

Why spiritual teaching NEEDS to change | Spiritual awakening and nonduality

Transcript from video talk posted 10/29/24: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyvRrAq-IL0>

Hi, I'm Sarah Taylor. I'm an awakening trail guide and an intuitive energy healer. Today I'm going to talk about what I think is getting in the way of spiritual awakening.

So if you are a spiritual student listen up. If you are a spiritual teacher listen up, because I got some things to say.

I have been a professional stand-up comedian and a spiritual teacher working in the non-duality realm. There are lots of different types of spirituality out there. There's New Age, there's all these different types of spirituality.

But specifically nondual spirituality has some real rigidity to it that I think is ... weird. Teachers, you do your students a disservice when you don't bring your humanity to the table, when you are not transparent about your own human challenges, pitfalls. When you're not human you make yourself other than the student.

And I know there's a tradition in these great spiritual wisdom traditions of the teacher being up there, and you're down here. We're in a different time. And spiritual students, stop giving your power away to teachers. They're just like you. Spiritual teachers, they're just like you. But seriously. They're awake hopefully, and they're human.

And they still have frustrations and challenges and backaches and you know all sorts of things, flat tires. And I mean obviously right? Relationship problems and financial issues and questions about where they're headed, I mean the gamut. Because we're human. Spiritual awakening will not save you from your humanity.

I've said this before but spiritual awakening wakes us up to the wholeness of who and what we are. We become more of what we are. You know, "Chop wood, carry water." Before enlightenment chop wood, carry water; after enlightenment chop wood, carry water.

That is just to say keep doing what you're doing. You're not going to disappear into a puff of smoke. You're not going to become so transformed that nobody recognizes you or you don't know how to live your life, although you could go through a period of time where, like the world of form is a little odd. But when awakening is integrated you're still a human; you're just awake.

I also think that spiritual teachers need to talk about their spiritual awakening. What happened? What was it like? What were your challenges? What were your pitfalls? What was it like integrating? What is it like now?

But it's really looked down on to do that. I mean, less so [now], right? [But] in some of the comments here about one of my videos or something, people were like, "How dare you be talking about being awake!"

Well, I think that my story about awakening is instructive and helpful for people. I also think sharing my humanity like in another video where I talk about how I realized that I was autistic long after a nondual realization is helpful and instructive as well. That's teaching too.

There's so many different ways to teach, and I think we're in a different world now where spiritual teachers can model wholeness and share what their life is like and be more down to earth.

It's really important. I started thinking this was a topic that I wanted to talk about because I was having a conversation with a student of mine who is helping me with this YouTube channel. She's been working

with me about two years so she knows my work. She knows the benefits of it and has benefited greatly from it and all that wonderful stuff.

So she was like, "Yeah it's really weird. I notice your online presence [and] I kind of get the sense that people don't take you seriously because you've been a stand-up comedian," and you know maybe because I post funny cat memes on Instagram. I don't know.

[I sense] that people are like, "Oh she can't really have anything to offer as a spiritual teacher, and I've always been like, "Okay that's fine." I feel like I'm flying under the radar a bit which has always been kind of good. I liked it, but she was running into a bit of a PR problem with me. She's like, "Wow. People don't know what to make of you." And I'm like, "Yeah."

About 10 years ago I had a standup comedy show called "The Divine Mess" show. I took it tour and it did very well. I would go to yoga studios and churches and, you know, open-minded audiences, but I ran into, again, a real perception problem in that people didn't know whether I was a comedian or a spiritual teacher. They could not reconcile both.

I mean people would say like, "Oh my God, I was so shocked when you were funny," or people would say, "Oh I was so shocked that that meditation was so moving." People fell into one of two camps – they were going to see a spiritual teacher or they were going to see a comedian. Their friend probably dragged them there and they're like, "You got to see this. It's spiritual comedy." I don't know.

I did it for awhile and I stopped because [of] the barriers, just as an artist, as somebody who's creative having to wade through the thick projections just to get to the storytelling. The teaching was laborious. This was 10 years ago. I think audiences are different now and might be ready for it, so if you want the Divine Mess Show again let me know.

But I just was fine to continue walking my path, which was two paths. I'd go to a comedy club in Los Angeles. I'd get on stage at The Comedy Store or the Laugh Factory or The Improv and do a set. I'd go out of town and do my work and then I'd teach a class on the weekend or at night or I'd work one-on-one with people.

