



HELEN HAMILTON

### **DTE July 21 - Lesson 1 - P2**

Helen 0:02

Okay, so we've got some hands up already.

So we'll go to Tom first, when you're ready. You're still muted there Tom.

Hello, there we go. Lovely

### **Tom - 0:45**

Okay, I can see you and hear. I've been meditating for some years on and off, and I'm stuck on a technique that I can't get out of. Whenever I drift, I go back to my breathing. I try to listen to the silence instead, but I can't just get rid of "Go-back-to-your-breathing". It's so stuck that I can't get rid of that technique.

Helen

It's okay. Let's say you notice your attention has wandered, and that there's some thought or something. And there's a very well-grooved habit to go back to the breathing as a way to recenter yourself. That's okay, isn't it. And it's just like any other habit that it can be turned around. So if you notice the breathing, then you can notice that you're noticing. You can be aware that you're aware of the breathing. So I'm aware of the breathing and now I'm aware that there's Awareness. Or that that breathing is happening in the Stillness; the movement of the breathing is happening. We just treat the breathing as any other phenomenon for the sake of this practice. It's no different than a thought or an emotion. It's just where attention has habitually learned to go to. And it's a karma phenomenon to look at the mind, isn't it?

Tom

So I treat the breathing as another phenomenon.

Helen

Yeah. And then you can say, 'I'm noticing the breathing.' There's awareness of it. There I

am, I've just noticed I've been aware of Awareness, right there. Very, very simple.

Tom

Yeah. Okay. Another question is, when I get in touch with the Noumenon, you often say you get peace and love. But I just get that it's obviously true that I'm everything there is. I'm the world and the world is me. But instead of feeling peace and love, I think Yeah, well, it's obviously true. So what! I'm missing the goodies here somehow.

Helen

it's very normal. When I first heard the silence, it didn't feel magical. it didn't feel blissful. In fact, it felt boring, if I'm honest. Okay, silence, so what! It wasn't a big deal; there were no angels, no fanfares, no trumpets. Certainly no bliss!

Tom

I get the 'So what! Yeah, I've seen this; big deal!'

Helen

Yeah. It's a very subtle defense mechanism of mind. Mind takes a snapshot of the Self and says 'Silence okay, Silence; it's nothing amazing'. But if we can tune into the Noumenon, just because it's what's true. If we don't need anything else out of it in that moment; let me just listen to the Silence, because it's here. Or let me just recognize Awareness because it's here. And because it's true, it's what's permanent about me, even if I hadn't realized that experientially yet. If you let that be enough in that moment, mind is kind of listening to the Silence; it's got its checklist, hasn't it? There's no peace, there's no bliss, there's none of these things that have been promised. 'And I'm not going to like the Silence', says mind, 'until I can check all these boxes'.

But really, that will start to happen as you relax into the Silence or whichever method we're using; just because it's what's here right now and just because you can't suffer when you're listening to Silence. When you're listening to thoughts we'll suffer. When you're listening to Silence, we won't be able to. Those thoughts might still be there, but we can't entertain them, personally as a separate being, when we're listening to Silence.

So if you let that be enough for now and content to experience the Self, the Noumenon, however it's appearing for me right now. And for a lot of beings, myself included, it was very normal, almost 'So you know, silence...!' And I stuck with it because I couldn't suffer there and I was just so desperate to come out of suffering. It was a lifeboat. So, as you just stick with it, it will deepen, it will reveal itself to be something so much more amazing. But here is again a place where mind is trying to say 'this isn't the Self, this is just boring'. This is the Self over here when it looks like this. But the Self is right here right now as this Silence that feels boring, or whatever we're feeling we're noticing.

Tom

And treat breathing as another phenomenon?

Helen

Yeah. Really we could divide Reality into two categories: everything is either a phenomenon, or the Noumenon, in a very simple way for terms of meditation. Does that help?

Tom

Yeah. Thank you very much.

Helen

Good. Nice to talk to you. Okay.

Hi Gabriel.

