



How Self-Hatred Can Lead to Self Transformation

Dr. Keith Witt and Corey deVos

[00:00:00] **Corey:** Dr. Keith Witt, good to see you man!

[00:00:01] **Keith:** Good to see you as always, Corey, looking forward to this today.

[00:00:05] **Corey:** This is gonna be yet another extraordinary show, Keith, and we're gonna be talking about a really, really important topic. And it's a topic that I think all of us have experienced at some point in our life. And this is basically managing the really, really difficult and challenging feelings of self-hatred, self-loathing, self-abuse, self-attack. And we're gonna be talking about this in the context of transformation. And I'm really, really excited for this discussion — and it sounds funny to say, I'm excited to talk about self hatred, but I think that this is gonna be.. yeah, exactly, right? But I think this is gonna be a really sort of liberating and even healing conversation for all of us. So I'm really looking forward to hearing what you have to say today.

[00:00:52] **Keith:** Well, great. I put out a blog this week called Self-Hatred as a Tricky Defense Against Change. And the reason why I did that is because I encountered this an awful lot in therapy. And it's not that this self hatred necessarily is a bad thing, and we'll talk more about that, but it is a tricky defense because it's not obviously a defense. Somebody looks like they're doing it, they're really taking responsibility. But if somebody

makes a mistake or violates a value and feels that little surge of distress, that anger, that shame, and goes into "I hate myself" and it stops there, it doesn't turn into self-observation or self-correction, then it can be a subtle resistance against actually taking responsibility and changing. Growth involves new understanding plus new behavior.

And I think that this is an important capacity that has come with self-aware consciousness. You and I were talking earlier and part of, the question, what's the use of self-hatred? Is it a spandrel? And a spandrel is an evolutionary term, meaning it's a capacity that came with another capacity. So did, self hatred just arrive, kind of piggyback, on top of the moral foundations that are obviously there that help us have society? Is it there on top of dominance? Is it there on top of aggression? And I don't think so, and I think the evidence strongly supports that it has enormous evolutionary potential, because it points us to something that needs attention

And particularly it points us to something that needs attention that has to do with how we orient in the world, with our own interior selves, and how we orient socially with other people.

So let's talk about this just for a second. We all crave change in growth. Self-transcendence was found by a guy named Robert Cloninger to be one of seven characteristics that all people had to some extent. And it's my favorite. I mean, cooperation is pretty good, and, you know, reward dependence is, you know, kind of a favorite of mine, given to my seven wing and so on. But self-transcendence is basically the evolutionary impulse coming through us. we all crave change and growth, but we also resist change and growth. And this is how most of the drives are set up. They're set up with opposing forces, because before there was consciousness, there were just the drives. And so, you know, the drives had to balance each other. They had to start us and stop us, for instance, you wanna go to the party, because you know you'll have a good time and it's good for you to be social, and then you don't wanna go to the party cuz you wanna stay home. Okay? Right. So you got two opposing drives. And now, what do I do with them? if you make a mistake, or if you violate a value, you have an emotional reaction. And the emotional reaction says, "something bad happened, and I want to correct it." And there are healthy and unhealthy responses to violating the value and making a mistake.

So what are the healthy responses first? Okay, so you see yourself do something wrong, you feel a little surge of distress, and then you correct and you start doing it right. So you're driving through the desert and you look at your speedometer, all of a sudden it's crept up to a hundred miles an hour, and you feel a little bit of alarm and a little bit of fear of being observed, and you come back down to 75 and you feel virtuous again. Okay? Healthy response to making a mistake. Or say you did something that you felt was wrong, that violated one of your moral foundations. You notice it, you go with the value that I violated. And then you go, well, I either will follow that value, or I will refine it to become a better value.

For instance, you decide that you're gonna have an adventure and you and your wife go to a nude beach. And you haven't been to nude beaches before, but you figure that's an okay thing to do. There's your next door neighbor coming up and talking to you at the nude beach, and you feel this wave of embarrassment. And then you go, "wait a minute, that way of embarrassment and shame is just my old 'don't be nude in public, don't be naked in public', but I've changed that to 'don't be naked in public unless you're at a nude beach.' And then you engage your, neighbor and talk to them, try not to look at each other's genitals. Okay, so that's refining the value.

[00:05:36] **Corey:** Which is like the elephant in the room, right? Like the more you try not to think about it, the more you see the pink elephant

[00:05:42] **Keith:** the more you see the pink elephant.

[00:05:44] **Corey:** Maybe I'm being generous by calling it a pink elephant.

[00:05:49] **Keith:** Really generous. I spent, I spent several happy years after I got my first license, you know, I was a licensed therapist, there's a great nude beach in Santa Barbara. I'd go there and play volleyball and backgammon with my friends, you know, on the weekend. I mean, finally I just got bored, it was just too much living in the land of the lotus eaters, went and got my PhD after that. It might have been two years.

Anyway, mistakes can lead to self-hatred, but there are healthy responses to mistakes. Healthy response to a mistake is to feel that surge of anger. Oh God damn it, I'm such an idiot. And go, no, wait a second. Let's just deal with this. Good example, you dropped

the bottle of olive oil, it shatters on your kitchen floor. Ah, I have such an idiot. And then you go, no, you relax and you just clean up the olive oil. And while you do it, you chant yourself. The Navy Seal mantra, slow is smooth, smooth is fast, to develop a new habit. And I particularly like this example because I've noticed over the last four or five years that I don't get upset when I make stupid mistakes anymore. Somehow all the work I've done on myself translated into something like that. Oh, okay. And then I just start cleaning it up.

Another healthy way of dealing with violating a value, making a mistake, or feeling self hatred is, say you just walk around feeling like a jerk. "Oh God, you know, I hate myself, but I'm just, geez." Like that. And you don't know why. The healthy response is, go find somebody, coach, therapist, and talk to them about it, and find a way through. You know, say you're an artist and you get uncomfortable, feel like a lot of shame when people compliment you. You go to a therapist, you find out that you grew up in a culture where it was considered wrong to feel good about yourself and to accept compliments, and you go, "no, I, I think I'm gonna change that value to, it's good for me to receive a compliment, and the only way you know that you receive a compliment is you feel pleasure from that compliment."

So those are healthy ways. Okay, what are the unhealthy ways? Well, let's just start with everybody's favorite, all the defenses. Make a mistake, violate a value, and then I deny it, I project it, I rationalize it, I scapegoat, all those things are designed to avoid responsibility. Okay? That's everybody's favorite, everybody's favorite unhealthy way.

Another one that we see a lot of, is we try to coerce other people or find other people that will support us in saying we didn't really make a mistake. Okay. You know, the January 6 people, a really good example of that. You know, they all knew that this is probably a bad idea to invade the capitol, to, you know, be chanting and seeing people do stuff. But they all kind of agreed with each other and so that, that feeling, a sense of consensus leads us to not self-correct. The worst form of that, of course, is mass formation psychosis, you know, the whole Nazi thing. And we've talked about that in other episodes.

