

From Adyashanti's book, "The Way of Liberation," Chapter 1, which is titled, "The Five Foundations." Today's reading is about one of those five foundations.

Never Abdicate Your Authority

The third Foundation is *never abdicate your authority*. This means that *you take full responsibility for your life and never forfeit it over to someone else*. There is no such thing as riding the coat-tails of an enlightened being to enlightenment itself. A failure to understand this can lead (as so many have been led) to cultish fanaticism, fundamentalism, magical thinking, disappointment, disillusionment, and/or spiritual infancy.

While it is understandable that many people project their unresolved parental issues, relationship issues, authority issues, sexuality issues, as well as God issues onto their spiritual teacher (and are sometimes encouraged to do so by unscrupulous spiritual teachers), it is essential to understand that a spiritual teacher's role is to be a good and wise spiritual guide as well as an embodiment of the Truth that he or she points toward. While there may be deep respect, love, and even devotion to one's spiritual teacher, it is important not to abdicate all of your authority over to your spiritual teacher or project all divinity exclusively onto them. Your life belongs in your hands, not someone else's. Take responsibility for it.

There is a fine line between being truly open to the guidance of a spiritual teacher and regressing into a childish relationship where you abdicate your adulthood and project *all* wisdom and divinity onto the teacher. Each person needs to find a mature balance, being truly and deeply open to their spiritual guide without abdicating all of their authority.

The same can be applied to a spiritual teaching. A spiritual teaching is a finger pointing *toward* Reality; it is *not* Reality itself. To be in a true and mature relationship with a spiritual teaching requires you to *apply it*, not simply believe in it. Belief leads to various forms of fundamentalism and shuts down the curiosity and inquiry that are essential to open the way for awakening and what lies beyond

awakening. A good spiritual teaching is something that you *work with* and *apply*. In doing so, it works on you (often in a hidden way) and helps reveal to you the Truth (and falseness) that lies within you.

What is it to not abdicate your own authority and yet not claim a false or self-centered authority that will lead you into delusion? I am afraid that I cannot tell you. You see, no one can tell you how not to deceive yourself. If in the deepest place within you, you want and desire Truth above all else, even though you go astray in a thousand different ways, you will find yourself somehow, again and again, being brought back to what is True. And if you do not want and desire Truth above all else, well, you already know what that leads to.