules continued for the first half day and there were dyads throughout the day. Further details of this are included in the section on Integration.

If you want to make changes to the schedule here are the key things that I came to regard as important constraints.

- (a) participants are exhausted by the end of two weeks with a schedule that has 11 dyads a day and between 7 and 8 hours sleep a night. So keep within these constraints.
- (b) the gaps between meal times should be as even as possible. The most difficult gap to keep small enough is that between breakfast and lunch. The rest of the time the snack keeps food levels OK.
- (c) if the rest period is only 45 minutes long participants are shocked by the wake up call and spend the next dyad waking up. I have found making the rest 75 minutes long works best. People have a good sleep and are ready to engage again in the next dyad.
- (d) the work periods do not contribute much to the Intensive. One work period a day brings up stuff related to work and doing things, and this can be helpful. It is also helpful for participants to feel they are contributing to the overall environment of the group. But few people are able to maintain their contemplation during work – so it can disrupt the flow.

## 2.7 Structure and Rules

There are a number of other factors that need to be taken into account when devising a schedule and considering the overall level of stress on participants.

The first is what participants do during the meal and exercise periods. Do they continue to contemplate their question? Are they allowed to talk to each other about what is going on with them? Should they

be instructed to “be in the here and now” or to continue to contemplate?

I have very limited experience on these questions. On the long Intensives in which I participated I found talking to other participants, and listening to their talk, completely distracting. I also found the schedules devised by Satya quite light – so I maintained silence and continued to contemplate my question steadily. This worked well for me as a participant and so, when I started Mastering long Intensives I gave instructions to participants to do the same. But this is not how other Masters run long Intensives. I experienced silence and continued contemplation as increasing the intensity (and hence the stress and pressure) of the Intensive. I also found that the spectrum of participants who took long Intensives with me could all tolerate the schedules (set out above) with these rules.

People who had been used to my style of running Intensives found it hard when participating in other long Intensives where talking was permitted during the meal breaks and where people were instructed to “be present” rather than contemplating their question. My view is that there is not a right or wrong way to proceed on this, it is a matter of style, intensity and what Master and participants are used to.

There is generally no senior monitor on long Intensives, by which I mean that there is no one monitoring the participants in the room during dyads. In the group room it is just the participants and the Master. This is different from three day Intensives where there may be one or more monitors assisting in the room. My reasons for continuing this tradition were

- (a) being a monitor in the room is an extremely exhausting role, in fact the most exhausting role on 3-day events. I would not expect anyone to have the stamina to be able to do it for two weeks
- (b) there is a general sense in which the participants are expected to take more responsibility for their participation in the process which reduces the need for monitors. There should be no new comers on long Intensives, the participants are people already familiar with the process and are willing and able to abide by the rules
- (c) a stronger relationship builds up between the Master and the participants when there is no monitor present, and this, it seems to me, is an important requirement of the long Intensive process. Participants are putting themselves in the Master’s hands a great deal more on long Intensives, so the relationship with the Master needs to be stronger.

Finally there is the issue as to whether to use a gong timer or cycle dyads. As with the instructions regarding what to do in breaks, I consider this to be largely a matter of the Master’s style. There are benefits and drawbacks associated with both choices. Cycle dyads tend to keep participants doing the technique better and also allows them to complete communications – whereas the gong timer can often cut the communication cycle badly. Against that I personally found it a lot harder to monitor what was going on in the room using cycle dyads. With the gong timer there is no doubt about who should be talking and in what direction to restart an interrupted dyad. Because I elect to track participants closely this advantage of using the gong timer was the overriding factor. The gong timer also establishes a rhythm that seems to aid the process of long Intensives – it helps people to drop time. One significant disadvantage of cycle dyads is that some participants may use a lot more or a lot less time than their partners, over a long period this can become a serious issue – one the gong timer makes apparent and

starts to correct.

## The Rules

When I started running long Intensives I used essentially the same rules as for a three-day – with one exception. I permitted people to keep a journal – though the times when they were allowed to write in it were circumscribed and I always warned of the dangers of paying too much attention to it. As I lead more 3-day events my wording and emphasis regarding the rules changed. I ceased saying “talk only of enlightenment” and basically said “no talking except during dyads, when engaging with me or a monitor or for simple information exchange.” My Intensives basically became ‘silent’.

I also changed the way that the rule about judgements was couched. I made a point of saying that it was against the rules to pass any judgement, positive or negative, on any other participant, in any way whatsoever. This covered the bases of not just saying negative things but raising eyebrows, frowning or smiling and so on. I explained that positive judgements were as debilitating as negative ones in terms of fostering a space where people could have direct experiences.

When I present the rules I now say enough about them so that people get both a precise wording, and, more importantly, the spirit of what the rule is aiming to achieve and why it is important. This, coupled with my no nonsense attitude, has meant that I have had very little trouble from people breaking rules – on long and short Intensives. I also aim to nip problems in the bud. If I spot someone struggling with criticalness I may initiate an interview with them to help them handle it creatively. Similarly if I notice someone starting to turn up late for dyads and lecture I will say to the person that I have noticed this and that they need to pay attention to being on time.

Recently I have made some other changes to the rules that I regard as beneficial. The first is that I have changed the “no touching unless specifically invited to do so” to “no touching”. I noticed that people found it hard to refuse an invitation to a hug or touching – even when it was not what they wanted. I also attended a 7-day Satori event in which there was no touching at all – and found it beneficial. It threw me more into myself and my process. So I used it on 3-day events and on the last two week.

When there are couples participating on the Intensive you have to be clear about what is and is not acceptable to communicate. My position was that they could say what they liked about themselves, even if that had an obvious implication for their partner. For example one person may communicate how sexually frustrated they felt all the time – which clearly reflects on their intimate partner, but is a statement about self. Inevitably there are grey areas. I did my best to cover them in advance, and if I felt someone was crossing the boundary I would give a correction – sooner rather than later.

## 2.8 Food and Diets

You will need to address food issues **before** the start of a long Intensive, otherwise you may end up in

some very difficult, and unnecessary, problems. Many people have food trips. The last few long Intensives I have run I have insisted on no special diets and it worked really well. Some people have not participated as a result, but then I haven't had to deal with their trip on food. I will normally accept people who are vegan and make sure that they are adequately fed without giving them too much special attention. I also respect people who are seriously allergic to some foods, such as nuts. But I resist trips that require Papaya for breakfast, or only raw food after midday or not mixing protein and carbohydrate and so on. There may be some degree of validity to any or all of the trips people are into. This is not the point. The point is that you cannot eat your way to a direct experience of the Truth, you should not mix techniques on an Intensive and all participants are required to surrender to the process – which includes accepting the food they are given.

Almost everyone in the western world overeats. To counter this I get the cook to serve out small (normal intensive sized) portions for the first four days of a long Intensive. During this time the participants' appetite and stomachs will shrink a little. So on day 4 lecture I would announce that the participants can have seconds at lunch time and the cook will increase other portions in line with need. For example on the six week schedule I used the gap between breakfast and lunch was too long, so we increased the breakfast size until most people were not inconvenienced by the long gap.

Another feature of the Satori event (referred to in the previous section) was that it had no sugar, honey or sweet food at all. This was a departure from the standard 3-day EI that would allow honey (one teaspoon only!) in herb tea and had sweet snacks in the middle of the day. I found that having no sugar at all stabilised my energy and that after the first day I did not miss it at all. This was in contrast to having the occasional spoon of honey – which kept my desire for sweetness alive. I have subsequently adopted the same approach, in both three day and long Intensives, with very positive results.

The last two week was at a venue where the amount of food provided was significantly more than I would have expected for an Intensive. But this had no observable effect on the group – other than there being very few complaints about the food or hunger in dyads. There was a high proportion of raw food (fruit and salad) in the diet and I concluded that provided this was so then larger food portions may actually be beneficial (in that they avoid the distraction of hunger).

## **2.9 Working Contemplations**

Part of your preparation should include thinking out working contemplations – or at least organising someone at the venue to do so. I have usually been able to negotiate a slightly better deal with venues by pointing out that they receive the benefit of some 20 to 40 hours of careful work per day (depending upon the number of working contemplations you include in the schedule).

Preparing working contemplations requires you (or your staff or the liaison person at the venue) identifying sufficient number of inside and outside tasks and all the necessary tools and equipment required. In general people prefer to work outside; weeding, digging, chopping wood are always popular. These tasks also require participants to have gloves – so you need enough, and enough

different sizes. When it rains very few people will want to work outside, so you need to have enough indoor jobs to keep the whole group occupied. This may require some ingenuity and forethought. I have had two long Intensives on which it rained almost every day – and there were two work periods a day on both. Finding this number of inside jobs is one reason for having only one working period a day.

On a long Intensive you should also organise, or have the venue organise, laundry for participants' clothes. This can be a major task – especially if it rains a lot of the time! I advise people to bring enough clothes for five days and collect clothes for washing on days 4, 8 and 11. Participants should be warned to

- (a) not hand in anything that is not colour fast
- (b) wash any delicate items themselves in a work period
- (c) do their best to only collect their own clothes

On every long Intensive people have had their clothing collected by other participants – and I then have to announce to the group that “a pair of red underpants” or “yellow socks with blue stripes” have gone missing – and would the person who has inadvertently collected them please return them!

The further particulars I send to people includes advice to bring normal summer clothes (I have always run long Intensives in the summer) and some warm clothing as well as rain gear.<sup>3</sup> Getting Started

*This section covers the design of the first part of the Intensive, from when people arrive to when they are fully engaged with enlightenment dyads. This is a critical period in that it sets the tone of the entire Intensive, so pay particular attention to what you include.*

There are many options for organising the start of a long Intensive. Here are three that I have used;

- (a) combining a three day Intensive with the first three days of the long Intensive. This was described and discussed at the beginning of the section on schedules (section 2.6).
- (b) starting the two week in basically the same fashion as a three day. This involves having the participants arrive after dinner on the opening day, having interviews and an opening talk at the end of the evening. First thing the next day there is a lecture on the technique, schedule and rules and the Intensive effectively starts.
- (c) have participants arrive in the afternoon so that they all have dinner together. Interviews are carried out before, and if necessary, after dinner. There is then an initial dyad on what the person wants to gain from the group followed by the opening lecture for the long Intensive. This opening talk includes a description of the technique, rules and schedule. It is followed by tea and then the first enlightenment exercise of the Intensive.

I used (a) once and vowed to never use it again; I was too exhausted by the three day. I used option (b) for all but the last long EI I mastered, and it worked adequately. However, having tried option (c) this is the one that I would now use, and recommend to you. The initial dyad was helpful in establishing intentions for each person, and this was picked up and referenced in the integration work at the end of the group. Having dinner together on the first evening also made that an easier social time than normal. There was a lot less time of people hanging around not quite sure what to do. And having the first dyad in the evening meant that the Intensive was off to a flying start.

I trust that seeing these options makes it clear that there are many different ways to start a long Intensive. You need to devise or choose one that suits the venue you are using and your overall aims.

### **3.1 Initial Interviews**

Earlier I indicated that it would normally be the case that you already knew all the participants on your long Intensive. If people you do not know want to sign up then aim to have a conversation with them, or at least an exchange of information about their experience in taking Intensives and therapeutic processes. You should aim to get a feel for the person and satisfy yourself that they have successfully completed a bona fide three day (preferably more than one), are in basically good shape physically and psychologically (i.e. are able to cope with the stress of the long Intensive) and that you can work with them – in particular that they will accept guidance from you. This is not always easy – but believe me it is far harder to have someone on the Intensive who has not participated before, who is borderline and unwilling to take guidance from you (and yes I have had such a person!). One strategy for achieving this is to ask anyone you do not know well to send you a short biography and to invite them to ask you questions about the Intensive. People display quite a lot about themselves through the questions they ask!

Even though you may have previously worked with the participants, or have satisfied yourself that they are suitable for participating, you should still have an initial interview with everyone. This should not be an option the participants can choose; it is a requirement of yours. I say this because I have found these initial interviews enormously useful in giving me up to date information on the person's state and current issues. It also starts what will become a very intimate relationship, and this is best done in private with time to allow contact to unfold and sensitive issues to surface.

When I conduct one of these interviews my main focus at the beginning is ensuring that the person feels at ease; I then attend to contacting them as deeply as possible. The questions I use are simple: "How are you?" "What is going on for you in your life right now?" and "Do you know what question you will be working on?" The last question will often surface issues that are important – because people will have thought about it and will have related their choice of question to stuff that is somehow significant for them right now.

If something comes up that I find odd or disturbing I follow it up. I don't let things pass. I want to know what it is that was not fully explained, or why the person seemed tearful at this point – or

whatever it is. Don't shirk from challenging people – remember you are setting up a Master-participant relationship and to be effective you will have to be willing and able to confront – and the participant must be willing and able to accept this. I do not mean to convey that you should go out of your way to initiate a confrontation this quickly, but if the situation demands it, don't back off. In particular if you think that the person may not be a suitable participant, for whatever reason, then sort it out now – don't leave it to get to be a big mess!

You should come out of the interview satisfied that the person is in good shape to take the Intensive and with a fairly good idea of what is going on for them. The participant should come out of the interview reassured, having their questions answered and being in contact with you.

*An Aside on Satori events:*

I participated in a 7-day Satori event run by Osho sanyassins. It uses dyads and similar questions and rules to an enlightenment intensive. But it is actually using a different process to attain a direct experience – and it took me several days before I realised this. In the Satori event the aim is to have an experience by being completely present in the moment. To aid this they have three active meditations a day (like the dynamic meditation) each lasting an hour. They do not encourage contemplation at all – indeed some Satori leaders require people to retain eye contact at all times during the dyads. So if you have people come on your Intensive with a background in Satori events, you would be well advised to explain the difference to them – preferably ahead of the actual group.

If there are any people in relationships on your Intensive then you should check, during the initial interview, that they understand what is required of them and are willing to abide by it. If there is any hesitancy or unwillingness to comply clarify the issues there and then. This is a key issue that needs to be set up correctly right at the beginning of the Intensive.

### **3.2 Guidance on Question**

The notes that I send people by way of an Introduction to a long Intensive always discuss the issues associated with what question to work on. A sample of these notes is included in Appendix 1. I make it clear from the outset that I expect them to work on only one question for the duration of the EI i.e. there will not be any question changing. Interestingly it has not been an issue on long Intensives. I think people understand that staying with the same question takes them deeper and that this is the purpose of the longer duration. In contrast I often have people on a three day wanting to change questions after presenting an experience for a few dyads.

It is not uncommon for people to be unsure of which question to work on at the initial interview. As mentioned earlier this is often a useful topic to explore to find out where they are at. “Well I am interested in life because right now ..... On the other hand with my relationship up in the air I might be better off working on what is another....” I find that the best strategy is to listen to what they say and pick up where they have the most interest or energy. It is usually obvious, to them as well as to me.

Sometimes the problem will be that there isn't anything in their life that prompts one question over another. Under these circumstances I press them to figure out what interests them most.

Sometimes I suggest a simple thought experiment that can help them clarify what they are most interested in. I get them to imagine that there are three boxes in front of them. Each box contains absolute knowledge on one of the questions: what they are; what life is and what another is. Which box do they want to open? I have found that it usually only takes a few minutes for people to get what attracts them most with this type of fantasy.

Before I offer people the option of working on another (and to some degree life) I check that they have had a solid experience of themselves. If there is any doubt about it I ask them to describe the experience to me. I do not expect to 'get it', but I do expect to pick up some degree of certainty or being settled with the issue. It really is a waste of everyone's time if someone who does not know who and what they are works on 'another'. I have watched too many people bang their heads on this brick wall – I now do not permit it. (On the six week there was someone in this position and after twenty or so days I realised that this person did not have any understanding of what it meant to put your attention on 'what the other is'. This was a case where I changed the person's question to try to make the process more productive for them.)

I used to put people off working on 'who' on long Intensives. I am now more relaxed about it. The point is that 'who' is actually simply an alternative question for working on self enlightenment. The probability is that if they have a deep experience then it will be of 'what they are' – and the question used is basically irrelevant. Some people have actually had profound experiences of 'who they are' on long EIs, but this is comparatively rare – they do usually drop into a 'what' experience.

I have not had any experience of using any questions other than the four standard questions. Some people have reported success working on 'what is love' or even 'what is consciousness'. However I see these as fundamentally problematic for the way that I teach the technique – which is to start by directing your attention to a concrete part of reality – not an idea about it. (See the section 4.2 on the object of contemplation for further details.)

When I participated on a Satori event I worked with 'Who is in?' It took me a while to understand that the Satori process is significantly different from the EI process (see the box in section 3.1 on this). As far as I can tell 'who is in?' is equivalent to 'who am I?' – provided that the person does put their attention on who and intends to directly experience that one.

### **3.3 Initial Dyad**

This section is only relevant if you elect to follow the process that was developed in 2006 – or if you are interested (as I am) in facilitating people *living from the Truth* they experience – as opposed to just having the experience.

There is an implicit problem with putting integration work at the end of an Enlightenment Intensive. This is encapsulated in the advice given at the end of all EIs, namely don't take any important decisions for a short period of time (a week after a 3 day and a couple of weeks after a two week). The reason for this advice is that people are in an unsustainable state of awareness at the end of an Intensive – and may therefore make decisions or resolutions that are impractical. In order to avoid this difficulty I instituted an initial dyad – which was undertaken before the Intensive started – in which participants explored what they wanted from the Intensive and what they wanted to change in their life.

There was just one dyad, lasting 40 minutes. For the first four changeovers the question that each person asked their partner was

Tell me what you want to gain from participating in this Intensive

From the mid-point onwards, i.e. for the last four changeovers, the participants gave their partner the instruction

Tell me what you want to change in your life

The participants were also told, on the first evening, to keep a journal of their insights and experiences. They were explicitly instructed to record the issues that arose in this initial dyad. This was then referenced at the end of the Intensive. In this way the participants could access the things that they wanted to change *from their normal state of consciousness*, as opposed to the state in which they found themselves at the end of the Intensive. If you are planning on including any significant integration work at the end of the Intensive (which I hope you do) then this initial dyad is important and should not be overlooked.

### 3.4 Opening Talk

There are really two opening talks for an EI. The first is a welcome talk in which you set the scene. The second is a technical talk in which you describe the technique, the schedule and the rules and start the official proceedings. You may elect to combine these – but this strategy is vulnerable to people turning up late. In this section I want to cover the material that you should include in both these talks.

I have found it important to establish a particular theme or orientation for each long Intensive that I have run. Sometimes I have emphasised discovering what it is that is holding one up from being more in touch with truth, other times I have emphasised the value of self-inspection or the importance of self acceptance and more recently the importance of living from the insights and experiences that one has on an intensive. I find it helps me to identify this sort of theme well ahead of the Intensive itself. The theme usually arises as a result of my own process or meditation – and it colours how I think about the Intensive and preparing lectures. I look out for stories that relate to the theme. And it makes this particular Intensive unique and fresh for *me*.

In the welcome talk I usually provide a basic orientation to the group. I will usually talk a bit about how amazing it is that they can access the Absolute in the process, what such experiences can do for an individual and the fact that most people go through difficulties before they get there. I usually talk a bit about what a crisis is and how to get through it – this is extremely useful later when people are actually in a crisis – I remind them what I said in the opening talk and they get it.

There are two other themes that I start in the opening talk and pick up periodically throughout the Intensive. The first is that ultimately the success of the Intensive depends upon them and how they treat each other. I make it clear that although I will be policing the rules to the best of my ability, I know it is impossible for me to pick up subtle trips and conversations going on in dyads. It is up to each of them to avoid these traps – and to raise their hand whenever they think the rules are being broken.

The second is that they will be tested in the course of the Intensive. The precise way in which people are tested is unique to them. The trouble is that the way that each person is tested most is by the particular issue that they are least willing to face. For some people it is boredom, for others being seen, for others humiliation and for some just feeling lost or out of control. Whatever it is the experience will be familiar – it will be an issue that occurs, and disables them, in everyday life. Here is an opportunity to face it, to own it, to communicate about it – basically to cease feeding it and to become stronger in themselves.

I have found that people respond very well to this approach. They accept the responsibility of complying with the spirit of the rules – and their essential role in this. They also recognise that gains are not made easily – and in fact welcome an opportunity to face down whatever it is that has been undermining them for much of their life.

### **3.5 Pattern of Energy**

In the Master's manual Charles Berner describes a definite pattern of energy on a two week Intensive. I have not ever observed this pattern. Instead I have observed a different pattern. It is now my view that the pattern of energy shown by the group is actually a reflection of, or at least strongly influenced by, the Master's unfolding energy state. (I discuss some of the evidence for this in section 9.1). After the first couple of two week Intensives the pattern that I noticed was this;

- (a) there was a flurry of experiences with a high energy on days 2 to 5
- (b) days 5 to 8 had a few experiences each day but were basically the group going deeper, dropping layers of identification and learning how to accept and surrender more
- (c) the peak occurred between days 9 and 11. The peak is also marked by several experiences occurring close together and by a special energy coming into the room for a dyad or two.
- (d) days 12 to 14 were something of an anti-climax. I was able to inspire the group to continue, and there were sometimes very nice experiences toward the end.

I have observed the tendency of the group to rebel between days 8 and 11, but it has not caused me any difficulty. I am too strict and go on about the mind too much in lectures for people to get into open rebellion. I also give good lectures on criticalness and how to handle it, the importance of the formality in the dyads for the process and so on well in advance of any trouble (themes I start in the opening talk).

I find it essential to organise a time for myself to exercise and rest during the day. Whenever I have neglected either I have had a hard time, either physically, mentally or emotionally – often combinations of all three. I use the exercise period to have a run followed by a shower (in my own bathroom, which I also find essential). I usually sleep in the morning walk period, for some reason it is a time when I get particularly drowsy. I also get sleep during the rest period in the afternoon.

I also suspect that the pattern of energy in the group is influenced a lot by the degree of intervention that the Master takes on. In the long Intensives on which I was a participant, Satya intervened very little in people's processes. This provides a lot of space for participants and also leaves them to find their own resources to deal with difficulties, from which I gained a lot of benefit. However it can also leave individuals stuck for long periods.

