

Matt Kahn - BATGAP Interview (#105)

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{BATGAP theme music plays}

Rick: Welcome to Buddha At The Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer and my guest this week is Matt Kahn. Welcome Matt.

Matt: Well thanks for having me. Great to be here.

Rick: Yeah, I met Matt out at the Science & Nonduality conference, along with his wonderful partner, Julie Dittmar. And my immediate impression of Matt is he is this bundle of love and energy! Within seconds after you meet him he's giving you a big hug, and really an enjoyable guy.

And speaking of enjoyable, I've been listening, as I usually do, to recordings of you throughout the week. I often do that in preparation for the interview I'm about to give, and interesting stuff. I mean, you have an interesting blend of sort of, nondual message, but on the other hand, you have stuff that would make nondual peoples' hair curl, you know? All kinds of embellishments and richness of relative consideration of psychological, emotional issues, angels and all kinds of things.

Matt: Of course!

Rick: Yeah! And that actually resonates with me. I'm not your plain vanilla nondual type of guy. I think that that level of reality is perfectly valid, but there's also a whole range of other possibilities, which you could dismiss as illusory, but which have their own significance, their own value.

Matt: Yeah, and in touching upon that, which we can in so many ways, I think what's very interesting because I've, you know, having the honor to speak in front of many nondual audiences as well as many mystical audiences, which is always an interesting play, because some of these audiences are focusing on one aspect of the journey.

And I think, what it feels like I'm here to do is to be a part of integrating and bringing it all together into a much bigger picture and possibility, where everything can be equally included, where we don't have to necessarily embrace one possibility at the exclusion of another.

And I think one of the biggest things that we can look at is looking at how, kind of, segmented or segregated a lot of the aspects of spirituality are - that this school of thought talks about angels, and of course this other school of thought talks about that being illusory, and there's one self. And of course there's this other side that wants to improve the self.

And I think that when we find ourselves experiencing things from a very integrated way, we find that only in our own direct experience can we actually know the truth, but to also recognize that the truth and the way it manifests, is unique for every individual.

So to say that one teacher teaches the truth, is going to exclude the possibilities of how the truth unfolds for you. [It] may be a[a] completely refreshing and new [way] that many have never heard or considered before.

In the direct experience of truth, what we actually come to see is that the truth, and when I say "truth" I say truth as a pointer to truth seeing itself. That seeing doesn't see illusion. It can see the label of illusion, but that seeing doesn't actually see illusions. Seeing just sees. And so the truth of just seeing seeing, just sees experiences.

So just as I can say I see you right now, is the exact same experiences as I've had with angels and ascended masters. Of course, knowing that you and I have this dialogue and conversation, is just as much a play of consciousness, as speaking with ascended masters and angels on an etheric realm of reality.

And so if we are to see that it's all one play, and no matter what floor of experience we're talking about - it's not really all a play, but it's a play that does not actually involve any form of illusion. Because if we were just to see from the truth of seeing, we would see that no one is being eluded.

Rick: I find it convenient to use physics as an example. I mean, out at the Science & Nonduality conference we heard a couple of physicists speak, and you know, a physicist will tell you that Newtonian physics - the level of obvious cause and effect - has complete validity and it's all been worked out in great detail mathematically, and so on.

The quantum mechanical level completely has its own rules, which don't apply on the Newtonian level, and vice versa. But neither one invalidates the other.

Matt: Right, and if we are going to investigate this journey and not just to trust the words of a teacher, and then become the salesman of other peoples' findings; if we are to be our own investigators, if we are going to dare to see for ourselves what other people inspire us to look and see for ourselves, then we have to begin with an innocent intention that everything is valid.

Because if not everything is valid to being explored equally, we're never going to know the truth if we're entering into the exploration with such ideas or assumptions that already exclude the possibility that could show you something that quite honestly, maybe no one else up to this point has seen this way. So we have to begin with the assumption, with the intention, that everything is valid.

Rick: Yeah, yeah, you're probably too young to remember this but back in the 50s and early 60s, there was a commercial on television for Certs. And the way it started...was these 2 twins were arguing with each other. And one would say, "Certs is a candy mint." And the other would say, "Certs is a breath mint." And then this disembodied voice came in and said, "Wait. You're both right. [Rick clicking his fingers] Certs is 2, 2, 2 mints in 1!"

And so it's a humorous way of illustrating the point you just made, which is that it's not either or, you know?

Matt: Right, and when you said that the 2 Certs - the 2 mints in 1 - that to me reminds me of the physiological basis for awakening, that when someone is experiencing what they call "separation", or "ego consciousness", it's because the left and right hemisphere of the brain are in an argument.

And when we actually go through an experience of awakening, it's when the left and right hemispheres of the brain - whether spontaneously, suddenly, or gradually over time - come into a harmonious balance, to where the left and the right aren't arguing side versus side, but are actually able to be in a state of natural balance or equality, that of course then allows the consciousness perceiving through this form to see what it sees as clearly as that balance takes place in the brain.

Rick: Yeah, and I heard you refer to in one of your recordings, to having had some EEG research done on you...

Matt: Yes.

Rick: And of course there's been a lot of other EEG research done, extensively on people who meditate, and so on, and they do find that the pattern of the functioning of the brain is transformed during deeper, more transcendent, higher states.

Matt: Yeah, and it was interesting in the EEG - not only did it measure my brain waves, but it measured the brain waves of a participant that was sitting with me, because we wanted to be able to scientifically measure the transmission of energy that comes through the words I speak, when I do offer what I offer. And we found that when we were sitting together, in the beginning, that their brain chemistry was in one place and mine was in another, and that as I began speaking and transmitting, because I - when I speak it's a transmission of energy - their brain chemistry began to harmonize in the frequency of what mine was already at.

So we were able to see that, and it was pretty interesting. And there was also a part of my brain that we found that is in a permanent sleep state. And so the researchers were looking at the fact of, maybe because that part of my brain is just asleep, that allows me to transmit and be in this space of transmission all the time.

Because my experience of "awake"- if you want to call it that - isn't an experience of something that comes or goes; it's an experience that has been realized, but it's an experience of

something effortless, that is always there, that has nothing to do with a practice or a procedure, or that any experience in my life, or any experience, actually gets in the way of.

Rick: Right.

Matt: And so of course, it's about allowing us to look so deeply in our experience so we can see in ourselves, not only what is the deepest truth of who we are, which of course is just looking at what in ourselves doesn't change in time, but to see that that which we're indivisible from actually doesn't, is in no way limited or obscured by anything in experience, but it is just seeing each experience in the deepest, most intimate way.

Rick: I wonder if we could use this brain example to probe a little more deeply into the word "transmission."

Matt: Yes.

Rick: 'Cause... how about this? Just as there was nothing physically going from your brain into that person's brain.

Matt: Right.

Rick: In the same way, when you say 'transmission,' it's not so much that - correct me if you disagree - that some woo-woo rays are being transmitted from Matt to so-and-so, but rather that there is a resonance or an attunement which takes place, which kind of brings the other person into alignment with that which is already there for them, but which they may be a little out of tune with.

Matt: Yes, yes. So if we're using the example of a radio, I'm attuned to a frequency. And another radio sits with another radio, and soon the other radio starts to be attuned to the same frequency, and play the same frequency of sound that the other one is.

Although I will tell you, just for the sake of sharing experiences, I will tell you about an experience that I can't really explain. It was a pretty profound experience. I was doing a session with someone and it was a very intense session. And it was around this idea of letting go and really just surrendering and letting go. And she got to this point of really intensely, you know, "I can't let go. I don't know what letting go means. I can't."

And there was this intensity between us building and building. And out of nowhere, again, I can't explain this, what I can only describe [as] felt like a lightning bolt shot through my eyes and hit her in what we would call the 'third eye,' and she fell over.

And at that moment you know, of course I was thinking, [says it singing]..."Hope you're O.K."

And so I sat there for a second going, "What just happened?" Because again, it was so sudden, spontaneous. And then of course she, in a bewildered state sat up, and from that moment

forward was seeing life in a totally different perspective. And for her, that was a deep, profound awakening experience. Of course, you know, I didn't push and button to make that happen.

Rick: Right, it just happened.

Matt: But I can tell you, I've had experiences of the woo-woo rays. So I will tell you that that also should not be excluded. Because not only have I had the woo-woo rays shoot out of my eyes at people, to create the most profound opening, but I will also tell you that I had the woo-woo rays shot at me. It actually happened when I met Ram Dass.

Rick: Mm-hm.

Matt: And interestingly enough, I was hit with the woo-woo rays through Ram Dass, and then I was the one that shot them at someone else afterwards, so that happened first.

Rick: Yeah.

Matt: So when I met Ram Dass, he and I met at a retreat and he and I had a connection. And we had this moment before the retreat. And he just looked at me and out of nowhere, again, this blinding bright light shot out of his eyes and hit me in the third eye. And in a bewildered state I wandered back to my seat.

And you know, mind was completely empty, and my mind was completely empty before that, but it was just a deeper, more exaggerated level of that emptiness, and that "I don't know".

And then again, a few months later is where that happened with me and that other person. And so again I will say, even though I do agree that when I say the word 'transmission,' it is an attunement to where the energy that is radiating through this form is just giving the person, the people in the presence, a chance to attune to that same frequency and then being able to experience it different, or how a life sees, or to be able to explore it in a different way. But again, but not to exclude that the woo-woo rays live.

Rick: Oh I'd have to agree with you there too. And there's our cat pokin' her little ears.

Matt: Oh, hello cat.

Rick: She had a rough day. We had to take her to the vet's.

Matt: Aww, blessings to your cat.

Rick: She's doin' O.K. But I'd have to agree with you, it's another one of those "both, and" things. Where, you know, the first statement is true, the second paradoxically different statement is also true, and both are parts of a larger wholeness.

Matt: Mm-hm.

Rick: And you know, take examples of batteries. I mean, people become surcharged with subtle energies the way batteries become surcharged with electrical charge. Or clouds, you know? And at a certain point there's a discharge from one cloud to another, to use your lightning bolt example.

Matt: Sure, absolutely.

Rick: And then there's sort of an equalization of energies...

Matt: What I also find though, just in when I've talked about this, and I've had experiences of sharing these kinds of experiences in nondual audiences, when I've been asked about it, but what I find is, and again, this will sound very funny, but you'll know what I'm talking about - of course everyone listening will know, is that you can be in a nondual path, which is wonderful, I think it's all beautiful because it's all relevant, it's just a matter of how long you spend in one path, whether or not you're aware of "I'm here for this and it's time to move on."

And of course the irony is that at every stage of your development, whatever you've learned before, not only isn't relevant anymore, but what you may encounter next may even contradict what you learned before.

And I find a lot of people who become - this is a contradictory statement – become conditioned to nonduality. And then when you speak about something like this, it's either rejected, or what I find is that there's an interesting element of... underneath it all of actually being afraid of experiences, that when we're in the nondual reality we have come to a deep truth, we revere the teachers who speak such deep truths, and it leads us to think that that's the end-all-be-all.

And then we wind up defending those words at the expense of experiences that can take us well beyond any realm or scope of understanding.

Rick: Yeah, well I think that a lot of times in contemporary nonduality, there's a tendency to become conversant with the terminology, and to perhaps mistake that fluency for the experience to which the terminology actually refers.

Matt: Yes, yes.

Rick: And when understanding isn't fully grounded in experience, fundamentalism creeps in.

Matt: Absolutely, and what I see a lot of, is a lot of people who can speak very eloquently with certain usage of words, but although, for me, as just someone who's always had a very intuitive sense, my intuitive sense is that I feel into peoples' words, and I can feel whether or not it's grounded by experience, or grounded by learned conceptual knowledge.

