

There's No Fast Track to Awakening

The path only opens when you walk it

Adam Tugwell | 5 January 2026



Introduction:

In a world overflowing with spiritual labels, quick fixes, and people promising to “unlock” something inside you for the price of a subscription, it’s easy to forget a simple truth: awakening isn’t a shortcut, a status, or a badge you can buy. It’s a lived experience. A slow, uncomfortable, deeply human process that no amount of branding or belief can replace.

We're all walking the same ground, equal in our confusion and our potential, and the only thing that separates one person's path from another is the willingness to actually do the work.

This is about that work - and why there's no fast track to awakening.

Between Shadows and Sun: The Honest Path to Awakening

Turbulent and troubling times - *whether in our collective world or in the quiet corners of our personal lives* - have a way of pushing us toward a search for meaning.

That search is natural, even necessary. But it can also become a two-edged sword when desperation takes over and we slip into the mindset of "any port in a storm."

In those moments, we're not really seeking truth; we're seeking relief. And relief, unfortunately, is the easiest thing in the world to sell.

Historically, "finding God" or returning to church was the familiar response to crisis. Today, the landscape is far more crowded. The options available to anyone "searching" have multiplied beyond recognition.

You can find new age speakers, astrologers, tarot readers, channellers, intuitives, mystics, and self-proclaimed gurus online with the same ease you'd find a recipe for dinner.

The 21st century has thrown the doors wide open to unconventional thinking, and what began with the Mind, Body & Spirit shelves in bookshops around the millennium has now grown into a sprawling industry - an entire marketplace of spiritual identities, disciplines, and promises, each one ready to catch the eye of someone navigating rough waters.

As with anything in today's world, there is good and bad in all of this. If you can apply critical thinking - *real discernment* - to the process of watching, listening, and exploring this spiritual smorgasbord, then a few false starts under the banner of "buyer beware" won't derail you. They may even help.

But the challenge is that spirituality means very different things to different people, and that's where the waters get muddied fast.

There's a big difference between what works, what we think works, and what we desperately want to work.

A journey of personal discovery is, in itself, a good place for anyone to be. The path of self-exploration - though often painful as we confront the realities that shape our personal truth - almost always leads to greater self-awareness and a healthier understanding of who we are. And knowing who we are is the foundation for understanding who other people are - not in the superficial sense of personality, but in the deeper sense of recognising the processes, wounds, and experiences that make them who they are.

When it comes to having healthy relationships and a grounded view of the world, that's not a bad place to start.

But like everything that becomes commercialised, spirituality has attracted its fair share of charlatans and false prophets. Social media has made them easy to find. They often have a very attractive bridge to sell - one that promises to make you different, better, more special, more righteous, more deserving. And all you have to do is commit, sign up, subscribe, or step aboard. It's a seductive offer, especially when you're hurting. But it's also a distraction from the real work.

Starseeds, lightworkers, shamans, mystics - these labels may or may not have value in certain contexts. The problem isn't the words themselves. It's the way they're used.

Many of today's disciples of YouTube spirituality haven't yet grasped the simple truth that whatever path you take - ancient, modern, religious, esoteric, or entirely your own - it all requires work.

And ironically, the work required isn't the work many of these speakers are selling.

The work that no genuinely spiritual person can avoid is the ongoing effort to be the best, most human version of yourself in the form you currently occupy.

That means humility. That means responsibility. That means compassion. That means learning to forgive - not as a performance, not as a spiritual badge, but as a lived practice that dissolves ego and equalises your relationship with the world.

There is no easy route to redemption, no shortcut to "not coming back," no spiritual identity that exempts you from the human experience.

You cannot bypass the messy, uncomfortable, deeply ordinary work of being a person.

You cannot escape the world without first giving back to it - fully, honestly, and without expectation.

Spirituality is not an exit strategy. It's an invitation to participate more deeply.

Those who join a religion, sign up to a spiritual club, or adopt a label because it makes them feel superior or separate from others are missing the point entirely. They're wasting time, energy, and often money. Because the cheapest, most direct, most effective way to get your life together and become the best spiritual version of yourself is to look inward and work with everything you already carry.

And here's the part many people don't want to hear: everyone is equal in this process. Everyone is the same, whether or not they understand who they really are.

No label changes that. No identity elevates you above anyone else. The only thing that matters - truly matters - is how you live, how you treat others, and how deeply you're willing to face yourself.

Call yourself whatever you like. But unless you live it, you won't *be* it.

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