The style I adopted was different. First I made sure that I tracked everyone in the group, which means that I listened in to their communications and made sure I heard everyone every day. I would make sure a person was not stuck or doing the technique incorrectly for more than two days. If I thought they were stuck with a technique error I would initiate an interview to first, check my assessment and second provide whatever correction was necessary. This fairly high level of intervention keeps the group moving, so it does not run into the doldrums and crises described by Charles Berner. This high level of intervention is made easier when the group is odd since the sitting out periods provides an easy opportunity to talk to each participant on a regular basis. Indeed the participants twig to this and choose to sit out when they require an interview. Note that with odd numbers on long Intensives you need a very good system for keeping records of who has sat out when; the following sub section explains how I organise this.

## **Sit-out Record**

When the number of participants is odd someone is required to sit out in each dyad. I have set rules that say

- (a) no one shall sit out a second time until everyone has sat out the first time, and so on through all the sitting out periods
- (b) no one shall sit out more than once in any one day

This requires me, the Master, to keep a record of who sits out each day. And because it is easy to forget to keep the record, I need a way to check that my records are up to date. I have evolved such a system.



Nicholas H	1	2	4					
Richard W	1	2	4					
David McX	2	3						
John S	1	3						
Stuart W	1	3						
Paul N	1	3						
Richard W	2	3						
Daniel V	2	3						
Karl W	1	2						
Christian Z	2	4						
David G	1	3						

#### 4. The Technique

*In this section I describe the technique that I teach on long Intensives in some detail. I also cover the main ways in which people require correction. Much of this material is used in lectures, though not necessarily in the format presented here*

I describe the technique in a great deal more detail on a long Intensive than on a 3-day. I also include it in every single lecture (except the closing talk). A key reason for running long Intensives is to facilitate deep experiences – and these occur by people doing the technique steadily – and having any errors corrected quite quickly. Deep experiences are different from those that typically occur on a 3-day. On a 3-day most experiences occur when the participant is not paying much attention; it is as if they have been tricked by lowering their guard momentarily. Deep experiences do not, in my experience, occur like this. Deep experiences occur when the person is contemplating their object steadily and deeply.

Then the deep experience is entered into as part of that steady contemplation – and usually the person has the ability to re-access the experience for a while (see also section 7 for further detail on this). So I emphasise the importance of continuing to contemplate throughout the day, whilst eating, walking, working, sitting – and in five minute breaks and physical exercise periods.

One issue that can arise is with people who have another regular meditation practice. They may find it quite hard to avoid using it, especially in the sitting period and other periods outside the dyads. I stress that whilst other practices are really excellent, they do not mix with the EI process (I say it is like having two good recipes, one for a cake and one for gravy. Whilst both are good, mixing them produces a mess.) I will often work carefully with these people to help them avoid slipping into familiar states, or using tricks of being quiet, from their regular practice.

I encourage people to establish habits that work for them and enable them to contemplate steadily. Thus I encourage them to do the same job each day, to shower at the same time each day, to use the same walk and the same exercise routine. By doing the same each day they also remove the element of choice, which can be distracting. I emphasise the element of steadiness from day three onwards.

One of the other things that I state quite early on is that people should expect their subjective sense of doing the technique to change. By this I mean that their inner experience of intention and of openness is very likely to change. I will clarify this in the following sections where I explore each aspect of the technique in more detail.

## **4.1 Intention**

On a three day Intensive people can confuse intention with wanting or desire, and it will not impede them. But on long Intensives this confusion can be a serious problem – because people think that once their feeling of desire for truth has gone then they are no longer intending. So I usually devote part of a lecture quite early on (sometimes on day 1), to explaining that intention is a choice, a decision – and that this is different from the feelings of desire or wanting.

Feelings inevitably come and go, they certainly cannot be sustained for 14 days through a process where the individual experiences times of elation, depression, love, boredom, criticalness and so on. But a decision to go for the Truth no matter what can be carried through all those different states.

I think it helps to give people examples of other situations where one can have an intention without knowing in detail how it will turn out. The two examples that I use are

1. intending to resolve an argument. When I am stuck in an argument I can (sometimes) spot that my intention is to be right, to make the other person wrong. Whilst I have that intention the argument rages unresolved. If I can shift my intention to resolving the argument then something different happens. I will not be able to anticipate how the resolution will come about – nor who is right and wrong about the content – but the argument does get resolved. So this is an example of me shifting my intention without knowing in detail what will happen as a result. This is similar to having an intention for a direct experience without knowing what that experience will reveal.
2. intending to resolve an issue in a therapeutic context. I can go to a therapist with a clear idea of what is wrong and a clear decision that I want to work it out – but do not know how the issue will

be resolved. It may require me to shift my perspective, or to see a connection to some childhood experience .. or any number of things. I do not know in advance what will be involved or what I have to face, but it is critical that my intention is to resolve it.

I advise people to consciously renew their intention periodically. I suggest that they explicitly place their choice for the Truth above any choice to

- (a) have something interesting to say to their partner
- (b) look good
- (c) avoid something bad
- (d) stay in a nice state

I personally found it helpful to do this each time I was given the instruction. It ensured that my intention stayed aligned to having a direct experience. I think this served me well on all the Intensives on which I participated.

I emphasise this material about intention quite strongly at the beginning of the Intensive because it has been my experience that, in the end, people do get what they intend. I used to explain the “Creative Law” process (as explained in Geoff Love’s book “Quantum Gods”) at some point in the Intensive – largely because I saw it as an exercise in aligning one’s intention very precisely. But I found it distracted people too much and was not strictly part of the process. Nor did I find it increased the number of experiences.

Sometimes people get hung up on the word intention. It has some other meaning or connotation for them that is an obstacle. If this arises I explore alternatives such as choosing, deciding and setting out. One of these usually works well.

## **4.2 Object**

It is my view that on a three day Intensive it is best to never mention the object of enlightenment. It is a detail too far for that process. But on a long Intensive it becomes enough of an issue to require some explanation and attention. Basically the object of enlightenment (hereafter referred to as the object) is simply the self, life or another – depending on which question the participant is working. There are three common errors associated with this part of the technique. The first is to not put their attention on the object at all – to just ask themselves the question. The second is to hang onto a particular object, rather than taking what is most immediate. The third is similar, but different, and involves taking an idea or an ideal as the object – rather than something real. This last error can result in the individual becoming quite weird and ungrounded. Whenever I find someone displaying “odd” symptoms the first thing that I check is the object they are using. Examples of ‘odd’ symptoms that are due to this error include; the same material surfacing over and over again, the person becoming ungrounded and over concerned about minutiae, not being able to succinctly communicate what arises or how they are doing the technique.

It is generally best for people to put their attention on their most immediate sense of self, life or others. Sometimes I describe this as their best sense, sometimes as the one that is most obvious, other times just where their attention goes. Some people get really hung up on “is this the best sense, or is this better?” They basically waste time selecting an object instead of setting out to directly experience any of them. The point to emphasise to such people is that whilst it is important to have an object and to start by directing one’s attention to it – any object will do. There is not a “better” or “worse” object to use, provided that what they put their attention on is real. If someone spends more than a few seconds, say ten seconds at most, selecting their object then this is an error that should be corrected.

Incidentally people who miss being in control will tend to overemphasise the few choices that they have on a long Intensive. The two key ones are selecting a partner and selecting the object of contemplation. If you spot this is an issue with a participant help them to see that it is a way that their mind is seeking to exert control. This usually gets them back on track.

The error of hanging onto an object occurs either when people have had a “good run” using a particular object – or after a direct experience, when they have been using the real thing as their object of contemplation and being open to more (see section 7 for more on this). Hanging onto any object for long periods is an error because it is usually missing something more obvious, more immediate. There may also be an ulterior intention – like having juicy stuff to communicate or trying to hang onto a particular state. After a direct experience I instruct people to use what they have experienced as their object and be open to more – as a way of re-contacting the experience. However there comes a time when the experience has faded and trying to use that object no longer works – it is similar to putting one’s attention on an idea or a memory.

Another aspect of this issue is associated with allowing the subjective sense of doing the technique to change. As people go deeper they will experience themselves (and life and others) differently – so the object that they put their attention on will be subtly different. People tend to find this most disturbing when it is their sense of themselves that has shifted. They may seek to recover the sense of themselves that they had previously. Address this problem by encouraging them to be open to a new sense of themselves – indeed to welcome this.

I have seen people make the error of using an ‘ideal’ by trying to put their attention on their “real self” or their “divine self” when these are just ideas. The same can happen when working on another, only now it is the “real other” or the “divine other” that is sought. I discourage this and tell them to take the actuality of the other right in front of them. Sometimes it is OK to work on another who is not present – someone like their mother or partner or son, someone they know really well. However they are then putting their attention on their idea or memory of the other, and this can go wrong – so I tell them to come back to a real live other in the room as soon as feasible.

The object is always a problem when working on life. The issue is that there is so much that can be used. The individual’s own life, the life in their body, the life in other people, the life in plants, the life in the room, the life in plants, the life in the carpet. Everything that is not self or other is part of life. So the choice is pretty well infinite. Here are the most common difficulties.

- (a) The most common problem is not being able to handle the large choice. Is this a better object than that? The key is to tell them that any object will do – there is not one that is better or closer to the Truth of life than any other – after all they are all part of ‘life’.
- (b) Sometimes people experience life disappearing from any object they direct their attention to. If this happens tell them to just set out to experience the life there anyway – whether they “sense” it or not.
- (c) Some people get hooked on life being the same as “alive”. This is an error and you should point out that dead things are also part of life. Restricting their choice to alive things is being closed to a part of life
- (d) People who use the life in themselves need to be careful to distinguish it from their ‘self’ – which is the object of a different question. This also applies, but less problematically, to people who use the life in another person as their object. The confusion seems more problematic with self and life.
- (e) People being unable to handle nothing arising in their contemplation and switching objects at every step in an attempt to ‘make something happen’.

It is an error on the part of the Master to try to help people out of this ‘object’ problem associated with the life question. It seems that people just have to go through this struggle, and if you try to short cut it they will fall back into it later on. There does come a time when someone has struggled enough with the object and they are ready to move on. The key to indicating that they have reached this point is when they really know – and tell you – that all objects are equivalent, that there is life in all of them. At this point I may well say something like “well if it doesn’t matter which one you use, you might as well use one that is always there and convenient” – at which point they may start using life in themselves, or in a rock that they carry around with them. Any such strategy will usually work well for them – provided that they are also open to some other aspect of life grabbing their attention from time to time – such as the cold weather or the noise in the room or the beauty in the flowers in the room. Basically keep them open to switching objects, but relieved of the struggle to find a new one or the best one.

### **4.3 Contemplation**

As a long EI proceeds the likelihood of a direct experience is determined more and more by the participant’s willingness to be open. What is more their subjective sense of being open is likely to change – and participants need to be warned of this – otherwise they hang onto a sense of openness that was limited. The reason why their subjective sense changes is that as they become more open, as they drop levels of identification, their perspective on their inner world changes. Most people start by just noticing what is going on. If this runs out, or they run into a blank patch, then they are likely to start looking for material in their consciousness. A characteristic of this phase is noticing that in their inner space thoughts seem to emerge in one area, memories in another and images somewhere else. This is a deeper sense of personal awareness – but they have to be encouraged to cease “looking” for material and, as it were, sit back and notice at this deeper level. Later some people can experience entering or sinking into a void or blackness. Sometimes they experience reveries, like awake dreams, and they suddenly wake up and are unsure whether they were contemplating or goofing off. This is another indication of increased depth of openness, but like the other states will pass.

There are a number of standard errors that people make in this part of the technique. All the errors are ways in which the person's mind seeks to retain a level of control over the process i.e. subvert it. Here are some of the more common ones;

- (a) hanging on to the object and intention during the contemplation phase. In order to be completely open the individual must let go of their initial focus, and of their intention. If they hang onto either of these in their "openness" then they will be closed. These people just need to be told to let it all go.
- (b) checking that they are doing it correctly. This is a very common problem for people who want to be perfect – or who are plagued by doubts about whether they are good enough. What happens is that at some stage in the process, and often in the openness phase, the individual will carry out a check that they are "doing the technique perfectly". And of course that process of mental checking is not actually doing the technique. This person has their case excited every time I describe the technique in a lecture and every time I urge people to do it just as I say. In dealing with these people you must first check that they are doing the technique correctly – check very carefully so that they know you have really established the truth of it or not. If you are not thorough then the trip will return very quickly. Once you have checked it then establish what they are actually doing – are they breaking off the technique to carry out a check – or is doubt arising in their contemplation? If doubt is arising then that is what came up and they need to describe it –and its effect on them – very fully. If they are breaking off and carrying out a check then instruct them to stop doing this and to trust that they will do the technique correctly until you check with them again.
- (c) trying to perceive the Truth. This is a very common trap, and is particularly prevalent when people are working on life or another – because the object is outside themselves. If you catch this in people's description of their process then point out to them that Truth is not perceived but is experienced through no process. Focussing on their inner perception is as foolish as focussing on their hearing or sense of smell.
- (d) preconceived ideas. This is too big a topic to cover in a short paragraph here. I usually give a whole lecture on it –with examples from my own experience – to emphasise its importance. On 3-days I sometimes get people to imagine what their experience will be like and what they will experience – and then point out to them that these are preconceived ideas – and that in practice almost everyone is surprised by their experience of the Truth. I also make the point that you do not have to give up your beliefs – you just have to be prepared to be wrong. So it is not that a belief gets in the way because it is incorrect – it gets in the way because it is conditioning the individual's openness.

Later in a long EI I give more and more talks about openness – and link it very strongly to acceptance and surrender. I have also found that emotionally moving stories help to increase the level of openness in the group.

I have run into an odd problem with a number of participants over the years. It manifests by the individual being plagued by a repetitive image or set of images every time they contemplate. I had one person who described one road after another. Another person described a succession of animals for days. What I have noticed is that this type of material arises quite quickly – and effectively prevents the individual from contemplating deeply. So I have devised a strategy that seems to work – but not always. There are four steps:

First I check the object that the person is using. Sometimes the repetition occurs because the individual is hanging onto a particular object and the object is throwing up the same association over and over again. Changing the object solves the problem.

Second I get the person to communicate absolutely everything about what it is that is repeatedly arising. What is its significance? How does it make them feel? What are the associations and memories? I tell them to really be behind their communication in case there is something about it that they are avoiding letting on.

If the above two steps have not resolved the problem then I tell the person to wait in their contemplation until something else has come up – in addition to the repetitive material. Just waiting will help deepen the individual's contemplation – and sometimes a hidden association or feeling will emerge. A few times I have also noticed that something that they earlier tried to side step or overlook will come back. So often this will break the pattern – but not always

If none of the above resolve the problem I then instruct the person to simply ignore the repetitive material. I presume that it is being thrown up by the individual's mind as a defensive screen aimed at stopping them contemplating – and it is best completely ignored.

I have noticed that individuals go through cycles on long Intensives. These cycles seem to be the result of identifications. The person will communicate material from a particular identification until it is run out. They will then run into a desert, a stage of emptiness. Then they will try to fabricate something, or get pissed off that nothing is happening – and at some point they may drop the identification. That point, when they drop it, may occur in a quiet moment or in the middle of an emotional outburst – but when it happens there is a significant increase in their openness. And direct experiences can occur at this point. One difficulty distinguishing this is that the dis-identification will shift the individual's state energetically – so you cannot rely on that as an indicator of a direct experience. Once the person has dropped their previous identification they are then into a new realm of themselves and their experience – they have a whole new raft of material to work through and communicate. And their subjective sense of themselves and of the technique is quite likely to change.

The final issue worth highlighting under this discussion of contemplation and openness is that of criticalness. When describing the rules in the opening Lecture I always emphasise the rule about not passing any judgement, in any way whatsoever, positive or negative, on any other participant. Quite early on in the Intensive – and no later than day 4, I will give a talk on criticalness. I point out how it affects people in three profound ways.

- A. If one person communicates criticalness to another participant on the Intensive, then it will cause all the participants to close down to a degree. It is the absence of judgements that makes the space safe for people to open up. If judgements are overheard, even if not directed at oneself, then there will be a distrust of the space and a closure. This will inhibit the group and the entire process. I encourage everyone to stick their hand up anytime they hear a judgement being made about anyone else in the room.
- B. The person making the critical judgement or comment knows that they are intending to change the other person – and to some degree know that they are intending to cause injury. They may feel completely justified – but they do also know that what they are doing is wrong. And this will hold that individual up. This is why in the yogic system 'ahimsa' – non-injury - is the top priority. If you

injure others you hold yourself back, you deny your power and ability. I do allow people to be critical of me, because they sometimes need to let off steam about authority figures. But I also warn them to not go so far that they hold themselves back in this way. (On the six week Intensive I told them to communicate their negativity about me in a way that I wouldn't hear it. This was also a measure of self protection because I did not then know my capacity for tolerating negativity for that length of time. In the event I heard most of it and it was not a problem – at least not for me.)

- C. Third the person stuck in criticalness is being unaware of something about themselves. The criticalness exercise is the fastest way to enhance ones personal awareness – and it is basically to find out what it is that you are not accepting about yourself in being critical of the other. I give personal examples of this to illustrate how it works, sometimes quite subtly.

The issue of criticalness is potentially very important on long Intensives. Almost everyone will be triggered at some point – and most people a lot of the time. This is why I emphasise it so much in lectures – and here in this Manual. Section 5.2 contains a longer exposition about criticalness, explaining more about it and including the examples I use to illustrate the key points. Section 5.2 also includes material on how people hold back on their positive qualities – not just their negative ones.

## 4.4 Communication

There are two quite separate roles for communication on any Intensive. The first is to enable the individual to disidentify or let go of stuff that has arisen in their contemplation. On long EIs people will notice that if something comes up at the beginning of a walk or work period it tends to stick around for the whole period – whereas in the dyad it disappears once it is communicated. Provided, of course, that it is really communicated. By this I mean not reported but said in contact and owned in the communication. The more fully something is owned in contact with another the more easily can it be left behind.

The second role of communication is the opposite, it is in presenting an experience. I tell people that often an individual will not know that what occurred in their consciousness was a direct experience – until they communicate it fully. And now what I mean by communicate fully is being seen in the experience by another person. I used to think it was a question of getting the words right and being behind them – but now I am sure that the real issue is being seen in the experience by another person. This is a profound acknowledgement of the experience and is what makes it available to the individual later. I have quite a lot more to say about this – in section 7

It is clear from this description of the purposes of communication that they are both served by the person being fully present and in contact when communicating. The most common errors that are made are:

- (a) reporting what has come up as if it happened to someone else
- (b) not making a clear break between contemplation and communication. This means that at least part of the communication is made with the person focussing on their internal experience, often with their eyes closed, rather than attending to the contact with their partner.
- (c) being shy or embarrassed. This can occur for either very positive or very negative material. If I

notice this I recommend the person choose one of their favourite partners to communicate this to. (see also section 5.3 on the ten conditions)

- (d) embellishing or editing material that arises. At some point I include this in a lecture and emphasise the importance of communicating exactly what came up and nothing more. When I did this as a participant I discovered the degree to which I failed to tell the truth in order to try to look good, to preserve my image and to impress people. It was a real discipline to communicate only exactly what comes up in my contemplation. When people get this they see the point and really value it.
- (e) presenting difficult material in a joking fashion. I warn participants about this and emphasise the service they do if they can resist smiling and laughing when someone does this. By laughing they reinforce the defence the person is using to not own their material.

There are usually a few people in the group who are addicted to talking. This arises for people who are used to “thinking out loud” - or who just revel in having a captive audience. The people involved will not do themselves any favours because they will be continually losing energy. Sometimes I joke with them about it; “You know if people could get enlightened by talking a lot there would be a lot more enlightened people in the world!” I find it is usually a continual struggle to help compulsive talkers to contemplate enough – but when they do, they often do very well.

## 4.5 Listening Partner

It took me a while to twig that the single most important factor in determining the quality of an Intensive was the ability of the participants to be good listening partners. With a group of good listeners the Intensive will go deep, have more energy and more experiences. If there are a significant number of people who are absent or habitually respond or are unwilling to give their full attention – then the group is slowed down. So now I always emphasise, explain and illustrate the importance of being a good listening partner.

I usually accompany any talk on being a good listening partner by a demonstration. I demonstrate the sort of subtle responses that people may not be aware of making; the slight nod, the raised eyebrow, the intake of breath and so on. I also demonstrate what I call the ‘robot’ mode where the person effectively freezes their face and appears completely cut-off. With these demonstrations people get the idea of what is needed, and generally seek to comply.

If I spot someone responding in some way then I will aim to correct them in an unobtrusive fashion. One strategy that works quite well is to come behind the listening partner, and when the contemplating partner has finished a communication to whisper in the listener’s ear “you may not be aware of it, but you are responding by nodding” (or whatever their response was).

One subtle response occurs when the listener cannot hear the other person clearly. Rather than raise their hand they will lean forward, or turn their head so that one ear is closer to the communicator. If this happens once or twice I generally leave it; but if someone does it a lot then at the end of a dyad I will tell them that it is a subtle form of responding and ask them to raise their hand next time they cannot hear well.

One of the reasons why people are reticent about raising their hand for quiet communications is that they are often embarrassing (for either communicator or listener or both). Many times I have had to ask people to repeat – with me listening in – the thing that they find hardest in the world to say! Moral of the story – which I have sometimes used in lectures – is to always be clear in your communication – and especially when it is embarrassing.

If I am giving a talk on being a good listening partner I always include material to illustrate how some people try to hide difficult material by presenting it in a funny or joking fashion. When this occurs a really good listening partner will not respond at all – and the communicator will have the opportunity to really own the material they are finding difficult. If the listener does respond then they have failed their partner. When people hear this they do their best to not laugh.

Laughter and giggling is a periodic problem on Intensives. I had one three day that had a number of gigglers on it and it was uproariously funny for just about the whole time – and there were not many experiences. The issue here is that laughing discharges energy. And within the process there is a definite build up of energy that facilitates direct experiences. So as a Master I try to control or reduce the amount of energy that is dissipated in laughter and giggling. The problem is that attempts to stifle giggles will normally make matters worse. I have not found any general approach that works. Instead I play each situation ‘by ear’: in other words I aim to find what will work best in each unique situation. Strategies that I employ – at least until they are shown to be counter productive, include;

- (a) Walking up and down the line facing the row that is laughing the most. Sometimes just seeing me paying attention will be enough to calm things down.
- (b) If there is one person who has completely lost it I will offer them support. Sometimes just sitting alongside them is enough. Sometimes physical contact – a hand on the base of the spine seems best – works well. Other times it makes matters worse
- (c) Interrupting the dyad and inviting the people involved to let off steam. When they have done so to then get them to restart.

