

The Anatomy of a Spiritual Breakdown

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On the 15th August 2005, I was hanging up the phone after speaking to a business client when suddenly and for no reason I began crying and couldn't stop. As the crying continued a strong sensation of pins and needles and rushing water began to move up through my arms and legs and down through the top of my head. Within moments I felt as if I was under a grand waterfall, unable to move as the water pounded my body and beat me to the ground. The experience became so intense I ended up on the floor thinking that I was about to die from either a heart attack or a stroke.

The fear of death consumed me and all I could think about was how after all these years of living I was now going to die alone on the floor of my home. I couldn't move, and with what I thought were my last few moments, decided to begin chanting the words, 'thy will be done', over and over again. As the experience intensified, my body began to ache everywhere and it felt like every bone I had was about to break. I cried out in pain and began to roll around on the floor, my arms and legs now paralyzed from the force of the energy rushing through my body.

While crying, paralyzed and terrified, I crawled to the phone to call for help. It was almost impossible to dial the number but I eventually managed to reach my close friend who after a few moments told me that what was happening sounded more spiritual than medical. My hands became cramped and wouldn't work and as I dropped the phone along side my head I could here my friend's voice fading as the sensation of rushing water sent the noise of the linear world into the background.

Consumed with the fear of death I suddenly remembered a passage from the teachings of Zen Buddhism, 'all fear is illusion - walk straight ahead' and so with this in mind decided to trust and let go of everything in my life. I continued to pray and surrender to the experience; then like a set of falling dominos I let go of my life, my children, my business, my friends and all I had accomplished and not accomplished during my short stay on the planet. I was now ready to die and with this all fear vanished. Then just as quickly as the energy had consumed me, it disappeared taking with it all thought and a lifetime of internal dialogue. I was left in a state I can only describe as a living still silence and a peace beyond anything I could have ever imagined.

The world of opposites and time disappeared, movement slowed down and all things began to radiate and communicate the energy of all of life. Nothing had any more importance than anything else. There was no longer any hierarchy and everything was positioned exactly where it was supposed to be. All things were in a state of absolute perfection. There was nothing to do any more as a lifetime of desire and the need for accomplishment had fallen by the wayside. The noise of life moved into the background and peace, stillness and silence became my new reality.

The beauty of this state was so intense that I continued to cry almost every day for the next year while witnessing the absolute perfection of what I now know as the love of God. I remained in this state unable to function in normal life with even the smallest of tasks becoming cumbersome and difficult. There were long periods when I could not eat, wash, move or even speak. I lost weight, became unshaven and pale and my cloths wouldn't fit anymore.

After some time, I began taking walks. I managed to make my way down to the local supermarket where I would sit for hours on end looking at people going about their daily routine. One day, while walking through the bread section in isle seven, everything went into a profound state of perfection, each item exactly where it was supposed to be and everything radiating the energy of life. I had to be escorted out of the store in tears. It was like living in the temple of life. Everywhere I went radiated a sacred energy and all things communicating their presence and perfection to me.

I could see I was a part of everything and everything was a part of me. There was no longer any separation, just an all-ness that was part of a divine love. I would watch people walking down the street and it seemed as if they were sleeping, in some kind of trance. Why couldn't everyone else see and experience what I was seeing and experiencing?

I woke early one morning and sat on the edge of the bed. Then, in what seemed like a couple of seconds, I realized it was evening and time to go back to bed. When I did get up, walking was difficult. It felt like my body was a hundred years old and all my bones ached. Some days I would make it to the stairs and just stand there in a timeless dimension looking at the beauty of the woodwork in the railing. I would go for days without food; it never occurred to me to eat or in fact do anything as there were no thoughts going through my head any more. When your thinking disappears, you become very present to life and all its beauty; time vanishes and objects no longer have labels everything becomes beautiful. One day I managed to make it to the rubbish bins situated in a fenced-off section of the flats. As I opened the gate and walked in, I was struck by the beauty of the bins and all the rubbish around me. I stood there not wanting to leave, just soaking up the radiance of everything in view. I use to make it a habit after that to visit this area just to re-experience perfection.

Then after about a year of this, my mind began to return and with it came a lot of problems. It was like I had been abandoned by God, hung out to dry back in the world of thinking, formulating and suffering. My mind went into what seemed like an endless black hole of fear and terrifying thoughts. I would wake up at five in the morning crying and holding on to my six year-old daughter's stuffed teddy bear, in fear that some kind of monster was hiding under my bed waiting to ripe me to shreds. This fear continued to haunt me day in and day out for what seemed like forever. Every day I would awake into the same darkness as the day before, until death began to look like a smart option and the end to suffering. I felt completely and utterly alone in the world, like I was the only person left on the planet other than some evil black force

that was driving me insane. I would call the one or two people in the world that understood what was happening and weep and howl to them for hours on the phone, and then crawl back into my bed for another night of terror. I would wake up in the middle of the night with what felt like bolts of lightning shooting up my arms and paralyzing them, only to be followed by sessions of pins and needles that would have me jumping out of bed and begin shaking and walking around the flat in an attempt to make it all go away.

I had unbelievable cravings and would eat bags of sweets at a time, followed by what seemed like buckets of strong coffee in an attempt to try to feel and connect with my body, none of which ever worked. Then, just as it seemed like I couldn't go on, a miracle took place. One day I managed to get into London and found myself on a packed underground train, terrified and suicidal. Suddenly I felt someone hold my hand. As I looked down, I could see it was a little girl who, without realizing it, had taken my hand instead of her daddy's. It was like an angel had come to let me know everything was going to be all right and that even though it was my darkest hour, God was there letting me know it would pass. I now can see that the ego had become frightened of its own demise, with that coming all the darkness and the fear in a desperate attempt to hang on to its kingdom, while at the same time knowing it had lost the war and that it was only a matter of time before it was gone completely.

As time moved on, I began seeking support by looking on the Internet and asking if any people had experienced something similar - but with little luck. I went to other spiritual communities and spoke to people looking for someone who could relate to my experience, someone who could sit with me and say 'yes, I have been there and this is what you can expect and what you can do to manage your way to the integration of wholeness'. My sense of isolation and aloneness was unbearable at times and I thought I was never going to come out of the illusion of slipping into oblivion. Yet each day unknowingly brought me closer to living back in the world. Finally, after a year of darkness, I connected with people who had been through similar experiences and their love and support provided the ground for my journey back into the world.

I don't believe my story is unique. In fact, I think these openings are happening to people more and more as the consciousness of the world rises. The problem is that there is no spiritual after-care in the West for those going through these experiences. Most people, from what I can see, are either left to navigate the path alone or end up in medical care seeking support for what is a spiritual problem. Having said that, the medical system could be of great support, if coupled with knowledge of people moving through higher levels of consciousness.

I am now looking for ways to support others in their transformation and integration on the path to enlightenment. Please join me in creating a global conversation and system of support for those who are already here and for those who are yet to join us, by connecting with me at www.jcmac.net