

The Heart Of The Matter - 1984

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Thank you.

Well, I wish I could do as warm a welcome, but my welcome is with all my heart.

So thank you very much for being here.

It's a real privilege for me to be able to be here and be with you.

We've really had a remarkable breakthrough recently in this work.

What amounts to a major breakthrough in the possibility of the value of the work and its impact on the effectiveness of living and on the quality of life for people.

And I recognize as I go through these periods in this work where things become very creative and new possibilities open up that I owe a great deal to a lot of people that the opportunity for this work, I mean really being able to do it at all, is a product of an enormous amount of support from a lot of people.

Really the work is possible out of those interactions and relationships and actions that people take with their lives, kind of like keeping their neck stuck out, living at risk, so to speak.

The setup isn't so good when I stand on a platform and speak because it looks like a lecture or a talk or something like that.

I wanted to be clear about the nature of the evening tonight.

The nature of this evening is really in the nature of an inquiry.

We're going to use the three and a half hours that we'll spend together to inquire into certain issues.

And the issues into which I'd like to inquire are not the issues with which we're ordinarily concerned.

In the normal course of events, we have this everyday way of being in the world.

We have these everyday concerns, our relationships, our health, our work, our jobs, our finances, our children and their lives, our friends and their lives, the world, the nation.

Tonight's an inquiry into something which underlies all of that, something underneath those concerns which we have, which I'll call our everyday concerns, those concerns about our everyday way of being in the world.

And we want to inquire tonight into issues which are literally at the heart of the matter of being human.

These are issues with which we're not normally engaged on an everyday basis.

Hopefully, we've taken some time from time to time to engage in those issues.

Maybe we read a book at night about those issues.

Maybe we spend a few hours during the week engaged in those issues about what lies at the heart of the matter for human beings.

But for the most part, our everyday lives are not about that.

And so tonight is going to be a bit of a strain on you, given that I'm going to be asking you to kind of change your pace.

The way in which we're engaged with life on an everyday basis, on a daily concerns basis, is not quite the appropriate mode for an inquiry into these issues which lie at the heart of the matter for human beings.

We're going to take a look tonight, like a very serious look, like an inquiry, like asking the question, what kind of a being is a human being?

I mean, we all kind of take it for granted.

As a matter of fact, there are those who say that being for human beings is like air to the bird or water to the fish.

We kind of take it for granted.

We don't give much real thought to it.

Not that we don't have opinions about it, and not that we haven't been told something about it, and not that we don't have certain beliefs about it, but we very rarely stop and question, you know, just what kind of a being is a human being?

So we're going to, tonight, that's kind of the general question.

What kind of a being is a human being?

And I suggest to you that certain things will come up that may be difficult, that this is not an easy inquiry.

There are not pat answers to this.

And as a matter of fact, some of the answers, some of the honest answers, some of the honest possibilities about that question are somewhat uncomfortable.

So in addition to actually having to work tonight to kind of have to be up on the edge of your seat with these issues, some of it may be a bit uncomfortable.

In addition to the question, what kind of a being is a human being?

We want to then go on, if we can get someplace engaged in that question, engaged with that issue, we want to go on a bit from there, in whatever opens up for us out of that inquiry, to inquire into the possibility of being for human beings.

We kind of take that one for granted as well.

And so those questions may not seem very exciting at first glance, since they don't have anything to do with looking good, for the most part.

But I'm promising, and I want to be very clear about this promise, that the inquiry tonight and the work tonight is not some esoteric matter that has nothing to do with our everyday way of being in the world, with our everyday concerns.

But rather, we're doing this inquiry for its practical value, for the impact that it can have on our everyday being in the world, on our everyday concerns.

So we've got a very strange situation.

We're going to be dealing with those issues which lie at the heart of the matter for human beings, those fundamental issues about being for human beings.

And we're going to engage in this inquiry for a specific purpose, and the purpose is for the impact that it can have on our everyday concerns, on our everyday being in the world.

Now, in the beginning, you may not see any relationship between this inquiry and, for instance, your relationships with your children.

You may not see any correlation between this inquiry and your concerns at work, or for your concerns in your relationships, or your social concerns, or your concerns for the world.

But I'm promising that there is a relationship.

These issues that we're going to be addressing tonight are ancient issues.

I didn't invent them, and the people with whom I worked didn't invent them, nor did you invent them.

They've been around for a very, very long time.

They're old questions.

They're questions that came along with being human.

They're questions that came along with our civilization.

What we did invent, and what we're going to be working with tonight, is a way of getting at these questions.

So I want to be clear that while these questions have been gotten at by many different disciplines of humanity, that the method for tonight, the discipline that we'll be using tonight, is one that we invented, and I'll tell you why we invented it and what it's supposed to do.

So the questions are ancient, and the method of inquiry, the discipline which we'll be using to get at those questions, is one that we invented for this occasion.

The method we call transformation. It's not philosophy, although you'll hear some of the concerns from philosophy in the questions that we're asking tonight.

It's not religion or theology, although you'll hear some of the concerns of religion and theology in the questions that we're asking tonight.

It's not many other disciplines like sociology or anthropology.

So the question about being that we're asking, this engagement with the fundamental questions, the fundamental issues for human beings about their own being, what kind of a being is a human being, what is the possibility of being for human beings, is not a question that we want to ask in a philosophical domain.

We don't want to ask it in a psychological domain.

So tonight is not about psychology or a psychological approach to these questions.

It's not anthropological, nor is it historical.

We're not trying to get at the being of human beings in a historical domain.

We're not trying to get at our being from the perspective of ourselves as individuals, from ourselves as a collective, from ourselves as society, but rather we want to get at these questions about being in the domain of being.

So this is an inquiry into being in the domain of being.

Transformation is a discipline for dealing with being in the domain of being such that it's not designed to produce answers.

Now I know that must sound very strange to you because why ask a question if you're not going to get the answer?

It's not designed to produce answers.

It's not designed to produce solutions.

It's not designed to give people a prescription for living.

It's not designed to produce a recipe for getting the things out of life that you want.

As it says here, the work is not about solutions or answers.

It's an inquiry into the nature of being.

In the process of this inquiry, insights show up that profoundly impact the quality of our lives.

So that's the nature of transformation.

This particular way of getting at these questions does not produce answers, does not produce solutions, does not produce recipes, does not produce prescriptions.

What happens is that certain insights occur, even though you don't get answers, certain insights occur in the process of this inquiry using the invention, transformation, to get at these questions, certain insights will show up for you.

Now, the insights don't show up necessarily as, oh, I see something I didn't see before, because that would be kind of like an answer.

The insights show up rather than like that as actual openings or a space for being or a freedom or an empowerment in your everyday being in the world.

So I want to make that very clear.

I'm going to repeat it.

We're going to be inquiring into these issues that are at the heart of the matter for human beings.

The discipline with which we're going to conduct the inquiry, engage in these issues, is a discipline that we call transformation.

Transformation is a way of getting at these issues that is not designed to produce answers or solutions or prescriptions or recipes, but rather is a way of getting at these issues such

that insights will show up for you in the process of the inquiry and these insights will be openings or breaking opens or a certain sense of freedom or maybe more specifically a being empowered, not here in

the hall in thinking about it, but being empowered in your everyday being in the world, in your everyday concerns.

And by empowered, I mean having a sense of freedom, a kind of new opening that was not there before, a sense of empowerment in facing the risk that being alive actually is.

The challenge of our work, the challenge of our concerns for society, the challenge of our personal and individual concerns, and the challenge of our concerns like a culture, like a civilization, like a society.

So that's the nature of the work tonight.

What we're promising is that we're not promising answers.

We're not promising a pleasant evening.

What we're promising is an inquiry that will show up in your life, in your everyday being in the world, like a breaking open, like a freedom to be, like a possibility for being in your everyday concerns with your everyday concerns.

By the way, I want to be clear that I am clear.

I know that everybody in the room is successful.

So if you thought I was speaking to you because I thought there was something wrong with you or you weren't successful or you didn't know how to get along or you weren't great or you weren't doing well in life, that's not true.

I'm clear that you're very, very successful.

I'm also clear that when a person becomes successful, certain opportunities open up in their lives and they begin to recognize that whatever got them to wherever they are, when they recognize their own success, they recognize that somehow there are concerns and possibilities in life that what brought them to where they are don't match.

There's this wonderful quote by Einstein, which I'll paraphrase, in which he says that the thinking that's gotten us to where we are will be insufficient to solve the problems that go along with having gotten to where we are.

So that while that thinking that you and I are, that you and I engage in may have gotten us to where we are, we need to recognize to some degree that that very thinking, the one about which we're so proud because it's gotten us to where we are, that very thinking also produces problems which that thinking isn't powerful enough to solve.

At any rate, we all are pretty proud of what we know and we deserve to be proud of what we know.

We've accomplished a lot.

We've accomplished a lot as individuals.

We've accomplished a lot as a society.

We've accomplished a lot as a nation.

We've accomplished a lot as a race, human being.

So we have this whole section of the world called what I know.

Now one of the things that's happened to me as I grew up and learned more, at some point things shifted and the more I learned, that is to say the more I knew, the more I knew I didn't know.

So you probably have a little section of your life while you've got this important part called what you know which you use to accomplish and work on the things that you're working on and accomplishing in life.

So you've got this section called I know.

You probably also have a section called I don't know.

And there's a way of working on what you don't know.

And we all know how to do it.

You ask questions with the intention of getting accurate answers.

And when you're working on what you don't know, if you ask questions in an intelligent way and work on those questions in an intelligent way, you get answers and you expand what you know.

And maybe as you expand what you know, what you don't know expands a little bit more as well.

You begin to see that there are other things you don't know.

Now, tonight is not about what you know.

Nor, might I add, is it about what I know.

This is not about my opinions about the being of human beings.

I promise not to give you my opinions.

I will keep them to myself.

I invite you to keep your opinions to yourself.

That is to say, tonight isn't about what you already know, what you've been taught, what you've learned, what you've read, what everybody knows.

Nor is it even about what you don't know.

It's about what you don't know that you don't know.

Now, very few people know anything about what they don't know that they don't know.

So I've spent a good part of the last 14 years of my life struggling with the issue of what I don't know that I don't know.

And I don't know much about it either, even though I've been struggling with it for a long time.

But I know something about it.

One of the things that I know about it is the kind of questions, the kind of relationship that you and I have with what we know and what we don't know, has no power in the domain of what we don't know that we don't know.

