A Conversation with **Ken Wilber**

Bill Harris: Hello everyone. Once again this is Bill Harris Director of Centerpointe Research Institute and I am here today with Ken Wilber, the founder of Integral Institute and I'll let Ken tell you a little bit more about himself and as you know, our purpose here is to help people understand at a much deeper level what Eckhart Tolle and Oprah have been sharing and some of the related ideas and practices that might come out of this. So Ken, great to have you here.

Ken Wilber: Well, thank you Bill. Good to be here, buddy.

BH: Yeah, so, you want to tell people, you know, since I suspect that a lot of the people that are listening may not be that familiar with who you are and what you do. You want to give a little, brief summary of that?

KW: Sure. For close to the last 30 years or so, I have made a study of the world's various growth technologies and the world's various spiritual technologies, the world's various meditative paths as well as Western forms of growth and development. And so essentially what I did was take all of these different types of growth, types of awakening practices, types of psychotherapy, types of meditation and put them all on a table and tried to create, in a sense, a sort of a super map that included the essentials of all of them so that instead of, if you go to Zen, for example, which has some very powerful, very positive items about it, you don't find anything about working with the unconscious or working with the shadow.

So we include the shadow plus Zen and not just one or the other and the same way with psychoanalysis. You'll end up working with shadow material, personal, unconscious material, but very little work at all on transcendental or transpersonal or meditative awakening, deep spiritual concerns. And so the general idea is that at the end of this, I've published some 25 books that have been translated into 34 languages, that the end of all of this, basically to come up with, what we call, just an integral framework or an integral map and this integral map has room for all of the various approaches around the world and it can, in fact, explain all of them. The map itself has been used to explain over 50 human disciplines and created integral medicine, integral art, integral politics, integral educations, integral psychotherapy, integral spirituality and so on, and that map is also the foundation of a type of integral, spiritual practice.

So what we are doing when we look at what Eckhart is doing is recognize the positive stuff he has done. There is room for it on this map. There is a place for it on this sort of super, holistic, cross-cultural map and we really applaud that and just delighted that Oprah is, you know, giving the time and attention to this aspect of awareness. This aspect of awareness that is transcendental, that is timeless, that is focused on the pure present, the pure now moment, that all of the mystics maintain is the doorway to liberation and so it is fantastic that that's being done and you and I want to talk about that I think, but we also want to talk about maybe some of the extra things that can be done to make this even more effective, to touch on some of the other aspects of the human being and the human potential that Eckhart doesn't touch on and that would make his techniques for being in the now even more effective.

So, it's kind of, you know, a really well wishing and

acknowledgment for what Eckhart and Oprah are doing and then also a little bit of supplementation on things that people can do in addition to what Eckhart is recommending and we have some places where they can go for that extra help and we'll make that available as well. Not including, of course, Holosync and Integral Institute itself.

BH: Yeah, you know, I think one of the things that the people in the general public who are learning about this through Oprah and Eckhart Tolle may not know, is that there is a quite extensive, I guess you could call it, subculture of people who have been involved in what he's talking about for a long, long time and that there are many different schools of thought about it, many practices and a lot of people who are walking around in that same, that same state that Tolle is talking about. And that one of the things that Integral Institute has done is bring a lot of those people together so that they know each other and that they are building on each other's work and learning from each other and so on and so forth. So, there are a lot of other tools and resources that are available to people and so one of the things we can do is make people more aware of those.

> **"The discovery of this awareness is the ultimate goal and aim of life and it is the aim of spirituality itself, of course"**

KW: Well yes, that's certainly true and probably the... I mean, Eckhart Tolle himself says that what he is doing is essentially a reestablishment of Eastern forms of meditation and in one sense that is certainly true, although we do find this is Western forms of contemplation as well, but essentially, paying attention to the timeless now, to the pure present and doing that as a gateway to liberation. You find that essentially in the mystical schools of religion and spirituality around the world. You don't find that, for example, in virtually any forms of psychiatry or psychotherapy in the West.

So, what we're looking at, the West has come up with other forms of help for individuals and what an integral approach wants to do, of course, is combine the best of both of those so that you're working with shadow material, which the West has specialized in- shadow material being unconscious, dissociated, repressed material that was once part of yourself, but that you split off and is causing symptoms, causing pain, causing suffering, causing uncomfortableness and there are some fairly simple techniques for reintegrating the shadow. And so that's one of the techniques that we certainly recommend in our..we have something called an Integral Life Practice Starter Kit, which is a basic kit that has all of these techniques from this integral map, and the shadow is one of them and we include body, mind, spirit, shadow, among other things. Eckhart is working primarily with the spirit component and that's the component that is ever present awareness, this pure now moment that is free of the past, free of the future, therefore free of guilt, free of anxiety and is the gateway, in spiritual terms, to really oneness with spirit itself.

But the number of people that are then working with just meditative components and not so much shadow work or trying to integrate that with Western developmental psychology is indeed sort of the entire panoply of the world's mystical traditions and we find them in the East and we find it in the West, we find it of course in Zen and Vedanta and Taoism and in the West we find it in Sufism and Neoplatonism and Kabbalah and certain forms of centering, prayer and Christianity and all of these are designed to take awareness beyond it's ordinary, conventional, egoic orientation and open it to a radically vast, open, infinite super-conscious domain. And by whatever name this

super-conscious domain is called, whether it is called Brahman or Allah or Vishnu or Shina or Dharmakaya, that is a person's true and fundamental and ultimate sort of identity and for the world's great mystical traditions. Not the world's dogmatic or standard sort of mythic orientations, but the world's contemplative, mystical practices. The discovery of this awareness is the ultimate goal and aim of life and it is the aim of spirituality itself, of course. And Eckhart made it pretty clear in his book, The Power of Now, that he had a spontaneous awakening to this super-conscious state, to this timeless, present moment and so that's part of why he can speak with a great deal of authority about the state itself, but what he doesn't emphasize enough is that for most people, it really does take practice.