And so my interest, whether I'm helping someone in whatever school of thought they're in or, you know, at whatever stage of development someone's in, my interest is in giving direct

experiences, so that one can be their own source of wisdom and insight. Metaphorically speaking, I'm just here to be a flashlight and they're the one walking on the path.

Rick: Oh I totally agree. I mean, reading a cookbook doesn't satisfy your hunger, you know?

Matt: That's really funny.

Rick: And these guys, you know, the people we all revere as, sort of, the bright lights of nonduality, like Shankara and Ramana Maharishi, you can bet these guys weren't just parroting words; they were living in a truly nondual state, which encompassed and engulfed everything.

Matt: Sure, right.

Rick: And that's why you find them all to be so comfortable with paradox.

Matt: Yeah.

Rick: With recommending all sorts of things which might not sound very nondual, but might be appropriate for a person at that particular stage.

Matt: What's very interesting is that when you, when there is a deep awakening, when it becomes an abiding, living reality - it's not just, "I've awakened to the truth of existence," but it's being a living embodiment of what's been realized, then the paradox is really hysterical.

And what happens is, is that you begin to be a living transmission of a certain depth of understanding, and yet your living experience is being totally free of all forms of understanding. And I think if that's not recognized, then the words that people speak can be very confused as to where the words are leading one to explore.

And so when we're really rooted in a deep realization that's not only just cracking the door open, but fully stepping through the door into the unknown, we are completely free of understanding. Therefore, the words that we speak aren't because people need to know what I have to say, but they become almost a celebration and a decoration of what's been realized, in whatever unique way this form is going to express that realization.

And so a lot of times there could be the gathering of insights, the gathering of words, concepts, and yet inevitably you're only gathering the concepts to eventually throw it into the fire, just so that you can experience what I call the "final surrender," which is freedom from understanding.

Rick: Hmm, and just to probe that a little bit, freedom from understanding – would it mean not understanding or would it mean, just sort of, having a fairly generous dose of appreciation of mystery at all times, in addition to whatever you could actually articulate in concepts?

Matt: Right, I would say freedom of understanding is freedom from the need to understand.

Rick: Okay.

Matt: So it doesn't mean that you won't understand; it means that at every moment something will be understood, that may only be relevant for that moment. And that in every moment, what will be understood will always come to you, and if some understanding doesn't come to you, then there's nothing more that you need to understand. And so the freedom from understanding is actually really an invitation into the experience of acknowledgement.

When we say the words "direct experience" - direct experience is an experience of acknowledging. And so for example, when we see each other right now, we can acknowledge each other, but we don't necessarily need to have any kind of understanding in order to see one another. So the acknowledgement is there prior to understanding.

And even if we think in a societal view, if we think in everyday material, not so spiritual world – whatever people call it, even when we come to the rescue and aid and assistance of other people in the awareness of complete uncertainty, any act of heroism doesn't come as a direct result of understanding, but is an immediate impulse in response of acknowledgement, of seeing.

And so the understanding is just a decoration and celebration of infinite possibility. [It] is the ability to comprehend and to *fathom* how infinitely potential the potential happens to be. At the same time, it is the need to understand, hold on to what you understand, or to seek a further understanding that actually gets in the way of the simplicity of just acknowledging what is only here to be acknowledged.

In fact, one of the deepest realizations in the path, is that the need to understand will never free you from the need to understand, but will only lengthen the ability for you to need things to understand. And then when that breaks apart, we find an invitation into the simplicity of acknowledgement, which is just seeing what I see is only here to be seen.

Rick: So could we, for instance, use the words "freedom from the *need* to understand?" Would that be a good way of saying it?

Matt: Sure, absolutely.

Rick: And would another way of saying it be, "freedom from the need for certainty?"

Matt: Um...yeah, freedom from the need for certainty, but freedom from any need for certainty is actually the death of doubt. So what's interesting is if we really look into all of the levels of certainty that exist in words and teachings, those that have the need to be most certain are the ones that have not confronted, or have not faced their own inner doubt.

And of course as children, we see that with the mentality of bullies, and we see how the opposites operate in such an interesting way. So I would say that...because if I said, "It's freedom from the need for certainty," someone might hear these words and then try to not be certain in their life, and that won't address the doubt.

And so I would rather point people towards the source of certainty, which is doubt. And then if we really face the doubt, the doubt is an invitation into making contact, into acknowledging our own innocent nature. That it's our willingness to be in communion, or in relationship, with acknowledging the various aspects of our own innocent nature that actually not only unravels the doubt, but leaves us nothing to be certain of other than the willingness or ability to embrace and acknowledge whatever appears.

Rick: Would you say, maybe, that the need for certainty and the addiction to certainty, in some ways, is an attempt to mask the fear of not knowing, the fear of doubt? I mean, people do crazy things based upon certainty – they fly airplanes into buildings and they do all kinds of horrible things to each other because they're certain, they feel so strongly that this is the right thing to do, that they go ahead and do it.

But in my own case, I find myself... in a way, again, paradoxical. Because in a way, there's a greater certainty and a greater assuredness and so on, that grows. But counterbalancing that, there's kind of a comfort with uncertainty, or not knowing, or not needing to pin things down.

Matt: Of course! I don't think people are afraid of uncertainty, really, because if they are, they'd be afraid of their ideas about uncertainty. Which of course the irony is, being afraid of your ideas of uncertainty is just more known, or more imagined certainty, so it's not really uncertainty.

I don't think people are even afraid of doubt; I think people are afraid of facing the doubt that's already there.

Rick: Right, right.

Matt: So I think that what people are afraid of, if I were to be perfectly honest and just feel into the question, is the doubt. And again, everything that we find within ourselves is not an enemy; it's really an ally.

So the question is: what do I do when I face doubt? So if we knew what doubt represented and what it invites us to do, it may not be something to steer away from. Because when people feel doubt, they feel vulnerable, and then they feel more susceptible for threats, or that what they have could be taken away. And then the impermanence of everything starts to kind of, really turn up the heat in our experiences.

But really doubt is an opportunity to face the most vulnerable part of ourselves. And if we can acknowledge and recognize that any part of myself that I face – and when I say 'part' I don't mean that we're all fragmented but, you know, just different colors of the rainbow – but if when we find that sense of doubt within ourselves, that is the innocence within ourselves that wants to be loved, wants to be embraced, but remembers either not being loved and embraced by those it wanted to be loved by, or that the love that it let in was either taken away, rejected, or somehow lost in some moment of impermanence.

So I find that the basis of doubt is really a conflict of “I want to open up and receive love and be loved and love others, but I’m actually afraid of losing what I give, or losing what I let in, or being further rejected in some form of way.” So it’s really just the wanting of love and being afraid to receive it, simultaneously, that I find energetically creates the basis for doubt.

Rick: Yeah, interesting. For some reason, as we were talking about this, the example of a religious fundamentalist came to mind. I’ve never been one, although I’ve encountered a few. I sort of have been one, in a sense, back in my meditation movement days.

You know, there’s this sort of underlying attitude that... “This belief structure that I’ve bought into, or been born into, or whatever, is the right one and everything else is the wrong one. Mine is better. Those people are deluded. I’m going to heaven, they’re going to hell.” And there’s kind of a-an effort required to cling to that, because there’s so many things which constantly challenge it, and that’s scary.

And so [in] some of these groups you’re told, “Don’t think too much,” you know, “Don’t read books,” “Don’t listen to people,” because, “Thinking is the devil just trying to get you to just sort of, loosen up your tightly held beliefs and so... hang on tight.”

And so that’s an extreme example, but I think there are degradations or shades of that to every degree throughout society. Perhaps we can all identify a little bit of that in ourselves.

Matt: Sure, absolutely, and to me it all comes down to so many philosophical viewpoints; the comparing, the contrasting from one extreme to the other - you’re right, I’m wrong.

For me, the basis for what people call “ego,” I call the “dream of denial”. And the dream of denial is basically a game called ‘I’m right and you’re wrong,’ or it can also be where the ego turns on itself and it’s ‘You’re right and I’m wrong.’

So a lot of times when we’re seekers, what we’re seeking is ‘I’m the one that’s wrong, and the teacher’s the one that’s right. And I’m seeking to be like the teacher and be their salesman, and promote their teachings, and fight against people who I think are wrong, because I’m right - on behalf of the teacher.’ Or, ‘I’m the one now who’s realized what I’ve realized, and I’m right and you’re all wrong!’

Apparently - and this is not really all that fun - but apparently, one of the more alluring fantasies in ego is being the one who knows it all, living within a kingdom of infinite morons. Now I will tell you that that is not the greatest amount of fun, because the basis for all these teachings that we talk about, whether we frame them as nondual, or we frame them as esoteric, it all brings you to a place of discovering within yourself, the reality of love. And then to celebrate the reality of love through an intimate relationship that not only reflects how you relate to yourself within one body, but how you relate to yourself as the infinite reflections and encounters of what we see as a world.

And when I say 'love,' I don't say 'love' as an emotion; I don't say 'love' as the payoff of finding the perfect person in the world; but I say 'love' as the celebration of acknowledgement, or seeing Seeing itself, in one form or another.

So just when Seeing sees that it is only seeing reflections of its own potential, that's where love arises. And love is the equality of acknowledgement. So when we are seeing clearly, we are acknowledging everything with equality, we are recognizing everything through the equality of acknowledgement, and there is just Seeing seeing its own reflection.

Whether in an interaction between two people, whether as a baby taking its first steps in a brand new world of shapes and colors, whether as someone who awaits their final breath on the deathbed, or as someone planting flowers and seeds in a garden, it's all just Seeing viewing its own reflection and bracing itself within an infinite spectrum of possibilities, and that, that celebration of Seeing acknowledging itself throughout the infinite depths of equality, is what I refer to as the reality of love. Which if there is to be an awakening, it's awakening to that reality that simply decorates itself as body and world.

Rick: Hmm, that's beautifully put. As I understood that, as I was listening to it, I equated "Seeing" with, sort of, the Divine Consciousness or, Infinite Awareness, or Universal Intelligence, or God even, if you like. And if God or Divine Intelligence is really omnipresent – is not just sort of off in a corner, then it obviously permeates everything; it must be the seer, it must be the seen.

And this whole play, as one teacher put it, the Divine loses itself so it can find itself. It creates this whole fantastic universe as an exploratory tool for coming back and living itself as an embodied reality.

Matt: Um-hmm, and yet even the losing itself and finding itself, that in itself is another phenomenon *in* the play. Because in order for us to say that it loses and finds itself, is based on the labels we impose onto things that actually don't label themselves in that way.

If we were just to see this moment and just gather evidence only from seeing, we would see that there is actually no suggestion of "lost" or "found;" there's actually just seeing. So even that, as true as it is, is only true within the framework of a certain context or philosophy, which is wonderful because it's all equal, in consideration.

But to actually see that what keeps us, actually, from finding the truth on this path, is the assumption that something's been lost. And the reason why it seems to take so long for a lot of people is because they're trying to find what has never been lost, and they're trying to discover what they think remains unseen.

And yet when we come to a point of true sincerity and we say, "I'm just going to see what Seeing sees," we see that Seeing sees reflections, it sees objects. It sees objects that don't call themselves objects. It sees things that don't call themselves whatever we would call it, and it also sees whatever meaning or label has been imposed upon it, and when we can allow

ourselves to explore what this moment is like, to just see what we see, and see that it doesn't ask us to call it anything.

