

Interview: Santosha Ma with Torrey

Adi Da and the Patriarchy

10/28/2018

Santosha Ma: I wrote some things in my journal this morning to try to further process this dynamic that we've experienced in our lives in the spiritual, as well as how the patriarchy affected it, and our journey on the spiritual path. Also, how it affected our relationship with my teachers, and your teachers – me being one of them. I'll just read this. It's a little bit intense, but...

Torrey: Good!! *(laughs)* Because it is intense!

Santosha Ma: It is intense! It's a lot.

(Reading from her journal) “On Friday, the women and I talked about the female struggle in the patriarchy. I wanted to make a video detailing that struggle. I felt what was said was good, but not good enough for a finished presentation. I also wanted to talk about sexual abuse by the power dynamic model in spiritual communities. Except for Torrey's experience with the Free Daists, everyone else was happy with their life with Me, and didn't directly relate to the issue.

“My own experience with Adi Da in the physical, subtle and in-depth transmission has elements of harshness, sexual domination and spiritual possession. I don't put him on the pedestal of ideology anymore, nor do I throw his understanding and work completely out the window. I do recognize him for his works and help, but my need to idealize him beyond his obvious mistakes, and how they have hurt me and others, is gone.

“I remember years ago in a dream, he told me he had made a lot of mistakes. I didn't know how to respond to that. It wasn't like he was actually confiding in me and acknowledging how rough, and at times cruel, he was with me. Rather, he just seemed to be getting things off his chest in a general way. Also, if my Godman made mistakes, big ones even, how did it make me feel with my intention of my work and understanding that he had blessed in dreams over

and over again? There were also bewildering dreams where he seemed to want to take that recognition away, and yet he was bewildered by my capability altogether!

“In the earlier years during my sadhana, his approach to me in the subtle dreams was always through the sexual act, which I never felt I gave permission for. It always happened so quickly! In the transmission/shakti dreams he also pushed me, but unlike the sexual encounters – which I finally told him, ‘Let’s not!’, which he did stop after that - I welcomed the experience of the Shakti and its purifying work. He was a very aggressive teacher, with an alpha-male type of nature. The way he worked caused a wake of catastrophe. If one was open and wanted to continue in the process of awakening, one allowed his dominance and aggressive teaching style, and picked up the pieces of your life later, without any help coming from him.”

Torrey: Oh god, that hurts.

Santosha Ma: “He was a crude teacher. There definitely was a strong element of dominance and possession in the way he was and worked. Coming back to his own admission of making a lot of mistakes, and considering his profound influence in my life, I’ve had to pick up the pieces of his mistakes in regard to my own life, and make sense of his influence, both great and ridiculous. The ridiculous part being that, yes, the way he taught, in a dangerous extreme way in the relatable field, and as well with his shakti or transmission, was full of dominating gestures. It was the worst of the patriarchal attitudes we are living in in this time and culture. His community was run by him as a male-dominating power dynamic, with the life there being full of power positions that one could achieve if they were completely obedient to his teaching demands and his personal wishes.

“Everything was a dramatic gesture. Coming to terms with Adi Da as both an influence, a strange relationship of both utmost respect and disheartening disappointment, and allowing both to exist, be felt, and understood, has been quite a journey. This journey has given me the strength I have needed to live my True Nature and true understanding in a male, aggressive, suppressive culture that is playing out the worst-element-gone-wrong of the patriarchy.

“I feel I have gained the strength to live in my own manner, as my nature is, and make my own mistakes. I give my own blessing and support to others to live the Heart, be the Heart. I use my nature as an artist, spiritual teacher, and friend to inspire and enliven others to recognize the heart as their own self, to live the heart in their own unique way, to not duplicate anyone else. I live my understanding in my own unique way, in my own unique life.

“I do not live in his shadow. I live in my own unique life. I truly accept my life and work as my own unique expression and pleasure. It’s been a life of many creative adaptations, both my teaching life and work as well as my other impulses toward art and the natural world. Also, my relatable family, which at times has been fun, difficult, humbling, beautiful, full of enjoyable moments of vulnerability and intimacy and the bright shining of our heart, of the

Heart. It's my life, my work, and as Adi Da has been known to say, the 'only-by-me' life is my own, lived as myself, and given to others with love and pleasure."

That's what I got off my chest this morning! (*laughing*)

Torrey: Incredible!! (*laughing*) That was incredible!

Santosha Ma: You enjoyed it? Given that, any questions? Then we'll proceed with both our journeys.

Torrey: There were some things I was thinking about this morning. You are such a pure being, and he is so not a pure being, in the way of relationships and how he treats others. It is a little baffling to me still, what Enlightenment is. I can't understand what Enlightenment is, because you are so opposite of him in certain aspects.

Santosha Ma: There are a lot of ways you can look at it. Is art terrible because it depicts a picture of war?

Torrey: Oh! No.

Santosha Ma: Does that help in any way?

Torrey: Yes! It does.

Santosha Ma: It's a strange metaphor, can you relate to it?

Torrey: Yes! It helps a lot, actually. It reminds me of Yogananda sitting on his bed, and some light shows up around him, and he sees a video of the world suddenly. There is war and horror, and then he knows it's all just the Divine and it doesn't matter.

Santosha Ma: Yes. Enlightenment is bigger than any one teacher, any one expression, whether that expression is more benevolent or more aggressive, or in any way that you are disinclined to, or really attracted to. It's still bigger than all of that.

I think with Adi Da, he was so dominating, that his expression was the only expression we were allowed.

Torrey: Yes!

Santosha Ma: As I said, the fall-out from his domination and his aggressive teaching style, we didn't know how to make sense of it. 'Do we throw out enlightenment? Do we throw out him? Do we throw out our own sense of the suffering? What do we do with the suffering we have from it? Do we throw that out? Do we throw our happiness out?'

Torrey: Is it not valid, because I am an ego, and Narcissus?

Santosha Ma: Yes. It's been a confusing journey to make a kind of psychological self-discovery with, that things that can be great and profound, can also be ridiculous and stupid. Things that are ordinary can also be sublime. Things that look dark can have an element of profundity in it that will shock you if you get close enough to it.

Everything has a mixed bag in it. Through your love for me, you feel the best coming from me. We've struggled! The love and the intimacy have grown regardless of any of the mistakes, both on my part or your part. I don't have a teaching that says somehow, whatever has gone wrong is a big lack in you, a big identity with the contraction with you. I don't have a teaching like that. His teaching in that field seemed to be used in a lot of negative ways to hold people psychologically prisoner.

For me, any teaching that actually works to free people to follow it and be capable of developing their own strengths, learning independently how to do that, as well as being accountable for their mistakes – any teaching that helps that is good. Any teaching that doesn't help that should be cast aside. Some teachers will really work for some people, and other people they won't work for at all. Some are just not that good, in general. In education over the years, there have been a lot of people that have developed different teaching approaches, and some of them are actually better, even though they are not used in the mainstream culture.

Individual responsibility – the journey for your awakening, living your life, uniquely you, with the qualities and nature you have, living your understanding - it has to appear entirely unique. It can't appear as a duplicate of somebody else, or somebody else's idea or concept of their life. It can't appear that way. It never can. If it seems to be appearing that way, then something - that domination, or that possession, or the lack of that person to generate their own capacity, to take responsibility and go forward - hasn't been completely realized yet.

Torrey: That was another related question. I always had the sense that enlightenment, the enlightened person, however they are born, whoever they are born with, they just have that to work with. Is that it? If Adi Da wasn't born such an intense-Scorpio-crazy nature, then would he still have done all that?

Santosha Ma: Are you saying 'done all that' in a negative way, or 'done all that' as an explanation of what he's done?

Torrey: Everything, extreme positive and negative. To me, he's the Divine, and he always was. Even with all this craziness and confusion, it didn't move or change that part of him for me.

Santosha Ma: Buddha; do you feel Buddha was the Divine?

Torrey: Yes.

Santosha Ma: Krishna was the Divine?

Torrey: Yes.

Santosha Ma: Jesus was the Divine?

Torrey: Yes.

