

Trans-Hippie Integral Consciousness

by Ewan Townhead

I am integral. I have integral consciousness, and with it, the ability to see, to embody and to use, the goodness, truth and beauty it increasingly discloses to me. What a gift! And one that I will carry for the rest of my life whether I like it or not. What a journey I have been set upon!

I stand on the shoulder of giants, the warriors of my parent's generation who fought so passionately and resolutely to secure my right to be whatever kind of human I desire. They have taken me and my young integral brothers and sisters up to, and through the gates of second tier; the Kosmic scratches in the sand are already well trodden paths; the fundamental slabs have already being laid. The integral highway is underway.

And yet, as the integral project gathers pace, the impulse is shifting, changing, growing. The torches are being handed over; the old boomers and hippies are getting closer to their twilight zone, the master is fading, the student is growing. "Hey teacher, leave those kids alone!" This is not a revolution, this is an evolution.

Fuck, what a kick! I feel so alive; the world is so vibrant before these new eyes of mine. The lights are that much brighter, the space that much deeper, my consciousness is that much wider. And do you know what the most exciting aspect is? It only gets bigger baby!!

I wasn't in this place a few years ago. My journey had stopped at a very different point, one that is shared by so many of my generation. The playground we're given is so huge it's overwhelming. I see so many of my peers fall by the wayside, wasted through drink or drugs, giving up because the choices are too many. We're given the most freedom of any culture in the history of the world, we're told we can do and be

anything we desire, the shackles are off, and we've been given the keys to the whole damned castle. But with no map to know where the hell to go; its chaos. It is chaos.

Ken saved my life. I was floundering; overwhelmed by choice, lost through freedom, wandering the endless halls of a relativistic maze. I was ready, had been ready for some time, yearning for the lift up to the next floor, but with no map to find my way there; I was getting desperate. As my frustrations took hold, I got meaner and meaner, stretching my crumbling worldview past any sense of decency or rationality. Cue Ken....

Wow, this makes sense, this works! I've been fumbling for these truths for so long, and here they are, honest and tangible; bigger and more beautiful than I would ever have imagined. Here was someone with stature, integrity, and wisdom giving me not only more truth than I knew was possible, but the permission to embrace it and use it. That's where the love affair begun...

My life is about integration: learning to live in a unity of mind and body; introducing my estranged shadows to my conscious self, drawing them in, being them; constructing better understanding of the world out there, and in here; living in relationship, giving myself to friendship and love.

I love to learn: clarity of thought, rationality. If I have a distorted understanding of the world, my relationship to it will be distorted. If I have a partial understanding of the world, my relationship with it will be partial. If I have a distorted and partial understanding of myself, then I will be distorted and partial. For me, learning is about cognition in the best sense: widening my ability to see, to perceive. A good map not only helps me navigate the territory, it helps me see more of the territory!

I sometimes see caution thrown over the cognitive, rational side of integral, "be careful not to live in your head too much"; an understandable fear indeed, but one I

don't feel, or share. Is rational cognitive experience the only way I interact with, and learn from the world? Certainly not! What a death that would be! But do I find a rational reconstruction and unpacking of my experience crucial? Yes. Without it- without an accurate map- my ignorance and shadows can get lost in contradiction, sauntering off on tangents, withholding and distorting goodness truth and beauty. I know, because I have tasted that dream world.

Rationality and feeling are not opposites, it is not an either/or choice. They are lovers; the perfect marriage. Without each other, they wilt, unable to embrace the fullness of life. Without feeling we lose touch with the world, floating, disembodied, and dead on the inside. Without rationality we drift with no guidance, no filter, naked to contradiction and narcissism.

I love to feel, to touch life. I flourish through the visceral caress of relationship, of loving. This is part of my very nature, instilled by my parents and their own world. Rationality does not negate or repress this, quite the opposite, it allows it to flow freely, chaperoned by context and integration.

Where this river will lead, I'm uncertain. But this time I'm not lost, I'm exploring. So here I sit, surrounded by possibility, guided by perspective, driven by truth, nourished by beauty; this is how I live.