BH: Absolutely. Well, you mentioned shadow and in case people that are listening, some of them aren't quite sure what we mean by that, why don't we kind of explain what shadow is and I know right before we started recording we were talking about the fact that this shadow material is one of the things that can kind of pull a person out of being in the present moment, out of this now space. So, lets describe a little bit about what shadow is and some of the integral ways of dealing with it.

KW: Right because what you start doing when you start paying attention to the now is that you realize fairly immediately that when you're resting in the now, when you're really just giving pure awareness to the pure present, most of life's difficulties seem to evaporate. It's really true that you are free of the past and free of the future and open to this pure present and the pure present seems to have no boundaries and is wide open and is free of most anxiety and free of most depression and clearly that's a place where one would like to live and certainly the mystics agree. But as you start doing that as a practice, you will notice that okay, "I'm aware of the now moment, I'm aware of the now moment, I'm aware of the now moment" and then at some point, you'll realize you are not. At some point you have lost track. At some point you got caught in thoughts of yesterday or thoughts of tomorrow or some distraction.

So what causes that is an important aspect to look at when we are doing any type of integral practice, any type of integral spiritual practice, is to try to understand what factors cause me to fall out of this now moment. And there are at least two that are really important and one is the shadow, and the shadow is any unconscious or dissociated material from one's self that you have pushed out of awareness, tried to deny, tried to project or dissociate and it could be feelings of anger, could be feelings of jealousy, could be feelings of sexuality, it could be power drives. At some point in the past, these became uncomfortable feelings and so, you know, in a typical sort of Freudian way, we push these out of awareness and we tend to project them onto other people. "Oh, I'm not angry, but that person over there is angry," or tend to displace them, tend to have these feelings show up in disguised, morbid, uncomfortable forms and so what happens is you're paying attention to the now and you're paying attention to the now and you're paying attention to the now and all of a sudden you're not, and one of the reasons you're not is that you are caught in shadow material.

The shadow is something that was formed yesterday and so it pulls you back into the past. So, you're going along and maybe you meet somebody that reminds you of your shadow elements and all of a sudden you reactivate the shadow and all of a sudden, you're out of the now and that's one very powerful thing that makes staying in the now difficult. So, one of the ways that we want to work with that is in the integral life practice and Integral Life Practice Starter Kit that Integral Institute makes available, there's an entire section on working with the shadow and that works with identifying shadow material and dialoguing with it and then identifying with it, reintegrating with it so that you take it back, make it part of yourself, integrate it and then can let it go and then literally transcend it and not have it be this source of pulling you out of the now all of the time.

BH: So, why don't we give a couple of examples of this so people know more concretely what we are talking about.

KW: Sure. Let's say that you have a great deal of anger or aggression and it might be towards your boss or your partner and at night, you have a dream where there's a monster trying to attack you and essentially, although it could come from many sources, this monster is in fact, your aggression, your anger projected onto another form, projected onto somebody out there and then that anger seems to be directed at you instead of you being angry at the person because you're having trouble with anger and you're not supposed to be angry and nice boys and nice girls don't get angry. So, instead of getting angry at the boss or angry at your partner, you project it and it shows up then on other people or other forms. It shows up in dreams where they are attacking you. So, the monster is after you. The monster is angry at you. The monster wants to eat you and so what we would do in shadow work is take any image from a dream that is very, very powerful, very disturbing and this can be positive stuff too, you can project your positive qualities and then basically sort of be romantically falling in love with qualities that are actually a part of yourself and that happens a lot too.

BH: But disowned in yourself.

KW: Yes, exactly, but in any event, what we do is take these images and they can be people during the day or dream images at night and we basically identify them and then we put them in a chair, we imagine an empty chair, we put the figure there and we start talking to it. So, I would talk to the monster. "What do you want?" And then I would take the role of the monster, talk back to myself. "I want to kill you," and then go back and forth, back and forth, becoming more and more comfortable identifying with the emotions that this monster is possessing and then finally, once that comfortableness has occurred to some degree, then you simply identify with the monster. I am the monster. I have this anger. I am angry at the world and once that identification occurs, than that anger tends to be released and tends to dissolve actually on its own and so, that's just a kind of quick example of…

BH: Yeah, so if it was a boss then maybe in the conversation with the boss, the boss might say, "I really want to control you. I want to be in charge of you. I want to make you do whatever I want you to do." Those sorts of things, you know, whatever the dynamic is and then finally you take those qualities yourself. "I really want to control everyone. I'm really pissed off because my life is not under my control," and so on.

KW: That's right and once you can identify with those qualities, recognize them in yourself, befriend them, then they tend to take on a much, much softer texture and they become much, much less problematic and much, much less likely to be projected and then 'cause once you have a world full of your own projections, then it is very hard to stay in the now because any time, you know, your boss or your partner or monster-like figures come into your awareness, you lose track of now and you're off and running with these projections.

