

Awareness is Empowerment

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"To live without awareness is to live as the deaf, blind and dumb in a world of vibrant light and sound."

— Beisebuub



Awareness is a loaded word, one that can be used almost anywhere just to fill that gap. The gap which breaks our sentences because of the gap in our thoughts, the gap we know is to be filled with just the right word when we have got just the right thing. Awareness can mean a lot of things. It can mean truth, it can mean knowledge, it can mean observation, purposefulness, senses and sight, happiness, nothing and everything, almost anything. But all that all of it amounts to is empowerment. Awareness in its myriad compositions, its potent chemistry of essential elements seeks to make us better equipped, empowered individuals. It equips us to see the world round us in a better, more apt, more obvious and essential way. What we see without that extra perception is a limited understanding of a world with infinite potentiality. Awareness completes our world, it completes us.

Awareness often becomes a tool to distinguish between individuals. One could say that a self-aware individual would have a better understanding of life and more appreciation for it. Awareness is the difference between sleeping and waking, even when the two might be interchangeable. So many people sleepwalk through life without even knowing the difference. It's like being happy in your own little exclusivist cocoon of self important indulgencies, like living on an island of dreams except that the island is a self-imposed necessity and the dreams are mere hollow fantasies. Without being aware of oneself and one's surroundings, of the infinite possibilities that surround us, the infinite potential within us, that idea of a complete happy little life we believe to be living becomes hollow and empty, a "carnivorous void". Hence we need to be aware because as intelligent, understanding and feeling human beings we have the power to be. It is what differentiates us from other species and from each other. We have the power to see and appreciate who and what we want, the power to be who and what we want, and this in entirety makes us empowered.

"The capital-T Truth is about life BEFORE death. It is about the real value of a real education, which has almost nothing to do with knowledge, and everything to do with simple awareness; awareness of what is so real and essential, so hidden in plain sight all around us, all the time, that we have to keep reminding ourselves over and over...It is unimaginably hard to do this, to stay conscious and alive in the adult world day in and day out."

— David Foster Wallace

Educated vs Literate

There is a simple difference between education and literacy. When we conduct a survey, we cite the literacy rate because, education, like all abstract concepts cannot be mapped. Education is a process, a process of awareness and application that leads to empowerment. Literacy is a tool; it's like a proof that declares this or that. A physical manifestation of your having spent time in an institution, never mind how dubious that sounds. Education may happen without an institution, without an external agency, even without any perceptible gain in knowledge. Real education helps us to gauge the idea behind a plan, the thought behind an action and to see and know a thing for what it is. Amassing degrees is one thing, practicality is another. You may learn everything to do with agriculture yet you may fail to be a farmer, similarly you may acquire the highest knowledge of almost anything and still fail to perform it. Performance, application, pragmatism, and result all become a part of education that only being literate would not yield.

Education is a long drawn out process, one that begins when we are born and ends with our death. The kind of education being imparted and being gained is a clear marker of our personal and in a wider light, collective development. When G. H. Trevalyn talks about the kind of "education [that] has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading", it is a literary education that lacks any level of awareness. What we seek is that power to assert and decide, to experiment and learn, to live on a practical basis; real education that defines us and our lives, an education that comes from awareness, an education that leads to empowerment.

(Written in collaboration with Divya Garg)

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