

Hello, Robert.

I am Sergei, and I have just recently discovered your book. It is a very good read, and I resonate with much you have to say.

Before I ask my questions, I'll tell you a little about myself. I was a Christian for many years, like a really serious Christian, basking in the "certainty" it gives you in this and "the next" life. But eventually, all my faith crumbled, but not the desire to get some kind of "system" that would explain the world to me. I still spent a lot of years in the pursuit of Truth.

I tried yoga, non-duality, all kinds of stuff. But more and more I realized that I cannot know anything for sure. One of the heavy blows I got was from Robert Anton Wilson and his talk about reality tunnels and Korzybski etc. So now I find myself empty of any belief systems. I can play with some of them, but I cannot take them seriously.

So the question is how do you live in this emptiness? On the one hand, I get a lot of clarity seeing through all the games people are playing, political, religious, spiritual, and whatnot. On the other hand, I lost all kinds of ambition and drive for life. I do not want to invest myself in the business of life. I work to make enough money for my family, but I do not have any career ambitions. I actually detest any career gimmicks. I lost the desire to save people (like I wanted in Christianity), I do not see any grand plan for my life designed by God or any Supreme Being.

I am kinda just wondering through life, enjoy some little things: TV shows, bike riding, etc. I used to pursue people, looking for friends, now I am fine with myself and my family, and communicate with people only when they seek my company. Well, I guess you understand what I am trying to say. So how do you live now? How do you cope with all this emptiness of notknowing?

I remember listening to Jordan Peterson who says that we need some kind of story, myth, narrative to go through life. It sounded cool, but I realized that I do not have the narrative and I don't know how to get it. Do you have any such narrative? I am sorry, I feel that expressed myself a bit clumsily, but I would love to hear from you.))

:) Hello, Sergei—Good to hear from you. Thanks for your appreciation of my writing.

The idea that one can know "Truth," which is a core principle of most so-called "spirituality," does not stand up to scrutiny. This inability to ascertain bedrock knowledge can be seen on many levels. Any system of knowledge must rest upon at least one axiom, usually more, so if one accepts the axioms as true, then a series of "Truths" may be derived, but that is entirely within the system and dependent on belief in the axioms. Another system with different axioms as starting points will generate different so-called "Truths."

For example, to see Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life," which is a Christian "Truth," and to believe that "no one comes to the Father except through [Jesus]," which is another Christian

"Truth," one must first accept as axioms the proposition that "God the Father" exists and wants certain things, that he produced a son--his one and only son--by immaculate conception in a human woman, and that God specifically tasked this son with the job of saving humanity from sin. If one does not accept the axioms, Jesus' message is only a bit of philosophy and rules for living, not "Truth."

Having seen through the spiritual axioms--you mentioned "nonduality"--the so-called "Truths" of which, to me, are not necessarily true, but are simply points of view. Many people who embrace "nonduality" as indisputably true, seem, like Christians, driven by a need for certainty. I don't blame them, but I'm not like that. I am not certain of anything except that as an apparent center of awareness, I seem to exist. Beyond that, any ideas about what all this is, how it got here, where it is headed (if anywhere), or what any of it means, are simply conjectures, not "Truth," and I feel freer and more honestly myself without them. That's just the way I am. Other people are the way they are. In my view, no one chooses any of this, including the way one is.

When I first saw this--no choice, no doer--the experience was, as best I can express it verbally, something like "Wow! All of this is here, including myself, and I am not making any of it be here."

At the time, I had come to some notice as a photographer—New York shows, publications in the right magazines and journals, collectors, all that stuff. Until the sudden wakeup, I was deeply engaged in making a career as an artist. Soon, it became apparent that the ladder of fame I had been trying to climb was leading nowhere I wanted to go, but to delusion.

I had seen through the "myself" who wanted to feel important and admired. What followed was more schooling and then twenty years working as a psychotherapist in which I had no fame, and was only important to one person at a time—the one sitting in my consulting room. I felt better in that role and kept to it.

Now, I am retired and spend my time doing whatever I like. Mostly, the things I like are simple things: walking around with a camera, doing a little writing, playing with donkeys and cats, cooking, and in the evenings, a movie on TV with my beloved or a night out listening to live music--things like that.

Beyond needing food, clothing, and shelter, and perhaps a few other items that make life interesting, I do not see any great importance in what one does or doesn't do. But that's just me. If someone else is on a mission, I can respect that to the extent that I respect the mission. We all must think what we think, feel what we feel, and do what we do. I don't see any of it as a choice.

Jordan Peterson? From my perspective, a high IQ know-it-all with a big mouth.

I don't know how well this addresses your question. LOL

I wish you all the best,
Robert