



HELEN HAMILTON

## **Core Teachings 2 – self Inquiry**

Welcome to Satsang.

So we started on Monday's Satsang to kind of a three part Satsang and I wanted to take some time to look at basically the core of what we are learning here in Satsang, what we are coming to understand and most of all coming to experience. And the first part that was, what meditation really is, and perhaps more importantly what it isn't as well. We looked at that on Monday. The first part of this is already up on the YouTube channel.

Tonight I want to look at, do some self-inquiry to really look at what self-inquiry is. And again, perhaps more importantly as well what it isn't. And then Monday rather we will look at contemplation because these three really are the same thing, approached from a different angle. And either one of them or all of them will hopefully be experienced by you in a different way, in a much simpler way. I know for the purpose of tonight, self-inquiry was something that eluded me. It was a very difficult process. It just became the source of endless frustration and I really wanted to try tonight to simplify that and really to show you that it can be something extraordinarily beautiful, natural and simple. When we perhaps look at it with fresh eyes and come at it from an open place.

I'd like you to, whatever you know about self-inquiry just to forget that for this evening. And if you've done this with me before just to forget that too. And just come from the place where you haven't experienced this before, where it's new to you. And whenever you've read about self-inquiry in the past, the teachings, maybe just you know, set all of that aside for the purpose of this evening, this Satsang. See if we can experience something much more fundamental and simple in our experience.

So, self-inquiry is really the process of asking, inquiring, looking, and seeing as to what we really are. What is the visible part of us, our body, our mind, our emotions, our experiences, is really just the tip of an immense iceberg that is our real being. That is our real self. And self-inquiry can be a beautifully simple way to access that real self. And the clue really is in the title. Self-inquiry. Inquiry into what the self is. And it's not a thinking process. It's a direct looking and seeing. So it's a very simple thing when we actually experience it. It's an asking of the question and opening to all the different ways that, all the different answers that want to do that.

I want to explain a little bit about how I began to experience my own self-inquiry because hopefully that's a lot simpler than most of us have been trying to do it. It certainly was for me. Hopefully much more accessible. And then we will do some self-inquiry together.

So as human beings we are trained, conditioned, to ask a question and then to get a particular answer to that question. When we asked the most important question of all: What really am I? Or, what is reality? What is real? Both of which are going to take us to the same seeing. In our self-inquiry we have to let go of this idea that there is one final answer to that question, what really am I. One seeing, one epiphany, one aha moment, one understanding that is going to bring the whole thing to an end. Because there really isn't. There is only the question and the endless answers that can come to that question.

So in our inquiry we are not going to be looking for the right answer. This goes against our experience in many cases. We are looking for some final finish line where we experience something, we have some knowing, some understanding comes and we say okay, that's it now. But if we stop at any particular seeing or revelation with our inquiry then we are going to be missing out on something absolutely beautiful.

So we are not looking for the right answer, at all. And you know our mind will say, why are you actually doing it then if we're not going to find out what we are? If we aren't going to find a definitive answer. And that's really because truth is infinite. What is possible for us to experience in this moment is absolutely infinite. So, even if we did have some final cataclysmic seeing that what we are is vast and infinite, in the very next moment it is able to be experienced in an even greater way. So we are letting go in our inquiry of this definitive answer. And really the only answer we are going to come across is what we are right now in this moment. And that's going to be constantly changing on one level.

So, if we go to our inquiry, letting go of the search for the right answer. We are also going to let go of the wrong answer. The idea that there is a wrong answer. What if there is just many answers that we can experience to that question. What really am I actually. We are going to begin to include all the answers that are going to come in our seeing. So we are going to include answers that perhaps we wouldn't even have classed as answers. You know, if we ask this question what really am I, then anything that happens in our experience is going to be some form of an answer to this question.

If we ask this question, and just gently sit with it in our heart, with an openness to see any and all answers, we are going to experience different types of answers to this question. We are going to experience thoughts obviously. Our mind has many opinions about what we are and also opinions about what we aren't, what we should be and all of that. And then we are going to experience some emotions. Emotions are a kind of answer to this question as well. So, if we ask this question, what really am I, and some fear arises in response to that question, or some peace, then it is really life saying, you are these thoughts in this moment. You are also these emotions in this moment.