And of course another self-attack, another way of trying to avoid making a mistake, is to hate yourself. "I hate myself. I'm such a fuck-up. I'm this, I'm that." And what it does then, is it gives you subjective sense I'm doing something about this, but unless you're

doing something about it, that's just a way of avoiding taking real responsibility. You know, for instance, uh, you get to the dinner party and you drink too much and dominate the conversation. I'm just talking about a friend here, by the way Corey.

[00:09:28] **Corey:** I won't take it too personally then.

[00:09:29] **Keith:** Anyway, your wife says, "well, you know, you drank a couple extra glasses of wine and dominated the conversation". You go, "oh God, I hate it when I do that." But then, if you go and do the same thing in the next dinner party, hey, you know, knowledge without change is like no knowledge.

Now, how does this happen? Several ways that are important. One way it happens is, we're in a child-centric parenting mode in this culture, and mostly science-based parenting is superior to previous models. Basically, it is an authoritative, emotionally coaching parent who's interested in a child's interior experience, and invested in helping the child go through one developmental fulcrum after another successfully, supporting them, and then finding out who they are and supporting the development of that unique individual person. And one great thing about Integral is, every time that a new perspective is introduced to you as a parent, that's another perspective that you can orient in terms of helping your child develop. But one thing that children discover is, if they go "I hate myself" when they make a mistake, there's in some environments where parents who have difficulty with boundaries, all of a sudden, whatever they did wrong, disappears, and "oh no, don't hate yourself."

Okay. It's very much like the "you hate me" thing that kids will say, which just levels modern parents. I never heard that when I was a kid, because you know, in the fifties and sixties, if you said "you hate me", at least in my family, at least my mom was likely to go "damn right I hate you." You know, it's like that really didn't evoke much sympathy. So you take that kid who goes "I hate myself", "oh well I don't want you to hate yourself", 20 years forward, and all of a sudden he makes a mistake and it's not like, "God, I feel this self-loathing and I should change something," it's like, "no, you know, somebody else should come soothe me." And then you find a way of doing that.

But then there's also other things that cause self hatred. If you are in an environment where the parents try to support development by attack, by criticism, by objectifying the kids and attacking them when they're upset. Okay? An abusive or a neglective

environment. Children can learn that, "okay, I'm hated", and so there's a part of them that identifies with the aggressor. They interject that parent, and it's like, "I hate myself." Also, it gives them a little subjective sense of power over this dynamic that they can't control.

[00:12:00] **Corey:** Mmm..

[00:12:01] **Keith:** "I can hate myself before you hate me. I can attack myself before you attack me." It is a really bad habit that happens in those environments. And then also, some of us are born with lot more capacity for emotional sensitivity and for anger. So a disproportionate number of people that with these temperamental traits, develop borderline personality disorder, for instance. And a signature feature of borderline personality disorder is I hate you. I love you. I hate myself, I love myself", like that. It goes back and forth chaotically.

Now, however it happens, however "I hate myself" happens, it's an important moment to notice. Okay? And how do we want to notice it? We wanna notice it with compassionate self-observation and healthy action. You know, you know the rights — right view, right conduct. And it has to be compassionate. Just self-awareness and self-correction is not enough to create growth or to be healthy. For instance, say you're in North Korea, and you're in the army and you're on a train and you're driving past starving people, and you feel sympathetic for them. And then you look around guiltily, you do not want people to see you having sympathy, and you remind yourself "no, they are the whatever", the rationalization. Okay?

Say you're in a fundamentalist Christian culture, for instance, or Islamic culture , a conformance culture that's say down on abortion. And you see that 13 year old, who's pregnant who can't get an abortion because it's illegal, and now she has to raise this child because she was raped and she has nothing else to do. And you feel badly for her, you go, " God, maybe there should be an exception". And then you feel this wave of shame and guilt, adjust back to the conformist view, objectify her. She's just one of those people who... And so it's not compassionate self observation, it's objectifying and doing violence to another person.

Another great example from orange is, you rip somebody off in business, you know, the classic extractive capitalism thing, you know, I find a way, to put together wood chips

and sugar waste from the sugar mill, and put cinnamon in it, and it's a really tasty breakfast cereal for kids that doesn't cause 'em too much harm. And I mark it up by 6000% and I sell it, I make a shit load of money. And then somebody says, "God, you know, there's an epidemic of childhood obesity and stuff like that. And, you know, your product is at the top of the list we're discovering, you know, you arranged to make it addictive." And I go, "Oh God, that's too bad. But you know what? I'm making so much money, I'm just gonna go for it." And so once again, it's not compassionate self-observation of my own guilt at doing that. It's self-observation, self-correction towards more extractive capitalism. So it has to be compassionate.

But once that happens, okay, once you can compassionately observe, you were saying this earlier, Corey. Once you can compassionately self-observe yourself hating yourself... okay, Okay, this is a 3-2-1 thing, right?

[00:15:09] **Corey:** Mm-hmm.

[00:15:09] **Keith:** Who's observing? Okay, the wise self, the witness. And then make a specific correction towards growth, and follow through its behavioral, you know, has to be changed. And then go, ah, I just did something good. And the people that have researched this particular thing have been mediators. So if according to the mediation people who've done their research, I haven't seen the data, so I'm taking their word for it, which is always a bad idea, I guess. But anyway, they say they have an 80% satisfaction outcome, which is an enormous amount of satisfactory outcome. And I particularly, I think that it's successful because one, they focus on one issue. Two, they focus on compassionate understanding of each other. People have to feel understood. Three, they focus on one specific behavior that happens at a specific time and is monitored by both people to make sure it happens. You know, I just said specific three times, that specificity thing, specifically doing something at a specific time that is different according to the new value, according to not making a mistake, and then going, "ah, I just did a good thing", that has huge power. If you read BJ Fogg's book, Tiny Habits, I mean, that's how an enormous amount of change happens. And so that specific thing, once we're beginning to do it, we develop the witness and have compassion, observation, focus on one aspect, and come up with a specific thing to do different, observe it, and then do it, and then go, "ah", and now we begin to self-identify rather than someone who deserves self-hatred, we begin to feel a sense of admiration. "I'm doing what the people I admire do". Paying attention, and if they're making a mistake, they catch it and they correct it. And if they're doing something great, they give

themselves credit and feel an appropriate sense of pleasure.

Now, this thing about the self-observation and making a correction is indigenous to every psychotherapy system that there is. The analysis systems, you know, Freud, Jung, Adler, those guys, resolving internal conflicts, it was about that. It was finding an internal conflict, and then making a change in your value and in your behavior. Working our way up to Gestalt and the humanistic stuff and the existential stuff to family stuff, same thing. They were all very practical: let's find a way that's a bit more compassionate understanding, and then a changed behavior where the rubber hits the road. Modern systems, it's still the same.

