A Conversation with **Genpo Roshi**

Bill Harris: Well, hello everyone. This is Bill Harris, director of Centerpointe Research Institute and I am here today with Zen master Genpo Roshi. It is really great to have you here, Roshi.

Genpo Roshi: Thank you, Bill. Thank you very much.

BH: And as everyone knows, we are here to give a little bit more information that might be helpful to people that are finding what Oprah and Eckhart Tolle are sharing to be intriguing and helpful and we're hoping that we can flesh that out for people more, make it easier for people to understand, make it easier for people to implement what he is talking about and perhaps even, take it a little further.

So, you had a spontaneous kind of opening, like, I understand that Tolle had. Do you want to start by kind of giving that little bit of background about yourself and then we can get into something else?

GR: Sure, I'm happy to do that. So what happened to me was back in February of 1971, and I was teaching school at the time. I was also a lifeguard at the time, but not particularly in the winter and I was having some difficulty in my life, particularly around my relationship and I decided to go out to the desert for a few days, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, with two friends of mine and we went out to the Mojave Desert and while I was there, alone, as I hiked off to do something else, I was sitting on this small mountain peak and I had a spontaneous awakening and the awakening was I became one with the cosmos or entered into what I believe Eckhart Tolle calls the present moment or the presence and in that present, all of my former ideas about what... dropped away and all of a sudden, I realized that I was home. I actually was reflecting on this question, where is home and what is home? And it came up to me, of course, that I am always at home and at home is right here, right now and it is not out there someplace else, a physical place or a physical house, and in that awakening, everything became very simple and very obvious and very clear. All of my troubles, all my sorrows disappeared or vanished.

My fears, my suffering, everything went and I experienced what you might call being one with God, one with the universe, one with the all, the whole and I didn't really know what happened to me and in fact, what came up after this experience and this experience took some time. In fact, it took me about a year after the experience to feel like my feet were touching the Earth again, but after this experience, I started to question what happened to me? What's this all about? And what also came up at the very same moment of this awakening, was wanting to share this with anyone and everyone who was willing to have me share it with and, you know, I shared it with my mother. I shared it with distant teachers. I shared it with my students. I shared it with some of the other teachers at the school. I shared it with my friends. It was all about somehow finding and discovering, in myself, a place that was clear and spacious and where the self was no longer a problem.

The self was no longer present. They both had, actually, dropped off and I asked my friend, who actually had just received his Ph. D. in psychology, I told him about the experience and I asked him, "Do you know what happened to me?" And he says, "Well, it sounds like you had a Zen experience." I didn't even know what Zen was, but when he said, "It seems to me you're talking

like a Zen master." I didn't know what a Zen master was, but those words probably triggered something in me because I began to research spiritual experiences, Christian mystic experience, Jewish mystical experiences, I began to read Western psychology, people like Carl Jung and others at that time and I had already been in Gestalt therapy, under somebody who had studied under Fritz Perls and so I also began to study Erich Fromm and some of the other great psychotherapists at the time and everything seemed to me to point towards Zen. After this experience, I began meditating or sitting quietly. I didn't know what meditation was, but it spontaneously came up to spend three 30 minute periods a day, before work, after work and then in the evening before sleep, either in my room meditating or out on the beach. I lived at Long Beach. I began to just sit and my mind was at peace and quiet and I would sit there, as I said, for about 30 minutes each time and...

BH: So, you are in what Zen would call nonseeking, nongrasping mind, which sounds a lot like something that Eckhart Tolle talks about.

GR: It is, I started to say, it is the power of now. It is what he is talking about. In Zen we would call it the enlightened state of mind or the awakened state of mind or we would call it being in the present and as you said, in Japanese it is called Mushotoku. It means that when you meditate or sit, you have no goal, no aim and no objective in mind. You are just present. Also called Shikantaza in Japanese.

BH: Well, and you know, a lot of people then would say, "Well, so what's the value of that? I have all kinds of problems I have to solve and all kinds of things I have to get done and it sounds like it doesn't lead anywhere." And people, of course, think things need to lead somewhere.

GR: Well, let me explain it this way, the normal state of mind that we're in, which I would call our ordinary mind, our natural mind, everyday mind, is very goal oriented and it needs to be and it should be. It's task oriented, it's about getting through the day, fulfilling the jobs, the tasks that we need to fulfill and we need that state of mind and if we think of a triangle, just for the listeners, visualize a triangle where the base is horizontal and the third point is at the apex of this triangle and think of one side of the triangle, lets just say the left side of the triangle.

BH: The left corner of the triangle.

GR: The left corner of the triangle on the base of the triangle, lets just say that this is our everyday mind. This is the mind that we use to go to work in, in relationships and it is absolutely essential, it is necessary, it is what helps us in the supermarket, have a preference, make decisions and every day in our everyday life, we have to make decisions. Let's just say on the opposite side of the base of this triangle, the right hand corner, we have the power of now, the mind that is present, is also here, is always in the now, is not seeking anything, it is not wanting, it is not desiring. It's also called the mind of nirvana. It's at complete peace with all things and in that state of mind, there isn't anything to take care of. There isn't anything to do. There are no problems. There are no fears because in this state of mind, there's no self and it is the self that creates all of the problems.

BH: Or what Tolle calls the ego.