### **Gabriel - 6:30**

Good to talk to you again. Thank you. So my question is more related to a tendency. I don't want to start the course with this strong tendency of doing. There is like a kind of a harshness and inflexibility for this awakening process. I can feel sometimes a little, it's really heavy. And it's like, you need to practice more, you need to sit more, you need to do more. I feel really safe when I am in meditation. Like, when I sit to meditate, I feel safe. I feel really peaceful and that kind of openness is there. I'm not afraid of anything. It's just so good that when I go to the work so to speak, there is this contrast, because it seems really different from the experience from the meditation. So there is kind of an addiction, like, I need to be more in meditation, because it's so much better somehow. Do you have any tips?

Helen 7:38

What is that 'more' I need: to be more in meditation? Does it mean more time? Does it mean more effort now? Or does it mean something else? Could it be 'Let me be more with this energy'; something within us is trying to get somewhere, isn't it? Ego is desperately trying to get this awakening thing? It thinks by throwing a tremendous amount of effort at it, that that's the way to do it. If it isn't working, then it's because we're not doing enough effort or trying hard enough or something. So for me, this being more with this, more in meditation really meant, 'can I love this energy more', this egoic striving?

When I looked at it, I had this strong idea that to experience the silence of peace, the bliss, all of that, I had to get rid of this striving. But it's impossible to do that. It will melt away on its own and it is already doing that as we love it. How do we love something that's noisy, that's doing its thing? It's by understanding it, because ego is trying to get to some future point to where there is peace in the future. If I do this practice, I'll get to this thing called Awakening. If we come to understand that it cannot see that the Noumenon is already here and that you are already it, then as you start to understand ego more, you start fighting it less.

What if the egoic ball of struggle and suffering was just a phenomenon appearing inside the contextual field? Or it was just a noise happening in the background? As you know,

in the foreground, the background is the silence. What if you just treat it like another phenomenon? Every now and again it pops its hand out and goes, 'you're not doing enough' or whatever it says 'You're not working hard enough'. 'You're never gonna get there'. You know, something like that.

Gabriel

You're right when you say that it's just another phenomenon. I can relate to that because I think since it's spiritual-related to awakening this ego tendency, I give more credit to it somehow because it's coming from a spiritual voice that is, you know...

Helen 10:09

Because it's trying to get Awakening rather than a new car or something, right, we give it this kind of.... But noticing that Awakening is not in a future. It's Now. The Noumenon, the Self is always here Now. And also recognizing that ego is never going to understand that. It's always going to be trying to go deeper, further, better. And that's not wrong, but it's not going to work for the purpose of recognizing what's already here.

So if you were to pick up a reference book about how to speak Greek, for example, and you wanted to learn Italian, you wouldn't shout at this Greek book going, 'you are so wrong, this is not what I asked for, go away', you just go, that's the wrong book. And you'd leave it be, wouldn't you? So you can treat your ego a little bit like this. That kind of struggling and striving works for worldly goals, but it's not going to work here. But that doesn't mean we have to push against it. You can kind of just go 'there is again doing its thing and I'm aware of it'. Oh, there, I'm aware of Awareness. Or it's making all this movement and I can notice that against the stillness. There's a contrasting stillness, that the Self is effortlessly here that isn't trying to get one up on the next moment.

Gabriel

I like this approach of just also loving it somehow and in a more compassionate way.

Helen 11:40

The Self always wants to understand 'Why is ego the way it is? Why is it doing what it does? What's the purpose of it?' Is that going to work Here, Now, for this? Whereas ego is judging itself going, 'you are wrong, you are bad, you should go away'. The Self is incapable of rejecting anything, especially ego. it just goes 'there, there' and pats it on the head and says, 'you do what you want to do' and I'm just going to sit here and be the silence.

Gabriel

I think that from everything that you said, what really resonates is seeing it as just another phenomenon. And even using it like, 'I am aware of that, I am aware of this tendency'. Let me use it like that.

Helen

You can use any phenomenon to bring you back. When you see a phenomenon, whatever it is, it must be the Awareness, the Noumenon that is looking at it. Even this egoic fuzzball of stress is tangled energy.

Gabriel

Next time that I feel that this ego wants to awaken so desperately, I can say 'Yes, thank you, my friend. I'm aware of that', as a reminder.

Helen

If I paid attention to it now, mine would still be doing that: "You should be the best awakened being you could ever be", "the best one that's ever been", you know, it's trying to do that thing it does.