And I, you know, I told you in the beginning, before everybody got on, that, I was gonna make a comment about how come Integral doesn't get, I don't know, more explosive interest in the world?

[00:17:58] **Corey:** Mm-hmm.

[00:17:59] **Keith:** I was thinking that with integral psychotherapy, and I was going, most of the things that I just mentioned, at their core, they have their own core technology. Psychoanalysis has a technology associated with it.

[00:18:11] **Corey:** Mm-hmm.

[00:18:12] **Keith:** And, you know, and Freud and Jung it's basically it's the same one. Family therapy. There are, there are various technologies associated with the schools of family therapy, my favorite being Salvador Minuchin's hierarchical family therapy, I think that was the most practical. But Virginia Satir's is pretty great too. The modern systems, all of them, you know, EMDR, emotionally focused therapy, the Gottman approach, acceptance commitment therapy, internal family systems, all of those things involve some kind of compassionate understanding of some part of ourselves that we are not caring about. Okay? And making a connection where there is a separation, and then changing something. Either in the way we deal with ourselves or we deal with other people. And this is particularly relevant for people who have what's called complex developmental trauma. These are kids that have had a variety of abuse in their lives, and they generally will grow having to deal with that. And when you get 'em in therapy

and you start saying, "well, how do you feel about that kid who was abused", a lot of times you hear, "I hate that kid." In internal family systems, they call that part "the exile". Okay. And so an essential part of the therapeutic process is, okay, you need to have compassionate understanding both for the part of you that hates that kid, and for that kid, and there needs to be some kind of changed interior understanding...

[00:19:39] **Corey:** Right.

[00:19:40] **Keith:** ...to create a situation where both of them get supported. Now as you're doing that, who's doing that? That's in internal family systems, they call it Self, I call it the Wise Self, the Witness. We're strengthening that part to do compassionate self-observation, self-correction. And as we do that, we grow horizontally because we're fitting better into our current cultural environment. And we're growing vertically, cuz you keep doing that enough, and pretty soon the world looks a little different. Pretty soon people start looking like they're basically good. Which is quite a beautiful thing. You talk to a lot of the founders, the people that continue to grow, and you hear them saying the same thing about humans. People are basically good. People wanna be good. And that's true, the research supports that.

And so there we go. That's the dialectic of self-hatred. You do it without doing any change, it's a tricky defense. You do it with compassionate self-observation, self-correction, it's one of the many paths to self-transcendence and to love and joy.

[00:20:52] **Corey:** Beautiful.

[00:20:54] **Keith:** And there you go.

[00:20:54] **Corey:** Beautifully said, Keith. That was fantastic. And again, I just, it occurs to me that this is an exceptionally important conversation for us to be having, especially now in this current era when we're seeing depression rates, anxiety rates, suicide rates, et cetera, just skyrocketing.

[00:21:09] **Keith:** Especially for kids. Oh, and by the way, the point that I didn't make is in integral psychotherapy, because it's a meta theory, just like integral is, it doesn't have any core technology in it. It has all the technologies. So, you know, I have four or five

systems that I've talked about, therapeutic systems, in my books, but I'm not wedded to any of 'em because in an integral system, you're not wedded to a core technology. And that's the way that psychotherapy systems become popular.

[00:21:37] **Corey:** Yeah, no, that's, yeah...

[00:21:39] **Keith:** And that's a problem with Integral in general, and I wanted to make that point.

[00:21:41] **Corey:** Yeah, no, it's a good point, because giving people a methodology, giving people an actual tool, is oftentimes gonna be a more useful way to... you know, Buckminster Fuller has a quote about this, he says, "if you wanna teach people a new way of thinking, don't bother trying to teach them, instead give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking." And the tricky thing here is that integral is sort of a little bit of both, right? It's a view, but it's a view about tools, right? So we have something called integral methodological pluralism, where we basically say, here are all the tools that we can think of, each of which are sort of disclosing a different kind of reality or a different sort of aspect of reality. And we kind of need to use all of these simultaneously. And the simultaneous use of them is its own sort of meta methodology, but it can be a little bit difficult sometimes to communicate that, where, you know, it's easy for us to talk about integral visions and views and all that...

[00:22:34] **Keith:** Well, and that's why, that's why I like Beena Sharma's stuff and Suzanne Cook-Greuter, the polarity thinking thing.

[00:22:40] **Corey:** Yeah, that's right.

[00:22:41] **Keith:** The polarity thinking thing is a real great, great way of understanding a felt appreciation for multiple points of view.

[00:22:51] **Corey:** Yeah. And that actually segues Keith into some of my comments here because, you know, as I hear you talk, I'm thinking about this in terms of polarities, and I'm thinking of transformation itself in terms of polarities. And one of the critical polarities that I think we want to track in our own transformational path is the polarity that exists between, what I'll just say, future forms of wholeness, what we might call Eros, right?

Versus previous forms of wholeness, which we might call Agape. So when it comes to Eros, we're looking ahead at the whole that we wish to become at some point. We're not there yet, right? But we're doing the work so that we can make ourselves more whole, and so that we can continue sort of this ascending sequence of wholes into new wholes, into new wholes. And every time we do, every step that we take, we're also including a previous whole with us. And there's a love that works in both directions. There's a love that gets extended towards our future wholeness. And then there's a love that gets extended sort of "downward" into the past, into our previous wholes, which are now parts of our current whole, right?

So that's the difference between Eros and Agape. And both are absolutely critical for a transformational path, because, you know, guess what? If you have something broken or damaged down here, if one of your parts is in some state of disrepair that can be sort of like the pea under the mattress, right? It doesn't matter how many mattresses you stack on top, you still feel uncomfortable because that piece of you way down there is still sort of broken and needs some attention. It needs to be healed or redressed or what have you. So a healthy Agape is a transformational path that allows us to sort of look within, to look downstream in a certain sense, to reintegrate all of our previous wholes that are now parts of us in sort of new ways.

I think this is actually what leads us to this topic of self-hatred, self-loathing, self-abuse, self-attack, self-harm, ultimately self-annihilation, right? I mean, that's where that path can sort of lead, because this kind of self-hatred in a lot of ways is sort of like a broken Agape, right?

[00:25:04] **Keith:** Yes.

[00:25:04] **Corey:** There's this feeling, there's this sensation that I have incompatible parts within me, and the incompatibility of those parts is causing me pain or distress or, you know, self-loathing or what have you. And if that comes with a sort of overall resistance to change, and that resistance can be a resistance for its own sake, right? Because it's uncomfortable and we want to avoid uncomfortable things. Or it might just be coming because we don't have the tools, we don't have the language, we may not have the perspective to actually hold these sort of two conflicting parts of ourselves in our consciousness at the same time. Right?

[00:25:43] **Keith:** Or it might be because the culture says, oh no, being you is forbidden. Say you're gay in Iran...