Whatever you try be sensitive to the effect it is having. If what you are doing is making matters worse then back off and try something completely different. I have never found a strict approach to be helpful. The things that have worked most consistently are those that are empathetic to everyone involved –and include me having a laugh myself. I hope it is obvious that you should not even try to intervene if you are caught in your own hysterical laughter – just have a good laugh and when it is over then start to do your best. And whatever you do not come across like a strict school master – that will only fuel the fire of giggles.

## **5. Giving Lectures**

*In this section I describe my approach to preparing and giving lectures in some detail. I also include notes on a complete sequence of lectures for a two week. There are also sections on criticalness, specialness, the ten conditions for a deep experience and the six friends and six enemies – all*

*important lecture material.*

For people who dislike doing the six lectures associated with a three day then the 17 lectures of the two week (let alone the 45 lectures of the six week) looks like a nightmare. However if you find Intensive lectures difficult you are unlikely to contemplate running a long Intensive. You have to actually enjoy the Master role and all that goes with it to be able to run long Intensives, and this includes the lectures themselves. Basically on a long Intensive you have the opportunity to teach what you know about personal growth and Truth in the lectures – and it is what the participants expect and need. They also need you to go on about the technique, both in general and in detail, each and every day. And you will also need to go on about the mind in one way or another. The reason for this is that actually that is what is going on – people are struggling to be free of their mind and the tool they are using is the technique. That's the bottom line and you have to keep coming back to it every day.

You will develop your own lecture style and format to suit how you are on Intensives. After three or four long Intensives I decided that I was being too serious. That is my nature, to be serious, analytical and forcing. So I deliberately introduced a lot of jokes and silly stories into my lectures and also deliberately talked a lot more about surrender – I left the persistence bit to come across from my nature. This style evolved into telling two silly stories at the start of each lecture – and it was useful in grabbing people's attention, waking them up a bit and helping them to let go. A scattering of jokes and funny incidents throughout the rest of the lecture also kept people awake and listening. However if you know that your style is lighter, more naturally surrendered and easy going then you may need to deliberately include stories about persistence and overcoming heavy obstacles in your talks. The point is to try to get a good balance between will and surrender, between being light hearted and grounded, between interesting and inspiring stories and giving them the information that they need.

Over the years I have become better at surrendering the lecture content. Indeed on the six week I actually gave several lectures that I, the personality, thought were inappropriate, but they were just what the participants needed and were extremely successful. Here's what I wrote to myself shortly after the six week;

I had prepared the ground by reading lots of books and making a note of good stories I found. I had also made very short notes on some of the stories that had arisen in my own life that seemed to provide good material. During the morning period, especially before and after morning walk, I would just put my attention on the group and see what occurred to me. Sometimes it would come as a series of thoughts, sometimes as an issue that needed to be dealt with, sometimes I would catch things that people were saying that seemed relevant. Sometimes a topic would occur to me that I would dismiss, and then notice it kept coming back. Sometimes I would be busy thinking about something, such as guilt or forgiveness and try to put it aside to find out what lecture should be about – and then realised that I already had what it should be about.

Once I had the main topic or theme clear I would then do quite a lot of thinking about how to thread the ideas together, what stories to tell and anything that seemed particularly relevant to the group or any individuals in it. (Sometimes I would put an issue in a lecture to target just one participant.) Often I would get more ideas for stories to tell as I thumbed through books at lunch

time. By the end of lunch my preparatory work was finished and I would take into the group room all the books I might need to read from. Then during the dyad before lecture I would again put my attention on the group and allow changes or refinements to occur to the overall structure of the lecture. I would also usually write out the first part in some detail so I could get started correctly.

Once I started delivering the lecture I would not normally look at my notes again. I would actually surrender again and things often occurred as I was talking. I would refer to the notes again right at the end to check I had not left out anything important before asking for questions. Sometimes I noticed that I had left out a chunk of material, and usually decided to just leave it alone – it had been dropped for some reason I knew nothing about. If it was a logistic issue then I would find a time to mention it. The net result of all this is that the lecture material was largely generated by surrender, then wilfully ordered and structured, then delivered in a surrendered state. It worked extremely well. Virtually everyone was inspired by all the lectures.

Another important aspect of the lecture period is to encourage participants to ask questions. Everyone benefits from a good question and answer session. If you want to encourage questions it is very important that you do not end your lecture with a powerful story. Powerful stories will affect people emotionally – and they will be still digesting that when you ask for questions. They will also be unwilling to raise a mundane issue of how to decide what came up as a result of contemplation after listening to an amazing story of courage in the face of death! So put your big stories well before the end. I would follow the big story with a discussion about how it relates to what's going on in the here and now, and how it relates to the technique and then go on a bit about some aspect of the technique. Then ask for questions – and it would usually work well.

The other thing to emphasise is that people love hearing about you. They want to know how you are, both in your ordinary life and as the master. I would quite often describe what the intensive looked like from the Master's chair and this seemed to work well. But what inspired them most was stories when I struggled with my own stuff, with my mind and had to face something unpleasant. You do not lose altitude by owning your stuff – provided that the story does end OK. For example on the six week I was plagued by problems of leaking bathrooms, particularly leaking showers. It was persistent and distracting and also meant that some times the participants lost use of a bathroom. After pondering this - after one leak put water into the group room – I realised that there was an issue in it for me. I wanted the Intensive to be perfect. I had covered all the bases – but the leaks were a reminder that I was not really in control. So I told the group about my self inspection, my desire to be perfect – and being willing to let it go. Amazingly enough the leaks did actually get a lot better after that!

But by far the most important thing of all is for you to be present when giving the lecture. If you are there and in contact with the group then even the worst material will work OK. If you are not present then even the most stunning material will not work. It is you that they need – it is you that inspires them.

It is also important to tune into what the group wants or needs. On a three day there is very little scope for doing this – each lecture has a stock of core information that needs to be communicated. By the time you have added an inspiring story and space for questions you don't have much room for doing

anything different. This is not the case on a long Intensive. Now the core material can be communicated by day 4 or 5 and then you have days of lectures during which you can choose what to explain, emphasise or teach. Don't be shy of stuff that is important to you – even if it is not directly related to the Intensive. But most importantly strive to sense what it is that the group needs. If you listen carefully and surrender to the Divine I am confident that you will hear what it is that you should talk about.

Finally you should know that you can strongly influence the group's energy by the style, tone and content of your lectures. It took me a while to realise this. The energy on my two weeks peaked around days 10-11-12. This leaves two, three or four days with not much to do and my lectures used to let the group fizzle out. In later years I deliberately wound the group up again on days 12, 13 and 14 and managed to get another flurry of experiences on the last two days. I wound the group up by being genuinely enthusiastic, telling amazing stories of commitment and courage and reminding them over and over that experiences happen towards the end of the group. And it really worked. But you have to genuinely have your own energy under your control to be able to do this – you cannot fake it. (In the two week in 2006 I avoided the problem by finishing the enlightenment dyads at the end of day 12.)

## **5.1 Example of Lecture sequences**

In 2006 I Mastered a 2-week (with my wife Eva) at a venue – as opposed to at home. I realised that when I give lectures I like to have inspiring and relevant stories to tell. I ended up taking about 100 books with me to the venue – just to make sure that I had access to my collection of favourite stories. I strongly recommend all masters to make use of stories in their lectures – it adds variety, interest and some very heart opening material. Here are the books that I use most regularly for this purpose:

*All I need to know I learned in Kindergarten*, R.Fulghum, Harper Collins 1994

*The Perennial Philosophy*, Aldus Huxley, Flamingo, 1994

*The Heart of the Enlightened*, Anthony de Mello, Fount 1989

*Nothing Special*, Charlotte Joko Bek, Harper 1993

*Everyday Zen*, Charlotte Joko Bek, Harper 1989

*Catching a Feather on a Fan*, John Crook, Element 1991

*How can I help?* Ram Dass & P.Gorman, Rider 1985

*Miracle of Love*, Ram Dass, Dutton, 1979

*Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart*, ed. C.Feldman & J.Kornfield Harper 1991

*Chicken Soup for the Soul* (series), J.Canfield & M.V. Hansen, Health Comms. 1993

*A Path with Heart*, Jack Kornfield, Rider 1994

*After the Ecstasy the laundry*, Jack Kornfield, Bantam 2000

*The Enlightenment Intensive*, Lawrence Noyes, Frog Ltd, 1998

My collection includes quite a few other books by Ram Dass, Phillip Kapleau's writings on Zen, books by Thich Nhat Hahn and others on Engaged Buddhism and many spiritual classics, including "Varieties of Religious Experience" by William James and so on. In all these books I have yellow post-it notes stuck inside the front cover telling me where the favourite stories can be found – and what they illustrate. In this way I can quickly search for and find a story on a given topic or that I remember having been particularly effective in some regard.

I generally start my lectures with two jokes or silly stories. I do this

- (a) to counter my own tendency to be serious
- (b) to wake the participants up and get their attention
- (c) to encourage (a little) laughing – which I think helps in letting go

There is an Osho book of jokes (*Take it very seriously*) and the de Mello and Fulghum books above are good sources of silly stories. I also glean jokes from the internet and my life in general. There is very little that I am not willing to tell risky jokes about during an EI lecture (but I do avoid jokes in bad taste – well I think I do!)

I usually then say what the theme of the lecture is, why this is important – and then start. I aim to have one or two stories to illustrate the theme(s) I have chosen. Preferably one reading from a book and one story from my own life. The set of notes that follow are the sort of summary that I use when giving a lecture (though not typed or this tidy).

### *Day 1*

First day is tough no matter how long the EI is

Discomfort, tiredness, headaches

If this continued no one would ever take a long EI – it will pass

Preface of Hugo Lassalle book to set the scene of what this is about – grounding one's spiritual life in experiences of the Absolute

Why Charles Berner did not recommend long EIs – and how I counteract these as far as possible. Why I value long EIs so much – example of the change it made to me.

Raise issue of criticalness and give detailed examples of how to handle it within context of Intensive.

Affect on others,  
Affect on self,  
Avoidance

## *Day 2*

This would be half way through a 3-day. Experiences already happening. These will continue, I expect them every day from now until the end. Deeper experiences tend to come later – and you can set it up by having a smaller one now!

Intention and how it differs from wanting and desire. How to make the choice and reaffirm it regularly

What you are up against – your ego-mind.

Failure of fighting it; just one part of the ego against another part

Need for acceptance

Gurdjieff coach metaphor – the sleeping self taking control

Recognise your own ego traps – they will be familiar. Accept they are there but do not allow them too distract or deter you

Key is to establish a pattern of steady contemplation – start the habit now.

## *Day 3*

By now most of you have been through a cycle and have had the experience of dropping down a level. These cycles continue throughout the EI. Where you think you are making most progress – where the technique is easy. Where you actually make most progress – when it gets difficult, boring or depressing.

Need to maintain an immaculate balance between will and surrender

Will            follow the schedule  
                  doing the technique  
                  contemplating outside dyads

Beck story on attention

Surrender      to the process, allow it to take you wherever it goes  
                  to being open

“Take it to Delhi” story from Ram Dass

Allowing the technique to change

#### *Day 4*

The process that occurs on a long EI, dis-identification and dropping down a level – then coming up against the same material but from a new perspective. Crises can occur when you run out at a given level – and these are opportunities for you to go deeper and let go more. The problem is your resistance.

Stories to illustrate this

The issue is “do you want your awareness increased or not?” If you do then you have to face down the fear, have to be willing to disclose uncomfortable material about yourself. And you will be tested – over and over again. Each time you keep going you get stronger and the resistance weakens – but it may not feel like that subjectively.

The importance of presenting material fully – so as to let it go. Also important if you have an experience. Expand on this

#### *Day 5*

The ten conditions for a deep direct experience (see section 5.3)

Go through the first five in some detail:

Accepting guidance (Beck lecture on mind distortion)

Using a focussing tool

Contemplate steadily

Communicate with NO vagueness – how vagueness is an avoidance strategy

Let yourself be seen Ram Dass story

Willing to give up beliefs and preconceived ideas

Enlarge on issue of preconceived ideas with personal examples

Emphasise willingness to be wrong, even if right

#### *Day 6*

Recap first five points. Then deal with the remaining points on the list for a deep experience

Willing to express anti-social material. Personal examples. Why it is hard

Willing for your life to change. Explain what this means – not hanging onto stuff.

Not trying to bargain with the Truth (OK to change this bit, but leave all the nice bits in place)

Treat other people well.

The importance of own inner standards

A way out of not deserving

Wanting truth for truths sake - how egoic reasons always run out in the end

Willing for it to turn out however it turns out - refers to courage and making your Self strong

Handling sexual energy – important to own it when it arises (demonstrate!)

Intend to have a deep one: Skanda's fishing metaphor

*Day 7*

Half way through. The process starts to speed up now – you go through cycles faster, it can become more intolerable. People's reactions to intolerability

Giving up

Trying to force the issue

Trying to figure out how to get somewhere

Getting critical and pissed off

Explain the chief feature and how to recognise one's own.

*Path with Heart* Kornfield p.163 reading

What is required now is more surrender, more openness

Traps in openness – hanging onto object or intention

Trap of trying to perceive the Truth

Trap of figuring or looking for an answer

*Miracle of Love*, Ram Dass p.8 story

Nice if someone else could come along and shatter our minds in that way. Instead all you have is a couple of old hippies telling you to do this technique. You have to do it yourself – and that gives you a strength not available on other paths

*Day 8*

The importance of finding out for yourself. Silly stories to reinforce the point.

Satya story about getting a confrontation from Charles Berner

Finding out for yourself means you don't have to suffer trips from therapists or teachers – but it might also be hard work. Choyam Trungpa's remark about one insult after another. This is what the spiritual path is like – its not some airy fairy walk into paradise – it is facing yourself and your mind.

Reason why I read from Buddhist books – they tend to emphasise self discovery more than other traditions.

Dangers of finding out for yourself – making errors. But all errors are sources of learning. Sometime hardship and learning is key.

Mandela story about the power from suffering.

*Day 9*

EIs do not create stuff. You bring your stuff into the room with you. All the EI does is make it apparent to you. And it may do so in unexpected ways.

Stories of how people get to face things on EIs. The efficiency of the universe.

As well as these 'coincidences' the EI brings your stuff up by removing distractions and expanding your awareness and getting you to contemplate. Personal examples

The need to stay within the formality of the dyads. As the openness increases so too does the need to stick to the rules and the formality. This is what creates the space for deep experiences. Don't try to self correct – always raise your hand. Don't lean forward to hear better –raise your hand. Avoid relating.

The reason why relationships are key in life but to be avoided in Intensives.

*Day 10*

Back to preconceived ideas. But now deeper level of how they hold things up.

Refer to my history of teaching systems thinking. What it means to get a bigger picture, the need to be really open to different perspectives. Jokes to illustrate the point. Experience of getting people to shift their thinking – only after they had failed to solve problems the conventional way.

Fritz Peters story of Gurdjieff and rewarding people for doing wrong.

Review the likely preconceptions people have at this stage

What you have to go through before you can have an experience

What you actually think you, life or another is

When your experience might happen – what state you have to be in

Counter with examples. Communicate preconceptions, but don't believe them.

### *Day 11*

Talk about personal growth in broader context. Berner's criterion for growth "how well you treat others".

Menon story (Fulghum p.153)

In order to treat others better you have to be conscious of your trips, to know your weak points, your defensive structures, your chief feature and so on. Only when you are aware of this can you avoid behaving in ways that will (unintentionally according to your conscious awareness) harm others. Beck reading

Although knowing your mind helps, having direct experiences can cause a step change in your whole make up and behaviour. Give lots of examples from own life and from other people's stories. The point is that when you know how things are you want to act in accordance with that –and this is what reduces the amount of harm and injury you cause. Therapy can bring things into awareness and release the grip of some trips – direct experiences can blow away whole areas of your mind.

Ram Dass Clown story

So don't give up. Just persist. Keep going and don't settle for anything less than the Absolute Truth. It is your will for Truth that carries you through everything

### *Day 12*

Foolish to compare with a three day – you are in such an open space, but don't realise it because you have all moved together. Plenty of time.

There are always reasons for stopping – but do not confuse surrender (letting go and willing for anything to occur) with giving up (which means stopping doing it and intending)

Surrender allows surprises to happen. Direct experiences are accidents – and doing a practice for this long makes you more accident prone.

Stories to illustrate how surrendering brings surprises. (from my own life mostly)

Stories that challenge our preconceptions (starfish, Mother Teresa)

### *Day 13*

Still plenty of time. Well I would say that. Give examples of experiences occurring towards the end. For me personally on the very last walk of the six week in California.

Story from Star Wars: Luke Skywalker “I don’t believe it” Yoda “That’s the problem”

Tensions involved in personal growth and a spiritual path

First expressing yourself v suppressing yourself.

Here in the technique and rules. Say whatever arises, but not about other

Participants or what they say

Yogic path puts no-injury first – explain why: ahimsa lecture summary

In life the tension occurs physically (illness), emotionally (depression) and mentally (anxiety). Solutions are exercise, serve others and don’t lie

Second tension between will and surrender

Wilful processes get you to a place you cannot sustain. EIs are in this category. But they show you what you have to work on next. And if you have

direct experiences you KNOW what the Truth is and can start too life with it.

However can end up with enlightened egos

Surrender progress is much slower, but sustainable.

Problem is you have to start by acting in accordance with some code that you do not KNOW to be true.

Can end up with hypocrites

Different people need different mixture of will and surrender – paths that Eva and I are on. After an EI important to add in a daily practice that involves some degree of surrender.

### *Day 14*

Final barriers

Phenomena, - ignore them

Fears: ignore them

Not worthy – give the three ways out

Story to open their heart (e.g. Tokyo subway)

How the schedule is different (whenever that is)

Just keep going to the end.

I have notes at about this level of detail of the lectures that I have given on all the long Intensives that I have run. If you require copies of these I will be happy to provide them. The above is an amalgamation of the best in the most recent long Intensives.

## 5.2 Criticalness

The following has been taken from teaching material for the Open University on criticalness. It is a version of the basic material that I include in an early lecture on criticalness. I encourage you to use the technique in your own life and develop your own examples. It is an extremely powerful growth technique and is highly relevant to long Intensives – if only because both you and all the participants are likely to experience bouts of criticalness.

To start with I need to clarify exactly what I mean by criticalness. Perhaps the easiest way is to describe my experience when I was trying to quit smoking cigarettes in my 30s. Each time I succeeded in stopping smoking I would be extremely critical of other people who were still smoking. I would find the smell of cigarettes objectionable and I would mentally be criticising and denigrating the people who were still smoking. After many attempts to quit, with an equal number of relapses, I finally reached a point where I did cease smoking. One day I became so angry with the whole thing that I just destroyed a packet of cigarettes in a rage. Since then I have not had the remotest urge to ever smoke again – for which I am grateful.

But more importantly in that process I also lost my criticalness of other people who were still smoking cigarettes. I still thought that they were behaving foolishly, I still did not like the smell of cigarettes, but rather than being critical of them I felt a level of compassion for their predicament. I remembered how hard it was to really stop smoking and the grip of nicotine addiction. So I still *judged* their actions as unhealthy and wanted to support them in stopping – but I was no longer *critical* of them. This is a key distinction for the process or exercise that I want to describe. One can consider other people to be misguided, wrong, acting in poor taste or deranged, but these judgements are all distinct from a state in which one is critical of the other. The criticalness is something in addition to the judgement and makes one intolerant, negative and generally unpleasant.

So what changed when I really gave up smoking? Why did my attitude towards smokers shift from one of criticalness to one of compassion? What changed was something inside me. What changed was that I finally accepted the part of myself that had been addicted to smoking cigarettes – hence the rage at the cigarettes themselves, I felt they had imprisoned me. This may sound bizarre, but until I accepted that part of myself and came to terms with it every attempt to stop smoking was doomed to failure –

because I was trying to force myself into a way of being without accepting myself.

The criticalness exercise that I now want to discuss has the aim of making that transition possible under a wide range of circumstances. The principle on which the exercise operates can be stated quite simply. It is that **you are only critical of things in others that you have not yet accepted about yourself**. There are no exceptions to this principle! Everything about which you are critical is pointing to something about *yourself* that you are not accepting. And when you do accept it, whatever it is, then your criticalness will change. You may still evaluate what the other person is doing negatively, you may still want them to cease doing it or thinking it or whatever – but the negative intolerance will have gone and been replaced by something different.

Whenever I explain this principle to people they start by nodding in agreement. Then they think of someone about whom they are very critical – and recoil at the thought that this is reflecting something about themselves. At that point they will usually start raising objections. “But what if the other person is ...”. I understand this, I went through this process as well. It is an extremely confronting exercise, and no one likes being confronted, even by themselves. After more than twenty years using this process I can assure you that there are no exceptions – but there are subtleties that need to be explained.

Let me give you some further examples to illustrate how this works. I have one good friend who regularly winds me up and I become extremely critical of him. A couple of years ago I was staying with this friend for an extended period and my criticalness towards him became a serious issue – so I decided to use the criticalness exercise. The first step was to figure out exactly what it was that he was doing that I was critical of. After a while I twigged that it was that he always wanted to be the centre of attention. He would come into a room and immediately override the conversation and ‘take over’. The more I noticed what was bugging me the clearer it became – but I did not really get what it was in me that I was not accepting. A short while later, I had to give a presentation to a group and suddenly noticed how much I enjoyed being the centre of their attention whilst I was making the presentation. When I am in a social situation I do not allow this part of myself much space – which is a key way in which I was not accepting this in myself. But I could not deny that it was an aspect of myself that I was not accepting. I am still in the process of accepting this about myself, but already my criticalness towards my friend has disappeared. I still do not like the way he grabs attention, but I can now just say something about it in a kind way, rather than being intolerant.

I want to give another personal example that illustrates how subtle this exercise can be. I am normally a very tidy person. I have found this is an effective way to cope with a busy life. By being tidy I know where to find tools, pens, cello tape and so on. My wife, on the other hand, is an untidy person. It is not unusual for people who live together to polarise on this issue. From time to time her untidiness would really get to me and I would become critical of everything she was doing, or failing to do. Every time her clothes were on the bedroom floor, or the hairbrush moved from its established place, or all the pens disappeared from my desk drawer, I would rant and rave and become extremely intolerant. After a while I would relax and the issue would subside, but only until the next time. So I resolved to use the criticalness exercise to sort this out. The trouble was that I could not find a part of myself that wanted to be untidy. I explored several different aspects and came to the conclusion that if there was indeed a part of myself that wanted to be untidy then it was deeply buried in my unconscious – and that the criticalness exercise must therefore be flawed.

