

A close-up photograph of a small, young plant with several bright green leaves sprouting from a dark crack in a reddish-brown brick wall. The background is a soft-focus view of the same brick wall, creating a warm, textured environment.

JUST ONE LOOK
The Story

John & Carla Sherman

JUST ONE LOOK THE STORY



Just One Look Press

JUST ONE LOOK, THE STORY

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Contents

Dedication	3
Acknowledgements	4
Foreword	5
Preface	6
Introduction	9
Just One Look	10
The Story	10
Origins	11
The Prison Years	17
The Fall from Grace	21
Looking at Myself	26
Release from Prison	28
The Trap of the Spiritual Paradigm	32
The Fear of Life Disease	34
The Cure for the Fear of Life Disease	37
Recovery from the Fear of Life	39
A Brand New Paradigm	41

A Real Solution	43
Addendum to the 3rd edition	44
Other Titles by John & Carla	46
Resources	47
Recommended Reading	48
Contact Us	50
Support Our Work with a Donation	51
Connect with Us	52

Dedication

To all those who are tired of feeling that their life isn't worth living, tired of feeling that they are trapped in a world that they don't understand and can't deal with, tired of feeling that there is something missing, tired of feeling that the way to be effective in life is to be found among the many failures we humans have come upon in all the years that we have been suffering from this disease of fearfulness, alienation, and anxiety.

Acknowledgements

Our sincere gratitude goes to the thousands of people who have worked with us in the last eighteen years and have helped us understand the act of looking at yourself and its effects. Our work would not be what it is now without their contribution.

Foreword

John Sherman's act of inward looking is not presented as an alternative to psychotherapy, psychopharmacology, or any other healing pursuit. Rather, it is proposed as a radically new behavioral intervention that can be enacted on its own or as an adjunct to any treatment or healing modality, traditional or alternative. Nothing is required other than a sincere willingness to engage in this act whenever it occurs to you to do so. No new belief needs to be taken on and no existing belief or practice needs to be discarded. Anecdotally, people have reported that as the effects of the context of fear begin to fall away, their psychotherapeutic work, meditation practice, as well as other healing pursuits seem to move along more quickly and with greater ease. This is no surprise as they report feeling less "at stake" or "on the line" in the psychotherapeutic process and in life in general.

Paul Freedman M.S.W

Preface

Our mission is to make one simple insight into the root cause of all human mental misery and one simple act of inward looking that effectively eliminates that cause universally available and accessible to all.

One of the most harmful psychological effects of living from a context of fear and distrust is the way in which it alienates us from each other. We humans are a gregarious bunch by nature. We honor what ties us together, and we naturally congregate in common activity. This is what leads us to identify ourselves in relationship to family, region, country, sex, religion, sports teams, political ideology, and many other aspects in which we can find transitory commonality with one another.

Of course, it's also true that even in those areas of common interest a predominant feature of our gathering is a deep-seated, fear-based desire to distinguish ourselves from the others. To defeat

them or bring them to recognize our superiority.

This is the mark of the underlying force of the fear that pretty much runs the show and sets the prevailing psychology to an attitude of solitary relationship to life. It is this that drives us to seek individual satisfaction, safety, success, pleasure, riches, and a solution to the most common factor of our experience of life which is the yearning for a solution to we know not what. Even those of us who have found the solution in the simple act of looking at ourselves may find that the last vestige of the effects of the fear is often the underlying assumption that salvation is an individual matter and must be complete for the individual before the problem of the misery of others can be touched.

This remnant of the fear is the last to go for most of us, and the most powerful impediment to true freedom for all of us. I say this not to trivialize the importance of the liberation of the individual mind from the fog of fear but, once the looking is done and once you have begun to train your own

control over the power of your attention, you have done all that can be done in service to your own liberation. And the truth is that no one can be fully free until all are, and that inconvenient truth might well be the undoing of all our personal efforts to be fully human and fully free from misery.

*John and Carla Sherman
Ojai, California
October 13, 2015*

Introduction

Because of my activities as a revolutionary agitator, saboteur, and bank robber in the 60s and 70s, I was on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list for two and a half years.