Gabriel

Exactly. Thank you. I'm feeling lighter.

Helen 13:05

Good, good. Lovely.

Okay, **Julie**, when you're ready.

**Julie - 13:12**

Hi, Helen. Thank you. It's the first time we meet.

Helen

Lovely to talk to you.

Julie

I've been going through some stuff lately. I never meditate. Not once in my life, I was never able to meditate. So this awakening came upon me and I don't know how.

Helen

It comes whether you're ready for it or not, doesn't it? Something changes? Yeah.

Julie

Yeah. And so I kind of go about my day, in the Now, aware of the presence, while things are going on around me, and I get stuck in some thinking and then bring it back all day long. Should I meditate? Would it help?

Helen 14:02

I think it's good, it's great that you're doing that and I think it would also be good to set aside 20 minutes a day because there will be times if you're doing it out and about, I mean, yes, you can do that as well also, but if you're doing your food shopping, you're not going to catch a couple of times when attention has wandered.

So it's good to have that 20 minutes, where your phones on silent, the doors are closed, just so you can really sort of come to watch attention jumping to thoughts back all the time. It's just an opportunity to bring it back into consciously building a new habit. But it shouldn't be any more stressful or struggle than what you're doing. You know, you're just

sitting there, where you're out and about, sitting there in meditation, there's the presence, and then two minutes later, you realize you've been listening to thoughts for the last two minutes - okay, just bring it back to the present.

Julie

Okay, and there's something that's been going on lately. I wake up during the night, and I can't sleep.

Helen

We have this ongoing joke, this 4am satsang, or sometimes it's a 2am satsang, where you wake up, and your mind is just going.

Julie

The thought is: 'it's here!' 'I should... there's something that I'm missing', and it gets like, when you mentioned the Noumenon in the form of Awareness and the question 'Can the observer be observed?' It's going through my mind. I don't know if I'm getting off track; it's like the answer's yes, yes, but I cannot get it. I don't get it, and it's right here now it's not somewhere, is it? I just rest, resting down.

Helen 16:07

When that's happening, again, if you have a more compassionate understanding of ego: it's finally really interested in this 'awakening thing' too, you know; it's trying to get on board, it's trying to figure it out. And for me, there was a tremendous sense that 'there's something much better than this, that I can't quite' - you know, this being my normal everyday experience at the time - 'I can't quite get myself', you know. So the way to get to that is by recognizing right now how it's showing up.

So you're laying there in bed at 2am and mind is doing its thing. Can you just notice that you're aware of that? That might seem like a ridiculously simple thing to do, but it is atomically powerful. Whatever is going on in my mind, I'm aware of it, I'm noticing it, and then you can see hopefully that you can meditate even while that's going on, even while that noise is going on. You can meditate in that. It gets you off the hook of being in there. Because something's going to try to go, isn't it? Something's trying to do, and all you've got to do is just notice that. I'm just noticing that there's Awareness also, not trying to change that. Of course, we want Reality, of course, we want the Noumenon, of course, we want to experience that. What's the most direct way now? It's to look at how it's showing up for you right now in this moment. And as we said before, it might not feel amazing, it might feel boring, it might feel dull, it might feel unimportant.

Julie

It's the only way I can go back to sleep.

Helen 17:58

Yeah, and that's okay, isn't it? I used to, there was this frantic frantic energy because suddenly, awakening was the only thing that mattered and I had to, had to, and I could not live another day like that, you know, so I had to keep bringing those stampeding

horses back to 'What's here right now', 'What's here right now'. Off it goes again: 'What's here right now', which is just your attention, isn't it? What's it looking at?

In any moment, to keep this really simple, you've only got one choice, and that is where your attention is in any moment. It's either on the phenomenon or it's on the Noumenon. Okay, and that seems too simple for mind, but it is extraordinarily effective and it will just begin to dissipate this got-to-get-there-ness.

Julie

Because I am...like, if someone is angry, it just goes through, and I stay present, and it's not as it was before, like they are energy. But during the night, it's not. It's coming from the inside, not from outside.

Helen 19:29

So, if you can, again, understand that for me, the desire for awakening was the most powerful one I've ever had. And yes, it superseded everything else eventually. And that's okay, isn't it?