One day I was teaching this exercise to a group of Open University tutors and after explaining the process I did the exercise with them. That very morning I had blown up about untidiness I felt obliged to work on this issue once more. As I did so I suddenly saw that what was involved was not the untidiness in itself, but what I took the untidiness to mean. When my wife was untidy I took that as indicating that she did not care about me, that she did not care if I could not find my pen to write with, or a particular tool to work with or if I tripped over her clothes. So what I was critical of was not the untidiness – but my interpretation that she did not care for me.

This changed everything. I had no trouble identifying the part of myself that could become uncaring about other people – and my faith in the criticalness exercise was restored. This all took place more than 15 years ago and in the intervening time I have learned to care a lot more for other people. Indeed one of the ways that I demonstrate my deep care for my wife is by tidying up after her. I understand that her untidiness is in part forgetfulness and in part being more strongly focussed on people than things. It is now very rare for me to become upset about untidiness – indeed I cannot think of the last time it happened. Which is a sort of miracle considering that it used to happen to me several times a week!

So the steps of the criticalness exercise are as follows:

Start by noticing when you are critical of another person.

Figure out exactly what it is that you are critical of, noting that it may be what they do or how you interpret what they do.

Once you have identified precisely what it is that you are critical of, then reflect on this with the aim of discovering what it is about yourself that you are not accepting. It may be that you do something similar, or want to do something similar.

Once you have recognised what it is about yourself that you are not accepting then you will find it much easier, in the moment, to not be critical of the person. You will notice that although you may still judge what they are doing negatively, you will feel differently towards them.

However this issue will remain as a source of criticalness until you find a way of fully accepting the associated aspect of yourself. This may take time.

This is one of the most powerful tools I know for increasing ones self awareness. And it produces immediate benefits in terms of being able to listen to others and have a deeper appreciation of their perspective.

### **An aside on acceptance**

When I first read books by Carl Rogers<sup>[1]</sup> I failed to understand how his approach to therapy worked because I did not understand what *acceptance* was, nor how it worked. Other people I have spoken to have had a similar difficulty and also wanted a distinction between acceptance and *fully accepting* something.

Acceptance is a willingness for something to exist just as it is. Wanting something to be different

from how it is indicates non-acceptance. In relation to aspects of myself, acceptance is characterised by tolerance and ceasing to deny or conceal that aspect of myself. Note that acceptance does not mean that I have to like what I find about myself, but I do have to acknowledge it exists and that it affects how I act or think.

Fully accepting something about myself involves a deeper appreciation of whatever it is. Rather than just tolerating it I am willing to take responsibility for it. Rather than just ceasing to deny its existence I fully own that it is an aspect of myself. And rather than just be willing for it to exist I understand how or why it exists in me.

One of the key paradoxes on which Carl Rogers built his therapeutic system and reputation was the recognition that until something is fully accepted then nothing can change – and that as soon as it is fully accepted then spontaneous change was very likely to occur.

## **Specialness**

As well as projecting our disowned negative attributes onto others – and being critical of them – we also project our disowned positive attributes onto others – and then admire them a lot. In groups I would sometimes get people to think of the three people they admired the most. Then for each person to identify the key characteristic that they admired the most. Then they had to get a word or short phrase that encapsulated each of these characteristics. Finally they had to be open to the possibility that these were aspects of themselves that they had not yet owned. I would sometimes get them to say out loud to a partner “I am ...” followed by the three characteristics that they identified during the process. This is an interesting exercise to use to explore the positive qualities that one has but is not yet owning.

I have recently discovered a more direct way, at least for myself, to identify these qualities. Sometimes I notice that I want to be special to another person in a particular way. I want them to think of me as especially <some quality>. When I passed my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday I noticed that I was more and more often wanting young women to find me attractive, particularly sexually attractive. I could dismiss this as an inevitable consequence of losing appeal as my hair became greyer etc. But actually when I inspected this more closely I discovered that this desire to be special in this way had always been there – and it was because I was failing to own and accept that I was, in reality, attractive to women. Even now, as I write this, I can feel a sense of embarrassment and cringing within myself – this is not what I am supposed to say, this is being big-headed as well as unreal – and this reflects my continuing struggle to accept such a positive quality about myself.

I have asked other people to explore using this exercise, of noticing how they want to be seen as special, as a way of identifying their disowned positive qualities. And it has worked for all those I have discussed it with. So I am of the opinion that this is the positive equivalent of the criticalness exercise.

And it is very useful for anyone setting out to be a Master.

The reason I say this is that in my experience people find it harder to own their positive qualities than their negative traits and neuroses. This is in part due to the Anglo-Saxon culture which disparages people owning their strengths and abilities. But it is also a more general human trait. And it plays out a lot on Intensives. Part of the reason why people are shy and embarrassed about presenting experiences is precisely this fear of owning something so wonderful about themselves. And in my experience the more that I can own my positive qualities the more space I give to others to do the same. So you will be a better Master by owning your positive qualities – as well as dealing with your criticalness.

## **Our Deepest Fear**

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our Light, not our Darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you NOT to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the World.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone.

As we let our own Light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates other

Marianne Williamson; *A Return to Love*

## **5.3 The Ten Conditions**

In the lecture sequence set out in section 5.1 I made reference to the ten conditions for a deep direct experience. These are enumerated below, and then repeated with a commentary on each one. I have also included a different approach to a similar set of issues, entitled the Six Friends and Six Enemies. On a two week it is probably inappropriate to use both, but I certainly did so on the six week. These are useful vehicles for enabling you to talk to a number of issues that are pertinent to the whole endeavour of seeking to directly experience the Absolute, and as such are very useful.

### **THE TEN CONDITIONS FOR A DEEP ENLIGHTENMENT EXPERIENCE**

1. Accept guidance from someone who has had deep experiences
2. Use a focusing tool
3. Communicate completely with NO vagueness
4. Contemplate steadily
5. Be willing to give up beliefs and pre-conceived ideas
6. Be willing to express anti-social behaviour, thoughts and phenomena
7. Be willing for your life to change
8. Treat people well, by your own true inner standard
9. Want the Truth for the Truth's sake (not just for egotistical reasons)
10. Be willing for it to come out however it comes out.

The above ten points were specified by Charles Berner. In addition there are two other requirements

(11) Intend to have a deep direct experience

(12) Be willing and able to handle sexual energy without either suppressing it or acting out on it.

I will now give a short commentary on each of these conditions, indicating how I approach the issue in lectures.

### 1. Accept guidance from someone who has had deep experiences

I personally found this the most difficult to own when I started running long Intensives (and did say so in my lectures). It is clearly important and if you have not had a deep experience yourself then you should persist participating until you do. You really will be at a serious disadvantage until you know for certain where the Truth lies and how to steer people in that direction. Once I had owned this position I could see that people were relieved and pleased – they felt in safe hands. You probably won't feel this confident early on – so be honest with it. Once it is real you should just invite people to accept your guidance because you know what you are doing. Stress that you do not know what they have to face or what lies along their path, but that you do know the process and how the technique needs to be done.

### 2. Use a focusing tool

This is a very useful instruction for those perfectionists that think that there is one particular object that will best help them become enlightened. The point discovered by Rinzai, and the basis of that school of Zen, is that *any* focussing tool is helpful and increases the frequency of experiences (and the Zen people use some very weird focussing tools!). The point is that a focus limits the scope of the mind that has to be set aside – and this is why it is helpful – not because of the particular content of the tool.

### 3. Communicate completely with NO vagueness

This is not clear without examples, so make use of some. If you have done guilt clearing you will have good examples of how this works (if you have not then maybe you should!). By being clear, precise and not vague in any way you own what you are communicating – and it is this that enables you to set it aside and proceed to contemplate deeper. As explained in section 4.4 this also helps identify direct experiences – so there is no reason for communicating with vagueness – is there!

### 4. Contemplate steadily

The emphasis here is on steadily. And what steadily means is to contemplate all the time – not in bursts. So participants should be contemplating as they walk to the dining room, as they eat, as they walk – basically all the time other than when they are a listening partner or listening to a lecture. I labour this point around days 4 and 5 with an aim to get them into a habit or pattern of steady contemplation before the half way point. This is what they need to do to have a deep experience.

## 5. Be willing to give up beliefs and pre-conceived ideas

The key word in this is ‘willing’. It is not necessary to actually give everything up – if only because some of it may actually be true, and also because it is impractical to try to operate in the world without preconceived ideas. But it is essential to be *willing* to give them up – i.e. to be open to being wrong. I tell stories where I had to give up some of my own ideas – only to discover later that they were actually correct. But there is a world of difference between an idea and direct knowledge – and the idea, even if correct, is an obstacle to direct knowledge. Get this across and people will know what they have to do.

## 6. Be willing to express anti-social behaviour, thoughts and phenomena

I often introduce this by saying that in the hundreds of books that I have on spiritual matters, including personal accounts, there is only one in which anyone admits to serious anti-social behaviour. (It is Ken Wilber who, in *Grace and Grit*, admits to hitting his terminally ill wife.) It is hard to admit that one has hit one’s children, or can take pleasure from inflicting pain, or hate your mother – these are not noble truths. But they are the stuff that we all, as human beings, carry around with us. And if you want to increase your awareness you have to be willing to increase your awareness of the dark as well as of the light. And in my experience people often have to face the dark before they see the light. So don’t hold back. This is a safe place without any consequence on what you say – you are free to say your truth, no matter how glorious or awful. Don’t hold back!

## 7. Be willing for your life to change

Once again the key is in the word *willing*. Its not that you must change your life, not even that if you have a direct experience that it will force you to change your life. It is just that if you insist that your life does not change then you are closed to allowing in anything that could require you to make changes. In my experience the changes that are usually demanded – and voluntarily given – are internal changes. Things like one’s attitude to oneself, to life and to relationships with others. These attitudinal changes may manifest in outer changes, but generally the outer changes are less important. And it is the willing ness for internal change that is critical for the openness.

## 8. Treat people well, by your own true inner standard

I explain that one of the obstacles to having a direct experience is the knowledge that one has treated other people badly. This knowledge causes individuals to feel that they do not deserve the Truth – so they hold themselves back. One of the best strategies for getting out of this trap is to treat others well –

and you might as well get started right now. It will also make this Intensive work better. And it will certainly increase your willingness to allow yourself to have more Truth in your life.

#### 9. Want the Truth for the Truth's sake (not just for egotistical reasons)

Everyone starts out on the path for experiencing Truth from an egotistical place. This is inevitable, if only because the real self and Truth are, at that stage, unknown. Sometimes people retain some of the egoic reasons for seeking Truth – and they may sound quite noble. Things like wanting to change themselves so as to be better. But at some stage all egoic reasons become a barrier – and wanting to change myself was one of my biggest barriers. It was directly holding up my ability to accept myself as I actually am – which is the key for direct experience of self! So although we are all in this trap, the sooner we spot the ego reasons, the sooner we can let them go. It is important to not deny them or pretend they are not operating – the way forward is to accept that they are there, but that at a deeper level you want the Truth just for its own sake.

#### 10. Be willing for it to come out however it comes out.

This is similar to, but distinct from, the previous condition. Now the emphasis is on how this particular Intensive will turn out. The point is to drop any notion that you can make things come out the way you would like them – to just accept that what happens is what will happen. I sometimes refer, at this point, to the fact that direct experiences do not make one a better person – and not having one does not mean that you have done anything incorrectly or are somehow lacking. It just means that this is not what is on your path right now. The only way you can find out what is on your path is to go down it – and only you can do this.

The above ten points were specified by Charles Berner. In addition there are two other requirements

#### (11) Intend to have a deep direct experience

This is a refinement of the individual's intention – and it is quite important. It is feasible and desirable for people on long Intensives to renew their intention and to state it in terms of intending to have a deep direct experience. Skanda used to tell a story about going fishing as a metaphor for this. If you want small fish you use small bait and a thin, light line. If you are after bigger fish you use bigger bait and a much stronger line. Your intention is different in the two cases – though of course you could land a minnow on the strong line – and could even try landing a pike with the lightweight line.

#### (12) Be willing and able to handle sexual energy without either suppressing it or acting out on it.

There is a rule about not expressing yourself sexually, not having any sexual release. This condition

adds to this and emphasises that participants should not suppress their sexuality. I usually give a demonstration of feeling horny and how I express it! The point is to allow one's sexual energy to be there – but to not act out on it. I sometimes tell the story of watching a woman on a two week Intensive, on which I was a participant, dismissing her sexual fantasies as being irrelevant to her process – when she was working on life. Had I been the Master on that Intensive I would have challenged her to communicate fully what was coming up; in my view she was editing what was arising and this held her up.

## **5.4 The Six Enemies and the Six Friends**

These friends and enemies are identified in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, written by Yogiraja Atmarama, for all sadhakas i.e. those seeking enlightenment. I have not found this list as useful as the ten conditions – but this may be because I have used it less. In what follows I give a brief indication of how I have translated the ancient yogic advice into the needs of a long Intensive.

### **The Six Enemies**

#### **overeating**

Overeating is a problem because it reduces one's energy. If someone over eats on an Intensive they will usually experience a period of lethargy and their contemplation will be suppressed for several hours. This mitigates against contemplating steadily.

#### **over exertion**

This refers to anything that is adding something to the technique. Examples include making sure that the object is the best possible, doing something to make oneself more open or forcing a level of intensity or emotionality into one's communication that does not reflect what actually arose.

#### **talkativeness**

Talking too much is a common error. It blows off energy and means that the individual is contemplating a lot less. Since deep experiences depend upon steady contemplation talking too much is clearly a bad idea. Nevertheless a proportion of participants seem unable to refrain from doing so. Do your best to help each of them make progress with the issue.

forcing

The truth cannot be forced. All attempts to force the issue are counterproductive. Indeed as the Intensive proceeds what is required is more and more surrender – which is the exact opposite of forcing. The trouble is that some people have a lifetime habit of forcing issues, and it is a difficult habit to break (about as difficult as the talking one).

relationships

I emphasise that in life relationships are the key to everything, including happiness and fulfilment. But when seeking the Truth they are an obstacle. And the reason lies in our deep desire to be loved. This desire is so strong that we will unconsciously do whatever helps us to gain other people's love and approval. Especially those with whom we are in relationship. The real difficulty is that most of these ways of seeking love and approval through relating are unconscious – we do them without even knowing it. And this is why it is such a pernicious barrier. So if you find yourself really liking another participant, or falling in love with someone – just don't partner them for a while. This is a surprisingly common problem. Indeed I haven't run any long Intensive without it being an issue for more than one person.

unsteadiness

This is the issue of contemplating steadily from the other side. Some people find it hard to be steady and imagine that it is just as good to do the technique very intensely for a while, and then give themselves a break. This strategy doesn't work because in the break the openness is eroded and the next time the person starts to contemplate intensely they are not much further on from the last time they started. The key is to be steady and persistent.

## **The Six Friends**

firm faith (intention)

The importance of intention should, by now, be obvious. It is explained at length in section 4.1. The wording here, firm faith, points to the problem of doubt. If someone doubts that the Truth exists, or that they are good enough, or that they can access it, then this will undermine their intention. I assist these people by telling them to communicate the doubt, but to not believe it. Believing it is feeding the mind. Communicating it and going ahead anyway starves the mind of energy and makes their real Self stronger.

## constancy

This is the same as steady contemplation (see above on unsteadiness and the section on steady contemplation under the ten conditions.)

## knowledge of the essence

This says that if you have already had a direct experience it is easier to have another one – because you know it exists and have some knowledge of what it is like to experience the Truth. Many people on long Intensives have had experiences on 3-day events, so this is not disheartening to too many people. (If your group has a large number of people who have not had a direct experience then you may be better off leaving this out. And you should ask yourself whether you have an appropriate group for a long Intensive!).

## trust (surrender)

You cannot over-emphasise the importance of surrender, especially as the Intensive passes the half way point. The more people can let go, be open, surrender and just accept whatever arises the better chance they have of a deep experience.

## abandoning relationships

This is the opposite of the ‘relationship’ enemy explained above. I have often experienced this as an excruciating choice between love and Truth. And each time I have found it hard, but possible, to choose Truth above love. I usually have done so on the grounds that if the relationship were not founded on truth then the love would be shallow. But not everyone’s mind can be persuaded by this type of logic.

## courage

This refers to the fact that many people have to face quite intense fear at some point in the process. The fear can be of going mad, of dying or of being irrevocably changed. It is not enough for people to be told that the fear is not real – in their experience it is as real as any other fear. So what they need is courage, courage to go ahead in the face of the fear. Indeed I often explain that one cannot have courage without having fear. Someone who never knows fear has no need of courage!

## 6. Participants and their minds.

*Here I describe what it is like to engage with participants minds and some of the characteristic cases that you will have to deal with. This is a key aspect of Mastering a long Intensive, and one that cannot be adequately covered by any amount of written material. But this will give you a good start.*

I remember very clearly an early lecture that Satya gave on the six week on which I participated. She reported a conversation she had with Charles Berner in which she said to him “But what can go wrong?”. To which he replied, “their minds will come up, that’s what can go wrong!”. At the time I only partially understood what was meant. Now, ten long Intensives later, I understand all too well.

Earlier in this Manual I have said that a key part of the difference between 3-day and long Intensives is that material that was set aside early on reappears later. The later reappearance is harder to deal with because the person is now more open – and they are more profoundly affected – and also have the possibility of gaining greater insight into the material. But the first effect is to cause the person more distress or reaction. It is also the case that on a 3-day certain aspects of an individual’s mind can remain dormant and not cause them, or you as the Master, any difficulty. The longer an Intensive runs the greater the likelihood that the worst aspects of everyone’s mind will be excited. And once excited it will be your job as the Master to contain it. This is a key aspect of long Intensives for which running three days does not do much by way of preparation.

When I started running three day Intensives I made use of the story of the Zen Master who held a monk’s head under water until the monk thought he was going to drown. The Master pulls him out of the water and says “when you want to get enlightened as much as you wanted that breath, then you stand a chance!” I ceased using this as a story when I understood the difference between ‘wanting’ and ‘intention’ - it seemed to me that the story misled people into thinking that they had to have a very intense desire for the truth, rather than just choosing to prioritise it. However in recent years I have started to use the story once more. I use it as an illustration of the role of the Master. Basically in any tradition where people are seeking Truth there has to be someone who is willing to hold people’s minds at bay – or, in the story, under water.

It is difficult to convey this aspect of long Intensives adequately in a Manual. It is something that has to be experienced to be fully appreciated and understood. One of the main difficulties is that each participant is unique and will present their mind to you, as Master, in a wide variety of ways. You will notice it very easily in the ones that manage to trigger some aspect of your own mind. When this happens the key thing to keep reminding yourself is that they are doing their best. You should also undertake the criticalness exercise (section 5.2) and any other self-inspection to resolve your own issues as quickly and effectively as possible. But just because the participant’s mind has not triggered yours does not mean that all is well – you need to be on the look out for ways in which they are ‘going off’.

By far the most common way for you to engage with a participant’s mind is when you engage with

them in technique checking – and correction. The point here is that no one consciously does the technique wrong – everyone is doing it as well as they are able and they think they are doing it correctly. Nevertheless in more than half of the error checking interviews I do on a long Intensive there will be a serious error divulged. Incidentally I make sure that I check everyone's technique at least every two or three days. Here are some of the more common ways in which people cease to do the technique correctly because of some characteristic of their mind. I have chosen these to illustrate the spectrum – not to be comprehensive (which would take for ever to just write down!).

*Perfectionist.* These people will often volunteer to have their technique checked, because they are obsessed with doing it perfectly. Indeed they are so obsessed that they are watching themselves do the technique quite intensely – and as a result not actually doing it at all! The obvious signs of a perfectionist trap is someone who doubts their intention and renews it at length in every cycle, takes too long to select an object of contemplation, questions their degree of openness and checks and double checks that what they are about to communicate really did come up as a result of their intention. This person will be able to describe the way they do the technique perfectly – using the key phrases that you have stressed in your lectures. I find it quite hard to give effective corrections to these people – partly because they will simply take whatever you say and use it to feed their desire to be perfect. If they are working on themselves you could get them to use the one who wants to be perfect as their object; it is possible to do something similar with the life question. Another strategy is to help them to see that the continued checking is actually stopping them doing the technique – but this doesn't often help. Getting them to communicate the fact that they notice they are checking themselves can help. I have quite often resorted to telling some of these people to stop doing the technique as I describe it to the rest of the group and to just do something much simpler that they can trust and not check all the time.

*Doubter.* This is different from the perfectionist in that the overriding issue is doubting that they are actually doing the technique correctly – rather than aiming to do it absolutely perfectly. The first few times you check this person's technique you would not spot anything amiss. But after a while you will notice their doubt – even though they are actually doing fine. Help them to recognise that it is doubt, and that it needs to be communicated. But this is unlikely to resolve the issue. Eventually they have to trust – themselves, the process and you. And that is where you will be confronting their mind.

*Independent.* This person is one who would normally shy away from accepting any guidance or help. They will be quite independent and self-willed in life and will value their ability to 'do things my way'. When you ask this person how they do the technique they are quite likely to just say back to you how you have described it in lectures. But actually they will be doing something different. So quiz them deeper and ask them to put things in their own words. Persist until you are really sure you know what they are doing. In my experience they will often add things to the technique, or imagine that they know the answer and try to work towards it. Beware. Anytime you give this person a significant correction you will raise their hackles.

*Cruisers.* These people do not have a strong intention to have an experience. They will usually have an over-inflated sense of themselves and may have had significant experiences in the past – experiences that they consider put them above other people. Their lack of intention will show up in various ways; no depth to the material that arises, a casual attitude to everything, often a poor listening partner. One feature that often shows up in interviews is that they are hard to contact with any depth – they remain

on the surface. Like the *Independents* they will resist any sort of guidance. In their heads they are advanced and don't need guiding – nor even an experience. I have found it necessary to devise unique tactics to deal with each of these cases. My general aim is to find a way to deepen my contact, and then from that place challenge them to dare to go for more Truth.