Captured in 1981, I served over eighteen years in federal penitentiaries.

In 1994, in a prison in Colorado, I spent more than a year in the fully open awareness of spiritual awakening, which collapsed suddenly and left him bereft.

Three years later, shortly before my release, I found true freedom by means of an extremely simple act of attention.

This little book is my account of how all that happened and an introduction to the simple act of attention that gave me a second chance in life.

John Sherman

Just One Look

The Story

Origins

I was born in the summer of 1942 in Camden, New Jersey, to a father and mother about whom I know little other than what I have been told by others. When I was three or four, my mother and father split up, and I was sent to be raised by my grandmother, a Holy Ghost Pentecostal Christian, and my grandfather. When I was about ten, my grandfather died and my mother came back to town for his funeral. Soon thereafter, she was remarried to a sweet man, a tool and die maker, and they took me back from my grandmother. Within a year, we moved to Southern California. Over the coming years with him, my new stepfather gave me much attention and provided me with the basis for a philosophical outlook on life.

In 1958, when I was sixteen and in tenth grade, I stole my parents' checkbook, booked a flight to New York with a bad check, and moved into the Plaza Hotel, where I assembled a wardrobe and other

artifacts, went to a play on Broadway (J.B.), drank, ate high, and finally bought a \$2,500 Patek Philippe watch in the hotel jewelry store—all paid for with bad checks from my parents checkbook (times were easier then for a child con man). The watch proved a little too much—hotel security entered the fray, made some phone calls to California, and came to get me. In the end, they called my grandmother in New Jersey who wired enough money to bail me out and get me a train ticket to her.

I lived with my grandmother again for a while, got involved with a married woman, was found out by her ex-Marine husband and escaped into the Army, where I soldiered poorly for three years or so in Germany.

Upon my discharge from the Army, I returned to New Jersey and my grandmother. I was hired on as an apprentice machinist at a shipyard in Camden where my grandfather had worked. I learned a good trade to fall back on, and embarked on a pretty good run of good jobs and bad, and stupid adventures.

Before long, I took off for Southern California with another married woman, where I settled into a career of poker, credit card scams, and fraudulent check operations. She didn't stay for long.

Soon thereafter, I relocated to Oregon with another woman, where I was eventually sentenced to three years for Interstate Transportation of a Stolen Vehicle and incarcerated at the McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary near Seattle, WA. This all came about because I had purchased the car we had driven from California to Oregon with a bad check.

I made friends at the prison, and together we agitated, read Marx and Engels, Lenin and Mao, and came to see ourselves as political beings, instead of criminals. We finally managed to instigate a thirteen- day non-violent work strike, at the conclusion of which I was put in the hole (solitary confinement) and told that I would stay there until my release – a promise kept.

After eighteen months in the hole, I was released

from McNeil Island and rejoined the woman with whom I had originally fled California. I went to work for Boeing as a journeyman machinist and joined the Revolutionary Communist Party. After several years, I left the RCP over an ideological dispute and, before long, got involved with a ragtag bunch of anarcho-commies, led by an old comrade from McNeil. They called themselves “The George Jackson Brigade” after a black activist who had been murdered in 1971 by the authorities in the California state prison at San Quentin. Before long, I had persuaded them to abandon their anarchist ways, and to stop bombing Safeway stores and the like, where poor and working people had to shop for food.

We then put together a plan to sabotage the power source for Laurelhurst, the richest neighborhood in Seattle, in support of a strike by electrical workers. We thought this might bring to their attention the extent to which their comfort relied on the labor of others. On New Year’s Eve

action was carried live and in color on TV. It was a spectacular success. The strike was soon settled, and we moved on to bank robbery. Less than a month after Laurelhurst, we tried to rob a trailer bank in Tukwila, Washington and were caught in the act. One of us was shot and killed, I was shot in the jaw, and my old comrade and I went back to jail together.