You know, let's say you're more, you really wanna engage in a lot of social activism, and you're working in a cutthroat company. I mean, there could be a cultural thing that stops you from being you, and make you ashamed, make you hate you for being you at odds with that culture. And I think that happens in every first tier culture.

[00:26:11] **Corey:** A hundred percent. Cuz if you can't make that part of yourself into an object, that sort of hidden subject in you into an object, as well as the inherited sort of intersubjective matrix, right? If you can't make that an object, then that's the definition of suffering right there. I can't make these into objects, so therefore I can't hold them in my consciousness, and therefore I can't reconcile them without extinguishing one or the other. Right? And that is, I mean, that gets really, really painful.

All of which is to say, I'm increasingly thinking of this sort of experience of self-loathing and self-hatred as sort of its own transformative path in a certain way. Or maybe it's a branch of a transformative path. I'm thinking of it as "The Path of Thanatos". Right? I think the invitation here is, whenever we start feeling that, that sort of stuckness, right? There's an invitation for us to open ourselves up to other states of consciousness, particularly the Witness state of consciousness, which is the state of consciousness that is bigger than any of these sort of pockets of suffering that we find within ourselves. It's the part of us that says, you know, I feel pain, but I am not in pain. Pain is in me,

[00:27:31] **Keith:** Mm-hmm.

[00:27:31] **Corey:** And as soon as you make that transition, you are contacting that part of yourself, the Wise Self, as you often say, that is infinitely larger than whatever sort of points of pain we might be feeling in our system, and that gives you the space to actually begin sort of operating on the circuit board, in order to reintegrate some of these parts that we might be experiencing right now as broken or in conflict with each other, or what have you.

So, this "Path of Thanatos", I think, is a path of both sort of "growing up" transformation, but also a "waking up" transformation. And the danger here, I think, is when we can't

access that sort of larger, wider aperture of consciousness that comes with the Witness, when we can't access that, we begin to confuse sort of the magnitude of the pain. Rather than feeling like, "oh, you know, I hate this part of myself," instead it feels like, phenomenologically, it feels like "I hate the whole of myself. I hate being me. It is painful being me. I suffer because I feel like I am me and I don't know how to change that." And that is creating self-hatred, self-loathing, and which, you know, again, could ultimately end up with self-abuse and even self-annihilation. Right? It could result in suicide.

[00:28:52] **Keith:** Well it's kind of a psychological fibromyalgia. You know, fibromyalgia, your pain circuits get rewired so that you're in pain with what would normally be normal sensation.

[00:29:02] **Corey:** Right.

[00:29:03] **Keith:** Now this goes back to another talk we had about the difference between resilience and sensitization, which is, you know, a big deal in, in the current culture. But I wanna stick with Eros and Thanatos for just a second one thing I love about, you know, I said earlier when you brought up Eros and Thanatos, I said, you know, we all love Jung, okay? And one of the reasons we love Jung is he sees these opposing motivation systems and stuff, and he extends them to the mythological. We all have dominance, we all have aggression, we all have, you know, "the hell with it" stuff, we all have that. We all have "I want to create, I wanna love, I want to be loved", that kind of stuff. We got Eros and Thanatos. And we all have our own universe that is dependent upon us, throughout our incarnation. And I think what happens is people just don't recognize how important they are. don't recognize you have your own universe that you're directing throughout your life, and you have these incredible powers as a human being to make things happen or to screw things up, and to make yourself better or make yourself worse. Okay? And when you lose touch with that, or you don't encounter that, or you don't experience that, then those powers are kind of happening as they happen, kind of at the mercy of your temperamental nature and your environment and whatever healthy and unhealthy things showed up, until the Witness starts saying, "okay, now I'm gonna direct my personal evolution." And self hatred is, a big signal.

[00:30:39] **Corey:** Right. That's right.

[00:30:40] **Keith:** And by the way, it's super important to feel shame and self-hatred and stuff when we violate a moral standard because that's us saying, no, we want to be virtuous. So if we take it all the way to what's the value? Either follow the value or refine the value. If we take it all the way, then we grow. Okay? Unless we don't, we just go and then do it all over again. That's just pseudo insight and pseudo self-awareness.

[00:31:07] **Corey:** Yeah. And being able to relate to it, as you say, as information, right? I think critical here. I mean, I remember Ken saying at one point, and I can't remember which book this might've been in, I, I looked through One Taste and Boomeritis trying to find this, those felt like the obvious places. Maybe it was in a dialogue that he did or something, but I remember him talking about self-hatred as often being sort of necessary but not sufficient for some degree of actual growth and transformation. In other words, you know, we've talked about this a lot before. The human species is not inherently a very proactive species, right? We tend not to make necessary changes until we feel the pain, and that's true whether we're looking at exterior conditions like climate change and wealth inequality or what have you. We don't do anything about it until it hurts. Or if we're talking about interior sort of challenges that we might, you know, be suffering. We don't do anything about it until it hurts. And that self-hate, that feeling of self-hatred is the information of "this hurts, and if I don't do something about it, I feel like I could be annihilated."

[00:32:14] **Keith:** It's feeling the pain and feeling some sense of an ability to respond to it.

[00:32:21] **Corey:** That's right.

[00:32:22] **Keith:** Because feeling the pain and having zero sense of agency, "okay, nothing I can do about it", if you feel the pain and you go, "I have some agency to do something."

[00:32:36] **Corey:** That's right.

[00:32:36] **Keith:** Okay, those two things together. And that's what makes for a virtuous society. Now there's all kinds of complexity around it, cuz, you know, virtuous is according to at least six different moral foundations, some of them which are in

opposition to each other on occasion, and certainly different value memes, interpret and have different interpretations of, and support different forms of moral structures around those six values. But it's basically that. You know, I notice it, feel bad about it, I have some power to change, gonna do it and then feel better.

[00:33:16] **Corey:** Right.

[00:33:16] **Keith:** And I encourage everybody to do this. So I wanna take at least this practice from this conversation. When you feel self-hatred, go "whoa, I just made a mistake or violated a value, probably, what was it? if it was a mistake, I'll correct it." And if you correct it, you need to feel some sense of pleasure. "Ah, just corrected a mistake." If it's a value, you look at the value. "Did I violate that value? Really? Um, yes. No, if I did, okay, let's follow that value. Is it an unrealistic value? Perhaps, let's refine it."

Great example is, you teach your kids not to lie. And then, you know, kid's at 11 or 12 and you know, and Aunt Fria comes in and Frida's gained 30 pounds since the last time she came in and she's wearing an ugly dress, and you're 11 years old. And she says, "How do you like my new dress?" And 11 year old says, "well, it's really ugly." And then Aunt Frida freaks out, and then later on kid says, "what, do you expect me to lie?" And you go, "well, it's a little bit more complicated than 'don't lie'". There's some times that you lie, but it's serving the deeper truth. And if a kid's seven, they'll just look at you like you're talking Chinese to them, (you know, assuming you're not Chinese). And if they're 11 or 12 or 13, it'll begin to make sense.

