

Sincerity: The Essence of a True Seeker



The most important quality of a seeker is sincerity. If strength and sensitivity are lacking, one will indeed have hard time walking the inner path, but without sincerity one either cannot enter the path at all or will find oneself walking it in the wrong direction.

Because of contradictory subconscious tendencies, no one is completely sincere. The quality of sincerity speaks of an intention to align oneself with higher truth and love. For this reason, growing in sincerity should be seen as an essential aspect of our evolution, and this growth must necessarily go hand in hand with walking the path itself. The fundamental quality of sincerity is forged through the purification of our mind and heart, and living it fully is as important as the very realization of our spiritual self and our embodiment of the light of pure subjectivity. It is thanks to sincerity that we can finally shake off the shackles of the lower self and reach liberation through becoming our soul.

Insincerity is the most common and fundamental flaw of the human personality and, as such, is also the major obstacle on the path. Seekers who wish to evolve into their pure nature must make a conscious effort to transform it. But how can we understand what insincerity really means and to whom it applies? Insincerity has its roots in our identification with personality and the compromises our ego makes to protect itself against fears relating to social acceptance and survival itself. It is a side effect of our false evolution into egoic consciousness, through which our unconscious innocence was lost. In the natural world neither sincerity nor insincerity exist because the sense of me has not yet evolved enough.

To become sincere or insincere, one has to have freedom of choice between good and evil, between one's higher and lower intention. Seeing as most humans have very limited access to this freedom of choice, we might then wonder if they can really be considered insincere? They can, because, by tacitly agreeing to live mechanical lives, they have chosen not to activate their free will. Just on its own, this refusal to grow into consciousness, individuality and the light of me is the seed of insincerity. Being a human being is a precious opportunity and brings with it the responsibilities of transcending ignorance and becoming conscious. To live in denial of this potential and responsibility is insincerity.

The Social Origin of Insincerity

Although one may have an intuitive sense of what insincerity is, describing it in words can be extremely challenging. While defining hate or anger is relatively easy, it is much more difficult to do the same with insincerity. The reason why a true grasp of insincerity is so elusive is because of the degree to which it has so completely penetrated the human psyche. Throughout history, humans have developed very complex and sophisticated interactions, which involve playing countless social and cultural games, varying according to the culture and ethnic group involved. Since the beginning of human relationships, playing these games has been essential for physical and psychological survival.

The philosophy of Confucianism, developed in ancient China, is an example of an exceedingly complex system of ethical and social rules of conduct that influenced the cultures of many other Asian countries, including Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. In these countries, people have very strict codes of behavior and hierarchy on societal and family levels. A visitor from the West, who is struck by the extreme politeness in some of these countries, may wonder if it is from natural kindness and respect or because of training.

In China and Japan there is a concept of having two faces, one reserved for private life and the other shown in the outside world. While this can help maintain social order and accepted standards of etiquette, the polite mask for the outside world is usually insincere. Similarly, when one is wished, 'Have a nice day', at the checkout of an American supermarket, the staff member who says it often may not really mean it. But it is part of the social game everyone plays.

The intention behind the creation of Confucianism was positive, to teach people to live together in harmony. Confucius believed in people being fundamentally good, but needing some guidance to overcome their negative tendencies. However, in time, those who followed his teaching came to identify the inner virtue with external conduct, resulting in form replacing the intended true spirit.

Our personalities have been indoctrinated so thoroughly that we no longer know if our behavior and emotions are our own. Our essence, which we are born with, is so totally covered up by our family, cultural and societal conditioning that, although still influencing us in a subconscious way, it has been almost completely submerged and forgotten in favor of the persona's mask we have assumed and identify with – thinking that is who we are. This issue affects virtually all aspects of our lives.

For example, we are conditioned to feel certain things emotionally even though they do not actually feel them. If someone close to us dies, we might not know how we 'should' feel at all, because we do not understand what death is – no one does. And yet, we are programmed to feel upset and grief. This conditioned sense of duty triggers a flood of emotions and tears, even though they may not be truly authentic. Others may react with pretend celebration at the news of a death, because they have been conditioned to believe the departed has gone to a better place. But what do they really know? When we naturally feel sad about the death of someone dear to us, to pretend to feel joyful is insincere. Similarly, if we feel nothing (and actually do not even understand the meaning of what has really happened) to pretend feeling sadness is also insincere.

