

Falling Open in a World Falling Apart

The essential teaching of Amoda Maa (a summary by Pat Evert)

• Introduction

“I invite you to reject nothing, welcome everything, and surrender into the deepest falling of the open heart.” Underneath all the seeming convolutions of the spiritual journey is just one issue: the refusal **to meet life without resistance**. And so, through the years, my teaching has been refined to its essential message: the invitation to fall into openness. The resolution to both the inner tension of ego-self and the outer tension of the world is the willingness **to surrender the argument** with what is: to meet reality without resistance. This willingness to surrender is a falling—moment to moment—into silent awareness. Silent awareness is an undivided state in which the dream of separation comes to an end.



In the midst of the abject horror of an inevitable annihilation of my self (the “me” I thought myself to be)—I vanished into an eternal nothing-ness. Unexpectedly, this emptiness revealed itself to be the same as an alive fullness, and when I regained my senses in the next instant, I found that all resistance had fallen away—I had fallen into the infinite openness of this moment. It was the end of “my life” and the beginning of life as it is. It is available when you meet this moment with curiosity instead of conclusion, when you welcome your feelings into the softness of your heart, and when you slow down enough to allow silent awareness to reveal itself to you. Open spaciousness of being and an often indiscernible erosion of resistance to what is. Feel into what is essential, you will be guided back to the listening in the depth of your heart.

• Falling Apart or Falling Open

Openness is your essential nature. It is what was already here before the story of your life got created. And it is what remains when the story of your life ends. You cannot get rid of it, you cannot taint it or harm it, you can neither add to it nor take away from it. It is the consciousness that is always here, come what may. And yet this openness is so often overlooked and unrecognized. It’s as if we look in the other direction, focused on the endless narratives that rise and fall like waves on the surface of the ocean. **There’s a fear that if we open, we’ll be taken advantage of**, we’ll be abused or harmed. My invitation is for you to know the unshakeable openness of your essential nature. When you know this openness, even your most vociferous no will not come from reactivity, but

love. It is from here that true freedom can begin. Essentially, openness is the willingness to meet reality as it is. It's the end of resistance.

First of all, develop the art of listening—listen to the narratives that are running the movie of your life. These narratives are an indicator of how much argument there is with reality. **You stop rejecting and sulking, and start opening and welcoming.** In openness, there is no problem because there is no resistance to what is. It really is ok to let go, to fall apart. Finally, you can stop trying to hold it all together. But . . . it's so scary. It's a sign that a more true you is ready to emerge, like the butterfly releasing itself from the chrysalis. And in this naked awareness, **you see that you're not really falling apart—you are falling open.** This openness is the freedom that we're seeking, freedom from the defended-ness of the personality-self.

The discovery happens as we soften. It happens as we start to trust ourselves, in listening more deeply. It means softening, letting go, and relaxing within the experience that you are having. You are invited to **notice where the clenched fist is still operating, where there is turning away, or numbing out, or the tug of wanting something to be different than how it is.** This is the right time to stand as openness in the face of that which you don't want and that which you don't like. Now you are in touch with a deeper kind of trust—one that is not based on something. Even if you don't get to your desired destination of perfect happiness, **even if your heart is broken open over and over again—you will still trust the presence that holds it all.** Yes, it is safe to say yes, when you feel a yes in your belly—even though the mind may be tainted by a bad memory. At some point, when the examination of what went wrong has exhausted itself, the free-fall into the abyss of being is more inviting than holding on to any identity as victim. It's not that your life suddenly becomes perfect—it's that you finally can stand as openness in the midst of imperfection.

• Welcoming Everything Home

“What is broken is the doorway to gold... to inconceivable love.

What brings you to your knees is not a punishment but God’s invitation.”

The deepest acceptance of what is here—the utter simplicity of loving what is—puts an end to resistance. No longer is there a tight fist. What does welcoming everything mean? It is the doorway through which everything that has been previously unloved can “come home” and return to source. It is simply love in disguise. “How should I deal with fear when it shows up?” Turn toward fear and meet it with tenderness. **Become sensitive to the places and moments where you don't turn toward tenderness in your relationships.** You either operate as the tight fist of resistance and it's a nightmare . . . or you turn toward the tenderness of the heart, become intimate with your experience, and simply love it.