I didn't stay caught for long. About six weeks later, I escaped with the help of friends who had evaded capture at the bank. We left town for a while to lick our wounds and gather our strength and returned about a year later to rob banks, sabotage capitalist institutions, and cause consternation among our enemies. We managed to do just that for another year or so, after which I was caught again. I was tried, convicted, and sentenced for a total of thirty years—an act of “leniency” that almost gave the prosecutor a stroke. I was sent to the US Penitentiary at Lompoc, from which I escaped again a couple of months later.

After that escape, I was put on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted List. I worked for some time as a precision machinist at Sundstrand, an aerospace company in Denver. Eventually I made a mistake, was caught, and was returned to the federal prison at Marion, Illinois, at that time considered the end of the road and intended for the "worst of the worst."

It is customary in the federal prison system to routinely transfer prisoners every couple of years or so, to keep them from making too many friends and connections within the prison system, so over the following 18 years, I did time in federal penitentiaries in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Atlanta, Georgia; Terre Haute, Indiana; Talladega, Alabama; El Reno, Oklahoma; Bastrop, Texas; Oxford, Wisconsin; Sheridan, Oregon; and finally Littleton and Florence, Colorado.

The Prison Years

During my years in prison, I studied philosophy, physics, metaphysics, history, law, etc. Early on, drawn by its unabashed celebration of a mystical reality, I even converted to Catholicism.

Much later, in 1993, I again got into trouble for being helpful to prison staff with computer work. I became increasingly knowledgeable about such things, until I was barred from ever again getting on a computer while in the prison system. Since I was no longer allowed to have a job, I mostly smoked dope and played tennis. I had a lot of free time on my hands.

Around that time, someone came to me and told me that a gorgeous Southern woman with some kind of mystical teaching was going to come into the prison. He wanted to know if I would be interested in seeing her and I said, yes, of course I want to go. A beautiful woman with a mystical teaching, after nearly seventeen years of imprisonment? Duh. Yet,

for reasons that I still cannot explain, when the time came to go see her, my heart started racing, I became short of breath, and I felt like I was having a heart attack. I found myself unable to attend that first meeting with Gangaji.

After that, I made contact with inmates who were involved with Buddhism, and I started going to meetings with Tibetan Buddhists associated with Trungpa Rinpoche. They came in every week from the Naropa Institute in Boulder. I was very quick to understand the teachings and successful in my practice, and the Buddhists were very happy with me. They soon brought in a Rinpoche who was visiting from Tibet, and I formally took refuge and bodhisattva vows.

Then, the following year, Gangaji came back. By that time, I had become the go-to guy for the prison chapel so that, when Gangaji came for the second time, it was up to me to let people know she was coming and to get the room set up for her. I was also to meet her at the prison gate and escort

her to the proper place in the prison chapel area.

Since I had become a Buddhist, I no longer had any real interest in meeting Gangaji. Yet, as she was walking up the sidewalk toward me, for no reason whatsoever, I found myself dumbfounded. She said, “Hi, you must be John,” and the world as I had known it... stopped.

I attended the satsang with her and was completely taken. Destroyed, actually. There is no other way to put it. In her presence, I discovered myself to be peace and freedom and love without condition. We started writing to each other. I wrote of my realizations; she wrote back confirming my experience. I spent the next year in an extreme state of bliss and in the clear seeing of the reality of the oneness of all being.

Gangaji came in to the prison again the following year, and I was overjoyed. She had been reading many of my letters in her satsangs. One thing led to another, and people in her sangha became interested in me and began to visit me.

I had by that time been doing a lot of reading in the Upanishads and Advaita texts. Mysteriously, all kinds of unusual material started to show up in the prison such as the Yoga Vasistha. I walked a guy to his cell once, and there it was sitting on top his locker. He didn't even know where it had come from. I took it and read it and was blown away by the power of its story.

I had a number of mystical experiences following that. At one point, after being moved from the Englewood prison to the penitentiary in Florence, Colorado, I came upon a dead baby bird that was on a stone bench where I would often go just to sit and look at the Rocky Mountains. I was so taken with that dead baby bird that I spoke of it as a teacher.

