

# The Trained Observer

by Andrew Binstock

In Triangles, we are attempting to animate a network of light, love, and will-to-good through which we can distribute higher energies throughout humanity.

An important question in this work is how exactly do we distribute the light we invoke? It is not as though invocation alone is sufficient, and from there the light will enlighten by its simple presence. Rather we, like Prometheus, must bring forward the light we are given. One group of workers, called by the Tibetan the “trained observers” has a special responsibility to do this, that is, to carry the light to the astral plane and thereby reduce the extensive illusion that operates there.

My talk today is about being a trained observer. While I speak as though I know how this is done, the truth is that this is something I’ve been working on for a long time; and I want to share with you what I have found helpful. As for my background, I have spent much of my career as a member of the press in the technology sphere. To be good at that job, one has to learn to observe with detachment. In my case, I was the editor of a magazine with 250,000 subscribers, and when you’re communicating to that many people, you soon learn that taking a position that appears logical and uncontroversial will inevitably appear illogical to some segment of the readership. And if you can listen with detachment and ignore the sometimes salty language, you come to see that critics often surface an aspect you underappreciated or actually misunderstood. By maintaining detachment and listening repeatedly, you begin to learn to view events and critics with a practical dispassion coupled with a deep desire to fully understand context and ramifications. You strive to be a good observer.

To do that, you must observe with care: you must perceive accurately and with a mentality that is open to modification, even if that modification goes against a preferred narrative.

Today, I will focus primarily on the first part: perceiving accurately. In my experience, the biggest obstacle to accurate perception is lack of detachment. It is a truism that who we are determines what we see, or put more colloquially “we see what we want to see.” And, unfortunately, this still true even if we this bear it in mind as we’re observing. Put another way, awareness is not sufficient to get us out of the box—we must first learn to be detached in all things.

We are told by the Tibetan: **[slide]**

“If you could but grasp the full significance of detachment and stand serene as the observing Director, there would be no more waste[d] motion, no more mistaken moves and no more false interpretations, no wandering down the bypaths of daily living, no seeing others through distorted and prejudiced vision and—above all—no more misuse of force.”

That’s quite a stupendous reward for being a detached observer, wouldn’t you say?

It sometimes helps to have a model for detached observation. One of the most useful models is a medical doctor. If you are rushed to the emergency room with a serious wound, you don’t want the doctor to say “Oh, my goodness! I’m having a hard time not getting queasy looking at that wound. I bet that really hurts. Well, I want you to know we’re all very upset to see you like this, but we’ll try to do our best.”

Rather, you want someone dispassionate who, like the Tibetan says, sees things as they really are and does not waste motion. You want a mental approach not an astral one. And the mental approach will bring healing and dissipate the pitched astral tension of being rushed to an emergency room. We too can be healers by remaining mentally polarized, especially in situations where astral energy dominates.

But we can and should go beyond this into the world of causes. The triangles work is part of an esoteric tradition. Esoteric in this sense means the ability to enter into the world of causes and operate from there, most often by creation of thoughtforms and direction of energy.

Returning to the image of a doctor. In 2010, a close, middle-aged friend of mine went to the doctor due to pains on the side of his abdomen. After x-rays, it was clear that he had broken two ribs. Had the doctor not peered into the world of causes and simply remained at the level of treating the effects, he would have treated my friend’s broken ribs and sent him home. So, mentally polarized but not aware of causes.

But, the doctor took an additional step: he asked my friend how he broke his ribs, to which my friend could recall no prior injury. The doctor ordered additional tests, consulted with experts, and little by little was able to determine that my friend was suffering from multiple myeloma—a cancer of the blood that

presents itself by making certain bones, especially those in the trunk unusually brittle. All of a sudden, broken ribs were the least of my friend's worries. He spent a year in the hospital and was cured. We too can be healers if we learn to observe more deeply.

The Tibetan gives us specific instructions on how to enter the world of causes. These are enumerated in the opening pages of Rays and Initiations. [slide] The central theme is to truly be mentally polarized. This involves:

- meditation leading to the realization that one is only the Observer;
- a reiterated appreciation of the words "I am the Self, the Self am I;"
- a close consideration throughout the day to the use and misuse of energy,
- the development of mind control so that the Thinker grips and holds steady the mental processes
- all this built on a base of pure character.

That's a lot of work!

Like all endeavors that require the cultivation of new habits, progress can be made by exercising skills in small amounts, like etudes for the piano, and slowly expanding the range of the skills.

For work on a personal level, I've found the following exercise useful: Put aside a planned period of time, starting, say, with 20 minutes, in which your reaction to everything you experience will be not good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, but rather the internal reiteration of "I am only the Observer." Nothing more.

