



Experience Yourself Directly

In the Zen tradition, riddle-like questions, called *koans*, are used to provoke you to find the truth within yourself. A koan cannot be answered through logic. When your mind is exhausted with trying to figure it out, you are available to experience the existential truth of the answer.

The koan *Who Is In?* is used in the Osho Multiversity in the three-day *Awareness Intensive: Who Is In?* course, the longer *Satori* retreat, and in *Awareness Intensive* evening events.

To find out more about this process, *Osho Times* talked with people who have facilitated, assisted, and participated in these courses.

Rakendra, can you give the background to the process?

The Awareness Intensive process is a combination of the Japanese Rinzai Zen Sesshin format and western communication techniques. It was formulated by Charles Berner in the late 60's. Incorporating vital suggestions



from Osho, the process has been offered within the Multiversity here in Pune for over thirty years.

The core of the process is to experience directly who you are. The structure helps people to cut through the non-essential layers in themselves and get in touch with their true nature.

The course is a highly structured combination of communication exercises, Osho active meditations and silent activities. The "tightness" of the structure supports the participant by removing all peripheral distractions, allowing them to give all their focus to their inner quest.

What is the role of the facilitator?

The facilitator has to maintain a climate that supports the participants to stay completely focused and to connect with themselves in their unique individual ways, and at the same time, he has to remain present to himself. It is indeed a challenging role, where experience and intuition are the key factors.

Ultimately it is the Koan itself along with the participant's intention to access his truth, that does the real work.

How does the process work?

It works on different levels: understanding from experience and insight rather than from a thinking process; dropping identifications; and directly experiencing oneself.

The participant experiences that he is not what he believes he is. Disidentification happens; his awareness about himself grows and can grow to the point where he becomes awareness – that's when a direct experience happens.

The main ingredient of this process is trust. Trust in oneself, and trust that by opening oneself to oneself as well as to another, one can experience oneself directly.

Now the core question: What is a direct experience?

When the sense of *I* or *me* is not there, when you have disappeared, when subject and object have merged into one, when the sense of separation has disappeared – then there is only direct experiencing.

Any other experiences, as beautiful and breathtaking as they may be, are still indirect experiences. They can be and are very helpful on the way to oneself but one should not mistake them for direct experiences. They are all entertainment.

What happens for the listening partner?

The listening partner is very important in this process. While it is your turn to be the listening partner, you become a non-judgmental presence to the other – something incredibly valuable for both partners to experience.

By making yourself available, by opening, by receiving your partner's communication you open to yourself as well and the more open you are to yourself, the more chance you have to directly experience yourself.

Some people have direct experiences being the listening partner – maybe because then their sense of *me* is put aside and only listening is happening.

Aside from a direct experience, what can I get out of participating in this process?

That's an important question because collecting experiences like pebbles or precious stones does not really lead anywhere but to an ego infatuation; what is known as the "Zen Stink".

Generally the participant gains awareness about

himself, about who he is, about how he relates with the world around him and his life starts changing on its own – rather than as a result of arbitrary decisions – into a more flowing, relaxed life.

What is the Satori retreat?

It is a seven-day version of the same structure. It enables the participant to move deeper with different koans such as: *Who Am I? What Am I? What Is Love? What Is Freedom? What Is Trust? What Is Another? or What Is Life?* The choice of the koan is subjective; it is more an intuitive sense from the facilitator of what seems to be the most appropriate for that person in this moment to support his individual process.

What are the Awareness Intensive evening events?

An opportunity for people who have not participated in the three-day course to get a taste of what is possible there. For those who have done this process, it is a way to keep their search alive, to deepen their experience.

Samarpan, can you share your experience of the process?

The process is about being truthful and real, and it creates awareness about what is happening inside. You learn to be in the moment and to be the feeling, not just talk about it. It is a journey into the unknown – what will be revealed to me this time?

I love sitting opposite different partners; each one can trigger something from inside me – not related to them at all.

The challenge is to allow myself to be who I am right now and to communicate that in truthfulness, making the communication so intimate.