The Fall from Grace

That year of blissful experiences was followed by a year in hell. I had fallen in love with one of the women visiting me, and eventually the affair ended, leaving me in abject despair. All realization I had thought I had attained, was lost.

In my utter disillusionment, I came to the opinion that all of it was bullshit and that I had spent that year in a state of denial and self-deluded bliss. I became convinced that I had caused the whole experience of peace and clarity to arise through the force of my yearning—because I was good at that sort of thing—and I wanted not to be taken in by it again. To ensure that I would not be taken in again, I had to prove to myself that there was nothing to what had occurred to me and that it was all, in the end, just wishful thinking. My firm intent became to rid myself of the idea that there had been anything authentic in that experience.

I no longer believed there was anything

whatsoever that could be done to give anybody any real peace, yet I still had this deep yearning for an end to what I felt was the madness of being alive as a human being. I wanted to stop the yearning, so that I could get back to being as I was before and just live my life the best I could. I wanted to be rid of this idea that there was anything real to all the spiritual business.

I ended up in the hole again for going into the industries building and helping the supervisor there with his computers. Finally, in the hole, and in desperation, I turned to Ramana Maharshi, and I put all of my energy into the project of figuring out what it was he was asking us to do. I wanted to find an action that would either put an end to my torment or show me that the entire spiritual project was, as I suspected, completely hopeless after all.

Up until then I hadn't had a lot of interest in the teachings of Ramana Maharshi and the story of his awakening. I thought that Ramana was too simple for me. I was impressed by Nisargadatta and Wei

Wu Wei and, of course, Gangaji and Papaji. I had always felt a great connection with Papaji, but not so much with Ramana. I hadn't been interested at all in his method of self-inquiry or the question, "Who am I?" I decided, however, that of all the teachers and gurus that I had had some acquaintance with, Ramana was the best one—precisely because of his simplicity—for me to go to and try to find something to do that would invalidate and prove futile the entire spiritual project once and for all.

While in the hole, I spent some time engaged in some other silly endeavors. I had read Ramana's instruction to "find ego and grab it by the throat." So I would often sit on my bunk and, with all the energy I could muster, I would try to find within me the feeling that answered to the name of ego, and I would say to it, "Die, die, die!" This silliness lasted for quite a while, until I realized, "This thing ain't never gonna die!" And that make me laugh.

Then one day, while reading the biography of Ramana Maharshi by Arthur Osborne, I saw what

he said about his own experience, when he laid down on the floor and pretended to be dead. He wanted to find out what remained when a person died. In the book, Ramana says that he realized that once everything was gone, the only thing that remained was the force of personality:

‘Well then,’ I said to myself, ‘this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body am I dead? Is the body ‘I’? It is silent and inert but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the ‘I’ within me, apart from it.’¹

This statement sounded very bizarre and unexpected to me, since at that point, I knew that mind and personality do not exist. I decided that I would find a way to get the experience of the force of personality, the rock bottom, condensed sense of what gives rise to it. From then on, in every waking moment, wherever I found myself, I worked to

¹ *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi*

try to find just that, convinced that it would prove impossible or irrelevant, and thereby free me from all hope.

Looking at Myself

Then, one day in the shower, a very vivid recollection of myself as a young child overtook me. I was about eight years old, coming out of a James Stewart movie on a bright summer's day in Camden, New Jersey. I suddenly had the actual experience of what it felt like to be me back then. Just me, without regard to my thoughts, my ideas, my history, or my physical being. Simply what it felt like to be me.

Following that experience, I suddenly lost interest in that entire project and my sense of spiritual longing simply went away. The whole business just didn't seem to be important any longer. I felt calm, content and unconcerned with much of anything. I just didn't think much about any of that anymore.

At the time, I did not connect my newfound contentment with anything I had done. It would still take me quite a few years to realize what had really happened to me. I did however find myself

returning to that feeling of “me” from time to time over the next several years.

