



(An edited transcript of the mp3 entitled *Life as a Sitcom* on the [Listen to Satsang](#) page)

Life is like a sitcom. If you think about it, almost every sitcom has one plot, although there are

many versions of it. Basically, the plot is that at the beginning of the show someone says or does something foolish. Someone tells a white lie, makes a mistake, or doesn't tell somebody something that they should have. That's the setup.

On *I Love Lucy*, Lucy loses her wedding ring. Or on *Seinfeld*, George tells his date that he's a member of Mensa to impress her. Someone makes a little mistake or tells a little white lie or causes some misunderstanding. Then most of the half hour is taken up with the main character trying to cover up, hide, or make up for this mistake. He or she has to sort of fake it to keep everybody fooled. Then, of course, the situation gets more and more ridiculous as the story progresses, and eventually the pretense can no longer be kept up. The character has told too many lies, has too many balls in the air, and can't keep it up, so the truth comes out. Finally, Ricky turns to Lucy and says, "Lucy, tell me what's really going on." And Lucy starts to cry and admits that she lost her wedding ring, and then all is forgiven and life goes on.

We live this plot in a lot of ways. It's the form that a lot of the drama in our life takes on. You might even say our human life is like a sitcom because we make one really simple mistake at the beginning: We assume that we are the body, the mind, and the personality that is generated by that misidentification.

Then, because it's not real, because it's not true, we spend our whole life trying to cover up how incomplete, unreal, fake, and untrue it feels to believe that we are this body-mind. We go through all kinds of crazy machinations just to keep the illusion going, to keep the little white lie going—until the lie starts to wear itself out. Eventually, you can't keep yourself fooled.

Like in the sitcom, awareness of the truth eventually becomes too strong for the cover-up to continue. So awareness of the truth is the antidote to all of our struggles, all of the effort we go through to try to keep our illusions going. The antidote to the lie is simply awareness. When awareness and our misunderstandings come together, when we become aware of our mistake, our false beliefs and identities can't withstand that light and attention, and they start to dissolve.

There's no formula for how fast that dissolving happens. The dissolving of our misunderstandings and illusions isn't something we do; it's not a further activity of our mind. It happens simply by bringing awareness to our mind. Dissolving happens whenever we become aware of what is actually present and true, beyond our mistaken conclusions. So a lot of spiritual teachings and practices direct us toward bringing awareness to our experience and slowing down and noticing what is actually happening.

To bring our awareness to our mind, it helps to slow down, because our mind is moving so fast that awareness can barely keep up. When our mind is going a mile a minute, when our lives are going a mile a minute, there's little opportunity for this dissolving to have the time and space to happen. So that is why spiritual practices are designed to slow us down. They bring us to a pause in our experience. The most obvious one is meditation, just sitting. Whether you use a meditative technique or you just sit, meditation slows things down quite a bit. It allows awareness to touch what's happening right now.

Of course, often the first thing awareness touches is all that activity of the mind. Spiritual practices bring awareness to the present moment in a way that not only touches the present moment, but caresses and really tastes the moment. When we slow down, awareness can really take in what's happening right now. And if what is happening is a busy mind, then we experience how busy our mind is.

The invitation is to slow down, to touch your present moment experience with awareness, whether what you're experiencing is a thought, a feeling, sensations, a yearning, a sense of lack or emptiness, or the overall busyness of your mind. The invitation is to slow down and actually experience what is happening now—shine some of this light that we call awareness on what's happening right now. The invitation is to take a moment with the busyness of your mind or with your emotions or with that yearning or with a sensation you are having.

The particular content of our experience is not the most important thing. Our tendency is to focus on the content of our experience and to evaluate that: "Is it working? Am I getting there? Is this spiritual? Is this getting me something?" And yet doing this is what keeps us going faster and faster. Slowing down means giving awareness to whatever *experience* you are having right now

What really matters is the awareness itself. What really matters is our strange capacity to register bodily sensations, experience thought, hear the voices in our head, and know what we're feeling. How do we do that? What happens when awareness fully touches the thought, feeling, or sensation? What really matters right now is the awareness that's taking in these words and noticing your thoughts. This awareness might also be noticing a feeling. Or it might be noticing one or more sensations—something about the chair you're sitting on, the air temperature, or just the sounds in the room.

What happens right now if you just slow down and experience whatever is happening right now? If it's a thought, what happens if you slow down and really experience not so much the content of that thought, but the arising of thought, the strangeness of thought? What happens if you slow down and notice if there is an emotion or the absence of emotional energy? What happens if you stay with the emotion of this moment or stay with the absence of an emotion?

You can do this in the same way you would eat chocolate. Ideally, when you're eating chocolate, you put it in your mouth and see how long you can hold out before you have to swallow. You want to let the taste buds touch every molecule of chocolate as it melts in your mouth. What happens right now if you touch your thoughts in the same way—if you look with that same delicacy at the arising patterns of your thoughts and take some time to be with them just as they are?

A lot is made of the moments in life when things dissolve dramatically, like when you have a profound spiritual experience. But you can also develop an appreciation for everyday awareness, even when the dissolving is more like a creek carving a canyon. Releasing some of our structures or stuck places can take a long time. Uncovering the truth is rich, not just when there is a big breakthrough, but right from the beginning—once you're willing to be with your awareness.

All the richness that comes in big waves in a moment of breakthrough is actually always present. It is always available. What's satisfying is the awareness—even when it comes to chocolate. Chocolate is most satisfying when we slow down and fully experience it. It's why all the things we take the greatest pleasure in are satisfying—because when something pleasurable is happening, we naturally tend to slow down. In that slowing down, we experience more of this pure, rich flow of awareness that is in and of itself pleasurable.