



The Great I Am

A talk by Sydney Banks · the full transcript

Sydney Banks · Mayne Island · 27 September 1975

Transcribed by machine and corrected by a reader against the
recording.

The
Hidden Cause

Transcript version 1.0 · issued 2026-08-10

They've asked me to introduce Syd, and all I can say is that the words that he's got to say tonight have made such a difference in my life. Well, I'm happy, eh? And to see everybody on Maine Island change and really be happy has just been so tremendous. Just listen to his words. That's all I can say. A lot of groups have been saying it was too happy, so we're not serious. On the contrary, if you're unhappy, you're not serious. For the simple reason, when you go to search for self, God, that very search should be a search of love and joy and happiness, because that's where you're going.

You're heading towards love, tranquility, happiness. If you fear where you're going, you won't enjoy the route. You'll never get there, because there'll be fear. People say, Fear God. That's nonsense. You don't fear God. You love God, because you are God. You're the very essence of God. You're made in God's image. You don't fear God. There is nothing in God to fear. God is total love, total knowledge, total all things put together. And we are a microscopic part of that very thing called life. But even though we're only a microscopic part of it, because God is totally everything and everything that ever will be, we are.

That is why the Bible says, I am. The great I amness, the great oneness. It is so simple that nobody hears it. Jesus spoke about it, and he was crucified. The name of the game in life is go find yourself, and it's so well hidden. It's hidden by what we call a mind and an ego and a free will. And to break this barrier, you've got to drop ego. And we're not prepared to drop our egos, because we have a silly little thing called the mind.

You attach it to your egos and you become very, very smart. So smart that nobody can tell us the truth. The wise men have tried to tell us this since the beginning of time, and we never notice it because all we see is words. We have no faith. We forget where we came from. And this is the game called life. It is quite natural. We've forgotten where we came from. When we start searching for happiness, tranquility, the secret of life, we must head back inside again, from whence we came, where that divine spark created something called life.

You are that life. It's yours. Don't ever let anybody tell you it isn't. Jesus preached this all his life. It was inside. What he was, you were. What he could do, you could do. There's no difference between you or anybody else on earth. We are all truly one. These are not just words that I have to write, but energy. God. God's energy. God isn't a person. He isn't a thing. He's all things. He's energy. No matter what it is. No matter what that energy is, that energy is God.

You hear people talk about oneness. Then the next minute they argue with you about a simple little mind trip. They really don't know what oneness is. To find oneness, you must give up your ego bit by bit and realize the false from the true. You must give up beliefs, the silly little beliefs that got you where you are now. If you go farther, you go beyond beliefs. And this is where the truth is. And this is what's been so beautiful about Mayne Island. They're picking it up. They're all sharing love.

They feel the energy in the air, and it's spreading all over the place because it's true. Truth cannot be hidden. It can be fought, and it will be fought, but it cannot be hidden. If anybody ever starts to search for this kingdom of heaven here on earth, you must start, first of all, to be humble. And this is by giving up your ego bit by bit, all at once. You give it up to God. The inner self, you face truth, you see reality. You see that the reality that most everybody on Earth sees isn't reality at all.

It's the illusion of life. It is a thought of life. No matter whose book you look at, whose religion it is, they're all the same. Look at them. They'll talk about thought, but they all explain it in their own way, so it gets very complicated at times, because your own minds come in and try and analyze and judge what they're saying. You can rest assured, if you read the Bible and you judge and analyze, you'll never see it. If you pick up a Zen book and you judge and analyze it, you'll never see it.

If there's any hostility in you when you're reading it, you'll never see it. It's when all thought vanishes for a microscopic second that you'll see what you're reading and you'll hear what you're hearing. And this one instant of hearing, this true hearing, one, just one, will change your life. You'll never be the same again, because you've realized some truth. There's no end to realization of truth. Even people that self-realize have only started the journey. If you ever self-realize, realize God. You'll realize at that second, you're only a baby.