The invitation is to surrender the tenacious grip of reactivity toward what you're feeling. It's an invitation to surrender the habit of rejecting, denying, pushing away, and telling yourself “This shouldn't be happening.” When you stop giving attention to the narratives,

what remains is a kind of quietness. It's a space, a softness. It's the openness of an inner silence. Tenderness is what remains when there's no attempt to fix anything. **Surrender doesn't necessarily mean the discomfort goes away. True surrender means you fall into a deeper place within yourself, irrespective of your feelings.** In your depth, there is no division—there is only the deepest acceptance, there is only openness.

Shame, pain, loneliness, grief, and more—all these are your allies not your foes. They yearn to be acknowledged, to be loved. The purpose of everything in your experience that seems so unwelcome is **to reveal to you—that your essential nature is prior to all experience.** The question is not “How can I get rid of dark emotions?” but “Am I willing to embrace the grit and grace of being human? Am I willing to reject nothing, welcome everything, and surrender into the deepest falling of the open heart?” Listen closely. Hear it inside you: Your brokenness is holy. You may discover that shame is not a punishment, but a portal to your true power. This tender openness is a big internal shift from looking for an escape from the human experience to being fully present with what is. **It doesn't necessarily always feel the way you want it to feel, but it does mean that feelings are no longer the enemy.** The spiritual search, the desire to end suffering, is invested with a hidden agenda . . . to avoid feeling anything that we don't like. True freedom comes when all seeking comes to an end— when there is a deep rest in the now.

• Ending the War Within

Even if you are alive as this awakening for one moment only, the revolution has begun.

When you live as presence and openness you are the light of the world. You are no longer projecting your unconscious beliefs onto the world. In other words, you are no longer coming to a conclusion about the world. **When you meet the world without dividing it into good and bad pieces, you simply meet the world without coming to a conclusion.** When it arises out of an inner environment that's free of the pollution of conclusion, position, or opinion. This changes everything—**this changes you, and it changes the world.**

Reacting to being hurt or ignored is due to self righteous thinking. Be aware of how you do this. If you become sensitive to this self-righteousness— then you will start to see it sooner and sooner. Stopping it is not about doing anything, it's not about applying your will. But in seeing clearly. This openness requires a willingness for self-exposure—the willingness to expose yourself to yourself. The ugly feelings, the scary feelings— tell the truth to yourself about what you feel. It seems one of the scariest things. True intimacy, true love, and true freedom demand that you give up all strategies, all the attempts to “be good” so that life rewards you with goodness, all the attempts to “be loving” so that the other loves you. Simply, and utterly, be gentle toward your innermost experience.

Gentleness means there is no avoidance of what is felt. You come to realize that there's no "separate self" that needs to identify itself as vulnerable or not vulnerable—**there's no "separate self" that needs to be protected**. When the mental posturing falls away, all that is left is the openness of love. Love is the only thing that is real, everything else is imagined. To be with what arises in the utmost tenderness means to not judge, to not control, to not attempt to fix, nor even to attempt to provide an answer. The more you relax, the less you judge and the less you resist.

Transformation isn't about understanding something or doing something or knowing something. It's about letting go of all of that sort of thing. Every moment offers the opportunity to **let go of agenda and let go of hope**. If there is a so-called path, then it's accepting the ongoing invitation from life to turn toward openness, to not know where opening will take you or what will happen. When suffering is not wanted—whether it's physical or psychological pain—that's the time to get really close to the experience of pain or resistance.

