

**Session 4 Transcript**  
**Chapter Three: Fragmentation and Wholeness**  
***A New Republic of the Heart: A Guide To “Being the Change” For Real,***  
**with Terry Patten**

Wholeness, that's our theme this week. It's really delightful to me that it is our theme because in a way, this is the real beginning. This is where we begin and end, and are most fundamental. This gives us an opportunity to ground ourselves in our actual deepest, most real relationship to everything we are considering together. As we transition into the depth and sacredness that really are the context of this whole course and all of our meeting together, let's allow ourselves to drop in deeply and feel that wholeness. Please find your way to a comfortable posture with your spine as straight and vertical as is easeful for you.

Take a few breaths. With each exhalation, just let yourself relax more deeply into the mystery of this moment. Know every enlightenment, every profundity, even every moment of suffering is only real in some *now* moment. Now is infinitely deep and even our pain, and hurt, and trauma are rising within a profundity of death that our wisest and deepest traditions tell us is by its nature profoundly okay, even blissful.

Let us allow the whole quality of our attention to open up. It is often said that attention is like the beam of a flashlight. Allow that flashlight beam to spread out like a floodlight illuminating all the parts of your chest and belly and back. Just really allow yourself to experience every part, and every in breath and out breath. As you relax and radically open, that attention becomes a 360-degree sphere. There's a quality of wonder and brightness that appear that were there already, always. As you relax and trust, let yourself notice. Let yourself relax and rest as awareness, as the open, feeling, intelligence that you are.

Let yourself relax, whatever may appear to contract or limit your enjoyment of that inherent happiness. Not making it wrong for any experience to arise. Allowing whatever is. You can't mess it up and yet you can always allow it to deepen, to open, to soften, and to blossom more fully. We can trust this. No matter what may come; sickness, old age, and death are inherently part of life. Each moment of life is by its very nature whole, full, good, beautiful. This is the truth. We've gathered together to contemplate everything in the nature of this moment, this time on the planet. We've dared to gaze at things that terrify us and that bring forward pain and grief. A core question and possible riddle that I ask is - how can wholeness be in crisis?

What is reality, the very nature of reality? This whole, is not a problem. Our bodies aren't used to relaxing completely into this truth, but we can. We can relax a bit more. We can trust a bit more. As we do, we find our way through veil after veil of reaction and disturbance to a foundation of okayness, radical, real okayness. Let's allow ourselves to just rest in this wholeness for a minute or two in silence.

In just a couple of minutes, I would love to engage with anyone who is able to ask a question live, ideally opening up your camera but at least with live audio. Raise your hand if you have a sense that there's something you'd like to ask and bring forward. While you're finding your way to that, there are few things I'd like to say about this week's chapter on wholeness and fragmentation.

The nature of wholeness does exceed subject-object consciousness. Perhaps wholeness is paradoxically all of the different ways we define it at once. Then it interrupts every distinction with a reunification. Therefore, by its nature, it can never be fully known in the terms of conventional subject-object consciousness. There's a radical mystery. Perhaps intuitively grokkable only when there is no difference between a knower and that which is known. When we are wholeness, we understand wholeness; we allow wholeness to completely pervade us and take us over, take over consciousness in a state of mind-blown amazement.

Maybe we can begin to think from the whole to the parts in a way that gives birth to a very different worldview. There are a number of paradoxes in this chapter. One of them that I'd like to address is that wholeness is both radical and relative. I'm saying essentially that we can use the same word for that which is unconditional, that which is unblemished by whatever horrific events might occur. People often call it the divine, the radical prior condition of all arising conditions. It's unblemished. Nothing can mess it up.

It can't be messed up. It just is what it is. What it is, is love; what it is, is wonder; what it is, is bliss. What it is, is beauty, truth, and goodness, freedom and joy. It is an undifferentiated, not-separateness. We can ultimately even feel whole bodily. The great yogis of India are about opening up the subtle anatomy so that the 'sushumna' of macrocosmic orbit of subtle energy is going down the front and up the spine and is magnified at the heart. This radical brightness can pervade the vehicle of the body-mind more and more fully. We become transparent to that wholeness that can know itself through our body-mind.

Radically awakened yogis and saints sometimes have this 'siddhi', this living energy, the presence of wholeness, so powerfully that in their presence, we catch it. It's contagious. Like some of you remembered the days of using a lot of magnetic tape for audio and video. There were these very powerful magnets that would be used to bulk erase. In the presence of some profoundly realized beings, people have an experience like that. They come into the presence and it's like the magnet erases the noise of the mind and a kind of radical bliss is all that's left. They call that in nature, 'satsang', the descent of the holy spirit.