Santosha Ma: They are all different, totally different. Totally different kinds of teachings, different kind of manners, different kind of natures. Remember how Devdutt hated Buddha? I was told through watching the Mahabharata that in his time, people loved Krishna or didn't like him at all.

There is always that kind of dynamic where you come into a sense of something that is happening that is just not the ordinary anymore. To consider it, you're going to have to really be challenged in your own limits, your own sensibilities, and your own attractions. That can be good and wonderful, but it is still going to end up that you have to assimilate what you can, what you want to, and how that affects your ability to be authentic. Be as self-aware or fully aware as you can be, or are, if you feel you have realized the Self. Yes, you still don't get out of that! There is no one you can bond to or duplicate.

Adi Da gave the impression through his spiritual possession and his dominating personality, that you could be dominated and possessed and that would duplicate who he is. It didn't! Not only it *didn't*, it created a catastrophe of psychological baggage for a lot of people. In your own journey, you were hoping to become more free, and to find out who you were. You wanted to find out who you were as enlightenment. You endured living in a difficult circumstance where you felt you were dominated and oppressed?

Torrey: Yes. Very much so.

Santosha Ma: That is what you were telling me about over the years.

Torrey: There were a lot of incidents of male domination in the FDC (Free Daist Communion) when I was there. It begins when you are a young girl, but starting with my relationship to Adi Da, it started with me and Chris, my first husband. We were living together. We wanted to become students. The people we were corresponding with said everyone is getting married now, you shouldn't be living together. We went and got married! We were trying to cooperate, but right away, when I look back at it, it was totally that you had to be obedient to be a student! Obedience was demanded. Initially! Even before talks of love of him and devotion, before the heart, it was obedience.

Santosha Ma: Do you think that was a threat that ran through everything all the time?

Torrey: Yes, I do! Definitely! With my first husband, he did not stay a formal student as long as I did, because he didn't want to be dominated, actually. He wanted his own career, to make his own decisions about what he was going to do in his career. He quietly did what he wanted. He was always on the fringe of FDC as a musician.

Santosha Ma: Even though he was the male, and gained by being in this patriarchy – even though it is a corrupt one, and he gained by it - he still couldn't tolerate it.

Torrey: No. He didn't want to be there. He wanted to live his own choices. That's what I saw, and how I see it now.

Santosha Ma: Yes. How did you feel about that? Did you want to live your own choices?

Torrey: Not like he did. I was more attracted to keep moving toward Adi Da, toward Adi Da himself! And I thought that would lead to enlightenment.

Santosha Ma: The physical person.

Torrey: Yes, his physical form.

Santosha Ma: You were trying to have a strategy or life plan to get closer to him so that would aide your enlightenment.

Torrey: Yes. From my point of view, that was obviously what you needed to do. I don't know why I had that idea, but I definitely had that idea.

Santosha Ma: Do you think other people gave you that idea as well? That you just didn't cook it up on your own?

Torrey: Probably, especially once we actually met people. We moved to LA and met the 'missionaries' there. There was the whole mystique around Adi Da, and getting to see Adi Da, getting to be with Adi Da. It was so rare for me for 12 years! I was a student for 4 years before I even glimpsed him, for 20 minutes. I got to sit with him in a dark meditation hall after 4 years, and two more years before I saw him again. It was such a mystique to be around him. It was 'the prize!' If you got to be there, that was what you wanted! The great mystery that no one could even explain to each other - what enlightenment was, or what the process was - it didn't matter. It was him. That's really what it was.

Santosha Ma: Did you ever feel like - because you've been a musician for many years - when you were starting out and wanting to go forward with having a possible career and success with music, did you ever think that there was somebody you could apprentice to, or get to know in the music field, and you would do anything for that?

Torrey: My first husband!

Santosha Ma: Oh! That's what you did.

Torrey: Yes, I married him!

Santosha Ma: That was the same thread of how you approached it. Your dynamic to go forward was to get as close as possible to the person that had that success, and then you could figure it out by seeing how they operated.

Torrey: I felt like if I would do all I could, then they would give it to me, too. I know that's what I thought. Then it would be mine, too, if I could be with them. I always thought I had to be close to the source.

Santosha Ma: You didn't feel like you could directly have it yourself.

Torrey: Not at all! It never even occurred to me.

Santosha Ma: That's part of it.

Torrey: It's the training.

Santosha Ma: Yes. There's training in this life that women can't have their own direct life, their own direct experience, and their own direct opportunities. Our generation is still very much influenced by that psychology. Even though it still exists for the generations after, it was really still strong in our generation.

Torrey: Yes, I totally believed I had to be with a man.

Santosha Ma: Your idea was you had to get close to whoever had the success.

Torrey: And a man! Not a woman, it had to be a man.

Santosha Ma: Yes, a man. And if you got close, somehow they would give that to you if you obeyed them.

Torrey: Yes. Yes.

Santosha Ma: Did you have any success with that method?

Torrey: No! (*both laughing!*)

Santosha Ma: But you believed that method!

Torrey: I did believe it! I totally believed it!

Santosha Ma: Do you think that makes you stupid for believing that? Or just naive?

Torrey: Naive! Naive, but then when stupid things happened over and over and over - I never got out of it! Until I met you. Never! I did the same stupid things forever until I met you!

Santosha Ma: At a certain point naivety became...

Torrey: Stupidity!

Santosha Ma: Yes.

Torrey: Yes!

Santosha Ma: What held you in it? From having an innocent naivety and a plan, then the plan didn't work, to where it actually was stupid to keep going with it, but you kept doing it - what was it that got you there, that is was OK to be stupid now?

Torrey: It was different with each husband, but I still couldn't leave the man. I felt totally dependent, that I utterly was. It wasn't a question if I was or not.

Santosha Ma: You didn't feel like you could go on and get your own life together.

Torrey: No!

Santosha Ma: It was actually a very deep fear of survival.

Torrey: Yes! That's what I realized after about 8 years in FDC. A woman was talking to me in a healing session of some kind, and out of my mouth came, 'I cannot survive without a man!!!' She looked at me surprised. She had a husband and everything, but she was shocked by my saying that. Her shocked look helped me! I said it with such force and conviction, I knew that it was something I totally believed! Then I was surprised at myself! From then it started to break up a bit at a time.

Santosha Ma: Along with the original belief - that if you got close to the source, then somehow being obedient to whatever that source wanted, you would get what they had - you then realized you also had the belief that your own sustainability counted on you doing that *well* enough.

Torrey: Yes!

Santosha Ma: Do you think other people in the Communion had the same belief system?

Torrey: Definitely! It was pounded into you!

Santosha Ma: Yes, but you arrived with some of those beliefs already in place.

Torrey: Well, yes, I did! Then I'm wondering, how many women go there because of that? They are attracted! Do you know what I mean? Attracted to that belief system and how it operates. Thinking that is how to get taken care of! Until we learn what is really going on!

Santosha Ma: Yes, that would make sense.

Torrey: There was this sense that men put on you that you have to be attractive! But there already was this sense in the culture that you have to be an attractive woman or you are screwed, basically. My parents were always telling us how beautiful we were, that cultural idea. That idea fed the actual insistence on makeup in FDC, women advising women to wear it! Adi Da definitely encouraged that with women.

Santosha Ma: What happens if you aren't attractive?

Torrey: There was no logic like that! But if you weren't, then you wouldn't be able to do what you wanted in life... it's so crazy! It seems so crazy now.

Santosha Ma: Well, obviously women who are not attractive do all sorts of things, and have satisfying lives!

Torrey: I know! It's such a fear-based thing that is devoid of logic. When I was looking at it, I was feeling, 'This is so dumb!! How did I live that all these years?' I lived it for so many years - almost 40 years!

Santosha Ma: People don't really make sense of the bigger story.

Torrey: No. Definitely not.

Santosha Ma: There are three stories. There's your personal story, there's the story of the culture and how it's developing, and there's the story of awakening. There are three stories going on. People are struggling to make the personal story make sense. Mostly, at best, they remain at naivety. They go along, try to sustain and have some satisfaction, even though it doesn't fulfill any bigger picture than that. The other people, they are saying 'OK! What is the bigger picture? Where are they going with it?'

