

Fields of Awakening

A Story by [Ghazal](#)



Story of a tormented soul ...

Chapter 1 The Thought

As we neared the house, my mother looked small standing beside me, and yet it wasn't her height, it was a dimensional quality, perhaps her energy or carriage that made her small. Whenever I attempted to define that dimension, I get a twitch in my gut, that old feeling I've carried for so long. In three words my mother is silent, unemotional, and dark. TV was her only entry into her silence. She was responsible for my suffering, or so I thought.

Two months into the coldest months of the year and I have been unable to thaw my frozen heart. Years of study and travel to understand these tormenting emotional ups and downs have left me empty and anxious, following me like an annoying background song that never ends. Meditating on a dusky February afternoon, I tricked my mind into a partial calmness, something is not right. I feel like I may be going crazy.

I'm bored and stare into a mirror at my horrible face, dry skin, puffy eyes from that overnight flight back to Montreal, messed hair. My new clothes purchased in Los Angeles are incidental. I used to bring back a moment of lightness in my heart, that moment of joy that lasts until I get my mind redirected to other things. Why was it possible then and not now? I miss it. Is it my destiny to become crazier, more distant?
alone, more like my Mom?

Sitting at the end of the bed, looking down at stains of salted snow from my shoes, I don't want to end up like my Mom. If I had a life before and truly lived, I am determined to get it back. I turned the light off and slept until dawn.

Chapter 2 The Emptiness

Describing emptiness to people, who have never experienced it, is like a woman who has given birth trying to explain the experience to someone who has not given birth. How is it that some emotionally sensitive people, like myself, who feel so many emotions intensely, have to struggle with emptiness? So I asked for wisdom on the subject from those who may have experienced emptiness.

On my daily walk, I once sat next to a middle aged woman on a bench overlooking trees in the woods. She had been walking her dog, an old Schnauzer with white fur on its back, who appeared to be content with its life. "It's a nice warm day." said the lady.

Struggling with my emptiness at that moment, and trying to act as normal as possible, I turned my head, gave her a fake smile and said, "It feels somewhat empty doesn't it?" She seemed surprised at my remark, "Oh I know that feeling. When I feel empty I feel suffocated." She replied

Once, on a trip to South America, I remember feeling intense emptiness while sitting by the ocean, watching the waves coming into shore. I could feel the hot sand beneath my feet as I gazed at the horizon.

A hand holding couple passing by took pity on my sad face. They stopped and smiled at me, "Hey, are you ok? Asked the woman. "You look so sad." She smiled as her beautiful

long hair floated in the breeze. She appeared younger than her companion, a white bearded man in a tight yellow tank top.

“No I am fine, just feeling empty. Have you ever felt empty?” I asked’

“How can you feel empty, being here on this beautiful beach with this warm weather?”

Asked the man in the tight tank top. He paused a moment. “Well young lady, feeling empty is more about the self than being anywhere or being with anyone.”

“I agree.” said the woman.

“Thank you. I appreciate your opinion.” I said.

They wished me good luck as they walked away, leaving nothing behind but their foot prints in the sand which soon washed away by incoming waves.

My definition of emptiness came to me while I sat by the ocean, gazing at the horizon; Emptiness is the absence of *Me*.

Perhaps it had to do with identity disturbance, a distorted or inconsistent view of my sense of self. Not knowing how I am, feeling nothing, not knowing what I want in life, leaving a dark empty space in the pit of my stomach where I feel a huge ball dropped in the middle of it until it reaches my mind, but not entirely reachable, suspended. It’s that lack of distance in the space between stimulus and response as a positive moment; when there’s a sense of ongoing being-ness without ongoing-ness, emptiness is a static space, frozen, painful, alive, unmoving, unreachable, and yet present. Clear and foggy, safe and unsafe. In the end, that void is not completely empty, it is filled with painful emotions. I once experienced the presence of a sense of self.

Chapter 3 **The Void**

The absence of excitement. That short-term gratification; the chemical rush that comes from doing new activities. Like getting in my car. Putting on a song that gives my soul wings to fly, driving recklessly somewhere, anywhere, meeting new people, old friends, or finding myself sitting at a Black Jack or Poker table, involving myself with them, anything to experience new ways of feeling pleasure, to feel that I exist.

