

# Emergence

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## Learning to Ride the Waves

*A personal account by Sandy Denton*

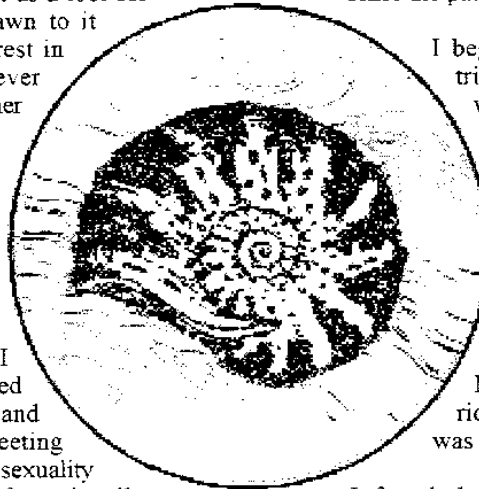
The past few years of my life have been equally the best and the worst so far, with phases of indescribable rapture interspersed with severe bouts of depression. When I discovered meditation about five years ago at the age of twenty-two I viewed it as a tool for relaxation and found myself drawn to it more and more through my interest in the Buddhist tradition. I had never imagined the opening-up to the inner worlds which would occur.

I was living a fast-paced lifestyle, busily trying to convince myself I had it all together and needed nothing or no one. I was nursing, managing a restaurant, and going out seven nights a week to parties with lots of friends. In general, I was burning myself out. I had drifted away from most family members and my existence revolved around meeting my physical needs. I explored my sexuality but never fully surrendered myself emotionally in a relationship.

My meditation practice continued and I spent some time at a Buddhist monastery. Over time I became restless and dissatisfied. This sent me on a search through all the self-help books I could find and incited some lifestyle changes, including the decision that a vegan diet was right for me.

I found myself in an extremely co-dependant relationship with a partner who didn't share many of my views on life. That was OK, but my problem was in allowing my personal choices to be abandoned. This relationship was a catalyst for great change in my life and was incredibly challenging in so many ways. The more I lost myself, the more I experienced feelings of

anxiety. I had no sense of boundaries and wanted to please others at any cost to my own well being. In fact, I don't believe I was in touch with what was conducive to my own well-being. I had surrendered my ability to sense the path for my highest good.



I began having panic attacks which I tried hard to cover up, pretending I was OK. I found this hard to admit to anyone, feeling overly concerned with what they would think; but this took a tremendous amount of energy to do and I was easily frazzled, becoming a nervous wreck. I attempted to avoid all social situations where these attacks might strike. Getting myself through a day at work was like clinging on tightly to a scary ride that had the potential to kill me. I was always petrified.

I found the courage to move on from that relationship and received some past life information through a Shastri visiting from India. This helped me put our karmic bond into perspective— all things happen for a reason.


Trying to rediscover my own truth set me on an introspective path, shining light on all those darkened parts of the self— frightening but intriguing and always drawing me in. I sought the help of a lovely spiritual healer named Anna who helped put me in touch with old memories and painful emotions. During one session I felt I was tumbling backwards very fast, but always safe and supported by Anna. Everything was suddenly brightly lit, although my eyes remained closed, and it seemed I was hurtling past things. Anna explained this

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as my spirit literally 'spinning out' of my body as I allowed the body to experience old blocked pain.

This was where I first began to make connections between childhood patterns and more recent or current ones, realising I was drawing similar situations to me in order to heal. It's comforting to know that at an unconscious level I am always operating for my highest good even if unable to consciously identify it yet.



***I slowly awakened to the possibility of embracing life's polarities, noticing how much energy I needlessly expended in struggling to push away the 'bad' and cling to the 'good'. I wanted to give up the fight: You cannot change the surf but you can learn to ride the waves.***



Sessions with a psychologist and bodywork therapist named Linda stirred up anger regarding my childhood. I became more anxious and insecure. However, my meditation experiences were rich and rewarding. During a chakra cleansing meditation an inner voice said, "you are doing very well". I was startled initially although I knew in my heart that I was receiving loving guidance. Another experience which occurred while soaking in a bath and chanting, evoked a lot of emotion. I cried and spoke aloud asking questions of myself, such as, "why do I keep allowing...such and such?", and "why don't I just do... such and such?". I was feeling victimised and unable to make change. An inner voice replied, repeating, "I don't know". At the time I remember thinking:- "Well that's stupid! Spirit is supposed to be all-knowing and I am told, "I don't know"! It was some time later in a clearer state of mind that I reconsidered this response and it dawned on me that my questions were answered quite sensibly, ie, "I don't know why you would continue to allow these experiences which don't appear to be for your highest good! It doesn't make sense".