The problem with insincerity is that, when it is so fully integrated, one does not experience it as insincerity. To tell most people that they are being insincere is futile because they are convinced that their intentions and emotions are genuine. As an example, it is very common that one can be convinced of caring for another person and experience all of the emotions that would normally be attached to such a caring feeling, but actually, deep down inside, not really care at all. Human beings have so persuaded themselves that they are feeling what they have been programmed to feel that virtually all of the sincerity they express is inauthentic and insincere. The degree to which the 'genuine' emotions people express are actually conditioned and contrived is nothing short of astonishing.

Insincerity is usually defined as 'not expressing genuine feelings, hypocrisy, deceitfulness, dishonesty, phoniness, falsity, and pretense'. It is relatively easy to see these qualities being played out in social interactions, in false politeness, or when people manipulate each other with ulterior motives. But it is more difficult to be aware of similar insincerity in one's relationship with oneself.

Because of social, religious, and other moral conditioning, most people spend a great deal of time cultivating a positive self-image of being 'good'. Anything about themselves which does not fit this image is repressed, swept under the carpet of the conscious mind.

Gradually, this hypocritical self-delusion is internalized and integrated into the structure of the ego's consciousness.

Insincerity of the Spiritual Ego

More or less every seeker thinks of himself or herself as being sincere. Everybody is convinced they have good intentions and are doing their best. If the subject of insincerity is mentioned, people think that it could not be referring to them, but must be about someone else. To really confront one's own insincerity is one of the most challenging things a person can do, because what they will find will undermine their egoic sense of self-worth. And, before one can acknowledge this insincerity, one has to become aware of what it actually means.

Insincerity is not only deeply embedded in society, but is also rife in the inner world of spiritual seeking. Insincerity and self-deceptive dishonesty have penetrated so deeply into the living flesh of human spirituality that they are completely hidden and forgotten. After all, spirituality is a perfect camouflage and hiding place for insincerity; no one would even think of looking for it there.

Insincerity among seekers is such a serious issue because it corrupts the very meaning of spirituality. An extraordinary number of self-deluded people enter the path for wrong reasons, having convinced themselves they are looking for the light, but in reality they are just transferring the ego games they play in the outer world to the inner path. There are countless expressions of such insincerity, but most of them are means of using the path to compensate for deficiencies felt by the egoic self. The ego can puff itself up by these ideas of its own awakening and of becoming spiritually superior. By seeking awakening, or even convincing itself it has attained some significant level of enlightenment, the ego can consider itself special and worthy of admiration and love. The insincerity of the 'spiritual' ego is particularly twisted, because its self-deception is extremely deep, and it also manipulates and perverts the real intention of inner evolution.

After experiencing a superficial awakening, why do so many seekers assume they have completed the path and even that they can begin to teach others? It is partly because they are ignorant and are not aware of what is still lacking inside, but also because they are insincere. Their intentions (which are those of their egos) are not honorable, and they are impatient to prove their self-worth to themselves and to others, even though their souls still experience profound suffering.

Insincerity on the Path

While one could generalize that entering the path from the ego, rather than from the soul, is the root cause of this insincerity, it specifically has more to do with self-deception and the manipulation of one's self-image. Some seekers prefer to follow superficial teachings for some ideological comfort, because the basic concepts involved are easier to understand. They are not really seeking truth and evolution, but a sense of belonging to a

spiritual community or of identifying with – and feeling like they are on – some kind of a path. They think of themselves as good and sincere, and actually believe they are serving the evolution of consciousness. Their insincerity, rooted in self-deception and sheer ignorance, is so deeply seated that they are unlikely ever to become aware of it.

Some seekers enter the path with great ‘passion’, but then, when faced with a variety of challenges and little or no progress, lose interest and give up. Their egos rationalize this in many ways to protect their self-image, but their weak characters are the real reason for this insincerity. Such people actually believe they are seeking the light, but are not ready to make the sacrifices required to serve the evolution of the soul. These seekers are so trapped by conflicting intentions and inner impulses, confusing what their ego-ideals tell them they should want with what their ego actually wants, that they are incapable of becoming aware of the insincerity that underlies the persona they present to themselves and to others.

A common excuse used by many seekers who stop their journey along the path is that they are now ready to ‘integrate their spiritual self with life in the world.’ Despite having only touched the surface of their real self, they are impatient to integrate this with the world. Unfortunately for them, they have nothing to integrate, because their inner realization is just too weak. In a different sense of the word, the world will ‘integrate’ them, swallowing them up, together with the little light they have awakened. And, even then, these people will not admit to themselves their failure to progress further, and will find all kinds of excuses and justifications to rationalize their betrayal of the inner path.