So what you and I are good at, which is knowing and finding out when we don't know, what you and I are good at, which is both knowing and finding out when we don't know, none of that skill, ability, none

of that experience is of much value when you begin to deal with what you don't know that you don't know.

Particularly, for example, asking questions to get the answer doesn't work in the realm of don't know that I don't know.

You see, we could say that we were blind to this, that this is our blind spot. And I give you the example and ask you to consider the example that asking questions to get the answer, which we're all very good at, dealing with questions for which we want the answer, which we're all very good at, isn't very powerful in dealing with what you don't know that you don't know.

There is, however, a way to be with questions, a way to question, a way to be with a question which is appropriate to getting at what you don't know that you don't know.

It's a kind of question or a questioning which you don't pose in order to get the answer, but which you pose in order to stand inside of like a space and look out from at whatever there is in the world for you to look out to.

So, I say, in this realm of not knowing that we don't know, there are ways to surface what we don't know that we don't know.

One of the ways to do that is to ask questions that are designed for a purpose other than getting the answer to the question, to ask questions which rather than providing answers, to ask questions which generate new questions, which new questions actually begin to reveal certain parts of what we don't know that we don't know.

So, tonight is about that, and I think you'll agree now that you've heard me speak about it for a few minutes, that that's strange territory for most of us.

Mostly, we don't engage in that territory, we don't deal in that territory.

So, tonight may be difficult on that basis, because we'll be in unfamiliar waters, not nearly uncharted waters, that would be the realm of not knowing, but knowing that we didn't know.

Rather, we'll be in waters that may not be like water, that may not act like water.

So, not only are they uncharted, they're really unknown, and there isn't anything known about not knowing about them, something like that.

At any rate, you get the point.

So, the questions that we ask tonight, this question, what kind of a being is a human being, what is being for human beings, is a question not designed to get an answer, not designed to provide a solution, not designed to make

you better or give you recipes for living, but rather a question in which to stand, out from which to look at your everyday being in the world, your everyday concerns,

so that while the question is a little exotic, when you stand inside the question and look out, you're looking at what you are already very familiar with.

You know, what is it, looking from inside the question, what kind of a being is a human being, what is it that you think?

Looking from there, what is it that you think?

Looking from there, what is it that you don't think?

What is it that you feel, looking from that space of possibility, looking from that clearing, from that opening?

What is it that you feel?

Looking from there, what is it that you don't feel?

So it's that realm with which we're going to be dealing tonight.

Now I want to talk to you for a minute about my own speaking.

I want to be very clear that I'm not asking you to believe anything that I say.

In the normal course of events, when someone speaks, we assume that they're asking us to believe what they say.

I'm not asking you to believe what I say.

I'm not even saying that I believe it.

But I mean what I say.

I'm not saying it to fool you.

I am committed to what I say, but I'm not pretending that what I'm saying is true.

And so you are relieved of the burden of having to figure out whether or not you agree with what I'm saying, because I'm not telling you that it's the truth.

I'm not asking you to agree with it or to believe it.

I'm simply asking you to be with it.

So that if I say something, I'm inviting you to consider it like a possibility.

I'm inviting you to stand inside the possibility of what I'm saying and look out from it for yourself at your everyday being in the world, at your everyday concerns, at the stuff about which your life is composed.

So while I mean what I say and I'm committed to what I say and I'm accountable for what I say, I'm not asking you to believe it.

Nor am I attached to it.

I am also willing to give it up.

If when looking out from it and looking into my own life and my own concerns, something opens up for me, I suddenly become aware of something about which I wasn't even aware that I wasn't aware.

And some new possibility arises, I'm not stuck with what I'm saying to you.

Now, while I'm not asking you to believe it, I'm also not a guy in a diner.

A lot of people don't know about a guy in a diner, so I'm going to tell you.

When I was growing up here on the East Coast, my family took trips to visit people and they were often long distances and given the kind of family in which I grew up, the discussion would often go on until late in the evening.

Very late for a guy as young as I was.

And we would drive home oftentimes very late at night. Oftentimes nights like this when it was raining or snowing or nasty.

And diners, as far as I knew, were places that you stopped late at night to get a cup of coffee so you could stay awake while you were driving.

And at my age, I couldn't let anybody do anything without my being there, so I always had to go in with them.

And I learned about guys in a diner.

Guys in diners late at night, like I'm describing to you, are usually fairly lonely because there are not a lot of customers late at night and they don't have anybody to talk to and they just love for someone to stop in because then they've got somebody to talk to.

And, you know, you go in, you're the only person there, and you sit up at the counter and you have your cup of coffee and whatever else and you find out that this guy in the diner, the guy behind the counter, knows everything about everything.

There's nothing about which he does not know.

He knows what the president ought to do about the deficit.

He knows what the country ought to do about its international relationships.

He knows what you ought to do about your marriage.

He knows what kind of work you ought to do and how whatever kind of work you are doing, you could do it better.

He knows something about everything.

So with regard to the issues about which we're dealing tonight, while I am not professing to tell you the truth, while I'm sharing possibilities which I'm inviting you to entertain, I'm also not a guy in a diner about this.

I've been doing this work for 14 years with an enormous record of value for those people who have participated in the work.

So a little bit, I like what Wittgenstein said about the work that he was doing.

He said, my proposition serves as elucidations in the following way.

Anybody who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical when he has used them as steps to climb up beyond them.

He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he's climbed up on it.

He must surmount these propositions, then he sees the world rightly.

So I'm inviting you to climb on my conversation with you tonight.

Climb up on it in your own listening.

Stand up on top of what's being said.

Stand up on top in your own listening.

Stand up on top and look out for yourself.

This is really about doing your own thinking.

Thinking for yourself.

And this notion about thinking for yourself is not what one ordinarily thinks of as thinking.

So I want to be clear about that.

What I mean by thinking for yourself and what these kind of people who we quoted on the board meant by thinking for yourself, doing your own thinking is not that ordinary thing which we call thinking.

You know those thoughts that keep going on in the back of your head?

That isn't the kind of thinking about which these people were speaking.

They weren't talking about your opinion or what comes out of your mouth when you say, I think, or what comes out of your mouth when you say, I feel, nor what comes out of your mouth when you say, I believe.

They weren't talking about that when they were talking about doing our own thinking.

They were really talking something like this, about standing up on top of what's being said, climbing up on it, as Wittgenstein says, and looking out at life, at your life, at life, at the world, for yourself.

Looking for yourself, seeing for yourself.

And so that's why I dare say anything at all.

Not because I'm asking you to believe it, but because I'm asking you to climb up on it and look and think for yourself in the way in which we've now just spoken about thinking.

I'm also committed to not being a windbag tonight.

And that's like not being a guy in a diner.

I promised you early not to give you my opinion, not to tell you what I think, what I like, what I don't like, what I want, what I don't want.

I want to read you this really wonderful quote from Max Weber.

He says, I am under the impression that in nine out of ten cases I deal with windbags.

Probably hung out with pretty good people if his batting average was that good.

But anyway, he says, I am under the impression that in nine out of ten cases I deal with windbags who do not fully realize what they take upon themselves when they speak and when they listen and when they think and when they act and literally when they are.

But who intoxicate themselves with romantic sensations.

Like I believe may be a romantic sensation.

My experience has proven may be a romantic sensation.

Everybody knows may be a romantic sensation.

Everybody, all the best people know.

I read, see I read may be a romantic sensation.

From a human point of view, this is not very interesting to me, nor does it move me profoundly.

However, it is immensely moving when a mature person, whether old or young in years, is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his speaking.

See, you and I don't take our speaking very seriously.

We have no sense that we are our word.

In fact, we pretty much don't trust each other's word anymore.

The one way not to get elected is to make promises.

Nobody trusts you if your promise is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his speaking, of his conduct and really feels such a responsibility with heart and soul.

He then acts by following the ethic of responsibility.

By the way, responsibility doesn't mean here blame or guilt or fault.

Something much more profound.

Something not like you and I ordinarily mean when we say I am responsible for that.

He's talking about something more profound.

At any rate, he goes on to say he then acts following the ethic of responsibility and somewhere he reaches the point where he says, here I stand.

You don't hear that very much, do you?

You hear, I'm here because.

Let me tell you what's right about why I'm here.

Let me tell you why I'm here.

Let me prove to you that here is the right place.

No, he says, and somewhere he reaches the point where he says, here I stand.

I can do no other.

That is something genuinely human and moving.

And every one of us who is not spiritually dead must realize the possibility of finding himself at some time in that position.

So tonight is about that position or.

Again, I want to be clear with you.

That the work we do in here tonight will be about issues at the heart of the matter for human beings.

But the purpose of engaging in those issues, the purpose of the inquiry is a very practical, hard-headed impact on our everyday concerns.

This is not some class in philosophy.

This is not a theological discussion, nor, as I said, one about history or anthropology or sociology.

No, its intention is to literally impact like break open.

Like empower us in our everyday being in the world.

I've used the word power a couple of times, and I want to tell you what I mean by power, because it's a badly understood word or at least the.

What I mean by it is often not well understood.

So I can take about a half an hour to tell you what I mean by power.

Or I actually read this quote by Charles Reich in which he says what I mean in a paragraph really annoys me.

But in the interest of time and efficiency, I'm going to read you what he said rather than give you my half hour.

I think my half hour is a little better, obviously, but.

I say it for efficiency's sake, he says power to me, by the way, this comes from a lecture that he did on power in the law.

He says power means to me pretty much the same thing as freedom.

Power is the thing that everybody wants the most they can possibly have of.

That is skiing is power.

Sex appeal is power.

The ability to make yourself heard by a congressperson is power.

Anything that goes out of you, anything that comes out of you and goes out into the world is power.

And in addition to that, the ability to be open, to appreciate, to receive love, to respond to others, to listen to music, to understand literature.

All of that is power.

By power, I mean human faculties exercise to the largest possible degree.

So in a way, in a large sense, by power, I mean individual intelligence.

Now, when you reach out to another person through the energy or creativity that is in you and that other person responds, you are exercising power.

When you make somebody else do something against their will.

To me, that is not power at all.

That is force and force to me is the negation of power.

So when I talk about this work, having a practical hard headed impact on our everyday concerns and our ability to deal with those concerns, on our everyday being in the world and empowering ourselves in our everyday being in the world.