I devoured books on a wide range of topics, never feeling devoted to a particular religion or philosophy, and became interested in drawing parallels between science and religion. I grew to understand the concept of consciously creating my life and accepting myself as a co-creator of my existence, instead of just an effect of a seemingly random bunch of events. It was time to walk the walk and not just talk the talk!

A whiplash injury from a car accident (interestingly the driver was my previous partner) opened up a long-term exploration of the severe tension in my neck and upper back regions, bringing up issues of the throat and heart centres. I learnt about my difficulty with firstly,

identifying my truth, and then, communicating it to others. I suffered migraines and at one time passed out ending up in a hospital emergency ward. Medical tests showed no physical dangers and, as a nurse, I was aware of precaution but I knew intuitively that I could continue to address this through so-called 'alternative methods'.

I was still experiencing severe anxiety and desperately trying to control my environment to avoid these panicked states. I describe it like teetering on a tight-rope between my yet to be discovered true self and the fabrications of the self that I had been living by. A precarious walk, always sensing the joy ahead but holding tenaciously to remnants of the self. I felt a lot of grief with this letting go process (and still do!). There were a lot of times when I wanted to stop this inner journey. I slowly awakened to the possibility of embracing life's polarities, noticing how much energy I needlessly expended in struggling to push away the 'bad' and cling to the 'good'. I wanted to give up the fight: You cannot change the surf but you can learn to ride the waves. This inspired me to continue learning.

Some mornings I would awaken as though in the middle of someone speaking. An inner voice would be saying, "I am always here. Just reach out". Another time it was: "The body is a vehicle for the soul's expression. The key to balance and harmony is to integrate spiritual awareness while in this realm". While awakening from another sleep I felt like I was being lifted, as though being pulled, by a force from my solar plexus. I was surrounded by white light and I remember thinking, "This is it. Just let go".

I explored my own healing abilities with friends, practising hands-on techniques, and immediately found it a natural way to extend love to others and encourage their own healing process. Of course it was ultimately healing for me also. I soon realised I would follow the path of a natural healer rather than continue my career as a nurse.


Still wanting to relieve the anxiety and feeling incredibly despondent, I consulted a psychologist who asked me if I ever heard voices. I naively said, "yes", and he questioned my state of mind using a questionnaire that asked if these voices ever threatened my sense of well being or suggested I hurt others or myself. I never returned.

Then I came across a marvelous man named Paul who works in Transpersonal Psychology, incorporating many healing modalities, and he helped me with some profound personal transformation. Over a period of about nine months Paul facilitated a beautiful, safe, healing space, which allowed me to navigate the exploration of my inner worlds. He helped me contact the pain and anxiety, often releasing it through breathwork.




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Language doesn't always lend itself to the rich profound journeys of the soul but I would often describe it in terms of colour, texture, temperature and motion, with periods of 'nothingness'. There were huge energy shifts where my face and limbs were tingly and numb while I sobbed. During one session I remember purple, heavy, thick, slow-moving swirls which I floated through and when I emerged on the other side I felt incredibly sad but unsure why. Often I didn't feel the need to know why; I just wanted to release it. I then sank into darkness where I found it hard to speak and respond to Paul's questions. There was a flash of anger, and a vision of hitting out at something or someone, then back into nothingness. Next I felt overwhelmed with joy and totally loved, guided and protected. Tears streamed down my face as I was consumed with enormous gratitude for everything and everyone. There was a sensation of love pouring down over me in a column that felt cool and tingly, producing a huge smile through my tears of joy. This extraordinary journey seemed to hold a message for me about letting go of fear and learning that I can allow my true self to fully experience everything and freely express all responses, and still be safe, loved and accepted—something I have struggled with.



***I took notice of the amazing synchronicity of life, being blessed with the most perfect situation if I allowed the natural flow. There have been episodes of rapture where I have to close my eyes and my head lifts as though in communion with God, the Universe, All That Is, while ripples of energy move through every part of my being.***



A skipping sensation began in my heart that continued for weeks and often kept me awake at night, sometimes affecting my breathing. I consulted a GP who confirmed my intuitive belief that I was physically well, and I kept on with my sessions with Paul, confident it would settle. I attended Vipassana meditation retreats and learnt some breathing and Yoga techniques from a Swami, which helped settle me down. Paul and I discussed the idea that my heart was 'skipping for joy' at the new found freedom it enjoyed.

