

# **You Must Know Where You Are Leaving, But You Must Never Know Where You Are Going**

**A talk by Vernon Howard given on 01-09-85**

This is a land of sad seekers. Roll that one around your mind a little bit, and right now, at the start of the talk, see how true it is. This is a world of sad seekers.

Observe anyone, anyplace, anytime; look at their face and their manners; listen to what they say; and you will see, if you're very careful, very sharp in your observation – you will see that that person is looking for something. That woman, that man you work with down at the place where you work, that teenager looking for something. And the whole tragedy, of course, is they start looking, seeking around when they're young people, and when they get older, after all these years of tramping around the world inside themselves and outside, after all the tramping, never having found what they were looking for.

There's a reason for it. There's a reason why they don't find what their heart wants, and that's what we're going to talk about now.

You're a seeker, are you not? You're searching for something. That's all right. That's necessary. But you know the first rule. Don't you dare have any idea of what you're looking for. See, it's all right to know and you must know what you want to leave, but you must never know where you want to go to. If you do, you yourself will create that destination, and it will be a destination manufactured out of your own egotism, out of your false beliefs, and that false nature in you will create the destination, and one day you will shout out – not knowing why you're shouting out – but you will say, "I have found it at last"

Do you know that even criminals say that? Let's get a little shock at this. Don't you know that criminals say, "I have found what I want at last."

What's he saying? He's saying I have found the thrill of violence. I've found the excitement of getting something without earning it, without working for it. He says, "I have found what I want." Of course he has found what his old nature wants, and that's all he'll ever have.

Some people say, "I've found it in religion," and they call on their frantic emotions to back them up, and they get religiously emotional. And they say, "I have found it." No, you haven't! And I know you haven't found it because when you tell me whatever you've found, that that's what you want, when you tell me that, I can see your face. I can hear your words. I can hear you desperately trying to convince yourself that you've found what you need. No, you haven't found what you need; you've found what you wanted to find, of course. And you played that trick on yourself from the very start.

To repeat now – listen to me carefully – you must know where you're leaving, but you must never know where you are going. Well, now, aren't you relieved? Aren't you glad to hear that? Let's try it again. Maybe the gladness will come at the second saying of it. You don't have to know what you want. As a matter of

fact, you must never know what your desire is, what you create for yourself and call that your aim.

See, if you create it, then you have created your own destination, your own place, and your own idea of what's going to take away this haunting heartache of yours, and it will never do it. And there's – there's the person who was a young man one time; now he's an older man or an older lady, and nothing has been accomplished, and that is what is called a wasted life, because you didn't come where you could hear what you're hearing right now, which would have put you on the right track where you could have found what your heart wanted instead of finding what your frantic nature wants. Your frantic nature, which you have, is the deceiver that you listen to.

Why do you listen to the frantic cry inside of you, and why – why do you remain them! If you remain them, you're going to follow them; you're going to follow them into the ditch! I've warned you, and I'll warn you again. You have no business ever, ever being sad. You have no business being angry at anything. You have no business being frantic, being desperate. And I'll explain that to you a little bit more a little later.

Have you ever as a child – remember – remember when you were a boy or a girl, you went on that long automobile trip with your parents and the little games that you played: who can see the first cow out in the pasture gets one point. A horse counts two points. And you get tired of playing little word games or sighting/observation games, and you get tired of it and bored, so what you did, you went to the back window of the car. You're in the back seat, no doubt. And you looked to see where you've been. And you looked back. Isn't that a different feeling?

All of a sudden – for hours you've been looking at what's been ahead of you, and you get in the back window, and you see where you've been. Kind of interesting, isn't it? You're not sure of what happened, but inside there's a different kind of feeling of which you're not conscious, because children are rarely conscious of anything that they think about. This is what you have to do in your inner-life.

Well, don't you want to leave something? Don't you? Of course you do. But you may not know that. You think you want to go somewhere. I told you never, never know where you're going; just know what you want to get rid of.