## 6.1. Giving Interviews

In my snap-shots and brief descriptions of how to address each of the above types you will have noticed a firm position from which I confront the individual. You should not presume that this is the whole of my approach. As far as I can remember I have always been sympathetic and warm towards people who have these sort of problems. So I do all that I can to give them support and love and encourage them to trust me. But I am completely merciless when dealing with their mind. If their mind attempts to push me away or gain my agreement or whatever then it runs into an immovable wall – I do not let anyone off anything. Indeed if after an interview I think I have let someone off I will give myself a hard time for having failed them – and I will seek a new interview as soon as possible to correct my error.

Some participants do not understand how I can be simultaneously so warm and helpful, and so ruthless and confronting. They are unable to distinguish between their real self and their mind – and what is confusing them is that I relate to each quite differently. In the end this is the key to you serving participants well on a long Intensive – your ability to distinguish between their real self and their mind.

There is a great deal more that I could say about giving interviews to participants, but in the end you have to develop your own style. Mine involves a lot of warmth, good humour, joking around and absolutely firm commitment to serving the individual in seeking the Truth. I find that in some situations a joke or bit of humour allows the person to gain a perspective on their mind that a serious talk or confrontation would not achieve. But it is always within this immovable and total certainty that what is afoot is me helping them get through whatever is going on. The following material I wrote after finishing Mastering the six week Intensive in 1998. It captures other aspects of what I do and why.

“The other time I consciously surrendered was when people came to me for interview. I would listen carefully to what they were saying and also step back from the contact to notice how they were saying it and what was going on with me. Then I would go for as much contact as I could get with the person and just allow whatever to come out of my mouth. With a few people I knew that I would have to confront them about some particular trip (such as arrogance or unreality or lack of intention) and would think out a way to do that which they could hear – and I would do this before they came to see me. Then if what occurred in the contact and content of the interview indicated that this was the right thing to raise or say, I would allow myself to say it. But 90% of the time I had no idea of what I was going to say and listened to it as carefully as the participant did.

A few times nothing would occur to me to say. Then I would say “I understand your problem but nothing is occurring to me”. Sometimes we would wait a bit longer, other times I would have to

talk about something else until a clear answer arose in its own way.

A key part of this method of interviewing is to be able to go for contact with the real person. I found I had that ability with all but one participant – and that person had so many trips on me I could never keep them in one place long enough to challenge or contact them. Whenever I felt critical of a participant I would work on myself until I saw that they were doing their best. This did not usually take very long. Once I knew they were doing their best then I could help them to improve that without any loss of contact or love. Here is a very good question to ask yourself when you are in difficulty with a participant “Is this person doing their best? If so, what can I do to improve it?”

Overall I found that my abilities to love others, to contact others, to remain in touch with reality and to surrender to whatever occurred were all extended, stretched and developed. This is what I gained from the Intensive. Since the Intensive I have also been aware of the desire of my ego to be fed and to have praise and adulation from others. I have resisted it pretty well, but it is like a very hungry child wanting to be fed most of the time – especially when people start talking about the Intensive. I am doing my best to tread along a tight-rope which acknowledges myself for what I have been able to do without feeding my ego. And a large part of the resolution of this is to continue to acknowledge that it was God that made and delivered the lectures, it was God who interviewed and guided the participants, and my real achievement was in allowing God to act through me. This was exactly what I intended, it is what I set out to do and it is what I meditated and prayed for many times each day. The best days were those when I surrendered the most – which were the days I meditated and prayed for guidance the most.

The people who stretched me the most were those who had the weakest sense of themselves i.e. who manifested the most ‘mind’. I knew who they were before the Intensive and thought about not allowing them to participate. Had I excluded the difficult participants then

- (a) the group would have been really easy
- (b) I would not have made any profit on the enterprise as a whole
- (c) I would not have been stretched anywhere near as much.

I recommend that when you start running long Intensives you do not allow difficult people onto the group. You will be stretched enough just by the process and length of the group. Only take on wacky people when you are confident you can handle them.

For me the reason why people are difficult is because I was afraid that they would have psychotic episode, or lose their contact with reality or something equivalent. Three of the people involved did seriously lose touch with reality at certain times, and in two cases I had to work quite hard to bring them back. The key to bringing them back was my contact with them. I had to have a very high level of trust with them so that they would trust me even when they were being paranoid or deluded or out of touch – they knew that I had their best interests at heart. This is key and not something that can be established quickly or easily. I also found it very helpful to know how to ground people and how to use acupuncture to bring them back down into their body.

I do not find it hard to confront people. This is a real gift for an Enlightenment Master because it is usually essential for everyone to be confronted on a long Intensive. – usually in a face to face interview. I have learned that it is part of my role to allow participants to hate me. Indeed if I do my job correctly then it is inevitable that their mind will hate me – if it's all sweetness and light all the time then I have failed the person (by not confronting them hard enough – being too nice about it). There was a short time when I eased back from confronting one of the participants because I felt that he was in real danger of losing touch with reality and I needed to maintain my contact and trust with him. As soon as he seemed stable again I did confront him, and it did indeed send him off into unreality land again, so I felt my previous judgement had been a good one. Basically this is working within each individual's abilities – their ability to bear facing stuff, their ability to contact me, their ability to distinguish reality from some very strong trip they are running and so on."

There is one golden rule that applies to interviews of all types throughout a long Intensive. It is "never delay in confronting a participant". In my experience any delay always makes it harder – both to the tackle the issue and to gain a resolution. The most common reason for not engaging early on is fear. I have been running EIs for 25 years, I have confronted hundreds if not thousands of people. And it is still a fearful process for me. I always experience the fear in my guts when I know what I have to do and set out to do it. I have learned to just go ahead anyway. I think that the fear is about the reaction that my confrontation will generate. People's minds can be very ugly – the fear is not fantasy!

### **Logistics of Interviews**

On a three day Intensives most interviews are conducted by monitors during work and meal breaks. On a long Intensive the interviews are all undertaken by you. And the issue is when.

If the group is even the only easy opportunity is at the end of dyads i.e. before walk, work and meal times. This is OK, but you may find that your own break periods are restricted. I had an even number of people on the six week and instituted a rule that I would see no more than three people at the end of each dyad. This ensured that my meal would not be too rushed and that I could have rests and lecture preparation time.

When the group is odd there will always be someone sitting out. I advise people to use that opportunity to talk to me i.e. I encourage them to time their sit out so that it is when they want to discuss something with me. This works very well – provided that you keep a careful record of who sits out when (see the end of section 3.5 for details). I usually ask people to call me over – so that the interview is at their initiation. But sometimes I just go over and initiate the interview. A big advantage of using the sit out periods is that I get the opportunity to interview everyone every two days or so.

When the group is even I still keep a record of the interviews I have. This is so that if I haven't seen someone for three days I can ask them to come and see me. Three days of doing the technique incorrectly seems to me to be a reasonable limit for a long EI.

## **6. 2 Particular cases**

Next I want to address the issue of how to handle certain types of participant. Clearly everyone has their own unique trip. But there are certain patterns that I have noticed over the years that I would like to pass on so you can work out your own strategies for handling them sooner.

### ***Ungrounded people:***

The most common reason for a participant going weird is that they are contemplating an idea rather than reality. And on long Intensives people get into this and will go weird within a few hours. You have to ask them what it is exactly that they are putting their attention on – and it has to be part of the current, here and now, reality. The most common error in this area is for people to have something powerful come up in their contemplation (e.g. I am oceanic love) and to then set out to experience that idea that came up.

The next most common reason is that the person is holding back from saying something important – often about the Master or about other participants. People go especially weird when they fall in love (with Master, monitor or participant). They also go weird when they become paranoid (about anyone but especially about the Master). Here a head on confrontation will usually make things worse (which is a good sign that paranoia or romantic love is at work). What you have to do is build on whatever level of trust you have with the person and encourage them to check out the reality of whatever it is they are not saying. If you know someone is prone to paranoia start this contract with them at the opening interview and keep referring to it so that if/when things get bad you have a basis on which to talk about it.

### ***Rebels:***

Everyone has unresolved power trips and most people will project these onto the Master (or monitor) at some time – especially if the Master is correctly confronting people. As the Master you just have to bear this – do not try to avoid it or duck it. Allow people to dislike and hate you and think you are a fascist and so on.

However what you do not tolerate, not for an instant, is people wilfully breaking rules. If you consider that someone is wilfully breaking rules you must confront them with their behaviour and threaten them with being sent home. And do this fast – do not wait for your courage to grow – it only gets harder the longer you wait. If you think someone is unconsciously breaking rules or being rebellious then start by pointing out their behaviour. The classic is being late for the start of the dyad. You just start to notice that it is always the same person who is last in the room or who needs to have their partner changed. Once you have pointed out the problem and ensured that they are conscious of their behaviour, then treat them the same as someone wilfully breaking rules.

### ***Over Wanting:***

If you have screened out people who take long Intensives just to have an experience then you will have eliminated the worst of these – but the chances are that you'll still have people suffering from this.

They will be so desperate for an experience that they will be forcing, or at least trying to force, the issue. They will exaggerate emotional distress, they will be ever vigilant “in case this is an experience” – and it is in this very vigilance that they keep themselves away from the Truth. You have to help them to relax, to trust that things will turn out best if they give up. Over wanting does reside in the ego mind – but then so does everything else, so pointing this out does not usually help much.

Another version of this issue is trying to do everything perfectly. That is the individual’s way of forcing the issue. They take you at your word and do the technique perfectly every time. They check that they only communicate what arises as a result of their contemplation and they are monitoring their state continuously. This is a hard one to correct. I have actually told people stuck in this to stop doing the technique and to just free associate and let things go wrong. In one case (out of four with whom I have tried this strategy) it worked a treat. (The other three are still stuck in it and have yet to find a way out!).

### ***Not intending:***

I remember very clearly looking at the group on the six week and noticing that there was one person who, although going through the motions of the technique, was just not getting anywhere. As I left my attention on her it became clear that she just was not intending to experience the Truth. So at our next interview I shared this perception (trip) with her. She was shocked but acknowledged that it was probably true. I told her to contemplate what it was that did not want the Truth. Within two dyads she was in a major crisis. She was desperate to protect her real self and was terrified at the prospect of having to communicate herself to others, and especially to me. She did not get through the crisis, had she done so I expect she would have had an experience; it was that serious. This is one version of the not-intending trip. It is a difficult trip to spot because the person will be going through the motions and will say all the right words – but if you put your attention on them you’ll see that there is something missing – and it’s intention.

By the way I have found it helps people enormously to differentiate between desire/wanting and intention – as explained in section 4.1. Wanting is a feeling that comes and goes. Intention is a decision that, once made, can continue through all sorts of states. There is also a good story about Master Dogen and his “will to Truth” which saw him through every possible misconception and mistake, that drives this point home.

### ***Non-communicators***

There are some people who just do not get that communicating what comes up means everything about what comes up – including the feelings and significance of what occurred in their consciousness. These may be very shy (or, in one case, very arrogant) people who have become very private by habit. You’ll spot them easily enough. It’s a good idea to have a good example to confront them with in an interview. For example “When you said you were having thoughts about your girlfriend you should include the content of the thoughts and what you felt about them and so on” – in this particular case the person was not letting on that his girlfriend had recently died!

There are also people who object in principle to using words to describe their inner state. This is a very

trendy “new age” attitude that traps a surprising number of people. It is correct that words cannot reproduce the inner state, they can only point to it. It is also true that any communication to another will be understood only partially. However point out, as strongly and often as possible, that even partial communication is better than no communication and that it is precisely the communication that enables Intensives to achieve in days what takes the same number of years in traditional silent processes.

### *Non-contemplators:*

These are also very easy to spot. The standard instruction to give them is to “only communicate what arises in your contemplation”. The trouble is that they are in the difficulty they are in precisely because they do not have that level of awareness. Once they start talking it just takes them over and off they go. The best way I have found to help these people is to tell them to make a clean break between contemplating and communicating. A lot of them blur the distinction and that’s how they lose awareness. Making the clean break before they start communicating helps them to break the communication once it is complete. I also go and stand and watch people to remind them to do this – it helps.

## **6.3 Physical problems**

People’s minds do not just show up in emotional or intellectual attitudes. They can also show up physically. Indeed this was how my own mind sought to undermine me on the long Intensives in which I participated. On the two week I had a slipped disc in my back that made sitting upright agony; on the six week I had a ruptured colon for the last ten days. These are the most extreme reactions I have witnessed – and put me in a strong position when dealing with people who have headaches, back aches, hip pain or whatever. As always there are several issues involved in dealing with these phenomena.

The first issue, one I stress in one of the early talks, is that physical discomfort is not part of the process. It is part of some enlightenment traditions – including Zen. But it is an unnecessary distraction on an Intensive. So I ask people to tell me about anything that they need in order to be physically comfortable for the duration of the Intensive. This might involve a harder bed, more comfortable chairs, ear-plugs or eye-shades at night and so on.

I have also undertaken a level of training in zero balancing that enables me to help people who have minor physical ailments that are aggravated by the Intensive. This includes things like long-term bad backs or hip problems. Zero balancing is a low level intervention that can often provide people with enough relief to be relatively pain free for the rest of the Intensive. (I have more to say about it later.) I will be very willing to use this on people who come to the Intensive with a prevailing physical condition.

Having said all this it is also important to recognise that in most cases the physical issue is being generated by the person’s mind. There is one example that is very easy to spot; tiredness. A person whose mind is making them tired will appear completely sleepy and struggling to stay awake whilst they are the communicating partner. Yet as soon as the bell goes and it is their partner’s turn they come

to life – and start falling asleep again at the next bell. It is not always as obvious as this, but the root cause is often a deep resistance that is manifested physically. By the way this is quite distinct from someone who is very tired on the first couple of days of an Intensive. These are people who have usually burnt themselves out a bit rushing to get everything done before coming on the group. When I am confident this is the root cause I often give these people extra rests during walk or work periods for the first couple of days – which is usually enough for them to recover. Once you have done whatever is needed to make all the participants comfortable, then you should presume that discomfort is resistance – and you should encourage people to face it down. There are three things that help.

The first is to remind the participant of what you said in the opening talk about facing crises. This is extremely helpful – and is why I always mention crises in the opening talk. The second is to encourage them to communicate just how bad it is. In many cases I have witnessed people have allowed themselves to be really vulnerable with pain for the first time ever – and this has been remarkably healing for them. The third is to just reassure them that they can see it through. Because I had such intense pain myself I can do this from a very authentic place - and people get that. But even if you have not suffered in this way you can give them your whole hearted support – and this will help more than you know.

One of the unexpected benefits that I gained from facing physical pain on an Intensive was that I overcame a level of cowardice that I had not really been aware of. Without realising it I had always avoided facing serious pain – usually by taking pain killers. By facing the pain on an Intensive, and communicating it, I found that I could actually tolerate a much higher level of pain than before – and I have not been so afraid of pain ever since. If people are in bad pain I will tell them this story – it can help inspire them to continue.

Some physical symptoms are so intense that they require treatment. Toothache is one of these. A common cause of intense toothache is an infection in a cavity alongside the tooth. This can be alleviated (on a temporary basis) by swilling very hot salty water around the tooth. The first effect of this is to dramatically increase the pain – but only for a few minutes. After that the intense heat and salty water can clear the infection and allow the person to continue to the end of the Intensive. I know this because I have had to do this as a Master. I had to repeat the treatment a few times the first day, once again the next two days and then it was quiet for the rest of the Intensive. Afterwards a trip to the dentist was called for.

I have put discussion of energetic phenomena in the section on kundalini (section 8). There I also discuss the role of zero balancing and its effect on participants on Intensives.

## **7. Direct Experiences**

*Running Intensives requires you to distinguish experiences of the Absolute from other experiences. In this section I set out my own approach to facilitating and recognising experiences of the Absolute.*

The title given to the EI Master's Training Manual by Charles Berner is "The Transmission of Truth". If you Master Enlightenment Intensives then you are engaging directly with the transmission of Truth. As such it is critical that you help other people to distinguish what is a valid direct experience of Truth, of the Absolute, and what is not. I have noticed that if people fail to do this correctly then they quite quickly cease to run Intensives. At some level if someone acknowledges insights or bliss states as valid enlightenment then they break their connection to the Absolute – and this disables them. So, in my view, identifying direct experiences correctly is central to the Master role.

I find this a difficult section to write. The cause of the difficulty is that I have chosen to run long Intensives in a particular fashion – and it is possible that to some degree it is a quirk of mine, rather than something that is objectively desirable. I do know that engaging with people and sharing moments of Truth together is an important motivation for me. Indeed after I had ceased running Intensives (in 1999) this is what I missed the most. However I also know that Satya was a successful master of long Intensives and did not engage in the level of engagement and midwifery that I am going to recommend here. So you will need to judge for yourself the degree to which you want to become involved with participants and help them at a critical stage of their realisation.

One of the reasons why I decided to set out to help people who are having an experience, but not realising it, or close to, but not engaging with it, was that I "missed" a significant number of my own experiences. Indeed there was one time I went to Satya to thank her for running the Intensive – and unusually she asked me whether that was all I wanted to say. At that time her normal response to all statements was "thank you" – nothing else. The next day I twigged that I had gone to her when I was having an experience – and when I told her this she recognised it as well – but we both missed it in the original interaction. Another reason was that after the powerful kundalini release I experienced in 1982 I found that whenever anyone in the room had an experience I just knew- for absolute certain – that this was the case – and wanted to act on that knowledge. That ability slowly wore off from 1992 onwards, but I find I am still always attracted to people around the time that they have an experience.

I have also noticed that by assisting people recognise and realise their experiences I am contributing positively to the Intensive. If someone fully connects to and presents their experience they are quite likely to turn other people on. I have had Intensives where it has been like a chain reaction, with one experience triggering another. This is only possible when each individual involved has connected to their experience sufficiently to present it really well – and for new comers this is particularly difficult.

Being a mid-wife to someone else's experience means that you are willing to assist in the 'birth' of whatever is there. And to do this you have to be completely open to whatever is there. Not only open, but also willing to be in contact with the person in their experience – which actually means being in contact with the Divine. For most people this means being willing to face anything – because being in contact with the Divine will bring to the surface anything that you are unwilling to face. Ever since the six week in 1982 my prayer when I start meditating has been "God give me the strength to face whatever I have to face in order to be able to serve you and others more completely". This is what it takes.

So what do you actually do? Well you start by making contact with the person – as deep a contact as you can. I don't know how to describe this in any other terms. It is a complete acceptance of the other and whatever they are going through. Then, once that contact is in place, you invite them to tell you

what is happening. Some people will just go straight there and all you have to do is receive them. But they are unusual. Most people are shy and embarrassed. These people are helped if you ask them to recount the sequence of what happened. They then tell you a long story about this happened, then they realised this and then that and then .. whoops, there they are – beaming at you as the Divine presence itself. At this point I usually cry. And in my confusion say something like “yes, that is it. Now contact that again”.

Again a few people can do this straight away. But most cannot. Most people try to recreate the experience, or try to force it in some way. So I tell them to just put their attention on it and be open to having more. Most times they close their eyes at this point. As they do so I gently say “don’t force it, just surrender to it, just allow whatever arises to arise”. This works for almost everyone – though they may have to go through a few contemplation sequences with something other than the experience coming up. But quite soon they are able to go back into the experience. At this point I say “OK, next time you go there just be open to even more, just surrender a bit more”. By now the person feels completely seen and accepted and can follow the instruction well. And by this point I am also beaming and crying – I may even have been carried into the experience itself by their presence.

What I let them know is that I see them in the experience state. I say something simple like “yes that’s it” or “thank you for letting me see the real you”. This is the point at which I have made the most profound contact with other human beings ever in my life. And they know that I have seen them in that way – and there is a bond between us forever. I also then instruct the person to present the experience to their next few dyad partners, for as long as it is available to them.

## **7. 1 Recognising Experiences**

In what I wrote above about facilitating experiences there is an implicit assumption that you will be able to identify, unambiguously, whether a participant is having an experience or not. This is not always the case.

People can, and do, have all sorts of wild, weird and wonderful experiences during an Intensive, particularly during long Intensives – but they are not all direct experiences of the Absolute. I regard it as critical that I enable people to distinguish experiences of the Absolute from other experiences. And the only way of doing this for certain is to “get” the other person’s experience in the way that I described in the mid-wifery section. There are no are externally observable indicators that are proof of an experience. And participants are often very poor judges of whether something is direct as well.

Participants are poor judges of direct experiences because during the moment of the experience itself the ego, the part of the mind that makes judgements, is absent. So no one is ever in a state of direct experience and evaluating as being that. Anyone who thinks otherwise is fooling themselves quite badly. Also participants, like Masters and monitors, can be fooled by phenomena and changes of state that take place and are not associated with a direct experience.

An individual can have a profound change of state without having a direct experience. People experience these shifts in everyday life and in therapy contexts. They are times when the individual's energy is released for some reason. This type of release and change of state does happen with a direct experience – but it can also happen with a dis-identification, with a sudden insight or because the individual finally lets go of something that they were hanging on to.

People can also have energy rushes in their body, a flushed face, feelings of love and bliss and a stream of new understandings – all without having a direct experience. All these phenomena are often present when a direct experience occurs – but they can also occur without the directness. And direct experiences can, and do, happen without any of these phenomena.

One trap that I have observed people fall into is that they have a genuine experience of the Absolute – but what they think was the experience, or what they remember, was the deep contact with another person or a feeling of rapture, bliss or love. By making this wrong association they are then misled in the future. The next time they experience a bliss state or deep contact they think they are having another direct experience. If you take your role in “The Transmission of the Truth” seriously then you need to help people make these distinctions – especially if they want to run or be on the staff of Intensives.

I find it a struggle to deal with this issue when I am fairly confident that someone has not had an experience – but they think that they have. The problem is that I can be certain when I get an experience that someone has had one – but I can never be that certain that they have not had one. Perhaps they did have a small encounter with the Truth and they are afraid to show it (for fear of being judged), or they have some trip running on me that closes them down. If people ask me then I tell them what I think – but I have noticed that the people in this ambiguous category rarely ask – and I think that they want to hang onto their illusion more than they want truth or Truth.

Whilst it is important to distinguish the Absolute from other experiences, this should not be overdone. Having a direct experience does not make someone a better or more advanced individual than someone who has not had such an experience. (I find this a helpful thing to emphasise at the end of Intensives.) Distinguishing the Truth is important for the Truth's sake. How an individual makes use of whatever they have experienced on an Intensive is down to them and how they choose to lead their life. I remember one participant who was profoundly moved by a story that I read out in a lecture. She took it to heart to such a degree that the message in that story effectively changed her life. In contrast I have seen other people have very profound experiences and make no observable change whatsoever in their life or their relationships. So although having a direct experience can be a profound and life changing experience, it is not necessarily so – and nor is it the only source of transformative experiences.