And so when we just see what's in front of us, without a need to refer to it the way it doesn't refer to itself, we gain vital evidence that has the potential to unravel every teaching we've gathered up to this point, but allows us to be a living expression and transmission of the teaching, and to confirm in ourselves what no amount of gathering and debating teachings can ever help us uncover – we actually just have to look at: if nothing that I see calls itself anything, what is this moment like when I just see? When I just acknowledge what I see and rest in that observation, what can be realized? What is present? What is being revealed to me, just in that simple invitation? And that's when I think things get really interesting.

Rick: Yeah, here is where I think though, we get a little bit into the description-prescription conundrum. Where a person, let's say, who is a very clear seer – to turn that into a verb, or noun actually – describes their experience and other people listen. And maybe their clarity of seeing is not so acute, there could be a lot of cloudiness, a lot of obtrusion. And they hear the other guy talk and it sounds good, but does that necessarily enable them to see it with the clarity that the guy talking has. I suggest maybe no. I mean, you walk up to the average person on the street and say what you just said, and he'll be like, "Okay buddy, I gotta catch a bus."

We were talking earlier about brain waves, isn't there something to be said for culturing the capacity of this mechanism to see clearly? And there could be, you know, a lot of gunk in the mechanism that needs to be purified? And I realize this whole idea of purification and progress is anathema in many nondual circles, but practically speaking it seems to be relevant.

Matt: What I would say is this: if one is teaching from a belief that things need to be purified, then it will be suggested things need to be purified. And then a world will appear to confirm the need for many people to be purified and to need that teaching, because it's just a confirmation of that belief.

At the same time, when one's heart has developed a level of sincerity, that sincerity may be willing to look and see things in a way that could be spontaneously inspired by what we call a "transmission," or just a simple instruction of looking to gather your own evidence.

So from my perspective, I don't actually think that one particular thing is necessary. Because when I sit in front of every person, or if I sit in front of a group, I'm just guided to say whatever that group or individual needs [me] to say, which is perfect for them. There may be a series of unraveling of things and that will lead to be true. That may spontaneously occur in one moment, that may occur over time, but I can say that it never is one way for any individual.

And at the same time what I can also tell you, is that the deeper game of spirituality, which is the deeper that any teacher or person who is teaching is living and embodying this truth, is the ease to which anyone who they're speaking with can have a deeper experience of realizing what life is like through their eyes, just in any conversation.

I mean, I've had experiences of talking to people, many years ago when I first started this path, using such direct descriptions and having them look at me like I'm talking a foreign language. In the last few months I've talked to people about bagels and they've erupted into realizations. That doesn't necessarily mean anything special or spectacular about me necessarily; it's just reflecting into a world how deep this realization and living reality has blossomed. Because again, as deep as it arises within oneself, the world just reflects back that clarity throughout the play of individuals.

So I think that instead of looking at what need to be done for a teaching to be effective, what I think is a more specific interest, is looking at how effortlessly others are able to awaken as a celebration of how deeply such teachings are, not inherited, but embodied by the one who's teaching them.

Rick: Okay, so you just referred then to evolution in your teaching ability, we could call it, over many years presumably.

Matt: Yeah.

Rick: Now, what facilitated that evolution? Why did you not just snap [Rick snaps his fingers] from initial awakening to the degree of depth and effectiveness that you have now? Why was there a maturation process?

Matt: Maturation process is [needed] because I came into this path knowing nothing about the path, and the maturation process was me learning about all the different pockets, and corridors, and games that I didn't know people were playing in spirituality.

Because I came into this path knowing nothing about it; I was just following my own intuitive guidance, and I started going through these awakening experiences. But I didn't know any of the words, I didn't read a book, I didn't know any of the formal teachings. I mean, I would have people come to me and talk to me about something called an "I Am", and for a year I had no idea what people were talking about, because my experience was just my own direct seeing and it had nothing to do with an "I Am" presence, or people talk about awareness.

And so I was present in all the sessions and times that I offered people, and I would spontaneously say things that I had no idea about. And I listened to all the things I said in sessions, not realizing that all the time I spent with people was also educating myself on the game that I didn't know spirituality was, and all the different ways people can get caught up in the certainties and the fundamentalism.

And so I see, if I look back, I see the maturing process and the gradual opening to all of this, as helping me to understand what I now have the honor to help other people through.

Rick: But it sounds like your maturation process was not just a matter of accumulating different understandings based on interacting with different people, but that there has been a profound maturation in your own depth of experience.

Matt: Absolutely, because in order for someone to help people through some of these deep stages, they have to have the most direct experience of what they're helping people through. And so, I've not only explored the understanding of what people can get caught up in, but I've experienced it as I am, which of course when you look at how life in the Divine experiences all expressions of life, the "I Am" is just the intimacy or the immediacy of how close the one is to all expressions of itself, right? It's not sitting in the theater watching a screen; it's actually *within* the appearing forms, experiencing the life of the character within the movie.

So I've had the most direct experience of all these experiences of awakening. I've also had very profound awakenings where, I mean literally, one experience I heard the sound of a loud popping in my head and then it felt like warm liquid oozing out of my ears. And at that moment, every memory of my life and every idea of myself was completely gone, and yet I had an ability to function in a world, but it was the most comfortable form of amnesia.

I was actually in a Target store shopping, and all of a sudden I walked and there's this pop that happened. And this woman actually came up to me, she was working at the store, and she said, "Do you need any help?" And I started laughing and I said,...

Rick: Get a mop!

Matt: Yeah, that's what I thought! "I don't even know what I'm doing here." I started looking at...it's like, "Why am I holding a hanger of clothes? Why would I buy this stuff? I don't need cloth. Why do I need this?" Nothing made sense, at the same time, there was a level of order within me that knew intuitively. So it wasn't like this completely chaotic experience. It was surreal.

And again, from that moment my life has been living in that surreal, empty reality. At the same time I've also seen that being that emptiness, realizing that emptiness, experiencing nothing but the infinite abundance of emptiness, that within that emptiness there is an intention for that emptiness to then celebrate itself throughout the decoration of form.

And what I find a lot of is in fact, people get into that empty state, and when they start to move back into form, they start to think it's the ego coming back, or they start to think it's actually them going backwards instead of actually completing the journey. So there's the emptiness, then there's the now-that-you-realize that at the very primal level there's nothing but emptiness existing. Now the emptiness wants to attend its own costume party.

And a lot of people I find in the nondual community, and in a lot of different communities, try to rest or be complacent in the emptiness, as if it's a point of attainment. And they actually keep themselves from fully completing the journey or closing the gap, as some people say, because they're not willing to then experience the emptiness simply through a decoration of appearance.

And again, there's been some very sudden things that I've experienced, namely my first one when I was 5 years old, and then when I was 8, and then throughout my life. At the same time,

it's also been very gradual in the sense of me being able to experience directly all the various nuances that come with this path that really, includes – obviously – realization. But realization is very widely spoken about, but it's really just the doorway.

Rick: Yeah, no, I have yet to encounter anyone who I honestly believe is not continuing to grow, and has not continued to undergo what we might call a maturation process. I mean, a lot of times the word “awakening” is used with a sense of finality, in kind of a static connotation like, “Whoa! Are you awake?”

How can you answer that with a sort of definiteness? You can say, “Yeah, but. Sure, but...,” - like the infomercials say, “But yeah, but wait, there's more.” And obviously there is some element which doesn't change and which in and of itself can't undergo any change or evolution, but as you were just saying, the expression of that, the embodiment of that, the refinement of the instrument through which that is lived - I can't see that there's any limit to the growth in that realm.

Matt: And why should there be? I mean, to think of awakening as being final is when we're thinking of it in terms of attainment. I think a lot of times why people want it to be final, and want to either claim that they've reached the final destination, or like to try to pick apart people who they think are claiming the final destination, is that we really seek a final destination because what we really seek is a fantasy of ‘I finally want to get to a place where I no longer obligate myself the right to believe I'm deficient in any way.’

So it's a fear of deficiency that creates the need to pursue awakening as a final destination. Whereas if I said to you, “Are you awake?” You are awake! That has nothing to do with the journey of being like a thousand-petal lotus, where every moment, every breath, is the unfolding of your own beautiful fragrance.

For me to imagine, or for someone who suggests that the journey ever ends, is not having an understanding of what's *on* a journey. What is experiencing a journey is experiencing its own never-ending potential, which is like listening to the harmony that only expands from one sound to the next. Why would we want the journey to every end?

What we really want to end is the seeking and the suffering, because we are in some way perceiving ourselves as something that is believed to be deficient. So if we were to see through the idea and belief of deficiency, we wouldn't necessarily think of awakening as the end of anything, when really it's just the beginning of our own exploration. It's the beginning of acknowledging ourselves in all forms. And it's the beginning of celebrating what's actually here, appearing throughout the decoration of such beautiful forms.

Rick: That's kind of what I was eluding to when I referred earlier to purification and progress. It seems there's a never-ending stream of evolution and at a certain point, as you're going down that stream, there's a milestone which you might call awakening, but then the stream keeps flowing. So it's not like it's a destination; it's more of a milestone.

Matt: And as a funny joke I would say, you know just to confirm, because we always have to confirm for ourselves what's true. Sometimes we say things – just very funny – that give offbeat ways to do that. Go into your backyard wherever you are or anyone, sit with a tree, ask the tree to let you know when it's finally arrived, and sit and wait and watch what happens. See if the tree knows that it's arrived. Or say to the tree, "Let me know when you've arrived."

And eventually the cosmic joke will dawn upon you that nothing frames itself in any sense of finality or arrival, that everything just is being itself and it is expressing however it's decorated. And yet no matter how it's decorated has nothing to do with the reality that is appearing however it appears. And again, people can hear that and think it's a very deep teaching.

My interest is giving people the opportunity to actually see that for themselves. And when a lot of people do see that for themselves they go, "Oh, I didn't realize it was so simple, and that's how I've overlooked it."

And so it's not a matter of getting people to talk about this celebration in the most eloquent way, but giving everyone an invitation to actually, consciously attend the celebration they're already attending, because life is a celebration.

Rick: I was cross-country skiing through the woods, listening to you on my iPod when I heard you tell that thing about the tree. And I just want to tell you that all the trees said that they've always been in the state of having arrived.

Matt: Oh nice! Nice. So the trees told you they've arrived.

Rick: They were all in harmony – in unison on that point.

Matt: Yeah, because I asked a tree whether it's arrived and I was sitting there for a while. And again, it's one of those things where...

Rick: Well it's just a presence, you know, to anything animate or inanimate object. Well, I guess a tree is more animate than a stone, but there's sort of a beingness to everything, which is devoid of any sort of disharmony or distance from being what they are at the moment.

Matt: Well you know what's really interesting, when I look at objects, and this happened when I had that popping sensation that I told you about, I began to see this like, how can I describe it is, when you look at a television set when you don't get the channel and it's that fuzziness. I see what I call a "translucent fuzz" in and around and between every object.

It almost looks like just pixels – pixels of energy. And if I look really closely, the pixels are going in so many different directions, you can't even make out if it's anything, and yet as a whole it's not really moving or going anywhere. So when I look at a stone I see that pixilated energy, and I see the stone as just the way that pixilated energy decorates itself.

If I literally right now look at my hand and my arm with my own eyes, and again, probably, it's just seeing through the third eye, but I actually see that pixilated energy just decorating itself as this arm or this body.

And then I had the experience of looking into a full-length mirror – because you know, I started to see this body as a decoration of pixilated energy and that was a pretty extraordinary experience – and I looked in front of a full-length mirror, and as the pixilated energy started to get more and more intense, the reflection of the body completely disappeared. And there's nothing but pixilated energy looking at pixilated energy. There's nothing but Seeing, seeing.

