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# What is this story about

## Introduction

# u t

***This story is about going from Human-Doing towards Human-Being. From fear to freedom. The freedom within. Your freedom within.***

When people meet you they ask, out of interest, if you have a career, whether you are married, if you have children. As if life was some kind of grocery list. But no one ever asks you if you're happy...

These questions you get asked are about figuring out who you are. But most of the time they lead to answers about what you are doing. You'll say 'I work here', 'I studied this and that', 'I live there', and so on. What happens with these types of answers is that the Doing is actually defining the Being. When the Doing is good and works out, then all is well with the Being. For those people asking you these questions it's a safe strategy; they don't need to worry about your well-being if all you are sharing is your well-doing.

# How to read this book

**The chaotic guidelines:  
the 'structure' of my brain  
and thoughts in this story**

# ok

This story is told in a personal voice. My voice. It is also a vessel for many other voices. My intention is not to suggest a definitive solution, a theory or a framework. Actually, I do not believe there is such a thing.

I hope this story sheds new light on the way you are living. On how you make choices. Sometimes choices come out of Fear and sometimes they come out of Freedom. Sometimes choices emerge from somewhere in-between. From nowhere. What is your level of awareness, consciousness and — what's your ability to respond? Maybe this story will help you find different ways of Being.

I hope it gives you new insights about what you've been up to. Maybe you've been living out of fear or out of freedom all along. Maybe it will let you identify those choices that have derailed you. Or maybe this story will offer a different view on past choices and frame future choices too. What's important is how you might tap into this new knowledge, and use it to your advantage. In your personal life but also in your working life. This is for whatever areas of your life need attention.



As a  
child  
you  
were  
open  
to the  
world

As a child you were open, fully aware and curious. You were constantly noticing, hearing, sensing, feeling and smelling stuff around you. What was there was there.

YOU JUST WERE.  
WITH FULL ATTENTION.  
IN THE EXPERIENCE.  
PRESENT... IN THE MOMENT.

THE ULTIMATE HUMAN BEING. *Bo*

Picture this. You are 4 years-old. You are walking through a street and see a beautiful little snail on the sidewalk. You sit next to it. You're looking, feeling, maybe even smelling it, you are listening for something. 'Mum, do snails talk?' You aren't getting that maybe mummy is in a rush, or that she might be late for an appointment. What is interesting is just that — interesting. You don't have a sense of time or days of the week. Months and years mean nothing to you.

Then  
you grew  
grew up,  
what  
happened  
to your  
freedom  
?

i  
m

up

SO YOU PULL ME FROM MY PLAY,  
MY ALL-CONSUMING PLAY  
TO LEARN MATHS  
WITH YOU AT A TABLE  
WITH BRIGHTLY COLOURED  
BITS OF PLASTIC.

WHILST I SIT THERE,  
LEARNING WITH YOU,  
ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT  
IS GETTING BACK TO MY PLAY...  
MY ALL-CONSUMING PLAY  
WHERE I WAS MEASURING,  
USING SHAPES,  
MAKING PATTERNS,  
COUNTING,  
SOLVING PROBLEMS  
AND THINKING

UNTIL

I GOT PULLED AWAY  
TO COME AND LEARN  
MATHS WITH YOU.

ELAINE  
BENNETT



# Human Doing, the rat-race of performing

56

the rat-race  
of performing

*When we meet up with someone the first question we ask is: 'Hi, how are you?'*

Out comes an answer that can be 'good' or 'I'm doing fine' (I find it curious that about 90% of the people are doing 'good' or 'fine' when we know that's not the case for many of us). The rest of the conversation is often about what one does or has done recently. We talk about our holidays, about moving house, about that separation from our partner, a change in jobs, that new car we bought, and how the kids are doing at school. But our most interesting stories tend to be about the stuff that either didn't work out or, on the other end of the spectrum, the stuff that worked out spectacularly well. Everything that sits in-between is, most of the time, not that interesting.

You might say at a push that these are interesting facts. But the truth is that these facts can also be the boring stuff. A kind of bucket list made up of actions.