You know nothing. There is no way, there is no way in the world, in hostility, possibly bring you peace and joy. If you go to a workshop and there's hostility in it, my advice is to walk out. You're in the wrong building. But if you have to go there, and you want to go there, then it's perfect for you. There's two sides of life. There's reality and there's the illusion. They both have laws governing each other, but they're both the same law, only on different levels of conscious state.

You go to search for a self, so we go into institutions, and we take Gestalt, primal screams, encounter groups, all different things. And this is okay. You're trying to find yourself. And some day you get a little bit smarter, a little bit wiser, something clicks and you say, It's not here. It's inside. The second you realize it's inside. The truth inside, that second is a new experience for you that you will never forget the rest of your life, because your reality will change. And the second it changes, wow, look up, it's beautiful.

From that second on, anything you find out about yourself, truly, truly, truly find out about yourself, will be instant beauty. Outside workshops, what I call outside workshops, that is finding the, trying to find the truth of life outside, blaming the environment, blaming your diet, blaming society, blaming your health, you'll never find it. You've got to take full responsibility of everything you see, hear and do. You take full responsibility for your past, because whatever happened in the past, you really had no control over it other than what you were at that time.

And if it had to be, it had to be. It was perfect. Now, hear this switch levels. When I say it's perfect, I'm talking on a cosmic point of view, of God being perfect, and everything it's ever done. And the law of God, so it is perfect. But on a conscious level, we come down, then there's imperfections. The only reason imperfections exist is because there's put there by our thoughts. We are the imperfections. You've got to learn to love yourself. And the only way you can learn to love yourself is to get to know yourself.

If you get to know yourself, true self. I'm not talking about the outside exterior me. I'm talking about inside, where all the universal love and the universal knowledge is stored. Where you are that knowledge. It's so beautiful and peaceful and quiet. You have no other choice but to spread it. And spreading love is the name of the game. The more love you spread, the more will return. The more hostility you spread, that's what you get. It's all thought. Everything is thought. Thought gets so fine that even life itself is a thought.

When you die, no more thought. No more life. Sure. The second you do, you'll say, I'm home. Beautiful. You've gone into heaven. It's a state of consciousness, not a place. It's a consciousness which exists. It is. And that state of consciousness. The trouble is, when you die and you realize this, you're reborn with the same level of consciousness you left, and you forget all about it because you still haven't found yourself. But while in the breathing state, if you ever realize self, you will realize there's no death.

There really isn't. There's nothing. What a trip. Here we are now and here we go. The whole world is printing. The further you go inside to this truth, the more love, beautiful positivity comes into your life, and you start seeing things with clarity. Any of you people ever read Don Juan book? When he talks about clarity, dropping thought, dropping the past. In this, guardians of the secret, the guardian is thought, our thought. It's good, you have to play the game. And all you have to realize, there's no such thing as fear.

To have fear of yourself is sickness of mind. We all suffer from sickness of mind. It's a game of life. Don't ever be ashamed of it. It just is. Once you start to see that everybody is doing the same thing, everybody is, then and only then will you really start to see with clarity and love. You'll see that all religions are preaching the same thing. People say to me, You never say anything new. Right, dead on. There's nothing new to say. You don't have to read it.

You don't. It doesn't matter if you've ever heard it, because somewhere you are it. So you're the books that's ever been written on it. You're everything. Everybody knows the secret of life because everybody comes from there. But how do we get past this silly little petty mind of ours to get the truth? If we remain on mind level, that's where we'll remain, because of illusion. Go beyond the mind, see one glimmer, just one instant glimmer. Then, and only then, will you realize truth. And when you hear it, you'll always hear it, because once you really truly hear truth, it cannot be forgotten because it is you. Nobody can take it away from you.

It's yours for eternity. The only thing you can lose is beliefs. Beliefs never get anywhere into heaven. Beliefs will never get you into heaven. Beliefs aren't strong enough. You've got to go beyond belief, because while you believe in God, you have an image of what God is. Your culture, your past experiences, your level of consciousness has picked up, and somewhere you have created a belief in what God is. And believe me, no matter what you believe God is, you can rest assured you're wrong. And that's a trick.