[00:34:29] **Corey:** Right.

[00:34:30] **Keith:** It's pretty shifty, but it's still, exactly what you said earlier. Want we want the Witness.

[00:34:36] **Corey:** And this is another thing that's really tricky here, Keith, is because, you know, we're talking about this in sort of a, I don't know, I guess sort of a third person structural way, right? Like, here's sort of what's happening over a sequence of time when people are feeling these types of things.

But of course, when it's happening to us, we don't see our structures, we don't see our shadows, we don't see any of this stuff. What we see is the phenomenology of our states right now. And we know that when people actually make the decision to commit suicide, it is the result of an extreme but temporary state of consciousness. Which is why we favor things like, you know, sort of the, what do they call it, the onion approach to harm prevention, right? Where basically we're saying, "okay, knowing that people can get into very, very intense states, and make very rash decisions when they're in one of those states, if we can just find ways to sort of delay any actions that might come out of that state, that could save the person's life." So that's like, let's put a, you know, a few days waiting time on purchasing a firearm, for example. That's one of those. There's any number of interventions that we try to put into place as a society just to give people an opportunity to come out of that extreme state of self-hatred, so that they can hopefully make contact with a piece of themselves, or a piece of the world, or a relationship they have, or whatever it is, their pet dog. I mean, it can literally be anything. But when they make contact with something on the other side of that state that can help sort of resolve that for them.

[00:36:11] **Keith:** Studies show about suicide is an enormous amount of suicide happens in a 10 minute window.

[00:36:19] **Corey:** Exactly.

[00:36:20] **Keith:** And so if someone can be interrupted in that window, generally the danger is, not always, but generally the danger has passed. Now, along those lines, remember one of the healthy responses to, making a mistake or violating a value, feeling that rage, or feeling that shame or that self-hatred, is to talk to somebody. The one good thing about the modern culture is that we're encouraged to talk to each other about self-destructive stuff. But of course, that's within a backdrop of extraordinary social isolation.

[00:36:54] **Corey:** That's right.

[00:36:55] **Keith:** The most isolation that the culture in the United States has ever had. And that feeling, that five or 10 minute psychotic rush by yourself, when there's a means... You know, people will say that when I'm working with them, and this has less to do with suicide, but has to do with self-hatred, you know, what do you wanna do with

that little kid that, you know, that put up with that abuse? "I'm gonna kill him, I'm gonna get rid of him.

You know, so I mean, at that point as a therapist, you know what your work is, at least, you know for however long it takes. When people will say that, they're not hearing what they're saying. Okay? And in general, when we enact defenses, we're not self observing. So there's a very subtle dissociative thing that goes along with being a human that comes with this stuff. And one of the nice things about self-hatred is that you're feeling it, you know, you're not dissociated.

[00:37:52] **Corey:** Yeah. It's undeniable.

[00:37:53] **Keith:** It's undeniable. And so if you can say, "okay, I know what I do with this, you know, if I made a mistake, fix it, and then feel good about that. If I'm violating a value, examine it and follow it or refine it, that's what I'm supposed to do." That's what you to do when there's that rush of shame or that rush of self-hatred, then it becomes a magnificent source of horizontal and vertical health.

[00:38:17] **Corey:** Yeah.

[00:38:18] **Keith:** And that's kind of the end of my wrap on self hatred, So, so are there any questions, anybody?

[00:38:25] **Corey:** Let's, let's see if people have questions. I've got another comment to make while we wait, but, um, again, I'm gonna remind people there's two ways you can engage. If you have a question, and you just wanna write it out and have us read it on air, just drop it in the chat. I'll read it, we'll respond to it. Or there should be, you should see a button on your system saying something like "call in" which will allow you to let us know that you want us to turn on your camera. We'll bring you into the conversation, have some real time back and forth.

You know, Keith, while we wait to see if we have any questions, one of the things I think is critical about this conversation and how we're trying, I think to frame it, is in a weird kind of way, we're sort of giving permission to feel these difficult feelings. You know, like, it's okay. Like you're strong enough, you're anti-fragile enough to feel what you need to

feel right now, because what this is constantly reminding us, reminding me of is our previous conversations about creating coherent life stories for ourselves.

And part of, you know, usually that thing, that part of ourselves, you know, as, as we extend agape love into our parts and we find a part that we're not so happy with, which can easily spin into this sort of Thanatos self-destruction drive. But nine times outta 10, that part that we identify that we don't like very much, takes the form of a narrative. We have some story about ourselves that we don't like very much. And more than that, we feel like we are subject to it. Like this is who we are on some fundamental level, and there's nothing I can do that will make me not be it. It's a limiting self narrative, right? So feeling the self-hatred is an invitation, it's an invitation to open up to... well, technically it'll be waking up... to these wider states of awareness, to Witness consciousness itself. But it's also an invitation to sort of do the intrapersonal psychological work to examine narratives, to sort of tease them apart, to figure out what are the sort of the primary ingredients of this story. Why am I drawing the conclusion from this story that I'm seeing? And why is this story preventing me from seeing these 25 other stories that I could be telling about myself. How can I start weaving those stories together into a self image and an identity and a story that is much more coherent, and therefore much more anti-fragile in the face of this kind of feeling of disrepair.

[00:40:49] **Keith:** Well, let's talk about development for a second, I think that's a good framework for this. And this is one of the problems I have with current Green society, particularly in colleges. Somebody says something sexist. I feel a surge of distress, you know, and maybe they say it about me, and I feel shame. Now there's a subtext of, "you shouldn't have said that. And the problem is that you said that, so you hurt me." My corrective action now is I need to either cancel you for having said that, worst case, you know, just make you not exist, or I gotta coerce you into saying, "yeah, I really fucked up and it was my fault that you felt bad." This is basically creating trauma learning, it's creating sensitization. It's a cultural artifact to make people feel more and more and more and more sensitized, detraumatized, by more and more stuff. Instead of, "okay, I had a surge of reaction to that. Well, that's weird, I wonder what that is. And maybe it has to do with this relationship. Let's see if we, you and I, can have some dialectic to have the relationship go back and forth. Oh, you disagree with me that I shouldn't use the pronoun that you want to use. Okay, well, that's your prerogative. I'll do it with other people." It's not like, "oh, you're not gonna use the pronoun. gonna get rid of you. "

[00:42:07] **Corey:** Right.

[00:42:08] **Keith:** This sense of taking the locus of the problem away from "I wanna grow". There are social dynamics, I mean, there's racism, there's classism, there's sexism, there's all the other stuff. But this particular thing, this particular dynamic is of concern to me. And it comes from people really misidentifying trauma and really not understanding how people develop, because that self-hatred needs to shift me into an adjustment in me.