In a way, I did have an impulse to begin this book by invoking wholeness rather than the crisis. In a way, that is our right relationship to everything. It is our home, our real home base. Yet, this spiritual reality is often invoked and talked about, and taught, and even practiced in a way that dissociates us from conventional experience. That radical wholeness that shows up is my care, my desire to be kind, my desire to make the positive difference, and my courage, my integrity, my willingness to face all that is and in a world in which so many are in such profound denial.

My sense was to begin with a conversation of the level of seriousness that I think is necessary. It was better to begin with that proverbial two by four across the forehead. If we're to really be different, if we're to really address these problems with a different kind of consciousness than the consciousness that created them, it's good for us to wake up into this radical okayness. For us to be in touch with it as much as possible, as frequently as possible. For us to practice wholeness and be a presence of care, a presence that honors whatever it holds.

It sees the wholeness, the real nature even of all the fragments. When we look upon the one who would be our opponent drawing a circle that excludes us or others who we care about, we see with eyes that notice a deeper, wider circle that includes us and everything we care about - including the one who

would have excluded us. We see this bigger circle. That's how we can be a presence and take actions in life in the conditional realm that reassert wholeness. That is how wholeness can reassert itself during a crisis of fragmentation through us.

I assert that wholeness is not just a noun, it's a verb. Wholeness is always like an immune response to a disease, reasserting itself. Therefore, relative wholeness, making things better, being a presence of kindness, being a practitioner, becoming more conscious, becoming more healthy, more coherent, more intelligent, more functional, less bound - all of that, that's wholeness too. In a way, we can use one word to include it all. It's true from a philosophical perspective.

We could separate that radical wholeness from relative wholeness. I don't do that here. I don't do that here simply because what's really important is not a bunch of philosophical distinctions. What's important is intuiting wholeness, breathing wholeness, being breathed by that wholeness and becoming a presence of wholeness. I had a little debate about that with Ken Wilber who would've preferred for me to make that distinction. I remain deeply respectfully unrepentant and I hope that resonates for all of you.

Terry: Karen, I'd love to dialogue with you about the question you just texted to me privately.

Karen: Thank you. As a type A personality, I have an inquiry around being compassionate while also being active. When I hear wholeness and compassion, I think of it as always being in the state of equanimity. At the same time, there's the interaction, the passion or energy of what can even be agitation at times, that I'd like to hold in a way that so I'm not passive. I hear equanimity as almost being passive.

Terry: In the book I use the word activism. I sometimes wish I hadn't used that word because it often has connotations of being adversarial. Being active-as-wholeness is exactly the impossible question that we're all holding because what we see is that people are very good at being active-as-separation and fragmentation and opposition, and doubt, and anger. But what is it for us to be active-as-wholeness in a way that's truly effective? What does that look like?

I speak about this a lot. In a way, it pervades the whole book. You're saying, "Look, I've got this tendency, I'm a type A personality. I'm tending always to be active." And in a way, maybe I'm losing touch with some measure of wholeness. I know how to deepen into an intuition of wholeness when I'm passive, when I'm quiet. But how do I deepen into this intuition of wholeness in action? Well, there's a lot to do and we don't see there's a lot to do. Thank goodness that you, Karen, are doing as much as you're doing with a very wise and good heart.

And, we have to keep restoring our wholeness as we go. I mean this is why it's a practice at inner work and outer work as a single, unbroken unity. You are already noticing and will continue to notice that I don't offer really simple formulaic answers to questions very often. Because what's going on right now is that humanity is awakening and each of us is to some degree awakened. We might not be transparent but we're beginning to become a little translucent to that wholeness. In moments, we're ecstatic. In moments, we're in love with all existence. In moments, we're in a state of mind-blown wonder, and amazement, and joy. In moments, we're awake. In moments, maybe we have fewer of those high states but our deep care and our deep connectedness to all that is alive is so full. We're not really separate from anything.

All of us have those moments when we're in touch with wholeness and we have moments when we're not. The first two chapters of part two of the book are all about practice, practice, practice because a life of constant practice is absolutely necessary. Now, as a type A personality, what you're saying is, my personality type and probably even my physiological type, my nervous system pattern (in the Hindu system, they'd call it 'Pitta' or 'Vata') is always moving, it's always doing. There's another typology that's based on the four quadrants of integral theory. It has to do with which quadrant you orient from and people who orient from the upper right quadrant are always asking the question: what needs to be done next? What needs to be done next? That's similar to what we're talking about here.