I had no idea I was experiencing the *Void* in me. I was too busy trying to escape the feelings to know what the feelings were. They can be so painful that I thought I was going to lose my mind. It felt like I was going to fall apart and disintegrate into nothing. I would dissociate while driving and run red lights. I could have died on many occasions because I ran a red light in a dissociative state of mind. I have never been suicidal, but I resented being alive and wanted to be dead sometimes. I could have lost all my savings in gambling, and not care a bit. I had lost many of those friends old and new to this unexplainable... *dis-ease!*

Happiness and excitement are not the same. Happiness is calmer, more peaceful. Creating contentment is different than participating in an exciting event just to fill the Void.

Chapter 4 **Automatic Pilot**

In 2014 Malaysia Airlines Flight M37 was flying a Boeing 777, the state of the art in its advanced technology plane, so advanced that it could literally fly itself on automatic pilot. But it too crashed mysteriously in some Indian Ocean, leaving no survivors. Most days I go about doing things on an automatic pilot version of a human. I wash my hand; brush my teeth, put on my clothes. And I just don't feel it. I am numb and disconnected. Thanks to my autopilot which makes me do my chores without even thinking or feeling. Until I

too would crash!

"Humans are no machines and can't be on auto pilot totally, you would miss so much out of life if you don't stay awake!"

Said to me once Chanty, my soccer referee, while practising before tournaments last summer. She was old about some 65 years old, with wrinkly long face, mid-long brown coloured hair and walked as though suffering from some arthritis or joint problems. She had come a long way and I was always admiring her courage to still be playing soccer at her age, nothing seemed to have stopped her. She had once been in international Asian soccer games back in the 70's, and she was not on no auto-pilot for sure. She was just alive as she has been when she was 20. Maybe still picturing herself in some International games, aiming for victory of some sort. I envied her aliveness.

I had been playing soccer, as a goalie for almost 3 years now. Something about this game made me feel good, the idea of having a team to go to, and not letting them down every Saturday morning.

"I feel dead, as though I always let my team down, I can't concentrate on stopping the balls" I told Chanty with my watery eyes blinking in the sun.

"You are impatient Shaya, you want fast results but you have to work at it, also you *think* too much. Just be in the present. And the rest follows naturally. See you next week and take it easy" Said to me Chanty as she walked away, to the parking reaching her car.

That night I thought for long about what Chanty had told me, the word *Thinking* too much and *Staying* in the *Present* resonated in me like a church bell that wouldn't stop for hours. I kept repeating those words. And I have been hearing those words, everywhere. In movies, books and small talks. What is this terminology? Is it a new wave of thinking; is this the new age philosophy of some sort to escape suffering and numbness? Was this the ultimate cure to my own miserable Self? I wanted so badly to live those words, to be alive again. And I was bound to go out there and find it. But some research needed to be done.

Chapter 5

The Traveller

The next day I sit down for lunch with Cameron, my oldest somewhat only best friend I have kept proudly for the past 20 years. We didn't hit it off right away, as he is hard headed, a lost soul, and still searching for something in his confused and lost single life for as long as I have known him. A real gambler, who can't stop losing and return to feel even more miserable from his loss. He was a dreamer.

But he is the best friend I have ever had, who always been there for me, and for that I loved him.

"I don't think there much for me here in this town anymore..I am thinking of moving to California, stay with my sister and then settle down eventually. But I am not sure if I am doing this to escape my miserable self, or if I am really having a goal finally" I told him suddenly as I ate my slice of all dressed pizza.

-shut up! He replied. You always say that, but you never do it. Yes it's a good idea you do that, more work opportunities, beautiful weather, and just few hours away from Las Vegas! I looked him and we both laughed.

I was ultimately lost in space of emptiness that might explain my unhappiness in the present moment. And in so many ways I too resembled my friend.

I clicked on my notes in my iPhone and wrote this down as a part of my search. The emptiness is in between the *Now* and *Then*. That could explain the uneasiness to stay still,

to be in the moment and just enjoy and not think anything. To connect with whatever it is right there paying attention. I felt as though I was missing constantly out of something, that I had been running to catch a train to get me to some distant place where I can finally find joy and happiness, or even a lover that was going to make me feel alive and loved. I am still running to catch that train.