I started doing this when out running errands. I observed the man driving like a maniac, the broken-down truck blocking a lane, the homeless man screaming, the shopping cart with the squeaky wheel, the long check-out line, the impassive cashier, and on and on—the thousands of micro-judgments that fill our waking hours. And to each, I respond internally "I am just the observer, I do not judge."

If your experience is like mine, as you move into this pure observer mode, you'll experience an enormous weight being removed—a weight I never knew I was carrying. For the first time, I could simply be where I was, doing whatever I was doing, and observe the world around me without transforming it according to my preference.

Initially, this exercise is difficult in the same way meditation is difficult: you keep slipping back into the chatter of micro-judgments, but with practice, in time you can sustain this enforced detachment longer and enjoy the freedom it brings.

It has been helpful to me, in particular, when I am irritated about something or elated, I suddenly self-remember and can snap back into the observer mode, thereby freeing myself from the need to opine and imagine actions I might take.

Among the biggest obstacles to expanding this effort and more deeply embracing the Tibetan's recommendations are interactions with friends, family, and the world as presented in the news. I leave the first two to you, but let's talk about the news.

When we consume the news today, it can be difficult to maintain detachment. This is because the presentation is purposely intended to elicit an emotional reaction from us: outrage, horror, grief, and frustration, or elation. The media analyst Neil Postman wrote in the 1980s, that most news is context-free and presented as entertainment. He posits that the advent of the telegraph brought news from foreign lands to people who had no need to know it. **[slide]** When the telegraph became established, Postman writes "Everything became everyone's business. For the first time, we were sent information which answered no question. [...] Where people once sought information to manage the real contexts of their lives, now they had to invent contexts in which otherwise useless information might be put to some apparent use."

But Postman points out, the introduction of photos and video into the news created context so we *didn't have to*. While the telegraph might tell us the relevance-free news that King Charles of the UK is ill, a photo of the King looking drawn and pale creates an immediate context, evoking alarm, sympathy, and other emotions—all of them impotent precisely due to their lack of relevance.

Much of today's news is presented this way—with video and images that provide little information but elicit powerful emotional reactions. Consider the extensive coverage when a mass shooting occurs, or floods, or multi-car accidents. Unless you're personally involved, these stories infect our quest for real information and real understanding of our world because they are slipped into legitimate news sources, making it difficult to remain detached and undistracted while searching for the information we need. As Thoreau pointed out in his essay, *Walden*, **[slide]** "If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident [...] we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications?"

I should pause here and observe that what I'm saying is not driven by indifference. In fact, I believe Pope Francis when he said the world is suffering from a crisis of indifference. This is rather indifference of the doctor to the astral as she is trying to heal a patient. A mental polarization avoids most things that elicit emotion. We are trying to bring light to the astral plane, not the other way around.

But suppose for reasons of your own, the conflict in Gaza has deep resonance for you. How do you achieve a level of detachment so that you can see into the world of causes and perhaps find a way to be of service?

What I've found helpful is to maximize the understanding of the history and the context of present events—the longer the time scale, the better, because most major problems today have roots that go back generations. And after getting a good grasp of the issues, then to listen or read responsible parties' proposed solutions. For example, on Gaza, there is an excellent interview on the World Goodwill website done by Kathy Newburn of the late, wise rabbi Michael Lerner, **[slide]** who wrote extensively on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Voices that are mental, rather than astral, can provide great light, which you then focus on the many astral eddies that this or any other conflict engenders.

In international conflicts, reference to Alice Bailey's "Destiny of Nations," can also enable us to peer into the cultural factors driving behaviors and conflicts. And so on.

Allow me to wrap up here. Working to become trained observers enables us to bring light where it's most sorely needed, the astral plane. To be a conduit for light is difficult, we must first maintain mental polarization and then exert ourselves to observe and experience the world at that mental level. The image of the doctor is a useful one. We seek to observe accurately and respond intelligently. To develop the skills of accurate perception, we can practice detachment through meditation and repeated small exercises that force the astral body to refrain from its unceasing chatter of like/don't like. In so doing, we create a space—that is, a delay in our reactions—in which we can wisely determine appropriate actions, if indeed any action is needed. As the historian Will Durant once observed, "Nothing is often the right thing to do, and always a clever thing to say."

Such, I believe, is the path of the trained observer.

I write regularly on this topic on a blog on Substack called the Trained Observer. I convey recommendations based on my work on this topic, which includes interviews with trained observers: doctors, human rights observers, etc. If these insights interest you, perhaps you'll join me there and we can walk this path together. Thank you.

---Andrew Binstock

blog: [trainedobserver.substack.com](https://trainedobserver.substack.com)