GR: The ego. Okay. We can call it the ego. So this is a no ego or non-ego place or non-self place. Okay? But what I'm talking about here in the self, when I use that word, I am talking about a limited self, a self that has a boundary around it, walls, barriers around it to protect it. In the non-ego or non-self place, there are no boundaries, there is no limits, there is no barrier. It's eternal, it's eternally present, it's infinite, it is the mind that is one with all things, all phenomena, all places, the great Earth, the cosmos, everything. There is no dualism in this state of mind. It is a non-dualistic state of mind and we can say it's our true state of mind

in a sense because everything emerges out of this, all phenomena, all concepts, all notions, all beliefs, all ideas will emerge out as we shift back to the left hand side or the left corner of the triangle, which is the dualistic side. The ordinary mind, the everyday mind, is very dualistic.

Now there's nothing wrong with either of these if you think of them in a state of balance or harmony. When we move to the apex of the triangle, we both include the ego and the non-ego, or the self and the no-self. We include the dualistic mind, the non-dual. We include the mind that is always striving, always seeking, always wanting and desiring to move further, to advance, to get the things we need or want in our life, but we also include the state of being, the being of presence, which is eternally happy, satisfied, content. It is the mind of nirvana. It's at peace and it's lacking absolutely nothing.

> **"When we move to the apex of the triangle, we both include the ego and the non-ego, or the self and the no-self."**

We include these two states and yet we move beyond them, we transcend them. So, we don't exclude one over the other and we don't have a preference for one over the other. So sometimes we need to be seeking and striving, making goals, having and fulfilling our goals, and sometimes we can just sit and mediate and be in this presence. We can also act in this place and yet sometimes we need to have a preference, to make a choice and we spontaneously can do it, but when we're at the apex, it doesn't mean we're at just that third point or the apex point, we are including the entire triangle.

Now if one imagines that this triangle is you, sitting there in your chair or on the floor or wherever you're sitting and the triangle includes all of you, of course we always include all of this. However, sometimes we're only aware of the dualistic part, the everyday mind and the part that is not satisfied, is not content, is striving to become something else and we get caught up there. We get even stuck there. We can also get stuck on the other side of the base of the triangle where we think that the ego is not good, the self is not necessary and that dualism is a hindrance because there is suffering and there is fear and there is dissatisfaction in that dualistic side, but the key here, in Zen we would say, is to move freely without restraint, without any kind of barrier between these two states of mind in the most appropriate way in that given situation that we find ourself in. But sometimes we find ourself where we are sitting on a bench..you know, I was out with my dog this morning, I sat down on the park bench while she ran around and I can be in a state of presence, in a state of just being and sometimes I have to strive, I have to make effort, I have to seek and I can move freely between these two states. The left hand side, sometimes I call that the human qualities of the human being and the right hand side I call the being qualities of the human being and we are all human beings.

So, what we want to do is embrace all of ourself as a completely integrated, free functioning human being and at the apex, we also consciously choose to be a human being. Now, if someone is looking truly to free themself from suffering and dissatisfaction and discontent, all one has to do is ask their mind to speak to the one who consciously chooses to be a human being and particularly after spending some time in the present or the power of now or that right hand corner of the triangle, then it's easy then to integrate it all and choose consciously to be a human being and to live a fulfilled and satisfied life.

BH: Now Tolle and a lot of teachers tend to emphasize the power of now or presence or, you know, whatever you want to call it over the human side and I can kind of see why they do that because most people are so much in the human side and pretty much unaware of the other, you know, right hand corner of the triangle that at first you kind of need to acquaint yourself with that place so that you can go there freely, as you were saying and most people have a lot of trouble doing that at first.

GR: And that's exactly right and I, myself, emphasized that side for, oh, more than 25 years from 1971 until about 1997, where I really emphasized reaching the state of awakening and being able to sit or meditate in that and to be able to live in that state of mind and I, myself, kind of got stuck there until about '94 and then in '94, I realized that there was a further step, but it took me several years to really clarify what that next step was and that there's nothing wrong with the emphasis on moving to that power of now, to that point where there is no ego. At some point, like you said, at some point there is another step and that third step goes back and embraces the ego and moves to the apex. I call that the egoless ego. That apex is another name for it. We still need and have an ego, but the ego itself is quite empty, not substantial, not solid, not rigid, not fixed and not stuck. So it's an egoless ego. We still have the ego, but it is an aware ego. It is a mature ego rather than being an immature ego and the reason that we are able to move to that apex is again, as you said and Eckhart Tolle says, is because we become acquainted with the presence of now or being here now.

BH: And wouldn't you say that at the apex, the ego, instead of being a master, which is at least what it thought it was in the beginning, now it is a tool or a servant.

GR: That's correct.

BH: You know, because there's plenty of things that we definitely need to do that are in the realm of striving. If you didn't strive to get shelter, you know, you'd die. If you didn't strive to eat or reproduce or whatever...I mean, there are certain things that the ego is in charge of that are really necessary.

GR: That's right and in fact, we're never without ego. I mean, we can be. I've been without ego for some time at times and we're pretty dysfunctional frankly. So, the ego is always present. We don't want to go into denial that the ego is there. I mean, there's nothing more egotistical than to say I am egoless.