Chapter 6

The Search for Answers

Mom was leaving to California for two weeks, and by the time I had woke up that morning she was already gone.

I felt an instant calmness, as if a weight was taken off my shoulders. I felt lighter. To continue my search for constant joy and happiness in the present moment, I looked up some documentaries and books on the internet. Found philosophy books, about the teachings of the ancients to help people like me with their Twenty First century problems. It was like an infection, it spread in all areas of your life. At work, at home, in relationships, and mostly with yourself. When there is a huge turbulence of emotions in all colours, all shapes, gathered in one body. A prison with invisible bars surrounds your psyche. Madness steals your body and soul. I knew a sense of self, from a far distant, far from the bars of the prison I was sentenced to. As I browse through all these self-help websites in search of a miracle cure I feel like an investigator of some horrific crime, bound to find the murderer and bring him to justice I felt we were all somehow robbed of our own happiness I needed to know and I knew it would be the only way out of this prison. Suddenly as I read through some articles about the self, ego, Carl Jung's on identity and human consciousness and psyche, I stumble upon an article: Mindfulness, the way to freedom. My eyes sparkled, something about its title was inviting.

The following day I woke up from the same dream I have been having for the past 20 years or so. Something about the dirty public bathrooms where I have to go, but so many girls are there and I am scared or shy. Should I get it looked at by a dream interpreter? Maybe the dream interpreter can convince me that it has to do with my past and as I evolve with time the bathroom will get cleaner, another way of saying you have made peace. Peaceful, huh?

That day I went on fighting against the overwhelming emotions of resentment and anger, followed by episodes of irritability as I knew I was going to have a long day at work.

Chapter 7

The Connection

What is it about longing to connect and to feel alive, to know you matter and looked after? The emptiness in me had taken its toll, the Echoing pain in my stomach made it all too worse. That Saturday at the soccer field I was not all there. My mind wandered here and there an occasionally paid attention to the game. Chanty wasn't in her best of shapes either, the grass had been wet by the early morning breeze, she nearly fell twice running after the ball even if she was just a referee.

We won and like usual without any long talks we all scattered our way back to our normal life. But I was not going back to anything normal. My emptiness and my gut wrenching stomach were painful. I looked at Chanty as though she knew I needed her

maybe because her wrinkles gave her that loom of wisdom or maybe it was her calm soothing voice that made my world of misunderstanding, understood.

"What is it Shaya what's on your mind today?" She smiled

"Oh miss Chanty not good not well. I feel not so here so not there ... Just hanging in between"

"You are out of alignment!" She said with confidence

"hmm I like it that describes me. I feel so lost though" I replied nervously.

She looked at me as though I was a young innocent girl with no experience.

"Have you ever found yourself to even lose it?"

My eyes glowed, with a giant smile on my face as though I had found my Guru. She knew exactly what to say when I had an existential crisis. Where had she been all my life? I thought to myself.

"Well you see Miss Chanty, I feel out of touch, not connected to anything, and I don't feel much. I feel numb all the time. The only times I felt alive was in a relationship when I was dating where there is some action I miss it but I also hate it. And now that I don't have it I want it I feel the only way to be happy and filling this emptiness is to connect with others"

Chanty stroked her head as if she was laughing at my perception of life in general! Or maybe she knew how exactly I felt.

"Have you ever lost anything that meant so much to you, that the pain of loss was unbearable?" Chanty asked quietly.

"I don't know , I think , I mean I feel I have lost something, and I don't know what it is, and is driving me mad, angry and lost. I wish I had the answer. But I feel a constant pain in my gut and my heart is so heavy, something in me feels dead. I try to meet new people or even date, but the more do I do the more pain resides in me then my heart wants to burst out of my chest"

She sighed and brushed her long hair from her wrinkled skinny face.

"Life isn't about happiness at all stages, it's about getting through and to do so you have to work at it. First to be aligned with you, then accept yourself as you are, then find joy in yourself. You are neglecting yourself, you seek answers in empty places, seek within yourself and you will be surprised. Stop comparing your life with others and think that's why you are miserable. Have you ever thought this could just be your personality?"

"What, you mean being alone or not wanting a real relationship?" I wasn't sure what she meant by that.

"Yes?"

"Well that could be true, but I also like a companion, I could feel alone sometimes you know" Hoping she wouldn't think I am too weak or needy.

