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# The Sacred Dialogues: Freedom of Spirit, Opening the Heart

A Course with

Jack Kornfield & Ram Dass

Starts February 23rd, 2026

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## Course Overview

This course brings together the timeless teachings and lived wisdom of Jack Kornfield and Ram Dass to explore the heart of the spiritual path in a way that is intimate, practical, and deeply human.

Rather than focusing on techniques alone, the course invites participants into a direct inquiry of love, suffering, service, and awakening as they unfold in real life—through relationships, work, aging, loss, and joy. Through stories, reflections, guided practices, and complementary perspectives, Jack and Ram Dass illuminate how spiritual practice matures over time, helping cultivate compassion, resilience, and a wiser relationship to both inner and outer life.

This is not a course about becoming someone new.

It is an invitation to **remember who you already are.**



## Who This Course Is For

This course is for those who feel called not just to learn about the spiritual path, but to live it more fully, honestly, and with heart.

It is especially well-suited for:

- Long-time practitioners and seekers who sense that what matters now is not more techniques, but deeper integration—bringing awareness and love into the complexity of daily life.
- Readers and students of Ram Dass and Jack Kornfield who wish to spend time with their voices in a more intimate, relational way.
- Caregivers, therapists, teachers, and those in service who are drawn to a spirituality that honors suffering without bypass and supports compassionate presence in the world as it is.
- Those navigating illness, aging, loss, or significant life transitions, who are seeking companionship on the path rather than certainty.
- Anyone longing to live beneath roles and identities, with greater tenderness, humility, and loving awareness.

This course may be especially meaningful if you are drawn to questions such as:

- How do I live a spiritual life in relationship?
- How do love and awareness meet suffering without turning away?
- What remains when striving and identity grow quiet?

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## A Gentle Orientation

This is not a beginner mindfulness course, nor a step-by-step program designed to fix or improve you.

It is an invitation—to listen deeply, to reflect, to soften, and to let the teachings meet you where you are. You are encouraged to move slowly, take what resonates, and trust your own rhythm.

As Ram Dass often reminded us, *we're all just walking each other home.*

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## Welcome from Jack

This course brings together teachings, conversations, reflections, and meditations that Ram Dass and I shared over many years—in retreat halls, classrooms, interviews, and quiet moments of practice. Some of these recordings go back decades; others come from the later years of Ram Dass's life. Together, they form a living arc of the heart.

Ram Dass had a unique way of pointing us back to what matters. With humor and honesty, he reminded us to be here now, to remember that we are souls, not roles, and to meet ourselves and one another with kindness. Again and again, he invited us into what he called loving awareness—not as an idea, but as a way of being.

As you move through this course, I encourage you to take it slowly. Let the words land. Let the stories work on you in their own time. You don't need to agree with everything or understand it all. What matters most is what opens your heart, what steadies you, and what helps you live with a little more compassion and ease.

This course is offered in the spirit of companionship on the path—and as a reminder that you are not walking alone.

With loving awareness,

Jack

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## Course Modules & Learning Journey

This course unfolds as a guided journey through the maturation of the heart. Each module explores a dimension of the spiritual path as it is actually lived—through identity, love, suffering, relationship, aging, and service. The emphasis throughout is not on attaining insight, but on **integrating awareness into the full range of human experience.**

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### Module 1 — From Roles to Soul

**Remembering Who We Are Beneath Identity**

This opening module explores the movement from identifying primarily with roles, stories, and social identities toward a deeper recognition of the soul.

Jack and Ram Dass reflect on how identity forms, how it serves us, and how it can quietly limit us. Rather than rejecting identity, this module explores how awareness allows us to hold roles lightly—without being confined by them.

### **Key themes**

- Identity and ego from a contemplative perspective
- Healthy function vs. over-identification
- Awareness as refuge beneath changing roles
- Living from essence rather than image

### **Central inquiry**

Who am I when I am not performing, achieving, or fixing?

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## **Module 2 — The Heart Path**

### **Love, Devotion, and Relationship as Practice**

This module turns toward the heart as a central gateway of awakening. Drawing from the bhakti tradition and lived relational experience, love is explored not as sentiment or ideal, but as a discipline of presence.

Here, love is not separate from awareness—it is awareness made personal.