I just was straddling these two worlds – this spiritual world that was like, "We've got to be a certain way otherwise I can't possibly be a spiritual teacher worth their salt" and this other world where you have to be relatable, because that's what it's about in standup comedy.

You have to be relatable. If you're not talking about things that the audience can relate to then they're going to tune out. You have to be funny but it has to be relatable. It's relatable first and then it becomes funny and the more relatable it is the funnier it is.

And then over here with this spiritual world was the opposite of what relatability is. As a spiritual teacher you're not [supposed] to be relatable [because] you have something that the student doesn't. So my student who's helping me with the channel was like, "You should make a video on this."

So here we are. You know I think things are changing. You look at Jeff Foster who was a nonduality teacher. In recent years he stopped being a nondual spiritual teacher. He's still a spiritual teacher but he's like, "I'm leaving nonduality because it really perpetuates this idea that you become perfected when you are awake, and it's just not how it is."

I remember years ago I went to a nondual spiritual teacher, a teacher who's perfectly fine, really good and brings their humanity to a certain extent to their teaching [but] doesn't really talk about personal things. Especially not present day personal things, never.

All the students that were ... there was this dead energy. Have you ever been to a spiritual event like that? Probably a nonduality one where it's just there's this dead energy? I remember going to a

nonduality conference and just you could feel again ... being autistic I can sense when people are kind of playing a part, right? It's like, "Oh they're playing the part of being a good nondual student or a good nondual teacher or whatever."

I mean this is the divine feminine that we keep hearing people talk [about]. Everybody's talking about the divine feminine. I get it but there has been a very, we could say, masculine approach, which is the way things have been structured.

And the divine feminine is coming in and saying, "No. We're going to roll around in the dirt. We're going to talk about our experiences. We're going to be a lot of different things at once and share with you and help each other and support each other."

We're in this together, and a spiritual teacher, even if they are awake, doesn't mean they're great at relationships or finance or they know everything about politics or they ... you know, it goes on and on. Teachers have a lot to learn from students just as much as students have a lot to learn from teachers. So I think we're going to see more of this bringing humanity into the spiritual realm.

I did a an interview with Rick Archer at *Buddha at the Gas Pump*. It's a very popular show where people share their spiritual awakening stories. Rick Archer hosts it. After I did my interview in 2018 he sent me an email that he got from a listener who said, "Yeah she was lovely but she can't possibly have woken up because she's an actress. She's still acting." And Rick was like, "What do you think of that?" Not because he and I were like, "Yeah that's a good point. I must not be awake." It was more like, "Isn't that funny, that people would think that?"

Because when you're deep on this path that's absurd. When we wake up, we become more of who we are. We don't become less of it, we become more. We become natural. A daffodil can't help but being a daffodil. A sycamore tree can't help but being a sycamore tree.

So please, students, look for the humanity in your teachers. Ask them, how do they deal with current-day situations in their life or just in general? And teachers, model wholeness to your students. It's so vital. It's so important.

I think I felt for awhile that in order to really do my work, to have the type of students who were serious about waking up, that I would have to kind of play along with the nonduality perceptions of what's needed. That to me felt ... really it's that dead energy again, so I've never really wanted to be a spiritual teacher because it looked like what it took was just uuugh.

But I don't know. I'm finding things my way, and you're going to find things your way as a student. You're going to gravitate towards somebody who resonates with you for a variety of reasons. Listen to that, but also be autonomous. Be in your power. Tune in along the way. If the teacher is ever asking you to do anything that doesn't feel right, whether it's just a simple meditation practice or something like that, to ... something else ... [shakes head].

And teachers, you know, can you show more of yourself? That would be great.

Thanks. All right. I probably forgot a whole bunch of stuff that I wanted to say but let's talk about it in the comments. I would love to know, have you ever been a part of a spiritual group where the perception was that the teacher's out there and up there and everybody had to, kind of go along with that?

And spiritual teachers or healers, talk to me about what it's been like for you. Has that been an obstacle? I mean it really is the thick perceptions ... people's perceptions are like a thick layer of energy that you have to And then, "Okay now we can be in the dirt together" or "Now we can be in the presence together and actually get to the teachings." You know it just gets in the way these ideas we have about what it means to be a student and what it means to be a teacher.