And so that's when I kind of realized that there's only seeing, and yet when we say there's only seeing, if we see and base our evidence on seeing, we see that even though I can only say there's seeing, nothing being seen ever gets in the way of this seeing, it's just being seen. So it's just...what were you going to say?

Rick: Oh never mind. There's this little movie, I forget the actor's name – 'Mr. Deeds Goes To Town.' And there are these little ladies in the courthouse that kept calling everybody "pixilated", sort of chuckling.

Matt: Sure, no it's interesting, and again, it's one of those things where a lot of teachings not only use the word 'only,' [but they] are trying to push other things away they call "distractions" so we can see something. But that develops a relationship where we have to live our lives on guard with things, that there's certain things that can get in our way. Like, "I have to make sure that thoughts don't get in the way of awareness," or that "reactions don't obstruct my awareness." And then I'm trying to keep awareness in the "no thinking" section, or whatever we do.

And I think that when we say 'awareness,' awareness is just the availability of seeing. That if we could just see that when thoughts arise, we see thoughts. When feelings arise, we see or sense the feelings. When experiences arise, we see them. And so if we just keep on seeing that nothing – even though there is only seeing, nothing actually gets in the way of the seeing. So that therefore the journey of clarity is just about how deeply and sincerely we are exploring our own seeing, versus trying to purify, perfect, or cultivate the seeing in some preferred way.

If we spend time exploring our own seeing, we will see what's always here to be seen. All we have to do is have interest and give it a little bit of attention for something deeper to shine through. And then we find that [what] we see with our eyes, or what we feel with our senses, is just celebrating that which is here, undivided from itself, no matter how it appears.

Rick: Well if we spend time exploring it as you say, then that is tantamount to actually purifying.

Matt: Sure.

Rick: So as to seeing more deeply, it's not a dirty word, per se.

Matt: And I will tell you also, purification – I have it in my life, because I've also seen on a relative level. Again, relative and absolute truth are indivisible, so to have a teaching that focuses on absolute truth at the negation of relative is just a higher form of fundamentalism.

On the level of absolute, we have an absolute reality that is unchanged by time, that does not come or go, no matter what happens in relative life. However, in the relative physical bodies we have cellular memories. And we have all these different things that I see as cellular memories, and as deeply as we go into the absolute seeing, are purged and released, which allow the body to be a clear and purified, open vessel, to allow what has been realized to shine through in conscious embodiment.

So the realization of the absolute is called awakening. The fully purified embodiment of what's been realized can be called "Christhood".

Rick: Yeah, no, I totally agree. And again, that's another confirmation of my use of the word 'purification.'

Matt: Absolutely.

Rick: And also there's pre-awakening purification, you know? Because it might be [that] there's too much gunk to allow the initial awakening to occur, and you get rid of that some of that gunk through various whatevers, and bingo! You're standing in Target and ka-boom!

Matt: And you know what's interesting - and again, I only share what intuitively comes to me from the universe, which is the one that I am – but what comes through intuitively is only what I teach. So I never really read on a lot of teachers. I know of a lot of the different teachings just to keep up on what people are talking about.

But what I was taught to do, just through my own intuitive journey, how I was taught to help people purify, is that we can purify the physical form and free it of these cellular memories, so that not only the realization but the embodiment can be expressed in a very deliberate and harmonious way, is with love.

So that actually, where we feel some pressure in our body, where we feel some tightness, where we feel some sort of blockage, or you know, where we feel the reaction that we have when things arise, is actually showing us the various parts of the body where life is showing us to send a series of "I love yous" to. That as we send "I love yous" to a specific part of the body at the moment we feel the tension, that the tension we're feeling is actually feeling what cellular memories are about to be released through the doorway of the heart. And the "I love yous" is just what gives it permission to release gently, and to no longer breed any kind of identification or attachment.

And so on the path which I've been guided to offer, which you know, a lot of people are seeing it as an integration between the esoteric and the nondual, and bringing ... really creating a really necessary bridge so we don't have two different playgrounds here. But really allowing love to be

what purifies the vessel for the deepest awakening. And of course to allow love to be what is celebrated after such an awakening has unfolded, that it begins and ends with love.

Rick: That thing you said a minute ago about people getting really established in the absolute perspective, and then from that vantage point dismissing all relative considerations. I mean, there are even some teachers that say, "Well, it couldn't possibly be any reincarnation or karma, or anything, because that implies the existence of a person who can reincarnate, or who could receive the karma..."

Matt: It doesn't.

Rick: "... but there isn't such person, therefore that's all a bunch of buck!" But, I don't know, my answer to that would be that on some level that's true. And also, on a more manifest, express level, it's true that there's reincarnation and karma. Each level of reality has its own integrity, its own relevance.

Matt: Sure, well, and when people are debunking reincarnation, let's really be clear on what they're debunking. They're not debunking reincarnation; they're debunking reincarnation as a way of saying, "I don't want to believe that I have to earn what I already am," which is true!

But to throw the baby out with the bathwater is just to find ourselves on one level being very insightful, but then bringing ourselves to a conclusion that is equally very limited and ignorant. I mean, to say there's no reincarnation only because I don't want to believe that I have to earn what I spent my childhood earning, that my parents never gave me, is more of a reflection of conditioning than any spiritual insight.

So really, we're in a day and age where we have to really start looking at these teachings and what is being offered in a very different perspective. Because again, I've met people that say, "Oh, there's no reincarnation," and I can feel into their energy and I go, "Oh, they've spent their life trying to earn the approval of their mother and father who never gave them a payoff. And so now they're having rebellion against any sort of earning, which is why they're promoting the 'there's nothing to do' teaching," because of course that correlates perfectly as the solution, or remedy, to all the things infuriating them from their childhood.

And so if we really start looking at things just in the same way, I meet a lot of people that are the most hardcore into nonduality and talking about "there's no one there," a lot of times, in my experiences, is that they're people who have unresolved self-esteem issues. And what better way to deal with a you you don't like than to say it's not there? Perfect disassociation, right?!

And so we really have to, again, the only thing that's really going to take us into the depths of the mystery – not to solve the mystery, but to experience ourselves *as* the mystery – is a heart of sincerity and the willingness to say, "I'm not here to assume or suggest or project; I'm just here open to exploring."

Because I can tell you, I've had experiences of past life memories, I also know past life memories to be parallel lifetime memories, because time doesn't exist. I can also tell you I can look within it every time I've had those memories and see there's no one there having them! But that's besides the point. See that's where it gets really interesting, is when someone can say, "But there's no one here to reincarnate." And the universe will say, "That's besides the point because it's all the One experiencing Itself."

Rick: Yeah.

Matt: It's kind of like if you go to a movie theater and you watch the characters on the screen and you say, "But what I'm seeing on the screen is not true in my life." And I will say, "But that's besides the point. You're still feeling what it's like to be the characters you watch." You see, we have to really get on the joy of the play.

Rick: If someone is really adamant about there being no reincarnation because there's no one to reincarnate, by the same logic there should be no eating, you know? There's no one to eat, so give that one up!

Matt: It's really quite irrelevant, and if someone has not had an experience of reincarnation, it doesn't really matter. And if someone believes in reincarnation with all their heart, it's not going to make it more relevant. It will just be something that is more widely talked about in conversations, and more widely debated.

The fact, or what I'll say is, the intention of reincarnation is to show that there is a constant reality that continues to exist, that is not obstructed by the birth and the death of characters – is really what's being pointed to. That 'you', the word 'you' – if I say the word 'you', you can probably hear that the word 'you' does not sound like 'body' or 'mind,' or 'ego' or 'conditioning.'

The word 'you' does not suggest any of those associations; the word 'you' is a pointer towards the witness of that which sees what you see. That that you, the witness, when you explore it, may be discovered as being that which acts as the same other you in other bodies.

So when you explore the you, you find seeing. And if there is Seeing equally existing in all forms, then maybe there's just Seeing seeing itself. Maybe that Seeing is what survives all experiences of birth and death. In the same way I use the word 'alive' to point to awake, because I think awake is a little overused – that if we see 'alive' is what's unobstructed throughout all moments, that alive experiences birth, that alive experiences death. Birth and death are opposites but alive has no opposites.

But if I ask you, "Are you awake?" you might go through all the different questions of, you know, "I don't know if I'm awake. Let me go through the checklists!" But if I asked you, "Are you alive?" you'd answer it in two seconds flat, and that's how we know we're going in a more clear direction. That perhaps awake is the realization, not only that you're alive but if you look within,

you actually see within your own direct experience, "Yes I'm alive, and I'm nothing else. I am just the aliveness of being that is seeing what it sees, and acknowledging the aliveness that I am in whatever form it appears, or in whatever way it reflects in something I call 'the world,' but it's just reflecting back my belief in that label and meaning."

That what you say is world' is really you, what you call a 'mind' is really you. It's just a reflection of what you said about it.

Rick: You use the word 'sincerity' a lot, and perhaps you can say it the way you say it, that if you're really deeply sincere, and such and such. Can you say that in a nutshell and then I'll ask you a question about it?

Matt: Yeah, sincerity is the willingness to explore, without limitations.

Rick: Okay, now let's say a person hears that and they say, "Well that sounds good. How do I cultivate that willingness? How do I become more sincere so I can really explore without limitations? I feel stuck, I feel insincere, I don't feel like I'm really living up to that injunction."

Matt: The funny answer is: the survival of your experiences already cultivates that. Like in the old days, you go to a teacher in an ashram and you knock on the door and they let you in. And the teacher would say, "What do you want?" And you would say, "I want to wake up!"

And the teacher might sense the endless pattern of wanting in that seeker, so they might give a seeker some sort of spiritual practice, which the seeker thinks is there to be mastered, to earn the approval of the teacher. But the teaching is actually there to cause deliberate, ongoing abject failure, to break apart all of the barriers to sincerity.

And once the seeker is in a puddle of misery and disillusionment, then the teacher goes, "Oh, now the innocence is present. Now I can point and look and make him see." Now the lights are turned on pretty quickly.

But in today's day and age, teachers, as far as I'm concerned, we don't need to do that. We don't need to play that kind of game, because the survival of your life experiences already makes people well-seasoned. Let's just say that. Life has a way of seasoning you, and in the survival of all your disappointments, hardships and failures, which I know that sounds very sexy and seductive, but in the surviving of all the failures, disappointments and frustrations, it breaks apart all those barriers to receptivity. [So] that whenever we find ourselves in that place of "I don't know what to do, I don't know who I am, I don't know what's next" – once we're in the "I don't know," the "I don't know" is how we know we're prepared to express and to explore that kind of sincerity.

So the irony is most of the people that I've ever worked with, have been at the exact moment they've gotten to the "I don't know," and I've just been there to say, "Oh look, they're well-seasoned. Now we can take the journey." Versus in the beginning of my journey when I was

helping people, before I had really discovered the depths of this and embodied it in a certain way, I was there helping people through the well-seasoning process.

But now it seems like just acknowledging who I've been able to help and how life seems to take shape and form, that life already well-seasons everyone and breaks everything apart for us. It's just that when we get to that deep, guttural, primal "I don't know", [is] when something like a deep teaching can be very helpful.

And sometimes when I find that people are the most confused, or when they find themselves attached to some of the deepest teachings – when they've taken the regular every day dream state and they basically just re-wallpapered it with spiritual slogans, and they've created a spiritual dream state – I find that [when that] happens, that's because they've started exploring the spiritual journey before life has finished well-seasoning them.

And really what I think is the best approach, is let life break down in you what it needs to break down. Once you get to the "I don't know what the hell's going on," that's when we're ready to start the journey. And again, I meet people at all different stages of the journey, but in order for the most sincere level of inquiry to occur, we let life break down the barriers. When we get to the "I don't know," we're ready for a flashlight to shine our way and point us in a different direction.