So these psychological, unconscious aspects are one of the primary items that pull you out of now awareness and so they're one of the primary things that we want to work with and we also know that it's important to work with shadow elements because you can make a fair amount of progress in now awareness and yet still not have taken care of shadow elements and so we know a lot of people that are, you know, long-term meditators and still have, really, severe shadow issues and so they're just sort of forcing attention over, ignoring those shadow elements and what we want to do is just acknowledge them right up front, get in there, befriend them and re-own them. So once that happens, then also you can stay in the now and make progress in resting in the now and in a much, much more stable and efficient way.

BH: So, one of the things that really keeps people out of the now is this unresolved shadow stuff and one

way to describe this for people to make it even more clear, I think, would be to say, if there are people who, you know, you're always bugged by a certain kind of people or a certain kind of situation, there is probably a shadow aspect of yourself involved and the same thing could be said about if you always feel attracted to and you're kind of putting on a pedestal or idealizing a certain characteristic in people, that could be a positive shadow part of you, a part of you that you have disowned and pushed down. And both of them are very valuable to work with and both of them could keep you from being able to be in that now moment, including the positive projections.

KW: Yes, that's exactly right and both of those are really important for you to spot and to notice and to work with and one of the easiest ways is at the end of each day, just review the day and in your own mind's eye, think of who it was that bothered you the most and who it was that attracted you the most and those are two good images to work with in this shadow technique and the same thing when you wake up. Just review the dream state and see what images annoyed you or frightened you, terrified you even and then on the other hand, which things you found incredibly, overpoweringly attractive. It's not to say that the boss isn't controlling. It's to say that if you... But other people don't get upset by the boss being controlling. Why do you get upset? You will get upset if and only if, you are projecting your own controlling aspects onto the boss and so, it's not to say that these negative and positive aspects aren't really out there in the world because they certainly can be, it's that if you also have these and you project them onto these people, then you'll see twice the amount of stuff that is out there and that's what's going to bother you.

BH: Yeah, if you're triggered by these kind of people and other people that are around you aren't triggered by them, they're noticing those people, but if it is not a shadow aspect for them, they just notice them and they don't go nuts about it.

KW: Exactly. Exactly. So, that's one of the things that you want to keep in mind when you're working in the now and working with that.

Another aspect, which we can mention, is a little bit more complicated, but it is a relatively simple idea and that is people that start working with now moment often leave out an important factor because what they'll start to say is things like, "Well, if everybody lived in the now, then the world would basically be without problems because it's people that aren't living in the now that are living the past, living the future, creating anxiety, creating all sorts of negative emotions and they take those negative emotions out on the world and that's where all of the world's problems come from." So, if we just all lived in the now, then all of our problems would be essentially taken care of and what that overlooks... And that's also very common in the world's mystical traditions. It's just, if I can live in the now, all problems are solved, but this is where another important discovery of the West needs to be added to a truly integral or comprehensive picture of my own spiritual practice, if I want to actually make practice, and that's the notion that there aren't just states of consciousness, like being in a state of now awareness, but there are stages of consciousness. There are structures of consciousness and these develop. States of consciousness generally don't develop, although if they are trained they can, but states of consciousness are things like waking, dreaming, deep-formless sleep, not ever present now awareness and those states of consciousness tend to come and go.

Structures of consciousness, on the other hand, tend to develop. They develop in stages and one of the first Westerners to point this out and discover this was Jean Gebser and he called these stages, which are stages that actually humanity have gone through and stages that individuals go through, even to this day. Everybody born today goes through these stages and they are archaic, magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic and integral and what happens there is if we actually look at these stages of development and we look at the

mythic stage, that's the stage of traditional values, of fundamentalists and the notion that, you know, Moses really parted the Red Sea and Christ was really born of a biological virgin and so on, but those are the basis of traditional values. Rational stage is the basis of modern values, modern science, modern scientific research, the modern Western enlightenment and so on. Pluralism is the basis of post-modern values and that includes, you know, multiculturalism and multicultural sensitivity and relativism and pluralism and so on. And those three stages right there are the basis of culture wars in our culture.

"So, whatever stage a person is at, if they have an experience, including the experience of the now moment, they are going to interpret that now moment from the stage that they're at."

It's basically traditional values versus modern values versus post-modern values. And so what's going to happen there is all three of those stages, people can be at all three of those stages and get in touch with a now moment and they're still going to be coming from those stages. So, it's important to recognize that what the world needs is not just having people get in touch with the now moment, but have people develop through these stages.

BH: Absolutely. Absolutely. So, whatever stage a person is at, if they have an experience, including the experience of the now moment, they are going to interpret that now moment from the stage that they're at.

KEN WILBER: Exactly.

BH: And so, why don't you describe kind of how each of those three stages would interpret that kind of a now moment transcendent experience?

KW: Yes, somebody at the mythic, fundamentalist stage would interpret this as an experience of absolute truth given to basically one and only one group of people because the traditional stage of development is very ethnocentric and so it believes in God's chosen people and it tends to be very militaristic and very patriarchal and somebody having and experience of the now moment and they're at that stage, they're going to experience it as a truth that is given just to a certain set of individuals and a truth that depends upon belief in the Bible, for example, or if it happens, if there's a fundamentalist experience in Islam, then it's a fundamentalist belief in the Koran and you have fundamentalist Buddhists and fundamentalist Hindus and so on. And so that's a very common and actually 70 percent of the world's population is at these ethnocentric or lower levels of development.