And we are going to also experience, actual experience these sensations, states, even deeper answers, we may experience some profound states, we may experience boredom in answer to that question, a sense of confusion, not understanding. All of that can be experienced and just allowed into our inquiry as a kind of answer. Any internal noise and any

external noise too. If a car drives past while I am asking this question, and I hear the noise from the car, that's the kind of answer too. It's not going to be excluded from this inquiry. So we are opening up really to all the ways that, all the answers that are present in this moment to the question, the deepest question perhaps of all. And as we are staying open with this question which we are going to experience in this moment.

Just the openness of the question itself is going to begin to change our experience. And letting go of this very human need to find the right answer, although it may appear that awakened beings have found the right answer to this question, what really am I? Actually what they are certain that they have found, is that they don't really know. And even if they do know, momentarily, appearing as all of this then that answer is going to change in the next moment. So, there is a deep and profound experience of not really knowing, and asking the question. Asking the question, what really am I? Is going to really kind of undo the idea that we already know, what we are sure of about ourselves. I'm sure that I'm not awakened yet. Or I'm sure that I am awakened yet. Or I'm sure that I'm confused, or lost, or suffering or whatever it is that's going on in our experience. So the question itself is more important than any particular answer. The question itself is going to allow you to experience a kind of openness, a kind of not knowing. A kind of actually wanting to look and see, a curiosity that's developing inside oneself, that perhaps we've closed off from as adults but we can begin to experience it again.

Self-inquiry then becomes this beautiful thing of just sitting with this question and allowing all the ways that life wants to answer. So nothing at all is excluded in that inquiry, in terms of what answers we are going to accept. If there is a noise outside where you are living, that is also an answer, if you have an emotion, a positive or a negative emotion, that is also an answer. If you were to experience an itch or a pain in your body, that's also a kind of answer to this question. And we are just not cutting ourselves up from any way that life wants to answer this question in this moment. We are going to be including everything that is possible to experience in our experience. Our experience of this movement is going to be the answer to that question. Our life is going to become the very lived experiential understanding of the answer.

And we are going to begin to experience the question itself as perhaps more important. The spirit of inquiry is more important than any answer that we could receive. So we are going to receive all these phenomenal answers, by that I mean answers that are coming and going, the thoughts, emotions, states of peace may come and go, confusion, clarity, bliss, fear, boredom. All of this, sounds outside, our environment, internal noise, a sense of energy morning, opening, relaxation in the body, the body itself, all of these are answers to this question. And if we just let go of this idea that there is a right or a wrong answer, or any particular answer is better than the others, but perhaps the phenomenal answers should go away, is something we can let go of. It's possible to experience the fullness of what we are even while there are thoughts and emotions present. We don't need to exclude anything at all. Just coming at our inquiry from this place of openness.

So if you want to join in with me now you are more than welcome to. To experience self-inquiry in its simplicity. You can keep your eyes open or closed, whatever you feel most comfortable with. And hopefully you are going to see how it really kind of dovetails into the meditation that we did on Monday. Just this openness to experience.

So just asking this question, whichever one you prefer. What is reality? Or what am I really? What am I actually? And just sitting gently with this question. Just a very soft gentle intention to find out, what really am I?

Of course one of the first answers, our body is present. That's a kind of answer. And as we are sitting with this question just allowing the question to reveal ever more answers. Again we are not looking for any particular answers. So our mind may say, well I am the self, or I am the ego, or I am this, that and the other. Or I am not the self yet. I'm not good enough, your mind may say all these kinds of things. And whatever arises in our mind we are just going to say thank you for that answer. We are not going to grab a hold of any answer in particular. We are not going to push anything away either. There is no right or wrong answer to this inquiry. What really am I actually. And maybe there is sound going on, maybe there are emotions arising. There might be a sense of something trying to figure it out how to do this. Again that's just a kind of answer. There might be something looking for a goal or an endpoint. We can just allow that to be another type of answer.