But what if you can't make sense of the cultural context? The culture has its own picture, and its own story that has influenced the personal story. It also has its stupidity and naivety as well! You had certain beliefs and a certain naivety, and you went to another place that was a bigger culture than your personal life, but still had similar beliefs and naivety! It actually became ridiculous and stupid after a while!

Torrey: Yes. It was abusive.

Santosha Ma: You would say overall, your experience was a negative one, and that you had to come out? Over a period of time you had to be shown another way to feel and understand your own experience, and the belief systems in the context you were given?

Torrey: The way I see it now, yes? Even though I hate to say that about Adi Da, because I felt...

Santosha Ma: Can I ask you why you say, 'I hate to say this'?

Torrey: Because I hate to blanketly say he was terrible, but I'm not saying that. My discovering Adi Da was finding that God is real, knowing the truth that Divinity exists, and was incarnate! When I never had imagined such a thing in my life before that.

Santosha Ma: Can Divinity be terrible?

Torrey: I don't know that.

Santosha Ma: Isn't the Christian god, the god up in heaven, a vengeful god that will put you in hell if...

Torrey: Yes, I never believed that... Hah! *(laughs)*

Santosha Ma: You didn't believe that one?

Torrey: No! *(laughing)* That's hilarious!

Santosha Ma: You like your god to be benign? I don't blame you! *(laughing)*

Torrey: When I look now, the men in the Free Daists were so domineering, all of them, and they supported each other in that! They all went along with it, all totally supported that belief and those actions. I told you the other day, if any man came in and didn't agree with them, he was out of there! He didn't last. They used women. We were objects and servants to them. Everything you said about the patriarchy makes perfect sense.

I was struggling with Richard hitting me, once a week or maybe twice a month or something, for 6 years! I got hit all the time, whenever we would disagree, or I wouldn't agree with him, or if he'd even misunderstand something I said, it was always physical, hitting. I stayed! I acknowledge that, but when we moved into a certain household, it began a change for me.

I just want to say this. There were three couples that lived in this household. There were no children in the house, just the three couples. One day, all the women realized we had been hit that day! That day, all of our husbands had hit us. It was so shocking for me. I thought I was alone in it.

Santosha Ma: You didn't know it was happening to them?

Torrey: No. When all three of us knew, we just cried, we couldn't believe it. We felt helpless, in a way.

Santosha Ma: But you had each other then!

Torrey: Yes, we were glad that we had told each other...

Santosha Ma: To stop it!

Torrey: No, it didn't though! It didn't go in that direction, that we got the strength to say no. It didn't happen there. We were all just helplessly shocked and sad. One woman divorced that man and left FDC about a year later. After that, I divorced Richard, probably about two years later. Pam, I don't know what happened with her. All that secretiveness was going on in the community. I know now, the men did whatever they wanted.

Santosha Ma: Do you think they looked at Adi Da as a domineering role model and said, 'That's OK.'

Torrey: Absolutely!

Santosha Ma: Instead of having another role model say, of a very gentle, benign guru?

Torrey: I think he absolutely was their role model.

Santosha Ma: He was their hero role model.

Torrey: Their hero! Exactly!

Santosha Ma: It wasn't so much what he taught, it was how he appeared and what he did that they wanted to emulate.

Torrey: It was exactly his actions that they followed.

Santosha Ma: He has often said that the way he teaches is not the way he is. What do you think about that?

Torrey: I think it's not true. The way he is, is what everybody did, it's what the men did. How the women around him received what was happening and stayed there in his intimate company! The stories we would hear of sexual games that were so degrading for women, so degraded! Women getting physically hurt. And they would stay!

Through all this, it was still a contest to see who could get closest to him! I was still in that mode of trying to get close to him.

Santosha Ma: Did you hear of those experiences those women had in Fiji, while you were in Marin? You were having those kinds of experiences in your own household! They were in a household relationship with Adi Da, and they were experiencing that. It was everywhere.

Torrey: Some of it would be very secret, of what was actually happening over there, but sometimes stories would leak through. We would all just go, 'crazy wise.' That's what we would say to not deal with it.

Santosha Ma: Did your husbands who were hitting you want to say 'crazy wise' about their behavior?

Torrey: They never even had to justify their behavior. No one ever made them.

Santosha Ma: Do you think Adi Da justified his behavior? Ever?

Torrey: No, no.

Santosha Ma: That was again, their role model. He didn't justify it. They didn't have to justify it.

Torrey: All that started to happen in '85 with the dissident time, this 'crazy wise' phrase started to come out. They had to justify it to the world, now that he was visible. Then he took off to Fiji so he was invisible again. More theater!

Santosha Ma: Do you think any of that emotional sexual theater that Adi Da did actually produced more self-awareness of love and relatability?

Torrey: No, actually. Not *really*, because those people came and spoke in Lake County at the sanctuary. I don't know what year it was, I was still there. Adi Da had several of his intimate Circle come and talk to everybody, and tell us the teaching had failed, blah de blah. They told a few sexual stories, just a few. There was no intelligence in any of it. It was awful to hear! They were laughing, making it supposedly funny.

Santosha Ma: Well, how were they feeling, relating that the teaching failed, and they did all of it under the guise that 'This is teaching!'?

Torrey: I'm sure they were embarrassed when I think of it now, but they were justifying everything that happened without heart. There was no heart in it. There was no real vulnerability, and so no felt intelligence in it at all.

He did so many cycles where he would just build people up and then just destroy us, flatten us all to the ground.

Santosha Ma: Do you think that was a real, valid teaching vehicle...

Torrey: I think it was painful.

Santosha Ma: Or just a very cruel way to teach?

Torrey: I think he was trying to teach, but to me, it seemed cruel. Especially in '86 when for the umpteenth time I saw him do it. These people were reportedly practicing in the 6th stage, Adi Da had said. They were experiencing being the Witness Consciousness. Just ordinary people around the Sanctuary were...

Santosha Ma: They are not ordinary people! They have devoted their whole life to him! That's not ordinary!

Torrey: No, I guess not!

Santosha Ma: That's not ordinary at all!

Torrey: Saniel was one of those people. They would wear orange scarves - I could see they were happy and full; they were in a different state. Soon Adi Da stopped the 'consideration'. Then he trashed everybody. That kind of play with him, to me, was so painful, really painful to me to see. He would bring them way up, and give them responsibilities, bring them close to him... That was my experience of it.

Santosha Ma: It's not just your experience! It's your powerful experience, and it has a lot of validity. What I want to ask is, do you think he can be credited with giving them the experience? You're saying he gives and he takes away. He seems to have that appearance of doing it. Or did he actually? Was he a catalyst, for some spark in them, to understand this? Did he actually really give it to them, and then really take it away?

Torrey: That's what I always assumed, and that's what it seemed like he was saying. Because if he couldn't take it away, then it would be like Julie and what she's saying in her interviews.

Santosha Ma: Do you think that other people can have these intuitive leaps without coming to his source?

Torrey: I do now!

Santosha Ma: Do you think it exclusively belongs to him? That he gives it and he can take it away?

Torrey: No, not anymore, but I did then.

Santosha Ma: I felt the same way, but not anymore - that he gives and takes it away. I don't feel like he gives it. He initiates a spark that's there because of his own spark, and whether it goes away is up to you, if you are interested in it or not.

Torrey: Right, whether you actually can understand it or not. Whether you can function like that, maintain that, whether you care enough or not.

Santosha Ma: Yes. You can try all sorts of things. Someone can say, 'Do you want to jump into this? You don't have any experience!' Say you go for a new job or something. 'We'll hire you!' You say, 'I'll give it my best shot!' You might be able to adapt eventually. Everyone can adapt. But at a job, they want to look for someone who can adapt quickly, so they will see if you can do it quickly enough.

Do you think that was part of what was going on? That he wanted people to adapt quickly? Instead of him saying, 'OK, I can initiate this spark, and let people adapt at their own pace to it, in their own ability to accept their relationship to it and their intimacy with it on their own.'? The withdrawing seems to put a time span on everything. Why was that?