You must go beyond belief to the realization of Because you are that of. You really are. It's in the palm of our hands, every one of us. It's ours. It's meant for us. And we refuse it because it's love, it's happiness, it's tranquility. Ever try and give love away and see what happens? It's the most freakish thing in the world. To most people, they can't accept it. They will rebel. You must learn to accept love. Once you get to start to know yourself, you'll feel more and more love.

You'll get braver and braver, and the feeling of love comes, the feeling of humility comes. And it's a beautiful feeling. It's a dropping of the ego. And it's just beautiful. People get uptight when I say this because it sounds so simple. Look at your Bible. Look at any other great books, and they're still saying the same thing: simplicity. But nobody will believe it. It's too simple. Just too simple. All you have to do is hear a word. Truly. All you have to do is hear a word.

A word of truth. From that moment on, you'll never be the same. You will head towards beauty, love, peace, tranquility. Any questions? People are all searching for the same thing. Everybody on Earth is searching for the same thing, whether aware of it or not. It doesn't matter if they say, I'm searching for God. Another one says, I don't believe in God. I think if I get lots of money, I get lots of power, and it'll bring me happiness. That's their way. Might be a wrong way, if it is a wrong, depending on which level of consciousness you're talking about.

Yeah. How do you know? Oh, that's easy. Yeah. You just feel like there's a knife being stuck in your back, and you say, Oh, something's wrong here, eh? When there's no ego attached, you feel really nice. Because all you know, you're just spouting out a bunch of words. They're beautiful, you know. There's no... It doesn't matter if people believe you, they don't believe you, it doesn't really matter. It's there, and anybody wants to pick up the positive energy, they pick it up, and if they're not ready, they don't.

And you can't change the world. And this is one of the biggest mistakes that we all make. We try and change the world. You can't change the world. You can only change yourself. Change yourself and the world will change with you. Now, society says, why, that's a selfish act. If there's anything that's selfish, it is the secret of life you've just found out. And as you start to find yourself, the world becomes a safer place to live, because you see it differently, you see it with clarity.

You start to find your freedom. And once you start to feel good and find your freedom, then you can step out into the world and help your way, knowing you're not trying to change the world, to just merely being available to anybody that wants to change. But anybody that tries to force anybody else to change, you can rest assured they won't enjoy it. They might think they do, but they'll catch up on you. You can't change the world. They've been trying it since the beginning of time.

This is the mind. This is why we have wars, one after another. There's always another excuse, but it's another war. This is why we've got starvation throughout the world. This is why we've got poverty. This is why we've got pollution. Just the ignorance of ourselves. Greed. Fear. It's all based on fear. Insecurity. Insecurity is fear. It is fear that hides the secret of the universe, the one that Jesus said was inside, and all the wise men say is inside. It is fear that hides it, this little gimmick that the world played on us, nature's play, to give us fear to protect ourselves.

Instead of protecting ourselves with fear, we've turned it against ourselves because of our ignorance. We're afraid to find out who we are. So we fight to condemn our very existence. Hence all the trouble in the world. Go inside, find the truth, then you can look outside and say, Everything's perfect. And people say, Well, if it's perfect, why are the people starving? I hope you heard my explanation for that. It's when you jump levels of consciousness. And that's what we're here tonight to try and do. Some levels of consciousness to truth.

Very simple. Everybody talks about it every day. We sing about it on the radio. We sing about it in churches. Our everyday conversation is full of pure awareness, and nobody sees it. But we go around telling each other exactly where we are all the time. We go around telling each other all our problems. But we don't hear ourselves talking. We're too busy talking to ourselves. We don't stop and listen. We don't listen to anybody else. We just talk to ourselves. Even when you're listening to somebody, you're talking to yourself.

Everybody on Earth does it. It's a natural thing. You've got to break this habit of talking to yourself. But as soon as you start listening to somebody, somebody's telling you a story, you're more interested in your story, your side of it, so you think, and you're not listening. You don't know what that person said to you. So if that person comes over with truth, you can't hear it. Or if a person comes over pleading for help, you miss it because you say, Oh boy, you think you're bad.

