What is Freedom? (Edited)
From a lecture by Doug Powers

Gender, culture, religion, economics, and other identities that previously limited people have opened up in the last thirty to forty years. But it did not open up a liberation that people are confident in. Right now there is the greatest amount of possible freedom, but this generation has done very little with it.

What does freedom feel like? A sense of infinite possibilities. And every time you act on one possibility, you collapse the infinite potential by tying up and limiting your conscious awareness with something. From spaciousness, conscious awareness can collapse onto an object of desire. Freedom is that conscious awareness that has not been limited to one focus. Freedom is the degree to which conscious awareness has that spaciousness. Freedom is conscious awareness unattached.

Determinisms are taught in college: your conscious awareness is determined by culture, gender, biology, etc. No reinforcement is given to potential freedom, but only the limitations of freedom from the determinisms. Ideology and determinism take the place that conscious awareness could see freedom and pay attention—to watch the mind and see the emotions and thoughts that arise as a process with a causation within you—and lay over that social structures of interpretation.

To give power to anything outside the conscious awareness, i.e. the determinisms, avoids responsibility and lets society control you. The moment of determinism is when truth is given to a theory, which avoids responsibility for every choice or action taken. Absolute freedom requires absolute responsibility. So if you have given your conscious awareness to some other theory or structure, you have lost exactly that amount of freedom. Your karma is your responsibility. Any place that you do not take full responsibility you cannot have freedom. To have a sense of your conscious awareness without these overlays is not easy.

Compassion would be to want complete freedom for everyone else, but today people are needy and play off each other’s needs and insecurities without expectations or loyalty. But this needs a lot of work. One has to line up too many activities to avoid being alone. Freedom vs. sensory overload.

The problem is that people lack confidence in the conscious awareness that has freed itself. Modern fun consists of alleviating the anxiety from the lack of confidence in one’s own nature. Fun covers up the doubt, but it is based on fear. No one knows what to do with such great freedom in themselves. Is this freedom of conscious awareness something that you are able to enter and grow in? Are you comfortable, or do you look for distractions? Here is a marker. How comfortable are you in solitude—in your own conscious awareness in solitude for extended periods of time? You would relate to people differently than a hyper sense of relating based on lack. How do you experience yourself all the time? Does your conscious awareness have the space to settle and reflect?

Modern people should develop comfort in solitude. Then we can care and listen to someone else without need and desire impinging and causing projections onto the other person. Solitude is not being not social, but re-entering the social without projecting onto others and having someone share your projections.

There is only one reason for your lack of freedom—you—have bought into a whole bunch of crap about why things are the way they are. The natural state is that human nature is good, whole, complete, not missing anything, not sinful. The contented state of solitude is already there if you just relax. You do not have to work on it.

You have to put effort into your confusions. We are attached and invested in our own bullshit. Wherever you are attached to a story of yourself, you are limited by that. From identifying with the awareness of some story we are limited. The story and investing in it limits you.

You can watch your mind move. If you do not attach, your habit has one thought less power over the freedom of your mind. Every time the mind moves, you reinforce the habit. If you do not return to the mind ground, there is nothing you can rely on.