That's what I mean by power like that.

Now, dealing with what we don't know that we don't know, this arena, getting at the kind of being that human beings are, is difficult stuff.

And I'm going to read you a paraphrase of a quotation by the philosopher Martin Heidegger from Being and Time.

He's talking about getting at this kind of being that human beings are.

And he says, people's kind of being thus demands that any attempt to get at that being constantly has the character of doing violence, whether to the claims of the everyday interpretation or to its complacency and its tranquilized obviousness.

So he's talking about a particular kind of violence.

He's talking about the kind of violent Gandhi was.

He's talking about the kind of violent Martin Luther King was.

A violence to the claims of the everyday interpretation, what you already know, what common sense tells you, what's clear for you.

So tonight, in order to really participate in this, you're going to have to have the courage and the fortitude and the commitment to a kind of ruthless honesty and a compassion for the value that human beings might possibly be required to do violence to what you already know to be true. That which you believe, that which is your opinion, that with which you literally that with which you identify.

That's the kind of work that you need to be willing to do to come to know what you don't know that you don't know.

And it's not easy and it's not comfortable.

And tonight is not a show.

And if you're here for a show, you're in the wrong place.

I'm not entertaining.

You probably can tell that already.

You see, you and I have been trained to listen for prescriptions, to listen for recipes.

We've trained ourselves and been trained by our culture, by the practices of our culture, to listen for solutions and answers.

People go any place if it'll make them thinner, sexier, richer, etc.

This is not about getting better tonight.

It's about freedom and power in our everyday being in the world.

We're not here to reduce the risk that life is by getting answers.

We're not here to reduce the risk that living is by finding solutions or getting prescriptions or finding the recipe or the answer.

We're here rather to conduct this inquiry in a special way.

In a way that we've developed, in a way that allows people in the process of inquiring for certain break-opens to happen in their everyday way of being in the world.

So this is not about following what I'm saying tonight.

It's not about following my propositions.

It's not even about understanding.

Much of this you will not understand.

I say that there are questions in life about which you and I are likely never to understand, but the inquiry into which all by itself, if done in a particular way, can produce enormous value in our lives. And I'm inviting you to engage with me in a conversation, a conversation that happens in my speaking and in your listening.

And your listening is not passive.

Not in an inquiry it's not passive.

Not when I'm inviting you to consider possibilities.

If I'm talking at you, then you may listen passively.

But tonight isn't about passive listening.

It's about being up on the edge of your seat with regard to these issues.

One of the other things I want to be clear about is that we live in a society which is very committed to a psychological interpretation.

We are a psychological interpretation.

We figure each other out and figure ourselves out in a structure of psychological interpretation, like a set of assessments.

We'll be talking more about that and that will get clearer to you as we go along.

And I want to be clear with you tonight that tonight is not about psychology, nor philosophy, nor theology, nor sociology.

It's an inquiry into being in the domain of being, in an ontological domain, if you like.

We're going to be investigating our own authenticity.

We're going to be coming to grips with our own authenticity, the nature of our being.

Now, we abhor the notion of being inauthentic.

We absolutely abhor it.

We live in a society in which the name of the game is look good.

And if you'll examine your own actions and your own thoughts and your own feelings from the possibility that I just mentioned to you, stand in the space and look out from that space of possibility that a great deal of what you think and do and feel is shaped by a kind of cultural commitment to looking good.

See, it's not that you ever woke up one morning and said, gee, what my life's going to be about is about looking good.

No, you showed up in the commitment to looking good.

So I want you to be very clear that I have no concern for how you look tonight, nor for how I look, nor do I even have a concern for how human beings look.

I have a concern for honesty, like ruthless honesty.

And I'm going to invite you tonight to take a ruthlessly honest look at our own inauthenticity.

Like I said, we abhor any possibility of being inauthentic.

And that makes us inauthentic about being inauthentic.

So we are essentially a cover-up for our own inauthenticity.

That's what prompts Heidegger to talk about the need for violence, the need to break through this inauthenticity about our own inauthenticity.

So that may be what we'll accomplish tonight.

The possibility is that at least we can come to some degree of authenticity about our inauthenticity.

Now that's going to be very strange for most of the people in this room.

Because the first thing you and I want to do when we find out something's wrong is fix it.

That's that listening for solutions.

That's that listening for getting better.

That's that interpretation, that commitment about looking good.

So I'm inviting you tonight to hold off on solving the problem of your own inauthenticity.

I'm rather inviting you to do an experiment with me to see what can happen in a practical, hard-headed way in terms of empowering yourself in your everyday concerns, in your everyday being in the world, by being authentic about your own inauthenticity.

Engaging in this question, what kind of a being is a human being?

I'm inviting you tonight to give yourself permission to be with your own inauthenticity.

Because the beginning of this evening is really devoted to coming to an authenticity about our own inauthenticity.

I'm asking you to be in the question.

To be in the opening the question is.

To be in the clearing of the question and the possibilities we examine.

To get beyond what you think or feel, beyond your opinion or belief, and just be in the clearing of the question, looking out, not to validate the question, not to validate the possibility or invalidate it, but looking out from the possibility, looking out from the space just to see what you see when you're looking from that space at your everyday being in the world, at your everyday concerns.

Be with your own life tonight.

Be in the space of possibility that the work is looking out at and being with your own life.

The way you live.

Be with that.

Be with what you say.

Be with what you think, what you feel, what you do.

Be with what you don't do.

Be with what you don't say and what you don't think and you don't feel.

See, we want to see how does being show up in an everyday way of being in the world for human beings.

This is not esoteric or complex.

It's simple, truthful look at what's present when you look at your life from the space of certain questions, from the space of certain possibilities.

You may be surprised by some of the answers. You may even be dismayed by some of the answers.

As a matter of fact, I suggest that you will be.

Now, this thing about what everybody knows.

See, there was a time when everybody knew that there were witches.

There are witches.

See, we burn people at the stake because there are witches.

Lots of very terrible things have happened in our civilization, in our society because of certain things which are so.

Now, by now, you and I all know that witches don't exist.

It's a superstition.

We've stopped burning people for being witches.

But I want you to consider something.

First off, I want you to see that superstitions are very powerful.

And they're only powerful, superstitions are only powerful when they're not superstitions.

You see, if I say that a black cat walking in front of me is bad luck, the black cat, as it is, will determine my behavior.

That's real power.

Or more accurately, that's real force.

So I want, I'm inviting you to consider the possibility of the enormous power that superstition has, and then further to look at the fact that a superstition is only a superstition when it is not a superstition.

A superstition is only a superstition when it's an is.

The black cat walking in front of me is bad luck.

And all of those things in my life which are so, determine the conduct of my life.

Not only the conduct of my life, but in many ways the quality of my life.

But suppose you don't say, more accurately, you aren't that black cats are bad luck, and you aren't even that black cats are thought to be bad luck, but who you are is black cats being bad luck's a superstition.

Now I say that that's a remarkable insight.

I say that it is a remarkable insight, and it begins to give you certain insights into your own life when you recognize that superstitions have enormous force in people's lives.

They determine the options with which people live.

And that a superstition can be disempowered, unforced, by simply recognizing it as a superstition. And that any step in the direction away from is, towards superstition, gives a person more and more freedom to be.

More and more freedom to live.

More of a breaking open of possibility, more empowerment.

So I'm saying that if there are things in your life which are for you, and is, and more likely than not, you are unaware that you are unaware of them, that simply becoming aware of them produces a breaking open in your everyday way of being in the world.

Now I'm going to say something.

And what I'm going to say I'm not saying is true.

And I am going to say it, and I'm not a guy in a diner.

I say that the you that you are when you say I am is a superstition.

That's a very strange thing to say, but I'm saying it anyhow, and I mean it.

And I didn't say it was true.

But I'm just inviting you to stick your toe in, and tonight we'll see how far you want to get inside of the I that you're speaking about when you say I think.

You know that I in the phrase I think, the I that that points at?

I'm suggesting to you that that's a superstition.

Now you don't even think that you're that.

You are that you're that.

You are that you are the I that's pointed to in the phrase I think.

You are that you are the I which is pointed to in the phrase I feel.

You are, it's not even that you think these things.

It's not that you believe them even.

You are that you are this.

Much deeper, like a real superstition.

Like one that isn't even considered.

Like one to which you are blind.

I say that you are that you are the I pointed at in the phrase I like.

I don't like.

I want.

I don't want.

I think.

I feel.

I believe.

And I say that that's a superstition, and we'll see.

Be clear that the interpretation has enormous power.

People get burned about interpretation that witches are never mind where they are or not.

The interpretation has enormous power.

The black cat is bad luck has enormous force.

So what is it that drives our life?

What is it that drives our identity?

That's the question at which we're going to look.

What kind of a being is a human being?

See, most of us don't give much thought to it because we think it comes with the territory.

We think, yeah, I'm a human being and I'm using being to get along in life.

I mean, I'm a human being and I use all those faculties that human beings have to accomplish the things I accomplish in life.

To conduct my relationships, to do my job, to pursue the concerns I have in life.

Well, there's some bad news about that.

You see, human being was here before you ever showed up.

Human being was here before you were ever thought of.

Maybe, just maybe, human being, because it was already here and already had a direction, already has a thrust, already has a scope of possibility.

Just maybe, human being is using you.

See, I know that you and I live, that we're using being.

But I'm asking you to consider the possibility that you showed up in human being.

And it uses you in its direction and its thrust.

You don't use it.

It already was when you showed up and it already had a thrust, a scope, a definition.

It already was a certain set of options and those options are using you.

You see, you say, we say in everyday language, I think.

I say you don't think.

And I want you to consider the possibility that you don't think.

I want you to stand in that possibility.

You understand what I'm saying?

I'm not asking you to agree or disagree.

I don't want to know what you think about whether you think or not.

I'm inviting you to stand in the possibility that it isn't you thinking.

Certainly there are thoughts. That's obvious.

There are thoughts.

Anybody who's alive and is human knows that there is thinking, that there are thoughts.

I'm not asking you to consider the possibility that there aren't thoughts.

I'm asking you to consider the possibility that it isn't you thinking.

I'm asking you to stand in the possibility that it thinks and you have the thoughts.

Now, if it's you thinking, if you're really committed to that it's you thinking, then you stop thinking.

You notice you can't do that.

That's because that isn't you thinking.

It thinks.

And you have the thoughts.

It thinks.

