(though English), and that we were most likely to ask someone like this to arrange the objects on the table. His unconscious would then present typical associations for Ireland, viz. Waterford glass, hunting whips and spurs, a Norman castle, then the same ruined, bogs and wild rocky coasts, Vikings, illuminated manuscripts, and wolfhounds. A single experiment like this, of course, can lead to no conclusions. The results, however, are encouraging and suggest that further experiments would be worthwhile.

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REMEMBERING OR SELF-REMEMBERING: AN ESSAY REVIEW OF CHARLES TART'S *WAKING UP—OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES TO HUMAN POTENTIAL**

by SUSAN BLACKMORE

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

Waking Up is an important book. It is about how people and consciousness and ways of being in the world can be transformed by hard work and consistent determination to face 'how things are'. It is about ways of 'waking up' out of the 'consensus trance' in which most of us live most of the time; about stopping the 'stupid suffering' which is miscreated by entranced people.

Tart begins by quoting (and badly misquoting, though I have corrected it here) Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*. This book is about learning to see again that fresh and glorious light.

Much of what I am going to say will sound highly critical. So I want to make it quite clear at the outset that Tart has taken on a supremely difficult task; that of bringing contemporary psychology to bear on spiritual development. He gives to it a wealth of his own experience and valuable insight. But in doing so he opens himself to all kinds of problems, objections and arguments.

Tart starts, and indeed spends nearly half of the book, describing that state of 'consensus trance'; how it comes about through automatization of all our thoughts and actions; how our parents act almost like hypnotists in training us to pass for normal in a world in which normal means asleep. Tart's contention throughout is that there is a way to wake up. We could be truly awake all the time if only we knew how, and if all of us were awake the world would be a better place.

His premise is crucial but I found this whole section somewhat repetitive and dull. It would have been greatly lightened by more clues to the ways of waking up which follow. The rest of the book is devoted to these practices, including self-observation, self-remembering, working alone and in groups, and with teacher. Finally he talks about selecting a spiritual path and about reality and God.

* Shambhala, Boston, 1986, xvi + 323p. $17.95.

I can say no more without mentioning Gurdjieff. It was Gurdjieff who said that most of the people we meet on the street have been dead for years. He was the inspiration for much of Tart's work and the book adheres more or less closely to his teachings. But I have to say I often wanted to shout 'tell me what you found, not what Gurdjieff says' or 'forget that dogmatic teaching and tell me what to do'. I almost felt that only the least secure and most dubious ideas were backed by theories of Gurdjieff's. The clearer and more realistic ones needed no such bolstering. Often I don't know whether I am criticising Gurdjieff (which I am not well qualified to do) or Tart himself, but I shall try to be as clear about this as I can.

I would like to challenge two fundamental assumptions of Tart's work. First he equates 'waking up' with enlightenment. He argues that one can be more or less enlightened and that enlightenment is a higher state of consciousness. Here he goes against the more usual notion of enlightenment, derived from Buddhism; that it is some kind of total change, a stepping outside of, or complete freedom from things like personality, self, suffering, greed, and indeed states of consciousness. It is indescribable, even though people (like me) try to say things about it. Readers should be aware that Tart is not talking about this kind of enlightenment.

Second, he follows Gurdjieff in insisting there is a 'real you'; an 'essence' which can be uncovered. He uses Gurdjieff's analogy of the horse, carriage and driver; the emotions, body and intellect, which can work more or less well together but ultimately are controlled by 'the master'. All this seems tempting to our individualist culture. We like the idea that we have a real self if only we can observe, create or nurture it. We like to feel that we are, or could be, in charge of ourself. But isn't this just another illusion?

Tart talks about false personality and essence but it seems to me that in the arguments over nature and nurture, modern psychology has long faced the impossibility of finding pure essence in personality. We can create 'higher' selves, ones above the more stereotyped habitual selves and able to observe them but they are still constructions. Only in letting go of notions such as 'the master' in charge, the 'essence' to be uncovered, can we see our true, constructed and ultimately empty, nature.

So my differences with Tart are quite fundamental. He argues that enlightenment is a gradual process, achieved by observing and remembering the self. I suggest that it might only be attained by letting go of the self. To explore these differences I want to talk about personal experience. This is not perhaps normal in a book review, but then this is not an ordinary book. Tart emphasises that much of what he says can only be understood by personal experience and therefore I wish to meet him on that level. Just as he will leave many readers puzzled, so may I. But I do hope that some (and especially Tart himself) will enjoy the possibility he has opened up of doing something like state specific sciences (see Tart 1972); writing while self-remembering, for reading in self-remembering, for learning about self-remembering.

Tart suggests three basic practices for 'waking up': self-observation, self-remembering and 'sensing, looking and listening'. They relate to Gurdjieff's four levels of consciousness: sleeping, consensus trance, genuine self-consciousness and objective consciousness. He starts with self-observation. You can train

yourself to observe your own actions and thoughts and every other aspect of yourself, moment by moment. Most of us do not do this very often. When we do, we feel more awake and can easily kid ourselves that we have been awake all along but in fact we are constantly being distracted by events and trains of thought which we hardly notice until we step outside of them by self-observation.

I decided to try this for one month (having practised persistent mindfulness before). I did the 'morning exercise' every morning as a way of starting the day sensing, looking and listening and this I found moderately helpful. I had enormous initial resistance to the idea of self-observation which I duly observed as instructed. Of course I may not have been self-observing correctly, but I followed the book's suggestions as closely as I could. What I found was a vast and complex self revealing itself and acting 'before my eyes'. I had strange experiences of feeling as though my own face were staring at me as I walked or dug the garden or talked to people. I observed emotional reactions, physical reactions and complex ideation. But I found the whole process enormously depressing. I confronted the unpleasantness of my ordinary self and its endless tricks and foibles. I found that the super-ego attacks Tart had described did indeed happen and I observed them. But I found them pointless and unpleasant. Above all I found that creating another self to observe all the goings on of the rest just seemed to clutter everything up still further until I was a mass of observed confusion. I suspect that in the end one may be able to let go of the self so created or perhaps the whole structure may collapse into emptiness, but as for the necessity of creating it in the first place I am not so sure. I wonder whether one needs all that indulgent harping on about self? I would ask—if one really is able to 'remember' all the time should one use that inestimable skill to remember self?