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## This book adventure

This whole book thingy started after I got invited to do a TEDx Talk in Cortina, Italy. That was my second TEDx Talk. The first talk was (still is, actually;-) about Knowmads Creative Business School Amsterdam. TEDx Cortina wanted another talk on Knowmads. But I didn't feel like doing that. So I took advice from friends on what to do. One of them said: 'Just talk about whatever you want. They're not going to kick you off the stage anyway'. Such good advice. I started developing ideas about how we make choices and how I made choices myself. Why hadn't I, Pieter Spinder, chosen to quit my University job back in 2010? (I was scared of losing security and income). Why was it so hard to consider having another child? (I was too busy, I feared getting less attention from my partner).

The more I spoke about these ideas to friends and family the more it became clear to me that Fear was ruling us (and fear was also ruling me).

I asked Annabella, a graphic facilitator, to listen to my story and draw it on paper. In these drawings there was plenty of me and my partner Ruti. As I travel a lot for work, I spend many hours in airplanes and hotels. Ruti joined one of my work trips to Cortina, and she mentioned

THOSE WHO  
DO NOT LOVE LIFE  
WILL NEVER LEARN IT AGAIN.

-REMCO CAMPERT-

something interesting. She told me it seemed to her a very lonely way of working and living. She was right.

Loneliness:

a breeding place for fear.

The TEDx Talk went well. Then someone in the audience asked 'when are you going to write the book?'

So here we are.

CONTINUE  
READING  
ON P22.

The  
road  
to  
freedom,  
towards  
human  
being

freedom

m

## CHARACTER

THE WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE'S  
OWN LIFE

IS THE SOURCE FROM  
WHICH SELF-RESPECT  
SPRINGS.

•JOAN DIDION•

I am not apologizing for my opinions on how to change one's starting points in life. As you might have noticed already I am very vocal about this. To put these opinions out in the world so bluntly might not be the best strategy for me, but I feel it's necessary for all of us to state what is true for us.

I don't understand people who say they're interested in changing themselves but then aren't willing to stick and ride with the change when the road gets bumpy. I don't understand people who want to do the same old boring stuff in their lives. Who can not move past the conditioning they experienced as a child and just go along with what's expected of them. That in itself is childish, to stay in that place of conditioning. To obey. To do as you are being told.

I also refuse to keep quiet. When I see something that I believe is important, and have the feeling it needs to change because it's heading in a wrong direction I will say it. Too many people settle for less. And too many people prefer to bear the status quo. They cope by complaining a little, every now and again. I hear them saying: 'I don't have to change my behaviour. Or how I'm living my life. It will be ok.'



# Batul Loomans— Founder of Buddha to Buddha and Lichthuis Zandvoort



Batul and his wife Renske live in a converted church in Zandvoort which looks splendid after two years of renovations. These days Batul Loomans is tired; that means he also feels vulnerable and fragile. Vulnerability has always been a part of his life. When you read about his success as a businessman you wouldn't expect that to be the case, but Batul reckons his sensibility is precisely what brought him this far. The contrast between being business-like and having a more spiritual approach suits him well, he enjoys building a bridge between the two elements. He's been practising meditation for 25 years, something that's been fundamental to his sense of vulnerability.

In his first job at a textile company his boss spotted this vulnerability straight away: 'The sales department is not for you, you are too sensitive. I want you to do styling instead'. So Batul joined a business trip to Hongkong to get the new collection going. Asia, with its mystery and rituals, opened up a new world for him. 'Chinese people talk far less and they're more in touch with themselves', Batul recalls. He observed old men as they practised Tai Chi in the park, in silence and at dawn, tucked between skyscrapers. He strolled through the streets and markets, sensed the atmosphere and inhaled the scents around him. This was his life for three years, as he decamped from Holland to Asia for two months at a time. Batul's tarot

card is the Hermit who stands there with a lamp. He sees himself shining this lamp on every nook and cranny of a place, just like he used to do in Hong Kong.

Three years later he was hired by another company to come and run the sales department. 'And there I was, driving my new Alfa around Amsterdam, wearing an Armani suit.' Within three months he said to the managing director that the job wasn't him at all. This guy was emotionally intelligent, he'd noticed Batul's vulnerability; so advised him to take a trip to India. At a drinks party Batul met a girl who dreamt of working for Mother Theresa, but her father would only allow her to go to India with a man. Batul didn't need much time to think through this, so he offered to go travelling with her. His volunteering job in Calcutta had him taking people out in their wheelchairs, wash and shave patients in the sunshine. 'I remember the skin of this old man being too delicate for a razor blade.'