The day came when I finally got out of the hole and was assigned the daily job of cleaning the bathroom in the staff lounge. I would perform this task in the mornings, and then I would be free to do whatever I wanted for the rest of the day. I would take walks, read, play tennis... Life felt so simple. I was happy. Not blissful or enlightened, just happy and content with being alive.

Release from Prison

Not long after, in 1998, the time came for my release from prison. The usual procedure is that, on the day of your release, they put you in a holding cell to wait until they drive you to the nearest bus station.

As it turned out, the department head of Receiving and Discharge had come in at six o'clock that morning because he could not believe that they were going to release me after all. He picked up the jacket that contained my entire criminal history—it was about nine inches thick—and he began to go through it page by page, looking for something or some way to stop my release from prison.

I sat in the holding cell for hours, with no idea whether I was going to be released or not, and I felt not the slightest concern as to what would happen. There was no anxiety or preference. I was simply curious to see how it was going to turn out. My best guess was that he was going to find a way to keep me there, but this didn't bother me at all.

He found nothing and I was released later that day. I found my way to a halfway house in Boulder, Colorado and, thanks to Gangaji's generosity, I was given a job at the Gangaji Foundation. Six months later, the Foundation moved to Novato, California, and they took me with them. I worked for the foundation as a computer systems manager until July 1999.

On a Saturday afternoon in June 1999, Carla and I were struck without warning by the realization that we were meant to be together. We had met at the Foundation office, where she was a volunteer at the time. On the following Wednesday afternoon, we were married on the back lawn of our friends' house in San Rafael, overlooking the San Francisco Bay.

Also that week, someone invited me to hold my first satsang in Palo Alto, California. I didn't really want to do it, but I finally relented. As time went on, more and more people started inviting me to come and speak, and Carla and I began traveling

frequently, which we continue to do to this day. However, through all those first years, I never had any real sense that I was being of any real help to anybody, nor did I feel that I was saying anything true to my actual experience.

Eventually, through much reflection and much discussion between Carla and me, I came to understand that something of import had happened to me that day in the shower, when I had the direct experience of what it felt like to be me. The more I reflected on that experience, the more I found that it really had nothing to do with any spiritual aspiration or anything I had been speaking about in satsang. Yet, at the same time, I could not find a way to speak about it in any way other than with a spiritual vocabulary and within a spiritual framework. I could not find a way to break out of that context and point people toward this far simpler discovery. Also, this was made more difficult by the fact that almost everyone who came to meet with me in satsang was there for spiritual

conversation or some kind of spiritual experience.

I became determined to find a way to speak directly and clearly about what had actually occurred to me that day and what its meaning was, in a way that could be helpful to people. I decided that from then on, I would use my conversations with people to try to figure out how to say what I really wanted to tell them.

The Trap of the Spiritual Paradigm

In 2006, during a trip to Chicago, Illinois, I first started feeling that I was making some progress in that direction. On the way back to California, Carla and I had a large meeting in Boulder, Colorado, where it finally became clear to me that what had happened to me in that shower was not of a spiritual nature at all. I was beginning to realize that the problem I had been having in communicating my actual experience had to do with the spiritual paradigm and its attendant vocabulary. Still, it was hard to break free from it. At the time, I spoke of my attempts as an escape from the spiritual ghetto.

Only recently have I begun to see the actuality of what it is that I am trying to call people's attention to. In the last couple of years, we have adopted the phrase, "just one look," with the intention of persuading people to try, just once, to get the direct experience of "me." Not "true self," "awareness," "silence," or any other spiritual or religious

abstraction. Just “me,” what the personal pronoun refers to, and that we usually try to avoid at any cost.

Finally, I got to the point where I felt it was critical for people to understand that I am not talking about anything spiritual or about the truth of anything. I am talking about the simple, primal, and ordinary experience of “me.”

The Fear of Life Disease

What I believe, and increasingly more people agree with me, is that almost every human being is afflicted very early in life – most likely at or near birth, and long before the acquisition of language – with a fear of life itself.