What do you want to get rid of? Oh, if you want to get rid of that suppressed hostility, uh, why do you hang on to it? There is no law that says you have to continue to be sad, frantic, disturbed, all these other descriptions that we've used. There is no law that says you have to remain that kind of a person. Then why do you? Because you won't listen. Because you don't want to understand for fear that God might not be as intelligent as you are.

That's right. You have set your own destinations. What is it? What's inside of that magic castle at the end of the road that you have set up for yourself as being necessary for you to travel? There's romance inside of it, huh? There's all the money you want, and all the ease, and all the entertainment, all the relaxation when you feel like relaxation. You have set up your idea of what is going to make you a happy person, and that means you'll never, never know

what it means to be happy. Which, in essence, means to not of yourself ever create the destination, but to let it unfold to you as God will show it to you.

When you're looking out the back window as a little child, you're seeing the world back there retreat. At the same time as you're observing what is retreating, you're also going somewhere, aren't you? So a spiritual parallel to that, if you really want to leave that desert, that dry country in back of you, the very act of wanting to leave that is what gives you the first compass, the first clues as to where you should really go. And you'll see that appear before you.

See, you know what you want only after you have found it. If you have found it according to your own intellect, then, again, what you will find is your own imaginations which you will not call imaginations, but you'll call them as the world calls them; you'll call them your goals, your right goals, something that is going to make you feel different.

You never – doesn't it occur to you that you never ever feel any different; it's always the same. And there is a lot of variety in agony, isn't there? Anguish has a lot of spice and variety to you. And it will continue to do that until you say to yourself – and this is sort of a summary right to this point – "Well what do you know, I listened to that talk on that special Wednesday night. I listened to that talk, and I found out something, and it became clear to me. What became clear to me is that God is more intelligent than I am. That being so, I don't have to frantically seek for anything. I don't have to crazily look around for something that's going to give me the thrills I want or the feeling of being victorious. I don't have to do that; and more than that, I had better not do it anymore! I had better not know where I am going. I had better not know what I want."

God can only come in and reveal what you really want to you when you have exhausted yourself so completely that you have no strength to fight anymore. You know how much we've talked about you battling for your rights, and your battling for your little corner in this world. God says, "You'd better give up your battling. You'd better give up all seeking, and let something come to you instead of you trying to go to it." As long as you are going to something, you know what you'll find all along the highway? Mirrors. You know what you'll see in that mirror? Yourself. What else? If you seek – if you seek – no matter how intelligent you think that searching is – if you seek, you'll find yourself.

Now, there isn't a single one of you listening to this talk that can deny the truth of what I just said. You know that all you ever meet wherever you go is yourself. All you do is change the scenery on the stage a little bit and call it another play. But you're still on the stage, and you're still forced to put on a performance because you don't know how to get off the stage. Ah, get tired of being an actor, an actress. There's no need at all for you to continue that way.

Well, so you listened to the talk, and you heard that your very efforts – your very efforts to find yourself is what has prevented you from finding out who you really are, because, when your mind, when your nervousness, tries to find relief, it always finds itself, calling it something else, putting on a label of some kind.

I've given you a few thoughts about not what you have to do, but what you have to stop doing. You have to stop being you! Will you? I ask you that. Will

you? Will you take just one short step in not being you anymore and not wanting anything at all? We're not talking about physical needs or psychological – right psychological needs. We're social people, we like company, things like that.

Would you just stop telling yourself what you need and no longer know the answer, no longer know where you are going? That scares you! I know it does, and that's why you won't do it. And that scare itself is a part of you which tricks you, and so you say, "I've got to know where I am going." How many times do I have to tell you you have no intelligence at all. God is the only intelligence. Truth is the only intelligence, and you keep saying you have to save yourself!

All right. Let's try it again another way. All your attempts – I don't care what fancy labels you put on them, calling yourself spiritual or bright or know what you're doing – all your attempts to find yourself will prevent you from ever knowing your real nature, from ever really reaching your real destination. You have to come to a stop, and you – you have to realize – please do it right now while I'm talking to you – the complete inability of yourself right now to do one single thing to save yourself. Truth can only help an absolutely helpless man or woman.