Of course, you're going to want this, of course, you're going to want this, especially once you've tasted it as well. You're going to want it even more then, and then when you taste it more and more, you're going to want it all the time then, and then you're going to want it effortlessly, you know, so this desire is going to evolve as you deepen into your seeing. And it becomes a very strong thing. But what we do in response to that desire is going to change; instead of striving and struggling now, to try to get to some future place where I will be awakened, we're going to sort of redirect, okay: What is here right now? That must be enough, if I look at it right now, it must be enough for me if I come back to that.

Julie

Yeah, the experience I had was, I spent about two months in a blissful state.

Helen 20:39

So of course, your desire is going to be massive to live like that. It's insane to think anything else, isn't it? You've had this 'try before you buy' and of course, something says, 'Yes, please, I want that effortlessly', and I want that all the time, I don't want it to be an effort and I want it permanently.

Julie

I especially don't want to screw it up.

Helen

Well here's the good news - there's some good news - that you can't screw it up okay? Because whether you've realized or not, you are already That, the Self, so it is waking up to Itself. And there never was a separate being that could screw it up. That was really helpful for me to figure that out.

All we're doing in this course, is speeding it up and working with it more consciously. So it's not an 'if', it's not even a 'when' because a 'when' would be a future, okay, it's a 'every day I'm clearer', 'every day, I'm clearer and living more and more authentically as the Self', every day a little bit more authentic. And that's never going to stop.

Julie

In real life it seems not sometimes.

Helen 21:55

Yeah. okay. There's still something within me that wants to go deeper. I have somehow thought that that would disappear, this drive, this obsession, but it's actually intensified now, but I don't fight it, don't fight at all. And it's our love of truth, isn't it? That's what that fire is: I have to know this, I have to. I have to, have to, you know, but that is doing its work in that it's giving you the the conviction, the consistency to be consistent in your practice.

All of that, right? But the 'ifs' and the 'whens', you have to kind of let go of them. Just every day, let that be equal. Every day, a little bit more time spent as the Self. If you just do that; that's still happening for me, that deepening the body and mind is still experiencing a deepening every day. That's never going to stop. Right until the body's gone. And everyday just clearer and clearer and clearer and deeper and deeper and deeper. And that goes on forever.

Julie

Because I start to look everywhere, 'Is it that?', 'is it that?' Oh, this happened!' And is it normal when I listen to the silence that I hear some ringing?

Helen 23:23

The ringing is a very subtle phenomenon of sound. We get lots of questions about this. It's not actually the silence. But you can hear in the silence can't you; this very subtle vibration sound that some people hear as a ringing. Sometimes for me it was very high pitched whine for a while in my ear, then it would swap ears. And as you start to notice the Noumenon it allows much more life-force into the body, and much more energy into the body, and the body will deal with that energy in a certain way. Sometimes you feel it as a vibration or as a sound, sometimes it's heat. Sometimes you might find yourself dancing or doing some yoga or laughing or yawning or something. But it shows up in all kinds of different ways.

Julie

I see some stuff vibrating in my eyes, I look at the tree and it's vibrating. Is it normal?

Helen 24:22

Yep, absolutely normal. Weird, but normal. Senses can see a lot more than we realize they can and you might start to experience that as you kind of get clearer in your seeing of what you really are. That everything really - we'll look at it in lesson four - none of this is solid, actually, it's all vibration moving on the surface of the ocean of the stillness, it's vibrating. Sometimes you can see that with your physical eyes.

Some people see things like that, it's okay, that's cool, yeah, a sign that I'm on the right track. Mind will be fascinated with it, won't it? Because it goes, 'Ooh, what does that mean? I'm getting somewhere!' And it's fun, it's fun too. But at the end of the day, even that is a subtle phenomenon of vibration, we can see it moving, we can see it changing. It's not bad or wrong. It's just 'even this I can see'.

Julie

Again, it's a phenomena. Not any use to concentrate on, like 'Oh, I get it! Now I see the vibration!'