I realise that I have not yet said anywhere what you can do to “spot” experiences. Probably the most important thing is to keep your attention on the group all the time. This sounds simple, but it isn't. The most common error that Master's make in this respect is to put a disproportionate amount of energy onto the participants who are in difficulties, resisting the process or causing the Master to react – i.e. the difficult participants. Sometimes this can go the other way and the Master's attention is captured by one or more people in the room presenting direct experiences. These ways of having one's attention

captured are normal – but as soon as you can, bring yourself back to watching the whole group.

Sometimes the shape of a room and the number of participants requires there to be two rows – with the Master effectively sitting in line with the space between the rows. I much prefer having one row and will strive hard to achieve this (even limiting the number of participants on occasion). The reason is that it is far easier to see the whole group when they are in one row with you looking down the middle of it. If they are in two rows then at any time you will be looking at the backs of half the group. When there is just one row you can immediately see the people who are currently withdrawn from the group – they will be sitting in such a way that they are pulled back from the line. The over eager ones will be leaning into the space between the pairs. These are obvious observations – and also powerful indicators. I make a point of watching out for people who have withdrawn. I also make a point of tracking people who are quiet and who tend to “disappear into the woodwork” in any group.

What I notice is that if I have my attention on the whole group then, when someone has a direct experience, my attention immediately flips to them. It is not a conscious decision on my part – it is something I notice has happened. And when my attention is pulled in this way I leave it there for a while – sometimes my attention is also pulled by people who are about to break the trip laying rule!

Of all the indicators that a direct experience has happened there are two that I value most. The first is this attraction of my intention. The second is a resonance, a stirring within myself. It is hard to describe this precisely. When the experience is very powerful I will spontaneously start crying. When it is modest I start grinning and feel a sense of elation and gratitude. And when it is just a small experience I am moved to want to go and find out more.

Of the other indicators the one that I find most reliable is the flush that appears in almost everyone’s face. This is certainly not foolproof – people can get flushed with embarrassment and sexual excitement – but it is involuntary and therefore hard to fake.

The indicator that I find the least reliable is the words that people use. Many times people will say the words that I know are an expression of Truth – and there is absolutely no evidence of anything direct. And other times people say the weirdest things as a result of their experience. So I often ignore the words – except in the process of mid-wifery when using their own words can help the person feel acknowledged and understood.

The other thing to emphasise is that experiences can happen at any time on a long EI. My early two week Intensives did not have a higher proportion of participants gaining experiences, typically around 30%, but those people often had one early on and one or two more later. My more recent long Intensives have had a much higher proportion of people gaining experiences – over 50% in 1994, 1996 and 2006 – with experiences on almost every day (except day 1).

## 8. Kundalini

*I recognise that running long Intensives requires the Master to know something about kundalini.*

With this I disagree. Just don't give long Intensives. To run long Intensives successfully and efficiently, the master would have to know everything about kundalini and would at once stop the Enlightenment Intensive and do an entirely different technique and approach.

*I have read a lot of contradictory things about it and talked about it with Charles Berner. But actually what I am writing below is based on very limited experience.*

Kundalini is the name given to the life energy

This is incorrect. The *kundalini* is not the life energy, chi or prana. It is the evolutionary force. The life energy or prana sustains life whereas the kundalini directs and powers evolutionary change in the body and mind associated with an individual. The release of *prana* is known in yoga as *pranothana*, which literally is the elevation of the life energy.

(also known as chi or prana) when it travels up the sushumi[sic] nadi (the central energy channel running up the middle of the spine). It seems to me that people have given the term kundalini to a much wider range of energy phenomena than this – but I am restricting myself to this yogic definition.

Alexander Pope, the English poet, had a wise saying, “Drink deeply of the spring of knowledge, for a little learning is a dangerous thing.” I myself have evolved in my knowledge of the evolutionary force over the last thirty-three years devoted to the technique of natural meditation. And in the last five years I am able to give you and others a correct description of the kundalini.

First, as mentioned above the Enlightenment Intensive technique works on the basis of the individual de-identified from what he has thought himself to be. This results in a release of the life energy which if directed toward the Ultimate Truth, awakens the evolutionary force. This leads to an increased ability on the part of the individual. Second, if the individual then again directly addresses himself, he is able to further de-identify from that with which he has confused himself.

However, if having done the first de-identification, the individual keeps trying to further de-identify, he will have to suppress the released life energy (rather than directing it) and after one or two or three attempts at this, will begin to bog down. Progress will slow, and he tries to deal with the various things that he and/or the master conceive to be blocking his progress. It is the suppressed life energy, and even suppressed kundalini that causes the slowdown. Whereas, if he fails to either suppress or direct the life energy, he will go temporarily physically, mentally or emotionally out of control with unpredictable results except for failure. Most people succeed in suppressing the energy and most who don't, quit the enlightenment project.

In simple terms the kundalini is a store of energy at the base of the spine that can be released under certain conditions.

As mentioned above, the kundalini is not stored at the base of the spine. It is suppressed until it becomes inactive as if it were asleep. The word kundalini literally means "the little coiled one" or a snake. The esoteric meaning of a snake in yogic literature is desire. Any desire, but especially sexual desire. It is desire to evolve a biological body to perfection. After puberty, the sexual desire must be controlled for social reasons and the primary means of controlling it is to suppress it. Upon de-identification in an EI, besides the life energy being released to some degree, the evolutionary force is unsuppressed to a minor

degree. But this degree is sufficient to require suppression by the participants or the participants begin to get involved in sexual relations. The Zero Point Energy technique is a way to try to direct his energy rather than suppress it. However, it does not get to the root of the matter.

It is a very powerful energy flow and will rise up the spine. If there are impurities associated with any of the chakras then the kundalini energy flow may get stopped or blocked.

Energy and impurities are also connected.

When the energy is stopped or blocked then it can cause problems for the individual.

What you are calling here stopped or blocked is the suppressed energy. Suppressed energy really only slows down or stops progress towards further enlightenment. When a person such as you perseveres in spite of this slowdown, he gets various side-effects, physical, mental and emotional.

According to Charles Berner there is always some release of kundalini whenever a person has a direct experience.

This is correct. However, it would be better to call it, the presence of the active kundalini state. It usually only lasts a few seconds, the direct experience, which then drops down to the life energy level.

It is the kundalini arriving in their head that causes the characteristic pink flush to occur – it looks as if the person has just enjoyed a good orgasm. If this is the case then the release of kundalini is small enough and the body is clear enough to handle it because I have never witnessed people running into kundalini troubles as a result of having a direct experience.

In the above, read life energy instead of kundalini.

I speculate that this means that the kundalini is released during or after the direct experience and that there is something about the change of state of consciousness (or the openness required for the direct experience) that prepares the body and individual adequately for handling the energy released.

Yes, there is something; it is that the individual's state of relationship with others is sufficiently advanced to allow the life energy to increase to the level that it does without overwhelming the individual physically, emotionally, or mentally. This sentence contains the answer to what to do about the life energy, the kundalini, about suppression, about how to continue progress, etc.

That is, instead of trying to push on with the de-identification process, the master and the individual, after the end of three days, should give up doing the enlightenment intensive technique which is of course focused on oneself, and instead focus on the individual actually improving his relationship with other individuals. This was the idea behind the questions What is Life? and What is Another? However, as it turns out, it is not possible to experience an Ultimate Reality of life since it is an illusion. And two, it is not possible to directly access the true nature of another by any conscious means. Those two questions, Life and Another, do not deal directly with improving relationships so that participants can achieve a deeper de-identification. What happens instead if they continue with the usual four questions, is that they try to de-identify further and further and can't because their relationships are not good enough. Or they apply themselves to problems that arise and the master supports them in this endeavour by putting them on Life and Other. So, instead of trying to press on with those two questions, I flew to India.

Instead, the individual should directly address the project of improving his relationships with others including on an energy level.

Powerful kundalini experiences that are not associated with direct experiences can cause trouble, often serious trouble. The trouble arises because of impurities (or energy blocks) and these are present when the body has not been prepared for the kundalini release. This has happened to me when I have been powerfully affected by someone else's direct experience – the participant was ready for their own release of kundalini, but that release triggered a release in me, and me and my body was not suitably prepared. In the Introduction I described briefly the difficulties I have run into with four major releases (ruptured colon, food allergy, crying for months and frozen shoulder). You can almost trace the passage through the chakras in my case (starting with the colon, then the stomach, then the heart).

Here is an account of a person who had a release on the six week Intensive but who handled it without difficulty or damage. She awoke at 3 a.m. one morning for no reason with a severe tingling and sharp pain at the bottom of her spine. She could not get back to sleep and was frightened by the phenomenon. This person had had a period in her life when she was psychic. This was extremely difficult for her to accept and live with. The psychic period ended when she fell off a ladder and landed on her coccyx. This pain was similar to the pain that occurred then and she feared that she might be starting a new psychic period of her life. I treated her by giving her a zero balancing session – with the aim of allowing the energy to flow past any block. At one point I felt the energy flow and she started sobbing very deeply. Over the next three dyads she faced a major issue in her life. It was extremely important and very profound – in my view it was the block that the kundalini had run into. She came back to me and then I used the acupuncture grounding points to ground the energy. Within another two dyads the pain at the base of her spine had disappeared and she had no further difficulties.

There are a number of indicators of a kundalini energy process starting

- (a) a tingling or itchiness between the genitals and anus or at the very base of the spine
- (b) an inability to sleep. This is not just insomnia, it is like a manic wakefulness.
- (c) overpowering emotions, especially of love towards others
- (d) the desire to groan or make strange noises
- (e) extremely powerful sexual feelings and urges –to the point where it feels overwhelming and impossible to control

I do not normally communicate these symptoms to people because they will then fabricate them (unconsciously). It is best to keep them to yourself and use them in evaluating whether someone is in kundalini difficulty or not.

The best an EI master can do to avoid the problems of kundalini is 1) maintain a relationship with the participants of love and discipline, and 2) limit the length of an EI to three days.

As far as I can tell the best a person can do is to surrender to whatever the kundalini wants to do.

This is an astute observation. It can be stated three different ways: a) surrender

one's body, mind and emotions to whatever is God for the aspirant, b) follow Jesus' injunction to turn the other cheek, or more broadly, not defend yourself regardless of how misunderstood, abused or attacked you may experience yourself to be, and c) to place yourself in a state of knowledge of the true nature of as many other individuals as you can. The evolutionary force is really the ability to place yourself in a state of direct knowledge of another individual or not, including their power to make such choices or not. Method a, above, is called natural meditation. Method b is union by action, and method c is the underlying basis of all personal growth activities. These three methods can be used to improve a person's ability to relate (not improve relationships, but to improve one's *ability* to improve relationships). By increasing this ability, the kundalini is mastered without suppression or direction. So after having achieved this, through some direct technique, not the EI dyads, you can then proceed successfully with further de-identification. When further de-identification has been achieved, you should switch back to improving your capacity to accept others as they truly are. Thus, switching back and forth between these two approaches, de-identification and improving your capacity to directly know what another is (see Ch. 1 of the Master's Manual available on the web), you eventually achieve ultimate liberation with power and transcend all desire, so that the kundalini becomes your ability. People who don't want full liberation should stop after two or three de-identifications and do some other technique for the purpose of having insights, maintenance. But these are not for the purpose of further enlightenment or liberation and should not be called EI's. I know of people in California who have taken more than a hundred EI's over the last 36 years and they mainly did maintenance work, etc. It seems to me that giving long Enlightenment Intensives in the face of my comments above could be justified only for fame and money.

## Two Types of Techniques

There are two types of techniques, one in which one's will is used to do the technique and the other in which one surrenders one's body, feelings and mind to whatever the Ultimate Reality is for oneself. The second method, called Natural Yoga in India, is only for people who have been successful financially, socially and in family life, and who want only complete and total liberation. The first type of technique, the willful type, is for people who want to improve their ability to succeed in life and get pleasure from life and are satisfied with trying to attain success and pleasure. The Enlightenment Intensive is a willful technique. Willful techniques that I recommend as alternatives to the Long Intensive are 1) three-day Enlightenment Intensives, and 2) what I have called Energy Mastery (see the Kripalu 's *Birthday Discourse* for the ten Energy Mastery techniques), and 3) studying different religious scriptures and pondering what they say the Ultimate Reality or God is. The last two techniques are not to be used on an Enlightenment Intensive, but are to be done separately, either individually or in group workshops.

In Natural Yoga, one automatically switches from self inspection, to increasing one's ability to relate, to experiencing directly what Ultimate Reality is; whereas in using willful techniques one must willfully choose to change from Enlightenment Intensives, to Energy Mastery, to studying scripture.

[For more, see Kripalu's 65<sup>th</sup> *Birthday Discourse* and the Second Edition of the Master's Manual, *Consciousness of Truth*.

[For a discussion on the importance of self reference to the *Lila Theory*, to Enlightenment Intensives and to people's personal evolution and growth, see

## [Self Reference and Accepting More Others.\]](#)

It also appears that energy management techniques (such as acupuncture or zero balancing) helps this – but only if the person is willing to surrender. The difficulty in the context of an EI occurs when the person is charged sexually. Follow the advice Charles Berner gives in the Master's manual, but if this fails and an energy grounding technique fails then you have a potentially serious problem. My own experience with kundalini says that it is not to be messed with. If the participant decides that they want to face it and deal with it in their own way that is fine, your job is to warn them that they may suffer physically, emotionally or mentally as a result.

Basically you want to aim to get the person to surrender to whatever it is the kundalini wants them to face and to assist the person in calming the energy flow down. The surrender may involve freaking out emotionally or allowing their body to move and convulse in an involuntary fashion. All grounding exercises will help calm the energy down; this includes getting the person to walk barefoot outside, standing on their feet, getting them to do intense physical exercise. Outside of an Intensive eating meat, drinking alcohol and having sex will all help – so too will acupuncture, shiatsu, zero balancing and similar energy treatments.

As far as I can tell the danger arises on Intensives because the kundalini can be released when a person is powerfully affected by another person's direct experience, but does not have an experience of their own. This is clearly quite likely on long Intensives – and it is also quite likely for you as the Master. On the six week I consciously held back from diving into people's experiences in order to reduce the chances of having another kundalini episode for myself. It also seems to me that the more releases I have had then the easier it is for them to be triggered again – which is another reason why I am now more wary of throwing myself into other people's direct experiences.

For someone who knows very little I have speculated enough! I encourage you to find out more for yourself. It seems to me part of the responsibility of a Master of long Intensives.

### **8.1 Zero Balancing**

This is the name of a technique, developed by an American called Fritz Smith, that aims to assist the alignment of the energy and structure in a person's body. A ZB session is carried out whilst the recipient is fully dressed and lying on their back on a hard surface. The session involves the practitioner applying slight pressure at a number of bone junctions that are not under voluntary control by the recipient. Very little pressure is applied, the principle is that the intervention provides an opportunity for the structure and energy of the body to realign itself. But it is only an invitation. The practitioner does not intervene as strongly as a masseuse, chiropractor or osteopath would intervene – and for me this was what made it a safe process to use on Intensives.

I had had my own kundalini releases treated successfully by a ZB practitioner. This, and the concern about ZB on very long Intensives, encouraged me to provide regular ZB sessions for the participants on

the six week Intensive that I ran in 1998. Two ZB practitioners came to the Intensive once a week and treated everyone who wished to be treated – including myself, the cook and the monitor. A treatment would take between 15 and 20 minutes. After being treated participants would return to the structure, and if that was a dyad they would take the place on the person scheduled to be treated next. It worked very smoothly and there were no kundalini releases, there was relatively little physical discomfort and some people received quite profound healing on a physical level.

However it also had a profound effect on the level of contact and type of experiences people had on that Intensive. The external symptoms were

- (a) there were comparatively few dyads within which there was a very intense contact between the participants
- (b) experiences came very quietly and gently and without any significant energy phenomena.
- (c) it was extremely difficult for me and the participants to gauge the depth of experience. Some very experienced people thought that their experience was just a shallow glimpse – but it continued to develop over the next day or two and became a major experience!
- (d) some people had “realisations” whilst having the Zero Balancing (ZB) sessions. These were indirect experiences of Truth that were somehow triggered by the ZB process. In one case the person had the same “realisation” when treated by a different person after the Intensive.

I was concerned, both during and after the Intensive, that the ZB had undermined the Intensive in terms of inhibiting “deep” direct experiences. After a period of soul searching, and many discussions with the people giving and receiving ZB treatments, I came to the following conclusions:

- (a) there are significant energy effects associated with direct experiences, and one of them is a release of kundalini energy
- (b) when a person has a direct experience their body and energy system is altered so that they can handle the kundalini released.
- (c) when a person is energetically affected by another person in a direct experience state (the so called contact high) their body is not prepared for any kundalini release – and it is then likely to cause the person to run into difficulties
- (d) the zero balancing seems to do two things. First it significantly reduces the energy released when direct experiences occur – including the kundalini energy. Second it seems to allow all energy to flow more easily throughout a person’s body – including energy picked up in contact highs.

The reduction in energy associated with experiences changes their nature, and particularly the subjective sense of the experience, quite significantly. This was something noted by Charles Berner when comparing Zen experiences with EI experiences. He noticed that in Zen the physical stresses were much greater so there were generally greater energetic phenomena associated with Zen experiences – but the essence of what was experienced was the same. In Zen there was a greater build up of energy, and this somehow affects the impact of the experience. So the subjective sense of the

experience is different, so too are the observable effects. Thus the differences between Zen experiences and normal EI experiences are of the same nature as that between normal EI experiences and experiences with Zero Balancing.

Now, some eight years after the six week EI in which I used zero balancing, I have asked people what they gained from the six week and their opinion about the role of ZB. Broadly people were disappointed by their experiences on the six week. The lack of energetic release associated with the experience did not alter just its immediate effect, but also the longer term effect. Some people who had several powerful experiences on the 6-week cannot now remember what it was that they experienced. However there were significant changes in people's lives as a result of participating. Whether these were due to the experiences or to the long self inspection it is impossible to say.

The issues around zero balancing and the six week caused me to re-examine my own experience, in particular my own experiences on the six week in 1982. That Intensive really did transform my life totally, and my way of explaining the transformation was that the experiences I had then were particularly deep. But that is a gross oversimplification. There were four ingredients that caused my life to change; the self inspection; the direct experiences, the kundalini release and my decision to make changes in my life. There is no way that I can untangle these factors, they all contributed to the process of unfolding that is continuing even today as I write this Manual. And of course what I really wanted for the people participating in the Intensive I Mastered was for them to set out on a similar process of transformation. I was satisfied at the time, and this has been reinforced over the years, that a significant number of people did indeed make substantial life transformations as a result of the six-week. This episode also clarified for me a shift in the focus of my attention, namely away from maximising the number of experiences and towards facilitating transformation in participant's lives.

If I were to run a very long Intensive again (anything over 2 weeks) I would not include zero balancing as a core part of the process. However I would make zero balancing available to people who wanted or needed it – indeed I now do this as a standard part of all the EIs I run. I have trained enough to be able to give a basic ZB to someone and have found this sufficient to handle extreme energy or physical discomfort phenomena on Intensives. I would also organise some form of physical treatment to assist me in coping with the stress of running a very long EI. I was probably the greatest beneficiary of the ZBs given during the six week in 1998.

## **9. Your own Process**

*Throughout the Manual I have referred to what you, as a Master, have to go through and face in running long Intensives. This section covers these issues more thoroughly. It also includes a summary of the most important errors that I have made – in the hope that this will help you avoid repeating them.*

I have realised that Mastering Intensives is an extremely powerful growth path. It is actually more powerful than participating in Intensives because you have to act as the Master – as the participant you are largely passive and can let your trips and stuff hang out. As the Master you have to be master of your trips – all of them. I found that I have the capacity to put things aside and to continue anyway.

This was extremely useful when I used to be powerfully triggered by a participant. But I would always pay the price at the end of Intensives when all the stuff I had put aside came back needing to be dealt with – all at once. Over the years I have sorted out enough of these trips so that it is now rare for me to be triggered by anything – but that’s not how it was in the beginning, and not how it will be for you when you start out.

So what will get to you are the people who press your buttons – whatever and wherever they are. Indeed I can pretty well guarantee that any button you have will get pushed – sometimes very hard, sometimes more than once! People may challenge your authority, they may hate you, they may not do what you ask or tell them to do, they may have crazy trips on you – whatever it is you have to go through your reactions to it all and see the real person who is putting out this stuff. You have to be able to relate to the real them from the real you. In short you have to love them (love in the non-romantic sense). The thing that helped me the most with this was the recognition that everyone was doing their best. Once I had that perspective then it was easier to drop my trips and reactions and just get on with helping them to participate a bit better.

Falling in love with participants is also a hazard. I do it regularly – in the romantic sense. It is just that they are so stunningly beautiful when they are so open and experiencing the Truth and thinking I am so wonderful! But beware it is a serious trap. You need to have an extremely good core relationship yourself – one in which there is no doubt or withholds. In fact you need a relationship that enables you to fall in love with other people and not have to do anything about it because you are so in love and happy with your existing partner. So pay attention to your own relationship before running a long Intensive – or watch out! (Charles Berner met and fell in love with his fourth wife on the three week Intensive he did!)

You will also be powerfully moved by what others are going through. You will have experienced some of this on three day Intensives. It gets to be a lot more powerful on long Intensives – both because participants run into deeper trips and also because you will be in a more open and vulnerable space. This happens because you are carried along by the group in terms of contact and openness. You must have dealt with all your own core issues – otherwise there will be a serious limit on your ability to be open. It also helps if you have had deep direct experiences yourself – because then you can be open when it counts the most, when receiving a participant’s experience. But this openness will also make you vulnerable. Not vulnerable in a victim sense, just vulnerable to seeing the reality of others suffering and wanting to relieve it and help them bear it. Earlier I referred to the fact that I would often allow myself to freak out in the breaks – putting myself under a duvet and just sobbing and howling with the pain I had witnessed and which resonated within me. I think it is a strength to be able to let go like this – it also keeps one open. I also think it is my way of staying in touch with the group as they go deeper. Here is another version of this that I wrote in my journal after mastering the six week in 1998.