There's a subtle contraction in that. And there is something that you will increasingly outgrow as you become more and more mature and awake, and happy, and full. That will naturally produce shifts that will affect whatever imbalances you have. I'm not here to tell you how imbalanced you are but we all have imbalances. There will be a harmonization of your nervous system. You will become more of a presence of wholeness in whatever ways are authentic for you.

You don't have to do that first though. In some moments, you may be in a separated consciousness and trying to make your life work and make contributions that are positive but you're not as feelingly in touch with wholeness. We've got to radically, radically, radically forgive ourselves for that. If we don't, we'll disempower ourselves. And the people who don't give a hoot about wholeness, like the very disturbed people who are threatening the coherences of our social fabric in America right now, they're not pulling their punches. They're empowering themselves as much as they can day and night, 24/7. Never back down, never apologize. Never admit fault. Deny, deny, deny.

In a way, what's upon us is to become stronger, not to say, "Oh, yeah. I'm forgetting my wholeness. If I'm not totally trustable, I better not do or say anything." No, that ain't it. We're blowing it if we go there. There's a moment that we're in now culturally and humanly in which we have to become friends with one another in ways that help us each individually, and all of us together, to recognize that we're in a time in which we're asked to grow into not just wholeness but powerful wholeness, effective wholeness.

I sometimes say that in a way the growth issue of our time is how can we learn to love and to be a presence of love that speaks with the inherent natural authority of love, which is by its nature more authoritative than anger or fear. How can we wake up from this idea that love is only gentle and kind and accommodating? I've got some waking up to do in that regard myself. We're at the edge of something evolving in culture and evolving in us. It's never been the case before that the secret teachings of the highest spiritual traditions were available with a few clicks of your phone in your pocket. It's never been the case before that thousands of people were doing these high esoteric practices and in conversation with each other.

It's never been the case that they were in touch with all of that and in touch with scientific method, and principles of comparative religion, and ways to take whatever they're doing and look at it, to make subject object. It's never been the case that we've been in a moment with all of this. We're in that moment right now. In some sense, we are expressions of the unbroken wholeness. We are also unique individuals who in some sense are souls who took birth in this time and this is our time. We are not people who rightly ought to be wishing we were born into a different time, when there wasn't so much of an emergency. No, no, no.

We are the ones who were fitted with this time. This is our time. We're in a moment in which, if we're really honest with ourselves, we're always going to be a little too agitated, or a little too passive or not effective enough, or a little uptight, or something. We're always going to be falling short a little bit. If we hold back because we think we have to be perfect, we're really going to short change the world. How can we keep practicing, keep absolutely noticing the ways we're falling short or getting out of balance *and* recognize our responsibility to be a presence of wholeness in every moment to really, really let this inherent wholeness of being find its way into the world through us so that we are the hands and feet, and embodied bodies of wholeness?

Well, this is something we could talk about for a long time but I do want to talk to some other folks. Thanks so much Karen. That was lovely. Blessings. Okay, I don't see any other hands up but I do see some questions. There's one that was asked one or two sessions ago by Ed that I wanted to return to. He said, "You stress the inseparability of outer work and inner work. I understand that both have to be robust for an optimally effective activist. Those of us who are not up to top speed in either category, can you advise guidelines for how we can best allocate our time and energy between bettering our game and playing the game? For example, how do we choose tonight between the meditation class and the meeting of 350.org?"

That's a really good question and it's again one of these ones that I can't just answer. There isn't some little formula that I can offer. I think that some of us have really strong tendencies to only go to meditation classes and never go to 350.org. Or the other way around and you know who you are. You know that you need something that's going to restore your spirit like a meditation class or you know that there's a finding your way into action that's hard for you and then, exposing yourself to people who are willingly going there is absolutely necessary.

I think maybe the way I can speak to this most helpfully might be to share from my own experience a little bit, which is to say I was raised as an activist, but then I was in the ashram and really did prioritize awakening and practice, and personal transformation, and becoming just a more well-rounded, healthier human being for many years. Then, in the last years, the process of writing this book and of launching this book, including the course that has followed, I made a lot of choices. I saw what time it was on the planet in a starker way. What we want is not plausible deniability. We don't want to be able to show up at the meeting of the cool people and be able to say, "Yeah, I did the activist thing that I ought to be doing and the practice thing I ought to be doing." We're not trying to justify ourselves. What we're interested in is making a real difference.

I felt like I could make a real difference with this book. I felt that I could make a real difference on the basis of having put out this book. I veered a little too far the other direction. I invested my money and was willing to jeopardize some measure of financial security and was willing to push all my chips to the center of the table. I was willing to be all in for making a difference in the activist sense, for really making a mark in the world that would restore wholeness in all the ways I knew how. I've been given over to that pretty intensively these last years. In the process, I had begun to neglect my own self care and my own well-being.