BH: You know, I had an awakening back in the 80s where I was just floating several feet above the ground, it felt like, for four or five months and during that period of time, I got fired from a job and for years I went around saying, describing how I did not care at all that I got fired from this job as if that was some sort of an achievement. Now I look back and I think I should have cared that I got fired from that job and I was stuck in that being place, the right side of the triangle, but at the time, I really did not care.

GR: Well, as I said, I spent from '71 to '94, now I look back, stuck in that place and one of the biggest dangers of getting stuck there, not having the experience, not being able to maintain the experience, but getting stuck there is that we deny a very important law, it's called the law of causation, the law of attraction or karma. We deny the importance of that because if we are in denial that I have an ego or I'm in an egoless state, the karma doesn't just stop happening. We continue to create karma. We're just not worried about it. That's just not an issue. So like you were saying, you get fired from a job, well, in a way you just don't care. You're in a place where you're very free and not caring or worrying about these things, which is a beautiful place to rest in. It's a beautiful place to visit, but we don't want to get stuck there. It's like ascending a mountain, there are going to be many beautiful sights, lookout sights to go and enjoy the view, but if you continue to just stay in that one sight, you never ascend to the top of the mountain.

Now in Zen training, ascending to the top of the mountain is a very important destination. That is the full enlightenment. That is what, when the Buddha discovered that when he said, "I alone am." That's that I am-ness that I think Tolle is probably talking about. Again, the right hand side of the triangle, point of the triangle, but we also have to descend the mountain, because that's where we can be of service and where we are not denying either the ego or the egoless place. We are not in denial of either one because they are always present. The whole triangle is always the whole triangle. We can get stuck in any one corner, but what we want to do is embrace and include and then transcend it all.

> **"When we get stuck at any place with any particular view, any particular understanding, it's not that it's wrong, but it is incomplete."**

BH: Well, one of the things that Tolle points out, as they do in Zen, is that all things in the relative world are impermanent. They pass away and because of that, there is a certain inherent suffering in being human because whatever you're doing, it's going to end. Whatever you have, it's going to eventually fall apart and go away and being in the transcendent, although it is a beautiful place to be, it sort of also implies a denial of the facts in a way. That things are impermanent and there is, as long as you are a human being, there is a certain amount of that that is going to be inherent in life. So, if I understand you right, you are saying that certainly being in the transcendent is a good thing, but if you disown the facts, the cause and effect of the world, then you're stuck in another place and eventually you need to transcend and include all of that.

GR: That's absolutely correct. It's very, very important to see how valuable it is to transcend the ego or to move beyond the ego and we don't want to get stuck there either. In fact, we don't want to be stuck at any of the three points. We want to be able to rotate it. We want to be able to revolve. You know, in Buddhism, there is a world called Dukkha and then normally it is translated as suffering or dissatisfaction with life or that we suffer in this life. It's not the most accurate definition of the word. Dukka is two words. 'Duk' means stuck and 'kha' means like an axle of a wheel or a wheel that won't turn, won't rotate. So, it was back in the time where there were carts and you could imagine if one wheel of a cart gets stuck, then the cart just keeps spinning in circles and doesn't really move and function properly. So it's kind of a dysfunctional cart. Well, that happens in our mind. When we get stuck at any place with any particular view, any particular understanding, it's not that it's wrong, but it is incomplete. It's like a cart, it's not missing the wheel, but the cart isn't functional. You know? You have a dysfunctional cart. It's like if your steering wheel of your car gets locked. You know, you turn the key off and the wheel gets stuck, I don't care what kind of car you have, you could have the nicest car in the world, the most expensive car in the world, however, if you can't unlock the steering wheel, you are going nowhere. You are dysfunctional. So, what the word Dukkha means is that the mind gets stuck.

What we want is the word Sukha, where the mind is free, the mind can function appropriately and can function in a very good way, in a functional way, in a harmonious way so that actually, what we are saying is that the person becomes a fully functioning human being rather than somehow suffering or lamenting or being dissatisfied, we're able to own that. So when I suffer, I just suffer. There is no suffering on top of that. I'm not adding anything to it. If I lose a loved one, like my wife and I, we lost our dog a little over three years ago and I chose to really suffer because I loved

that dog so much and I went into grief completely and in fact, it really... She opened my heart even further. It was like whatever walls were still around my heart just broke open with the loss of this little doggie, this little shih-tzu and what I found was, we can choose to go into grief and truly grieve and it actually becomes delicious. It actually allows us to be more open, more heartfelt, more vulnerable without walls of protection and still it's okay. You know? It's like we are choosing it rather than being victims of the death of the loved one or the loved pet.

BH: And that would be kind of what Tolle is talking about when people ask him questions about, you know, they are having some horrible feeling because something is happening and he asks them to go and really be in that feeling, to be totally present with that feeling.

GR: That's absolutely correct.

BH: And there's a... Even when you're feeling this pain of a death, for instance, there is, if you are really present with it, there is an underlying peace at the same time.

GR: And a helpful way for our listeners to look at this is if there is grief in our life, there's a reason for it and we allow ourself to speak from that voice. In other words, ask our controller for permission to speak to the voice of grief and then be in that grief, be one with that grief totally. That's not the self. What we can see is I am the voice of grief, I'm not the self and therefore, I can get into that voice 100 percent, 110 percent completely, experience the grief, but the self is not grieving.