[00:42:38] **Corey:** Yeah.

[00:42:39] **Keith:** It needs to not shift me into some way I have to coerce you.

[00:42:43] **Corey:** Right. Yeah.

[00:42:44] **Keith:** If I make that adjustment in me, I'm acting with my own agency, and I get stronger, I get more resilient. And that's what resilience is, can deal with stress more matter of factly.

[00:42:55] **Corey:** That's what gives us the resilience to do the shadow work in the first place. For us to actually be able to admit that this thing that's outside of me, which I hate, right? I hate whatever it might be, right? That is actually a projection, 9 times outta 10, again, of some interior piece of yourself, some interior narrative that you can't reconcile with the rest of your self system, so it gets pushed outside of yourself.

You know, I was actually just watching, a video earlier today where they're talking about, you know, the two ways that we form identities. One of which is sort of a negative identity, which doesn't mean negative in the sense of bad, it just means, it's like art with negative space, right? I define myself by...

[00:43:37] **Keith:** I define myself by what I'm not.

[00:43:39] **Corey:** ...what I am not, exactly. And then the other side is a positive, that I define myself by what I am. Well, oftentimes we get stuck into these little sort of

whirlpools of negative self relating and self-identity. And though that negative space is oftentimes occupied by things that I hate. Like if someone says, you know, they were talking about actually how sometimes the negative identity can get masked in a positive identity. Like if you ask someone you know, who are you? And they say, "I am a hundred percent straight." Right? Well that sounds like a positive self-image, but it's actually a positive self-image that is created in the negative space of a hatred or a shame for something that you are definitely not. "Other people might be, but I'm not." And that itself becomes a hint, it becomes an invitation for us to, again, widen the aperture, look at sort of the phenomena in here and the phenomena out there, my reactivity to those phenomena, and whether or not there's another story to be told that can better integrate these seemingly incompatible pieces within ourselves and without.

[00:44:44] **Keith:** You know, it's funny about your example, is that if somebody is a hundred percent straight... I mean, the closest I ever came to that was my wife. I think Peggy's a hundred percent straight. But if you're a hundred percent straight, you are such an outlier.

[00:44:58] **Corey:** Yeah, that's right.

[00:44:59] **Keith:** You are more of an outlier than if you're gay or even if you're trans. I think the a hundred percent straight people are, you know, just from a statistical standpoint, it's like, geez, you know,

[00:45:11] **Corey:** Yep. But you don't see that... if you're in second person, if you're at the, you know, amber stage, you don't see that? No. It's, it's binary. You're, you're one or the other. There's not much in between.

[00:45:20] **Keith:** And there's the cultural context which we internalize. You know, we have six moral foundations, but culture tells us what are the norms of those foundations. And those norms shift as we go through different worldviews, which make 'em really tricky. You know, what's fair is different at red and at green, just like what harm is, so or what sanctity is. And this is the other thing about integral. With integral, we can start with kind of a core concept like holarchy, which is one of the reasons I think it was really great that you did that thing on holarchy, because that's great place to start.

[00:45:50] **Corey:** Oh, the Holons video you mean?

[00:45:52] **Keith:** The holons video, right. But then it gets incredibly, infinitely complex, with multiple perspectives. And this is how, I don't know, you learn anything, you go from the simple organizing principles to the infinitely complex, to the simple organizing principles, back and forth. And after a while you develop appropriate perceptive sense of whatever it is you're doing, and you're able to create out of it. Now what we're adding today is self-hatred is a very important self-correcting mechanism that we have capacities for. And just like all the other mechanisms, there's healthy and unhealthy versions of it. And Corey and I, we always prefer the healthy versions of everything.

[00:46:35] **Corey:** Ideally.. We have a question from Nina. Nina asks, can it be enough to do our own parts-work internally to combat the self-hatred?

[00:46:45] **Keith:** Okay. First of all, hi Nina, nice to hear from you. Second of all, it depends on what you mean by "enough". Sure it can. Our capacity for integration is phenomenal. That being said, we are not just a social species, we are an ultra-social species. You know, one of the three jewels of Buddhism, of course, is Sangha. And so when we do the work, some point we need it to be validated intersubjectively. There needs to be some lower left place. This is, by the way, the opposite of mass formation psychosis. Okay? The opposite of mass formation psychosis, where, you know, we all share a belief that enables us to do horrific things and be blind to our leaders' foibles, this is the exact opposite. I've done the integrative work and I need somebody who understands me, and integrative work, and gets it. And then together there's a sense of a culture that we're part of. And in that culture, that culture is characterized by the outcome of the integrative work, which is more compassion for everybody. So not enough just to do it, we do need to share it with someone who gets it and gets us. And it doesn't have to be a big culture, but there needs to be a culture that, in my opinion, cuz none of us exist alone. We always exist connected with lots of other people, and we need to, it's not an option, it's a requirement of being an ultra social human being.

[00:48:17] **Corey:** Yeah, it's well said. You know, the other side of this too, Keith, is that I mentioned earlier that when we recognize something outside of us that we hate, nine times out 10, there's a breadcrumb trail that leads like directly to our own heart, right? Like there's something that we're sort of projecting out there, but I said nine times outta 10 for a reason, because it's not always true. There's always that one in 10 time where,

no, this is an object or an action or what have you that is worthy of hatred. Right?

Like I might say, I freaking hate Nazis. That doesn't mean like I'm projecting my inner Nazi outwards, and I need to reintegrate my inner Nazi so that I don't feel a hatred for anything outside of me. No, that is absolutely not what it means. However, if I am going around labeling people I disagree with as Nazis, just because I don't agree with them, well, that is some sort of interior shadow that I am projecting onto those people. So sometimes when we do our 3-2-1 work, oftentimes we do that kind of 3-2-1 shadow work, we're saying, okay, "I'm looking at an asshole, I'm dialoguing with an asshole, oh I'm the asshole. Let me reintegrate that." But sometimes, every once in a while, when you do your 3-2-1 work, you're still left with an asshole standing in front of you. Right? You've reclaimed and reintegrated as much as you possibly can, and at the end of the day, that person is still an asshole. It's not my projection. They're legitimately an asshole. However, now I am hopefully a little bit less reactive to the asshole that might be standing in front of me.

[00:49:43] **Keith:** Well, yeah, I would alter that somewhat, because I don't like to reduce people categorically when they have an aspect of them that is rapidly self-destructive or dangerous, you know, cuz there's always these other parts. I absolutely agree with that. For instance, I really have no attraction to being in charge of anything. So if I get bummed at people wanting to, you know, dominate and be the boss all the time, it's not like I want to dominate and be the boss all the time, cuz I don't want to dominate and be the boss. But on the other hand, when I take my dislike of, you know, super conservative Republicans...

Basically if I follow that in myself, I end up with Dirty Harry.

[00:50:25] **Corey:** Mm-hmm.