I'm really glad in a way that I did. To some degree, you don't know that you're in the right territory if you don't over-steer to the left and to the right. You don't know where the center is. There was something about my integrity, about the depth of my passionate care that I would jeopardize my own personal comfort for, in order to be an effective presence of wholeness that could make a difference in this world

that needs it. I would not trust myself otherwise. I needed to do this in order to respect myself fully.

But I've been reemphasizing my practice lately. I've been feeling good that the way that, when your practice is really crisp, you begin to brighten more and more. Your subtle field expands. I've had that experience now especially in the last few weeks. I'd gotten pretty exhausted, really putting it out there. I've now been getting restored and I'm reminded that yeah, you've got to course-correct the other way. It's a present moment decision. Tonight, some part of your own heart, Ed, knows that it's better right now for you to go to the meditation class or to go to 350.org, or maybe to take a walk in nature, or maybe to have an intimate evening with your beloved, or maybe to read a good book.

It can be a lot of different things. Maybe it's to go down to the wrong side of town and just have some compassionate conversations with people whose lives are really on the edge and to notice, and feel your calming humanity with the human condition and with the inherent suffering that's part of being alive. There's no formula but your ability through your practice is to rest at the deepest levels of your own intuition that tap into an inner knowingness. That's what's going to guide that kind of decision.

[At this point, Terry instructs the group to break up into two person practice groups (dyads).

The instructions were: after introducing yourself, is for each person to take a turn sharing by looking into the eyes of the other on camera and speak from the heart, deepening into wholeness. Speak about the issues and ideas that have been brought up in this session. Each person will speak for 30 to 60 seconds.

The next exercise was for each person to complete three open sentences. Each person was given three minutes to talk, including one minute to check in with each other. The three open sentences to complete were as follows:

- 1) "I feel...." This first one involves breathing self-compassion and self-respect, and allowing oneself to enjoy the present moment. I feel whatever you feel. One of you will say "I feel this..." and the other person will take that in, be connected, but then, breathing self-compassion and self-respect, allowing yourself to enjoy the present. "I feel..." and back and forth, and back and forth.
- 2) "I notice..." This second one involves relaxing as open feeling awareness. "I notice..." and the other person will again take that in and at the same time relax as open feeling awareness. You'll go back and forth saying that to each other.
- 3) "I experience...." This third one involves trusting that I am not separate from anything. "I experience..." and the other one takes that in and at the same time trusts that they are not separate from anything or anybody. Again, go back and forth with each other.]

Well, I hope that that was helpful. What's going on in this work is integration. It's integral work. It's challenging. It's really a lot easier to feel whole when my eyes are closed and I'm not hearing all kinds of cues and distractions. I'm just being totally passive. Then, when I communicate that with somebody else, there can be something that is really good about that. It takes it into another realm. Then, if I get practiced at that, can I bring it into relationship with somebody who's not relating to me so supportively? Can I bring that depth of my field and feeling forward more and more, and more broadly?

Well, wholeness is unavoidable. It's always already our situation. Yet, it's the context for the next two chapters. The next two chapters are the evolutionary perspective and the integral revolution. Each of these two chapters has to do with aspects of how a sophisticated understanding of wholeness also accounts for all the parts. It wouldn't be as whole to just zoom back into wholeness and not be able to function in relationship to all the parts. It wouldn't be as much wholeness if we could only experience it in the meditation hall or only with people who are fellow practitioners. The more we find our way into wholeness, the more it can accommodate. The more our intuition of wholeness is combined with our intellectual discrimination and with our embodied practice, our relational lives, our action in the world. All of that is being brought together.

What you'll see as we go through these chapters is that, in some way, we're crossing some apparent boundary. Like wholeness itself, as pure as it is, in our next chapter we're going to be considering how we are all a living process. I'm not a somebody. There are billions or trillions maybe of living beings, some of them my own cells and some of them the bacteria that populate my body that are here. I'm a process of processes within bigger processes, social, political, and cultural processes. I am a whole made up of parts that are also a part of bigger wholes.

That's something we're going to unpack a lot more in two weeks in the integral revolution chapter, where we really go into the integral world view. In our next session on the evolutionary world view, we're going to discover the profound implications of understanding the story of evolution and seeing ourselves in this amazing and inspiring context. A lot of what we deal with are stories we're story-making. We are creatures who by our very nature of neural networks relate to stories and to our own roles within stories. We'll get into that a lot in Chapter Seven later on.