There is a great Zen story by two great masters. One of them was name was Obaku and the others name was Rinzai and there is a whole school named after Rinzai and there's a smaller school named after Obaku, that's how great they were. One day, Rinzai, he was still a student then, was walking back to the monastery after working all day in the fields and his teacher, his master, who is Obaku said to him, "I see you've been hard at it." In other words, you have been working very hard. You are very sweaty and all of that and Rinzai says, "But you should know the one who's not hard at it." And he was kind of poking fun at his teacher and being a little bit, you know, a smart guy or a smart aleck, but it was beautiful because what he's saying is even though I am completely working hard, there is a self that is not and that self is the true self and that self is, I think, the one that we say has no boundaries, has no borders and is ever present and is always here now.

BH: Now, a lot of people, when they first hear about this, about that self, about the power of now, the presence, whatever term you want to use, it seems so foreign to them and all the ideas they have about themself, all of the concepts, all of the stuff of their mind going on, seems so compelling that they have a tough time experiencing that beingness. So, in what you teach, how do you help people to actually experience that place?

GR: What I teach and this is a very new discovery, I only discovered this method in June of 1999, after many, many years of studying and practicing and I actually came to it from a Western psychological place called voice dialogue, and that is, if we ask to speak to a particular aspect of ourself or a particular voice, then what we do is we shift out of the self and into that particular aspect of the self. So like, if I asked to speak, right now, to the voice of the controller. So, if the listeners want to try this, they can, particularly if you're not driving a car right now. So, I ask to speak to the voice of the controller and then we own that. We say, "Okay. I am the controller. I am not longer the whole self. I am just one aspect of the self, one primary persona of the self, I am the controller."

BH: And would you say the self is synonymous with what Tolle is referring to as the ego?

GR: And in this case, let's leave the self very vague.

BH: Okay.

GR: Because it also can be the limited self, it could be the transcendent self, we're just not the self. So we could say it is the ego, sure.

BH: But it's just that one aspect of the self, the controller.

GR: That's right and so as the controller, we might ask, "Okay. So what's your job? What's your function?" "Well, my job is to control." "Well, what would you like to control?" " Well, I'd like to control everything if I could. I mean, I would like to control you, I'd like to control others, I'd like to control myself, I'd like to control the weather, I'd like to control earthquakes, I'd like to control natural disasters, I'd like to control that there is no war, that people live in peace. I'd like to control everything as a controller." Now, each voice has both an immature and a mature side to it. Every voice can go from unhealthy and very immature to a healthy, mature aspect. So in the unhealthy, immature side of the controller, I want to control others. In a healthier, more mature way, I need to control myself. I need to control Genpo. What I want is for him not to hurt anybody or not to disappoint people or not to upset people, to be more compassionate, to be more loving, to be more open. So at a mature level, I can be the controller and I can work with wisdom and compassion. Every voice can do this.

BH: And then not also to hurt himself too.

GR: And not hurt himself and not hurt others. That's right.

So, in the controlling voice, what my job is, really, is to be sure that in every situation that I'm coming from a place with some wisdom and some love and compassion rather than from a self-centered or ego-centered place where it is all just about me. Now, the controller also is the one who kind of is the gate keeper. Through the controller, we're either allow in or not allowed in. So, the controller holds the key. So if I say to the controller, "May I now speak to the voice of the protector please?" And then the protector says, "Okay. I'm here. I am the protector. It is my job to protect." So maybe the self says, "Okay. Well what's your job? What do you protect?" "Well, I have to protect Genpo from the world because everything in the world, out there, can be dangerous. At any moment, anything could happen, either through natural disaster, through accidents or through somebody else. So I have to be alert and I have to be aware and I have to create some borders, some boundaries, some walls to protect him, the self, from the world and from others."
Well then the self might say, "Okay, well, what else do you protect?" "Well, I also have to protect him from himself because, you know, he has a lot of habits and patterns and conditioning that can be harmful to himself. You know, he'd like to overeat some times, he'd like to over drink. He would like to do crazy, stupid things like ride his motorcycle too fast or drive his car too fast. He would even like, if it wasn't for me, to leap out of a plane without a parachute and experience what that's like. So, he's not so bright and my job is to protect him, also, from himself."

And then the self might say, "Well, what else is your job?" "Well, as a protector I also have to protect the world from him because, you know, he can be hurtful. He can hurt others. He can say things that upset people, especially in his position with a lot of power. He can easily hurt somebody, even by not paying attention to them or not being aware of their presence or not being aware of how sensitive they might be. So I have to protect the world from him too. So I have quite a full time job, in fact, my job is like three full time jobs because I almost have to protect his loved ones and people close to him from others." So then the self might say, "Well, would you allow me now to speak to some other voices?" And then the controller would say, "Yes," and we can do that.

BH: Now, one of the things that, since I know a little bit about this myself, is that some voices when we might ask to speak to them in a person are very disowned. The person has trouble accessing them or they deny

that they even exist in them. So, I mean one of the kind of basics of this whole process is that all of these aspects of the self, all of these voices, exist in every person, even if you can't seem to find it or even if you don't really feel comfortable having it speak.

GR: That's right and that's a very important point that you're making and the point is this, that in every one of us is everything that is manifested out there. So if there is a saint out there, that's within us. If there's a Buddha out there, that's within us. If there is the most helpful, generous, loving person out there, that's also within, but there's also the opposite, you know, every one of us, like, what was her name?

BH: Mother Theresa?

GR: No, the one Death and Dying?