I was changing so much and so fast that I became familiar, experientially, with the Buddhist concept of "impermanence", observing the constant flow of change. This proved difficult and I was more lost and confused about my identity. I became very depressed and didn't want to leave the house. Friends tried hard to understand and be supportive but I always felt I was

letting them down. I would cry about everything and couldn't watch the news anymore because all I could do was cry and feel hopeless about making any change. My thoughts were ones of frustration thinking: "if I can't help myself right now, how could I ever contribute globally?". Of course I was unable to perceive the bigger picture and appreciate that healing the self is ultimately healing universally, or if I did understand this it was not at all comforting in my state of despair.

Paul reassured me that my experiences were in accordance with the deep change I was going through and he referred me to helpful books, such as *Spiritual Emergency* by the Grofs.

My creativity was awakening and expressed through guitar playing, song writing and poetry; my singing voice improved as I worked on clearing my throat centre. My senses came alive and I developed a wondrous relationship with my environment, from which I had felt so separate from before. Now I really paid attention to it and responded to it, particularly to colour which I use in healing work and often perceive in auras.

I took notice of the amazing synchronicity of life, being blessed with the most perfect situation if I allowed the natural flow. There have been episodes of rapture where I have to close my eyes and my head lifts as though in communion with God, the Universe, All That Is, while ripples of energy move through every part of my being. The strange part is that as I felt this connection with All That Is, with my growing awareness over time, I felt more and more isolated and alone (but never lonely) in my everyday life. Now I feel no separation.

Issues of sexuality arose and I became aware of a hot pink mass to my immediate left, mostly at night time. It felt like a warm, sexual energy that I was integrating into my life.

I began a course on Parapsychology (which I later decided was not for me) looking for ways to understand all this phenomena, meet like-minded people and learn ways to channel healing energy. I contacted a guide who gave me information through a vision. We were by a lake at the bottom of a mountain and she showed me three pictures by floating them across the water. The first was love, the second family and the third was me. I had a reading with a talented clairvoyant who advised me I would not reach the Divine (as I was hoping for) "until I addressed issues relating to blood, possibly relatives". Afterwards I contacted my estranged family, which facilitated an immense opening for me and a release of fears.

I continued to enjoy healing work with friends but this seemed to challenge me in terms of maintaining boundaries. Often during one of those panicked states I

had the sensation of expanding and becoming unable to determine where I stopped and the other person began or what thoughts and feelings were mine or theirs. I would feel extremely uncomfortable and want to retreat from any conversation, which was at times very embarrassing. I am learning to flow with this lack of separation which also holds— and isn't separate to— a sense of individuality.

A past incarnation regression with Paul helped me with these issues as did keeping a journal of dreams. This aided in the integration of my conscious and unconscious worlds, giving great clarity where needed.

Recently, I seemed to fall into a void where I felt unaffected by anything. I seemed to be in a constant neutral state. Then one day I felt agitated all day. I finally decided to lay back and contact this agitation in my heart centre using breathwork. There was an intense energy shift constantly flowing from my heart centre up through my crown centre. My face and limbs were numb and tingly while I sobbed harder than ever before, and my brow centre was tightening. By the clock it went on for about half an hour but for me it didn't relate to time at all.

Afterwards, as I lay unable to move from exhaustion, I had some insight into the cause of this sadness and pain. I felt sad about the lack of love expressed in this world and the myriad of problems stemming from this. I thought about the ways that we drift so far from our pure state of love, losing reverence for all that nourishes us, but also how wondrous the journey back can be. It became clear I would endeavour to be that love in everything that I do, everything that I say, everything that I am. Perhaps this is my way of giving back and hoping to make change. There have been times when I would have hesitated admitting this, in fear of receiving the "whacked out hippie, peace, love and mung bean" label, that I have been lovingly known as. But here I am putting it in print. It's my truth. I don't presume this is to be an easy task so I am currently in search of a spiritual teacher hoping to spend time living in an ashram.

I've always known that my vocation lay in the healing and caring arena. But now I know what to say when I am asked what I want to be when I grow up...  
The answer is undeniably: "love".