What does it feel like in your body when you just embrace the question, what really am I? What is real? What is actually real? What is reality? If some fear comes up, that's just another kind of answer. We don't need to push it away. Every answer that we can experience to this question is just as valid, just as welcome. We are not going to say that bliss is better than fear, or that peace is better than disturbance. We are just open to experience in this moment. All the ways that life wants to answer this question. All the ways that life wants to allow us to experience the fullness of what we are. So we are just allowing all these phenomenal answers to come. There might be some sensations in the body, some sense of opening. We might be aware of some tensions in the muscles somewhere. Might be itches or pain or shivering or you may feel hot. All of that is a different type of physical sensation, a type of answer.

Just sitting with this question, what really am I actually? Just a curiosity, I really would like to see what I actually am. And making no effort at all to make that happen. Just the question itself is doing the work for us in the inquiry. Just the wanting to see, gentle inquisitive curiosity. Just allowing whatever answer is coming for you right now. If there is a sense that, mind is saying, I don't know if I'm doing this right. Okay, thank you very much mind. It's just another answer. It's not the wrong answer and it's not the right answer. If a sense of peace arises, or a deep state, it's just another answer. And we are not going to grab a hold of anything or push anything away at all.

And then at some point... we are just allowing these phenomenal answers, there is going to be some recognition of something that isn't coming and going. Sometimes we experience it as just a blank empty space where there are no more thoughts or emotions coming, nothing seems to be happening. That's a kind of answer. Sometimes we might just feel a spaciousness, an emptiness, something that is just here. Or a deep silence in which all these other phenomenal answers are arising. And again, when this presents itself, this spaciousness, this not-a-thingness that we are, also, we are not going to grab a hold of that either and say that's the right answer. It's just another answer that's arising in this moment. There is a sense of peace, a sense of spaciousness, a silence or a stillness. And there is also all the phenomenal answers to this question. What really am I actually. And if we just

don't try to choose any particular answer, even this spaciousness that opens up, then we are going to find that this non-phenomenal answer just becomes more evident. Just kind of moves to the forefront. And maybe the phenomenal answers, thoughts and emotions, they're just kind of starting to quiet down on their own. We are not trying to make anything happen.

Again, just the openness of this question: What really am I, actually? Maybe there is so much more to experience when we keep including answers. We are not looking for the right answer and trying to eliminate anything from our experience right now. So i can hear the clock ticking, i can feel my body, I can hear these words. All of these are answers to this question. And there is a recognition of some spaciousness in which my body and the clock, all of this are appearing.

So our inquiry becomes this kind of open ended ever deepening experience of this moment, of ourself. All the ways that we are appearing, all the shapes and forms and names. And all the recognition of the formless spaciousness, the awareness that is in the background, moving to the foreground. And that spaciousness, that beingness may not feel amazing at first. It may feel like, just emptiness, like nothing is actually occurring there. It probably won't be all that exciting at first. Just allowing that to be present as an answer to this question. This is where self-inquiry can be something that we are just being rather than something that we are doing as a means to an end. Something that we are just experiencing, an ongoing, and even when our body is moving around and we are interacting with other beings, the phenomenal answers are changing. Other beings coming into our experience will be answers to this question. Other experiences, other physical locations will be answers. And there is a question, an openness that is really allowing us to dive deeper into the fullness of this moment.

What really am I actually. And whatever answer we experience, no matter how beautiful that may be we are fostering this kind of inquiry, this sense of curiosity. And never concluding that we've found the right answer. In fact, enjoying how it feels to just not know what you actually are, to be experiencing it directly. All the ways that you can appear, as all of this. And the empty spaciousness, intelligent sentience itself in which all this is appearing to be. We can never get to the end of this inquiry. We can only ever be experiencing a deepening of this inquiry.