And you live the superstition that you think.

But you don't think.

It thinks.

And one of the things that it thought up is you.

You notice it thinks a lot about you?

You are one of its favorite things about which to think.

And you are limited, for the most part, to the possibilities which show up in its thinking.

So I'm inviting you not to consider the validity of what I just said.

I truly don't care what your opinion is.

Listen, let's get this thing about your opinion handled.

Next time it's clear in Washington, go out on the banks of the Potomac.

Out where the memorials are, maybe.

And look up at the stars.

And tell them your opinion.

And see what they do about it.

Tell them what you think.

And tell them what you feel.

And tell them what you believe.

You tell them.

And watch them very carefully.

See, tell them what you want, what you don't want, what you like, and what you don't like.

You tell them.

And watch their response to your opinion, to what you want, what you think, and what you like, what you don't like, what you believe, and what you feel.

Watch their response.

And do that until you've gotten yourself clear about the enormous indifference with which the universe holds your opinion.

If you do that honestly, and I know it's kind of funny, but if you do that honestly, really honestly, it'll cure you of being a windbag.

You'll stop being a guy in a diner.

I invite you to contrast the enormous difference between the universe's concern for your opinion and your concern for your opinion.

There might be some power to get on the side of the universe in this matter of your opinion.

Really.

Not only that, but I promise you that if you do the exercise and do it honestly and authentically, that it will begin to reveal something which you don't know

that you don't know. When you begin to find out that the universe is profoundly and enormously indifferent to your opinion, to what you think and what you feel

and what you believe and what you like and what you don't like and what you want and what you don't want, it begins to open up the question, well, what is it that the stars will move for?

For what that I got would the stars move?

I say that that's missing.

Like we don't know that we don't know about that issue.

Not only that, it isn't you thinking anyhow.

It's it thinking.

And it thinks these thoughts which you have and you identify yourself as it.

See, human beings are strange kind of beings.

I have a dog, really wonderful dog, very big dog.

So it's easy to study.

And I have studied him at some length.

And I see that he's very much like a human being in some ways.

That is to say, he's got concerns like human beings have concerns.

He's got concerns.

He's concerned with food.

He's concerned with getting scratched behind the ear.

He's got various concerns like human beings.

But there's one concern which the dog doesn't have, which is the all consuming concern for the kind of beings a human being is.

See, whatever kind of a being the dog is, it's different than the kind of being that a human being is.

And I know they're biologically different.

I know they're theologically different.

I know they're psychologically different.

But I'm concerned with the difference in being.

So the dog is a being who has no concern, not no concerns, because he's damn concerned about food and getting scratched behind the ear, like many of us.

What's different is that he has no concern for his own identity.

And you are only concerned for your own identity.

That is to say, you never have a concern like a concern, it's always tied up with your own identity.

You aren't even ever just hungry.

It always tells you something about yourself.

And every one of your concerns is really a concern for your own identity.

When you're hungry, you're more interested in the eye than the hunger.

It's really appetite, obviously.

But our appetites use us.

You don't have an appetite.

The appetite has you.

Now you stand.

Look, I didn't tell you that what I said was true.

And I can hear you listening.

You're listening.

I don't think that's true.

Nobody asked you.

I'm inviting you to stand in the possibility like a space, like an opening, like a clearing.

Stand in the possibility that you don't have an appetite.

Your appetite has you.

And for the most part, those things with which you are concerned, like I want, I like, I don't like, I don't want, they are not your concerns, they are its concerns.

And those concerns have you.

You don't have them.

Now I'm inviting you to stand in that possibility and look out at your everyday way of being in the world.

Is it I have a job or does your job have you?

Now honestly.

See, I don't want you to get the answer. I want you to look out from the possibility that our work, that our relationships, that our families, that our beliefs, that our wants and don't wants have us rather than the other way around.

That it's not that you think even though it thinks you think.

It's really it thinks and you have the thoughts.

It's not you feel.

That's a superstition.

I'm inviting you to consider the possibility that it feels and you have the feelings it feels and those feelings use you.

It is using your life.

I didn't say that was true.

So stop trying to figure out whether you agree.

I'm inviting you to stand in the possibility that the being of human beings was here before you were ever thought of.

It is an already set of options that lives in our languaging, in our culture, in our practice.

The being of human beings lives in our languaging, our culture, our practices.

It's an already set of options.

There is no possibilities.

Just a set of options.

Yeah, my options will look different than your selection of the options.

Your path through the options.

And I may have something to do with which option I take.

Because this being of human beings that is using us is an already set of options and it is using your life for what?

And I don't care what you think the answer is.

I'm asking you to stand in the question.

Within this larger question, what kind of a being is a human being?

I'm asking you to stand in the larger question.

It is using your life for what?

Now you notice what you think and all your opinions?

You notice that will all come up for you.

And I'm asking you to put those aside for the moment and have the courage just to live in the question like an open question, not a question looking for an answer.

Not a question with an answer.

But like an open question.

Stand in the question, stand in the space of possibility.

The opening, the clearing.

It is using my life for what?

Stand in there and look out at your everyday being in the world.

Stand in that question and look out at you waking up in the morning.

Look out at your getting ready for the day.

Look out at your showing up wherever you show up during the day.

Whether it's in your home or in your office, with your children, with your spouse, with your friends. Look out from the question, from the opening.

What is it using my life for?

And look at your everyday being in the world.

What is it using your life for?

Again, I'm not questioning for an answer.

We're not looking for information here.

I'm inviting you to see what shows up like a breaking open.

Like a certain freedom for being.

Like a possibility, like an empowerment in your everyday being in the world, standing in the possibility and the clearing that these questions are, looking out at your everyday concerns, at your everyday being in the world.

What is it using your life for in your relationships?

Now you see, it's interesting.

If you're doing this, if you're doing the work, the cheap answers don't work, do they?

See, if you stand inside the question, what is it using my life for?

And look into your relationships, it ain't using your life for love.

That doesn't come very easily there.

You notice that the pat answers, that the what you and I already know, and even what we know that we don't know, aren't very useful when you look from certain possibilities.

Because we're not getting at what we're ordinarily interested in getting at.

Please don't think I didn't say you don't have options.

You do have options.

I want to make a clear distinction between option and possibility.

I said that there is no possibility.

I didn't say that there weren't any options.

When you showed up, human being was already a certain set of options.

And you think, and you feel, and you speak, and you act, and you live in that set of options that was already before you were even thought of.

So that there is no possibility for being for human beings.

There are only options within the possibility you inherited.

If you travel in airplanes enough, you finally wind up reading the magazine.

Because eventually you've read everything else.

And in that magazine they have puzzles.

And if you don't fly in airplanes that much, if you have children, your children bring puzzles home.

One of the puzzles in all airplane magazines and which all children bring home is the puzzle of the nine dots.

So this is a puzzle in which there are nine dots on a piece of paper, or a blackboard in this case, and your job is to connect the nine dots, all nine of them, with four straight lines without ever picking your pencil up from the page or in this case your chalk from the chalkboard.

So there are many options.

So while there are many options for the attempt to connect the nine dots with four straight lines without lifting the instrument from the surface, while there are many options, there is no possibility of doing it.

Many options, no possibility.

And whatever is using you, the options which it provides for you are the only game in town.

What is it up to?

What is it that it's after?

Why does it think the things it thinks?

Why does it think those things which we have as thoughts?

Why does it feel those things which we have as feelings?

Why does it believe those things which we have as our beliefs?

Why does it act in those ways which we wind up having as our actions?

Why does it explain the actions it takes in the way in which it explains them, which we wind up with as the explanations which we have?

Why does it like this and not like that?

Why does it want this and not want that?

What's it driving after?

Where is it going?

What is the possibility which it is in which there isn't any outside of?

There are only options in the possibility that we inherited when we showed up as human beings.

What is it that all of the options add up to?

See, it's one possibility with many options.

One possibility is no possibility.

There aren't any other possibilities than the one.

There is no possibility.

There are only options.

Now, if you stand inside that possibility that I've just shared with you, that there are no possibilities, there are only options, you will begin to see into the way we behave and why we behave like that.

You'll begin to see why many of the problems of this age have been around since the beginning of humankind.

Yes, we've got new options, but there are no new possibilities.

There are no possibilities.

There are only options.

If you take the board as the scope of the possibility of being for human beings, and you understand that that being has a commitment, a thrust, that it's constructed in a way so as to, and wonder about what it's constructed in a way so as to.

To what?

You'll begin to see that while there are many places on the board that I can take the chalk, many options, I can only be on the board.

What is it, what is that board you showed up in?

You see, I say that the quality of our lives, that our effectiveness with our daily concerns, our power as we are in the world on an everyday basis, is determined not by that to which we're paying attention, namely the circumstances, but is determined by the box in which the circumstances come.

I say, and I'm asking you to consider like a possibility, not decide with whether you agree, I say that the circumstances of a person's life don't determine the quality of that person's life.

I say that the box that the circumstances come in has more power in terms of impact on a person's life than the circumstances themselves.

I say that there's not much power in what you think.

And if that's still hard for you to get like a possibility, again I invite you out to the banks of the river about three or four in the morning on a clear night so you can see the indifference which the universe has for what you think.

I say the box in which you think, that set of options which has you and determines what you may think, often even what you will think, I say

that there's more power in that for instance, for example, as evidence for my assertion, I know people whose circumstances are horrible, people with terminal illnesses, who know

that they're about to die, whose lives have more quality, more aliveness, whose lives are richer, who are themselves more alive than people who can pass a physical at the doctor's.

They've got more vitality, more aliveness, than so-called healthy people.

I know lots of intelligent, well-educated people, far more intelligent than others with whom I can contrast, far more educated, whose intelligence and education comes in a package of options such that they are less effective in the world than less intelligent, less well-educated people.

I say that the circumstances of your life have less to do with your effectiveness in life, less to do with your aliveness, less to do with your having an impact on life, less to do with

the quality of your life than the set of options within which those circumstances show up, that is to say, less to do with all of that than

the interpretation or rather the structure of interpretation which you are has to do with the quality of your life and your effectiveness in your life.

And I also say that you and I give almost no thought to that.

We're very thoughtful about our circumstances, very thoughtful about the facts about ourselves and our lives, and we give almost no thought.

In fact, we're unaware that we're unaware that we live in a structure of interpretation, in an already set of options, and we only think what's allowed in that set of options.