"Would you die on a deserted island shut off from the world and people, if you were totally alone? "

I felt she was testing me.

"No, I would be struggling to survive out there I wouldn't think about relationship or the world"

She chuckled. "You see, dear child, you have been so unoccupied with what matters that all you think is what is lacking, all is lacking is yourself, you must feel enough with yourself. Connect yourself with yourself. Because all you ever had is nothing but distractions. When you don't have it, you feel empty and miserable as you described" There was a pause, I looked down on the green grass, for seconds I felt relieved and out of my misery for moments, like there was finally a solution. But my quest was in how to keep it. I needed a coach, and she was standing in front of me on the field.

"Wow, that is convincing Miss Chanty, but you see, i read about many ways of finding joy or to connect with myself, but I don't know how. What is the method, what's it like, where does it begin? All these self-help book tell you about the problem but aren't clear about the solutions or how to obtain it"

"Let me put it this way" replied Chanty as if getting tired of my questioning. "Whatever you do, do it like you mean it, when you think just think, when you talk just talk, stay alert on the now, don't let thoughts steal that moment from you. And then what you do feel it in your body, all over your body, if you don't feel it, you don't live. You become numb and lose interest in all life's good and bad. And that comes with practice, speaking of which lets shoot some balls"

After the practice on the field, I said my goodbye to Miss Chanty and came back home. The more I thought about what she said, the more it made sense. I never really lived; I was just on an autopilot mode! I had so much to ask her so much to say. I wanted her to know unlike the popular belief that happiness is not elsewhere and t is where you are I know for me joy and meaningfulness came where there was actually some changes in my life. Change of a place, and environment. To me that was a challenge. What better reason to do so, when you have nothing that restrains you? No kids, no mortgage, no attachment to anyone. No real responsibility. I wanted her to know I am not comparing and that I wanted to explore and challenge myself in other places, and start a new life. And to me that was my responsibility. I owe that to myself. As I kept convincing these thoughts to myself, I could feel a sudden lightness in my chest. I wanted to run. And for that I had to go back on the field.

Chapter 8

The Awakening

All of a sudden, I was delighting in lingering sunshine, warm breezes and bare legs. Yup, spring finally was around the corner and I had to catch it. If where you live is anything like Montreal, then you might find yourself battling with spring fever. As for myself, I was easily distracted and less productive than usual at work, daydreaming of a cocktail on a terrace somewhere down town with friends, or maybe feeling particularly smitten or more energized than usual.

But are these slight changes in our moods and behaviours all in our heads or rooted in science? I kept thinking to myself. Researchers have studied the link between weather and mood for years, but really is there a link?

I am sure there are, because everyone felt the same about spring, and kids would play in the parks, teenagers would shine their modified cars and would race it in the streets. For me it meant more practice times on the soccer field with Chanty. I was excited!

I couldn't wait to see Chanty, even if the change of season meant changing moods and welcoming new ones, something was still bothering deep down and I couldn't put a name

on it. As if I was still holding on to a past hurt, some sort of unimaginable event that shocked me and I can't get over it.. I needed more perspective on that and had to share it with Chanty.

The next morning on Saturday my alarm went off 20 minutes earlier to get ready quickly to see Chanty and use up the most time I could with her. I was excited like a kid that was going to go to zoo and then get an ice cream.

"Good morning Chanty" I smiled as big as my mouth could handle.

"Good morning Shaya , how was your week, glad to see you so early here for warm ups" I felt confident that she had approved my presence, so early! As I rapidly was putting on my gear, I didn't hesitate a second.

"I been trying to understand a feeling of mine I can't put a name on it , nor can I get rid of it has to do with a past hurt, a kind of betrayal. To free myself from it I have to know where it comes from and why? How do I do that Miss Chanty?"

"Oh well my dear girl, how can you have such deep thoughts so early in the morning, just enjoy the day and we will get to that later, to rush things you will miss out of the whole experiencing. You want to know things by rushing it, and you are not patient with yourself, so don't wonder why you are so anxious to find out what's bothering you!"

I didn't think she had answered my question, or was she indirectly giving me hints.