Now, listen carefully, because I know what happened when I said that. You said inwardly – I'm exaggerating physically – you said, "I'm helpless. I am helpless. I know that. I've never been able to save myself." That, what you just said and the way you said it, is your conceit!

Oh, I tell you, you don't know how tricky you are with yourself. See, I said you have to be helpless; then God can help you. And you got – your tricky little mind tried to find a way to use that in order to hang on to yourself. And you say, "Well, how can that be true when I am helpless but I haven't been helped? You said if I am completely helpless, God will help me. How come it hasn't happened?"

You're bitter. You're hard. You know what that is? Just stick with the one word, hardness. Your hardness to God hasn't saved you, according to your idea of what it means to be saved, by the way. Your idea that God hasn't saved you is a brick wall – that thick – separating you from God.

See, you have to be very, very careful. You say, "Well, I'm desperate. And the spiritual books and the spiritual people, whoever they are, they say that if I'm completely helpless, then I will be helped. But I am helpless. My life is a wreck. I know that. You don't have to tell me I'm crazy." Who's talking? Who is being so spiritually humble?

I'll tell you who. A very cunning tricky illusory stream of thoughts and feelings that you refuse to see through. Fake humility. Fake spirituality. A phony plea for help. I'll tell you, you want to know who is a dangerous person? People who cry to God for help.

If you could see – and you had better see – if you could see the real nature of all those millions of people who say they pray to God for help and they really want – they really want peace in this world, and they're so sorry for those starving kids in another country, if you – if you knew the – if you could even

begin to see the incredible depths of evil that passes itself off as humility, as wanting something true, if you could begin to see it, you'd be shocked off your chair.

I'm trying to get a point over to you, and that point is that you must be absolutely nothing in your own eyes. Don't you ever again call yourself a guilty sinner seeking God! Never, never, never! You'll never find God. To find God means that you don't have a nature who's seeking God. The seeker of God will never find Him.

I've told you that. I've explained that to you in many ways. Very, very tricky, that little intellect up there. It can lie; it can deceive. And I'll tell you something else it can do; it can destroy human lives. It can prevent men and women – and it does prevent men and women – from finding and having a soul.

You've got thoughts, haven't you? You've got a lot of physical movement; you've got a lot of talk. What about a soul? What about something that is of God, not of man? That ought to give you something right to ponder. And there is such a thing as right pondering about these things.

That ought to give you an idea that there is something quite different from your present procedures. And, in brief, what that procedure is is no procedure at all. When you're not hunting around for gratification, you're not looking for friends who will come over and keep you from being lonely, the seeker has disappeared or is beginning to disappear through insight into the fallacy of the existence of the seeker at all. When the frantic religious, social, sexual, whatever, seeker vanished inside you, what's there to seek?

Wholeness, oneness with God means the absence of everything that you now are. Health, spiritual health, eternity, means indeed that you do not exist in any way at all according to thought-descriptions or according to favorite pet feelings that you have that you used to like to go over and over and feel again.

Spirituality means that you are above caring for yourself. What self? The self you now are? You now care for yourself, don't you? Care for it? It's all you've got! you say. And it is right now all you've got. Of course it is.

Let me ask you a question. What have you got? You know. You know the answer to that. Want something different? There's special words to cover it, and one of them is indeed the word *daring*.

You know – have you ever observed – if not I want you to start right now – have you ever observed the incredible boldness and daring of sick human beings? Demanding things, marching the streets, in the home. The nerve. There's no end to it. You know that as well as I do.

By the way, human boldness is, of course, based in fear. "I've got to have that. I've got to win the argument. I've got to be a financial success." All that. And so the boldness, which, by the way, is the lack of conscience, is uninhibited. That's neurotic boldness.