BH: Elizabeth Kubler Ross. Yes.
GR: I heard her back in the 70s speak and I loved hearing her and she said something that was so helpful to me. I was still very young at that time. She said, and she had been at Auschwitz and she had witnessed this, she said, "Unless we can recognize and own the fact that within every one of us there is one who is capable, has the potential, doesn't manifest it, but has the potential, given certain situations, given a certain circumstance, has the potential to take food out of a starving babies mouth." She said, "I witnessed that from good people, decent people, loving people. They got so desperate and they were in such dire straits that they did that." And she said, "We will never be enlightened unless we realize and own what our capacity, the whole range of our capacity is, from the best of the best to the worst of the worst because then we have more empathy, more compassion, more sympathy for others who do things that are hurtful and harmful and we see, given certain situations, I'm capable of that myself. So, I'm less judgmental."

Now, it doesn't mean we act on it. It doesn't mean that we go out there and take food out of a starving baby's mouth or we're a rapist or a killer. It means that we recognize that every aspect is within me and so if I can not find a certain voice, it doesn't mean it is not there, it means it is disowned or it has gone into the shadows and I'll give you an example of some universally disowned voices that we all basically disown, like one is the narcissist. We all disown that voice. I'm not narcissistic and on the immature level, I am totally narcissistic. On the most immature and unhealthy level, it is all about me. You know? It's I love myself and I don't love you. I'm not concerned with you. I'm not interested in you. It is all about me. You had enough time talking here. I want to talk. I want to be the main focus. It is all about me, but as we move into that voice and we own that voice and we say, "Alright. I am the narcissist." Okay, what about as a mature narcissist. Alright, I'm the mature narcissist and all of a sudden what comes up is I not only love myself, but I love all beings. I love all people. I love all animals. I love all creations. I love this great Earth. I love this universe. I love everyone and it's because I can love myself. So all of a sudden we find out that the narcissist holds the key to spiritual or evolutionary growth, consciousness, because first we have to love ourself before we can love others.

BH: So, what you are saying then is that when you allow a voice that is disowned, or a shadowed part of you to speak, it grows up, just by speaking and another thing that you really haven't said yet is that if a voice is disowned, it comes out in some way anyway. It manifests, but in a covert or a dysfunctional way and a lot of the things that cause us trouble in our life, that get us into trouble are because we have some aspect of ourselves that we have stuffed down in the basement and it comes out in dysfunctional ways and then we end up having to, or other people, have to pay the consequences of that. So, this speaking from a certain voice, particularly if it's disowned, some really amazing things happen.

GR: That's correct. That's exactly right. In fact, we become happier, more fulfilled, more satisfied, more

loving, more compassionate, because we own these disowned aspects and they don't have to come out covertly. Another thing that happens is very often in a relationship where one person is disowning a voice, the other one actually ends up picking it up. So let's say if I disown my judgmentalness, I am disowning the judge in me. I say, "I don't judge people. I'm very open-minded. I'm very loving. I'm very compassionate and I don't judge." Well very often, it comes out covertly and it can come out in our partner and our partner becomes very judging, belittling of people and we don't realize it's because we're not willing to own in ourself and in the relationship, if you say there has got to be 100 percent, the other one takes all 100 percent instead of sharing it in an equal way like 50/50.

Another thing is that we do not realize that we are doing it. In other words, we are in a kind of state of denial. Now let's take the ego for example, if I disown my ego. If I am in denial of my ego. If I am saying that I have no ego. What happens is, sure I have an ego, of course I have an ego, but it's disowned so it comes out covertly. So when I look at other people, then I see their egos and I say, "Oh god. They are so egotistical. They are so ego-centered or self-centered."

BH: And you tend to be really triggered by it too, not just noticing it but really being bugged by it.

GR: Exactly. Very bugged by it. In fact, that's one of the ways that you can realize or find out what voices you are disowning by if there is somebody out there, we work with, we relate to, or we see on TV or the news or in politics and there's an aspect about them that I don't like, that irritates me, more than likely, I have disowned that aspect in me and I have gone into denial and it's still there and it is working on me, but I'm not aware of it. It's a shadow. I don't see it.

BH: Now, to bring this kind of back to Eckhart Tolle and a lot of the questions that I hear people having about it and one of the other main reasons that we're bringing up this whole idea of speaking from these different voices is that when you speak from different voices of the self, when you speak from the controller and the protector and the voice of fear and the voice of desire and so on, and you speak from kind of a broad group of the most important voices in the self, it gives you a distance from those voices and for some reason, that just allows you very easily to step into that power of now or the transcendent or whatever you want to call it. I think that's one of the most amazing things about this process, this Big Mind process is that it gives you enough distance from the self or the ego that it makes it easy to step out of it and since so many people who are reading Tolle or listening to these lessons online with Oprah, you know, tell me anyway that they're confused about how to get into this now space that he talks about. This is one of the most amazing and easy to use methods for getting into that place.

GR: Well, of course I agree. Thank you. Let me say this, going back to what you were saying earlier, when I own my own ego. In other words, when I allow myself to speak as the ego. If I say to my controller, "May I please speak to the ego now?" "Yes, you are speaking to the ego now." And we say, "Well, when are you present?" "Well, I'm always present." "So, what's your function?" "Well, my function is to make sure that Genpo looks good. You know, my function is, I am kind of his face, his facade. I am the one that is presented to the world" And then we say, "Well, let me speak to the very mature ego?" "Well, as a mature ego, I am not so ego-centered. I am not so egotistical. I see that I have a role, I have a function and I function to serve the self, but I am not any longer only focused on myself." And we immediately then move, once again, to the apex or we can say in this case, to the transcendent because in that way, the ego is no longer being ego-centered or ego involved and this is very important.