In attachment we attempt to merge with the object of our doing so that we can feel complete. **There's an existential wound that each of us carries** simply because of having been born into form and separated from the oceanic womb of consciousness. I'm calling it a wound, but it's not really a wound. **It's an imagined wound—a core belief** which creates a psychological structure around separation. Alone-ness that is unattached to the circumstances of your life—starts to reveal itself. But far from this being a problem, this is wonderful . . . **here is the opportunity to see through the illusion of separation**. So, don't reject this emptiness—welcome it! This seeking of fulfillment in an imagined future is a common trait of the separate "me" or egoic self. When we stop following the movement of mind that seeks fulfillment in a future moment, a kind of abyss opens up, our world falls apart. This dissolving, this falling apart, is freedom. When we slow down, we fall into an inner silence. And in this inner silence—is an inner wholeness—where any core beliefs about ourselves are highlighted. We think "I am separate," and with it the experience of a sense of abandonment or unworthiness or unlovability. **Everything in our lives is a doorway to waking up out of the dream of separation**. Everything is a doorway to realizing your true nature as oneness. Openness is quietness. **The true courage to face fear comes from quietly coming close to what scares you—and smiling at it**. It's an openness that befriends everything. In openness, you are invincible. **As long as there is some part of your experience that is seen as the enemy, there can be no real union with existence**, there can be no lasting realization of your true nature as wholeness. Without an enemy, awakening will inevitably flower in you, as love. It's a quiet love, an undefended state. Just say, "Yes, I'm willing to put down my weapons of war in response to this experience," then everything else in you will be taken care of.

• **The intelligence of Love**

"Love is a force that moves in us as natural intelligence, the kind of intelligence that takes care of the whole not just the individual parts."

You can't truly know this love until you meet the existential terror of being totally alone. **Aloneness is the final frontier to the love that is life itself.** We can find this wound of separation in every aspect of the human experience. Awakening means that **everything** in your life that was previously **in the shadows comes rushing in to be seen and healed and resolved in love**, to be held in honesty and intimacy. And this means everything. Everything is the Beloved in disguise. Everything is the intelligence of love—calling you all the way home. Fully human means that you are rooted right here and everything—the whole mess and the whole beauty—is pouring through you. You are not in denial of your experience. Whatever was previously unloved has the opportunity to come home. If you welcome it, it dissolves back into the infinite consciousness whence it was born.

Looking for fulfillment in the world of form leads to codependent relationships. A codependent relationship is one in which you're seeking something in order to know yourself as something—you seek love from a relationship in order to feel loved or lovable. But when you are truly nourished by the aliveness of each moment, there is no codependency—there is no give and take, there is no need, there is no expectation. It's in the unspoken realm of the heart, in the depth of undefended silence that is your innermost. While this unbounded intelligence of the deep heart is already known to you in your innermost, **there is often a journey of unpacking the armoring of the heart to be undertaken before this intelligence can truly flow in you. I call this journey “the crucifixion.” When we are truly willing to be broken open, there is a resurrection into love**—into the unbrokenness of the true heart. But as we come to trust this vulnerability more and more, we discover it is our invulnerability. In openness, nothing can touch you or harm you. In this openness, self as a “separate entity” comes to an end. You literally—viscerally—experience yourself as unlocalized, unconfined, untethered. This sounds scary to the mind, but it is freedom for the being. This is the time to willingly surrender the agenda. If you feel no movement either to be still or to take action, then keep waiting in the unknown. This is how you develop the art of listening to a deeper intelligence. When that openness and softness of heart flows into your experience of form, you've woken up out of the dream of separation, at least for a moment. **Inside hardness is an invitation to give yourself to the heart's deepest desire** and knowing. This invitation is from the Beloved—it's the invitation from love, an invitation from the wholeness of your true nature. **If you could turn toward this tenderness in every instance of righteousness, you would softly awaken to your true nature as love.** In this openness you see clearly. You do not see argument, you do not see abuse, you do not see victim, you do not see enemy. You see love, because you are love.

If you take this one key of turning toward tenderness, your life will be turned inside out by the purity and transformative power of love. When you give yourself to love, the struggle and striving for finding your purpose falls away. Even when the mind is screaming to go another way or to not go at all—this is the cultivation of goodness. It is the cultivation of God-ness. The cultivation of goodness and wildness is the marriage of illuminated mind and illuminated heart.

- **Discovering your true authority**

“The whole purpose of my teaching is to ignite your own inner authority, to help you see where you give yourself away, to show how your need for love or recognition or acceptance is keeping you small. And to invite you to stand as openness in the face of all the world throws at you.”