And very soon you will fall in love with how it feels to be living as this question, living as this question mark. I don't really know and it's okay that I don't know. And it's okay to actually find out and experience. We don't have to form some final conclusion. Right now you are all the ways that you're appearing in your experience. Human body, thoughts, emotions, furniture in the room, the room itself, the place you're sitting in, these words, everyone else in this Satsang. And the spaciousness, formless awareness in which all this is appearing. The shapes you're taking will continue to change, continuously. And the formlessness in which those are arising will continuously be present. Recognizing how it feels in your body too when you're open to this question. What really am I actually. There is this phenomenal answers to this question, the coming and going answers, and then there is this moment in which the question is being asked, and the phenomenal answers are arising. This moment is a non-phenomenal answer. Formlessness appearing. Neither one of those is better. We are not saying even that the formlessness is the right answer or the better answer. We are just open to experience all of the answers to this question.

And naturally just the question itself, the spirit of curiosity and inquiry, is just allowing us to explore the deeper aspects of this moment, of this experience, of our real self. That maybe we've only ever suffered because we've been grabbing a hold of a couple of answers to this question, some thoughts or some emotions about ourself. There is so much more to explore, and we don't stop at any particular answer. No matter how beautiful or ugly we experience it to be.

But if there was no answer you could reject about yourself, no way that you say, I should not appear this way, I should not be that emotion, I should not be those thoughts, and it was just another way that you are appearing in this moment. That life is answering this question of what you actually are. Just living with this question gently, wherever you go, taking it with you, exploring all the ways that you can appear as you move through your experience, your life. Just letting go of the need to find the right answer to this question. There is only the right answer right now. And then that answer will change in the next moment. Is there any need then for a finish line? Or can your life be the experiential answer to this question. What really am I? What is real, actually?

After a while of falling in love with the question, the openness, the question, how it feels in your mind, in your body, in your emotions, to not know what you are, you fall in love with this. You won't even want to know. And that's what the awakened beings, the great beings of the past have done. They've just fallen in love with not knowing, and actually experiencing in this moment. And that also includes mind. It also includes emotions. It also includes experiences. It's inclusive of every single way that you are showing up in this moment already.

Self-inquiry then is just a very simple thing, asking this question and just noticing all the ways that we are receiving and answer that question. Not closing off to any particular way at all. What is it like to experience the fullness of this moment? And then to eventually, it becomes a habit to live from this question, from the openness, from the curiosity.

We can experience life in two ways. We can either experience our projections and assumptions about what is real, about what we are. Or we can actually experience ourself in this moment, all the ways that you are showing up phenomenally, that fullness, spaciousness, in which all of that is appearing. One is constantly changing answers, the other is always the same. They really are the same one, viewed two different ways.

Self-inquiry then is no longer something we are trying to do to get to a final answer, but it can become an ongoing inquiry. An ever deepening experience of reality. A never getting to the end, and never assuming or concluding that I know now what I am. Of course you'll have those epiphanies, those revelations, those aha moments, deeper seeings. The very next moment there is an even better answer waiting, and even higher, even deeper experience of this moment. No matter how beautiful your experience becomes you can always experience more.

It becomes a way of being rather than something we're doing. It becomes a looking, and a seeing, and an experiencing rather than a trying to figure out. And instead of trying to remove things from our experience and go straight to the formlessness, we can just include all the phenomenal answers, not rejecting any particular one. Naturally in doing so that

openness will make the formlessness evident, the awareness, the beingness, the consciousness, the presence that you really are.

I hope you've enjoyed this exploration into what self-inquiry can actually be. And maybe you are changing your mind about how beautiful a thing it can be. And really there is no difference between meditation and self-inquiry. Self-inquiry becomes a kind of meditation on reality, on reality of the self, of what I am.

Whichever way, through meditation or self-inquiry, or contemplation as we will do in the next Satsang, it takes us to this thing, open space of consciousness, reality, and all the ways that reality, that you are appearing to be. All the things that you are appearing as, all the shapes that you are making.

If you just fall in love with the question, more than any particular answer, you are going to have a very different experience of life than most human beings. You are going to be experiencing life on a much more profound, intimate level than human beings can.

I'd really like you to make friends with self-inquiry again. And to experience it's beautiful simplicity. And I hope that you've experienced that with me today.