It's not that difficult to move into the transcendent and let me give an analogy. Let's imagine or visualize train tracks because there is a rail or two rails of this track and we are standing or sitting on one of the rails and we look down in the distance and we see that way

down in the distance, these two merge and they become one rail. Well, that's an illusion. That is not reality because if we think that they do merge and we start to run along that track trying to reach the place where these two rails become one, it always just eludes us. It is always off in the same distance in the future. We never reach it. When we're in the left hand side of the triangle, it may look like we can get to the right hand side by efforting and by trying and through time and in space, but we can't. It's an illusion. We can't ever get there. The more we work at it, the more we meditate and try to reach this place of the transcendent or this place of no ego, we can't get it. Only by a leap, by some accident, by some experience we make that leap, but by trying and efforting, it always eludes us. The further we go towards it, the further in the distance it still is.

So, what we have to do is leap the track. Now, one track, the left hand side is within time and space and that's the reality that we all know. It is the apparent reality. It's the relative reality. It is the reality that we live in on a daily basis. However, the other rail doesn't exist within time and space. It is beyond time and space and we can speak to that self or that no self that is that other rail, but we can't move to it.

BH: And by being not in time and space, you're saying the same thing that Eckhart Tolle is saying when he's saying it's in the now or in the eternal now, because there's no time when you get to that place.

GR: That's right. So the secret in getting there is to ask to speak to that one that's beyond time and space or the no ego or the no self or the Big Mind or the non-seeking mind or the non-striving mind. There is so many names we can use for it and you just ask your controller, "May I speak to the non-seeking, non=striving mind?" and then you own it, you acknowledge it. And when we ask to speak to it, we are doing something very, very important. We are giving ourself permission to be there, to be there now, to be in the present, because if you don't have permission, we can't get there. Somehow, we're all looking for that permission, but we can give ourself that permission. We can say, "Let me speak now to the non-striving mind or the non-goal oriented mind." Alright, now just meditate. Just sit there and be there and all of a sudden we are beyond time and space and we're there and we see with the same eyes that all of the awakened people and people in the world have seen through and we hear with the same ears. We are in that same space that is universal. All of the great mystics have gone to that place, Eckhart Tolle comes from that place. All of the great enlightened people come from that place.

Then of course, as we said earlier, we don't want to get stuck there. We want to go back and include both rails, because that train is going nowhere on one rail. You know? If there's just one rail, which ever one is not there, it is going nowhere. We need both rails.

BH: So, not only is it easy to get into this place because all you have to do is ask to speak to that aspect of yourself, but also by allowing these different parts of the ego to speak or different parts of the self to speak that we talked about earlier like the protector or the voice of fear or the seeking mind and so on, instead of being so caught in them, it's like you have them and that allows you to step out of them and not have them keep pulling you out of the present. Would you say that's...?

GR: Absolutely. Correct. You know, and you know, I've got DVDs that will help the listener actually do this. I mean, we have got hours and hours of DVDs. It's also on Genpo.org on Zeneye. People can actually practice this in their own homes where they get very acquainted with making that leap from, let's say, the ego to no ego and then back again, so that they actually learn and discover how to move freely between these two rails.

BH: Well and I'll tell you when I first heard this, a couple of years ago now, when I first heard a video of you leading a group of people through this process, it blew me away because I said, "God! It took me 30 plus years of disciplined meditation and all kinds of other things to have the same realization that a person gets

from watching and participating in one of these videos and also the ability to just drop into that now place. It just makes it so easy." And you know, you and I are doing workshops together now and we have sat there in front of 250 people who were skeptical that they could go to that place and within a very short time, there they all are and the feedback we get from people is universally, this was the most incredible, amazing experience of my entire life. So, I really do urge people to experience this Big Mind process, either by going to Genpo.org and getting some of these DVDs or come to one of these live workshops we are doing, which people could find out about by, I don't know if you have them on your website. I suppose you probably do, but also Centerpointe.com/BigMind would tell you about whenever the next one would be. One other thing I wanted...

GR: Let me just say one thing.

BH: Okay.

GR: You know, you were saying you spent 30 years. I spent nearly 30 years to discover this and way back on February 6th, 1971, with that spontaneous awakening, the thing that I most wanted to do was to be able to do was to share how people can have that same realization and it took me 28 years to discover this process and this process is the culmination of, you know, all of those years of training and practice, very long hours of meditation, sometimes as long as 10 or 11 hours a day, sometimes for a long as 90 days at a time and finally discovered a nonthreatening and a way that is accessible and available to really anyone who wants to do it and as you said, not that difficult if we know what we're doing. It is very difficult if we don't know how to get there because we're trying to get there.

BH: Yeah, one of the things that I see people do a lot is that they want the self to get it and as you have pointed out so many times, the self can't get it. It is not a getting that the self has, it is more of a shift of perspective away from the limited self and to the transcendent and this Big Mind process makes that shift of perspective super simple to do.