Torrey: I don't know, except he often talked about 'urgency.' I got the idea that he was stopping the considerations. That's what it apparently was. I would hear the crashing bombs of heart-disappointment all around, the sound and feeling of the people that were mad about that, and felt humiliated...

Santosha Ma: Again.

Torrey: Again, by that. It's interesting to me right this second that Saniei was one of them, because he felt he had to go do something with it, he couldn't stay there. It's like he felt he actually understood something, and wanted to go out and work with it.

Santosha Ma: He felt it wouldn't really be fostered there, under his own initiative.

Torrey: I agree with him. It wouldn't have been fostered there.

Santosha Ma: I agree with him, too! My own process unfolded in a subtle relationship with Adi Da, primarily, which was full of some of the same dilemmas you are talking about. Even though I wasn't personally competing, or having to be obedient, or being told how to live my life by anyone, it was still filled with the same domination, possession. The way he is! In which you say, 'OK, that's how your teacher teaches, and that's the way he is!' The way he teaches IS the way he is! There really isn't a difference.

In my relationship with you and your relationship with me, the way I taught you was trying to understand the way you are, to act and be in the way that would help you, instead of just

saying, 'This is the way I am, but the way I teach is different!' It was just completely transparent, and you said, "OK, this is what she's like.'

Torrey: You are in relationship to me! In 12 years, he was never in relationship to me. I never felt it once.

Santosha Ma: He kept calling me to come to him in the physical, but then he was his own obstacle to it! Everybody wants to blame the community for whatever seems to be an obstacle towards him, but no! He is his own obstacle. Everybody is responsible for how they set up their life. After a while I said, 'Well, obviously I'm going to have to do this (my life) on my own!' And as many dreams as he blessed me and acknowledged me, there weren't as many dreams where he just wanted to withdraw everything. There weren't a lot of those dreams. But when they did happen like that, it gave me the sense of, 'Oh! You think you can give it! And take it away! But you can't!'

Torrey: Ah! See, that's wonderful!

Santosha Ma: That's what I found out. I was living and conducting the life of an enlightened person more and more, under my own terms. When the collaboration with him and his community was never going to happen, more and more I said, 'I'll just go out and do it, and I'll do the best I can. If I don't want to teach, I don't have to, but if I do want to, I will. It doesn't come from him giving it, or acknowledging me or not. It comes from my own volition, my own understanding and my own capacity to face what I have to face to go forward.'

But there was a lot of adaptation for me to keep going forward. I found out that a lot of what other teachers did, including my own teachers, all had a limit in it. Those limits didn't work for me to go forward in living my life as an expression and vehicle of enlightenment, in service to others. It didn't work for just living a life! To find pleasure in life! To find pleasure in this place where it's difficult for women, and we live under this terrible gone-wrong patriarchy. A patriarchy could be alright, but this one has gone wrong in the worst way possible!

Torrey: Globally.

Santosha Ma: A matriarchy could be alright, or it could go wrong completely, too! I'm talking about the real dynamic where you get to be who you are as a complete being, in a vehicle that has expressions, and has a need to know itself both as feminine and masculine.

Torrey: That's beautiful!

Santosha Ma: You're on your own journey to get past all this.

Torrey: Yes. But I wouldn't even know it was possible if it wasn't for you. You are the pointer.

Santosha Ma: Well, yes, but you've been pointed by other people too. That's why we are doing this. I'm not just pointing so I get to be the pointer, or I'm the only one who gives you this. It's you get it, then other people get it who know you, or say, 'Well, I can relate to her in my experience. Wow! She came out of the fog of it. Maybe I can!' That's how we give enlightenment, wherever anybody can meet it! We don't throw people into super-spiritual states and then withdraw them.

Any experience you have, if you feel you are genuinely related to it - you like it, you enjoy it - it doesn't have to be seen as unnecessary and un-spiritual bullshit. Whether it's a high spiritual experience, falling in love with someone, doing a successful project, or helping somebody with a kind word. All experience has validity to it, if you live in it, and you enjoy it. You love it, you give it, you share it. It all has validity. Otherwise, what can we go on here? Why be in existence? Why be in existence if none of it has validity?

If you are a multi-dimensional person that enjoys both the feminine and masculine aspects of your nature, wouldn't you also enjoy the different aspects of your qualities as well as your talents, and what you observe in the physical and mental and emotional, psychological, spiritual? Why would you say it's all not the point?

His teaching made sense to him. A lot of how you got to be with him was through obedience, and allowing him to dominate you. But when he taught, some of his teaching didn't keep growing, so he could keep growing in his work. I've seen this with other teachers, and I respect everybody. I think everybody has either a difficult flaw, or a kind of benevolent flaw that's not that difficult. No one is perfect, but perfection is not the point of view. You don't idealize that something is so wonderful that it can never have a difficult outcome or difficult moment, or any harshness at all, that there won't be some kind of struggle that will be difficult and disorienting. There is nothing like that.

We all idealized that the Divine - if it was incarnate and it was allowed to be lived in a human body - that it would just not have any difficulty. And whatever it did didn't give any difficulty!

Torrey: Yes. (*laughs*) It sounds really naive when you put it like that.

Santosha Ma: We are really naive. That was a nice dream, and we were naive. That's great about being older now, we've gone through our experience. If you want to grow, you have to question what limits you in that, to be really self-aware and authentic and live a life that is not based on somebody else's qualities, or their teaching. Teaching is just a manual about something. It's not actually how you get to live your life.

When we watch Mahadev and Parvati, they struggled with her being the incarnation of creative manifestation, and he was consciousness principle. Whenever she was involved in an intimate way with creation and asking him to support and collaborate with her, he would always say, 'You're getting too attached,' and he would want to withdraw into the separate consciousness principle of being beyond and above and transcendent of all that. They

struggled with that in the series, but eventually they came to meet in a real collaboration. He really honored what she felt, and what she needed to do and be and live as a truly authentic being. She respected him more because he was able not to disassociate from that with her, but actually embrace her in that, and recognize her as that.

In Adi Da's life and community, I think there was some impulse toward that. And I think in my own awakening, and whoever else awakened that was female, there was some impulse toward it. But it was never met, because primarily he taught through the domination aspect of what he thought would really work as teaching. But he never adapted. He didn't have the creative force of Parvati. He didn't have it, so he never adapted. He couldn't. I think his impulse in dreams to get me there, was so he could begin that, but he never allowed it to happen.

He didn't allow it to happen. Because as soon as he wouldn't treat me as an awakened person that had taken on my own responsibilities for this work of serving others in enlightenment, as soon as I came up against anything that would be truly not helpful toward my own work, or if he would try to dominate my energy and my capability towards his work in such a way that I didn't agree with, I would have been out of there! There is no way I could have endured it! That's why in some ways, I suffered my own psychological catastrophe, but not up close the way other people have. I appreciate the tale of their suffering of it, although I don't think it's been completely exposed yet.

Torrey: I wish it could be exposed - just tell it, get it out.

Santosha Ma: I know! I think one thing about aging is, just tell the story! It's your story, own it! You can't tell other people's stories, but you can tell how their life has affected you, for sure. You can name names! You can say why you feel that way, and not shut up! Not feel like you are too stupid or too naive to be able to tell your own story! Empower yourself and tell it.

Torrey: It's important!

Santosha Ma: It's important! It's important to yourself, and to other people. Many women are in a similar position - not just in that community. As we're older, we have seen a lot of communities have the same problem! This power dynamic where the guru has sex, and the women either comply, or feel oppressed, or are made to feel they have to go through with it. They are not willing consorts, or willingly being *loved* by this person! The guru is using their power dynamic, their spiritual idea that sex has its own spiritual capacity towards enlightenment, and if you do it with an enlightened person that's going to give you the advantage on that. No! It's such bullshit.

Most women haven't compared anything about their sexual experience, they haven't owned their own feelings about themselves as a sexual being. They just have been told by men if they

are pleasing enough or not! They haven't ever been able to stand, in the sense of, 'How was I pleased? Is it just about being pleased? Is it about pleasure?'