At the rational, modern stage, somebody experiencing the now moment is going to interpret that as the reality underlying the entire world. They're going to interpret it as a ground of being. They are going to interpret it as something that is true for all people regardless of race, color, sex or creed and they're going to interpret it as it being the same for all people, that it is a universal and this is something that would be very, very strongly believed in.

When you get the next stage, the pluralistic stage or the post-modern stage and somebody has a strong experience of the now moment, then they're going to experience that as being truth, but truth for them and they're going to maintain that other individuals, other sentient beings could have a different type of experience of this now moment. That this now moment would show up in different forms and in different ways and it is not universal because there are no universals for somebody

at the pluralistic stage. So, even though they're having this powerful, powerful experience, when they come out of it and interpret it, they're going to interpret it as still being pluralistic.

So, these are examples of what happens when people have these experiences, but they will interpret them to the stage they are at and the important thing is that all of these early stages of development all have one thing in common and that is they believe that their value structure is the only correct value structure that there is. So, the fundamentalist believes that his or her fundamentalist values are the only ones that are really true and the modernist believes that modern, scientific methods and modern rationality are the only methods that give actual truth, real truth and the others are all wrong and the post-modernist, the pluralist, believes that even science is no more real than poetry and that all truths are relative and so they believe their truth, that all truths are relative, is the only correct truth anywhere in the world.

Well, what happens when you get to the next stage, which is called an integral stage or the integrative stage is that that's the first stage where individuals who are at that stage realize that all of the previous values have some important place. They have some important role to play. That they are fundamentally important and that they exist for an important reason and that they're part of humanity's development. So the integral stage finds room for all of the previous stages and understands that all of them are necessary in terms of overall growth and development and so in a sense, the way we would sort of summarize the ideal situation for a person is that they would be fully ensconced in the now moment and do so from an integral level. Now that combination is something that would give us a chance for world peace, but having individuals at the pluralistic stage or at the modern stage or at the traditional stage, having those people have pure now experiences is not going to guarantee world peace because all of those values are at war with all of the others. All of those values still believe that they're the only correct value. Everybody else is wrong and that will guarantee warfare, even if the person is living from the now moment. So, we want to supplement, be in touch with the now moment, but when you interpret it, interpret it from the highest structures, highest stages that are available and right now, those are called integral.

So, it's two things, two types of growth that we really want to pay attention to and one is the sort of vertical growth through these stages of archaic to magic to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral and then another kind of growth into the now moment, but doing just one or the other of those, leaves out an enormously important part of the human condition and an enormously important part of your own liberation.

BH: Now, another little detail that we probably should throw in here is that people go through these stages in order. You cannot go from mythic to integral for instance. You have to pass through each of the stages, so in some cases, you know, we're looking at someone who might be at mythic or rational or whatever and they have to, you know, there are certain things developmentally they have to do to go through the process of moving through those stages.

KW: That's exactly right and these stages and sometimes, you know, in our post-modern world where nobody likes to be told what's true, you know, and nobody likes being told what to do or that they have to do something, people sometimes get riled up with the whole notion of stages, but these kinds of stages are part of what's called Growth Stages or Actualization Stages and these are different than dominator stages. Actualization Stages are the way nature grows. An atom, to a molecule, to a cell, to an organism. Those are four good stages. Those are actualization stages and each one builds upon the previous one. Each one, in a sense, transcends and includes its predecessor, so molecules transcend and include atoms. They actually embrace them, they actually love them if you want and the same with cells. Cells transcend and include molecules. They actually embrace them, they

physically envelop them and that's what happens with true stages. In the archaic to magic to mythic to rational, those stages, each higher one, embraces the previous one, but just as you say, stages can't be skipped. You cannot go from atoms to cells and skip molecules and that's because they're ingredients of each stage. So these stages are, indeed, something that are the way that we grow, they're the way that we actualize, they're the way that we increase our perspectives and they can't be skipped. They are an invariable sequence of actualization.

BH: And one of the keys here is what you just said, perspectives, that each new developmental level has a wider, more inclusive perspective. So, say a little bit about that too.

KW: Yes, that's one of the things that we found to be most extraordinary about what I'll go ahead and keep calling this vertical growth scale and that's the fact that one's perspective, one's identity expands with each of these major vertical stages of growth and what that means is in the early stages, archaic and magic for example, individuals there can only take a first person perspective and that means they are narcissistic and egocentric and can't really take the view of another person. They can't put themselves in somebody else's shoes. But that happens at the mythic, the traditional value and so it expands there from a first person perspective to a second person perspective.

The second person perspective means that you can take at least another person's perspective. So, your identity at the mythic, traditional, fundamentalist level expands from just a single self to a group or a tribe or a nation, but only that far and so that's why the traditional values tend to be ethnocentric. It expands just to my people, not to all people, just to my chosen people and so that's why the traditional value system, wherever we find them, tend to be ethnocentric and then when you get to rational level, it expands from second person to third person and a third person essentially means universal. So, starting with the rational stage of development, individuals are looked at and judged according to world-centric standards, not egocentric, like archaic and magic and not ethnocentric like traditional, but world-centric and that means that a person is judged regardless of race, color, faith or creed.

So that's another expansion of perspectives and we find the same thing continuing into the higher stages and so these vertical growth stages are so very important and very important to world peace, very important to our own growth and our own freedom and liberation because they give us more eyes to look through. They give us a wider identity in every case. They give us a larger scope for care and compassion, one's capacity to love increases dramatically as these perspectives increase. One's capacity for compassion increases dramatically as individuals move through these stages of increasing perspectives and so again, you see, you can be at the fundamentalist stage and have a complete, full, now experience and you will interpret, as we said, according to ethnocentric standards. And so the importance of having these vertical stages added to states like now moment is important because both of those are the ways that we mark our freedom.