Something happens to us very early on that makes us afraid of being alive, and this creates in the mind an environment of fearfulness and anxiety. That fear is the bedrock context in which the psychology comes into being and takes shape, so that our psychological mechanisms are, from the very start, charged with the task of protecting us from life itself. This state of things has brought us to a point where almost everybody on earth is diagnosable with one personality disorder or another. It is not surprising that suicide is the second leading cause of death among persons aged 10-24 years and the third among persons 15-44 years.

The world of human beings is afflicted with the fear of life itself, which is best understood as a kind of psychological autoimmune disease because it consists in a component of one's self that falsely perceives threat where there is none, and attacks the perceived threat based on that perception, which in turn produces pain and disease.

Because of that invisible context of fear, our psychological structures, our personality—our interface with the world—is constantly engaged in the project of defending us from life itself. It is constantly trying to protect us from ourselves. It warps and distorts our capacity to engage directly and openly with our lives. It creates a buffer between us and the direct experience of life, and causes us to live life with a two-second delay, always on the defensive, always looking out for threats.

Some of us become violent, angry, and aggressive because of this disease. In others, the disease creates a personality inclined to withdrawal, silent suffering, and misery. For others, the disease

causes them to seek to get something from others that can only be fulfilled within oneself. In other words, all the ways in which we human beings are damaged are just different aspects of the same fear of life disease that is at the root of the widespread psychological suffering that afflicts most of us.

The Cure for the Fear of Life Disease

The movement of attention directly to the actual experience of “me” destroys that invisible context of the fear of life. This is what I believe happened to me that day in the prison shower, and we now have considerable evidence to support this theory.

Consider this: the only thing that we really have anything to say about is where we put our attention. We don’t have anything to say about anything else that happens to us. Thoughts come on their own. Sensations happen. When we notice them, they are already here. The only thing that we have anything to say about is where we put our attention. Usually we are not very good at choosing where to place our attention. Mostly, we just let attention go toward whatever attracts it.

The special nature of the focus of attention is critical here because moving the beam of attention, just for a moment, to the feel of “me” instantly destroys the context of fear of one’s own life, which

is the cause of all our psychological problems. This simple act, done only once, opens the way for a complete regeneration of the psychological mechanisms and the development of a fresh personality, now based on positive aspects that are life-affirming, creative, and self-reliant.

We believe this happens because of the silent and complete annihilation of the fearful context that takes place the moment the diseased mind has the direct experience of the completely unharmed “me” that it has foolishly been trying to protect.

Recovery from the Fear of Life

After directing attention to the feel of “me” in the act that we refer to as “looking at yourself,” one often experiences a period of calm and peacefulness. It is as if a heavy weight has been lifted and the person often feels elated and relieved, with a sense that the war is finally over. That period may last anywhere from a few days to a few months.

When the diseased environment, the invisible context of fearfulness is destroyed, the diseased psychological mechanisms that had sprung from it are now deprived of their source of energy and they begin to erode. The person enters then what we call “the period of recovery.”

This falling away of the old neurotic mechanisms doesn’t necessarily unfold easily, and what we’ve seen quite consistently is that often people experience a period where things can get a bit tough. For instance, anxiety and old feelings of helplessness may get even more amped

up. We find it useful to think of this process as a period of recovery in which the old psychological mechanisms—whose only purpose was to protect us from life—are for a time fighting against their own demise.

Then, after a period of up to two or three years, everything starts to calm down. Sanity and clarity begin to assert themselves in a way that had never been experienced before. People begin to see much more clearly that the old mechanisms of protection are no longer necessary, or welcome, and they begin to take pleasure and satisfaction in engaging directly with life. They experience the fulfillment that comes when one is effectively and intelligently engaged with one's own life.

A Brand New Paradigm

What has happened here is that we have stumbled upon a new framework in which to consider, understand, explain, and do something about the widespread human psychological suffering and the generalized misery of human existence.

For thousands of years we have been attempting to bring a spiritual solution to what is actually a psychological problem and, not surprisingly, nothing we have done in that realm has brought much in the way of permanent and widespread relief.