So if you stand over a maze and you put the rat in at one end and there's food at the other end, there may be many ways through the maze, many ways of getting through the maze, and the rat has the sense of lots of possibility.

Except when you stand over the maze and look down, you can see, well, there are many options.

You can go through the maze like this.

You can go through it like that.

There's no possibility.

There's only the maze.

What is the maze in which we showed up?

You and I showed up as human beings.

We showed up in the being of human beings.

What is the being of human beings designed for?

To what is it committed?

Where is it going?

What is it using your life for?

And it is using your life.

Its thoughts use your life.

Its appetites.

Its I wants.

Its I likes.

Its I thinks.

Its I feels is using your life.

For what is it using your life?

What is it using your life for?

Can you forego getting the answer right away and just stand in the question, what is it that being, the being of human beings that I showed up in, what is it that it uses my life for?

You notice it gives you a totally different cast.

A totally different view of your everyday being in the world.

Of your everyday, your interaction with your everyday concerns.

So, I want to suggest a possibility.

Something for you to try out like a possibility.

That the nine dots of being for human beings, the options or really the set of all of the options for human beings, what each of those options lives inside of like a set, the set, the being of human beings is about survival.

And what its using your life for is survival.

Now, you don't have to do anything with that for the moment.

It's just a possibility.

I want to take a look at another possibility and then I want to put the two of them together.

When you are, that you are the identity, I pointed at in the phrase I think.

When you are, that you are it.

The I pointed to in the phrase I feel, I want, I like, I don't like.

When you are, that you are that.

Not when you think you are that, not when you believe you are that, because it doesn't make any difference what you think or believe.

Remember the stars?

They don't move for that.

But when you are, that you are the identity I, when you are, that you are that, and you couple that with what it's up to, you get a very powerful look into how this what it's up to is translated into our everyday way of being in the world.

Into our everyday engagement with our everyday concerns.

What it's concerned with, once you are, that you are it, once you are, that you are the I in the, pointed at in the phrase I think, I feel, I like, I don't like, then what it's up to is making you right, it, I, right, and making anything else, by contrast, wrong.

What's using your life is using your life to make that which you are, that you are, namely the identity I, it's using your life to make sure that I dominate anything or anybody, and maybe just as importantly that I avoid the domination of anybody or anything.

It's using my life, it's using up my life to make sure that I win, that I avoid losing.

It's using my feelings, my thoughts, my likes, my dislikes, it's using all of that to justify it and to invalidate anything which isn't it.

So that's what it's using your life for.

Now I'm inviting you to stand in that possibility.

I didn't say that it was true.

I'm not asking you to believe it.

I'm asking you to stand in the possibility that that is what it uses your life for.

To stand in the possibility that the being, that set of options in which you showed up is using your life, given that you have identified yourself as your identity, the I and the phrase I think, that it's using your life to make you right and others wrong, to dominate and avoid the domination of anything or anybody, to win, to avoid losing, to justify it and to invalidate anything that isn't it.

Now that's nasty medicine, isn't it?

I said that tonight was about coming to grips with our own inauthenticity.

To at least be somewhat authentic about our own inauthenticity.

Now that's nasty news.

And I know that the first thing that you will do when you hear about that is to attempt to avoid the domination of that possibility.

That's it at work.

The thoughts that you just had that that couldn't be true.

All those thoughts about yes but, how about and what if, that's it at work.

See lots of people spend their whole lives attempting to avoid the domination of the ruthless rules of reality.

They're called seekers.

They seek to get out of this trap of survival.

They want to be free of this trap of survival.

The problem is that the attempt to get out of the trap is the trap.

You see to attempt to avoid the domination of it is being dominated by it.

See I know that when we have this kind of a discussion people on the way home they'll be driving home they'll be talking about what happened tonight.

And in the conversation you all of a sudden notice you're trying to be right.

Oh my God I'm trying to be right.

And then the first thing you'll do when you notice that you were trying to be right is you'll try to stop being right in order to be right about not being right.

See I know that no matter how many times I say at the beginning of the evening about giving up trying to hide our inauthenticity no matter how many times

I speak at the beginning of the evening about not trying to get the answer about not using the evening to get better about not using the evening to get a solution about not using

the evening to improve yourself no matter how many times I say that no matter what we talk about you stick it in the mall called how can

I be better and improve myself.

So if in fact you begin to discover the power that your own inauthenticity has over you the power that it has the force that it has that it exercises when you begin to discover that the first thing people want to do is to avoid it.

But that's more of it.

No you will if you were working tonight begin to notice when standing in this possibility that your life is being used by it and what it's using your life for is to make

that which you've identified yourself as right to avoid the domination of that which you've identified yourself as to avoid its being dominated by anything or anybody when

you stand in that possibility you'll have some very deep insights into life and into your own life.

I say that there's an enormous power in being authentic about our own inauthenticity.

I say that there's real power and that that power shows up in our everyday being in the world like a practical hard-headed impact on our effectiveness and on the quality of our living.

I say that there's that kind of an impact for those people who will live with the possibility. I didn't say believe that it was true.

I say live with the possibility.

Look, the thing I want to give you an opportunity to consider is what happens when you cover up, when one covers up the way one is.

What happens to us when we cover up the way we are, when we're unwilling to consider or be with our own inauthenticity, when we cover up our inauthenticity, when we cover up this kind of being used, what our lives are being used for.

I want to give you an opportunity to consider what happens, and I want to give you an opportunity to consider it deeply and profoundly.

There's a kind of resignation which occurs, a kind of being stuck with this being used by, when we're unwilling to take a look at it.

The single most powerful characteristic about human beings, for those people who actually look at and come to engage with the questions in which we're engaged tonight, is this aspect of covering up and the resignation that goes with it.

When you cover up the options which are using you, you've really resigned yourself to those options, and I'm asking you to take a look at that for yourself.

That when you're being used, if you cover up being used, you're then resigned to the being used.

So the very fight, the very struggle against the unwillingness to look at our own being used, leaves us with a kind of resignation to those options which are using us.

It's only in coming to confront our own inauthenticity, only in coming to confront that it isn't we who are thinking but it is it which thinks and we who have the thoughts, it's only in confronting that it isn't we who feel but it who feels and we who have the feelings that it feels, that you're presented with anything other than the resignation.

So there's a very strange thing going on in the interaction between us and what we're considering here.

In one way we're being invited to consider that we live in this trap of the being in which we showed up as being, and in the normal course of events we resist that with all of our might.

We try to avoid it, try to get away from it, try to keep demonstrating to ourselves that we've got some choice in the matter.

Again, I make the distinction between choice and options.

I know you've got lots of options, but I'm saying that there's no choice.

We've only got the possibility which we inherited, the possibility into which we were thrown.

We're thrown to be this particular way.

We're thrown into this kind of being that has this particular set of options.

And I know that I'm asking you to confront the inauthenticity which we are, the lack of possibility which we are, and I know that it screams against that.

It wants to avoid any recognition of its own mechanism, of the mechanism which it is.

But in our avoiding coming to grips with our inauthenticity, we really resign ourselves to the inauthenticity.

The cover up, the struggle to avoid, the trying to get away, the convincing ourselves that we've got choices, all of that leaves us resigned to the options which are using us.

The whole cover up, the whole attempt to avoid the discomfort, the embarrassment, that whatever it is for you that confronting this kind of authenticity is, that leaves you resigned to the inauthenticity.

The cover up itself leaves a person resigned.

And if you're with human beings, like just being with them, you begin to see this profound kind of resignation that we are.

If you stand in the possibility of this resignation to these options which are using us, that we cover up with our franticness, with our attempts to look good, with all those ways in which we cover up, you begin to see this deep resignation, this kind of mood of resignation which people are.

And look, I want you to understand exactly what I mean by a mood of resignation.

I mean that environment of being into which you wake up in the morning.

I don't mean something like what you see in a mental institution.

I mean that environment of being into which you and I wake up in the morning.

That waking up more tired than we were when we went to bed.

That waking up to no sense of freedom, no sense of possibility, no sense of openness, no sense of opportunity, no sense of real joy.

So when I talk about the resignation which we are, I'm talking about that mood, if you like, that environment of being which encapsulates us from the time that we wake up.

When you're with other people, like in a meeting, stand back for a moment and take a look at the environment of being which is available to them.

Is there any sense of possibility?

Are they thinking?

Are they feeling?

Are they speaking out of a sense of the possibility of life, out of the privilege which is to be alive, or are they really speaking out of this resignation which I'm asking you to confront, that we are this resignation to the options that own us?

I say that that resignation which is the environment of being in which we live, that that resignation is held in place by our addiction to looking good, by our absolute unwillingness to confront our own inauthenticity.

And by inauthenticity, what I mean is that our lives are being used for the survival of our identity, the I which is pointed at, and I think that our lives are being used for making ourselves right and others wrong.

I will bet that every complaint in your life really represents a racket that you have, that about which you are complaining in your life, because it somehow makes you right.

You watch the way people use their illnesses.

You watch the complaints that people have about their work, about their jobs.

Most people's complaints about their work, about their jobs, are a racket which enables them to avoid the domination of their job like an opportunity.

See, if your job showed up like an opportunity, like the possibility of making a difference, like the possibility of making a contribution, if your job showed up like a space of freedom in which to express everything that you had, everything that you were, then you'd have to be responsible for the opportunity your job is.

But as long as you can say they and it and the boss and the circumstances of your job and they don't listen, I say that that's a racket.

And I'm inviting you to take a look at your complaints like a racket.

The complaints about our work for the most part help us to avoid the domination, help us to avoid the responsibility of the opportunity which our work is.

You know, I know in your relationship you're saving something.

You don't give everything you got.

You're saving a little bit, cause someday the guy's gonna come on the white horse, and when the guy comes on the white horse then you're gonna give everything, but not to him or not to her.

No, they don't understand you.

They don't fill in your own complaint.

But I say that that lets you off the hook.

That helps you to avoid the domination of the responsibility of holding your relationship as an opportunity to express yourself fully and totally.

See, if only she, fill in the blank, that's your racket.

And when we get authentic about the kind of beings we are, the kind of beings that we see ourselves to be, when we wanna be authentic about it, is a racketeer, and the racket is whatever it is you're complaining about.

You're too old. Being old's a racket.

I had the privilege of a very close relationship with a man who was 84 when I was working with him.

Bucky Fuller was anything but an old man at 84.