Torrey: Or love?

Santosha Ma: Family! Isn't it about family? This is never brought up! What we all talked about Friday night, that sex leads to motherhood and fatherhood, how do you feel about that?

Torrey: It is true. The men were happy!

Santosha Ma: Yes, the men in our group were happy. Men in general, I don't know. Each *man* would have to stand up and answer that question himself, as each woman. But most *women* want sexual intimacy to be connection, and the ability to grow towards family. That's what they want it for!

Torrey: Yes, it's obvious to a woman, but not to men.

Santosha Ma: It's not like women in history are having such profound sexual pleasure, that they just want it to be about sexual pleasure.

Torrey: No! (*laughs*)

Santosha Ma: Men didn't even know how to sexually please women, and haven't forever!

Torrey: I'm not sure they do now. Maybe women are more vocal now, I don't know.

Santosha Ma: No. I was just talking to the younger generations in our Circle, it doesn't seem to be all that different. There is a little more information and access to things, but...

Torrey: That's the patriarchy though. They don't *have* to.

Santosha Ma: Do you want to describe anything else about your journey?

Torrey: There are a lot of details, they are real, and just crappy illustrations of the men and how they treated the women.

Santosha Ma: Well, I think details are good in the sense that you'd say, 'That really happened!' instead of, 'Let's not look at what really happened.' Instead of, 'Wow, that really happened to you!' I think that arouses compassion in people. When people don't want to give the details, but have a lot of so-called 'final psychology' about what happened to them, no. I think a story told from the point of view where the moments of pain are actually exposed, where what you felt and the moments of pain and how it happened, is an important part of the story. It's hard to tell those stories, though.

Torrey: It is, until you do.

Santosha Ma: Until you get to the point where you realize that it doesn't have to define you anymore. You don't feel particularly defined, then you can tell the story. But leading up to it, it's just hard to tell the story.

Torrey: It is hard. Well, that's how the 'cycle of violence' goes. I never told anyone, forever, that I was in a cycle of violence with my husband. I never told a soul. That's why in that household, when the three of us realized we all got hit that day, it was a relief. It might have been the first time that I told someone.

Santosha Ma: Do you think that was in other households, too?

Torrey: Yes, absolutely. It had to be! I lived with this one couple in two different houses, so I didn't know in the other house that Karen was getting hit. I didn't know that. But when we moved in this other house with the three of us, three of us were getting hit!

Santosha Ma: That is so bad.

Torrey: I don't know which one of us said it first. Maybe, 'I can't believe what Richard did to me today', or something. Then Karen said, 'Oh! Mohan just knocked me over in the shower!' 'Oh, Angelo smacked me today!' We said, 'What!?! Really? This is awful!' But that is as far as it went right then. But it was a relief at that time just to say it, just to say it out loud.

Awful stories.

Santosha Ma: Just get it all out. You know, it's not our life now, so we're free. That's why it's OK. I'm not really embarrassed about all that happened to me.

Torrey: I'm not either!

Santosha Ma: Good! Good!

Torrey: That's the great part!

Santosha Ma: I'm not embarrassed, I don't feel humiliated by it anymore.

Torrey: I don't either.

Santosha Ma: I feel like I can do what I want, I can live as I want, I can be happy, I can find pleasure in relationships.

Torrey: It will never happen again! There's not the remotest possibility.

Santosha Ma: It will never happen again! Because I'm not naive and stupid. I'm powerful and free.

Torrey: I'm not embarrassed about it anymore. That's awesome.

Santosha Ma: Then, just get it all out, and if anything pops up for me, I'll say it.

Torrey: For me, the main thing in the community was with Richard. That was the main terrible experience. Before that, with my first husband, we joined the community after being together 5 years, and he mostly was a cheater. He was a musician who cheated on me a ton of times, so that it didn't mean anything to me after a while.

Santosha Ma: I had a similar experience when I was with my first husband, a musician.

Torrey: When we joined the community, nobody cared about that. Nobody cared, nobody said, 'Chris, you shouldn't be doing that.' Nobody said anything to him as far as I saw. Then with Richard! He would hit me. I think within the first couple of weeks he hit me, and I was so shocked that he hit me that I kicked him in the ass as he was going out, then he turned and looked at me and then he really hit me. Then I felt, 'Holy shit.' When I was in high school, the first boyfriend I had hit me, so I believed at that point that that's how relationships were, because it was the first real relationship I'd had.

Santosha Ma: But you didn't see that with your parents, right?

Torrey: I didn't see anything, they were very hidden. I never even saw them argue.

Santosha Ma: Oh, that's how it was. So you just assumed everything was alright?

Torrey: Yes. I assumed everything was OK, so when he hit me in high school, I assumed everything was OK. When Richard hit me, I didn't tell anybody. You just don't say it when you are embarrassed by it. You're very embarrassed by it.

Santosha Ma: Yes! It's humiliating actually, being hit. It's an embarrassment to tell people about it.

Torrey: It's unbelievable to me now. It's unbelievable men feel a right they can hit you. I can't comprehend it anymore! That's what I can't comprehend now - how a man actually thinks he is superior to you! What is superior about a man over me? There is nothing! Nothing! The feeling they have that they have a right to treat me as less than they are, it makes no sense to me anymore whatsoever. I cannot accept it.

Richard hit me so many times, so many. He would just wheel around and whack me. I would go flying across the room and land on a chair if I was lucky, or on the floor. He'd kneel on my arms and smack me in the face. He was terrible. Then I started to realize that I was living in

houses with other women that were getting hit. One time we lived in a house with a single man, and he beat up his girlfriend so badly. She called and I ran to her house to go see her, and her face was bleeding, she had a big black eye, she had cuts on her arm - he hurt her so badly! Nothing was ever done to those men!

Santosha Ma: She didn't call the police?

Torrey: No! We didn't! The first woman that called the police was Ellen. I really liked her. She was a strong and funny woman. But this guy, Michael Costabile, who is such a saint in the community...

Santosha Ma: Oh, what a saint...

Torrey: He beat the shit out of her. I went to the house pretty often. I happened to be going over there, and Ellen is laid out on the couch, blood on her face. Her friend Jane was there too. I said 'Oh my god, what happened?' Ellen said, 'I called the police.' I said, 'You did? Oh! Awesome!' I was so happy! I was so *happy*! That was the first time I'd heard that from a woman in the community. She called the cops because he just hit her and hit her, threw her around the house, in front of their daughter. She had said, 'I'm calling the cops', and they came and got him.

Santosha Ma: They did? Good.

Torrey: I never heard that it went further than that. Just that she had called the cops changed something for me. I still didn't leave Richard for a long time after that.

Santosha Ma: Wow, and he was still hitting you during that time too?

Torrey: He hit me when we were living in this house with that man, the single man who beat his girlfriend up so bad - Tom. He was a creepy guy.

Santosha Ma: What was his last name?

Torrey: Rollison. Tom Rollison. He was dating April for a while. He hit April. Then we were in San Francisco at The Mummery performance, and he was trying to hit on me. He was a real slimy guy.

Santosha Ma: Why do slimy people like that want to go to a spiritual community?

Torrey: I don't know, I don't get it. I really don't.

Santosha Ma: I don't either. Except that it's maybe just average, that most men are like that.

Torrey: I think that's what it is!

Santosha Ma: They still have a spiritual impulse anyway.

Torrey: Yes, even though they have this. It's like Adi Da! Maybe people that were like him just got attracted there! Because there were a lot of men like that. There were also sweet men there, that I knew superficially, I didn't live with them. And I can't vouch for how they treated the women in their lives, either.

Anyway, I was at that house with Richard and Tom, and Richard had recently hit me, the day before or something. I was home that day, and I went for a walk up the hills in the back of the house. All of a sudden, I had this vision of my heart. It was black, and it had worms crawling through it. It was dead. I felt I had to change something, or I was literally going to die. When Richard came home, I told him 'Don't ever hit me again.' I said, 'I don't care if we are getting along or not getting along, if you touch me again like that, I'm leaving.' Then he stopped hitting me. It was still almost two years after that though, before I divorced him.