Rick: Kind of sounds like AA.

Matt: Life is like that!

Rick: They talk about that. I mean, people just sort of getting to the point of complete desperation and needing to put their faith in something other than their own capabilities, which have totally failed them.

Matt: Right, because if you don't do it in that order - which not like it has to be in a certain order; we're just speaking differently -but if you do it out of order, then instead of it being the desperation of not having anything to cling to in your life, it will actually be the desperation of trying to spend all your time holding on to teachings and defending them in conversations with people.

And the reason I say it in this order is because it turns out to be the most compassionate path. So I find people that, when they've done their little out-of-order, and again, we all experience desperation, but instead of the desperation being "the Divine has apparently huffed and puffed and blown my house down and I have nothing and I'm naked," which is the best place to enter a spiritual teaching as far as I'm concerned – having nothing and knowing to function like that. The opposite side is, "I entered spirituality before the desperation huffed and puffed and blew my house down, and now my new attachments have become defending and holding on to a teaching."

So now the desperation is being afraid of letting go of the teaching and holding it with both hands, with white knuckles, [and] it's going to turn into a debate, which I'm not interested in having with anyone. What I'm interested in [is] when people have their lives turned completely upside down, and now they just don't know how to function in any other way, which is when everything is the most open and available to point to the deepest reality. And then in that sincere way, the integrating into it as a living reality becomes a lot easier.

Rick: Yeah. Well I have just a couple of questions and comments on what you were just saying. One is, I'm sure you're not saying that if you feel an inclination to pursue spirituality, you should wait until your house has been foreclosed or lost your job and your kids are on drugs – just follow your inclinations on the one hand.

But then the other thing you're saying is that we don't have to view life's hard knocks as the enemy; that there's sort of an evolutionary value in everything. That there's an innate intelligence in the universe, and everything is being orchestrated for our better good.

Matt: Yeah! I mean, for those that travel a void, what life will unravel naturally, they'll find a spiritual practice, and then that will do the same thing. But, I'm not saying people should – like what you described – wait for...“No, I've got to wait for my life to go to hell before I can enter spirituality!”

Obviously there's an impulse to be curious, and what I would say is, follow the impulse of curiosity. If I'm going to say it as a universal statement, I would say, “Follow the innocence of curiosity,” which is, “I'm interested to see what's over here, I'm interested to see what's over there. And then based on what feels good to me, what resonates deeply, what feels natural to me, I will then explore that. And then I'll just see what is true in my own direct experience that all these spiritual teachings - sort of suggestions, pointers – and I will have to look into myself to confirm which of these correlate to my own sincere, clear seeing, or perhaps is leading me to have a seeing that creates a pointer for others that had never been pointed out before.”

It's just that when we're all in this spiritual journey, what I happen to see is that those who have already faced the desperation sometimes have an easier time seeing into the simplicity of what's already true, versus those who say they're open but they're just using the examination of other possibilities, as a way of continuously defending and selling the teaching that they think is the one, eternal truth. Which of course if there is one way, it is the equality of all ways.

Rick: Yeah, different strokes for different folks. Let's touch a little bit on the whole idea of seeking, and so on. Because you know it's very popular to say, “Give up the search,” and “you shouldn't seek,” and all that stuff. And to me, that sounds like telling a hungry man to give up hunger. Now if you just give him some food, then you don't have to tell him to give up hunger; hunger will be gone, he'll forget the hunger. But if he's standing there hungry, you could say, “Give up the hunger,” till you're blue in the face, but he's still going to feel that craving, you know?

Matt: Well, and I think that the statement “Give up the seeking” - again, and I acknowledge that a lot of people that are saying this are saying it from the best place, but it does appear to come from

a place of arrogance to say, "Give up the search." Because to say "Give up the search," is assuming that someone is doing something wrong, when really, a teaching or being a teacher is an opportunity to say, "Here are the possibilities you might be excluding, and here is a way for you to have an experience that doesn't limit you and gives you the most availability to all perspectives."

I mean, just to know the availability of choices opens your reality up to such a bigger world, that that in itself starts to give you a sense of relief. That doesn't necessarily lead you to knowing what choice to make; it's just the availability of the choices opens you up to how much there is to explore.

Now to answer that question in terms of giving up the search, the way I like to kind of adjust that statement is, instead of giving up the search, I invite people to explore and contemplate why they're searching. So, not give up the search - like it's right or wrong; *why* are you searching? Not, what are you searching for? – because that's a different inquiry, because then that question become very limited too. Because they state, "I'm searching for awakening, consciousness..." My question is, "*Why* are you searching?"

Rick: I imagine that most people would say, "Because I don't feel fulfilled. I don't feel happy. I feel like there's some emptiness, something missing, and I want to find that so that I don't feel this way."

Matt: Right, then my question would be, hypothetically speaking, "Is fulfillment a feeling?"

Rick: I think, well, based upon my own 44 years of spiritual practice, it has its feeling-level component, but that feeling-level component is based upon something more fundamental, you know?

Matt: So we could say that the feeling is how it's being interpreted and expressed.

Rick: Right – it's how it shows up in the body, maybe, or in the heart, or in the emotions, or whatever, but there are some deeper roots to it.

Matt: Right, so kind of like, if the feeling of fulfillment was like a balloon at a party, you would see balloons present at the party. Like the feeling is present when fulfillment is realized, but that not everywhere you see a balloon there's going to be a party.

Rick: Right!

Matt: So then we go to these parties with all these balloons, and then every time we see a balloon we think we're attending a party, that might be a little bit of an overstatement or a misperception. So the same way I would say, yes, we can experience fulfillment as a feeling, but the next inquiry would be, is fulfillment actually located in feeling alone?

And perhaps the looking for it on that level is already taking us in the direction that's not as clear. And perhaps that's why we feel like things are more difficult, or that we learn to doubt ourselves, because we're trying to succeed at the things that can't be succeeded at.

Rick: Also I think we have to qualify the word fulfillment. I mean a person might have just eaten a good meal and go, "Ahh, I'm fulfilled," or just had sex or won the lottery, or something! They're feeling fulfilled in a way which probably isn't going to last, you know? So there are deeper dimensions to the notion of fulfillment.

Matt: So maybe fulfillment is – the way people perceive it – maybe fulfillment is: the rest I imagine experiencing when I no longer obligate myself to seek or maintain.

Rick: Let me rephrase that as a way to make sure I understood what you just said. Are you kind of saying that fulfillment, as we're referring to it here, is a state or a condition, if I could use that word, which takes the air out of the drive or the necessity to seek gratification through any relative means?

Matt: Mm-hmm, that really, the real fulfillment is the freedom from seeking or maintaining – in reality. But then the misperception is that people say, "I can only be free from seeking or maintaining once I've gotten life to appear as only I think it needs to appear." And of course the appearance of life, even if you get it to look a certain way, it's going to of course, once you start getting to that kind of state of 'everything is finally looking the way I want it to look,' of course once it's begun to look the way you want it to look, it's begun to end and life's impermanent nature reveals itself. And then you go from needing, to seeking it to look a certain way, to now having to defend the way it looks, and trying to keep life from changing, which of course is impossible.

So, the idea is that people say, "When I get life to be the way I want to be," or "When life can finally be the way I want it to be and never change again, then I'll finally reach the fulfillment," but the reality of fulfillment is actually being completely free of needing to seek or maintain anything. Which then just allows life to bring you what it brings you and you face it however you face it, one moment at a time.

Rick: Yeah, well I mean the whole description that you just gave of getting life the way you want it to be, it pertains to rearranging the deck chairs, and it pertains to those sort of considerations. The kind of fulfillment that we're talking [about and] referring to is founded in something which is unconditioned, which is not relative.

Matt: Right, and at the same time what we're pointing to as being unconditioned, eternal, ever-present, without the influence of relative existence, motivates a lot of people to then push away the relative world. As if spending time only in the absolute, having no consideration for the relative is going to somehow get one to a deeper sense of fulfillment, which of course doesn't do that; it actually just leads to the same seeking and maintaining on an absolute level, which is

the same mechanism that was at play in the relative. It's just the same relative game, being played in a world decorated by 'absolute' wallpaper.

Rick: Yeah, I was a student of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for many years, and he was always fond of saying, "200% of life – 100% absolute, 100% relative, and both together." And also, the point you just made, I believe the kind of fulfillment we're talking about is not one where one has to exert an iota of effort to maintain. It's something which when dawns, is rocklike, it's unshakeable. You know, you could be thrown in a jail cell but it's not going to be perturbed.

Matt: No, not at all, and at the same time, it depends upon one's level of interest and sincerity to explore that ever-present, eternal reality, that then reflects how deeply one realizes it, and eventually embodies it and recognizes it as their natural way of being.

Rick: Well, there it is, we're back to sincerity - sincerity to explore.

Matt: At the same time what I would also say, to add to this, so that the relative and absolute can start to come into an integrated understanding, is that yes, there's an absolute reality seeing all this as untouched by all this, and yet on a relative level, the things that arise within us are only the expressions of that absolute, that are here to be acknowledged and loved unconditionally and equally to all other parts.

So for example, just to give an example, I have met with people that have been seeking on paths for many years, studied with many different teachers, and they said nothing I did has made the seeking stop. And I said simply, you know, intuitively suggested that perhaps if all expressions of the one eternal reality are here to be acknowledged, embraced, and loved, by its own self, just as a celebration of loving and embracing everything with equality, then perhaps the need to either identify with seeking, or the need to unravel the seeking, is missing the simplicity of recognizing that the one who constantly seeks is actually what's next in line to be loved and adored equal to the spiritual one who does everything perfectly!

And in one split-second, that realization, I've seen people collapse into a million pieces. And what shines through in that moment is beyond any compilation of spiritual practice, and any realization through the words of any concepts or teachings; but is a realization of, "I'm only playing out what I haven't recognized is here to be loved and acknowledged equally. And what I don't acknowledge and love equally within myself, I equally experience a world where I find such lack of equality in all experiences and encounters."

And I find these qualities that I think spirituality is going to dismiss or unravel, as getting deeper and darker and yuckier, simply as a way of saying, "How loud does this alarm clock have to be to get you to love what's here to be loved, with equality?" And that the whole basis of what we call 'dark night of the soul,' is meeting all the different aspects and the archetypes within the one true self, that have been waiting in line to be loved, and have just not gotten to the front of the line yet.

And so a lot of times, and again I can tell you from personal experiences, having faced some of the darkest, most angry, most desperate energy within myself, to this exploration, and being able to allow it to do what it wants to do. If it wants to yell, if it wants to scream, if it wants to threaten to take my life – I give it full permission to do so, and I’m only going to love it and embrace it, no matter whether it threatens this existence or not. Only in that kind of an uncompromising sincerity - which I can’t describe why I would choose that, it just kind of happened - is where I was able to see not only what survives this relative journey, but to take a journey that where everything that would arise would only be there to be loved and embraced.

And in the end, only that love and sincerity is what survives. And again, I just think it’s very interesting where people can be seeking, they can be suffering, they can be not doing their spiritual techniques correctly, and yet the irony is, “Of course I’m not doing this correctly, because the one who can’t do anything correctly is next in line to be loved! Of course I can’t stop seeking because the one that’s seeking is here to be loved equal to the one who’s doing everything perfectly!”

That type of insight starts to blow the lid off of a lot of misunderstandings and starts to bring everything together, so that spirituality can be a celebration of inclusion. And if it’s a celebration of inclusion, it is a journey of equality.