Now I asked you to see this, this nerviness of sick people, millions of them marching down the streets demanding their rights and so on. I tell you what I want you to do. Here comes the entrance of a method for you. Very effective if you will do it. Every time you notice the incredible neurotic boldness of lost

people, I want you to match it with your spiritual boldness.

See, there are so many things involved, and I was watching my mind. It could have gone in five different directions commenting on that, and I'll go into this one. You see, right now, in your present false-self living, you're afraid of nervy people. While you sense there's something wrong with them – the hard, screaming neurotic woman, the demanding man who has authority, maybe – you fear them, don't you? You're afraid of them. Even though you sense there might be something awfully wrong with that animal pretending it's a human being, at the same time you fear them. That's hardly – that's hardly using threats from the outer world to build your own strength.

Now, see, this is interesting; this is good. From now on, you're going to notice their neurotic nerve, and then you're going to remember that God – listen to this. It's so amazing. Haven't you seen this yet? – God is more powerful than that human hyena. You're not! No. You're not. You're afraid of him. But a – I'll use a synonym for God – a spiritual nature is not afraid. How can light be afraid of darkness?

But I am giving you a method by which you can use the sickness, the dripping sickness of society to rise above society, which, of course, means rising above the society that is still mobbing your inner nature.

The next time you're afraid of anyone, a public figure, anyone who seems to have more strength than you, you're going to match it with your boldness in putting in one thing: in putting yourself on the side of Truth itself.

Don't you dare try to fight this world with the weapons of your own cleverness, your own thoughts. Don't you dare try to handle this world the way you are now. Instead, when you see the false power of cruel people, right in your own home maybe, but certainly wherever you go, ask Reality to show you and to give you the true power whereby it will be absolutely clear to you that that nervy, bold, demanding person has false power.

Ah, you still believe in them. Yeah. Look. You know, we're not here very long on this earth, and human beings know that. But to prove the absolute stunning stupidity of the average human being, he and she sells his soul for a few years of being a tyrant. Oh, not necessarily over a country. It could be right in the home. It could be a tyrant in the home and making everyone as sick as he or she is. I'm asking you to remember at every glance, terrible glance, out at the terrible world – I'm asking you to remember that you are reacting toward that human hyena in a wrong way, in a way which it is not necessary for you to any longer do.

Truth is as close to you as your own wish for it to be close to you. Now never, never fall down again in fear before any person, before any circumstance, before any thought of your own, before any feeling of your own. You are going to do something from now on you've never done before. You are going to honor God. You are going to honor God instead of honoring tyranny and viciousness and cruelty which you've now been doing by fearing it. What you fear you worship. What you worship you fear. The very idea of honoring God sounds good, doesn't it? It sounds good because it is good. It's all we've got. It's everything we've got.

Summary. You can give up looking for anything to make you happy. You can give up looking for anything to put you in charge of yourself. You can – you can cease looking for it, knowing, happily now, that you'll never find it because you've proved it over and over and over. When this seeker disappears, then what your heart wants appears. When the mental goes away, the spiritual comes in its place. All this is for your daring to discover. And you ask – always do the right thing now. Always ask God to give you the daring that will match – match – spiritual daring is totally triumphant over the neurotic daring sickness of the world.

The very common phrase "you win with truth," but the winner is not who you presently think it is. When the desire to win for your own egotistical purposes is seen through and fades away, then there is a winner who never ever has to think about winning or losing again. This is winning with a capital "W".

Take a break.

Whenever you meet another person, I want you to be so awake and so kindly and so self-sufficient that you don't blunder in and take away their activity, their time, or whatever they want to do. Now it is very sad and very common, very prevalent for two or more people to get together in the conversation or the party or the get-together because not one of them has anything worthwhile to do. And so they all waste each other's time. And that is exactly what this world is doing. All the so-called political activities, all the so-called good social times, all the good company and all that all is really nothing but a bunch of people – everyone wasting everyone else's time who is gathered there, because do they not only have something worthwhile to do, they have absolutely nothing worthwhile to do with their lives.