It is true that we have to integrate our inner journey with our life in the world, but to do this by losing our connection to the inner work is not only a contradiction in terms, but defeats the purpose of it. The spiritual path is a lifelong journey, and it takes many years before one can truly balance the embodiment of the inner self with its spontaneous expression in external reality.

Insincerity in Non-duality

Another even more deceptive aspect of insincerity is using the path to deny one’s individuality or as a means to avoid meeting oneself. Even though seekers can be said to be drawn to non-duality because they have been brainwashed and do not know any better, this can never be used as an excuse to live in contradiction to the soul’s purpose or in denial of her divine essence. The philosophy of non-duality can be appealing to the ego, because it allows it to identify with universal consciousness, puffs its self-image up, and distracts it from confronting its own pettiness. The delusion of the denial of one’s self in Buddhism’s and Advaita’s non-duality (however unconscious or well-meaning this may be) has its roots in this deceptive insincerity.

Insincerity in Illusory Surrender

Some seekers think they want to surrender to the divine. They have no interest in realizing who they are, but dream of becoming one with universal reality. Despite this not making any sense, many seekers live in this or similar self-deceptions. When examined more closely, it becomes apparent that these people do not really want to surrender. One cannot surrender without having an individual me to do the surrendering. And if we try to bypass the awakening of me in our surrendering, the old me remains unchanged, because the observer cannot be transformed without the soul.

So, if such seekers cannot really be surrendering, because they have no one to do that with, who is doing what? What they actually want, based on what they say they are trying to do, is to expand beyond their limited self and find some refuge in a state beyond the mind. An attempt at identifying with such a state, together with living in denial of their old self, is what they call 'surrender'. Of course this is not surrender, because they have not yet awoken a me who can surrender. This kind of self-deluded spirituality is just the dream of surrendering, and insincerity props up its illusion.

False Sincerity

There are many people who have good intentions and do their best to live a good life. Similarly, there are many 'good' seekers in the world. There are good yogis, good Buddhists, and good TM meditators, who are doing their very best on the paths they follow. Some Buddhists sacrifice throughout their lives to attain the promised enlightenment. They become monks and spend thousands and thousands of hours in rigorous training and meditation. Does this make them sincere? The short answer is, no.

True sincerity is always accompanied by the intuitive intelligence which can hear the potential of one's soul calling one back to herself. The fact that one follows one's deepest convictions, whether they be political, religious or spiritual, does not mean that one is sincere. The world is full of fanatics who live for some 'higher cause'. To imagine that they are sincere would be a great misunderstanding of, and disservice to, the word. On the surface, they appear sincere in the sense that they are doing what their minds believe to be true but, because their path is not connected to the intelligence and will of the soul, it is a false sincerity. It is not enough to be diligent, devoted to the path and ready to make all the necessary sacrifices for the purpose of awakening. Seeking enlightenment without meeting one's pure subjectivity is no more than ignorance, and to accept living a life in such ignorance is insincerity.

One may wonder whether people of low discernment and intelligence can be seen as being responsible for their insincerity? In fact, can people who do not seek to get in touch with their subjectivity be regarded as insincere? In the dimension of ignorance, awakening to our true self is extremely challenging, and it usually takes a long time to find the necessary clarity to make progress on the path. People who are still young in their evolution will not even be able to grasp basic spiritual concepts, such as what pure subjectivity or their me is. However, the ten thousand mile journey begins with the first step, and this evolutionary step has to be made now in each one's present life, so as to

take one closer to one's destiny. Not to take this step, no matter how basic it is, conflicts with the law of sincerity.

Bringing an End to Lower Tendencies

Impurities have many manifestations. They come into being as a result of our manipulation of the inner and outer realities, so that we can get what we want and need for our lives on this plane. These kinds of manipulations occur in every sort of human relationship, including with governments, communities, in one's work life, between neighbors, and in marriages and romances. We learn how to manipulate others from childhood, and then we internalize such manipulative strategies – embodying their impurities – as part of the armory our superego requires to function acceptably and successfully in our social settings.

Everyone occasionally needs to become aware of their impurities and lower tendencies, but just having these is not what makes people insincere. What makes them insincere is their tacit agreement to accept and make use of these tendencies to look good to others and to build up their own self-image. When one can really see one's own impurities, true sincerity calls for the honesty and courage to reject and change anything that is in conflict with our natural and original purity and love.