Rick: Sounds good. I’m going to shift gears here a little bit now. I get emails from people saying, “I don’t want to hear anyone’s personal story, I just want to hear what they have to teach!” And then I get other emails from people saying, “Oh, you’ve got to have people telling their personal stories. It’s so interesting to hear what they went through, and I don’t care if it’s different than what I went through.” But you hear dozens and dozens of people each telling their own personal stories, and it’s just fascinating to experience the diversity and variety with which this unfolds.

So, we’ve spent the first hour or so talking about what you have to teach, and keeping with the principle that it doesn’t have to be either-or; both can be part of a larger package, let’s shift back to your personal story, and from as early an age as you feel is significant. Unless you kind of want to go through a chronology of it, hitting upon what you feel has been meaningful.

Matt: Yeah, well it’s funny. I’ve met people also, and have spent a short period of time playing out those things. There’s a period of time where we say, “Oh, I don’t want to hear anyone’s story.” You become the lieutenant of the story-police.

Rick: Yeah, “That’s just your story.”

Matt: Oh yeah, and then you come to a much deeper, more beautiful realization, which is ‘why would I ever not want to hear what the Divine has experienced?’ That’s how I see it.

So, I have to use my intuition to recall some of my memories, because I really don’t have much recollection – I actually don’t have much recollection of what we just did an hour ago.

Rick: We didn’t do anything; we just started this! Hey, welcome! Welcome!

Matt: Honestly, every moment of the day feels exactly the same to me. I could have just woken up 5 minutes ago; I'd never know the difference. But when I was five, and this just comes up right now, when I was five I had an experience where I was walking to a friend's house. And there was a wall that divided - like a brick wall that divided my property from theirs - and I looked at this wall and I had this experience where, and of course I was five, I hadn't been well-seasoned by life, I didn't have anything to compare it with.

So there was no realization-music in the background. There was no, "Oh my God, this means something!" But I was looking at this brick wall and I just stopped and I stared at it. And I had this sense that I'm not the body that I'm aware of and I'm not the wall that I'm seeing, I'm the space in-between. And I had no idea what that meant. It was a deep sense of, "I'm not the body, I'm not this wall I'm seeing, I'm the space in-between of it." And then I just moved on and went to my friend's house and played Nintendo.

Rick: You mean you were the space - the 10 feet or so - between your body and the wall? Like that?

Matt: Yeah, yeah.

Rick: Okay.

Matt: And of course it had nothing to do with future realizations that that space between the objects is the reality within the objects. But at that age, for some reason, I remember that experience was like, "Ha?!" But it didn't mean anything to me. I just kind of moved on, and I went and played video games with my friend.

Then when I was eight, I went to sleep like any other night. And I found myself in the most amazing garden. And I thought I was having a dream, but I mean the colors in this garden were so bright and vibrant. The colors were so vibrant, it would be like watching HD on steroids. I mean, the lights were so bright, it was actually emanating this love. And it was a love that I never actually really felt. I mean, I'd felt my parents' love, but this was like a totally, extraordinary type of love.

And at that age when I was growing up, my biggest fear was being displaced from my family, or being kidnapped, and so being in unfamiliar places was very scary for me. And so my first sense in this garden, with these extraordinary colors was, I had this thought of, "I should be scared, but I'm not." And I felt the most held and loved that I'd ever felt.

As a child, I was so overly sensitive to being able to feel what other people were feeling, that I identified with the insecurity I felt in others. And so as a young child I felt very insecure, so having an experience of security was profoundly different. And so it was very palpable because I never knew what security really felt like, because I was always identifying with the doubt that I felt in other peoples' bodies.

And so I'm in this garden and I'm walking around the garden, and I see this field of waist-high flowers. And I start feeling what it's like to move with my legs through this field of waist-high

flowers, and then I realize that as I'm feeling what it's like to walk through the flowers, I'm actually hovering above them, simultaneously. And I remember thinking, "That was interesting," but I couldn't explain it. The love was so palpable, it's kind of like it didn't even matter! It's kind of like when you're in a dream and something makes sense, and you don't know why it makes sense, and you just kinda go with it.

And so I was hovering above this field of waist-high flowers, and about 20 feet in front of me was this being in a white robe and a beard – I have no idea who it was. And as I looked closely, the being was motioning me towards them. And I didn't move at all; I was frozen. And then I started to float towards this being that was equally hovering above the flowers. And when I got about 10 feet from the being, I saw that their eyes were just glowing with this pure white light.

And at that moment I had the thought – it reminded me of the people who roll their eyes upward, like in a scary movie. As an eight year old that was my only association of, "Oh, like in those scary movies!" And at that moment I fell through the garden. I felt myself falling through the sky, and I fell back in my body, which is how I knew I had left it, because I thought it was a dream.

And I was shaking and sweating, it was like a cold sweat. And out of the corner of my eye I saw the same being, like a chalky-white, what I would call etheric material, motioning me towards them. And I looked and the being disappeared. And I went to a different friend's house the next day... actually, back up. So I told my parents the next day what happened, because my parents are very open-minded and would listen to me talk about these kinds of things.

And it turned out my dad had had nearly the same experience, detail for detail, 25 or 30 years before I did. Which at that moment didn't mean anything; it just showed me that there is some kind of higher order going on in everything. And then I went to my friend's house and I didn't really talk about it, but on their wall they had this really big, framed picture of Jesus, and I didn't know who that was. And I said, "That's who I saw in the garden." My friend said, "Matt, you're Jewish, Jewish people don't..."

Rick: So [it] was Jesus.

Matt: Apparently so, and a very good carpenter apparently. And I said, "That's who I saw in the garden." I didn't know who he was; I just knew that's who I saw in the garden. And from that moment forward at eight years old - and even knowing it was Jesus didn't mean anything to me, it was just like, "Oh, that's the person I saw," – I would be able to walk and see and feel in my peripheral vision the presence of these beings in this white, etheric energy. And they would be like walking with me.

And I was talking to my friends about this and some of my friends would think I'm crazy. And they would say, "Well who are these beings?" And I would say, intuitively, "Oh, they're my guides."

Rick: This happened all the time?

Matt: Yeah, from the eight year old experience, I could see them and feel them walking with me. And my friend would say, "Well who are they?" And I would say, "Well they're my guides." And they would say, "What's a guide?" And I would say, "I don't know!"

So half the time my intuition would tell me the right answer, and then at the same time I was still in an eight year-old mentality, not knowing anything.

Rick: Right.

Matt: Like I didn't know why they were guides. I knew they were my guides as clearly as I... and I can see them, and hear them, and feel them as clearly as I'm talking to you. And it was a knowing that is as deep as saying I'm sitting in a chair right now. It was the kind of level of knowing that nothing can actually shake. It's just one of those kind of things.

Rick: So was there communication from them, or guidance from them, or anything like that?

Matt: When I was eighteen they start speaking to me, but not until then.

Rick: So ten years for them to communicate.

Matt: Yeah, from that point on I just continued my "well-seasoning" process – getting broken down by the calamity of life and learning about ego.

Rick: High school?

Matt: High school and middle school.

Rick: Puberty and all that stuff?

Matt: Puberty, and for me the interesting thing that helped me develop my intuition but was also a very difficult journey, was I could, from an early age, feel what was going on in every person's body I would talk to. But I made the mistake, and I'm sure on purpose, I thought that what I felt in my body was what they thought of me.

So I spent most of my life apologizing to people and trying to fix their life, from like eight years old on, because I thought once they feel better in their body, that means I'm liked.

Rick: What percentage of people didn't feel like they disliked you because they had so little garbage in their bodies, or was it pretty much a world of dark people?

Matt: Exactly. I was living in a world where my family loved me, I had friends and family that thought the world of me. I've had experiences of having many levels of success in a lot of things I've done, and I've had experiences that I can look back go and, "Wow, that was an extraordinary experience."

I've had a wealth of experiences and yet I can also tell you that no matter how much I've been loved and adored by people, or how successful I've been in everything I've done, it never made a dent, I never believed it. Because I didn't know that what I was feeling was not what they thought of me; [it] was actually just what they were experiencing in their own life, of being well-seasoned.

Rick: When did you finally realize that that was the case?

Matt: Well, so when I was 18 they first started speaking with me. My first experience of Ascended Masters and Archangels was they said to me, "You're not who you think you are." And my response to them was, "Who the hell are you?"

Rick: Well they've been around for 10 years or so, right?

Matt: For some reason, at that moment it was just the response that came through me. It was one of those silly things. And so from 18 on I would just sit in my bedroom of my parents' house, after school or whatever, I'd sit there and I would hear, feel, and see these beings, and they would teach me things about the universe. And every day I would meet a different one, you know this day is archangel this...

Rick: Would they speak in English?

Matt: Yeah, but it was a telepathic thing.

Rick: Right, but it's a language you understood. And would they identify themselves, "I'm Archangel Michael..?"

Matt: Mm-hm. I'm Jesus, I'm Mother Mary, I'm Ganesh.

Rick: And would you see them clearly? Would you see Ganesh with his elephant nose and the whole deal?

Matt: Mm-hm. Sometimes I would and sometimes they'd come as symbols – it was like a certain symbol. And again, just to kind of go forward a little bit, all spirit guides and angels that we experience are just archetypes of the Divine. And of course the bigger realization is that if angels and ascended masters are archetypes of the Divine, the deeper realization is that every being and individual we see are equally archetypes of the Divine. It's just the Divine speaking to Itself.

Rick: We are that Divine, ultimately.

Matt: Right! So the Divine was basically playing this game of telephone with Itself. And so I would learn what I would learn from the Ascended Masters, they would give me instructions every day. They would say, "Make whatever choice you'll make." Sometimes I would even make the opposite choice they would suggest, just so I can learn for myself.

Rick: Can you give us one or two examples of specific instructions, or specific knowledge they imparted?

Matt: Umm, like I would be worried about something coming up and they would say, "Just let it go. It's not really important."

Rick: Like a test at school or something?

Matt: Yeah. Like for me, when I used to take tests by the way, I wouldn't study. My greatest fantasy was trying to improve[ise] my way through everything, so I never studied for a test. I always thought, "Let me just see if I can feel it out," which...I don't recommend, you know? But at that age I didn't have enough focus to really have an interest in school; this [what] I was learning from the universe was my only interest.

But like something would happen in an interaction with people, like at school, or just how friends get in their little stuff, and I would be worried about... "Oh, I guess this means they hate me," or "This girl's going to break up with me," you know? And you're basically experiencing the loss and waiting for them to call and guarantee it.

And they'd say, "Oh don't worry about it." And I would sit there and listen to that and feel like I have the right to suffer or something like that. Or I would say, "Oh, I'm going to go do this," and they would say, "Well why don't you try this?" And I would deliberately do the opposite just to see that what they were offering me was clear. And it also gave me the opportunity to not live my life subservient to this type of insight, but to have the intelligence and willingness to say, "I have the power to choose this," versus "I have to do this." The universe is telling me I have to get an ice-cream cone versus, I can just say, "I'm just going to choose this."

And so I would work with the Ascended Masters and Archangels. I worked with them for so many years. It all came to one big experience where I went up to... sometimes what happens is I close my eyes and go into meditation, and I find myself whisked off into some other dimension, experiencing things. And whenever I go into a different dimensional experience, the reason I know it was a different dimensional experience is because the whole feeling of it feels different.

When you experience different dimensions, the gravity of it feels different, everything just feels really different. It's a very surreal quality. So I went up into what is called the "Akashic Records," which to me, what it looked like is the outside of the Lincoln Memorial – the steps and the pillars - and there was a light-table. And all the Ascended Masters were standing in front of the table waiting for me, and I kinda walk up..."Hey guys!" you know, little me!