GR: That's right. How can the self, which is limited, at least the limited self is, with it's own boundaries, grasp the ungraspable or the infinite or the eternal? The self has to dissolve, much like an aspirin into water, dissolve the boundaries so it becomes the water. So, the self can't have what it so desires and seeks, which is that true peace and freedom and liberation because the self has to be gone for that to be there.

BH: And it's only once you can easily access that power of now that then you can go back and take the mature parts of the self and integrate them, which is the apex of the triangle.

GR: That's right.

BH: One other thing I thought we should mention here is that having this experience of Big Mind or the power of now or whatever you want to call it, for some people just becomes a great experience they had and so I thought maybe we could just talk a little bit about practice too because people do need to do some sort of practice in order to really integrate this so that it really becomes something they're embodying rather than just an experience they had.

GR: Right. Let me say something to that. Think of a bird with two wings and there are two aspects and one is a sudden insight or a sudden realization, a sudden enlightenment or awakening and the other wing is a gradual integration and embodiment of the insight or the awakening and both wings must develop, pretty much, simultaneously. You don't want one wing overly developed and the other one underly developed because then you have a dysfunctional bird. So, what you want to do and it's what you're leading to, is you need a regular, kind of daily, weekly, practice where you actually spend time in that state of power of now or the present moment or being present, what we call Shikantaza. Just sitting. Just being. We need a certain

amount of time to integrate and embody the insights and the awakenings that we have. So, and I just heard recently, Duane... Is it Duane Dyer?

BH: Wayne I think.

GR: Wayne Dyer. Wayne Dyer. speaking, I think it was, well, on one of the TV programs and he said a beautiful thing. He said, "There is some kind of proof out there now, that if everybody would spend one hour a week even..." that seems to me like not a lot of time... "...sixty minutes a week in this meditative state of nonseeking and nongrasping, the world would be..." He was quoting the Dalai Lama. Okay, yeah, it was Ellen Degeneres. My wife just told me he was quoting the Dalai Lama. "If we spent one hour a week doing this, the whole world, for one generation, the whole world would be in peace." And of course, that is what we are striving for. If we say what we are striving for... If every... My wife is remembering the quote better than I can... She said, "If every five-year-old, one hour per week..."

BH: For one generation.

GR: Yeah, we would be transforming one generation.
BH: Well, I have no doubt that that is the case. Course, I prefer Holosync of course because I think it's just like Big Mind is. It's a fast way. It's an accelerated way to get you into that place, but anything that someone does is going to be beneficial.

GR: That's right. That's right and Holosync is a great way for people to do it and again, if we would just have this regular, daily practice, whether it be on Holosync or sitting in a non-seeking mind, the whole world would move to the next level of consciousness where they were would peace and happiness and contentment in the world. You know, I just was using Holosync just while flying back from Massachusetts on the plane and I put in my Holosync and spent about an hour doing Holosync and I find it so peaceful and tranquil to just sit there in a noisy plane and just be in that state of mind.

BH: Yes, it is pretty amazing stuff. So, anything else that you want to add about, you know, how people can get into this state? Well, let me mention something, actually, I noticed something in The Power of Now, where Tolle is describing something that sounds very much like the instructions for Shikantaza. He was saying sit and close your eyes and watch your mind to see what the next thought will be. Have your mind be sort of like a mouse hole and you are watching the mouse hole to see what will come out of it and when he said that, it just, it kind of reminded me of the instructions for Shikantaza, which are kind of to be sitting and being so aware that it is as if an opponent with a sword was in front of you and that you had to be totally aware so as to respond because if you lose awareness, they will just cut your head off.

GR: Well, you know, a great Zen master, who lived about a thousand years ago, maybe a little less than that, said exactly the same thing in his instructions. He said, "Sit there as if you are the mouse and you are watching the mouse hole." Not the mouse, you are sitting there as a person watching the mouse hole or like a cat and when the mouse comes out, that is the thought and just be so attentive and as soon as that mouse runs away, immediately go back to the mouse hole and stay focused on that. The mouse runs out and runs away so you are back focused on that.

So, you are just watching those thoughts in a very alert and aware mind and then you are letting it go as soon as it arises. The only problem with that analogies is if you try it and do it, it is very hard to maintain that for a very long time because that state of concentration and attentiveness, unless you have had lots of years of Holosync or meditation, you are going to be unable to have that kind of attentiveness. So, you can relax more. You can actually sit there, not seeking, and being aware of whatever arises and just letting it go in a more tranquil, almost passive way, rather than such an active and forceful way. Both work, but ones harder to maintain.

BH: It's a little more advanced, which is why they often teach people just to observe their breath coming in and out.

GR: Well, you know, let me say something to that. That's an old teaching, but I have revised that teaching and I say to people, "Well, just let me speak to the breath." Okay, you are speaking to the breath. Alright, now sit. And so, I, as the breath, am breathing. I am breathing in and I am breathing out. I am breathing in and now I am breathing out. I am relaxed. I am slow. I am deep or I am shallow. And you know, this was actually the technique the Buddha used to attain enlightenment. He was actually sitting there, with the breath and experienced being the breath. So he was watching the breath and then by a spontaneous, enlightened experience or awakening, he became the breath, but he was first watching it and just saying, I am breathing in, I am breathing out, but instead of being the person, just be the breath. I am breathing in. I am breathing out and there is no self there. The self is gone.