“I was often profoundly moved by people, especially when someone was being very real about some huge pain or trauma in their life. I often cried whilst sitting in the chair. I was also moved to tears by many of the direct experiences that happened. I did not mind if people saw me crying. During the lectures I often allowed myself to be silly or angry or upset. I wanted to allow myself to cry during a lecture, but it never happened – either because it wasn’t right or because I was still hanging onto a level of control. Quite often in my breaks I would let myself fall apart completely. I

would go under the duvet and just sob and howl with the pain I picked up from others. I often found myself in a very deep emotional place during these episodes – but nowhere I had not been many times before and felt quite OK about. I actually felt as open emotionally as anyone in the group – so I had no difficulty in keeping my heart open to them.”

What puts me through the mill is my sincere desire to help all these people to become enlightened. If you run long Intensives I am confident that you will be in the same trip. And you know that to do your best for people you have to tolerate anything and be able to contact the real person from the real you. It is staying in a real love space in the face of great duress and suffering. That’s where you will grow.

Reading back over my own journals I realise that I have had to face some very significant trips of my own whilst Mastering a long Intensive. This isn’t recommended – it is much easier to deal with a trip in other contexts, but if you are like me you may have to be forced into it by the process of Mastering. Early on, whilst running three days, I had to face down my desire to be nice to people, to help them feel good about themselves and me. I ran two EIs with no experiences at all before I spotted this trip and dealt with it. On one long EI I was plagued by doubt. Doubt that I could do it, doubt I knew anything about Truth, doubt that anyone could have an experience and so on. I made headway by starting to surrender – and was able to put enough of the trip aside to carry on being the Master.

When I started running long Intensives I had two important things going for me. First, as a result of my experiences and kundalini release in the 1982 six-week I always knew when anyone in the room was having a direct experience. This was an amazing gift to have as a Master, and one that I sorely miss (it slowly disappeared between 1991 and 1994). The second ability was that I could put stuff aside. This included quite heavy material – I could recognise it and just put it aside and proceed as if it had not been triggered. This enabled me to get through the early long Intensives in apparently good shape – but I always paid the price afterwards. Sometimes it took me more than a month to recover from running a 2-week. It is only in the last few long Intensives (since 1996) that I have not been completely wiped out by the process.

The two biggest trips I have had to face whilst mastering long Intensives were being over-identified with doing things, and arrogance. In my life I have been strongly identified with doing things well, with being successful, with achieving what I want and so on. I carried these traits into the long EI context – and had it beaten out of me. I had to learn over and over again that there is nothing I can DO to get someone else enlightened. I can facilitate their process – but that is all. If you are prone to this trip then watch out – it will be played out as a Master and your doing too much will not serve the participants. And it was this realisation – that I was not serving others but getting in their way – that caused me the most anguish and the greatest impetus to sort myself and my trips out.

Arrogance is a lifelong issue for me. In recent years I have started to experience it subsiding as I accept my abilities and strengths more honestly – and to myself. It is a paradox, but whilst I was denying my abilities, particularly my intelligence, I was behaving arrogantly and trying to prove to myself and others that I was bright and able. Accepting these attributes meant that I did not have to go around demonstrating it or proving it all the time – and the arrogant behaviour has subsided. In the context of EIs I had to learn, over and over again, that whilst I might have some insight into other people’s trips and what they needed to do – in detail *I was always wrong*. I could never ever understand someone else

as well as they could come to understand themselves by serious introspection. With good guidance on how to do the technique there is nothing that a person could not discover for themselves far better than anything I could see or suggest.

Here are the key issues that I think everyone running a long Intensive has to pay attention to:

- A. Whenever you are critical of a participant it means that you have been triggered at some level. You need to make use of the criticalness exercise to discover what it is in yourself that you are not accepting. Until you can do this avoid the person you are critical of. But sort the issue as quickly as possible (see next section for the reason why!). The criticalness exercise is described in detail in section 5.2 together with examples that I have used in lectures.)
- B. Always remember that all participants at all times are doing their best. Their best may be bloody awful and very limited – but that simply tells you something about what state they are in. It is only when you see everyone as doing their best that you will be able to empathise with the real individual.
- C. In all your interactions with participants aim to contact, and relate to, the real individual – not the one caught in a trip or seeking your sympathy or approval or whatever – but the one who came on this Intensive to experience the Truth. If you find yourself caught in a participant’s trip then do whatever you need to do to disentangle before you give advice or direction.
- D. Remember that “making it all right” for a participant is one of the worst things you can do. You do not have to be unkind or cruel or unfeeling. But you do have to be willing to watch them suffer and to be certain that they are strong enough and have the resources to find their own way out. This is where you as a Master has to override you as a human being; where your desire for this person to experience Truth has to be greater than your desire to reduce their suffering.
- E. Allow people to dislike you, think you are stupid, think you are cruel, think you are heartless, a fake, a weirdo or whatever. Do not try to protect your image in any way. This is a tough call, especially when you are starting out. But it is really important. People will need to project all sorts of nonsense and trips onto you. As the Master you are an authority figure and everyone I know has stuff to work out with authority.
- F. Do not let anything disrupt the routine of the Intensive. Keep to the same schedule. Keep giving the same instructions. Keep the same tone of voice. Keep the room tidy. These provide very clear boundaries and a setting within which people feel safe. If you change stuff they will feel unsafe and will close up – to some degree. So do your best to stick to a well defined routine – even when you feel that everything is falling apart, including yourself.

## 9.1 My worst Errors

Of all the long Intensives I ran there are two that stand out as being poor – especially in comparison to the others. The first of these was in 1986, the other in 2003. The errors I made on each were quite different – and worth recounting in some detail.

In 1986 my core error was to start mastering in an exhausted state. This was a time in my life when I was running a business, a department at the university and about 6 Intensives a year – as well as managing a garden and four children. I arrived at the Intensive tired and left completely exhausted. Indeed after it finished, as I walked in through the door at home I fell over – literally, my body finally collapsed and I could not even stand up – that is how exhausted I was. My exhaustion meant that I did not have sufficient capacity to handle the participants. This manifested in one person presenting his difficult sexual material in a joking fashion and encouraging the rest of the group to laugh at it – which they did. The end result was that no one in that group felt safe to disclose difficult material.

There were other aspects of the group that caused me difficulties. There were 15 men and three women, and the women were not very feminine. So there was a surfeit of a masculine energy – heavy masculine energy. This meant that it was hard for anyone to be light and open – which also helped keep things closed down. There were a few experiences on this Intensive, but not many, and not particularly deep.

I remember that I became very critical of several members of the group. This was before I became adept at using the criticalness exercise. The best I could do was to take a long run (in their work period) up onto Dartmoor and scream out my criticalness. It helped, but not enough. And nothing could undo my own closure resulting from my exhaustion.

The second group that was not good was in 2003. The problems here were of a wholly different nature. First it was the first EI that I had run since the end of 1998 – so I had had a four and half year break and was going straight into a 2-week. Second I wanted to do it from a different place within myself – in fact I wanted to just “be myself”. So I was a lot less formal, claimed a lot less altitude and was a lot more friendly with the participants. Indeed a lot too friendly. I let people off serious trips – by giving them premature and unsolicited reassurance. Also when I did have to confront people there was such a disjunction between my overly friendly style and this suddenly confronting Master that people were shocked – and assumed that I was into a trip of some sort.

But my worst error was that I failed to spot that I had become extremely critical of an EI Master in the group who, in my judgement, was not intending to have a direct experience of the truth. This criticalness blocked my energy from day 9 until I finally woke up to it on the evening of day 12. And the group was stuck for this entire period. It was this experience, more than anything else, that forced me to see that my energy state was a critical factor in the progress in the group. During days 10, 11 and 12 the group was just grinding away and getting nowhere. It was obvious to them and to me that it was stuck.

What happened on the evening of day 12 was that I suddenly saw that I was blocked by my criticalness. I stayed up that night going through processes to discover what it was in myself – and discovered – surprise surprise – that I was running an Intensive and had ceased to want more experiences for myself – exactly what I was critical of in the participating Master. Once I saw and accepted this about myself I felt my own energy release. And blow me but in the first dyad on day 13 someone right in front of me had a direct experience – the group just took off. But it was too late for there to be many deep experiences. The stuckness had caused a significant number of people to give up – and they never re-engaged with the process.

When I reflected on the 2003 group I realised that the lack of formality had actually increased my energetic exchange with the group. Had I been more formal, me being stuck might not have affected things so profoundly. So the two errors compounded each other. I felt a great deal of remorse when I realised the degree to which I had failed people. I also realised that if I wanted to continue to run long EIs then I needed to stay in touch by running few 3-day events.

I made another serious error on the 2003 Intensive. I cannot describe the detail without breaking confidences, but the essence of the affair was as follows. I had an agreement with two participants that they would undertake certain things before joining the Intensive, things that would facilitate their participation. They did not comply with this agreement – and I still allowed them to participate. Because they had not complied with the agreement they both struggled to participate, and to some degree disrupted the group. What I should have done is said “since you have not complied with our agreement, you cannot participate”. That would have worked far better. I failed to do this because I wanted these people to have a positive experience of participating in a long Intensive – and of course I also failed to fulfil this objective by having them participate having broken their agreement.

The other errors that I am ashamed of are the times when I have let people off their trips. I do this by giving them some form of reassurance – when actually what they need is my conviction that they are strong enough to find their own way through. Once I also fell in love with a female participant and gave her instructions that were designed more to impress her than to help her. (This occurred in 2003; on other EIs I have fallen in love with participants and not made this sort of error – or at least not consciously.)

The final error that I want to discuss is one that I have only recently fully appreciated and it is to do with having my wife Eva as a participant on many of my long Intensives. Eva was a participant on three or four two week Intensives I mastered, including my first one, and also on the six week Intensive in 1998. We seemed to have got away with it until the six week. Quite late on in that group Eva sought to introduce new furniture into the group room to provide softer seats to sit on. Remember that the Intensive is being run in our house, so she knew what furniture was available, where it was and so on. She introduced some small armchairs that, whilst very comfortable, held the participants too far apart in the row, so I removed them. At this point she erupted with fury at me overriding her. Without fully appreciating it I was confronting her desire to control the situation – and I was doing so in public in a fashion that she later declared as being humiliating to her. This became known as ‘the orange chairs episode’.

We thought that we had dealt with it in the immediate aftermath of the Intensive. However eighteen months later I noticed a level of hostility from her that turned out to be rooted in this episode. We discussed it more and again thought we had resolved it. Then in 2006 we shared a profound experience in Peru where a still deeper layer of this trip emerged, a layer that had caused us to be less harmonious and together than either of us had recognised. So it took at least 8 years to resolve this issue between us.

At root what happened was that our relationship was distorted by me being her Master for a long

period. We could accommodate it for 3 –days – and indeed had done so both ways around. We had just about got away with it on the two weeks. But the six week was a step too far. Indeed it is now my view that we had already overstepped the mark during the two weeks previously and what the six week showed us was the nature and extent of the distortion we had introduced. It is just completely inappropriate for an equal husband-wife relationship to switch into the unequal Master-participant relationship. During the Intensive I did serve her correctly as a participant, but not as a husband – and the two roles were in direct conflict. We have resolved to never do this again – and to warn other people of the serious danger of doing so.

In fact this is an extreme example of the dangers of mixing any sort of relationships on long Intensives. I have lost one good friend through this process and put one other friendship under serious strain for a while. Basically if I do my job as Master correctly on a long Intensive I will end up confronting some significant aspect of each participant’s mind – and that is not something that sits easily within a friendship. It can be beneficial, but all parties need to go into the arrangement aware of the risks and what might happen.

## **9.2 Checklists**

As a result of my experience in 2003 I ran a Master’s refresher course for many of the Masters in the UK. As part of that process I wrote the following check lists for “being a Master” and “being a Monitor”. The list for being a Master is relevant for both 3-day and long Intensives. The Monitor list is less relevant on long Intensives (because the monitor is not in the room as on a three day). But the principles involved remain the same.

### **Being a Master:**

1. Be the Master at all times. This requires you to be able to put your stuff aside and not be caught up in trips of any sort. It also means acting with authority but not being authoritarian.
2. Know the route to the Truth and that everyone can realise it. This is what Charles Berner refers to as certainty. My perspective is that it requires a deeper engagement and personal realisation. You need to know and be able to remember that the most awful participants can (and do) get enlightened.
3. Be able to distinguish insights and other psychic experiences from realisations of Truth. If someone incorrectly acknowledges something as Truth when it isn’t they will usually just stop running EIs. They know, at some level, that they have broken their connection with Truth.
4. Do not ask a monitor (or any other staff member) to do something that you are unwilling or unable to do yourself. This is particularly important in confronting participants and handling crises.
5. Do not delay confronting participants or staff. If you know someone is breaking a rule or

not contemplating or somehow not participating properly do not delay beyond the end of a dyad. Some issues are not important enough to intervene in the dyad, but as soon as the dyad is over do what you have to do. Delaying just makes it worse – in every sense.

6. Be in charge of the physical environment – notice how it is and what is going on. By all means delegate, but this does not mean that you lose responsibility.
7. Self inspect whenever you find yourself being intensely critical of a participant or staff member. You are only critical of things in others that reflect an unresolved or unacknowledged part of yourself.
8. Do your best to put your attention on the people who are participating and contemplating well – rather than allow yourself to be drawn towards the trouble makers or difficult participants.
9. Do your best to track how people are doing and if they are not contemplating correctly think out what instruction you think they need. However when it comes to interviewing them, drop your previous analysis and be open to whatever occurs in the contact between you and the participant. (Often it is what you have previously thought out, but be open to something different.)
10. Remember that you cannot take credit for people having direct experiences. It is something between them and the Absolute. If you take credit when it works well you are going to have a hard time when no one has an experience!

## **Being a Monitor**

1. Being willing to serve the Master of the Intensive and do it her/his way. This does not mean that you do not discuss things or debate the best way to do something. But if push comes to shove you, the monitor, defer to the Master – and you do it really. This means being able to do something in a way that you may not consider wise or appropriate.
2. Always give positive instructions. As tempting as it might be you should not tell participants what not to do but tell them what they should do. This is really important and the cause of much unnecessary grief between monitors and participants. “You should abide by the rules and put that cigarette out. It would be best if you gave me the rest of the pack until the end of the Intensive.”
3. Never correct an error that you have not yourself witnessed. This means that you do not take someone else’s word for it. If someone reports another participant as breaking a rule or involving them in their communication always ask first “did you break this rule?” or “did you involve X in your communication?” If they deny it then just accept that and watch. The intervention will normally be enough to resolve the issue.
4. When you are tired take a rest. It is better for the Master to be without a monitor than to have a tired monitor. Tired monitors reduce the energy of the group – and you are more likely to make errors.
5. Never say anything that is untrue. You can refuse to answer questions or say “I will discuss this at the end of the Intensive” or “You should ask the Master”. But never concoct something to fob people off – it always comes back and bites you.

6. Always tell the Master any important correction you have given to a participant. This is critical to ensure that you and the Master work together in guiding people towards doing the technique and participating correctly.
7. Attend lectures and listen to how the Master presents the technique. You have to align your interventions with this – and it is powerful if you can refer to things that have been referenced in the lecture(s).
8. Self inspect whenever you find yourself being intensely critical of a participant or staff member. You are only critical of things in others that reflect an unresolved or unacknowledged part of yourself.
9. Be willing to be emotionally engaged with participants, in particular allow yourself to share in suffering when this is appropriate. You aim to maintain a level of formality, but do not behave like a robot. Neither should you intervene uninvited – and never ever offer someone tissues when they have not requested them.
10. If there are people on the Intensive you really dislike or have negative history with, make these known to the Master and request that other people intervene with those people. Do not pretend.

## 10. Integration and Completion

*As I explained in the Introduction, my focus has shifted from maximising the number of experiences to facilitating people living from all that they have learned and discovered during a long Intensive. This section describes my limited experience in developing this aspect of the overall process.*

Most of the time that I ran Intensives my focus was on facilitating people having direct experiences. From 1985 onwards I ran an ‘experimental’ 3-day EI at Rohatsu (early December) in which I introduced elements that I thought might enhance Intensives. And I sought to measure success by the proportion of participants who had direct experiences. A number of useful changes emerged from these experiments, for example sometimes including a five minute silent contemplation period before starting a dyad. However overall I failed to raise the percentage of experiences on 3-day Intensives above an average of 25-30%.

On some three day, and on all long Intensives I offered some sort of integration exercise. Either the day after a long Intensive or late on the last evening, I would organise a couple of integration dyads. People would use the dyad:

Tell me something you have experienced on this Intensive

Thank You

Tell me how you can make use of this in your life

Thank You

I also used to organise Holistic Yoga for people who wanted to try out a daily practice. This is a good vehicle for introducing people to a wide range of regular growth practices and I recommend it for that purpose. These modest efforts towards integration work were OK. But I was not overly concerned with how people put their experiences to use. This has changed for me.

Now I am more interested in helping people to lead lives that are more in tune with the Divine, with their own true nature, than in simply facilitating more experiences. This is not in tune with the strength and purpose of EIs. As described by Lawrence Noyes[2], an EI is an awakening process – it demonstrates to people that the Absolute exists and that they can experience it. The EI does not have much to offer for the much longer and more difficult process of bringing such experiences into one's life. But this is where my energy has shifted toward.

I have introduced a specific period, between one and two days, after the end of the Intensive for structured integration work. I will explain the structures that were used in a moment. But first I want to explain something about the design.

First I had all the participants complete an initial dyad in which they worked on two questions. For the first twenty minutes they worked on “Tell me what you want to gain from participating in this Intensive” and for the second twenty minutes “Tell me what you would like to change in your life”. These are done before the start of the Intensive in order to

- (a) set a clear intention going into the Intensive
- (b) establish some realistic life changes that the person wants to undertake – before they get into an altered state

Then I give the opening talk of the Intensive, complete the first dyad and send them off to bed. When they awake the next morning they are straight into dyads and continue until the end of (in the case of the 2006 two week) day 12. The Intensive itself is continued right up to the end day 12. The participants go to bed and are told that the Intensive rules will continue the next day. First thing the next morning I deliver the “Closing Talk” of the Intensive and immediately follow it with an “Introduction to Integration” talk. This ensures that the participants remain in silence, in the open state achieved during the EI and in a contemplative state. And their first task in the integration process is to silently review what they have learned or experienced. They do this with reference to a journal that they have kept during the EI.

In the Closing Talk of the EI I emphasise the following points

- (a) it is they, the participants, who have made the Intensive whatever it was; that I am honoured to have served them and that they have all made progress. I thank them and, if appropriate, the EI staff.
- (b) experiences can, and often do, occur after the end of the Intensive. If this should happen to them they should communicate it to someone who will simply receive what they say. If an experience occurs during the integration work they are free to use any of the dyads to communicate what has

happened

- (c) having a direct experience does not make someone a better person; and not having an experience does not make one worse – nor a failure. Inevitably I have appealed to their ego to commit to the process – and to the ego not “succeeding” feels like failure. But you cannot fail at something you cannot make happen.
- (d) In order to retain any of the benefits of what you have discovered and experienced you will need a daily practice. You have been in a wilful process and the benefits will be lost over time – that is inevitable and not a failure on your part. Wilful changes are not sustainable without regular practice.

In then opening talk on Integration work I make the following points:

- A. The whole point of participating in something like an EI is to improve the way that you live so that it is more in harmony with the way things are, so that you are more fulfilled and cause less injury. But this requires effort over and above the Intensive itself.
- B. Whether you have had a direct experience or not you will have discovered, or been reminded about, things about yourself or life or others. These insights need to be integrated as much as experiences themselves.
- C. At the beginning of the Intensive they did one dyad that addressed what they wanted from the EI and what they wanted to change in their lives. They should now return to those issues in the light of what they have learned and experienced.
- D. Making changes in one’s life requires clearly identifying what it is you want to change, identifying the obstacles to change, the help you require and have access to, and designing a scheme to make the change in small steps, preferably reversibly.

Following these talks the participants have a period of silent contemplation and review that lasts about 45 minutes. Then they have a schedule that has a dyad followed by a meal or break of some sort for additional reflection. By about half way through the day the schedule includes a group in which people share where they have got to. At that point the rules of the Intensive are relaxed and participants can start to talk to each other outside the dyads. Having a process of relinquishing the safety of the Intensive in a series of steps is far better than the previous pattern of ending and moving immediately to socialising. It also ensures that the integration work is done seriously and with the level of openness and honesty generated within the EI.

I am still in the process of developing the integration work, but I am satisfied that the principles outlined above are correct and that the type of schedule used in 2006 provides the basis for continuing this activity.

## **10.1 The Integration Process**

In order for people to be able to work on integrating what they have learned and experienced during a long Intensive I came to the conclusion that it was necessary for them to keep a journal. This has

always been allowed on long Intensives, I have now also allowed it on three day events. I emphasise that the journal is simply a record of what they have understood or experienced – it should not be an analysis or any sort of internal conversation (which are valid journal techniques). I permit writing in journals only during rest periods and last thing at night – and then only for short periods. This seems to have worked well.

The first thing for the participant to do in the integration work is to review their journal. For a long Intensive this can take longer than 45 minutes, so I also include a meal break in the period. On a short EI 45 minutes is ample time. I recommend that they consider the implications of what they have learned or experienced in all areas of their life, including

- (1) their inner standards
- (2) their intimate relationships
- (3) how they work or operate in the world
- (4) how they present themselves and what they do to others
- (5) their relationship to the Divine – or whatever they regard as the highest for them

I recommend that they assemble a short list of the key points or issues to which they can refer during the dyads (so it is acceptable to refer to the list, but not to spend time reading the journal during the dyads).

On the two week Intensive in 2006 the schedule for the complete group was as follows;

Day 0:	Arrive by 6pm	
6.00 - 7.00pm	Dinner	
7.00 - 7.30	Introductory talk	
7.30 - 8.15	Dyad on objectives and change	
8.15 - 8.45	Tea and snack	
8.45 - 9.30	Opening talk of EI	
9.30 - 10.15	First Enlightenment Exercise	

## **Days 1 to 12**

Full schedule of dyads each day from 6.00am until 10.30pm

## **Days 13 and 14**

Schedule shown below and on the next page

The first dyad on the very first evening had two parts. For the first 4 changeovers both partners work on

Tell me what you hope to gain from this Intensive  
then for the last four changeovers they work on

Tell me what you would like to change in your life

This dyad is an essential preparation for the integration work on days 13 and 14.