Yes, he had certain constraints that his body's age put on his actions, but they did not show up like a racket for Bucky.

They didn't keep him from being fully and totally and absolutely alive.

So I'm inviting you to stand in the possibility that if you wanna be authentic about yourself and take an honest look, what you're gonna see is a racketeer, and that's what life's about.

The being of human beings leaves human beings as racketeers.

We've got this racket, and like all racketeers we expect the payoff from the racket.

The racket, the payoff is we get to be right.

Your racket lets you be right, or it allows you to make somebody wrong.

Lots of people in their 60's are still making their parents wrong, still making their upbringing wrong.

People would rather be right in their relationships than love.

You know what he did?

Whatever he did is more important than love.

You stand in that possibility.

No, I know it's not your relationship we're talking about, but you stand, you stand in that possibility and look at the relationships of your friends, and you see, looking out from the possibility, that you would exchange being right about what he did or she did, you would exchange that for love, or they would, your friends.

Our unwillingness to come to grips with this essential nature of being for human beings leaves us living a resignation to the options which use us, and spending our lives covering up that we're being used.

And it's the cover up that we're being used, the cover up that our lives are devoid of possibility and only present us with options.

It's the covering up which ensures that we'll be stuck in the resignation to those options.

I know this isn't pretty what I'm telling you, and I know that if you're like most people you're sitting there figuring out a way that it's not true about you, or at least it's not always true about you.

Life is a racket, and you and I are racketeers.

And if you can get beyond the horror of that to just be with the is of it, I say that there's power in that, and you have to see whether what I say turns out to be so.

I'm talking about the possibility that accepting your own deep profound inauthenticity, accepting that your life is being used by it.

I'm saying that accepting that, not like the truth, not like something you believe, but accepting it as a possibility in which you are willing to stand and look out at your everyday being in the world and your engagement with your everyday concerns.

I'm saying that the acceptance of that inauthenticity will lead to a breaking up of the resignation which you are, the resignation of the environment of being into which you wake up when you wake up in the morning.

The day by day in this petty pace about which Shakespeare spoke.

Not like a set of circumstances, because I know you got a lot of titillating circumstances in your life, but like a mood out of which one lives.

I know how to put on the good face.

I know how to look good, and I know you know how to look good.

And television and most of what we consider to be public is about looking good.

And if you look out from the possibility that your life is about looking good, you're gonna see that a hell of a lot of what you're up to is about looking good.

You don't mean it, and sometimes you know you don't mean it.

You don't even believe in the things you believe in, and sometimes you know you don't believe in them, but you keep looking good about it.

You're afraid to express your own doubts for fear of not looking good.

And again, while I don't profess to be telling the truth, I'm not a guy in a diner.

So I'm inviting you to look out from the possibility that you are a racketeer, that your relationships, that your work, your job, the things in your life are really about getting these payoffs.

And the best place to look is those things about which you're complaining in life.

I don't like. I don't want.

You see, you and I are willing to sacrifice the quality of our life for these payoffs.

Like I said, in our relationships we're willing to sacrifice love.

I mean, the real presence of love.

Like, maybe you can remember, we're willing to sacrifice that for being right and making the other person wrong.

We're willing to sacrifice that to dominate the other person, to manipulate them, to get them to be the way we want them to be, and to avoid any manipulation or domination from them.

We're willing to sacrifice love in order to win, to avoid loss.

We're willing to sacrifice love in order to justify ourselves.

If any inkling of an opening for generosity shows up in the relationship, we close it down very quickly in order to keep ourselves justified in the position that we're in.

We're willing to give up, to sacrifice our own self-expression.

See, on your tombstone, what they're going to put on your tombstone when you die: something was left, and we don't know what it is or was.

See, they're not going to put on your tombstone, used up, because you ain't going to get used up.

No, you're going to save it until Prince Charming comes, then you're going to give it, but not now, not here, not for this, not for what you got.

Most people are going to go to their grave with the sense that there was something in them that never got expressed, that there was something there, something of real value, something that could make a difference, something that could have been a contribution, that just never got expressed.

And most of us are going to go to our grave like that.

Because you see, we're willing to sacrifice being used.

I don't mean being used like I was speaking about before.

I mean being used by, by being used I mean using ourselves.

Most of us are willing to sacrifice our own full self-expression for the avoidance of responsibility, to avoid the domination of taking on life like an opportunity.

Most people are happy to give up their happiness.

People don't have any problem sacrificing their happiness, not as long as they can be right.

See, I say any place in your life where you are unhappy, I'll bet that right there you're being right or making somebody or something else wrong.

You've exchanged your own happiness for being right or making somebody or something else wrong.

OK, it isn't you anyhow, it's it.

You're just along for the ride, you're just being used.

What I'm asking you to do is to start confronting, to be in the place, the possibility, looking out at your life, being in that possibility, looking out at your own life, to see that that's what it is using your life for.

That it's willing to sacrifice love, vitality, happiness and self-expression.

See, I know you want to be happy.

You aren't, but you want to be.

I want to share one little tip with you.

I told you I don't give tips.

I said I don't have answers or solutions or prescriptions.

Here's one little tip: you aren't ever going to get happy.

Ever.

I promise you aren't ever going to get...

I know you know all the fairy tales and the stories, and I know you intoxicate yourself with romantic sensations that someday you're going to be happy.

As soon as X, then you're going to be happy.

I promise you will never get happy.

That's a promise.

The pursuit of happiness is the only guarantee against it.

By accident, almost anything else might leave you happy, but the pursuit of happiness is an absolute sure guarantee against happiness.

So I can very comfortably promise you that you're never going to get happy.

No, it will sacrifice your happiness for that, and you will cover up that that is what is happening.

You will cover it up from yourself, and you will cover it up from others, and that cover up will ensure that you live in an environment of resignation to the options which are using you.

And your life will be a clever strategy at best, and if you're real good at it you won't know that.

If you're very very good at it you won't even know that you don't know it.

See, the cost for those things is always our aliveness.

That's what it sacrifices in order to accomplish that.

Now, human beings, I told you the kind of being that a human being is is different than the kind of being a dog is.

That's a fairly safe statement.

I told you that one of the things about the being that human beings are is that that being is very concerned for identity.

The dog has no concern for his identity.

Sometimes by interacting with human beings you can get the dog a little bit concerned about his identity.

Makes him very crazy.

Then they start to be psychological like human beings are.

It's interesting, but it's true.

Some of you got dogs that are hung up on love like you are.

Well, the other aspect of being for human beings is this aspect of making up meaning.

It's kind of like, you know, a thunderstorm.

If there's a thunderstorm, thunderstorms are very unpredictable.

Anybody who reads the newspaper or watches television, you know the weather part of it, you know that thunderstorms are unpredictable.

I mean, they can do a certain amount of predicting, like you can about human beings, but for the most part thunderstorms are unpredictable, like human beings are.

There's a certain range in which you can predict, but then they somehow turn out to be somewhat unpredictable.

Well, thunderstorms and human beings are very much alike except for one thing.

Thunderstorms don't talk, and human beings talk.

And what they talk, when they talk about the thunderstorm which they are, is they talk meaning.

See, it's kind of like a thunderstorm.

When there's a thunderstorm and you say the thunderstorm is evil, the thunderstorm is up to no good.

No, the thunderstorm is watering the little plants.

Ahhh, isn't that sweet, the thunderstorm is watering the little plants so that spring can come again and life can be renewed.

If you stand back from yourself far enough, you'll see that you are very much like a thunderstorm.

You're a mechanism, very much like a thunderstorm.

It's true that you're not very predictable, except within certain limits, like a thunderstorm is predictable within certain limits, but not totally predictable.

But you're a thunderstorm with a mouth.

That is to say, you give meaning to the direction and the actions of the thunderstorm, when in fact the directions and the actions of the thunderstorm, while not entirely predictable, are nevertheless very mechanical.

See, a thunderstorm is a mechanism.

That is to say, it has no purpose.

It has no meaning.

It isn't going any place.

It isn't trying to do something.

It's not trying to create a flood or water the little plants.

This survival is like a description.

That in a thunderstorm it rains.

In the being of human beings there is survival.

The one difference is that the kind of being that human beings are, unlike the thunderstorm, they can attach meaning to all of this.

I say this is devoid of meaning.

It doesn't mean anything that it is about your being right.

That's just the way it is.

See, if you're feeling badly about having your life being used for making you right and others wrong and so on and so forth, if you're feeling badly about that, that's you ascribing meaning to the thunderstorm.

You've told this wonder.

You've made a soap opera out of a thunderstorm about the little plants.

Isn't that sweet?

You see, you add the story that it's watering the land, and you are just being used for survival.

It's using you for survival.

It doesn't mean anything that it's using you for that.

It just is.

When I ask you to consider the possibility that your life has no meaning and no purpose, you can't tolerate that notion.

I mean, you can't even consider the possibility.

You can't consider the possibility that your life has as much meaning and as much purpose as a thunderstorm.

Yes, it's very interesting, and there's all kinds of things happening in the thunderstorm.

I mean, really, they're wonderful, but they don't have any meaning, and they aren't going anywhere like a purpose.

And it's true that they're wonderfully unpredictable within limits, and it's true that we're getting better at predicting them, like we are about you.

But the thunderstorm can't add meaning to what's happening, and you can.

And in adding the meaning, you cover up the inauthenticity of the being of human beings.

The being of human beings is fundamentally inauthentic.

That is to say, it is a being used by being.

It's like you are a spear carrier in an opera that you made up.

Lots of you are spear carriers in other people's operas, which is even worse.

The being of human beings is a mechanism, the end of which, the purpose or design function of which, is survival.

See, now you can't hear it, because you know it's going to work out.

You're just sure it's going to work out.

It isn't going to work out.

Really, it is not going to work out.

This is all there is.

This, this what you got, is what there is.

Never mind the fairy tales.

This is it.

It is not going to work out, because it has already worked out.

This is the way it worked out.

If you don't like that, too bad.

The knight in shining armor is not going to ride into your living room and carry you off, so you better stop saving it.

You better give it up now.

More importantly, to come to grips with our own fundamental inauthenticity begins to alter the mood of being in which we live, from one of resignation to one of a kind of authenticity or honesty about the inauthenticity which we are.

One begins to wake up in an environment of being that has a certain quality of authenticity which no one covering up this ever knows about.

I didn't say that was true.