So we don't want to have individuals going around living from the now moment, believe that they are plugged into the absolute and yet be only at, let's say, the traditional level where their absolute is just going to be ethnocentric. It's just my chosen peoples are the ones that realize this and nobody else does and as a matter of a fact, we know there are several mystics that are very aggressive and war like and ethnocentric. They are perfectly aware of the timeless now moment. They are perfectly plugged into it, but their vertical stages of growth are not as high as they could be and so that's why we want to be careful about in praising either one alone. Many Western developmentalists praise and work only with these vertical stages of development and they work only with archaic, magic, mythic, rational and so on, and they have no concept of a timeless now. They have no concept of pure presence and no concept of a supreme identity of the self with a grounded being

and so, both sides can be at fault in not taking the other side into account. So, we have two major ways of growth available to human beings. One is through these vertical stages and one is through these horizontal states. Both of them are crucial. Both of them are absolutely crucial.

BH: Now, this brings to mind, for me, a couple of questions that I want to ask you. One of them, certainly you're not saying that it's not useful or desirable to for someone at some of these lower developmental levels to have this experience of the now and obviously, or very likely, many of the people who have read Tolle's books or have heard these lessons online that Oprah has created with him, are not at this integral level of development. They're at one of those other three that you mentioned. So, in a practical sense, if someone is listening to this and they're saying, "Okay, I'm at this rational level or I'm at this pluralist level." What would they actually do in a practical sense then to work with what you have just discussed?

KW: Well, that's where we have basically, we have to look at all of the information that Western developmental psychology has developed in terms of what helps people to grow and develop vertically through these stages and this part is kind of a long conversation because it gets very sophisticated, but basically what it comes down to is what's called challenge and support: that the individual needs to be exposed to things in their environment that challenge the level they're at and support responses for the next higher level.

BH: Which expands their perspective.

KW: That's right and so, what we've done in the Integral Life Practice Starter Kit is include the largest number of practices that have shown to help with this vertical transformation. So, we have included those in the package along with those things that help people to get in touch with the now. So, we have included techniques for basically both of those and let me just say that one of the things that does help with vertical growth, not always, but all things considered equal, meditation itself can help. It doesn't automatically cause it because if it did, all mystics would automatically be at the integral level and a vast number of mystics are at the fundamentalist level, frankly, or at the scientific level, but it is a strong way to help with vertical growth and so that's why things that help with spiritual practice can help vertical growth. Other things are required as well, but that can be very helpful and so doing things like Holosync, doing things like Big Mind, these can be very powerful ingredients in an integral, transformative practice, in an overall practice that helps people move their perspectives upward. So, I would just toss that in as individuals can start by, you know, getting the Integral Life Practice Starter Kit or going into some of these meditation practices, but just with the idea that increasing perspectives are a necessary part of the growth process.

BH: Right and I'll just give a little commercial here for the Integral Life Practice Starter Kit because I have recommended it myself to thousands of people and I think it is probably the most sophisticated collection and easy to use collection of practices out there and that if people want a very easy to use way to really begin to implement and embody the things that Eckhart Tolle is talking about and some other things that we're adding to that discussion, this, what we call ILP Kit, Integral Life Practice Starter Kit, would be a great way to go.

KW: Well, thank you.

BH: And at the end of this, we can sort of tell people how they can get that. Now, my second question that popped into my mind is that I am suspecting that a lot of the people that have run into Tolle through Oprah, are probably of the Christian persuasion in some way. You know, whether they are at mythic or rational or pluralistic or perhaps even some of them at integral and particularly with traditional, mythic Christianity, which is the Christianity that most people come into contact

with, even though it may be a sort of a softer form of it in some cases, not a really hard fundamentalist form of it, there are things in Christianity that seem to be at odds with some of what Tolle is talking about. You know, the whole idea that, okay, Jesus can be in this state, but you know, he's the great exception, not the great example and so, I'm guessing that there are a lot of people who come in contact with this and it's a little bit of a, you know, they are trying to integrate how can I fit this into the beliefs that I already have and I just thought it would be a good idea to address that because I get letters from people who are a bit confused about that and I'm sure a lot of people who are listening may be thinking about that.

KW: Yeah, it's true and it's something that does need to be addressed. A lot of individuals up through and including the traditional stage of development, the mythic stage of development, do have this view that one person can have this state of consciousness, but nobody else and that is a belief that we don't find in the mystics, East or West, and it's something that is in many ways the product of a political choice through the Catholic church because there's many cases of prophets and saints and individuals that are recognized to be essentially in communion or in union with God or Godhead and what the Catholic church did was basically in a, kind of a political move, say that, "Well, wait. Only one person was in that state and that state is salvation and we, the church, control access to that state." And so just there, right there, was a power move to, in a sense, make that the graces from that state available only through certain rituals and certain practices that the Catholic church itself 100 percent owned and that took place, that was not present in the early teachings, certainly not of Jesus, and slowly codified over the first 3-400 years of the Catholic church's growth.

BH: And though the Protestant denominations today don't express it exactly that way, there still is this implicit thing that Jesus is the great exception.