"But I feel like I can't get over the fact that I was truthful to a feeling of mine but the person I was dealing those feelings with wasn't , and I feel betrayed as if they had some power over me, since I feel hurt "

Chanty felt annoyed since I didn't want to do anything but talk. Picked up the ball from the field and held it tight in her arms.

"Well, because you let your ego speak instead of your own intuition, remember the louder voice is your ego; you should listen to the quieter voice in you. You feel hurt, and think none can ever make you happy, the way you want it. But again, it will go away all of it. Everything has an expiry date. Just because you don't know when, doesn't mean it will never expire!"

"But until it expires I keep this anger in me, and it also holds me back from living. I feel empty for a moment and that emptiness weights a ton, makes me have these gut wrenching aches in my stomach"

"Oh goodness, are you sure you can even practice with all you just described?" She quietly laughed as I looked somehow desperate for a cure.

"You are trapped in your ego" She glanced over with a smile, then continued

" your ego is too big, just accept things as they are, no matter how and what may have caused it to be such an unbelievable fact in your life, you can't accept that something unfair was done to you, just because you didn't have it your way You have had accepted other ways before as unfair, but because the person you dealt with didn't threaten your ego, you were ok with it, I am sure you had been around people who had an ego as big as yours...!!" She quickly dropped the ball from her arms and tossed it between her feet.

"Ok well I am glad I am no longer poisoning myself with all that rubbish thoughts, and also that I am not going crazy for. But I feel as though I haven't finished an experience, a journey not yet completely finished. Does that make sense?"

"That's what rebounds are for sweetheart, said Chanty while bouncing the ball with her feet. Rebounds are meant to finish that unfinished journey with someone you didn't get the chance to terminate. It's like you become what you couldn't be and do or say the things you wanted to, then rebounds are just there for that. In fact they should get a lot of credit for the free therapy they provide"

"hmm it makes sense...but I want it to be that person that i lost if not I will still feel empty"

"No you won't, every person fills in and brings new good things in you. And you should welcome that which makes you feel just good. You don't have to have anything as deep and emotional as you're with the one you lost, but remember you are together with your rebound to finish an unfinished journey of pain, confusion and lost. The French call it *L'expérience Inachevée*. A rebound is not to be mistaken for a patch to cover the pain, or to forget someone, it is there for you to learn your unfinished journey that you left behind with another"

"So one can go about all their life trying to finish up an unfinished experience or journey, I for one can spend an entire life doing just that" I replied back.

"Because you don't live life fully, you have to finish it and be fulfilled elsewhere. That is unfortunate" Chanty continued. Your fears are what hold you back to live to the fullest. Instead you borrow moments from people to finish up your half lived journeys. Her words calmed me, I had found the answer the cure, the cause, and now I knew how to let go of anything that was holding in me.

"Ok miss Chanty lets shoot some balls before the girls come, we have a tournament coming up soon, will be you be there?"

'She shrugged. Then smiled."I am not sure; I have plans to go to Paris"

"Wow, good for you miss Chanty. Alone, or with someone special?" I asked her curiously.

"Alone of course" She replied as though I had offended her choice of solitude. "For you are only free when alone. She reclaimed, to be really good in your own company you must learn how to get along with yourself."

She sounded like she knew I had been neglecting myself, that I needed to reinvent myself all together, by respecting everything, bad or good, without judging, then all my problems would go away.

"It's my last day of practice here, then leaving to Paris next week, will you be all right?"

I felt like I was losing something important I couldn't explain, like losing a a special person in my life, no more than that, was losing a coach. A guru I had found on the fields. I haven't felt that way toward anyone in ages.

"Well I hope you'll have a nice trip" I lied wishing she won't go. "I only hope you won't forget me, as I know you will always be my louder voice" I told her firmly and with confidence. She sighed then pounded on my shoulder as if to secure me.

"Shaya my dear, the only thing that is making you feel so much uneasiness, is that you

have lost your source of distraction. Lose that which gives you purpose and you will lose yourself; because those are not real things and people you hold on to are means of distraction. Change your means of distractions, and find meaningful resources, then you will be just fine"

She smiled and gave me a hug; we held each other for long moments. My face hidden in her neck, she felt my warm tears rolling down my cheeks. She held me tighter to assure me that things will be ok.

And just like that we said our goodbyes. She to me and I to my old *self*.

-The End-

Ghazaleh Ghazanfari

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