[00:50:26] **Keith:** Remember the Dirty Harry movie with Clint Eastwood? Dirty Harry walked around with a 44 magnum, and if anybody messed with him and he thought they were wrong, he'd kill him. Okay? So there's a part of me, the martial artist parts of me finds that's just very appealing. Okay? And so that's basically that psychology taken to extreme. That's why, you know, in those big gatherings, they really love talk about shooting people. And you know, I don't want to put up with this and you know, you pry this gun from my cold... You know, all these lurid, macho, braggadocio kinds of things.

Okay, I can see that in myself. And then go, alright, now what's the healthy version of that? And there is a healthy version of that.

[00:51:03] **Corey:** A hundred percent. I'm just saying there's not a healthy version of Nazism. There's not a healthy version of being a rapist. There's not a healthy version of, you know, being a murderer. Right?

[00:51:13] **Keith:** There's not a healthy version objectifying and exploiting.

[00:51:17] **Corey:** That's right.

[00:51:18] **Keith:** Okay. That's the thing, that's why you need compassionate self-observation, not just self-observation. If you objectify and attack, there is an exception to that, but the exception to that is the warrior.

[00:51:31] **Corey:** Right.

[00:51:32] **Keith:** Okay. Why? There are some people that need external constraint.

[00:51:36] **Corey:** Mm-hmm.

[00:51:37] **Keith:** Okay. So somebody's gotta do that, and that's violent.

[00:51:41] **Corey:** Right.

[00:51:42] **Keith:** So those people, we want them to be especially pure spirited, want them to be especially supported psychologically and spiritually, because they have to go do violence to externally constrain someone who's gonna keep on screwing everybody up, unless there's an external constraint.

[00:51:58] **Corey:** Yeah. Yeah. And maybe it seems silly to sort of emphasize this point, but I actually do think it's important, because I think there are schools of interpretation, particularly when it comes to things like non-duality, where they'll say for example, "well,

you know, when it comes to the always already, non-dual ultimate truth, Hitler is as much God as Gandhi is, who is as much God as Jesus Christ is. There's no lessers or higher or inners or outers, cuz it's all just one sort of nondual embrace." Okay, fair enough. But that's only the first beat of non-duality. Right? The second beat is, everything is always already perfect, and that's why it requires urgency to make it even more perfect. That is what feels like a contradiction to the dualistic mind, but it really isn't a contradiction at the end of the day, because there are genuine relative evils and goods that we need to sort of navigate between.

[00:52:58] **Keith:** They're evaluated through the beautiful, good and true. Okay? So we have good data, right quadrant data, why Nazism is a bad idea. You can see it, you know, Germany tried to dominate the world three times and got devastated three times. Didn't really work out. You know, we have really good upper left data about how it corrupts you to objectify and attack other people. It corrodes you as a human being. We have really good lower left data, you know, that the quality of Intersubjectivity suffers to the extent that it's normalizing the objectification and the attack, or the exploitation, of other people.

[00:53:44] **Corey:** That's right.

[00:53:45] **Keith:** And, we have our own moral foundations, uh, where if we allow ourselves to do that, we're creating dissociative barriers between us and our own core values. Because humans' core values, if everybody's all relaxed and generally having a good time, and they're not wired by genes to have paralympic deficits and be sociopath, most humanity, when they're feeling secure, they wanna share with each other and they want to be fair and they want to care for each other. We've seen that in a variety of situations where that happens. But also people wanna dominate too. So, it's always that dialectic.

[00:54:20] **Corey:** Yep. Now it's an important point, especially cuz you know, non-duality is not nihilistic, non-duality is not narcissistic. And it is nihilistic and it is... because non-duality is constantly, you always sound like, you always sound like Yoda, this guy over here, because you can't say anything without immediately contradicting it. Right? Cuz everything is not-two.

[00:54:39] **Keith:** And also, you know, since life exists in time and it's constant change, I mean first of all, there's suchness that never changes, and then there's everything else. Deida calls the suchness the masculine, and everything else the feminine. I kind of like that, you know, as a broad stroke. But as long as we're alive in time, we're gonna have to be making decisions. And those decisions are practical and moral decisions, and they're having to balance out a bazillion perspectives. And this is why Integral is so beautiful.

[00:55:09] **Corey:** Yeah.

[00:55:09] **Keith:** And I mean, integral says keep on adding perspectives, that each one tells you that there's a healthy and unhealthy, or a right and a wrong, or something, and keep doing that until you have some kind of clarity that is agreed with by a community of your peers.

[00:55:25] **Corey:** right. Yeah. Yeah. That time piece is really important too, which is why earlier when I was framing Eros and Agape as sort of future forms of wholeness versus previous forms of wholeness, I mean, that really lands for me. I mean, that sort of has become sort of my orientation to how wholeness unfolds, not just within us, but within the universe itself.

[00:55:44] **Keith:** In the universe itself,

[00:55:45] **Corey:** yeah..

Yeah. We have another question on, uh, YouTube. So Arthur asks, "can you use meditation to grow your consciousness to higher levels, vertical development, higher plateaus of development, and have non-dual awareness?" And this is I feel like sort of a tricky question to answer. So we're talking about, you know, talking about two sort of vectors of growth here at the same time packed into this question. One is the vertical growth through these sort of sequence of stages that unfold over time, versus these states of consciousness, which can be accessed at any point in time, regardless of where we are in our developmental journey. So this is a classic question: how does meditation affect or influence or accelerate, maybe, these two different vectors of

growth?

[00:56:33] **Keith:** Okay, so first of all, yeah. There's stage-stages and state-stages, and we can talk a little bit about that. Meditation involves a progression of states. You know, you start by getting settled, so let's just generically start by getting settled, getting a comfortable spot, focusing on your breath and your breathing, focusing on awareness. Carol Bear did this research that most contemplative practices have these four things in common: awareness, awareness of awareness, awareness without judgment, or letting judgments come and go. A present moment orientation, and as you do this, then you begin to have moments of equanimity, a sense of peacefulness, and then senses of unity with things and occasionally moments of unity with everything.

Now, when you do this, you're creating neural architecture of self-observation, which is very important. You're literally activating circuits that every time you activate them, they get more heavily myelinated. And after 30 days stem cells will divide in your brain, creating integral neurons, integrative neurons, that hardwire these self-regulatory capacities into the limbic area of the brain from the frontal cortex. The limbic area has to do with emotion, it has to do with motivation, it has to do with relationships. So some sense of, compassionate self observation is necessary, but it's not sufficient. Why is it not sufficient? Well, let's just go in any zendo in the world. Alright? And, you know, let's hang out there for a while, like two or three weeks, and then all of a sudden we're beginning to see the politics of the zendo. And the politics of the zendo will run off of the drives. And if people are not taking responsibility for the drives or being aware of them, then certain forms arise out of human societies and in human individuals where we have blind spots. These blind spots are generally the defenses. Okay? You experience any sense of threat. One of the downsides of a pure contemplative path is the illusion that you can meditate yourself out of any problem. You can't,

[00:58:46] **Corey:** All right. We call that spiritual bypassing.