It was so prevalent. When I look at it now, it is so sad. All those households...

Santosha Ma: Do you think outside of intimidating you and scaring you through physical punishment, then there was nothing there that was worth being with, with Richard? Because you had two years without being hit with him?

Torrey: Yes.

Santosha Ma: So nothing grew, except that he just didn't hit you?

Torrey: He didn't hit me, but then I saw was he was very abusive verbally, emotionally, and psychologically. I didn't notice it before because he was hitting me! But he was terrible. There was a real crisis point where I got so ill that I was crawling to the bathroom. I crawled back, lying in my bed, he starts yelling at me about something. I said, 'You are being so mean right now, stop it. I'm sick!' Every word that came out of his mouth for about two minutes straight was so abusive, and I just looked at him with my eyes opened! I said, 'You are just as abusive as ever.' That was the turning point then. I think I divorced him about 2 months later, when I realized that he was so abusive. I saw it clearly.

Santosha Ma: Did you ever feel that it would be better to just go out in the streets and have nothing and nobody, than to be with him?

Torrey: I had to get all the way there, and it didn't happen fast.

Santosha Ma: We're always there, aren't we? In the patriarchy?

Torrey: Yes. I know it now. I'd be much happier by myself! Out in the street with nothing! I wouldn't even be afraid now. I know I could do it.

Santosha Ma: 'I know I can do it. I'll find some support and get my life going again.'

Torrey: Not back when I was young though. I know you had that strength to trust yourself, but I never did. I don't know why I didn't. I had to learn it.

Santosha Ma: I don't know why I did!

Torrey: You don't know why you did, right! Thank God you did.

Santosha Ma: Maybe I had it so other people could benefit. I could benefit by it, then other people could come to have it. Is it a learned thing? I think so.

Torrey: I think so! It's taken me 30 years!

Santosha Ma: Can it be something you just know? Yes. Can it be a learned thing? Yes. Same with being able to do creativity - it can be a learned thing, yes. Could it be a thing you just know? Yes. There is all that possibility, one way or the other, with almost every expression of life.

Is there any other story? Those are pretty all terrible events. Finding it and saying it is pretty persuasive! In your life in the community, what you came across with the patriarchy, the oppressive obedience, it was to the point of actual physical abuse.

Torrey: It was supported in the community.

Santosha Ma: It was all part of Adi Da's life too. Let's not fool ourselves that it was not part of his life.

Torrey: It was, I know it was.

Santosha Ma: You know, in what has happened in the last year, with women coming out in the culture, talking about being molested and sexually abused? Some of the men, the more prominent ones with the biggest stories, all think it was consensual in some way. Do you think any of the men in that community, in their self-satisfied patriarchal 'I'm entitled' position, think it was consensual too?

Torrey: Yes, I'm sure.

Santosha Ma: And that all the hitting was completely justified?

Torrey: Yes. I do.

Santosha Ma: Yes. So, unless you tell your story from an empowered place, they are not going to get it, are they?

Torrey: No! They won't, they can't. Yes! You have to tell it! You have to.

Santosha Ma: Yes, you have to.

Torrey: Whether they deny it or not, it doesn't matter.

Santosha Ma: No, it doesn't matter!

Torrey: It doesn't matter at all. It doesn't matter what comes of it, you just have to say it.

Santosha Ma: Well, nothing can come of it! You are authenticating your own life! It's not dependent on them in any way! They can't do anything to you anymore! I mean, anybody can do a desperate random act, but why bother?

Torrey: Yes! I'm just an old lady! *(laughs)*

Santosha Ma: To go and try and kill somebody, what's going to happen? You're going to be put in jail for that crime at least. At least we have some bar in this culture! There is not always justice being served, but sometimes there is!

Torrey: I can tell the whole story with my retreat and kriyas.

Santosha Ma: You want to tell that?

Torrey: Yes, I do. I went on retreat in 1990, and went to Fiji for three weeks. It just happened that I was with a certain little group of people - there were about 6 of us. We were all on the plane together, and in Fiji together. Then we ended up going to retreat in Hawaii afterward. We spent a lot of time together during this one month of our lives as Adi Da's devotees, this certain group of people. We all started having kriyas after a couple days of seeing Adi Da in Fiji. These kriyas were very noisy, physical, vocal. There was so much energy in my body! I know this was created by the energy in my body, that my body made different kinds of movements.

Santosha Ma: People have that in other religions, too.

Torrey: Yes! It got wild there, very noisy while we were in Fiji! But we were all happy! Adi Da had said, 'Oh, at least they are receiving me!' He had somebody tell us that. We thought we had opened up to him enough that we were receiving some deeper aspect of his transmission. I attributed it all to him, that it was all him, and it didn't have anything to do with me. So I just figured he was possessing me, like you say.

Santosha Ma: And you were happy about being possessed?

Torrey: I was very happy, because I'd never felt that kind of energy in my life.

Santosha Ma: It was pleasurable to you? Or just bewildering? Or just different?

Torrey: No, I didn't feel afraid of it at all.

Santosha Ma: Did you feel pleasure in it?

Torrey: I felt pleasure and pain both. It was very intense sometimes, and sometimes physically painful. My body would go into yogic positions that were physically crazy for me, that partially hurt and partially felt blissful. There was both pleasure and pain in it. It was mostly the mystery of it that was wonderful to me.

It made me feel stronger, and validated as a person, *myself*! I felt like I didn't want people to mess with me. I didn't want anyone telling me.

Soon the patriarchy there started to tell us we shouldn't be so loud, we shouldn't be having kriyas. Especially when we came back from retreat - nobody said that too much while we were in Fiji. But when we came back it was, 'We've been all through this already, and there is nothing real about it, and no, you're not advanced or anything, and no, you can't talk to the community about it...' They just really put it down, and tried to quiet us all down. I was mad at that. I felt they were trying to crush my relationship to Adi Da, directly. And so I wasn't going to allow it.

Santosha Ma: Were you still having experiences after you came back?

Torrey: Yes! They went on for months after we came back, around 6 months.

Santosha Ma: Did you get tired of them at a certain point?

Torrey: Not really, but they got calmer. It wasn't so noisy. It was just energy moving in my body, not so exaggerated physically.

Santosha Ma: Did having those experiences continue make you feel like you were still possessed by Adi Da?

Torrey: I felt like I was close to him, that's what it made me feel.

Santosha Ma: Oh, ok.

Torrey: It made me feel close to him. All the time I'm trying to get close to him, so this energy of him in me, made me feel like I was closer to him than I was before.

Santosha Ma: Did it ever occur to you that, 'Maybe he doesn't know what's going on with me. It has nothing to do with him?' Perhaps he just was a spark?

Torrey: No. I always gave him full credit.

Santosha Ma: You wanted to have that emotional connection with him.

Torrey: Yes, I did. It was always very personal with me.

Santosha Ma: I understand that.

Torrey: It just was, and he wasn't. *(laughs)* But I was!

Santosha Ma: See, the spiritual path of the Witness is very impersonal. When you get in the Witness position, it's not like...

Torrey: 'My dear loved one!'

Santosha Ma: It's nothing like that. You see everything arising, and you're not identified with its implications as your experience, as your identity anymore. What went on?

Torrey: I was on the Sanctuary at the time. We were in the Chapel, which is a smaller meditation hall next to the bigger meditation hall, the Cathedral. A bunch of people were in the Cathedral meditating, and we 'noisy ones' were in the Chapel meditating, maybe 15-20 of us. It got very noisy in the Chapel, I agree! The next day someone came to me, and said, 'You're going to meditate outside tonight, no one can concentrate in the next room. So, we're going to send you...' Only me?! They sent me out to Landbridge Pavilion, which is outside, in the dead of winter. I had to go out there and meditate during the next meditation time, which was at night. I felt singled out and severely punished, and I thought they were being really cruel to me. They were definitely trying to suppress me, and my energy, and what I felt was my love for him.

Santosha Ma: Now it's your energy!

Torrey: My energy with him...

Santosha Ma: No! I like that you said 'my energy'!!