Okay, so I'll open it up for questions if anyone wants to share or ask a question you can click on the participants section on the bottom of the screen and click at the bottom of that section there is an option to raise your hand if you want to share something or ask a question. While we are waiting for those questions, just see even with your eyes open you can maintain this spirit of inquiry, this openness, and maybe even while you're asking a question or listening to an answer, to a dialogue that comes after this. We will start with S..

S: Hi Helen.

Helen: Hi, how are you?

S: I'm great thank you. The question is, if with self-inquiry we are open to everything, and that's what we are, that in every moment, how... then all the unwanted beliefs then I am that too.

Helen: Yes.

S: How can I work out to get away or dissolve those beliefs that I don't want.

Helen: That's a really good question. If I'm open to all of these answers, how am I going to move beyond these beliefs that are kind of limiting my experience. But if you can recognize that with the openness of the question, naturally the formlessness that is our deepest experience of self, is going to become more and more evident. And appear faster every time we ask this question. Appear is the wrong word because it's always here. But we are going to notice it. And, if we take the stance of the formlessness which isn't trying to reject anything. It's not even saying, look over here I'm the formlessness, I'm better than the forms. If we take that stance with our inquiry, that openness then what begins to occur is, the answers that we're getting phenomenally, the thoughts, the emotions, the experiences

are going to be, begin to change, they are going to become more pleasant by just by being open. And the thoughts, the quality of the thoughts, the frequency of the thoughts, the frequency of the emotions is going to get more and more positive, not by trying to change them but by our openness. Naturally the manifestation is always increasing, always becoming lighter, always becoming more.

So if we just allow whatever thoughts that are coming to arise as answers to this question, then at some point we'll realize that those thoughts have disappeared. Our attention, what's coming to the foreground of our attention is the answer that is the real self, the silence, the stillness. And as we take attention off, the reason these thoughts perpetuate these beliefs is because we've been accepting them as the only answer. If I ask what really am I, and I get a sense of unworthiness or something like that, the feeling that I'm not good enough, before we might have grabbed a hold of that and really felt that that was true, and therefore keep experiencing it. But if we go okay, that's just one answer to this question, and I don't have to stop and accept that that's the only thing that's possible in this moment, and ask and if there are any other answers as well, we are going to kind of be drawn deeper into our experience. Can you get a sense of it?

S: Yes, that helps very much. Thank you.

Helen: Very good question. Okay, M.

M: Hi.

Helen: Hi, how are you doing? Good to see you again.

M: Good to see you. My question was, when I was doing the inquiry, I also was, or I felt led to do the "what's happening now" or "what's arising", kind of the same thing, and the deeper I started getting into it, I just felt a deepening but also kind of like a detachment, in the sense of a, but then at the same time a wanting to fall asleep, or also kind of like a no, no. A very negative type of thing, like it did not want that. Is that something that is, I don't quite understand. I don't know if that's something that's normal.

Helen: It's very common. Something inside us has been holding, hasn't it, something very deeply holding on, trying to control our experience. And usually by the time we end up in Satsang, you know, this also has been trying really hard to find the right answer, you know. It's really certain there is a right answer. So we kind of experience this opening up and letting go it's kind of antithesis to what this egoic energy is trying to do. It's trying to get somewhere, to arrive at somewhere. Instead we are kind of experiencing that we are already able to find that right now in this moment. So something, inside of me it was very much kind of falling in love with this question, but also there was this very big knot in my stomach that said no, this is not good to open up like this, it's just not. Something felt very exposed, very vulnerable, there is this kind of little, actually quite big ball of tension somewhere inside, you know, that was very much saying no to the experience. Is that kind of what you've experienced?

M: Yes, pretty much. There was a little bit of fear that was rising up as well. Kind of like a, I don't know what's happening here.



