



## Open to Release, by Arthur Zajonc

Let's say you're making something, a simple artistic sketch. You have the sketch in front of you. There's the sketch; you study it, move it inwardly, feel its gestures. Now imagine setting the sketch to the side and holding onto the activity that made the sketch. The artist actually did something to make the sketch. You also had thought, inner reactions, and so forth. In this meditative exercise, there was a whole set of activities associated with the experience, activities that were selflessly behind the scenes at work. You could say they were spiritual activities happening in you and through you and with your assistance.

[...] But in some ways, the activities are selfless, they have become objectified in the sketch. The fact that I'm speaking is a kind of a miracle, right? If I was conscious of the activities that go into allowing me to speak, I couldn't possibly say anything.

But you can stop talking and allow the activity to presence itself, and in this way to sense what the miracle was, what the miracle of the presence of all that which had to live in me in order to have these words come. So there's a reversal of awareness that the letting go allows. It's another level of reversal. You first go through one set of thresholds. But it doesn't stop with that. You have another threshold. I think each threshold experience has a similar architecture. In other words, you start with the sense object. You have to give that away; that's a letting go. Then you bring something else into attention, namely the imaginative experience. You give your attention to it, to the felt qualities and movement. You allow your attention to flourish on in this domain of experience, and you try to redirect yourself away from your habits of consciousness, suspending judgment so you don't automatically bring in old thoughts.

But then you could fall in love with this experience. And in order to make it to the next step, the next threshold, you have to let the imaginations go. Then what shows up is the activity that's behind everything you have been experiencing. But living inside that activity, then, can become a problem, can become too single-minded and a kind of preoccupation. One can be captured by this realm of experience like any other.

[...] Each one can fall into the trap of saying, "Oh, now I'm where it is all happening. This is reality; all else was illusion. This is it." And then you're captured there.

Freeze. There you are, boom! Done. Â Just as you are if you're content

with the self-evident reality that happens to be around you today. So, at each level, a mobility of consciousness has to be built in, where you realize that this is another layer, another aspect of the world. But it's also open to release, and then a new level can emerge.

Arthur Zajonc, in *Dialogue on Leadership*  
[<http://www.dialogonleadership.org/interviews/Zajonc-2003.shtml>]

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*Published at [www.awakin.org](http://www.awakin.org) on May 11, 2009*