Torrey: My energy... Yes! It was!

Santosha Ma: Yes! I like that you said 'my energy!'

Torrey: They were really trying to suppress me, and they were going to all lengths, including sending me out in the cold.

Santosha Ma: Did you go out and sit out in the cold?

Torrey: I did. And it is funny, because when I went out there, Carolyn Long was out there! I think she wanted some quiet to meditate! *(laughs)* She was prepared and had a whole down blanket wrapped around her. I had my coat and a hat. It was cold!!

Santosha Ma: It's terrible! That's abuse.

Torrey: I felt hurt by that, that they singled me out. I felt really hurt, and it made me mad, too. I got very mad. I had some really noisy kriyas after that for a while! *(laughs)* Right in the middle of celebrations, right in the middle of videos - I was so mad about it. I did not want to be suppressed anymore by them.

Santosha Ma: But do you think some of your anger made them loud?

Torrey: Yes, after that event, I definitely got exaggerated, because I was mad. Not always loud, but not suppressed!

Santosha Ma: Is that the way you were showing your power?

Torrey: Yes.

Santosha Ma: Good!

Torrey: That's what I did. I felt, 'Fuck you, you're not going to stop me.' Eventually it all slowed down in me.

Santosha Ma: But what if you were *directly* able to say, 'Fuck you!'?"

Torrey: That would have been great. Right when they'd first said it, if I would say, 'Fuck you!' that would've been really different!

Santosha Ma: Do you think at that point you were trying to hold on to the kriyas and expressing them loudly as a kind of defiance of the suppression?

Torrey: Yes! After that event? Yes, definitely. I still had a ton of energy, and also the anger increased the energy in my body. It wound down after a few months. I was on retreat in Fiji in June, and everything wound down in late November.

Santosha Ma: How did you feel when it wound down?

Torrey: Kind of despondent.

Santosha Ma: Oh? You were depressed it had left?

Torrey: Yes. Because then I felt like I'd been part of one of those rounds that I'd witnessed for years, where he fills you up and then he takes it away. It wasn't exactly that, it happened slowly. But I was a bit depressed after that. Not long after that, about 4 months later, I divorced Richard.

Santosha Ma: If looked at another way, you could say that the experience itself and what you experienced, empowered you! Rather than you became despondent and it went away.

Torrey: It's funny to look at it now, I'm glad to talk about it, because it was that in the next few months after that, that I divorced Richard!

Santosha Ma: Your personal life started to move in a direction that you liked, because you were directing it now.

Torrey: Yes, I felt stronger.

Santosha Ma: You felt more like you were directing your own life now?

Torrey: Yes! I could divorce Richard! *(laughs)*

Santosha Ma: Do you think there was a combination of the Shakti experiences, as well as the oppression of it by others?

Torrey: Yes, wow!! That's great, Santosha Ma.

Santosha Ma: Both dynamics contributed for you to have your own ability to direct your own life.

Torrey: Yes, I finally got angry.

Santosha Ma: It wasn't just the Shakti, was it? Just the oppression wasn't it either.

Torrey: No, that wouldn't have done it alone.

Santosha Ma: That's the grinding of life!

Torrey: That's interesting! That's really good to talk about it!

Santosha Ma: It seems for me, the mistakes in everyone's life can grind you into being more authentic, and you can direct your own experience, too.

Torrey: That's how you felt, too?

Santosha Ma: Yes, in my life. You can sit around and say everybody did you wrong, and that's why you are wretched. Or you can say, 'Wait a minute! I'm kind of pissed off about this! Now I'm doing what I really want to do!'

Torrey: Right! Yes! That's what happened! That's a great turn.

Santosha Ma: That is a great turn. Your ability to direct your own life, the Shakti moving - it wasn't just his possession of you. It showed you that there was another possibility in life, and an energy beyond the energy you knew about. That gave you the courage now to start to direct your own life, even when you were being oppressed.

Torrey: It did!

Santosha Ma: You were being oppressed before, but you didn't know you could do that. Now you knew it. It didn't have anything to do *particularly* with Adi Da, did it?

Torrey: The events in California? No! He certainly didn't know about it. On retreat, being right in his physical company, whatever he did there - the kriyas might have to do with what he was doing. I don't know what he did!

Santosha Ma: He didn't do anything! He always says, 'I Am just merely Present,' like Shiva. He's not doing anything!

Torrey: That's so interesting!!

Santosha Ma: Everybody wants to think the Guru is doing something towards them, but the guru is not doing it. I think it's the guru within you, or the spark, or the intelligence that came and said, "I want enlightenment!" that gets sparked by being in the presence of enlightenment. Or it doesn't! But if it does get sparked, then your process is completely unique and different. It is nice to have some things that are relatable to other people who went through this process, or it can actually be relatable to the teacher's own process. But the teacher, I guarantee you, is not doing anything.

He talks about his energy possessing people! That's the way he is, because he is a dominating, possessing kind of character. But if anybody had any experiences, both psychic or spiritual, or just say psychologically beneficial by being around me, I can assure you I wasn't sitting around trying to direct anything like that.

Torrey: Yes, I can vouch for that. I don't conceive of you like that.

Santosha Ma: But I'm not trying to own it, though. Since I'm not a dominating, possessive character, I don't try to own anybody's process or experience. Nor do I disqualify it!

Torrey: No! You give it freely! Like you are right now!

Santosha Ma: If someone says, 'Here is a beautiful art piece I did,' and it's not really good, I'm not so perfectly impartial that I'll say, 'Well, that's pretty good,' I'll just say, 'Oh, keep going, and try more.'

Torrey: You're kind about it, always.

Santosha Ma: I try to be kind about it, because they are doing it, hopefully, not out of seeking some 'special me' status position, but rather because they actually love it!

Torrey: Yes, because they want to do some process with it. I have to say, though, after you've said all that, that being in your company is different than being in other people's company. It does have an effect, even though you're not doing a thing. Sitting next to you is different than sitting next to anyone else. Being in a room with you is different than being in a room with anyone else. It doesn't matter if there are a hundred people in the room with you, it's still different. Yet I can see where you'd say it's not intentional on your part.

Santosha Ma: As I've always said, it's normal for me! If something is normal for you, you don't think it's extraordinary. You don't try to get recognition, or get made special by it. It's just your normal reality. When you wake up, it's just your normal reality to be awake now! So to get any special status or recognition, no.

Teaching is entirely a service. It could backfire and be difficult. It has backfired, and it's gotten difficult. Despite all that, you still have an impulse to it. That is the same way an athlete has an impulse to climb Mt. Everest! Some people say, 'Why fucking bother? You might die!'

There are certain things that are very difficult to do, and if you don't really have a passion or an impulse to do it, don't do it! Don't think that somehow all people that wake up need to teach, or all people that teach are good at it. The fact that anybody does *anything* that can serve *any* spark in *anybody*, whether their flaws or mistakes also create some problems, overall it is still worth it.

Our journey is our responsibility, our own journey. But we're not in a journey where we are not sharing it with the whole world. The whole world is on a journey.

Torrey: We're here together.

Santosha Ma: We're here together; we count on each other in a lot of ways. If it's not understood and felt to be done with respect and love, then whatever is difficult about it becomes *really* oppressive and difficult. In a lot of your experiences, there was a lack of a real human dimension of connection and love, and respect for people's individuality and differences, and patience and compassion. There was a lack of that, because there were just a lot of characters trying to win at the patriarchy game of spirituality! There is nothing worse than spirituality done as patriarchy!

Torrey: I know! It's the worst!

Santosha Ma: It's really bad!

Torrey: For example, there was this one man that I lived in a household with, that was definitely 'part of the hierarchy' there. There was one time, towards the end of my time there, that Adi Da was writing notes, and he wanted everyone to be celibate and eat a raw diet. This was a lot to take on all at once! And this guy, Angelo, was frantic! He was trying so hard to get people to agree to do this stuff, so that he could send some good news to Adi Da!

Santosha Ma: *(laughs)* Did anybody agree?