Listen to me again, you see. We don't hear. And the reason we don't hear, we have too many thoughts in our head. Thoughts connected to the ego, self-importance. So we go around the world feeling so damned important, and who dare. Meddle with me, eh? If we just tell me anything, and yet we go up to workshops and we say, Tell me, what's wrong with me? So the psychologist, the psychiatrist, he tries to tell you. He said, Don't believe him. Fine. So you're off again, because we don't listen.

My advice to anybody in the world, no matter who it is, read books from enlightened men. Listen to words of truth whenever possible. Find a person that you trust, that you hear, then you'll have some. Doesn't matter who it is or how you get it, if you truly trust and you truly have faith, then do it. And then this thing like, everything, like you say, everything will take care of itself, faith or really have faith. And I can see that happening, and yet there's this thing that goes on in your head that says, Now wait a minute, you can't let go of control.

You're waiting for that moment. You can't let go of control. But I know that to get control, you got to let go of control. You're right at that. It's such a hassle for me, you know? It's a mind hassle. The whole thing about money. Yeah. Letting go of worrying about that. If you look in the Bible, it'll say, if you have faith, you'll be provided for. And it just happens. It doesn't have to make sense. If you get in connection with the very essence of God, the energy, the positive energy of all mankind, get into that stream, this is what they call changing levels of consciousness.

The higher the level of consciousness, the more positivity is the stream of energy that you're living in. It's giving yourself up to God, and God will provide and take care of you. This is why, very mysteriously, a lot of people are being cured of all their ills. Nobody can figure it out. It's quite simple. It's just that you've given up and putting your hands into God, your inner self. Because our approach is a little bit different from what the Western culture is used to, everybody's getting a bit freaky about it, because we're going inside us to find God, to find true self.

And this is what, if the psychologists and the psychiatrists could realize, that when they get interested in psychology or psychiatry, they're trying to figure... What makes the human being, the mind tick? They're searching for God. They're searching for something inside themselves. But they get hung up on beliefs, beliefs from the past. It's beliefs that stop us, petty, silly little beliefs. It's the same with the churches. They're all searching for the same thing, but the silly little petty beliefs won't get them together to find out really what's being said.

There's analyzing and judging and, ah, lots of data, which isn't really what... Pinch of salt. Another pinch of salt. Drop it all. Go right through and hear the words. That's all. A seed of words. Never mind what somebody else is telling you about Jesus or what he said or they said or anything else. It's the same with

the Don Juan book, okay? Don't look at all the details and all the frivolous little things and the things that you can't understand. Just look at Don Juan's actual words.

He's talking pure truth. Just listen to his words. It's the words have got the secret. They're really hard, and it's just simply a thing of hearing or not hearing. It's where you're healing because you believe you're healing. And the closer you get to believing, it's beautiful, because you're starting to believe in something. But believing isn't really good enough. It's like searching for God. It's really a waste of time, because while you're searching, you haven't found Him. When you stop searching and realize, I am, then you'll find happiness. Questioning.

I'm sure there must be lots of questions by now. If you really inquire, without anger, just inquire, ask, investigate, believe me, you'll be rewarded. But don't go striving. You'll never make it. Just get interested and investigate. Just by having an open mind. If you only have a question, ask it, because it might be the very question everybody in this room is waiting for. The one that somebody else will understand, even although you don't. What is meditation? Meditation is a tranquil mind. Very tranquil mind. It's a mind that's not blocked by thoughts, a mind that's seeing pure truth, even though it's a microscopic second.

Meditation is not a structured poise that's only the mechanical means to try and get meditation. True meditation comes from within inside. It's inside all of us all the time, but we won't let it come because of our thoughts. So we've got to drop the thoughts to get to that tranquil place where all of a sudden, truth appears. And you can rest assured, if you're ever in a state of meditation, you will be hearing beautiful, beautiful truth, no matter what's being said, you'll be hearing beautiful, beautiful truth. Is that the same thing as, like, driving along in the car, something, and sitting back from what you're doing, and back and without trying to actively participate in...