KW: Right and there's... You know, I mean, you can even find, even in the Synoptic Gospels, you can find statements like, "Let this consciousness be in you, which was in Christ Jesus that we all may be one." And so, there were even hints of this that got through and made it through even the orthodox, you know, versions of this story, but if you look at it around the world, it's a staggeringly unanimous decision, which is that the capacity for any individual to get into this state of consciousness is the birth right of every single individual alive and that having it taken away and given to just a single person as dramatically as it was done with Jesus of Nazareth, it is just out of wack with the great, great wisdom of humanity on the whole. So, it is true though that many modern Protestant individuals have a hard time with that notion and it's something that they just have to work with, they have to study a little bit, have to open their own awareness to and then make that decision for themselves.

BH: You know, one of the political statements that you talked about is kind of the idea that we know what the truth is and we're going to tell you what it is as opposed to a competing idea, which is a developmental step or two further down the road, which is that you could go and find out for yourself. You could do some sort of experiential practice and find out for yourself what's going on in the universe spiritually and so I think that's what we're kind of saying to people is that rather than having somebody hand you truth, you know, in a book or something, there are practices, and this is partly what Tolle is talking about, things that you can do so that you can experience this same thing that Jesus and a lot of other people have talked about. And that is kind of a shift for people to think, "Gee, instead of having somebody tell me about this, I could actually do it, experience it myself." And that's partly what the Integral Life Practice Starter Kit is about. That's certainly a lot of what Holosync is about is that you can experience these states for yourself and once you have the experience yourself, your whole perspective on it changes. I mean, that's one of the things, I think, that does open up a person's perspective. Even having

that transcendent, now moment experience at a lower developmental level does do something to open a person's perspective and prepare them, hopefully, to make the next developmental shift.

KW: Yeah. Yeah I agree entirely and I think that one of the things that we've seen over the last 30 years is an increasing shift to just that kind of understanding and that type of desire in an enormous number of individuals that have come from the previous understanding, which is 'here's truth, we are giving it to you, you know, swallow it just like this, it's a dogma, it's a creed. If you believe the myth exactly the way we tell you, then you can live in heaven. If you don't believe the myth exactly the way we tell you, then you are going to hell.'

BH: You are in big trouble.

KW: That was sort of, you know, religion. What's happened over the last 20-30 years is that now, although 60 percent of the American population remains churched, in other words, they go to church or synagogue on a regular basis and more or less buy into the dogma that's presented to them, although even that has loosened up a lot. 60 percent do that, but a full 20 percent now actually call themselves and refer to themselves and will use the phrase, spiritual, but not religious and that's exactly what you're talking about. Spiritual is a direct living experience. It's not religious, which is dogmatic and fixed and, you know, this mythic membership, traditional, fundamentalist approach and that 20 percent is a huge, huge chunk of the population and they are looking for the reality of experiential tasting and testing and most of the world's great mystical traditions are experiments in consciousness. They are ways that you can do these particular practices and if you do them consistently, you will have the following kinds of experiences and that's what people want. They want to check it out themselves and they want the real, live experience that the original mystics themselves had and that's what can be done in doing these kinds of things and so that's, you know, it's one of the reasons that we, you know, we appreciate that Oprah's having Eckhart and has had several other individuals on that are basically talking about spiritual, but not religious.

BH: Yeah and I suspect that a lot of the people that are attracted to this through Oprah, are those people that consider themselves spiritual, but not religious.

KW: Yeah, I think so and then fortunately, some of the people that are kind of religious are going to start thinking about getting spiritual and breaking out some of the dogmatic forms that they have been locked into.

BH: Right and people tend to remain in those dogmatic forms as long as they work in helping them to make sense of their life, but at a certain point, if they don't seem to work very well any more, that's when people at first are kind of, feel a little lost and then they begin to figure it out and that's a developmental shift happening.

KW: Yes it is.

BH: So, let me throw something else in here because if we look at the next developmental level, the rational level, you've got a lot of people that look at what Tolle is saying and certainly he's not the only one saying it, but we're kind of focusing on this as a platform, they look at that and they just sort of poo-poo it as being kind of light-weight, airy fairy, sort of stuff and this is another trend that's happening in the world where there is sort of disowning of internal, subjective experiences. There's a shift happening where there is a lot more credibility being given to those and you've been, I have to say, one of the people who has really spearheaded this in the culture. So, lets talk about that a little bit for a minute.

KW: The shift from the traditional stage to the rational stage is indeed a shift from essentially taking a second person perspective, which means your ethnocentric in your perspectives and your identity, to a third person,

which means you open up to universal truths and you judge people regardless of race, color, sex or creed and it was the emergence of that stage of development in a 100 year period, the rational stage of development completely outlawed and banned slavery from every rational, industrial country on the fact of the planet. That's the first time in history that slavery had be outlawed by any societal type. You find slavery in tribal, horticultural, agrarian societies. But because of the third person, world-centric fairness found in the rational stage of development, things like slavery were outlawed. Things like feminism came into existence all during about that 100 year period in the 1800s and one of the interesting things is that it started out and it was an increase in capacity for introspection in a scientific level was an increase in capacity for turning within, looking within, exploring within. That is one of the reasons things like psychoanalysis was invented during those periods and then something happened starting right around the 1900s and it is about 1920 in this country, we got a complete, what I call, flat land approach, which is science stopped looking inward and began looking only outwardly and that is a disaster. The last great psychologist in this country to write about inward states of consciousness was of course, William James, who was just a genius.

BH: And that was 100 years ago.