What change has it made in your life?

The challenge continues in daily life: to be real with people, to be real with myself, to be present in a conversation. It is an adventure to continue to discover myself. The meditation techniques help me go deeper in discovering who I am. The *Who Is In?* process helps me understand when Osho says: "You are not the body, you are not the mind." *Who Is In?* is like a sword diving inside; I'm coming closer to the real questions in my life.



INTERVIEW

Expressions of the Experience

Anandi, Switzerland

It was a very deep process for me which allowed me to face all my blocks and resistance. I became aware that resistance is recurring in my life and it prevents me from being happy. Towards the end I experienced changes in my body – better digestion, feeling lighter, and a completely different face. After the course was over, I was so present and aware of the stillness inside and I began experiencing being the watcher.

Marga, Italy

The first time I did *Who Is In?* I was quite shocked at how much garbage I had inside. It was quite strong but it was the beginning of a cleansing process during which I delved into meditation. The next time I did the course I was a little scared of what I would find now, but I was amazed how easy it was to get in touch with the essential parts of myself and how the garbage wasn't there anymore. It gave me great joy.

Dasi, Japan

In the beginning when I was asking myself who is in, so many things came up; the parts I knew and other parts of me that I didn't know. I was surprised since I was sure I knew myself. I stayed with the koan, and by the end of the process I felt I was no one because each time I was someone else. I feel like I found the key to who I am: I am no one but made up of so many faces.

Khushi, India

Who Is In? is quite an intensive course and I didn't realize that my mind would become obsessed with something as simple as food. However, after 24 hours, I was so deep into discovering who is in that I could easily go on. During the process, I had an experience of who's inside when I'm not identified with my body and mind. It was really strong, really beautiful and I have become aware of everything that happens inside – the koan is always with me.

Deva, USA

My experience with the process was the evening events. All my fears and judgments were magnified in those two hours. I walked out feeling that two hours is a good start but not enough and that the process would continue in me for a while. The following week I joined the evening event again. This time I jumped right in and after peeling away layers of conditioning and masks, I suddenly experienced it – I saw who was in. I felt a deep silence in me and I was overwhelmed by the simplicity of my discovery. I felt so much gratitude for the process, the facilitator, my partner, and most of all to myself.

I have become more relaxed, more receptive, not only to people but also to trees and flowers. I think that anyone who wants to live a life of joy, aliveness, and truth, should participate in *Who Is In?*

Nandan, what was your experience?

The first time I did *Who Is In?* I had a deep curiosity, a deep need to go inside and find out what was there. I loved the intensity of the process – a whole group of people on the same inner search. It was the beginning of a much deeper look at myself and my meditative process.

Two years later, I participated in the *Satori* retreat with many people I knew. It was more intense to expose myself and tell these friends how I was feeling. To be honest at the risk of losing friends helped me find my truth. I see koans like a spiral process. I start answering from the mind until it gets fed up and then I continue downwards until I hit the center. Once I hit the center I have to start again on the same koan because each moment everything is different, changing.



As an assistant, I could watch it from the outside and it clarified my awareness on how we go around in circles and how difficult it is say who we really are. It takes courage and trust, and watching from the outside brings me inside.

The process never stops. I feel deeply touched by the process of this interview because it's taking me again to the inside space and it connects me with what is happening in this moment outside and inside. Inside is a feeling of expansion, warmth and wonder. Deep down there is always the question of who is in now, especially when I am confused about something. The koan can pop up at any time. It's not something I drive from my mind; it comes from a deeper place.

Awareness Intensive Training – Centering Through Awareness

Dec 12 - Mar 1

First, as a participant in the Awareness Intensive courses, you can experience the powerful simplicity of the koans while going through your own process. Then, as staff-in-training, you learn the structures and techniques that support the participants to be total in their process.

You will receive individual coaching and supervision to gain confidence in giving feedback and direction to participants. This training includes additional courses which support the training process by providing further experiences to deepen your awareness.

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