BH: Yes, that's... I can just tell from you saying that, that would be very effective. Well, any last words you want to leave people with before we end?

GR: Yeah. Let me give the people one more analogy that I think is very helpful and that is, think of yourself as a very, very large company. Okay? And the name of this company is whatever your name is. So, my name is Genpo. Okay? So the name of the company is Genpo and in this company I have many, many employees and in fact in Zen we would say 10,000 states of mind. So, 10,000 employees within me, which just means so many more than I could count. Alright, no every employee in this company, not one of them knows what their job title is, what their job description is. No one knows what the product is. Nobody knows who they are working for and everyone thinks they are the boss. This is kind of the state of affairs of this particular company.

BH: It's a dysfunctional company.

GR: It's totally dysfunctional and in chaos. Now imagine taking out one employee at a time and interviewing them. Saying, "Okay. I'd like to speak now to the controller." Alright, call in the controller. "Alright, I am the controller and I am here." "Alright. So, what is your job as controller?" "Well, now that I know my title, well, I can see my job is to control. It's obvious." Alright and at some point then we introduce each employee to the other employees. We eventually introduce them to the CEO of the company. We may even introduce them to the board of directors and we allow them to know what the product is. You know, like, maybe the product is being a happy, fulfilled person, freely functioning and once enough employees find out or discover what their function is, the whole company starts to function in a more optimal level and it becomes a well integrated and beautifully functioning company just because we have taken the time to tell everybody what their job is and what their job description is and that is how the Big Mind works. We take out enough of the employees. We interview them. We also introduce them to the no self or the no ego.

Now, there is one more thing that I'd like to say about this company. What makes up the company? You know, when we really think about it, what makes up the company? The company is made up because it has a name. It's got maybe a board of directors or its got a boss or its got a CEO and its got employees, but what if we change employees, do we still have the company called Genpo? Well sure. What if we move from rather immature employees to mature employees, do we still have the company called Genpo? Yes we do. What if we change the CEO? Do we still have the company? Well sure. What if we change the board of directors? Do we still have a company? Yes we do. What if we change the name of the company? Well sure, we can change the name. What if we change the product? We go from being unhappy, dissatisfied, discontent to being happy, content and fulfilled. Is it still the same company? Yes. So what makes up the self? What is the self? What is

the company? Well, we find out it is just a concept. It is a concept that we all agree upon that this concept called myself is who I am. Everything can change and we know scientifically everything does change and still there is a company, but it is no longer so solid and so fixed and so stuck.

BH: Yes. So what is it then, the question would be, what is it that doesn't change? What is it, as all of those things change in the company, something is still always there?

GR: That is the ungraspable IT. The unknowable IT. The capital I, capital T, IT. That is what some would call the witness or the ever present now. That which, we call it Big Mind, but it has no form, no shape, no color, no size. It is shapeless, formless, sizeless, colorless. It is ever present. It is always there. It is the true master, the true self, but it is not a fixed thing and it is not graspable or conceivable or knowable. It is the forever unknowable. Some people call it God.

BH: Well, and I have to say that, first of all, I just want to say how much I appreciate you and what you do and what you teach and also, I have been around a lot of people who were in that now space or whatever you want to call it and of all of those people, I would say that you most naturally embody that of anyone I have see and so it is always delightful to be around you and I always learn so much and I really appreciate that you were willing to be a part of this and to help people further understand this. It is amazing to me that Oprah has put this out into the public awareness and I am just glad that you're able to step up here and add something really significant to this discussion.

GR: Well, you know, first of all, thank you and I appreciate everything you said. I do think that Oprah and Eckhart Tolle, so many people are doing such great work in really helping to transform consciousness on this planet and that really, we have to continue to put this out into the world because we can make a difference and we can have hope that we can make a difference in this world and to leave this world a better place than we found it for our children and their children and their children. I love that saying that this planet is just on loan from our children to us, this present generation and its for us to leave it to them in a better way than we found it and so I'm really very, very pleased, exhilarated that both Oprah and Eckhart Tolle are doing this and so many people like Wayne Dyer and others are appearing like on Ellen Degeneres' program and really helping to shift the level of consciousness on the planet. It is so needed and I believe that we will succeed. I am very positive about it and that we will make a shift in the next few years or the next five or ten years and we will reach another state of love and harmony in this world. We have to.

BH: Well, I feel grateful that I can play a small part in it and I am certainly glad that you were able to be here for this. So, any last words before I...?

GR: Well, thank you for doing this and I think bringing together Byron Katie and Ken Wilber and Diane Hamilton, yourself, myself together to do this was a great concept, a great idea and I applaud you for it.

BH: Well, I just hope that it helps people. I, partly, I just saw that as well as Tolle explains all of this, and I do think he does, I just meet so many people that are still confused by it and it is because this isn't something you can just tell someone. You do really need a teacher to help you really get into this place and then integrate it. It's very helpful and so, I just thought maybe we could get some people that I know have something significant to say and teach about this together and add to the discussion. So, I hope we have succeeded in doing that.

GR: I hope so too and I am sure it adds to the whole thing.

BH: You bet. Well, I really appreciate you being here and I appreciate everyone who is listening. So, until next time, I'll just say to everyone, be well.

GR: Thank you, Bill and thank you all for listening. I appreciate it.

BH: Alright. Thanks.

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