It turns out that the spiritual project is ill-suited to put an end to human misery; it cannot solve a problem that is purely psychological, with no metaphysical aspect to it whatsoever. What we offer here is a brand new framework within which we can finally understand and heal the human mind.

This new paradigm, the heart of which is the insight that the root of all psychological suffering

is the fear of life itself, explains everything in the realm of human misery, including the failure of the spiritual project to have much lasting positive effect on humanity as a whole. And it has nothing to say about non-duality or about metaphysics.

I do believe that this is what Ramana Maharshi himself stumbled upon and was trying to tell us, but I also think that he was trapped in the spiritual context of his culture when trying to understand what had happened to him.

If there is any value whatsoever in the spiritual, religious, and metaphysical efforts of humanity, those realms of investigation will be better served by the abandonment of the idea that the spiritual, religious, and metaphysical projects can bring an end to human psychological suffering.

A Real Solution

There is a kind of self-destructive madness that seems to be overtaking the entire human species now, and our capacity for self-destruction seems to be escalating to higher and higher levels every day.

There is a limit to how much we humans can bear and there is a limit to how much the earth can bear and still be able to support us. But we can rid ourselves of the fear of life, which is the cause of it all.

What I have seen is that this method of inward looking by directing attention to the feeling of “me” permanently eliminates the cause of all human psychological suffering, which is the fear of life.

Carla and I have taken on the job of bringing this to as many people as humanly possible. All we want is to get this good news out to the world. We want enough human beings to hear about this simple act of looking at yourself to ensure that the possibility of true and lasting peace becomes available to the entire human family.

Addendum to the 3rd edition

Since this ebook was first published in 2012, our work has evolved based on feedback from several hundreds of people around the world who have tried to look at themselves in the manner we recommend and have come to us for conversation, support and encouragement. This is how we have developed [The Just One Look Method](#), which is available to all on our website.

The Just One Look Method brings together the essence of Ramana Maharshi's Self-Inquiry (which is the act we call "looking at yourself") and a very simple, but amazingly powerful work with attention (we call it "self-directed attention exercise"). And no, this is not mindfulness meditation; it's more like its opposite.

We have spent the last ten years or so introducing The Just One Look Method to people of all walks of life, and helping them through the process of recovery. And it has been proven over and over to

truly achieve liberation from mental suffering.

Please read some the testimonials attesting to that [on our website.](#)

John & Carla Sherman

Ojai, California

November 1, 2017

Other Titles by John & Carla

Lookers Tells Their Stories (2017)

No More Fear, No More Anxiety (2015, 2017)

*Just One Look: Experience the Power of Human Consciousness
to Free Itself of the Fear of Life* (2011, 2014, 2017)

*The Fear of Life and the Simple Act of Inward Looking that
Snuffs It Out* (2011, 2014, 2017)

Look at Yourself (2010)

Meeting Ramana Maharshi, Conversations with John Sherman
(2004, 2017)

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Recommended Reading

“The Radical Act of Inward Looking” is a corroboration of John and Carla Sherman’s work written by mental health professionals Paul Freedman M.S.W., R.S.W. Jonathan Goldberg M.S.W., R.S.W., and psychiatrist Jaak Reichmann M.D., FRCP(C).

ABSTRACT

In keeping with the new wave of context-focused behavioral treatment approaches such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), we discuss an innovative behavioral intervention referred to as the Act of Inward Looking. The theoretical underpinnings of this intervention are based on the assumption that the primary cause of human psychological suffering is a pervasive fear

of life which is established at birth and thereafter operates as an unconscious psychological context or core belief. Problematic symptoms, negative behavioral traits and reactions as well as our attempts to get rid of them are seen as effects of this lifelong pernicious context. The Act of Inward Looking primarily targets and modifies this context and is thought to subsequently lessen or extinguish many of the aforementioned effects. The Act of Inward Looking is described in detail and viewed, in part, through the lens of In Vivo Exposure Therapy, as well as contrasted with mindfulness-based practices.

[Download the free PDF.](#)

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