And they say, "We want to show you something." And so they all lifted up their masks, which I didn't know were masks, and they were all me underneath. And I gasped when it happened. But the funniest thing is, I say to all these beings that I'm in front of, "I don't get it."

And so they said to me what I'll say to you, they said, "If you were to go into your past and visit yourself as a child, that child wouldn't see you as its evolution. It would see you as everything it doesn't know itself to be. So it could only see you as a celestial being or as a spirit guide."

They said, "We're not only what you're becoming, we're what you've already become, and we are here, stepping back in the dream of time, to visit ourselves in spiritual childhood."

And at that moment, that was when the Matt speaking to Ascended Masters, Matt who had the universe on speed-dial, became the realization of: there is this reality in which all forms of intelligence exist, but it's that intelligence communing with all different aspects of itself in a dream of conversation, or a dream of interaction.

And that's when all of a sudden I started to be able to not only use my intuitive abilities, which had been honed through these experiences, but to know that what I'm bringing through is what I am. So it's not that, 'Get Matt out of the way,' it's not that, 'Matt is channeling Ascended Masters;' it's knowing that the ascended mastery of existence is actually channeling personalities in a costume party of existence.

And so it then led me from the esoteric, across a bridge into what people call the "nondual," but I didn't seek a nondual teacher. I didn't even know the term "nonduality" until people started telling me the type of information I was saying. I just went on my own exploration and I let the intuition at that moment, which was very well-developed, to be my only guide. And that, over many years, brought me to where I am right now.

Rick: Cool, so the intuition just sort of led you into nondual experience and understanding.

Matt: Mm-hm, but then I would read some of the ways the teachers would describe or point, and I would understand what they were talking about. But it didn't necessarily, to me, feel like the end-all-be-all. So when people would make certain teachings the end-all-be-all, it was kind of valuing one piece of the puzzle instead of stepping back and seeing the whole picture.

Rick: Yeah, well I would imagine that just reading different teachers, it would affirm or concur with what you already had come to experience.

Matt: What was interesting is that I had been living in that awake-awareness - if you want to call it that - for quite a long time. So when I would read a lot of these revered teachers - and again, they're all beautiful writings because again, every heart is a revered teacher, every heart is here to use life as their living or written or spoken, interactive journal, to express its own Divine nature to its own Divine audience, which is just the Divine experiencing itself to itself.

So I think everything is just really quite beautiful, but for me what was interesting, and it wasn't the teachers doing this at all, but a lot of the people that were seeking or affiliated with the teachers - what I got confused by was that everyone was making this such a big deal. And my experience of it was that it actually wasn't a big deal. For me the big deal was the beauty and the honor and the preciousness of life.

So I would meet people who were kind of arrogantly, you know, downgrading life and... “Oh, the material world..” And that never made sense to me because I had no idea what people were talking about. Because for me, I was already seeing that the material world was a living decoration of the nonphysical world, so calling it the “material world” made no sense to me at all.

[In their] thinking there’s this big thing, and when I merge with the Divine...and so that made no sense to me at all. So for me it was very confusing. And I came to this place where I either had to trust what I knew and what I could see, or I had to assume that I am completely crazy and everyone else knows what they’re talking about, and I’m going to spend the rest of my life in some sort of padded room.

And so for me, it was really just taking that step to say, “I have to trust what I feel and see. I have to trust what I know.” And that led me to a place where now I think that I could be helpful in helping to create a new integrated way of looking and experiencing this, where it doesn’t have to be about rejecting life, but about returning to life.

Rick: Well I’ve heard you say that it’s your understanding that people are naturally at different levels of experience. I think it was Ramana Maharishi who said, “There are no levels of awareness but there are levels of experience,” you know? So some are in kindergarten, some are in third grade, and some are in high school, and some are in college, and some are post-graduate.

And you’re a guy who I would say happens to have been born at a fairly high level of experience – you’re born in graduate school, or something. And so when you talk about interacting with other seekers and so on, maybe some of those are just in high school, some are in graduate school, and so they’re just going to do what they do, be who they are. Anyway, you know where I’m going with this.

Matt: No, I do, and what is interesting is that all grades are present at one eternal campus.

Rick: Yes.

Matt: Which is the hilarity of it! And we’re all mixed together in the same classroom.

Rick: Another metaphor is that we’re all in the same boat. Some happen to be in bow, some happen to be in the stern, but we’re all in the same boat and it’s just going along! Take and carry us all.

Matt: Sure, sure. I think to not know, or to not take seriously how developed I was when I came in was a big blessing, because it allowed me to go through the entire ego journey. It allowed me to experience everything people experience, and to speak in a way where I can speak about it as being someone who has lived *in* the world, as well as experiences the world in the way that I do.

Which again, when I first started to see this, for me it wasn’t like, “I see what people don’t see and I think the world needs to wake up” – it didn’t come from that kind of a spiritual sense of like, ‘This is what needs to happen in the world! The world is going to hell! We need to wake up.’

What came to me was, I realized people weren't experiencing what I was experiencing, and there was this sense in me that I couldn't sit back – this was just my sense.

I remember thinking one day, "I can't sit back and just kick my feet back and go, 'Well, I experience things and some people don't and that's just the way it is.'" For me, it actually birthed this fire in me. And the fire was: I want to use these abilities and do everything I can to give people the opportunity to experience all that can be experienced. And if I represent something that people have yet to experience, then I will only dedicate my time to giving people opportunities to experiencing that within themselves.

That is what erupted in me and what led me where I am today. Just that interest in, 'I can't just sit back and go, well, you know, some people just are the way they are. And whoops, you know, hey, they're not evolved!' You know, for me to get into that kind of thing – that for me made me very disgusted.

In fact, when I first came into the spiritual community I was very confused, because I thought I was going to run down the halls of a new spiritual high school, you know, and meet all my spiritual buddies. And then I came into the community and just as far as my experience was, I found myself very disgusted by some of the levels of arrogance about, you know like, "These are evolved beings, and these people need our help," instead of being like, 'If people are unaware of certain experiences, then I want to help people have the experiences, for no other reason but to really know the infinite possibility of infinite possibility.'

And that's where my life of service really came from, was just wanting people to have all the experiences they want to have, and not make something I'm experiencing as something put in a cage on a zoo exhibit.

Rick: Yeah, well I think that's what drives most genuine teachers, is that sometimes with a burning intensity, there's this drive to enable others to enjoy that richness and fulfillment that they're experiencing.

Matt: Absolutely! And again, when I first came into the spiritual community, I would experience the spiritual community as a refuge from the everyday life, the material world. And that never made sense to me because I didn't understand the whole idea of needing to take a break from everyday life.

Like for example, when I was a kid, a lot of people would find a lot of peace in nature. And as a kid I never liked nature – not that I didn't like it; I just didn't seem very impressed by it. And what I realized is that what I was already experiencing everywhere, in the concrete jungles of Los Angeles, was the kind of space and break that people only felt in the stillness of nature. I didn't get that! By the way, I didn't even realize that until I was in my late 20s, early 30s.

I just went around thinking, my whole life, that maybe I just don't appreciate nature. I didn't realize that that was something from a very early age [I] had already experienced and realized.

And of course I didn't know I realized it, because there's nothing else to compare it with. But this idea of needing to escape life, the material world, for something more spiritually relevant, which you know, on the esoteric level, people need to apparently escape their material world and go hang out with the angels in the higher realms, just like people in the nondual community are trying to rest in the emptiness of awareness, and trying to get away from the relative.

I found that to be very confusing, and so what I started to see is I started to have this burning desire to assist and just to give people the opportunity to experience all the things that are possible, to help people see in their own way, that the relative and absolute are the same.

Rick: Yeah, and having said all that and agreeing with what you just said, I would also add that it's completely appropriate and fine for those who are so inclined to go into monasteries - Mount Athos or whatever - that lifestyle, because it's different strokes for different folks, again.

Matt: Totally, yeah! And it's not like there's a wrong path, but there is a difference between how sincerely we approach it or how tainted our approach is based on our expectations, or what we hope to get out of it.

So there is either the strategy of expectation or there is the sincerity of exploration. And my point of view isn't really [that] people should or shouldn't go to monasteries, because again, everyone is a unique expression of the path, and every path is going to be expressed and celebrated...

Rick: As their own proclivities.

Matt: Right, it's just a matter of my interest is, how sincerely is that path or experience being expressed or experienced or embraced? And life will show you how sincerely or how much agenda fills any kind of exploration, depending upon the disharmony that arises.

So my interest is just helping and assisting others in being able to walk whatever path they're on with the deepest level of sincerity and the most direct amount of insight, so that they're life can be the most enjoyable celebration of the Divine they already are.

Rick: So for you, was there any kind of moment which you could have marked on a calendar, at which there was like, boom! - awakening, or was it more of a subtle growth process from an early age? That there were no radical shifts or jumps?

Matt: Yeah, well the lightning bolt hit-in-the-head, that was pretty memorable.

Rick: Oh, with Ram Dass you mean?

Matt: Ram Dass, shakti pad, or whatever, was pretty memorable. And then of course the egg exploding out of my head and oozing out of my ears at Target was pretty memorable.

I remember once, and not that this was the point of arrival, but I just remember it as a very clear memory, was I went for a walk around my neighborhood and I had this experience of opening,

or awakening. And I remember that moment the words came to me – not the words I held on to, but I just think it's pretty interesting the words that came through.

I was just standing on my block and I had this thought of, "I once was a person standing in a space, and now I'm the space where a person stands."

Rick: Nice.

Matt: And so it was like everything shifted and nothing happened at the same time.

Rick: Yeah.

Matt: So it was kind of like I took a walk around my neighborhood, and at one point I turned a corner and I just walked out of myself.

Rick: I'm sorry, your voice garbled right there and I think it's important what you just said...

Matt: Yeah, so I took a walk around my neighborhood and as I turned a corner, I walked out of myself. I just kept walking, almost like when you walk out of a pair of shoes. I just walked, and I walked out of the shoes and kept walking. And the shoes were left behind and then I realized what I realized, you know, "I once was a person standing in a space, and now I'm the space where a person stands."

And I remember there was just this sense of, 'I've always been what I've always been, I just thought it was something else.' Like I'd always been myself, I just thought it was a body, a personality to defend, you know, in a world of other, different people. So I've always been myself – that was the realization, but what I thought myself to be was what made it so confusing and painful.

Rick: I see. You thought yourself to be something other than that which you actually were.

Matt: Right, so I'd always been myself it's just that what I thought that was, was just decorations of that. But in confusing that, of course, I'd lived my life defending the honor, maintaining the integrity, or trying to cultivate and practice the accumulation of what added to the well-being of this character, and trying to escape, push away and overcome, anything that would put that at risk.

And then when I realized I am what I've always been but just thought to be something it wasn't, that all kind of disappeared. And what I started experiencing in life for the first time - with nothing to seek, and nothing to want, and nothing to need, it wasn't for me like this realization of, "Oh, that means I've experienced this, or I'm in a state of nonattachment," – there wasn't any of those kinds of ideas of 'This means something;' it was actually a very surreal, odd sense. I had never experienced that before, and it wasn't bad, it wasn't negative, it was just like, "Hmm!?"

And I remember that was the experience for me, was “Hmm!?” because I’d never not needed, I’d never not wanted. And so the funny realization for me was I was experiencing not wanting and not needing, effortlessly. And then I was laughing about how any of this can ever be wanted. You can’t want this, you can’t need this. You can only want and need your ideas of this. And yet even when you attain your ideas of what you think awakening is, that will be what you actually wake up from.