The heart becomes illuminated when we allow our allegiance to truth to support us in seeing beyond concepts or ideas or hopes or fears—to what is truly here right now. **The heart stops being a reservoir of hurt and defense and need, and starts being an open vessel for love.** Now we can start to live with illuminated mind and illuminated heart. It is the end of an inner patriarchy.

You begin by noticing how you hold back from exposing the truth of your feelings to yourself because you fear you might not be good enough, because you fear you might be unloved, because you feel you might not be worthy enough. **Your true power is activated when you see that there is no external authority—only an imagined one** (a father, a mother, a husband, a wife). Underneath our carefully orchestrated posturing or confidence we actually feel powerless or unlovable or broken. There can be no acceptance of our humanity if we do not admit the truth of all our feelings, however seemingly dark or ugly they are. When the question “What is my deepest longing?” goes inward and falls into the realm of not-knowing, it takes you to an openness. When you operate from a “me here” and “life out there,” you are operating in the dream of separation. Essentially, you have abandoned yourself—you have moved away from your innate wholeness. The wild heart is your inner authority—the tenacity to turn toward your innermost and give it your allegiance, even in the crucifixion of criticism or rejection or condemnation.

When the commentary about what should or shouldn’t be happening—“I shouldn’t be feeling this,” comes to an end, you feel as if you’re falling apart because you start falling into the unknown. **But it’s not really you that’s falling apart— Welcome it—it’s a sign that presence is beginning to reveal itself.** It’s no longer something far away. It’s in you, as you. The true happiness you seek is revealed as already here. Presence is the same as openness. Being here has nothing to do with feeling comfortable, but everything to do with your innate capacity to bear the unbearable. There’s a big difference between identifying with the victim and simply being with what is. **When you think there’s something wrong with what you feel**—that you shouldn’t be feeling rejected or alone or vulnerable, for example—**you become a victim of your experience**, a victim of life. The deepest acceptance has no victim in it. There’s a possibility of softening, a possibility of relaxing the identity and being tender toward whatever is showing up in you.

In true presence, there is no avoidance of what is here and there is no attempt to fix. When we truly listen in the open field, there is no willfulness in this, just the willingness to meet reality as it is. In this willingness, something shifts inside us. What

we're really listening to is the silence that is the essence of openness. **Notice when we're not listening**, to notice when we want to jump in to find the solution, or when we want to avoid feeling our own discomfort. When you are disturbed by another, your story about them is the problem. Silence happens when you turn toward tenderness every time an unwanted feeling enters your inner landscape. Only when the heart has been opened can we fall into this silence.

• **The Art of Being Fully Awake and Fully Human**

"Be wild, be wide, be open. Feel everything, deny nothing. Reveal your true self to yourself. Be daring enough to be all of you. Both human and divine.

It is a state of wholeness—you are both broken and unbroken, both fullness and emptiness, both form and formless at the same time. The problem is you believe your thoughts and feelings to be ultimate reality, you believe them to be the final say in the matter. **It is a freedom that wipes away** the layers of defended-ness, **all the strategies that we create—to get what we think we want from life** to feel comfortable, to feel special, to feel loved.

Are truly willing to stop rejecting your experience, to stop dividing life into good and bad, to stop making an enemy out of what is here? Because only if you are truly willing to end the war within can you start to wake up out of egoic identity and the dream of separation. What really happens is that the acquisitive mind steps down from its self-appointed position as master. When you stop believing the voice of this false master to be true, when you stop mistaking yourself for this voice. Something dies, yet something is also born—a whole and integrated human being, passionately in love with life yet totally rooted in the absolute truth of essential nature. Awakening is the demolition of self as story-maker, it's not the end of you as a unique expression.

Most of humanity is looking for happiness, peace, fulfillment, and love from within the dream—but they can't be found there. There appear to be billions of beings, but truly there is only one. **You may not be able to change the world, but something in you will have changed. And that internal change is what really matters.**

All that remains is the willingness to meet life as the openness you already are. You no longer need to cultivate love—you are love. Don't be concerned with awakening as a means to an end. Put aside the fantasy of a spiritual utopia.

So you can stand unbroken in the midst of brokenness.

So you can turn toward tenderness in the face of the enemy.

So you can live as fierce grace when your world comes tumbling down.