Yeah, right. Yeah, just observe. Observe. Pardon? Okay. Now when I say drop thoughts... I don't mean that you go around like this, eh. See, what it is, is we're controlled. Can I explain it this way, please? We're controlled by thought, our thoughts, eh. All the past thoughts we know somewhere, since the beginning of our childhood, whatever we see we take to be true, because everybody's truth is true. So we go through life picking up negative ways how to play the game of life, because we're all born within the realm of this life: desire, hate, jealousy. Everybody's got it, eh.

So we all pick it up and we see this is real life. We just see it and go along with it. Now when you grow up, those childhood games are so subtle within yourself that you don't even know they're going on. These thoughts are controlling you, you see. Watch me make my wife jump, and you just go. You say something, it triggers off anger in her, and then you start fighting. This is not you. This is the past. I can't tell you how to drop thought.

We can only just keep talking the way we're talking now until someday something happens to you. You say, Wow. It might not be here. It might be two weeks from now. It might be two years from now. It might be never. It might happen tonight. It's your choice. But if you hear truth, it's your choice what to do with it. But the trouble is, we hear truth according to a level of conscious state. The lower the conscious state we are, the more hostility. The higher we are and we hear truth, the more beauty, love, and tranquility washes in.

Because once you get a glimmer of it, it is so totally beautiful, you just can't deny it. Drop trips, silly beliefs. Beliefs are like, is it the same thing like dropping beliefs is the same thing the way dropping thoughts, because thoughts are beliefs, right? Right. Like you're conditioned to get jealous in a certain situation. When the situation is set up, person A, person B, and then you, and then you're jealous. That's a condition, so that's what you have to do, right? You react according. So the idea is to drop that thought of what's going on and just sit back.

You don't have to go through it anymore. Yeah, right. So beliefs and thoughts. Because once you start dropping beliefs, you see with clarity. And it is this clarity that makes you understand what's going on. Like people go to workshops and they're told, from the mind, it's all inside. But he says, Yeah, soul and psyche. We all hear that, soul and psyche. Then they start teaching differently, because they say, If you want freedom, be a man. Surely you're not going to let your wife tell you what to do.

Be free. Do your own thing in life. And it turns out the women and they say, You do your own thing in life. Refining our individuality. That is not finding individuality. It's finding a superficial conscious level individuality. It is a stupid, ridiculous game. It's an ego trip. True individuality is when you step inside, and when you're getting taught, it's inside constantly. Any deviation from inside is wrong. It has to be, because we all come from inside. We are. We truly are. If there's hostility, forget it.

Somewhere, somebody's missed the boat. Hostility is fear, and the very secret of life is hidden by fear. This is why we have things called desire. Desire is really fear. Many things is fear. Hostility is fear. Anger is fear. Doubt is fear. Lack of faith is fear. Insecurity is fear. Realize just one of those things, just one of them, and you'll never know what hit you. Life will turn so beautiful. And this is what's been happening, bit by bit and all at once. And it's been happening bit by bit, big bits.

And the more you give yourself up to this, the more health will radiate from you. For the simple reason, if you remain in a poor me, insecure, whatever it is, you must play negative games to keep up insecurity, because insecurity must be fed. If you're an insecure person, you must feed it. You must. If you don't feed it, you have no insecurity, and that would never do because I'm an insecure person. We feed it so many ways, it's unbelievable. But it's always, always fed through fear.

The closer you get to knowing, realizing self. I said earlier on about people medically fixing themselves. It's God that's doing the work. You're just allowing them to do it. You're stopping your thoughts from creating your problems. The more insecure you are, you need lots of sickness. Is it a headache? Is it a ulcer? Is it a backache? Is it a migraine? Is it my sinuses? What is it? Each one of us got little pet things, see? We've all got a little wee pet thing in the back here, and whenever we call for it, we call it, and we're really sick, truly sick.

We feel the pain, and we really have the sickness. Then we go to the doctor and we tell the doctor, and he examines us and says, Well, there's really nothing wrong with you. Oh, that makes you mad. I'm going to go to another one. So you go to a specialist, and he gives you some pills to take to calm you down. You say, Wow, that's more like it. He's actually found something wrong with me. Believe me, the biggest percentage of those sicknesses are strictly by our own minds.