Helen 25:39

It's a useful sign, isn't it? If you're setting off from Leeds and traveling 200 miles to London, South of England and you saw a signpost saying, 'instead of 200 miles now it's only 100'. That's a useful sign. I'm on the right track, and I'm getting closer. But you wouldn't stand there looking at the sign: like 'This is a really cool sign, you know!'

Julie

Okay, thank you. Thank you.

Helen

Good. Lovely. Good to talk to you.

Okay - Melissa.

**Melissa - 26:12**

Hi, Helen.

Helen: Hi, how you doing?

Melissa: Good. How are you?

Helen: I'm good, good, thank you.

**Melissa 26:15**

You said thinking is not the same as noticing. And what I realized a day or two ago is that I felt disconnected from the Self for quite some time, and I realized that I have been spending time thinking about it. And thinking can be really overt. But what's been happening for me, is really subtle. So I'm realizing that, "Oh, I've been thinking about it." Can you speak to thinking versus noticing, so I can get a clear (understanding).

Helen 27:00

When you start to have a seeing, as you did in the last course, then things really start to happen for you. And then mind is going to get really excited and start to try to fit what you're seeing into its paradigm of Reality. (Mind says) I'm getting somewhere and something's happening. And then of course the other side of that coin, (mind says)

"Nothing's happening, I'm stuck again now, Where is it all gone? I've lost it." ...all the other side of the thinking about it. But it's not one or the other.

Again, the phenomena of thoughts are appearing inside the field, the Noumenon. So I can notice that I'm thinking about it, and I can notice that my attention has gone to it. And then I can notice that I'm noticing that I'm tuning in again. And it's kind of a subtle and tempting trap, to think about the Self as you're making progress, because those thoughts about the Self feel so much nicer than "I don't have enough money", or "When am I going to make up with my ex?" or whatever it is that we're thinking about. This thought that says, "I recognized myself so much clearer yesterday", Wow, that feels really nice, because those (thoughts) are kind of addictive aren't they. So subtly we realize, I've completely been paying attention to thoughts again. And it's okay. Your body will tell you though whether you're focused on the Noumenon or the phenomena. It never lies ever. So even if I'm thinking some lovely thoughts, my body will be less relaxed, than when I'm just listening to the silence. It costs energy to pay attention to phenomena, to thoughts, especially. And then we'll begin to feel the emotions.

So you'll notice this, I'm going in the right direction, then I take a detour and then I have to come back. Then the next detour is not quite as long and I come back and am course-correcting all the time. And just don't beat yourself up over that.

It's helpful every now and again to ask, "What's my attention on right now?" Just asking that question, when I remembered to ask it, would bring me back to where I was supposed to be looking at. And then every time I hear thoughts, yes some thoughts... there's nothing wrong with that, it's gonna happen, especially as the thoughts get more exciting. But just notice that and bring it back when you recognize, and less and less will it happen. The mind has just been our go-to method, our reference library hasn't it, for so long. The first thing we do is run to it and ask it what do you think about this?

Melissa

Yes, running to it (the mind) without being aware that we're running to it and it's just constantly...

Helen

You sit in a library with all these books going, "How did I get here? Let me go back out again." What would the Self say about that, if it could? - "No big deal. No big deal, nothing's gone wrong. I'll just go back out again."

Melissa: Thank you.

Helen: Yeah lovely,

Helen

Okay, Joyce when you're ready? Can you hear us Joyce?

## Joyce - 30:30

Oh hi

Helen: There we go. It's okay.

Joyce

I forgot what I was gonna ask because I think you've been answering.

Helen: That's okay.

Joyce

Since the last course, my first one, my environment has changed. And I'm extremely grateful for it. I am now physically, in a environment that is extremely beautiful and silent and peaceful, as opposed to a city street. And so when I'm out, going for a walk, (or whatever my initial question had been), and...I was listening to one of the questioners that it was obvious to them that the Silence and the Space, they are That, and, I don't get the sense of me being That. My being kind of drinks it in, but I don't have the sense of 'being' That.

Helen 31:52

It's very normal at first to feel that for a while. I felt like someone tuning into the Noumenon, and I got really, really good at that. I could hear the silence anywhere, even in the airport even, I'm really getting somewhere now, really, really good thoughts that we were just talking about with Melissa. It's very, very normal. That's where we all start from, isn't it - I'm someone trying to get to the Self, to the Noumenon, and I'm not there yet; I still feel separate to it even, on some level that I can't properly explain, but I feel separate to it. There's an IT. And me, in my experience, IT, being the Noumenon.