One of the important aspects of the work purifying the subconscious mind is letting go of the lower tendencies it has accumulated over time. While there are an infinite number of negative tendencies, the 'mother-negativity' that virtually all of them emanate from is insincerity, which is built over the personality's subconscious fears. If we are able to detach and transform this root, most of these tendencies will wither away and cease to exist. The first step in doing this, before we can attempt to renounce it, is simply to become aware of our own fundamental fears and insincerity. The run-of-the-mill person living exclusively in the external world has little power over his or her mind, but anyone walking the inner path must have a more conscious connection with their freedom of choice, which comes from a more awakened link to the light of me. The activation of this freedom of choice comes from embodying higher intention, for without it nothing can be purified or changed in the mind's tendencies.

Sincerity and Higher Intention

In a world where insincerity has become the way of life, we have to make a conscious effort to see past and through it so as to return ourselves to sincerity, our birthright as the soul's authentic quality. Sincerity is generally understood as meaning genuineness, honesty, earnestness, and probity in intention and communications. In relation to its opposite quality, it is defined as the freedom from (or absence of) duplicity, deceit, or hypocrisy.

Just being convinced oneself that one is genuine does not mean that one actually is so. The ego, although firmly rooted in insincerity, has many ways of convincing itself that it

is being good and doing the right thing to maintain its positive self-image. A missionary may live a life of sacrifice, involving an extraordinary amount of additional suffering, to serve a cause his mind was trained to believe is right, but which he does not actually truly understand. Many seekers attend countless spiritual workshops and retreats as a means of promoting the ego's ends. Most people hide their suffering and, as they age, don a brave, but insincere, mask to hide the despair they feel at the approaching entropy and death of who they think they are. Living a life of doing the right things for the wrong reasons, and being who one thinks one should be rather than who one really is, is a life lived in insincerity . . . and words to this effect would not be out of place in most obituaries.

When one has lived in self-deceit long enough, it no longer feels like deceit, because duplicity has become one's natural state. Unless we activate our higher intention, insincerity will always be at the root of our thoughts and actions. Sincerity is our higher intention in action. Living sincerely is living beyond self-deception and in harmony with the truth of the soul.

Each human being has the potential to follow their instinctive goodness, compassion and honesty. While the idea of honesty may initially be linked to learned morality and a fear of wrongdoing, it later becomes the natural expression of our real and true self. To fully embody the quality of sincerity, one has to live beyond the mind in the pure subjectivity of the inner self. No matter how much one tries to be sincere through using the mind alone, the very complicated nature of the psychological self, entangled and lost in endless fragmented thoughts and emotions, gives rise to insincerity. To be sincere, one has to be profoundly simple and spiritually innocent, so that one can become the transparent window for the wholesome expression of the love and will of the soul.

Living beyond Personality

Even before the soul awakens, we must be intuitively sensitive to her call. This call is automatically aligned with sincerity, as the soul is always consistent with her natural truth. All true seekers are responsible for listening for this call and nurturing the response of sincerity they hear back, because our consistency with the soul's sincerity is the bridge through which higher intention can reach and join our divinity. To fully awaken the soul's quality of sincerity, we must realize our identity beyond the mind and personality, because natural sincerity only comes from living as our soul.

To live beyond personality requires surrendering the human, awakening the soul, and merging me with I am. The intention of the soul is naturally pure because it emanates from her freedom, bliss and love.

Living beyond personality does not mean that our personality is eliminated. It continues to be our psychological structure through which we relate to the outer world and society. But when we live from the soul, our personality becomes transparent and is no longer in conflict with our pure nature. Our mind, personality and ego can never even begin to approach perfection by themselves and, even when surrendered to the soul, can still alert

us to further required purification through occasional disturbances. However, once the essence of our personality's me is integrated with the soul, such remaining disturbances no longer have the power to take us away from our soul's original sincerity.

Embodying sincerity brings us into consistency with the divine will and love of our higher self. We are no longer required to choose sincerity over insincerity, as sincerity is no longer opposed by its opposite. Sincerity is now the basic quality of who we are. The soul's sincerity reflects the essential purity of her connection to the world of creation, as well as her intention to continue onward in her evolution into the ultimate reality.

Blessings,
Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology, you may visit of website page:
www.anaditeaching.com/glossary