Now you are a New Life student. You're supposed to have something worthwhile to do. Worthwhile! There's nothing in this world higher than you trying to find the Higher!

Now you're making a mistake, and I'm calling it to your attention right now, and I'm connecting it with me, too. I will ask all of you to please – to please learn to be so spiritually self-sufficient that you don't have to waste my time, whether it's one minute or longer. I want you just to ask now – not just me now. I've brought myself into it, and I'll exit myself and talk to you generally. When you call on someone or walk over to them or make contact with them in any way, the real reason you're doing that is because you're a zombie. You know zombies walk. They don't know where they're walking or why they're walking when they're going because they have no consciousness. *No consciousness and no conscience.*

Those who have wasted their lives don't give one bit of thought as to whether they're going to waste someone else's life. What do they care? Waste to them, the way they see it, is good social fellowship, a romance, being a good companion of others. They never put the right meaning on it. They always put the false label on it.

You will now forever more be very aware of where you go and why you go

there. And the best thing that can ever happen to any of you is to see how you are bothering people, thinking that you're giving them your marvelous company. You're bothering them.

Now, if you will do this, a very happy thing will happen to you. You will begin to see how not only have you wasted their time, but yours also. And that, in turn, will make you value the time that you do have. It will make you so rightly excited to use every minute you have to read one of the books or hear one of the tapes or do an exercise when you're out somewhere. It will make you put – it will make you make time your spiritual servant. It's not now. It's your commander. It's your tyrant. It makes you chase everywhere, spending your money and spending your energy.

Spiritual growth always, always includes the kind of excitement where you feel, oh, there's so much to do and you enjoy growing so much; a little bit of a new insight. You read that book ten times, and on the eleventh time you finally saw something great that you never believed was in that book. And you no longer want to go around wasting your time or anyone else's in idleness. You've got too much good work to do, happy things to do. You can't be bothered with people anymore. Before you couldn't live without them. Now you'd be delighted to not be in their company.

You – you are really getting your life back now. And guess what you're getting as the only real companion you need? The companion of Truth itself. You know it's right. You're reading that, you're reflecting, you're thinking about something. You want your mind and your time to yourself!

So you have to see it both ways. You have to see you are wasting other people's time, maybe mine, for example, or someone else. You connect it with someone. Whose time are you wasting? Shame on you. Don't you have any conscience at all, that you force yourself and impose yourself on other people and waste their time? What's the matter with you? Can't you be a good human being?

All right. It works two ways. You see how you're wasting their time, and having seen that, you always turn the arrow of attention back on yourself and you see what a ghastly mistake you've made in wasting your own life too. Wasting your own time by wasting their time. You see, isn't that nice to know that as you become nicer to others, you become nicer to yourself? As you become nicer to yourself, you become nicer to others because it's one niceness, the niceness of Truth itself.

Go over everything that was said in this short talk, and every time you feel impelled to go toward another human being, I want you to remember everything I said. And I want you to remember that you are quite capable of being happy all by yourself, because in the Spiritual Kingdom, in the Spiritual Kingdom, you are never all by yourself. You're with Truth Itself, and you know it and you feel it, and you live it, and, oh, how glad you are that you finally exchanged the human for the spiritual.

Gentlemen, John Greenleaf Whittier was a famous American poet, and he wrote the lines, "Of all the words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, `it might have been.'" Now, I can give you sadder words than "it might have been," and

those words are, "He never learned."

Some of you, you've been coming here all these years, and its just as if you weren't here at all. I want you to learn something, all of you, because you're all unlearned in different ways. I want you to learn that you haven't learned! All of a sudden you're so shocked, you're so surprised that something happens to you; you get rebuked or you fall down and hurt yourself inwardly. You're so surprised. The reason it happens is because you never learned the lessons right here in this room.

Your assignment until next Friday is to learn that you never learn. Do that, and you'll be able to learn, and then you'll be able to live what you know.

Good night.