So, just noticing that and you can begin to then ask (that's what we're going to do in Lesson Three later, and the questions that come with that). You can start just by, if you're hearing the Silence, or whichever way you're tuning in, you can really just say, is there really a 'me?' And it feels like, it seems like, there IS, right? Let me just when I first tune into the Noumenon - anyone can do this as well, if it feels right - still do your 20 minutes or whatever you're doing, and at the start or the end of that you can just say, **"Is there really a me and the Noumenon? Can I really find this separate being that seems to be tuning in? Can I really actually find it?"**

And again, to answer that question, if we put attention on phenomena, we're going to feel very separate to it. Okay, so I asked that question, **'Am I really separate to the Noumenon? Is there really a ME and IT? Is there really two?'** Then, what happens if I don't reference thoughts, emotions and experiences to answer that question? If I reference thoughts, emotions and experience, I'm always going to feel separate to it. Okay, so there's a body, there's thoughts going on, there's emotions, there's experiencing going on in that body. But what else is there about me? And is it separate to, or different from, the Self in any way. And recognizing if our attention stays on the

phenomena, we're always going to feel separate. If attention goes the Noumenon, we're going to feel increasingly...and at some point subtly for me, this just shifted to the sense that I'm looking 'from' That. And again, we'll work on this more in Lesson Three.

But for now, just ask that question, "Am I really separate from IT? And what is the evidence I'm using to agree, that I'm feeling separate from the Self?" And if we look at that, i.e. the evidence - for me, it came down to thoughts and feelings, and the sense of experiencing here, just here, all of which is going to go when the body goes. So can I use that as evidence, really, to find out what I am, if it's not permanent? Is it reliable evidence, as to how separate I am from the Noumenon? If all of that is going to go at some point, am I still going to include that in my Self inquiry? Not that it's wrong of course. Thoughts are a beautiful human experience we can have. But for the sake of answering this question, "Why do I still feel separate to it? What is the evidence?", have a look at that. What evidence are you using to agree that you still feel separate? You might find something quite wonderful happens out of that.

Joyce

Okay. So the question itself is going to open something perhaps. You feel this yearning, this striving, like somebody else was describing, and I could really relate to that, like I...

Helen 36:06

...I got to got to got to got to, like that. But even for me, it became clear, it became more important, Why am I so convinced still, that I am separate? Because I'd seen so many times that the Noumenon was here, and like I said, I was very good at tuning into it. I'd also seen in my self-inquiry, that I wasn't a thing at all. So why do I still feel separate to it?

Joyce

I haven't got that part, that I'm not a thing. I'll feel like, I am this thing. And I'm in this skin. And this skin is separating me from that. But that's okay? Like, I'm not doing something wrong?

Helen 36:50

Everybody starts like that. Yep, I would ask the two questions - '**Why am I so sure I'm separate to it? And, what evidence am I using to back that up?**' Because if we've been certain of something, we must have some evidence for that, to conclude that. When you start to look at this, it will change everything inside.

Joyce

Okay. Awesome. Thank you so much.

Helen 37:19

Good, good, lovely. Everything's going absolutely right. It's very normal, what you're experiencing, we all start from that place. Good to talk to you.

Okay, so we will leave it there for today. Just to remind everyone, that there is a live Q&A session this Thursday, there'll be one each Thursday for the Course. Different times for different timezones, depending on my schedule, as well. So it's slightly different now to how it was.

And if you don't want to ask a question in this session or the Q&A, because it's a sensitive question, you can use the contact form, on the hidden page to send it in. It'll be read out anonymously and answered, as many as we can in that session. And if you can't make the session live, you can send one in as well. And it will be recorded and uploaded to the page, as Maggie said so well. So, dive in, get practicing meditating. Don't make hard work out of this. it's just noticing, we're just shifting what we're noticing. So just like I'm looking over there, and I look back over there, I'm looking at thoughts. Okay. Let me go back to the Silence. No more hard work than that.

Okay. So, thank you very much. Namaste.

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