KW: It was 100 years ago and we then had this entire waste land of nothing but behaviorism all the way up until the '60s and then we had the explosion of, you know, anything from psychedelics to Eastern forms of spirituality and slowly a reopening of science to looking at interiors, but it's still, it's still taken as, like you said, science says to look at the interiors as a little bit woo-woo and a little bit, you know, not quite to be trusted, but we made an enormous number of gains over the last couple of decades compared to the previous past century, which was just absolutely nothing. So, it's with the continuing input of meditation studies and meditation studies using things like CAT scans and PET scans and really sophisticated brain imagining, slowly there is a coming back and an accepting of some of these interior, the realities of these interior states of consciousness, which is extremely important that that happen.

BH: Absolutely and so, I just brought that up because, you know, there's the one objection to all of this is it's not the truth of our group and it's not been handed down by this guy and, you know, and then there is the whole idea of not investigating it yourself and finding out for yourself experientially what's going on and then the other one is just that, well, it's not objective. It's not observable on the outside and I think one of the big contributions you've made is you've really got a lot of people to understand that everyone has a subjective, internal experience and it's just as valid as the objective side. It's a different perspective, but it is there and it is valid and it is repeatable too.

KW: Right, exactly and that there are types of interior experiences that are repeatable that are in that sense, public that can be passed on and passed down and so that is part of the integral approach, integral theory and we've had some success with people who have indeed, scholars have opened up to that idea and so I've been glad to report that that has had some effect in opening up this frontier.

BH: Well, and there's still plenty of people who are adamant that all of this stuff continues to be woo-woo, but that's the way things are. Nobody believed Galileo for quite a long time too. So, one other thing I thought we might talk about a little bit, which we've woven into this already is the idea of practice because, I mean, you can read Tolle's, either of his books and follow some of the instructions he gives and you can get into this now moment. People, also, when they listen to, or read the book, or listen to someone like Tolle, who is coming from that place, sometimes they almost sort of get what we used to call a contact high back in the '60s and '70s where they find themselves going into that place.

So, there are ways to get in there, but we want to do

more than just sort of have these short visits and that's where having some sort of a daily practice comes in because, you know, most people that I've talked to about this say, "Oh, my mind is going all over the place, it's running constantly." So on and so forth and I know from having done 35 plus years of meditation, it's very possible to get to a place where your mind is not running all of the time, where it's pretty much silent unless you decide to use it for something, which is something Tolle discusses. That's the result of practice. This getting into this presence that he talks about is something that is difficult for a lot of people and it only is something that can happen for a few moments, so having a daily practice is really the doorway to making this something that you really embody for longer and longer periods of time and it becomes your natural state. So, I thought we could just chat about that a little bit here before we wrap things up.

KW: Right. I mean, it is paradoxical in many ways and the world's mystical traditions are aware of this and the paradox comes in the fact that the awareness, that's aware of the now moment, the awareness that is one with pure nowness, is known by many names, but it's basically the awakened mind, it is the liberated mind, it's Big Mind, it's pure awareness, it's consciousness per se, and that pure awareness, that Big Mind is in fact ever present. The awareness of the now moment is ever present and it's something that people right now, whether they realize it or not, there are sounds happening around them, they are automatically hearing these sounds. People are hearing the sounds of our voices. You don't have to make any effort. It's coming straight out of the now. You are aware of the now moment right now. That's all you are aware of right now. If you have a thought of yesterday, that thought occurs right now. If you have a thought of tomorrow, that's not tomorrow, that thought of tomorrow occurs right now. The only thing you are ever aware of is the timeless present and so you don't have to do anything to get into that state. It's not hard to get into that state. It's impossible to avoid.

BH: You can't get out of it!

KW: You can't get out of it! So, on the other hand, there is still, while you are not fully aware of the fact that you are always in it, then it does indeed seem like you are out of it and so that's the paradox and in Zen, it's called things like the gateless gate, where it is something you are going through, but not really and so there is a gate there, but not really and practice is the gateless gate. Practice is what you're going to do to pass through something that you have never really needed to pass through, but without working, without practicing, you still won't fundamentally wake up to the ever present nature of this awareness and so practice does become important and it's even though there are thousands of mystical texts that talk about, you know, Buddha-hood without meditation or Christ-consciousness without effort and, I mean, Krishnamurti spent his whole life saying, "You know, there's no technique, nothing, it is absolutely already present." Well, all of that's fun, but that happens only at the end of years of practice. I mean, those texts in the mystical traditions are given to only the people who have, you know, been meditating for a decade or two so that they can then see that the meditation was, in a sense, preparing the ground, but it's not necessary for bringing into being that which is always already the case, that is which ever present, that is which 100 percent present right now, but it is that paradox. It is that gateless gate. Zen masters call it selling water by the river.

BH: Right. You can't grab hold of it and you can't get rid of it. That's another Zen saying. You know, Tolle had this spontaneous awakening and that does happen from time to time and one of the things that people are interested in spiritual practice and awakening have been trying to figure out for, you know, several millennias, 'okay, what's the surefire way to make sure this happens?' And it turns out there is no surefire way to make sure this happens and there's a lot of sort of reasons for that, but that we don't have time to go into, but one of the things that you've said that I thought

was very, you know, one of your better bon mots is this idea that being in that present all of the time, rather than just having visits because you decided to pay attention to the now moment as Tolle is talking about, is an accident. However, meditation makes you more accident prone and I think that really does sum it up very well. Nobody has figured out a surefire way to get into the state where you are ever present in that way, but a lot of people do arrive there and almost all of them are people that have done meditation and other practices, generally, for many, many years.