I said that I'm not a guy in a diner, and that I meant what I said, and I'm asking you to stand in the possibility of what I said and look out at your everyday way of being.

I'm not asking you to surrender or to give in to the being of human beings, the being which is using you.

No, I'm asking you to confront it, to accept it, not like give in or surrender, but to accept as in be with all that noise in your life, all that chatter in the back of your head, all that evaluation and judgment and assessment, the whole story in which you are a player in the script called your life.

I'm asking you to consider the fundamental inauthenticity of that, that that is really very much like a thunderstorm to which you and I have added this great fantasy, this great story, this great soap opera.

Maybe it doesn't mean anything when you're sad.

Maybe you're just sad.

Maybe it doesn't mean anything more than it means when it rains hard outside.

Oh, I know, you think it's out to get you.

Really, you do.

You even complain about it.

It's like kicking in your windshield when you have a flat.

Maybe it really doesn't mean anything, and maybe that isn't sad either, because maybe that doesn't mean anything either.

See, maybe it doesn't mean anything that it doesn't mean anything.

I know you're fighting against it because you think that it means something that it doesn't mean anything.

You showed up as a human being.

That's the total options.

That's the being of human beings, like what you inherited, their inheritance.

And we're all waiting for it to turn out, and it is not going to turn out.

This really is it.

There are no hidden meanings.

There are no secrets being kept from you.

It isn't going to turn out.

It isn't going to get better.

It gets better and it gets worse, and it gets better and it gets worse, as we thrash around amongst the options.

But remember, the box in which the options come determines the quality of living, not which option you choose.

I know you think your option's right.

You chose the right option.

You got it figured out.

You got it made.

Okay, I accept that you did.

The only problem is that it's all in that box, and in that box there is no being.

None.

There's right, wrong, dominate, avoid domination, win, lose, justify and invalidate.

So don't fool yourselves about having a choice.

Yes, I grant that you've got options, but no choice.

By the way, when I say this is it, I don't mean that nonsensical stuff about be here now or let it all hang out.

When I say that life doesn't have meaning, that you are devoid of meaning, devoid of purpose, you're a thunderstorm with a lot of conversation about meaning and purpose in which you are very engaged.

Some people want to use that as a justification for something.

If you use that as a justification for something, you don't get it.

That it's meaningless and empty is not a justification for not doing anything.

That it's meaningless and empty is meaningless and empty.

You can't use it, and if you do use it, if you make a therefore or a prescription or a justification out of it, you didn't get it.

It doesn't mean anything that it doesn't mean anything.

It's empty that it's empty.

And remember, I didn't say it was true.

And I know you think that it's an alternative thing to believe.

I say it's a possibility in which to stand and look out at life.

Now, like I said, we've only got three and a half hours.

We can't get into these things to the depth to which I would get into them if we had the time.

But there's a much bigger possibility here.

This is designed to give you a taste, the taste of the real thing that's different than being told about it.

You know, when you taste a banana split, it's different than being told about a banana split.

But a taste of a banana split is also different than eating the whole banana split.

So this is a taste of the forum, of the work of the forum.

It's a taste.

We want to take a look from a slightly different perspective.

Let's see.

We talked about is earlier.

We said that when you live is-is, those is-is use you.

A black cat is unlucky.

That uses you.

We said that it is thought that a black cat is unlucky will use you less.

Black cats being unlucky is a superstition.

That will use you very little.

That will leave you with the freedom to be.

So in this investigation of the being of human beings, I want to talk about not what shows up like the circumstances of your life.

See, people always think, well, if you don't know me, that is to say, if you don't know my circumstances, if you don't know my story, you don't know what's happening in my life.

How can you say anything that's of any value to me?

You don't know me.

I know you're very attached to your own story, like it's who you are, but I'm really more interested in the box in which your story shows up.

I'm really more interested in the context in which your circumstances live.

So I want to investigate with you, take a look at with you, the boxes you inherited when you showed up as a human being, the domains of showing up rather than what shows up.

The domains of showing up for the circumstances and the story of your life, the domain of showing up for the feelings and thoughts and so on and so forth of your life.

Now, when you show up as a human being, what kind of showing up opportunities are there?

Well, let's use an example of the person with whom you live.

You go home and you say, I love you.

What we should say when we go home is I live the concept, I love you.

And I measure my feelings against my concept of love.

And if my feelings match my concepts of love, then I feel good about my love for you.

And if my feelings at the moment don't match my concepts of love, then I begin to doubt my love for you.

I live the concept, I love you, and I examine my actions.

And when my actions match my concepts of love, I feel good about what I've done.

And when my actions don't match my concepts of love, I feel guilty about what I've done.

I live the concept, I love you.

And I know that I'm living the concept, I love you, because I can remember, most of us, I can remember living in the presence of my love for you.

And the presence of love is distinct from love as a concept.

And by contrasting the two, I can see that it would really be right to say I live in the concept, I love you.

And every once in a while, but not often, I'm in the presence of my love for you.

Now, I know that's real enough for you to follow.

And it's all right with me if you think that what I just said is not true about you, but everybody else.

So that demonstrates, because we don't have the time to go into it any more deeply, that there are domains of showing up that are distinct from one another, in which X can show up in one domain, and the same X can show up in a different domain.

We can have love as a presence and love as a concept, it's the same stuff, it's love.

But please notice how different the impact is on the quality of our living, between love as a presence and love as a concept.

Now, I picked a subject, namely love, which is easy to talk about, because again, we have very little time.

But I'm saying that the kind of being that a human being is, when you showed up as a human being, you had available to you two domains of distinction, two ontological domains, two domains of showing up, in which life could show up as an experience, and life could show up as a representation of experience.

I say the kind of being that human beings are loses their inheritance, so that they lose the distinction between these two domains of showing up, and life neither shows up discreetly as an experience, as a presence, nor does it show up as a concept, as a representation.

But that the two get collapsed together, wherein life doesn't show up at all.

We live in a collapse of domains of showing up.

Our experience always devolves to memory, that is to say, to the representation of our experience.

Our memories, our concepts, our descriptions of life, which is not life, but a description of this, our definitions, which is not that which is being defined, namely not presence, our explanations, our justifications, our rationalizations, shape our experiences.

So that rather than experience something directly, like in an opening, you and I experience through the already structures of interpretation, namely our structure of concepts.

A conceptually shaped experience reinforces the concept that shaped it.

The reinforced concept more fully shapes the experience.

The more fully shaped experience reinforces the concepts of more, and it goes around like this in a vicious circle.

That is what you and I live into.

I say that you and I live into a vicious circle.

What is before us is not our past like a history.

Although many people use that interpretation, rather what is before us is this vicious circle of the collapse of these two domains in which there is no distinction between what is and my representation of what is, in which there is no distinction between the presence and the concept of the things in our lives that we live into, what goes in front of us.

The space into which we live our lives is this vicious circle.

Now there's something very powerful about just that.

If you just restore the distinctions that you inherited as a human being so that life can show up when it is present as a presence, and life can show up when it is being represented or conceptual as a concept.

See, I want you to be very, very, very clear that I am not talking about getting rid of concepts.

I'm not talking about irrational.

I'm not talking something anti-intellectual.

That is for me like cutting off half of yourself.

No, there's a richness and a power and a validity and a value in our concepts, in our descriptions of life, in our stories about life, but not when they're confused with the presence of life.

And for the most part, for most people, we have fallen into a collapse of these domains of distinction.

So, just like a possibility, stand in the possibility that life no longer shows up for you like a distinction.

That you are no longer living the distinction between presence and concept.

That the two are kind of mashed together.

And that into which you live your life is this collapse of these distinctions, which I've called the vicious circle.

Take, for example, looking out from that possibility at your relationships, or at your relationship, that you are living into a future built like this.

I don't mean in terms of the circumstances because you can put any circumstances in here.

But in terms of the possibility of it, the possibility of it is really what is possible in this vicious circle.

That's hard.

Let me give you another example.

There's this guy by the name of Diogenes, who lived in a barrel and carried a lantern around looking for an honest man.

He died without finding one.

I don't live in a barrel and I don't carry a lantern and I'm not looking for an honest man.

I'm looking for someone who is late.

And I have never found anybody who is late.

I've never found anybody who's been late.

Can you believe that?

I have never found anybody who's late.

Just late.

People are always late because.

You see, like a presence, when you're late, you're late.

And that's all.

Period.

And if you want to look for cause in the domain of presence, then you're late because you're late.

Like a presence.

Now, it's also valid that you forgot.

I forgot.

I'm late because I forgot.

It's true that you forgot.

Nobody's saying that you didn't forget.

You did forget.

But I forgot lives in a different domain of showing up than I'm late.

See, if you're late and you're remembered, notice that there's no difference in terms of impact than if you're late and you forgot.

You don't notice that.

You think it's different if you're late and you forgot than it is if you're late and you're remembered.

And you live in a culture which doesn't know the difference either.

It wants to know why you're late.

So I picked a fairly trivial thing to invite you to restore for yourself this distinction, to restore for yourself the domains of showing up, not like that's true, but like a possibility, like standing in the possibility of your life, your relationships, your work, your concerns in the world, showing up like a presence and having that distinct from the story you tell about it, from the description, from the justifications, the rationalizations, the excuses, the explanations, so that you've got some room for life to show up just like that.

Now, the reason I bring it up, I bring it up because it has something very powerful to do with the kind of being that human beings have fallen to be.

I bring it up so that you can look from the possibility that you're living out into a box called a vicious circle, where the story of your life is really

that into which you are living your life, where the story you tell about yourself is really that space into which you are living your life, that you're living out into this vicious circle

where the story and the presence of life, where the concepts and the rationalizations and justifications and the experience of life are really kind of jammed together. And I'm suggesting to

you that no matter how clever you are, no matter what circumstances you put into the vicious circle, what you're going to get out of it is what

you can get out of a vicious circle in terms of your own effectiveness and in terms of the quality of your life.

Now, a very strange thing happens when you push this question, what kind of a being is a human being, when you push it really hard.

Now, we've only tapped at it a little bit tonight, but we've kind of tapped at it across a fairly broad spectrum.

We've covered a lot of ground.

We haven't been able to go very deeply, but we've been able to go fairly extensively into the kind of being that a human being is.

And if you can confront your own inauthenticity, once you can be with your own inauthenticity, this resignation to the inauthenticity begins to break up and a question arises.

Now, that question is around all the time like a defense, like a way to survive.

