

Wake Up Call #4a

The Test of Awakening

"The Color Test"

This next wake up call was the final test when I taught the guys in prison. I taught in both the women's and men's prison, but today we're with the men. I was with them for 3 months, 5 days a week, 6 hours a day. We bonded. We got very close. And we had a very high level of trust by the final test. Somewhere in the middle of the 3 months, they had already tested out on the math I taught them, so I had some freedom to color outside the lines a bit. So, I had a lot of fun.

So, their final test - and your wake up exercise right now is ... look at a color. When I did this at the prison, everyone in the room, except me, was completely confused, thinking, "How can this be a final test?" So, let's do it now, then I'll explain.

Ready? Look at a color in your environment, right now. Maybe it's a piece of your clothing. Maybe it's something on the desk or the wall - a color you like. Just, look around to find which one you're going to look at. And for a very short period of time - it does not have to be long - just look at it.

-pause-

And now ask this one simple question, "Does that color look better, the same, or worse than the last time you stopped to look at that color - not the object - the color?" It's a very good question, it turns out.

If you can now take this one step further, try to make your experience of the color become better - more beautiful. (Another

favorite version of this exercise is to do it with faces.) If you can change it, then you are the master of your destiny. You are actually commanding your presence. You are waking up right now. You're moving toward more wakefulness, not less. And this is always in your power. And I dare say, there is no situation where less wakefulness is better than more. No matter what's happening around you, you can always bring more presence to it and that always makes things get better.

So, now come into the prison with me and picture, there are guys who are about to be released after 5, 10, 15 years. They're going to join society again - back to family, friends, jobs. I said to them, "Will anything go worse if you can bring your presence more to the moment? Just look at a color or someone's face, or something you see every day, and just check yourself. How am I doing? How am I doing today? How am I doing right now? Oooh. I'm phoning it in - I'm falling asleep. Could you use this exercise to wake up there and then? If you do, won't that improve the relationship you have with the next person you talk to? Would your job go a little better? Would your homework go better in that junior college, so you can get a better job? What will go wrong? And how easy was that? And how much do we normally find ourselves falling asleep for long periods of time? Don't feel bad about how you may find that you are constantly sleep walking, rather, be grateful for the wake up call."

So, how can you do today's wake up exercise? I guess I'm saying that in order to wake up, you just wake up! But that's how it's done. I'm sorry - if there are any short cuts, tell me about it, because I never found them. All I know is that you just do it. You just do it.

Well, that's it. I'll see you in one of those tomorrows.