Helen: It's just that part of us that's trying to get somewhere, you know, that's trying to experience something, to arrive at a conclusion. If we can just treat this, kind of this tension, this no-ness, as just another answer, it's just another way that this question is being answered in this moment. And we are just totally allowing it to be. If we look at the formlessness, the emptiness, whatever we want to call it, it doesn't reject anything at all. Even this no that's quite powerfully asserting itself. We can allow that to completely exist. And when it's just allowed to arise, and we're not in opposition to it, we are just allowing it to arise fully, then it will begin to relax on its own. It will begin to open up on its own.

The fear is this idea that our mind has that at some point the awareness, the formlessness is going to make this let go. It's going to force it to let go. But when it's just allowed to arise and be there for as long as it wants to be there, it kind of starts to relax on it's own when it realizes that, somehow our mind has got this idea that the self is this big bully that is going to come in and smash it or something, force it into a thousand pieces. And it really is the opposite of that isn't it? It just loves it completely. Okay, if you want to say no, you say no. You can totally be that no in this moment, and the fear, whichever way it's arising. It will dissolve that on it's own in it's own time. We don't need it to, to go away, to experience the peace. It's just another answer and we can stay open. There has been this idea that we are going to have to get rid of this before we can experience peace, and it's just not true. It can just be allowed to be there.

For me it was there for quite some time. I don't know, maybe six to twelve months. This ever deepening peace, love and joy. And right in the center of [inaudible] was this fist going no, you can't make me let go. I don't want to. But it was just loved more and more and more, and eventually it just kind of ran out of steam. And must have disintegrated at some point when I wasn't looking, you know. I hope that helps. It's a very common experience. Very common.

M: Thank you very much. Thank you.

Helen: Good question, lovely. Okay G. We'll go to G.

G: Hi Helen, hi every one.

Helen: Hi, how are you?

G: I'm alright thank you. How are you?

Helen: Yes.

G: So just yeah, just a question. It's quite timely Satsang tonight because I've been thinking even more about more realizations really, a deepening a suppose, is the best way to describe it, a clearer seeing that you know, there might have been certain areas in my life in which I thought that [inaudible] being right, even if it was more subtle, but I kind of realized more and more recently that whatever answers come up, even if this ego believes it's still just as valid an answer, or just as valid because it's here, it's there, it's itself. But with that as well I've been thinking about, there have still been emotions coming up, hopefully not as

strong as what they used to be, but you know still sometimes coming up, and then, and then mind thinks, so the part of me that's kind of just been recognizing those when they come up, and if ego gets swept, you know involved for a little while, then realize and question, it's not really true... but a part of me is also wondering when... probably getting confused with itself really, is there, when do you know not to question? Do you see what I mean? Or when do you kind of just think, oh well you know the emotions, I see the emotions come up and I think, okay, yeah, I've looked at that. But then a part of me thinks, oh do you really maybe need to question this a bit more?

Helen: Well is it still troubling you? Is it still showing up, it's showing in the emotional form? Is it showing up as something happening in your life still? Is it causing... because the emotion can just arise as an answer. You know, in this moment. It's what we kind of do with that emotion, isn't it? Are we contracting around it and really getting involved with it? Or are we just allowing it, is it just another thing that's arising in this moment. You know, if we are kind of fixating on it, feeling that contraction and losing the sense of the openness, the questioning, then probably we need to inquire into that a little bit. You know, do contemplation or something that we'll do next Monday. Asking, you know, looking at that in itself. Or it can just become a place where we recognize, have a tendency to close up, when this answer comes something grabs a hold of it. When this emotion or that thought or this being arrives in my experience, I tend to contract. Just to notice that's going on, we can go back to the question, okay, that's just an answer. Are there any more answers? What else is there to experience in this moment?

G: Right.

Helen: What's worth questioning again, through contemplation is to really look at what's happening when the emotion arises. It's not the emotion per say is it? It's what are we doing with it? Are we going into some relationship with it? Saying it means.. Or you know...

G: It means something. Yeah, I don't know any more to be honest.

Helen: That's okay, that's great. See if you can, next time that emotion arises, it can just be another way you're showing up in this moment. And it doesn't matter whether it's there or not. It doesn't matter if it's got another label in the mind to peace, or something. It's just another way. The peace comes from not contracting around any particular answer, not saying this is the most important answer.

