



SLEEP

Where do you fall when you “fall” asleep?

Close your eyes, and fall there now. Literally, let go and *fall* inside, pretending to be deeply asleep. Feel this sleep-place of silent, blissful nothingness, right now.

Are you smiling? If not, close your eyes and fall into the dark peacefulness of this sleep-place until you can't help but smile in bliss.

When you have accomplished this capacity to feel the place you fall asleep to, then try this: dream.

Dreamily imagine yourself sitting in the wilderness, watching two elephants eating grass with their trunks, while a monkey shouts from the trees, "Hey, buddy, you're dreaming!"

Imagination is a form of daydreaming.

When you have examined your imaginative daydreaming, then open your eyes and see the world around you. Is it possible to know for sure that this isn't a dream, too?

Have you ever wakened from a dream only to discover that you are still dreaming? Most people have.

If this were a dream right now, would you act any differently?

Whether you are dreaming or awake, one thing is certain: It will end. You will wake up from the dream and it will evaporate.

Your life as you know it vanishes at death; your entire lifetime disappears, as if your turmoils, adventures, and romances had never occurred.

As you age, you may begin to feel the futility of your life, as if it were a fading dream. The routine cycles of days and nights can easily grind down your grand hopes for fulfillment as you slide into old age and death.

If you want to relax in peace as the dream fades or as your life ends, then learn to trust the openness that remains.

You are this openness that feels.

Rather than waiting for death, practice relaxing as this openness now.

Do this three-part exercise whenever you are ready:

1. Close your eyes, relax, and smile as you begin to fall into the blissfulness of silent, dark, deep sleep.
2. While continuing to feel this blissful nothingness, also allow thoughts and daydreams of elephants (or your workday) to move in your mind, feeling their texture, sound, and light, as if in a dream.
3. Then, open your eyes to the waking world, without losing touch with sleep's nothingness or your inner dreaminess.

By practicing this three-part exercise of falling into the bliss-place of sleep so your lips smile, while feeling your monkey-like daydreams lit up before your eye-of-mind, while also opening your physical eyes to notice the world in front of your physical body, you may suddenly open beyond all three states: waking, dreaming, and sleeping.

While practicing to feel all three states simultaneously, right now, you may suddenly realize something startling: Nothing lasts. Nothing is necessary. Nothing ever was necessary.

Your life does not need to be noticed.
At death, your present life will vanish, like a dream fading away, noticed or not.

Openness is always here, holding the place where you can fall to sleep, or dream, or notice your slice of the waking world. Learn to trust this space where everything happens, regardless of what you do or don't notice.

Then, when things aren't noticed—like in sleep or as death fades your life—openness without objects will feel as home as it always is.

Every object and every thing, including your sense of self, will disappear from time to time. Whether you notice a self or not, openness remains.

Your worst nightmare—while waking or dreaming—will pass. Whether you notice a lingering dream or not, openness remains.

By the time you have finished reading this sentence, what was now has already passed.

Openness is eternal.