[00:58:49] **Keith:** Spiritual bypassing. Because what you're doing is you're using your meditative contemplative capacity to choose states to avoid having to deal with issues. Now, what that does is it contaminates your contemplative practice, and it provides another barrier to actually taking responsibility for self-awareness and self-correction. Okay? And so in that case, it's not a matter of "I should choose equanimity rather than anger, because I don't like my self anger," little self-hatred there. At that point, "no, I

don't wanna choose equanimity particularly. Maybe I can anchor in that. And then I want to do inquiry." This is the whole Rihwan school, right? "I wanna do inquiry into that anger. I wanna find the roots of it and the understanding of it, and realize my capacity for it." Cuz the illusion of, the idea people think that enlightenment is, you're not gonna feel stuff anymore, you're not gonna feel the drives or, the primitive impulses, so the defenses. Nothing could be further from the truth.

[00:59:45] **Corey:** Hurts more, bothers you less.

[00:59:47] **Keith:** Yeah! You have more awareness of all that stuff. You have more of an unobstructed experience of that stuff. But what do you don't do? You don't allow that part of you to take over, you don't self amplify that stuff.

[00:59:59] **Corey:** Mm-hmm.

[01:00:00] **Keith:** And from that position of compassionate understanding, you look for, "all right, you know, what's the universe asking me to do about this? Both for my own development, and also for whatever my purpose is, and almost all of our purpose is serving each other. Okay? And so it's necessary, but not sufficient is my answer to that particular question.

[01:00:22] **Corey:** That's a great answer, Keith. You know, the only thing I'll, add to that is I think that when it comes to the actual mechanism of meditation, what it's actually doing, like what this tool really, really is, is it is a muscle that we are building within ourselves that allows us at any moment in time to make object out of any kind of subject we might be experiencing.

And that is how it can serve us both horizontally through waking up as well as vertically through growing up. Right? Because as we're waking up, I mean we are dissociating from the gross and we're beginning to associate more with the subtle and then we continue meditating, which allows us to then see the subtle as an object in front of an empty causal body, for example. And then we begin to see that total subjective space of causal or even witness consciousness, and it gets integrated into non-dual. So that's how it sort of unfolds in the horizontal sense. Something very similar is happening in the vertical sense, right? So, and when any of our lines of development are sort of growing

in that vertical sequence, what we're doing at every step is, we have a whole parade of subjects that one at a time we are making into objects. I think this is how, in a certain way, meditation helps accelerate, it helps sort of lubricate the gear works of vertical development. It's not gonna get you there in and of itself, because there's nothing on that cushion, when you're actually sitting on the cushion, if you're at Amber, there's no Orange content that's just popping up in your head, right?

Or there's no Green content that's just landing down on you because you're meditating. However, what you're doing is, you're practicing again and again and again, this series of objects becoming subjects so that when you encounter new kinds of complexity that require new kinds of thinking, and require you to let go of previous interpretations or narratives or self stories or what have you, the meditation is that muscle that you've been developing that allows you to do exactly that, to sort of let go of these things that at one point in time maybe felt very real, very opaque, very, you know, maybe high gravity, high density. But now you can just sort of drop it, and you can allow something new to emerge. And maybe that thing that's emerging is these new adaptations, these new vertical stage adaptations to new kinds of complexity that you find. And it's new to you. And it didn't come from meditation, but the meditation is what allowed you to sort of drop these stories long enough for something new to emerge.

So that to me is sort of how meditation can, it directly serves waking up, but then it sort of it greases the wheels for vertical development.

[01:03:03] **Keith:** And also noticed you're talking about maps, really. You know, Terri O'Fallon's work, Kim Barta, you know, they have basically a map of what states you need to be able to comfortably inhabit to be able to go to another level of, ego development. The Ridhwan school is very much about constant inquiry, until inquiry into stuff becomes a habit.

You know, when I wrote my book *Shadow Light*, part of the reason of writing that book is to just to point out that when you train your unconscious to start making these kinds of discernments, after a while your motivation system shifts. And so your unconscious moves towards the confusion, or the self-hatred, or the distress, or the discrepancy, in inquiry about what it means about you, and what it means about the world, and what it means about your interface with the world. And of course compassionate self-observation, creating that neural architecture is central to all that stuff. You know,

Christopher Alexander and Ellen Langer's research into transcendental meditation showed that through three or four years of transcendental meditation, you shifted up one developmental level. I've seen 'em do the same thing in Brazil. They have a program to reliably shift people up, one developmental level. What does it involve? Lots of self-observation, lots of 3-2-1, lots of learning different perspectives about me, and about me and the world, enneagram, masculine, feminine, and all that kind of stuff. All embodied, all anchored in us, in my own awakening, in my awakening with you, cross-validated through small group work. You know, that's one year's work causing on average, one developmental level. So it seems like there's a framework here, that there are processes, but then there's different maps that you can use to navigate. And all of them seem to be pretty good maps, as far as I'm concerned. I like 'em all.

[01:04:57] **Corey:** Yeah. Yep. Well, the, the final follow up question is "what about life is just dream from the perspective of non-dual?" My quick answer. All of it. Right? All of it. And none of it. All of it. And none of it. It's all a dream. None of it is a dream. It's all lila. It's all play. And that's why you have to take it serious as a heart attack.

[01:05:19] **Keith:** Okay, so let let this be the last thing that I say today, okay? Now this is just my belief. I think when the big bang happened, the universe dream came into existence and it's been waking up to itself ever since. And I think that at least in this part of the universe we're at that crest of the universe dream waking up to itself. You know, we are the universe dream waking up to itself. And to me that is very beautiful, and it's very ecstatic, and it's very reassuring. And it also makes me feel like, you know, a butterfly. Cause I know in the life of the universe, you know, Keith comes and goes like that. But during my brief moment, I can go, "oh yeah. Yeah, I'm the universe waking up to itself. And then if I'm doing that, then everything that happens, including self-hatred, just becomes another way for me, as the universe, to wake up to myself. So on that note, much love to everybody.

[01:06:20] **Corey:** Yeah. Thank you, thank you so much everyone for joining us. Thank you, Keith, again for a fascinating and again, I feel like very sort of fundamentally important conversation. And I hope that the perspectives that emerged in this space between us, are helpful for anyone in our audience who might be, you know, struggling with some of this. Which again, I think all of us have at some point in our paths. So yeah, so thank you so much. Deep bows.

[01:06:46] **Keith:** Thank you Corey.

[01:06:47] **Corey:** All right,

[01:06:48] **Keith:** Okay. Much love to everybody. Much love to you,

Corey.

[01:06:51] **Corey:** right, you too. Take care.