I would contrast this with another way: that of 'being in the moment'. This might be closer to Tart's 'sensing, looking and listening'. It entails remembering (all the time and in every moment) to be alert to everything going on, whether internal or external, loud or quiet, important or unimportant, nice or nasty. As I have practiced it, it entails letting go of all complex thoughts, reactions, comments and opinions as soon as they arise; not just observing them but letting them go.

In just sensing, or being in the moment, there is no dependence on self nor on essence; no clinging to the notions of a master in charge. There is (in the end) only a succession of events, of things arising and falling away. If this is practiced persistently it rapidly reveals the non-permanence of self and the constructed nature of the world. It can give rise to quite a different way of being in the world. Where there is no clinging to future and past there is no selfish desire, for self is a construction which depends on looking forwards and backwards in time. When all attention is on the present moment self has little relevance. When there is no encouragement of thoughts and judgements, they drop away—there is no more 'if only . . .' 'what if . . .' 'it might have been . . .'. There is no ever more complex clutter but an expanding sense of spaciousness, emptiness and peace. It doesn't sound very human does it? But that, to me, is the paradox. How letting go of so much can give rise to so much in the way of compassion, love, acceptance, clarity and freedom from suffering. Tart does not talk much about letting go.

So compared with this alternative Tart's path is not an extreme one. It does not require the student to drop everything, to let go entirely of self, but it is,

nevertheless, very hard. Indeed it is probably precisely as hard as being in the moment and for the same reason; that forgetfulness is our natural state. I think Tart could have made it clearer just how hard it is. I suspect that people may give up when they find this out for themselves; when they find it arduous, frightening and lonely they will not believe that they can be doing the right thing. In fact it isn't waking up momentarily which is so hard, but staying awake. Not lapsing back instantly into distraction is what takes all the skill. And if you don't realise how very hard this is, you can easily be discouraged.

Tart also claims that one needs a teacher or a work group. I am not sure about this, although he is confirming what most teachers will say. In the end you have to do the work yourself. You have to face your own aloneness and emptiness and though others may greatly help you, they can also foster your illusion that you are not alone and that others can do it for you. In the end I think one needs only two things; the motivation to awaken and a technique to follow. Tart provides both of these in his book and I am sure it will help a lot of poeple to see their own dissatisfaction in sleeping and to try to wake up—however painful the realness of the world as it is can be.

One final difference concerns the objective of all this hard work. Tart says that in consensus trance 'We already believe we are genuinely self-conscious, that we know what we are doing, that we make our own decisions, that we understand our own minds, that we are one. These particular illusions are especially pernicious, for if we don't know how much we lack genuine unity, self-consciousness, self-understanding, and volition, it doesn't occur to us to seek these things' (p 214).

I agree wholeheartedly with Tart's diagnosis but I am not so sure we have to 'work very hard to create (these) faculties'. Yes we have to work very hard to awaken but to awaken to what? In the end I think we can only awaken to the realisation that these must all be illusions. Self and other are only made separate by the action of thinking. Unity is an illusion fostered by the functioning of an intact brain, as reseach on split brain patients has revealed (Gazzaniga and LeDoux 1978). True self-understanding is not of the kind 'I am essentially a greedy person who likes hurting people' or 'I am a very kind woman with long black hair and a lovely family'. It may include these things but is more likely to see such aspects as just part of the flow of the whole universe; neither to be blamed nor worried over, nor even to be observed for long, but only to be accepted and let go. And as for volition, the illusion that selves 'will' things is dispelled by being in the moment. There comes a state in which actions just happen, apparently spontaneously. Responsibility seems to extend far beyond the boundaries of self and compassion arises naturally (and without Tart's complex formula of combined teachings). This may be what Tart refers to as the action of higher centers but I suspect they are not so much 'centers' as natural ways of acting which emerge when illusion is let go.

Finally I would like to set this comparison in the context of states of consciousness. I have often argued that we can begin to understand altered states by asking what is a person's model of reality (Blackmore 1986)? The process of self-observation encourages a model of reality including a self and a meta-self; a complex and full construction. That of being in the moment and letting go encourages simpler non-analytic models. If the limitations on the contents of

consciousness are the compexity of the model sustainable by the system, then the former will produce little change in content beyond adding an overview. The latter, by greatly simplifying all processing and especially the construction of self, may allow for the integration of all kinds of barely processed input. This might account for the dramatic changes in the quality of consciousness and the impression of seeing things 'as they are'. Arguably a total transformation would only come about if there were no model of self at all.

I have described an alternative to set Tart's work in a perspective which makes sense to me and perhaps to others who have tried these and similar techniques. From this viewpoint his suggested path of self-observation looks not only painful but unproductive. However I must emphasise the limitations of making personal comparisons. Different paths suit different people and for some my comments may be wholly inappropriate. Inevitably I speak from very limited experience and so risk the charge of being too personal and subjective. However, Tart understands both the value and limitations of working with personal experience and that is one of the great strengths of this book. We may look back on our current flounderings as very primitive indeed, but I do hope we may at least look back on them as the beginnings of a science based firmly upon the best of contemporary psychology and dealing with personal experience and spiritual development. In this endeavour Tart will surely be seen as a pioneer.

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