People are always in some form or another asking about possibility and what choices do I have and what can I do with my life and what should I be doing with my life and what did I do with my life and was it right and was it wrong, all that stuff.

Listen, the question, what is the possibility of being like capital B, what is the possibility of being for human beings?

Ask against the background of being inauthentic about your inauthenticity.

Ask in this environment of being which should be called resignation.

Ask in the space of the cover-up of our own inauthenticity is always more of our inauthenticity.

It's always more of a survival ploy, always more of a survival strategy.

And so there are lots of answers to the question, what is the being of human beings?

Sorry, there are lots of answers to the question, what is the possibility of being for human beings?

And almost none of the answers makes any real difference in people's everyday being in the world.

And I told you that this work that we call transformation, that we do in the forum, a taste of which we're giving you tonight, was a way of engaging in these questions that are at the heart of the matter for human beings such that the engaging, the inquiry, the questioning shows up in people's everyday being in the world as a kind of breaking open for them.

You'll find yourself, I promise, going through the things you go through every day and suddenly there'll be a bit of a breaking open here.

There'll be a sense of freedom where earlier there were only a given set of options about which you needed to be clever.

Suddenly there'll be a breaking open, a freedom to be with that which you couldn't be with very well before.

Someplace else in your life there'll be a sense of being able to be with something that was kind of crowding you, something that was pushing you, something

that was confining you, just by virtue of this inquiry, not because you found the prescription, not because you got the answer, not because you know the recipe, not because

you got the solution, but just by virtue of this special way of inquiring into these questions, just by having been here, there'll be a certain empowerment in the face of the risk that being alive is.

And you'll find that happening.

You'll try to dominate the ruthless rules of reality or avoid the domination of the insights that you find.

However, if you really push this question which we've been addressing tonight, what is the being of human beings, it brings you authentically out the other side at the end of it, like the beginning of something where the beginning is a question, namely, what is the possibility of being for human beings?

Now, I don't suppose that that's happened to you very naturally tonight, because as I said, we're doing in three and a half hours what people have been working on since the beginning of civilization.

But I say that it happens very naturally.

When you cover the ground authentically, when you start to live with your own inauthenticity and not ask the question as another ploy to try to avoid your inauthenticity, but just asking the question like a possibility, what is the possibility of being for human beings?

Well, the first thing that comes up when you ask the question, what is the possibility of being for human beings, the answer that comes up, the first thing that comes up, is there isn't any possibility of being for human beings.

And if you don't get to that, you don't get any further.

There just isn't any possibility of being for human beings.

What you showed up in did not include being.

It isn't interested in being.

It has nothing to do with being.

It is only concerned with survival.

So there is no possibility of being for human beings.

And that's a part of being authentic about your own inauthenticity.

And if you can really be with that, and I doubt that you can fully, if you can be with the emptiness and meaninglessness which you are, if

you can be with the emptiness and the meaninglessness of life as a thunderstorm about which we tell a story, that kind of a thunderstorm, suddenly the emptiness

and the meaninglessness, when it's lost its meaning that it's empty and meaningless, suddenly becomes a clearing in which to stand and look out for the possibility of being for human beings.

See, that which starts out as a threat becomes an opening, a clearing when you can be with it authentically.

And if you are being with it authentically, you're clear that there is no possibility of being for human beings.

Now what do good human beings do in that situation?

What would a good human being do?

All the good human beings you know, you, what would you do about it? You would change it.

That's what you would do.

You would.

You would change it without ever recognizing that change is something from something.

See, change is something which comes from or is made from something.

But there is no possibility for being for human beings.

So change won't work because change only alters the circumstances in the vicious circle, only becomes another form of survival.

Creation is something from nothing, from the no possibility of being for human beings, from the emptiness and meaninglessness of the thunderstorm which we are.

From that emptiness and meaninglessness, from that no possibility, from nothing, something.

Really?

Really?

Have you got anything in your whole life which isn't predicated on something?

No.

You haven't got anything in your whole life which isn't a predicate, which isn't predicated on something.

Everything in our lives is a derivative.

We're always living into the options.

And to create is to act without predicate, to act from nothing.

What is it for a human being to act from nothing?

Well first off, you have to restore to yourself the nothingness which you are.

You have to restore to yourself the emptiness and the meaninglessness of this very enticing thunderstorm which you are.

Now you'll notice I haven't changed anything about the inauthenticity which we are.

I'm simply showing that being authentic about our own inauthenticity opens like a question in a very natural way the possibility of being for human beings.

And without the foundation of being authentic about our own inauthenticity, the question is just another clever dodge in the issue of our survival.

Even if you restore the distinctions so that when life is a concept, it can show up for you like a concept.

And when life is present, it can show up for you like a presence and you have a distinction between the two so that they can show up as they are.

Even then, there's no being here.

You notice the rest of the board is blank because there isn't anything there.

And if anything is to be there, it will have to be there as an act of existential courage.

That is to say, as an act without any basis, without any propping, without any support, without any rationalization, justification or explanation.

Something like what Weber is talking about when he says, Here I stand.

Now, for those of you who think that what I'm saying is some kind of mystical hocus-pocus, I want to be clear with you that it is not.

That this is rigorous and accountable in that a domain of being predicated on nothing would demonstrate its validity in the actions which were derived from it and in the alteration of the circumstances which those actions provide.

By the same token, if you're thinking that I'm saying that being can be evidenced, it cannot.

There is neither a predicate for nor evidence of being.

Being, capital B, or more rigorously, the possibility of being for human beings could be said, being like a possibility, being as itself, not being like a presence, not being like a concept, but being as itself could be said to be the stand that I am the stand I take.

Being, like the possibility of being, could be said to be the stand that I am the stand I take.

In other words, the possibility of being at all, where by being we mean possibility, so I know this is hard, but to say it accurately, the possibility of possibility, not

the possibility of an option, not something derivative, not in the sense to which you are already resigned, not to that which is using you, but the possibility of a possibility, not an option, not a strategy, not a new maneuver, not a change, not a change,

no, not a change, but a possibility.

The possibility of possibility is a product of taking a stand for the possibility of being the stand you take, where the stand which you are is a clearing for that for which you stand.

Okay, we started out by talking about you, that you are the I, and I think, I feel, I believe, and I suggested to you that out on

the banks of the Potomac at three o'clock in the morning on a clear night, you look up, you'll see what concern the universe has for the you which

you are that you are, and in a very subtle way, I invited you to the possibility of yourself as emptiness and meaninglessness, in which possibility, if you engage it authentically,

you begin to see that empty and meaningless is also a clearing for.

Maybe you aren't that which is pointed to in the phrase, I like, I want, I think.

Maybe you're the kind of nothing, the kind of empty, the kind of meaninglessness, the kind of not going anywhere, the kind of emptiness and meaninglessness which is a clearing for life to show up in like a possibility, like something from nothing.

Yes, against the background of culture and practices and languaging, certainly always against that background.

I'm inviting you to consider the possibility of being as the possibility of taking a stand for your being the stand that you take.

I'm inviting you to stand in the possibility that your life could be lived into possibility, like into the stand which you are, where the stand becomes a clearing, an opening, a freedom, a possibility for that for which you stand, rather than living into the options of the vicious circle.

Now you'll notice that I won't get very far in this.

Again, I said a taste, but a taste is enough.

The invitation here is to live in the question what is the possibility for being for human beings?

Not like a way to survive, but like an opening, like a possibility.

See, I'm afraid that you keep listening possibility like option.

I'm talking about outside the nine dots.

I'm talking about outside the options which are using us, while being authentic about being used by those options.

I'm inviting you to create a question into which to live your life.

I say people live their lives into that vicious circle.

They live their lives into their past.

They live their lives into the resignation of the options which are using them.

I'm inviting you, given that you've now perhaps recognized as superstitions, some of the superstitions which were using you, I'm inviting you to create a question like an opening, not like looking for an answer, but like an opening.

I'm inviting you to create a question into which to live your life.

A question in which your everyday concerns show up in the question.

Same everyday concerns you've always had, but now instead of showing up in the resignation and the options, I'm inviting you to the other promise besides these openings, besides these freedoms, a like way of being empowered.

A question that gives direction to your living where the everyday concerns and your everyday being in the world are the material with which you are asking the question.

To live into such a question is not to live into the resignation into which we wake up.

Please notice I haven't recommended that you now have a new belief which wakes you up.

Rather, I've invited you to create a question out in front of your life into which you can live your life and in which question, like a possibility, like an opening, not like a question looking for an answer, but like a question, like a possibility, like an opening in which your everyday being in the world can show up and your everyday concerns for living can show up.

So that's the front of the hand and the back of the hand of transformation.

The front of the hand is to engage in these questions in such a way that they show up as breaking opens, freedoms, empowerment in the face of your everyday concerns, your everyday being in the world.

The other side of the possibility of transformation is to create a space for yourself in which to live that enlivens your living, that allows you to live a possibility instead of a set of options.

Now I know it's a little frightening in actually doing it.

So if you stand in front of a blank canvas, you can create.

And standing in front of a blank canvas is frightening.

Most people are way more comfortable living with the strategies which the options present for them. It takes courage to live into the opening of a question.

And it transforms the quality of one's life in very practical, hard-headed, being effective in the world ways, and in addition, in opening up life as a possibility rather than as a given set of options. So I'm leaving you in front of a blank canvas. I'm not leaving you with a message. I'm not leaving you with an answer. I'm not leaving you with a prescription. I'm not leaving you any better than you were when you walked in.

I'm not leaving you improved. I'm leaving you with a blank canvas, with an invitation. What we're talking about is a little bit like an example I'm going to give you out of evolution.

We're told that life began as a bit of protoplasm in a tropical sea, and if you add eons of time, you get life all over the sea in many various forms and so on and so forth. That's what we're told. We're told that life in the sea has evolved to cover every niche and cranny in the sea.

So there's life all over the sea from the top to the bottom, from fresh to salt, from one sea to another. And then there's this story about a fish who walks up on land, and I say that that's not evolution. That is to say, that happens in an instant, compared to evolution. And in that instant, elephants and eagles come into existence like a possibility. For me, the possibility, the opening, the freedom, the chance to live with those concerns, with those questions, makes life an enormous privilege.

So being here tonight with you is for me a very profound privilege.

And for that privilege, I want to thank you. Good night.

The producer of The Heart of the Matter was Michael Portis.