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# LIVING WITH ENLIGHTENMENT

**BY David Clair**

When I was very young, I sought something. I had little idea of what it was, or how to find it, but I seemed compelled to seek it. I would catch glimpses of it sometimes in Nature, especially in wilderness, but then it would be gone, even though the wilderness was still all around me. It felt like a deep peace, a sense of infinite possibility.

At some stage later on I discovered that what I sought was called enlightenment. I read books, cover to cover, again and again. I asked a lot of questions. Over time I managed to absorb the knowledge that enlightenment is right here, but we are cut off from it by the illusion that we have (or are) a separate self.

I read more books, I meditated and spent time in wild places. Eventually, it occurred to me that I needed a teacher – not in a book, but in the flesh. My search then changed its direction. I met a few genuinely enlightened teachers, and these meetings had a profound effect on me. I started to see having a teacher as an essential part of the process – and began a long journey of facing my ignorance and learning how to overcome it.

When I first met Linda, she had such a clarity about her that I was sure she must have been an experienced meditator. I was puzzled, and I admit, dismayed when I found out that she had no interest whatsoever in meditation, my stack of spiritual books, or even my absolutely amazing insights. Despite this, there was a very strong attraction between us, and we were somehow on the same wavelength. This was in 1980 – ancient history.

My attempts over many years to interest her in spiritual matters all came to nought. She would listen politely, but it bored her. In the early nineties I managed to drag her along to meet one of my teachers, Peter Jones. Something happened in that meeting that would change our lives forever. I was gobsmacked. Enlightenment suddenly became her main interest. She poured an enormous amount of energy into meditation and spent as much time as she possibly could with Peter. She even started reading my books. Before long it became obvious to me that she was far more conscious than I was.

What happened to Linda over the next eight years has been documented and published in other places; I will not go into it here. But the outcome of it is that for the past few years I have been living with an enlightened teacher. After all my years of searching for teachers, this is an odd sort of outcome for me I suppose, but an extraordinary one for which I am hugely grateful.

Over these past years I have encountered a lot of curiosity – which is totally understandable when someone openly claims enlightenment. The purpose of this writing is to answer the curiosity in a broader and more formal way than I have til now. I hope to be able to shine some light on the reality of this amazing state from a different angle. Some of the questions I've been asked are -

- What's it like living with an enlightened woman?
- How has Linda changed since she became enlightened?
- How has her enlightenment affected you?

These questions are closely related, so I'll answer them together. Linda has said of enlightenment – “[It] is a state of indescribable peace, a deep passionate peace.” She is in this state every moment. It is a radically different way of being. So how does it manifest in daily life? How can you see it? It shows itself in subtle ways. Some people don't notice it all because she is so ordinary. But if you look, you start to see it.

There is a noticeable lack of fear in all its forms. Every situation is met directly, unflinchingly. In fact none of what we normally call negative emotions ever appear, except sometimes for a brief instant, and I can tell that they have virtually no effect on her. There is the spontaneity of a child coupled with deep wisdom.

This is probably one of the biggest observable changes. Before enlightenment, I would say Linda was averagely emotional. She became upset, sad, anxious and depressed from time to time as most of us do. But not any more. This has had a profound effect on our relationship. These emotional states are foreign territory to her now, so when I become emotional, she can't feel what I'm feeling. She feels compassion for me when I'm emotional, but she can't really relate to what I'm feeling because she can only dimly remember what it was like to suffer from emotional pain. This can become frustrating, but ultimately I am forced to take responsibility for my own emotions.

Detachment is another sign of enlightenment, and a challenge in relationship. Most relationships have an element of need, and whether we like to admit it or not, most of us enjoy the feeling of being needed. It seems to give us some security. I know that deep down Linda doesn't need me. I know she loves me and enjoys my company, but she doesn't need me. And I need her, so there is a kind of inequality in this, which provides plenty of opportunities for my insecure ego to make a meal of it.

Since she has been teaching, people have openly praised Linda, often in very strong terms, and it is obvious that she is totally unaffected by it. This has been very interesting for me to watch. There is no pride, no embarrassment, no reaction.

There has always been much interest in and debate about desires in the enlightened state. Desires are the source of our suffering, according to the Buddha. But how could you live without them? Linda certainly has desires. Their range has changed quite dramatically, but she still has desires. They are most often for simple things like going for a walk, or seeing her children, but the main difference is that she is not at all attached to her desires. If it doesn't happen, it doesn't matter. There is no worry, no wishing or wanting - no projection of desires into the future. Plans are made, recorded, and then forgotten until their time comes.

Being around enlightened energy a lot of the time has its obvious benefits, but its challenges too. My awareness has received a huge boost, but I can easily become lazy. I can coast along on it, and slacken off on my work. It's been hard for me but I have come to terms with it. There was a time when my 'stuff' didn't appear much at all, but that was a kind of honeymoon period. The mind hates enlightened energy, and eventually it has to try to assert itself and play its games. Otherwise, it fears, it will die. Territory has certainly been won, but my mind is pretty much as devious and desperate as anyone else's, and it has shown its resolve to fight until the last ditch, regardless of the stiff opposition it now faces.

I feel, as I said earlier, huge gratitude for my situation. There is an undeniable 'meant-to-be' feeling about everything that has happened. Whether we're aware of it or not, enlightenment is what we all want. We want to be free from suffering and unhappiness - free from our unconsciously self-imposed limitations. For me, it's happening slowly but steadily. I see enlightenment embodied right in front of me every day. This is the most important factor. It keeps me from straying too far from the path.

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