### **Key themes**

- Loving awareness
- Devotion as surrender rather than belief
- Relationship as mirror and teacher
- Opening the heart without losing discernment

### **Central inquiry**

How do I meet love when it includes fear, disappointment, and change?

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## **Module 3 — Fierce Grace**

### **Risking Being Fully Human**

This module forms the emotional and psychological heart of the course. Jack and Ram Dass speak candidly about the places where spiritual ideals meet trauma, fear, therapy, and emotional life.

Awakening here is not framed as transcendence of difficulty, but as the capacity to remain present and compassionate within it.

#### **Key themes**

- Emptiness and emotional life
- Therapy and meditation as allies
- Spiritual bypass and its costs
- Vulnerability, fear, and courage

#### **Central inquiry**

Can awareness include fear and pain without trying to fix or escape them?

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## **Module 4 — Walking Each Other Home**

### **Service, Surrender, and What Remains**

The final module turns toward aging, illness, service, and death—not as abstract ideas, but as lived experiences that reveal what truly matters.

Drawing from Ram Dass's later years after his stroke, this module explores what remains when roles, capacities, and language begin to fall away. The emphasis is on presence, love, and companionship.

#### **Key themes**

- Surrender as wisdom
- Service as love in action
- Being with suffering—our own and others'
- Trusting what endures beyond identity

### Central inquiry

How do I remain present when there is nothing left to do?

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## Learning Intentions

This course is offered as an invitation rather than a prescription.

Participants are invited to:

- Deepen their capacity to meet experience with loving awareness, including joy, sorrow, fear, and uncertainty
- Integrate spiritual understanding into relationship, service, and daily life
- Gently recognize and soften patterns of striving, self-judgment, or spiritual bypass
- Cultivate a more spacious and compassionate relationship to identity, aging, illness, and impermanence

The intention is not to arrive at conclusions or special states, but to **learn how to stay present—with honesty, humility, and heart.**

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## What Makes This Course Distinct

This course is not a comprehensive survey of spiritual teachings, nor a step-by-step training program.

Instead, it offers a **curated, relational transmission** shaped by decades of friendship, practice, and lived inquiry. The teachings are selected for depth and resonance, not completeness.

Distinctive qualities include:

- An emphasis on integration rather than transcendence
  - Spiritual practice understood as unfolding within relationship, suffering, aging, and service
  - A tone that welcomes ambiguity, silence, and not-knowing
  - Equal respect for contemplative insight and emotional life
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## Suggested Pace & Rhythm

You are encouraged to move through this course at a pace that feels supportive and sustainable.

Many participants find it helpful to:

- Spend one to two weeks with each module
- Listen to talks more than once
- Leave space between sessions for reflection and rest

There is no expectation to complete the course within a fixed timeframe. This material is meant to be **returned to over time**, especially during moments of transition or tenderness.

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## A Closing Reflection & Dedication

Ram Dass had a way of reminding us of what matters most, again and again, in a language that was both playful and profound. He would say, “*Be here now*,” not as an instruction to perfect yourself, but as a gentle nudge back into the present moment—the only place where love actually lives.

He taught us to remember that we are souls, not roles. That beneath all the identities we wear—teacher, student, parent, seeker—there is something timeless and awake that can meet life with compassion and humor. He liked to say that we are all just God in drag, playing our parts, forgetting and remembering who we are along the way.

One of Ram Dass's great gifts was helping us see that love is not something we give from one person to another, but something we recognize. Loving awareness, as he called it, is the field we are already living in when we remember who we truly are. When the heart opens, even a little, we begin to sense that everyone we meet can be our teacher—our guru in disguise.

Near the end of his life, Ram Dass would speak of wrapping the whole world in Maharajji's blanket—holding all beings, all joys and sorrows, in an embrace wide enough to include everything. This wasn't an idea. It was a way of being. A way of meeting suffering, beauty, and uncertainty with kindness.

And through it all, he kept returning to one simple truth: *we're all just walking each other home.*

If there's anything to take from this course, it's not more concepts or beliefs. It's a remembering—to pause, to soften, and to see the sacred right where you are. To meet yourself and others with a little more patience, a little more curiosity, and a little more love.

Thank you for being part of this shared exploration, and for carrying these teachings forward in your own way, through your own life.

May you continue to walk gently.

May loving awareness guide the way.

With gratitude, loving awareness, and *Ram Ram*,

**Jack Kornfield**

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