G: Right, I get that, yeah.

Helen: You zoom in around this emotion, let's say it's fear, or something, you'll seem to lose the peace on all the other answers because you are really only looking at this one, going this is the most important answer in this moment.

G: And can that be the same for like, physical sensations and stuff?

Helen: Yeah, those ones, physical pain, all that is something that our attention goes to and perhaps we may have to practice opening up, staying open to other answers as well in that area, with physical things. We all have our favorite, not as in we like them the best, but

favorite thoughts, emotions and things going on in our life that we seem to contract around. It's the most important answer in this moment, we pick it up and say this is relevant. That's just where our karma lays. So we're just kind of looking at, do I have to automatically grab a hold of that one answer when it arises or can I just learn to let it arise and give it no more meaning than any other answer in that moment.

G: Okay thank you.

Helen: Good stuff, good good. I?

I: Hello.

Helen: Hi, how are you doing?

I: I'm alright. Are you alright?

Helen: I am alright thank you.

I: I was just... out of the three things, meditation, contemplation and self-inquiry, when you started talking I realized I do self-inquiry probably the least out of them three things. And, I was a little bit surprised when you first started talking, [inaudible] kind of thing, there was quite a contraction, kind of like, ughhh kind of feeling. It kind of surprised me a little bit.

Helen: Something inside goes, oh my god self-inquiry, no! Can't do it.

I: I don't know why I have this kind of... because I only ever came across the term self-inquiry through you really. So I haven't really got any baggage about it. And yet of the three of them it's the one that really kind of stir things up a bit. And funnily enough, as we progressed, it didn't take that long, oh it's just, it's really just the same as meditation.

Helen: Yeah.

I: And it really started to kind of really sink in that it's the same, feeling in the body was the same and all this kind of stuff, and I just thought, do you think, do you think I should just do a little bit more self-inquiry to kind of like knock it on the head kind of thing [inaudible] and kind of, come to peace with it kind of thing?

Helen: If you can see that they are both leading to the same place. Meditation, we start off really by noticing, in the meditation that we did on Monday, there are all kinds of different ways obviously, but you start off by looking at what's in the background of our experience, what's constant, what's not changing, and whichever way we have to recognize that, call it awareness, silence, stillness, peace. Self-inquiry is a kind of meditation then on everything that is present in your experience and that space in which experience is arising, you know, the real self. So, they are going to lead to the same place anyway. Some people find it easier to include everything we are experiencing in this moment, which then naturally leads to an awareness of the awareness in which it's all being seen. Some people find it easier to kind of, okay not this, not this, not this, let me just look at the non-phenomenal aspect, the silence, the stillness, the peace. So it's, only you know, it's a really long way to say I don't

know the answer to this question. Only you know whether you are avoiding self-inquiry from a place of resistance, or whether it's just not your thing and you prefer meditation. What I would say, as a caveat is, is if you are not getting back to that silent space of awareness, to the noumenon, to the real self, either through meditation or inquiry, that's what really needs to be looked at. How we arrive at that is really, you know we can get there through contemplation as well. There is no difference really.

I: Because I did actually feel very much like meditation, after about five or ten minutes of you talking, kept with the question, I was getting a lot of like thoughts flying around and emotions coming up. But as I stayed with it, kind of worked through it eventually, it just felt like, just like a meditation. It was really good. I really enjoyed it.

Helen: It's really, all we are practicing really is not grabbing any particular answer, any phenomenal answer. By doing that, by not doing that, we are not looking for the right or wrong answer, we are naturally taking the position of the formlessness which isn't able to grab or, it's not doing this constantly, it's just kind of like this [gestures hands open to receive]. So it's just by, different way in but ending up at the same place. Which hopefully you'll experience with the contemplation, well, already have experienced with the contemplation as well. I just say like, just have a look inside and see if it's a little bit of resistance or, no this is.... I prefer meditation. Or maybe it's a bit of both of those.

I: Okay. That's great. Thanks Helen.

Helen: Okay, great stuff. Okay. We will leave it there for this evening then. Thank you. Namaste.