Preventative medicine. The best preventative medicine in the world is to get to know yourself. And this is the whole story behind religion. is getting to know yourself. The more you get to know yourself, the more beautiful everything looks, so you don't call those stupid little things that made you suffer. Hence, I don't have any backaches, migraines, pains in the legs. You name them. I'll bet we've all sitting here got a little pet peeve tucked away somewhere, and we think it's so real because of our beliefs.

We believe them to be real. My advice for anybody on this island is get together with Carl and David, Chuck, Chan, all these people, because they've found a lot of this works and they can take you to where they are. They'll assist you. Everybody, everybody learns. There is nobody in the world doesn't learn. You should learn from everybody every moment of the day. There is no end to learning. That's why there's really no teachers, just students. And we should remain there for eternity. You'll never get to the end of it.

So you may as well remain a student and just keep going with it. It's when you try to put the brakes on, you're in trouble, because you bring your ego in and say, I know enough. There's no end. It's impossible to come to the end of knowledge. When I talk to you people, I'm learning, which is a beautiful experience for me, because I'm saying things tonight I never thought of in my life. So we all teach each other all the time. Don't ever be afraid of meeting someone who you think can help you.

Welcome it with open arms. Swallow your silly little pride and say, You can help me. Maybe I can help you. And we'll both help each other. And this is one of the secrets to finding this place that we're all searching for, is sharing. Share love. Sharing love is sharing knowledge, because pure love is knowledge. Pure knowledge is energy. Everything is energy. God is energy. So therefore, the purest energy in the world, which is God, is love, is knowledge. They're all one. There's no difference. It's there. It's round about us all the time.

It's in our very souls. It's in our bloodstream. It's everywhere. But we can't see it because of our silly, petty little mind. We're caught in the illusion of life, and we've got lots of argument to stuff us from seeing it. Our mind is very adept. Oh wow. But as I say, if you come to Carl and David, they'll show you the way, as far as they can go, which is a long way. Believe me, it's a beautiful journey. No, I don't know if you've seen anything.

No, not just a friend that you trust, but it could be anybody. You could pick up a book, you see, say by an enlightened man, that you think is an enlightened man, and you read his words and you trust them. It's always... Always up to you, because nobody in the world, nobody can change your mind. Truth comes from within. It got to come from inside out. It must. Anything going there in is of no value. I'm talking just words now, absolutely nonsense, words. Words don't mean anything until you hear those words.

When you hear those words, you don't hear the words from my words into here. That's only intellectually hearing. When you truly hear the words, you hear the words coming from inside out and meeting my words and saying, of course. That's simple. But nobody can make you believe anything you don't want to believe. Nobody in the world can explain to you truth. It's absolutely bizarre. I'm sitting here trying to tell you who you are. It's really bizarre. They say the man that searches for himself is a fool, because when you're searching for yourself, you're saying there's something to find. When you stop your search, you find out that you've had it all the time.

You are it. We still have, like, we keep the sets on, eh? So you have ... free yourself, free yourself, free yourself, and everybody's going to talk to you, say, okay, now you believe you're free yourself, and you say, forget it. Don't search for yourself. Give up. It's like the Bible appears in double talk, huh? Enlightenment talk in double talk. And it's not double talk. It's levels of consciousness. Consciousness. What's true on one level is saying yes, and on another level the same yes is no, someplace else.

And that's his idea. When you talk to an enlightened man, you talk to yourself. So when you ask questions, you ask yourself questions. Nothing to do with me. It's God. When I talk to you people, I really, I don't care who or what you are. I'm not talking to you, the bodies. I'm talking to your inner self. If you could hear me talk to your inner self, it would make sense. But because you hear me talking on your outer self, it doesn't make sense. So you've got to give that outer self, which is me, the body, ego.

You got it. Go inside. Let it slip inside, and find out the truth of life. Good night.



*“It’s a mind that’s not blocked by thoughts, a mind
that’s seeing pure truth, even though it’s a
microscopic second.”*

Rightsholder unknown. Transcribed by The Hidden Cause.

Sydney Banks’s words are unaltered.

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