

The Awakened Leader

Interview with Dr. Susan Simpson (Part III)

Last month's Awakened Leader interview with Dr. Susan Simpson more deeply explored her findings and how these relate to her work as a neuro-scientist. In this concluding part of her interview, we'll explore what these findings mean for organizational leaders, as seen through her experiences.

Nota bene: The study Susan is conducting and that is referred to in these interviews is intended solely to measure whether or not a neuro-biological change occurred in the brain after someone has awakened. It cannot be used to determine whether or not someone has awakened. While that could be a long-term goal, much more research, data, and studies are needed. Susan's work is to explore whether or not the neuro-biological state change that Oneness University has predicted will happen upon awakening has, in fact, happened. Ultimately, she wants to determine if there is a consistent pattern in the brain patterns of people who have awakened.

Don: Let's talk about your experience before and after awakening. What have you noticed is different?

Susan: The most obvious change is that I'm definitely happier. It's been six weeks since I've been back and there hasn't been any moment of unhappiness or feeling discouraged. There hasn't been negativity in me, which used to be a problem. Negativity is a right frontal lobe function. The right frontal lobe tends to see things in black and white and in generalizations. Examples of right frontal lobe dominance are something like, "This is never going to get any better", or "I will always be an utter failure." This is part of the curse of the right frontal lobe since it makes these kinds of judgments. Releasing that pattern shifts activity into the left frontal lobe, which is much more objective and observational. [With this shift] I find my thinking has changed so much. I now think, "It's going to be what it's going to be," or "That's what it is." I don't have a definite attachment to the future and how things are going to happen.

I wouldn't say I'm even keeled or that there's nothing going on in my mind. Things are pretty intense, which kind of surprised me because I had my own ideas of what life would look like and feel like after awakening. I guess I had this fantasy that everything would be blissful and rosy after awakening, that all my problems would disappear. In some ways, it has been very different. I am now very aware of all the negative emotions and fears in my mind that caused me to close off from life. I can now see the blocks for what they are and not allow them to rule my experience of life.

I've been much more cognitively efficient, much more productive in my work. I have a pretty demanding, intense position at work with a lot of projects to juggle, and I have been much more productive. Much more efficient with concrete things like writing a report or documenting things, that sort of thing.

Don: Are you going into a flow state or something like that?

Susan: [Let's say for example that] I've got a report to write. Usually the report would be about a patient to their family doctor who referred them to me. The letter is usually about four pages and full of details and my impressions. Before, it would take me two to three hours of rethinking and reworking it. Now it just flows and is done in an hour. Busy thoughts get in the way of that kind of efficiency, and now I do not have those busy thoughts to get in the way.

Don: What else have your staff and colleagues have noticed?

Susan: I haven't asked, but it's more like my state has rubbed off on them. I noticed that the clinic is a lot happier and more productive kind of place.

Don: You operate other clinics, right?

Susan: Two other clinics currently, although we can have more operating at any one given time.

Don: What have you noticed about interactions with your associates? Are there things you're doing differently with your partners or interacting in different ways—more direct for example?

Susan: I think we're bringing our vision to a whole other level—our vision of where things can go.

Don: Particularly for a leader, that's a really positive outcome.

Susan: Yes. One of the differences is that I'm feeling much more intuitive. I've always been intuitive and see the bigger picture, but that's been enhanced. It's hard to describe, but it's like I definitely feel that I have my stations tuned in, or I'm tuned to a whole other station of information. I don't know how to explain that. Insights and visions are flowing a lot freer and easier. I seem to be more connected.

Another thing that's going on at the same time is synchronicity. For example, we'll be planning a project but there'll be some kind of obstacle in the way of achieving that kind of goal. Within days, or sometimes the same day, circumstances will shift around in a much more helpful kind of way.

Both of those components work together—having the intuition and the vision of what direction to go in, but on a practical level it doesn't seem like it's doable, but then it's doable when external circumstances shift synchronistically.

Our mind isn't just contained within our brain. We communicate with each other in a field. Executives know they influence their team. They can influence them in a positive way or a negative way.

Don: How has your view of your role changed, or has it? Do you see your role differently?

Susan: Before in my mind there was some question/concern about where the world was going in terms of the environment, economic issues, political issues—a general recognition that the planet is in trouble on all those dimensions. I don't have those worries any more. It's like night and day. I recognize those things are going on, but I see a different dynamic and see a different outcome happening. I see them interacting in a different kind of way.

Don: Is that a reduction of fear or seeing the pieces in more complex interactions?

Susan: It's seeing a deeper dynamic happening, seeing more complexity. It's kind of like I've gained this perspective on a larger scale. Even things that appear to be negative or painful have their purpose in the larger context.

Don: For an organization leader to have their worldview change or to have that broader perspective become more dynamic, or develop a deeper understanding...

Susan: I think that's an accurate description, but it gets a little complex. In the small perspective, we make judgments about what is good or bad, positive or negative. Within this higher or larger perspective, everything is included. I can see the interdependency of everything—that there is no good or bad, but that everything serves a purpose in the larger picture. It is not that life becomes perfect or without problems, but that even painful experiences lead to greater transformation.

What Oneness University offers is something I've been looking for for a long, long time. That's why I became a psychologist. That's what psychology is supposed to be, but of course it's not. I've tried many different avenues to arrive at this higher level. From one perspective, the more we're able to deal with our personal problems or the more of our own baggage we can let go of, the higher functioning person we'll be. However, after many years of this kind of personal work, I just came to the conclusion there's no end to dealing with our personal baggage. There's no end to personality that gets in the way.

The whole meditation route has had its uses and it was helpful up to a point. I was very dedicated to these approaches, and I would work at using these techniques consistently. I would achieve some of those states of heightened awareness and peace, but they wouldn't survive more than a couple of days of 'being back in the real world'. The neuro-feedback was the closest and the most successful I came to achieving lasting inner peace, but it never got to the point of crossing over into awakening, to making those shifts I'm seeing in my brain after Oneness.

The other thing I'd like to comment on is cooperation. I used to be pretty ambitious and competitive—not in a cutthroat, I-want-to-be-better-than-you way, but in a driven need for achievement way—but I've virtually lost the ability to be anything but cooperative, to be anything but inclusive.

Don: In the face of completion do you back down?

Susan: No, no. Again it's like competition is one paradigm, it's one model. And when you're in the model, that's the only way you can do it. It's either win or lose. But when you step out of that model, it's completely different. It's kind of like the way we've been talking about doing this research project. One model to do it is, "I've got a hold on something that nobody else does, something to offer. It's my project and I'm going to go for it and get credit and recognition for myself."

There's no more energy within me for that now. I feel that we're all in this together, we all have the same goal, there's a purpose for all of this. My life has led me to where I have something very significant to contribute to this project, and I'm here to contribute it. But I need everyone else in there to make it successful. It's just a different perspective and a different set of motivations.

Don: Thank you, Susan, for this interview and for all that you're doing to help us better understand what awakening is all about physiologically and psychologically.

Next

The next interview will be with another organizational leader who has been through Oneness University's six-day course and who has awakened. We'll talk with her/him about how her/his life—both personal and career—has changed, and what impact awakening has made on these.