### **Day 13 Schedule**

6.00	6.15	Get up
6.15	7.00	Introduction and Q & A
7.00	7.15	Physical
7.15	8.00	Reflection on Journal (what has been learned?)
8.00	8.45	Breakfast
8.45	9.30	Dyad 1: what I have learned
9.30	10.15	Walk (reflection on change)
10.15	11.00	Dyad 2: what I want to change
11.00	12.30	Group: (rule changes)
12.30	1.15	Lunch
1.15	2.00	Dyad 3: obstacles and ways to overcome them
2.00	3.45	Rest and Physical exercise
3.45	4.00	Snack
4.00	4.45	Lecture
4.45	5.45	Group and Q & A
5.45	6.30	Dyad 4: first steps in change
6.30	7.00	Dinner

7.00	7.45	Dyad 5: help I need and how to gain it
7.45	8.30	Group
8.30	9.15	Walk / relaxation
9.15	10.00	Wise man process (optional)
10.00	10.30	Snack and retire

### **Day 14 Schedule**

6.00	6.15	Get up
6.15	7.00	Reflection on process so far
7.00	7.15	Physical exercise
7.15	8.00	Dyad 6: Reflection or forward looking
8.00	8.30	Breakfast
8.30	11.30	Group and letter writing
		Final Interviews
11.30	12.30	Final Group
12.30	1.15	Lunch: leave after lunch

The dyads used in this schedule were as follows;

#### **Dyad 1:**

Tell me what you have learned about yourself, life and others during this Intensive

#### **Dyad 2:**

Tell me what you would like to change about how you live and relate to others

#### **Dyad 3:**

Tell me about something you want to change

Thank you

Tell me why this might be difficult

Thank you

**Dyad 4:**

Tell me about something you want to change

Thank you

Tell me the first steps that would be required to make this change

Thank you

**Dyad 5:**

Tell me about something you want to change

Thank you

Tell me what help you might need to make this change

Thank you

Tell me how you could obtain that help

Thank you

**Dyad 6:**

Tell me about your insights and resolutions that have arisen as a result of this Intensive

Thank you

Tell me what more I need to know to fully understand this

Thank you

**Dyad 7:**

*First five minutes*

Tell me what changes you expect to have made 1 month from now

Thank you

*Next five minutes*

Tell me what changes you expect to have made 3 months from now

Thank you

*Next five minutes*

Tell me what changes you expect to have made 6 months from now

Thank you

*Next five minutes*

Tell me what changes you expect to have made 1 year from now

Thank you

Of these dyads Dyad 5 was the least helpful. By the time people reached this stage of the process they already knew what help they needed and where to get it – no one reported any additional benefit from this dyad. Dyads 6 and 7 were offered as alternatives in the Dyad 6 slot on the morning of day 14. Most people chose dyad 6.

The lecture about half way through the integration process was about how to approach making changes. In this I reported my own experience when I attended an alternative festival in 1979. There a man called Russell Swithers gave a talk in which he helped everyone see that although they wanted to make real changes in many aspects of their life, no one was actually doing so. He said that the way to make real change was

- (a) take only small steps at a time
- (b) aim to make each step reversible so that if it did not work it could be undone
- (c) after each step re-evaluate what change was needed next

He made the point that most people failed to make a change because they thought that they would have to make some large irreversible step – and they, sensibly, concluded it was too risky. Rather than selling one's house and moving into a commune one could explore living with other people by going on holiday with them (this often being enough to show the difficulties involved!). So the participants on the Intensive were encouraged to identify the small, reversible steps that they could make as the beginning of a process of change.

Given that people are in a state that could not be sustained, it was important that they did not seek to address issues unrealistically. This was why the very first dyad on day 0 addressed these questions – and provided the base point for the integration work at the end. This was remarkably successful. Almost everyone was able to relate what they had surfaced in the first dyad to everything that they had learned and wanted to change at the end. I strongly recommend this approach.

It is important that the slots in the Schedule labelled Group are well managed. In 2006 we made the first group a completely open group – and this threw people – they suddenly felt unsafe and several participants made unhelpful contributions that exacerbated this. On reflection we decided that it would have been preferable to have had an extended “round” where each person gave a brief account of where they had got to and the issues that were now of most concern to them. The later groups worked better because they were generally focussed around a Question and Answer format following a lecture or brief introduction. The aim of these later groups is to enable people to raise something that has arisen that they have not been able to resolve or make headway on. One issue that arose and was usefully

explored was that of introducing a regular daily practice into one's life.

The wise man process[3] on the evening of day 13 was extremely successful. Indeed it was here that several people who were stuck in knowing how to make effective changes in their life received detailed guidance on how to proceed. This could have been organised earlier – and on a shorter integration schedule should definitely be earlier.

The other strategy used for addressing the fact that the participants were in an unsustainably open state after the EI, was to make use of a letter writing exercise. In this they write a letter to themselves that they would want to receive in three months time. They put the letter in a self addressed envelope to themselves and hand it in. I then post it to them 3 months later – to serve as a reminder for the integration work – and whatever else they have put in the letter. This proved very popular – though some people also commented that they were not looking forward to hearing from themselves in three months time.

## 10.2 The Final Interview

When I have finished a long Intensive I always like to have interviews with the participants to say goodbye in a formal sense. However I also always find this very tiring. Even ten minutes each with 20 people takes over three hours. In 2006 the dyads were used as a time when participants could opt to have a 20 minute interview (there was an odd number of participants). This worked well and meant I could monitor the dyads and complete most of the interviews.

I think that the interview is important as a closure. I always interview everyone at the beginning – which starts the process – so the final interview is the completion of the process. Not all participants will want this interview. Some, who are still into hating me, will decline the offer. That is OK, but I will still aim to say goodbye to them in a more casual way as a completion.

It is usual to allow people to stay on for a day or so after the end of a two week – remember to include this in your budgeting. I also make a clear boundary time by which they must all leave. This is easy at commercial venues which usually impose their own constraints. But when running a long Intensive at home setting the boundary is harder – and in some ways more important.

Then finally they have all gone. At that point I usually start to feel all the stuff that I have been putting aside. I feel exhausted, deflated, fucked up, unappreciated and the very last thing I want to do is to put my attention on anyone else. What I actually feel like is having a harem of beautiful young maidens to come and massage and bathe me. I want others to give to me rather than for me to have to give to others. I am saying all this not to display my own neuroses but to warn you about what it might be like for you at the end. I think it is inevitable that after giving out so intensely for a long period that one wants to reverse the flow – and if you can organise this in a straightforward fashion then do so.

More recently I have not been so exhausted, nor felt so deprived of attention and input. But this is comparatively recent. For the first five or six the sense of exhaustion and deprivation went on for weeks after the end of the Intensive.

I organised reunions after all the early two week Intensives. However I found them a bit of a strain, and only a few people could ever make it, so I have ceased doing that. However I do contrive to stay in contact with people. That is easier now with the use of e-mail. I think it is important to hear from everyone. Generally the people I do not hear from are those in trouble and they usually only need simple advice to get out of it – so I am fairly insistent until I hear from everyone.

Well this is the basics of what I have learned. If you are planning to run a long Intensive and want to ask me anything about it, feel free to contact me; I will always do my best to assist. Long Intensives have transformed my life in unbelievable ways and I feel honoured to have shared the process with so many others.

Jake Chapman

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## **Appendix 1: Notes for potential participants**

A two week Enlightenment Intensive is not a light undertaking. It is important to approach it realistically. The aim of these notes is to assist you to decide whether to take a two week intensive, and if you do, how best to prepare for it. If after reading these notes you have any further questions please contact me (Jake Chapman) directly.

### **1. What is a two week Intensive?**

A two week Enlightenment Intensive is different from a three day Intensive in more ways than the number of days. It is a different level of undertaking, involves a different process and can produce fundamentally different results. There are also differences in the schedule and rules; for example some writing in journals is allowed and the daily schedule finishes earlier (around 10.00pm). The high level of stress and intensity of a three day is reduced quite a lot by the two week schedule.

On a three day Intensive participants are invited to give their all for three days - it is a sort of "spiritual

sprint" with the goal of achieving a breakthrough. During the three days the main process operating is that participants will dis-identify from their minds. This dis-identification allows breakthroughs to occur.

A two week Intensive starts off exactly the same as a three day; this means that the discomfort associated with uncoupling from life that lasts for the first one and a half days takes place at the beginning of the two weeks. Once that uncoupling is accomplished the participants enter a different space and this continues throughout the rest of the intensive. This is an advantage of taking a long intensive because there is a larger pay-off for the initial discomfort.

After the initial stage of uncoupling the participants go through a deeper process of dis-identification. On a three day intensive the dis-identification occurs for the last one and a half days of the group; on a two week it continues for much longer. After about day six the process shifts gear again, material which was conveniently put to one side for a couple of days now re-emerges. This can be distressing - but it also provides an opportunity for a deeper level of handling the material - it is possible for participants to actually clear material from their minds in a long Intensive. Some of the main benefits for taking a long intensive arise from this process of deeper self inspection and clearing. However the real pay-off is in the possibility of having a much deeper enlightenment experience.

On a three day intensive it is comparatively rare for anyone to have a deep enlightenment experience; on my Intensives it will occur once every three or four Intensives. The frequency of deep experiences on two week Intensives is such that about 25% of the participants have them. Overall the number of participants having enlightenment experiences is also increased; the average on three day Intensives is between 25 and 30%, on two week Intensives it is between 40 and 60%. However the most significant difference is in the frequency of deep experiences.

What is the difference between a deep and shallow experience? Well most experiences on three day Intensives will not cause the person to change their whole life. The experience is valuable because it resolves for ever the issue of whether there is an absolute truth and who one is. There will also usually be a number of useful insights after such an experience. It is also not uncommon for participants on three day Intensives to hardly notice that they had an experience; some may miss it the first time altogether, others will need help from the master or monitor in connecting to the core of the actual experience. And these experiences often happen by the participant being "tricked" - they may not have been contemplating deeply but had, by some means, just been more open than before.

Deep experiences have quite different characteristics. The person who has a deep experience knows it at the time, there is no mistaking it. They may be shy about presenting it, but they know what it is that they have experienced, and it is usually "mind-blowing" (literally!). To the degree that the person accepts the experience it can provide a whole new basis for their life. Me and my life changed dramatically and totally as a result of a deep experience on a six-week intensive. I changed how I was in the world, what I did and how I related. And the changes have all lead to increased happiness, love, satisfaction and sense of fulfilment in my life.

This sort of deep experience requires a deeper level of commitment to going for the truth, it requires great persistence and willingness to be wrong. Those participants able to make this deeper level of commitment stand a good chance of having a very deep direct experience. Those who do not have direct experiences make enormous progress in sorting out their lives and relationships. As with most things in life, the more one puts into this process the more one gets out.

Taking a two week is rather like retreating into a monastery for a period of time. The daily routine becomes a way of life, it becomes easier and easier to maintain ones contemplation, and the love and contact in the group deepens steadily throughout the two weeks - until by the end you will count the other participants amongst the people you know and love the best in the world.

## **2. Requirements**

It is essential that you have taken, and completed, a three day Enlightenment Intensive before you take a two week. It is such a different type of group to any other growth process that it would be extremely foolish to sign up for two weeks without knowing what you are letting yourself in for. You should also have had no difficulties in readjusting to life after a three day intensive - because if you had difficulties after a three day you may have serious problems after a two week.

By difficulties I don't mean the normal issues of coming out of the structure, learning to tolerate being interrupted and losing the sense of openness. Nor do I mean the emotional swings, from high to depression, that normally occur once or twice shortly after an Intensive. The sorts of difficulties I mean are real problems in relating to people, or difficulties in sleeping, or unwillingness to enter into the stream of life, or paranoia. These are difficulties which relate to exposure to stress - and many people simply cannot handle the amount of stress that is generated on an Intensive. This is nothing to be ashamed of - it is just the way that some people are. The very worst thing such people can do is to ignore the symptoms and expose themselves to more and more stress - that is the way to have a psychotic break! So look at it for yourself. Did you have problems handling the stress after a three day? If you did then don't take a two week - it simply won't help you.

Another requirement is that you should be seeking the Truth just for the sake of knowing the Truth. Quite often people will take a three day Intensive to find out what it's about. Then they may take another one because they want to have an experience, or to have another experience. Sometimes people think that they will stand a better chance of having an experience if they take a longer Intensive - so they sign up with the aim of satisfying their ego - to have an experience, to appear bigshot, to be able to say "I did a two week Intensive". Well you should know that these motives wear pretty thin after a few days. One's ego desire can keep you going through a three day - but on a two week that motive gets crushed pretty quickly. So although a person's ego may get them into the process it is not an adequate basis for taking a two week intensive. Do it because you really want to know the Truth of yourself, life or another.

You should be prepared for your life to change in fairly fundamental ways. You should not expect to be able to take a two week intensive and then continue your life exactly as before. If that is your

expectation then you will either have a hard time (trying to forget what you have learned) or you will be disappointed - because the whole point of digging that far into finding out the truth is to be able to bring your life more in harmony with who you really are, what life is really about and what others actually are. I will return to this later on in these notes.

### 3. Choosing a Question

If you have read this far and are still contemplating taking a two week then you need to know something about how to prepare for the group - and one of the more important aspects of this is choosing your question. Normally you will work on the same question for the entire two weeks - so it is not a trivial decision. Since you will have already completed a three day you are free to work on any of the four questions - which are

Who am I? (not recommended for a long Intensive)

What am I?

What is life?

What is another?

Charles Berner ended up using the above four questions because they actually covered all the areas of direct experience encountered in the more traditional methods for seeking enlightenment. He also noticed, as Zen Masters had noticed for hundreds of years, that the above order of the questions appears to be the "natural" order of enlightenment. In other words people tended to first experience who they were, then what they were, then what life is and finally what another is. This is not a universal sequence, but it is by far the most common.

On a three day group participants are instructed to work on the question that interests them most. This is a good guideline, but needs to be moderated by some other considerations - especially since what is being sought in a two week is a deeper level of experience. I do not recommend "Who am I?" for long Intensives. A very deep experience of oneself is almost always a "what" experience - so it is best to work directly on "What am I?" if you want self enlightenment.

It is important to work on self enlightenment first simply because if you do not know who you are then it is far more difficult to experience another. In fact I have had participants who have had direct experiences of life or another but who were unable to present the experience, let alone integrate it, because they did not know who had had the experience. So I recommend people to work on self enlightenment until they have had a solid (i.e. not just a flash) experience of who or what they are. There are other advantages to this strategy since when you know who or what you are then

- (a) you can do the technique better because you will be able to communicate from yourself more fully and also be more prepared to enter into the contact with your partners
- (b) you will be more willing to go through crises - you will know that you are different from your mind

and be more prepared to face it down.

(c) the mind clearing effects of the longer intensive will be somewhat enhanced.

Working on "life" on a long Intensive can be difficult - the object of contemplation becomes a real issue and you will have to face up to all your ideas and preconceived notions about life. However it is precisely for this reason that Charles Berner used to strongly recommend this question - he says it is the best question for getting your ideas sorted out. In his opinion once a person knows who they are then it is their lack of knowledge about life that is usually their greatest obstacle to personal growth

"What is another" is actually the most difficult question to work on. It is difficult for practical reasons - you will usually be using your partner as an object of contemplation and yet must not involve them in your communications. It is also difficult because it runs you straight into your most profound obstacles - the deepest parts of your mind. But this is also potentially the most rewarding question - indeed for many people it is finding the Truth to this question that finally resolves their issues about how to orientate their life.

In his most recent comment on Enlightenment Intensives Charles Berner has noted that people seem to make most progress working on "What am I?". He attributes the reason for this to the faster rate of dis-identification that occurs on this question, and on the fact that the object is relatively easily available. His observations coincide with my own. My own most profound experiences have been on this question.

So there are pros and cons associated with all the questions - nevertheless there is a strong case for persisting with the traditional sequence - self, life and then another. There are also benefits and drawbacks associated with working on a question that you have already worked on in an Intensive. The advantage of sticking at the same question is that you will go deeper each time you work on it - the disadvantage is that you might start to get preconceived ideas about what it means to work on that question. On balance I would recommend people to stick to the same question until it is resolved for them - too often changing questions is the mind's way of demanding entertainment.

#### **4. The Down Side**

Taking a long Enlightenment Intensive is not easy. There are three main reasons for not participating.

The first is that the long period of introspection may throw up serious problems about you and your life that the process itself cannot help resolve, and indeed is not designed to resolve. You may feel it is an advantage to have seen the reason why the way you are leading your life is not helpful to you or others, but if you have no other options open to you then you may have to continue doing things or acting in ways that you no longer believe in. This can be very disheartening. The integration exercises will provide some help with these sorts of difficulties.

The second is that, according to Charles Berner, you may awaken your kundalini energy during the intensive. If this happens then you may have trouble containing it. If you fail to contain it you may have trouble with sleep, food or sex during or for a while after, the intensive. I have noticed kundalini phenomena only very rarely during Intensives, and the most extreme cases actually occurred after a three day event, not a two week. People have experienced difficulties after two week Intensives, but they appear to be more related to coming to terms with what they now know about themselves and others rather than energy phenomena. So although I personally have not observed much kundalini you should know that this is the main reason why Charles Berner does not recommend long Intensives.

The third is that the stress associated with the process may exacerbate some latent condition in you that you then have to deal with. I went on a two-week intensive with a bad back and ended up having to lie on my back for three months afterwards to heal it. It wasn't that the EI caused the problem - it was just that all that sitting for that long made it much much worse. I would do it again, both for the experience I had on the Intensive and also because in the process my chronic back problem was resolved. But be warned, you may be thrown into sorting out a long term problem that you have been putting off!

Looking back over the people who have taken long Intensives I can see that for something like 15-20% it was really disappointing. In most cases they came for the wrong reason - the most common being that they thought the process would "do something to them". Whatever the reason the person ended up not being open, to themselves, to the Truth or to change. The two weeks then became a long grind of either resisting material that was trying to surface or searching for something to report in a very closed off state. Not much fun! Only take a long Intensive if you have a real passion for the Truth, for finding out what you and life and others are really all about. And that openness must include a willingness to be wrong.

## **5. The Up-Side**

Here are some quotes from letters I received from people after the 1992 two week intensive.

"I seemed to have a relatively easy time, with loads and loads of memories coming up from my childhood....It was lovely, really peaceful, and I came out of it feeling very good about my early years..... So on that level the Intensive was very healing. .. But I do now meditate daily, not as much as I feel I should, but considerably more and more regularly than I ever have before. And I have also surrendered more in my daily life. I am noticeably less stressed than I used to be. People remark how well I look, and I feel quite different."

"...as a result of the Intensive 'God' now has a place in my life. I am aware that I am not in control, in fact the more I try and control the more stuck I sometimes get. As an ex-control freak I sometimes find it marvellous to just observe things taking place, taking their natural order and I am aghast when I think of the amount of energy I would at one time have used neurotically trying to force things to go my way. Overall my life and my life with my family sees to be much more rich and successful (financially too)."

“During those two weeks I felt myself stripped away, showing parts of myself to others that I’d never

shown before. ... I learned a lot about the judgements I make of others, and how faulty those judgements are... Knowing what another was made such a difference. It was like I'd been missing the obvious for years. Knowing is profound beyond words. ... I have touched the moment outside duality - the Divine Compassion that embraces both "good" and "bad". But I have some major catching up to do in the everyday world... Other things are different for me too - I have done a lot of clearing up in various relationships. I am more honest with myself and have become a lot closer to family and friends. I fell less frightened of the intimacy of close friendships, feel more love in my life and can trust that it is there, and so feel very blessed."

## 6. Integrating after the Intensive

Earlier I mentioned that one of the requirements for someone to take a two week Intensive was that they should be prepared for their life to change. By this I do not necessarily mean that you should be willing to give up your job, your relationships and move to a monastery (though some people have made such moves after 2-week Intensives!). What I am getting at here is that you should give yourself the space to make some profound changes in the way that you approach life - be open to the possibility of major changes. You should put all your beliefs on ice, be prepared to be wrong about your ideals, be willing to change the basis on which you relate to people. These are all internal changes - they may or may not involve you in making external changes like changing jobs (in most cases what is involved is *how* you do things, not *what* you do).

I have stressed this requirement of being open to change because, unless you are open in this way then you will not get the benefit that taking a two week intensive can provide. It is one of the most intense and profound growth experiences that you can take part in - and to get most out of it you have to be open to making changes. To take such a group and then to try to force yourself into the same strait-jacket and mould as you were in to start with may be very painful, if not impossible.

The theory of two week Intensives is that participants go through two one week cycles. According to this theory the group should peak on days 12 or 13 and then naturally complete on day 14. My experience of two week Intensives has been that the peak occurs on days 10 or 11 and that the last three days (12,13 and 14) are often quite heavy – even turgid – as if the participants were starting a new cycle.

I have also noticed that the biggest difference between people is not in the nature of the experiences they have, nor the level of insights they have about themselves, but in their ability to integrate what they have experienced or understood into their life. Indeed I have noticed that long Intensives often bring things to the surface that the participant then struggles to come to terms with.

Putting these two observations together has lead us to make a radical change to the overall schedule of the 14 day event. In the new schedule there will be a full twelve days of dyads. There will be an extended introduction to the process, with some group exercises. The last day and a half will consist of a number of structured exercises and processes which aim to explore how participants can integrate and deal with what they have experienced and understood. The schedule then looks like this:

Day 1 Arrive in afternoon. Group dinner together, opening dyad, the opening talk of the Enlightenment Intensive, first enlightenment exercise.

Days 2 – 13: Long EI schedule with 11 enlightenment exercises per day.

Day 14: Full day of integration processes and group sessions.

Day 15: Further integration exercises. Leave after lunch.

The integration exercises will make use of the insights and experiences participants have recorded in their journals during the period. There will be periods of reflection, some dyads to clarify issues and then structured exercises to explore how to make practical use of the new material in relationships, in your work, in your family and how the material affects both your own inner standards and your ability to live by those standards. There will also be creative processes for exploring novel ways of shifting behaviour patterns and exploring new ways of being.

The overall message I would like to convey to you is to regard the two week Intensive as a potential turning point in your life, the beginning of something new. After all is said and done that is actually how most people find it affects them.

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[1] See for example “On Becoming a Person” by Carl Rogers, Constable and Robinson, 2004

[2] *The Enlightenment Intensive* by Lawrence Noyes, Frog Ltd, California, 1998 see p 122 - 123

[3] This is a fantasy journey in which a person can ask a wise man any question and persist in the conversation until they receive an answer that includes specific guidance.