KW: Yes. Yes, it's true and one of the things that we're increasingly finding ways, and many of the traditions, particularly the Tibetan Buddhist tradition have ways, they're called pointing out instructions, which can help people see this ever present nowness very, very quickly, within, you know, just an hour or two of working with somebody who knows these pointing out instructions. And of course the Big Mind process, which I know you will be talking with Genpo Roshi about, is a modern day version of these pointing out instructions that can help, within really an hour or so, give people a direct realization of this nondual, ever-present mind, but then you still need to practice and you still need to anchor it. You still need to develop the muscles, so to speak, that allow this awareness to register and so the spontaneous occurrences that happen are great, but we can't let that... It's a disservice if people think that all they have to do is sit around waiting for that thing to happen. That's just sad. Get down, pick a practice. They are any number of ones that work and just get started and the day will come, sooner rather than later, when you will be having this ongoing understanding and these series of sort of 'experiences' and that will be great. Just get started.

BH: Yeah and these experiences generally are some form of really what Tolle is talking about where you get your mind out of the past, out of the future and into the present, but it's a little bit more structured way of doing it. So you might be sitting and for instance, watching your breath go in and out and so when you do that, you are in the present moment, and then what happens is you get distracted by something, thoughts or you will hear a sound or your leg hurts or whatever and then you realize, "Oh! I'm not with the breath anymore." And you go back to it, but it's done in a structured way and these are the sorts of things, and there are many, many such practices that cause a person over time, all of the crap in their mind that keeps pulling them out of the now, begins to become more quiescent and then you're left with, as we talked about earlier, you're left with this shadow material that isn't addressed by meditation, but there are ways to address it. So, I mean, I'm bringing this up of course because I really want to encourage the people who are listening not just to read Tolle's books and say, "Wow! I sure like these books and it sure feels good when I do this a couple times a day for two minutes, I'm going to think about being in the now moment." That probably ain't going to do it. You know? You're going to need some sort of a practice and of course, I of course would ask that people consider using Holosync and I certainly, highly recommend the Integral Life Practices Starter Kit. Why don't we tell people how they can get one of those?

KEN WILBER: Sure, you can go just straight online and go to MyILP.com and just order it straight from there. So it is MyILP.com.

BH: And I know you guys have some sort of a money back guarantee on it or something. So, if people can get it and try it and if they for some reason don't think it is for them, they can always send it back. We have the same thing with, you know, Holosync, a one year money back guarantee. In fact, with Holosync, people can get a free demo CD of it and try it before they even decide to buy the thing.

KW: Yeah, well, we're all fans of Holosync over at Integral Institute and certainly recommend that as one of the options for the spiritual module or use it in addition to the thing. Yeah.

BH: And I think one of the great things about this ILP

Kit, the Integral Life Practice Starter Kit, is that it gives very lucid, clear description and instruction on how to do a lot of these practices and that's one thing that is missing, unless you have a direct relationship with a teacher, which is probably not a bad idea to have anyway, but, you know, there unfortunately, is a lot of, let's just use a technical term, bullshit out there about spiritual practices and the brain trust of people that you have that collaborated to put this together is one of the most spiritually advanced, most conscious, most intelligent groups of people in this area anywhere in the world. And so people can really have a lot of confidence that that kit really is giving them the straight scoop on how to do a lot of this stuff and, you know, it just allows you to really accelerate your progress and more quickly get to that place that a lot of people have become turned onto because of Oprah and Eckhart Tolle.

KW: Well thank you very much. I certainly agree. We've got an extraordinary number of, I think, just the world's finest meditation teachers as well as Western psychologists and putting that all together was exactly what we wanted to do. So, I appreciate your comments on that. Definitely.

BH: So, before we wrap this up, do you have any last words you want to put out there for people?

KW: Just that it's important now as we, you know, go into forms of practice and forms of taking charge of our awareness and our consciousness, that we do have a comprehensive approach, that we're not leaving out some really important issues and that in other words, we've just taken a little bit more integral approach to what we are doing and it is kind of a spiritual cross training to get all of these factors in and it at first sounds like it's more complicated, but it actually turns out to be the simplest kinds of practice you can do to wake up because other practices that don't include all of these factors, don't work. So, they just don't stick and so integral comprehensive and effective is basically the rule of the day right now and so I would just encourage people to remember that as they are on their own good paths.

BH: Yeah, there's so many things about the Integral Life Practice Kit that we didn't have time to talk about, unfortunately, but you're right. It is the most comprehensive road map for waking up. That's for sure. Well Ken, I really appreciate you being here and talking to everyone and to everyone out there listening, until the next time we are together, please be well.

Thank you so much for listening to this conversation in our Mastering Eckhart Tolle's The Power of Now series. I know this information will help you to master the ideas Tolle is sharing with the world. To thank you for listening, I have a very special free gift for you. As I've worked to master and implement these amazing ideas in my life, one of the most powerful tools I've used is Holosync audio technology, which, when listened to using stereo headphones places the listener in deep states of meditation, literally at the touch of a button. In addition to many mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits, Holosync creates an ability to focus your mind so powerfully that manifesting what you want becomes easy. I'd like to send you a free Holosync CD so you can try it yourself, along with a free Special Report explaining how it works and all the amazing benefits it has created for the nearly 300,000 people around the world who have already experienced it. To get your free Holosync CD, simply click here **http://www.centerpointe.com/FreeDemoCD/** or call 1-800-945-2741 and we'll send it out to you right away.