

# A MIND AT HOME WITH ITSELF

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*How Asking Four Questions Can Free Your Mind,  
Open Your Heart, and Turn Your World Around*

**BYRON KATIE**

**WITH STEPHEN MITCHELL**

INCLUDING A NEW VERSION OF THE DIAMOND SUTRA  
BY STEPHEN MITCHELL



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## INCONCEIVABLE WEALTH

The Buddha said, "Let me ask you something, Subhuti. If someone were to fill a billion worlds with inconceivable wealth and then give it all away in support of charitable causes, would the merit gained by this person be great?"

"Extremely great, Sir."

The Buddha said, "It would indeed. But if this merit were real, the Buddha would not have called it 'great.' It is because this merit doesn't exist that the Buddha calls it 'great.'"

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Every time I give something away, what comes back to me is freedom. I allow the whole world to enter the space that had been filled by my possessions. When I gave away possessing, I gained the whole world. I saw that there was nothing to possess in the first place, so everything was mine. And even though I appear to own things today, that can never be. Possessing is a state of mind. You only need to watch a building burn to understand that, or the burial of someone you love. Once you understand it, you notice that everything is yours, and it always has been. When I drive through a neighborhood and see a man watering his lawn, I know that it's my lawn, it's my house, it's my

friend, though we've never met. I know him. He's taking care of my world. He's doing what's necessary. There's merit in all things. There's merit in every moment. There's not even a need to wake up to it, since it is what it is, whether we notice it or not.

I identify with the person the Buddha is talking about here, the man or woman of inconceivable wealth, the richest possible person in all possible universes, who gives everything away. Wealth is a state of mind; if anything is held back, it's not true wealth. True wealth, the apparently meritorious state of mind, gives everything because it gives itself. It *can't* hold back. When the mind matches the heart (my name for our natural wisdom), it doesn't discern right from wrong; it's completely right with itself, always. It's the song of the self, the song of our true nature. I never have to go out of my way to think, "Who needs this?" That's a task I would never think of taking on. My abundance is so great that it can never be spent—not even a fraction of it. Every time I spend it, it multiplies again. It's completely self-sustaining. It's a well that never runs dry. It's fun to be the richest person in the universe, because you're completely at leisure, always. Your wealth can never diminish, and you don't have to do anything for it or with it. You're simply a conduit.

It's equally wonderful to be the poorest person in the universe. I own nothing, I have nothing, I am nothing, and that leaves me with everything. What I give away isn't mine. The well never stops flowing. It pours out whether or not a need is expressed.

In 1997 a couple came with their young children to see my little one-bedroom guesthouse, which I was selling. When they looked at the guesthouse, they knew it wasn't what they wanted. But as the conversation continued in my own house, which was a lot bigger, the woman turned to her husband and said, "I'd do anything to own a house like this, wouldn't you?" They laughed and sighed, then she turned to me, looked me straight in the eyes, and said with a smile, "Would you give us your house?"

I said, "Yes."

"Are you kidding?" she said.

"No."

So I gave them the house I was living in. They were amazed, and so grateful. As they were moving in, they said that they loved my dog, so I gave them the dog too.

At no time in this whole transaction did I think that I was doing something generous. The house was theirs, obviously, as soon as they asked; it was no longer mine to give. They loved it so much that I would have been a fool not to give it to them. They belonged there. I was simply recognizing the fact. There was no decision to make. And this was true about my dog as well. They obviously loved him. Roxann, my youngest, had moved out of the house many years before, and I knew that the dog would be happy to have young children to play with.

*Abundance* isn't a word about yesterday or tomorrow. It's recognized now, lived now, given now. It doesn't ever stop; it just keeps pouring itself out. Once you understand this, all striving falls away. You need only notice and let the giving happen through you, excited to see where it will go next, always knowing that you'll never run out of what's needed.

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*You've said that you always found it easy to make money. Have you always felt wealthy?*

Before 1986, absolutely not. Wealth is freedom of mind. Making money was easy for me even when I was ten or eleven and sold Christmas, birthday, and holiday cards. In my twenties and thirties I made a lot of money, but I felt the opposite of wealthy. Though I owned several businesses, a wonderful house, other real estate, cars, a boat, etc., I never trusted that I was going to have enough money to support it all.

After 1986, there was nothing that needed wealth, because I realized that everything belongs to me, so there is never a reason to own anything. Other people are taking care of it for me and being generous for me or not, and whether they're keeping it or giving it, it's all as it should be, nothing out of order, everything a gift.

*When you gave away your house, how did Paul react?*

At first he went nuts. He was used to my strange actions by then, but he considered this "a doozy." According to him, our whole world was tied up in that house. But after a while, he calmed down and signed the papers. He must have trusted me in this, in spite of what he was believing.

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