In Calcutta Batul worked with a French guy called Stan. It was the first person he could be truly himself with at work. Once he spotted Stan sitting in the lotus position and asked him what he was doing. 'Come along, I know a place where you can learn meditation.' For a while they lived on a houseboat on the Ganges river. They would see the deceased being carried by their relatives. This was Batul's first real encounter with rituals. 'It was incredibly magical'. He blindly signed up for the meditation course. Soon he was meditating for ten hours a day in total silence at this place in the mountains, surrounded by peacocks. I was a sobering experience, where he was allowed to speak only once a day.

After a while Batul thought he was going mad, as if his head was going to explode. One of the masters said to him: 'You are doing fine.' He turned out to be right. Batul broke down and cried but carried on

FOR ME,  
IT IS MEDITATION  
THAT SETS ME FREE.

THE SELF DISSOLVES IN SILENCE.

TO FIND YOURSELF  
IS THE DOOR TO  
FREEDOM,

BUT SILENCE ...

IS THE ULTIMATE  
FREEDOM.

[BATUL  
LOOMANS

and completed the full ten days of silent meditation. This was the first time he connected with his feelings. Five days later he started another ten-day meditation experience. He was flooded with memories and fear. 'It was very intense and the release was enormous.'

Little by little he began to feel the effects of silence. After living for a month in near silence he went back to civilisation. He ended up among holidaymakers in a youth hostel and their conversations really contrasted with his inner experience. 'For the first

time I was connected and in tune with myself. And I am noticing this charade taking place in front of me, this beautiful charade of life being played by this holidaymakers.'

He then joined a well-known Osho meditation centre. He felt at home the minute he stepped on those marble floors. 'It was paradise. You could try out all types of meditation and therapy, you could take sports or help in the kitchen. There was this aura of freedom and creativity about it. Whenever I recall that experience I feel the energy coming through my pores again.' Four days and a thousand kilos lighter he knew he had to continue on this spiritual path.

Every winter, for the following 15 years he went back to Osho. He met many people who were different to the world he'd grown up in. Meditation became part of his life. From then on he religiously sat down at 6am to meditate—regardless of whether he was working his butt off or partying until 4am. He does this, every day.

Batul doesn't believe that there is such a thing as people living in complete freedom. 'That wouldn't be a good thing. We need darkness and shade too, so little pearls of wisdom may emerge. It is up to each individual to have the guts to face those darker moments.' He continued his career in business. 'I love both worlds. I love business and spirituality. Luckily these two worlds are blending more and more. Check out how those businessmen of 'de Zuidas', one of Amsterdam's business districts, are free to focus on the deeper layers of life. I'm seeing more and more people awakening to these dimensions. There are beautiful undercurrents out there, things are merging and blending. For me it's meditation that sets me free. The self dissolves in silence. To find yourself is the door to freedom, but silence is the ultimate freedom.'

# Start today

# Yes.

I believe every child is born with a huge potential. And as I mentioned before, this is being downgraded by obedience. When we allow children to develop their individuality, without obstruction of parents, teachers, coaches and you-name-who, we will get a beautiful world. There will be lots of Buddhas and Jesuses.

Let's make it clear. I still have a lot of doubts, confusion, and there are times when I don't know what to do. I still judge; I still say and do the 'wrong' thing at times; I allow outside events and people to stir up anger and frustration in me. I have things that I'm desperately hanging onto in my material world even though I know it's time to let go.

This life is an ongoing piece of work, one I make through this journey, right? But my goodness, life is so much better, easier, more enjoyable, more peaceful than before I embarked on this transformation journey. Issues that come up get resolved so much faster than they used to. There is so much peace and clarity. And I am noticing similar changes in people around me. It's very exciting to watch!



From Fear to Freedom, from human doing to human being.

Pieter Spinder

200 pages

English

7 chapters

5 different “reading” lines:

- What I believe in
- My personal story
- Quotes and drawings
- 7 interviews
- 10 photo's

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