And so for me, if there was a point of arrival, it wasn’t when I was eight, or when I met the Ascended Masters and realized they were all me, or all that kind of stuff; the point of arrival - if there was one, which there doesn’t feel like there ever is one for me in my journey – was, the realization of the spiritual dream is what I actually woke up from.

There’s waking up out of the spiritual journey, and in waking up out of the spiritual journey, I discovered life. And I discovered that spirituality for me and the way I define it is: the willingness to embrace and celebrate the equality of life at every moment. So for me, life became spiritual, every breath became spiritual, the world became my ashram, every being was an ascended master, everything I saw was the Divine. And it still didn’t exclude the fact that I would have moments of happiness and sadness, but it didn’t mean anything anymore.

There was no grieving process when disappointment showed up. It was just a full willingness to step into every moment and nothing actually mattered, but it wasn’t like a withdrawal that it didn’t matter; it was like I didn’t mind. I didn’t mind, so I stepped into everything.

Rick: Cool. Well, you and your partner, Julie Dittmar, you travel, you teach, you give seminars, or retreats, or one-on-one consultations, and all sorts of things - and when we wrap up here I’ll make some announcements about that, and so on.

And just yesterday somebody sent me an email. He lives in the Seattle area and he said, “You know, I looked on Matt’s website, I’ve seen Matt a couple of times, and now he’s charging \$195 bucks an hour for something called a ‘Star-seed activation,’ a ‘DNA something or other.’”

He said, “That seems a little mercenary to me, a little crass,” he said, “Would you please ask Matt about that?” So I said, “I’ll just ask him and see what he says about that.” So I suppose there’s two components to that. One is, you know, is \$195 a little steep? I don’t know. Money is relative.

And I don’t know, if you can charge that then more power to you, I suppose. And another is, some of these things, DNA-activation and what not, I’ve been hearing that for years and wondering if anyone’s looked with an electron microscope and seen if [there’s been] any noticeable change in DNA, or maybe it’s on an etheric level and you wouldn’t see it under a microscope. So maybe you could address all those.

Matt: Of course, of course. So again, when I started doing the star-seed activation it was just spontaneously. One day I had a conversation, download coming in from the universe – which I

go through downloads all the time, that's where I get all the teachings and all the things I say that some people say are original and different, because I just get it from that place, it just comes to me, and then I share what comes to me.

And so then I was taught this process called star-seed activation, which is to activate the dormant aspects of our multi-dimensional self, and to activate the crystalline DNA. I'm not saying they're asking for the mechanics of it. It's just kind of coming through and I'm like, "Okay." And they're (the Ascended Masters) showing me how to do it and how to work with someone, and activate this on an etheric level.

And again, because I'm very sensitive to energy and I actually see those etheric levels everywhere, for me I understand. But for some people who don't see it, I understand how it would sound, and I just go "Okay."

But then the people who have experienced this activation have had very interesting, profound experiences. And even when I do the activation I say, "Hey, let's not expect anything, let's just see what happens." You know, so it's not a leading kind of thing, but to get back to the money issue – about 195 – on the website it also says, and this is something that I do regularly, that "Any person who is in any kind of financial situation in their life will be helped and served with these teachings. And if the price that is offered does not fit what is feasible, or that would cause undue stress and harm to their financial stability, a donation can be made in whatever way fits their current financial climate, and they will be given these same exact opportunities, teachings, sessions, that anyone else would be."

Rick: So like bake you some brownies and send them!

Matt: I'll tell you a funny story about that. I once gave a session to someone who called me and they said, "Will you meet me at this location?" It was at a park, a few years ago. And it turned out this person was homeless, and they said, "I don't have what you usually charge, but here's what I believe your teachings are worth in terms of my financial climate," and they handed me a dollar! But it was the most heartfelt dollar I've ever received.

And what they understood, which sometimes people don't understand in the spiritual community, is it's not about charging money for a service and trying to hold people hostage to... "If you want your DNA activated, you gotta pay me 195 dollars;" it's not like a ransom in a foreign country; that the money and prosperity we share for the things we receive is a way of giving value to the things we receive. And when we allow ourselves to exchange energetically, because money is just a manifestation of energy, when we allow ourselves to exchange value for what we're receiving, we actually, on an energetic level open ourselves up to receiving that gift and that transmission in a way that will transform someone's life, potentially, in a very deep way.

So for example, I've also had experiences where people in the past have said, "I have zero money." And just because in my heart I never say no to anyone, that's just how I am as a being, I

help everyone everywhere. If I go to a restaurant and someone comes up to me and asks me a question, I will sit them down and I will talk to them as long as I need to. That's just how I am.

People don't disturb me. I'm here to serve the world. Whenever I've had experiences of people who have been against the money or who have paid nothing, it has also been a session where I found that that is someone that is not very receptive to receiving and to going very deeply. When I worked with someone who couldn't pay the full price but were very sincere about 'I value your time,' that's someone who equally had a very profound, deep experience.

So I look at the ability to charge for this time and what we do, to be a way for people to express the value that is the intention that allows them to really own and honor what they receive, in a very deep way. And of course on the most fundamental level, money doesn't really exist! And if we find ourselves in positions where money seems to be scarce and not flowing as free as we like, there are also things energetically that can be done to increase that flow.

You know, ironically, when we are in the deepest place of gratitude, and very moved and living in honor of what we are giving, and honoring the gifts that others are offering us, there tends to be not a lack of resources to allow some of those experiences to happen.

In the same way people could also say, just for argument's sake, they could probably say, "Well I'm going to eat 3 times a day anyway, I already have to eat to be a human being, so who the hell is this restaurant charging me for what I'm going to eat?" We could make the argument that way and it sounds completely ridiculous. It's just when we come into a reality or a realm of spirituality, all of a sudden - and I think it's because people usually think of materiality and the spiritual world as being these opposites - we come into this idea as if the gifts that we receive, or the help that we receive from others should not be celebrated, honored, or valued.

Rick: Oh hey, I'm with you. I mean, I taught Transcendental Meditation for 25 years, and although I think it's rather overpriced these days - you know when I was teaching, it was like \$35 for students and \$75 for adults, or something like that, it was pretty cheap - but even then people would gripe about it and say, "How could you charge money for a spiritual thing?"

And sometimes I'd cut people some slack if they didn't have the money, or if they said they didn't. But what I very often found is they wouldn't show up for all their instruction sessions.

Matt: Exactly.

Rick: You know, they'd come to the first one because it was just sort of a frivolous curiosity. There wasn't a sincere, earnest inquiry going on, and so it wasn't taken very seriously.

Matt: Right! If you don't pay - I mean again, this is what I've seen in my own experience, and again, I preface this with saying that anyone who is interested in receiving any assistance I can offer, who is interested in what I offer, no matter what financial situation, will never be turned away, it's never been that way ever.

Even during retreats for example, people would call and you know, the retreat price is covering the cost of the center, that I have nothing to do with! I mean, we're holding it at a space and the place is saying, "Here's how much you have to charge per person to cover whatever." And so, knowing that I will never ... that Julie and I have never steered away anyone; that we have helped every single person who has ever come to us - from women living in a crisis shelter, to a homeless person living in the park, to any other version of person imaginable - that when you pay in whatever way for the services you're receiving, it matters.

When you pay it matters, and when it matters you value it, you give it your attention, and then you can go to the deepest with it and get the most out of it.

Rick: In Indian tradition it's called the 'dakshina.' Give the teacher a dakshina, which means some payment for the teaching. And it may be you tend his cows for a couple of years before you get instructed, or whatever.

In this day and age that's not really practical, but you could also say that those who are able to pay kind of cover those who are homeless, or who are living in shelters.

Matt: Happens all the time.

Rick: And otherwise you'd have to quit and get a job.

Matt: Right, and I will tell you [that] over the years, just in my own experience, that we hold our intention that I offer these teachings with the depths and the utmost of sincerity, compassion and love, so that those will meet these teachings with utmost compassion, sincerity and love.

There have been certain situations where let's say someone tells me, or tells Julie, "Oh, I can only afford this much money," and we kind of sense that's not the deepest truth, but we know life is the equalizer, everything will be made fine, and the next day someone pays more than is even being asked, because they just felt inspired to! So everything always equals itself out.

And so all I can do is be the open, willing space of service, you know, and to offer what I offer, to not exclude anyone from the teachings and offerings because, I've been shown what I've been shown, I've been taught what I've been taught, and I transmit what I transmit, only so that every being has the opportunity to have the most vivid and most miraculous experience of existence while they're here in this form, and I offer that to all.

And I can tell you that it's only in certain spiritual circles that I ever hear about that kind of money issue. And what's even more interesting is that over the years, as things have continuously deepened in my own evolution and seeing, a lot of those kinds of conversations have ended, and the frequency of them have become few and far between. So I think that's pretty interesting as well.

Rick: Okay, so I think we've spent enough time on the money issue, we covered it.

Matt: Yeah, yeah, it's a good topic though.

Rick: It's worth addressing and if somebody brings it up, they deserve an answer.

Matt: Yeah, absolutely.

Rick: And so you've given a good one, so let's end that chapter. We've spent about two hours now and I don't necessarily want to end on the money note. Is there anything you'd like to say in conclusion, that you want to leave people with?

Matt: Well I think that no matter what is said or what is spoken, that the intention behind the speaking is to embrace and to love all beings as they are, however they appear. And to not confuse the fact that what I'm saying or what I'm pointing to, to be able to see and illuminate in ourselves what may have previously been overlooked, has nothing to do with the fact of why I speak. I speak to embrace and to love all beautiful beings, to embrace the beauty of life that I see, and to allow all hearts to know how deeply they're loved. And to awaken that depth of love so that all that come into their field of vision can be loved as well.

I speak only to celebrate love. I speak only as love, and I only see love to all those I speak to. And so if I really wish to end with anything, it's to know that I serve the love that I am, that you are, and that love is the only thing speaking these words.

Rick: Beautiful. Well thanks, this has really been enjoyable and I'll say what I said at the very beginning, which is that when I met you, that's the impression I got. It was sort of this "love bomb," you know? Just a great, big, warm hug, and just lots of bliss, and really just a delightful person to interact with.

Matt: Thank you.

Rick: And Julie too. Please give Julie a big hug for me.

Matt: I will.

Rick: So let me make a couple of quick concluding remarks. I've been speaking with Matt Kahn who lives in the Pacific Northwest, but who travels around giving talks and seminars, and so on. He'll be doing a retreat towards the end of February into March, and there are details on his website, which I will link to. And he's also going to give a 10-day retreat in Greece, which sounds nice to me, and there are details about that on your website. And your website is TrueDivineNature.com, and I'll be linking to that from my website so you don't have to remember that. Just go to BATGAP.com – oh and incidentally, we're recording this in the middle of January of 2012, so if you're seeing this two years later, those retreats have ended, but undoubtedly Matt will be doing something!

So go to TrueDivineNature.com and you'll see what he's up to. And again, BATGAP.com, which is acronym for Buddha at the Gas Pump, is the repository for all these interviews. There are over a

100 of them now, and if you go there you can see previous ones, you can sign up to be notified when new ones get posted.

A little discussion group crops up around each interview, there's a podcast you can subscribe to, so as to listen to this while you're cross-country skiing. And there's a 'Donation' button, and if you feel the inclination to click on it, remember you have no free will. There's no one doing anything, so just go with the flow. 'Cause speaking of money, I too can use a bit. Just bought a new computer, which is why you're seeing this in 720P instead of 640 by 480. In other words, my new computer is giving the capability of higher resolution, and I paid for half of that with BATGAP money and half of it with personal money, since I also use it for my business.

So in any case, thank you very much Matt, thank you to those who have been listening or watching, and we will see ya next week.

[BATGAP theme music playing]