

DEATH 2. As an atheist, I do not believe in a God or an afterlife. However - without calling myself an agnostic - I will say that my atheism is not absolute; I mention in my conversation with my mother (DEATH 1) that I believe in a universal consciousness. **T**hat is the space where all of humanity resides ... in a spiritual, esoteric sense, as spirit (spirit = soul): without a persona or an ego; where our soul is at peace. This belief allows me to see all of humanity as one, and all humans as equal. For me, this is The Truth. **F**or my mum ... this concept of death provided much comfort.

see also THE TRUTH, WHAT I BELIEVE

DEATH 3. Once a Master travelled in Northern India by the river Ganges, with a group of followers and one of his sons. **A**long the way his son became unwell. A doctor in the group attended to the young man - the diagnosis was that he was gravely ill and could not be helped. The Master's disciples were distressed and urged him to cure his son, believing he had healing powers. **H**owever, the Master - who appeared dispassionate - did not respond to their calls. Overnight the young man died. All the while the Master had been sitting in meditation. **W**ithout delay a funeral pyre was built, the body cremated, the ashes strewn in the river; soon the group was on its way again. **T**his story is told as an example for acceptance, detachment and letting go. The Stoics say 'expect nothing, be satisfied to live in harmony with the natural progression of things' and 'how strange to be surprised at anything that happens in life.'

It is evident that for some enlightened individuals death does not hold the anxiety, terror or uncertainty it holds for others. The German writer and mystic Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832) said:

"The thought of death leaves me in perfect peace. I believe our spirit is a being of indestructible nature. It works in eternity; like the sun, which seems to set every day, but doesn't really - it shines perpetually."

In the context of death the notion of enlightenment, acceptance and detachment is not only the heart of our spirituality, but also the bedrock of our equilibrium; it gives us peace of mind in the face of our mortality.

The story above has enlightenment at its core. To be enlightened is to accept, detach and let go. It pulls into focus what Krishnamurti meant when he was asked about his enlightenment: "I don't mind what happens."

see also ACCEPTANCE, DETACHMENT
KRISHNAMURTI, STOICISM