We can tell ourselves stories that are lies, stories of separations, stories of a dead world, and stories of a doomed world. We can tell ourselves stories that account for the miraculous nature of existence more and more adequately. This story of evolution which is factually or scientifically demonstrated to be a more adequate telling of the story that we're all involved with is really important for us to download and integrate, and bring in as best we can.

I think this will be a rich exploration. We're also at a point where those of you who are in groups who are using these deepening questions, or those of you who are using the mind on your own for journaling, or those of you who are just auditing the course and maybe haven't even always looked at the deepening questions, I recommend you do because they sharpen some of the distinctions and they help you bring them into your field of felt experience. I mean really the challenge of all this, of everything that is going on in our world right now, is how can we embody a different way of being. We're being asked by this critical evolutionary moment to become different kinds of beings.

Downloading this so that we can feel it is critical. I'm very happy with these guides and the deepening questions, and the practices both personal and social. One of the things that I mentioned in the document for this coming week is the importance of us getting engaged right now in activism, especially most of us who are in the United States because the midterms are coming. It's a different thing. I think it's important to donate money and I totally recommend that we give as much support as we can to candidates whose understanding expresses wholeness so that we can have an effect on events and the future.

It's also really valuable to do something with your own hands and feet. I've recommended this practice of writing postcards to voters in swing districts who would tend, if they do vote, to vote in a way that

would be a positive thing. Just sharing in a heartfelt way that they can see with a handwritten postcard, the fact that you care, and that you're encouraging them to recognize that what they do will affect you and every one. Those kinds of practices are really helpful because you feel involved in a different way. You're engaging people. Or if you can go down and sign up, do phone canvassing. There are a variety of things that you can do.

Embodying your activism and enacting it is not always so easy to do in a way that actually communicates that inclusive wholeness. Doing that practice will sharpen and intensify and uplift and enrich your experience of everything you're learning in this course. There were a few questions that got chatted over to me during this session that I wasn't able to get to. I'm sorry. I will save them and if it can work, I will certainly try to get to them next week or beyond.

Let's take a moment here, rooted in what we've experienced, and deepen into this reality of wholeness. Let us also recognize, paradoxically, that undifferentiated wholeness, although it is also our nature because of the targeting mechanism of our nervous system and the fact that we tend to return to the point of view of the body, mind is also in a way our most intimate relationship. The one who has been with us; the one from whom our mother and father emerge; the one that gave rise to us from our mother's womb; the one who was there in all our moments of being alone; and the one who will be there when we go through the depth process, if we do have that experience of disappearing down a tunnel. That will be the one that is waiting on the other end of the tunnel, this oneness.

In some senses, both are our true nature and our most intimate relation. This one is the source of grace. As we complete this session, I want to drop in and turn to that. Turn to you, wholeness; turn to you, mystery; turn to you, source of grace; turn to you, beloved; turn to you, who are beating my heart; turn to you, who are the life pulse, the living presence of intelligence, life evolution. The spark of the consciousness in me and in any one who hears these words, thank you.

Please help me relax and to open deeper and deeper into gratitude, deeper and deeper into contact with the miracle, the grace that you are. Please awaken me beyond the contracting habit of the mind. Please awaken us all again and again into a life of real practice and real engagement that we may be deepened and expanded, and awakened so that you may enter this world through us as us. That we may know the joy and the confirmation, the empowerment, and the profound sense of meaning and purpose that comes from really making room for you to bless this world through us and as us. To enjoy this world through us and as us, and to bear the discomforts and frustrations and challenges of being a person in a way that still allows you to really be known. Find a way through whatever difficulties tend to arise in this constant realm of contraction, that the wholeness that you are, the grace and divinity and mystery, the beauty, the truth, the goodness that you are, keep finding their way into our field that we may feel into deeper truth even while we might suffer the temporary experience of separation.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you everybody. I'm looking forward to being with you for our next session on the evolutionary perspective. Take care.

Sherry: Thank you Terry. I just want to remind people that they are welcome to connect and reach out to each other in the Facebook group and to please make sure that you've updated Zoom, so next time you're ready to go.



Terry: Ah, that reminds me of an announcement I want to make. We're going to close the public Facebook group after midnight tomorrow. We're going to turn it into a secret Facebook group so that we don't have constant interlopers trying to join the group, which is hard to manage. For instance, someone got in touch with us after our breakout groups after the last session and wanted to be in touch with the person. As a result, we need to turn it into a secret group. The place to do that kind of connecting is the Facebook group so please join. It's your last chance. Even if you don't expect to participate a lot, it's good to at least be a member so that you have access to it. Please join now. This is the last call. Thanks.