Torrey: Quite a few people did agree. It was the first time I didn't, and I knew something was shifting because I said no. It was a month or two later I was out of there. When I remember seeing Angelo, he was a frantic mess. I'm sure he didn't realize what he looked like. He's on top of the hierarchy, directing everyone, and doing the direct communication of Adi Da's notes - there was so much bullshit 'position' in that community! I know certainly that he *did* hit his wife, and that frantic energy can be taken out on her. It's so incongruous to me, so gross to me, that someone takes a position, gets stressed by it, and goes home and hits their wife!

Santosha Ma: Well, because he can't stand up to Adi Da's dominance. If you think of some of the people that were living in Adi Da's intimate Circle, they don't really have lives to go back to! Like you, until you got to the place where you said, 'I don't care if I don't know anybody and I'm just out in the streets, I can figure it out from there, rather than take this!'

They say an addict has to get to the place where they know it's the end, before they will deal with their disease. I think in our lack of being empowered and having our own lives as women, we have to get down to 'We're just really being enslaved in the worst way possible!' We have to get all the way there, how terrible it is, that we'd rather just get out, have no place to go, or not know anyone, and start from *there*, than stick this out.

I think some people in the community weren't psychologically capable at that time to get to that point. Someone like Sanial did. He said, 'I can have my own life.'

Torrey: A bunch of people left! That seems so different to me now.

Santosha Ma: They were called failures, and condemned to hell!

Torrey: They were! I was! Eternal damnation! That's what they told me, 'Eternal damnation.' What a drama!

Santosha Ma: It's the kind of dramas done by families, like when you go off and marry someone they don't want you to! Or you get a job outside the state, and you're not supposed to go - you're really *bad* in some way!

Torrey: There is another really gross story of meeting Richard. After I had sex with him for the *first time*, I ended up going to his house the next day, and I met one of his housemates. Richard left the room, and this man Gary said, 'We heard Richard sanctified your hole!' He laughed. A total stranger says this to me! I'd just been made into a totally meaningless sexual object, that he could say anything to and laugh his head off. I felt, this is the community!? I was humiliated, and I was saddened to think, 'This is it? What a gross person! A devotee?' But I had no power to do anything about it still.

Santosha Ma: Now, any indication of any kind of entitled power over you, you're going to run the other way.

Torrey: I'm going to somehow not even be in that room where it is, if at all possible. Then if it shows its head, I'll just leave.

Santosha Ma: When that guy attacked you at your job last year...

Torrey: I'm still mad about that, it still comes up, because he totally denied it, and he learned absolutely nothing! I do feel glad that I did what I did...

Santosha Ma: You did at least get the situation to change.

Torrey: Yes. I have my own space now.

Santosha Ma: Yes, that's the deal. If we're all looking for the people that abused the power to acknowledge it, and to heal and create justice for the people they abuse, it's not going to happen! But if you can now dictate your life under your own directive, without having to encounter that directly in your experience, then that's the best that can happen. That's good!

Torrey: Also, if I encounter it, I never accept it.

Santosha Ma: Yes, don't accept it. I always feel like if I have to die first, if I have to be homeless first, I'll go do that! I'll take death! I'll take homelessness, rather than put up with something that is so terribly physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually abusive.

Torrey: I agree. I prefer death. I would prefer to be homeless in the street and just wander off, free! Free of it! Whatever it was.

Santosha Ma: Our relationship to Adi Da was complicated by the fact that personally, we didn't have any access to him, so we couldn't talk about anything with him. We couldn't see how he really emotionally relates to people directly, or to us directly. He never acted like he

had to, but he had a right to dominate every decision in your life, and emotionally and sexually and spiritually possess you!

Torrey: I felt that very much after a few years.

Santosha Ma: He felt quite free to insult and humiliate the feminine as much as he enjoyed; to use it as a sex object, and call it teaching.

Torrey: Women were so much a sex object there. That's what you were, period. If you did something else, well nice, they could use that talent.

Santosha Ma: Anything you got, we'll take it! But we won't acknowledge you for it.

We both have a story. The outcome to both of our stories has to do with processing a complicated history, both positive and negative. But the negative really mattered, and really had to be understood. Not this idealization of him, and idealization of his life and work.

At the same time, we don't want to throw everything out that has to do with him and his work and life, and our love for him. I don't think we have a particular sense of his love for us though, do you?

Torrey: Not in the physical at all.

Santosha Ma: It's only been in dreams. But over all, it's that this has to be accounted for, for his internal validation of his love for me to go to another deepening level.

Torrey: He showed up in my dreams a couple of times very recently, and was 'ordinary' with me. This is his sign to me that is different. When I first came to you, I had dreams where I was doing something with him, working literally head to head. It's been all this time since, and I've had these two dreams now. One is where we are in the same room and he's doing something and I'm helping him. The other dream is he is just talking to me about the day, relating to me as a close devotee.

Santosha Ma: More like your and my relationship!

Torrey: Yes! That happened in the last couple of months. All the years in the middle, I don't know, it was so rare that I ever felt his love for me. I never felt that he knew me as a person. He didn't!

Santosha Ma: You know, even in his aggressive teaching style and initiations of me, and recognition of me, it was all very rough, aggressive and dominating. With my other teacher Rama, there were certain elements that I got frustrated with internally over the years, but I have to work them out. You have to work it out.

We have to dictate to them that how we feel matters, that how they respond to us matters. The patriarchy operates like this: whatever condition the world is in, *that* comes before whatever condition you are in, or how you are treated. You have to help them help the world, and they can treat you any way they want for that!

Now I say, 'No, it doesn't work that way! If you are not directly treating who you are collaborating with, and depending on to help you to make a spiritual movement here, if you're not respecting and showing that acknowledgment, showing that love and caring towards that person, every time you see them, internally or externally, then no.'

Torrey: What are they going to end up bringing to the world but that kind of abusive treatment?

Santosha Ma: Exactly! It's the bullshit it is! There is a lot of stupid patriarchy in religion and spiritual movements, and in spiritual gurus. I don't know if it is so prevalent that they couldn't even see it themselves, how it affected them directly, and how they became such a part and expression of it, even with transcendental wisdom.

Torrey: Even Rama. He ended his life, or whatever he did.

Santosha Ma: Yes! That to me is a feminine response to what he hit up against that was cruel about the patriarchy. If he had been willing to move toward me, I could have helped him *through* some of that. Because if anybody can help you get through the patriarchy, it's people who are directly suffering it.

This whole patriarchy system can continue if women continue to be bewildered by it, instead of saying, 'No, I'm not buying that! I can generate my own life. I don't have to play along with these stupid games! Your entitlement games, your sexual and emotional psychologically abusive games. No! You need us to continue the race. You need us to use our power, our creativity and our talents to make life move and be better! You have to acknowledge that! Then we'll have a good cooperation.'

Torrey: Yes! Because we are the same!

Santosha Ma: Yes, each person has elements of masculine and feminine in them.

Torrey: I can feel it when I was writing this week.

Santosha Ma: Did you feel any oppressive energy coming towards you while you were trying to process this?

Torrey: Yes! I did.

Santosha Ma: Oh, you did!

Torrey: Yes. I did even the first couple of days. I started writing, and that's when I got angry. The next day there was energy coming at me strongly of, 'Don't get angry, don't talk, don't go there.' I actually stopped for a day! I was trying to figure out, 'Is that my feeling, or what's happening?' Then I thought, this is bullshit. I wrote on my paper, 'I don't care what I write. I don't care what I say anymore, it makes no difference whatsoever. I'm going to write anything that happened to me.'

Santosha Ma: It's like if you're going to die anyway, should you live life to the fullest, or not bother? If you're going to die anyway, should you just tell your truth, how you experienced it, and the validity of that, or just don't say anything? I'm one for engaging life, and engaging in communicating truth.

Torrey: We're all really carrying this burden. We're carrying all this crap in ourselves.

Santosha Ma: Yes! It's not fun to carry. Live life to the fullest! Express yourself to the fullest - the suffering and the joy. Then yes, it feels a lot better!

Torrey: A lot better! I literally feel different, just trying to write this. All along, all the things you are showing us and me, about taking responsibility for your own life...

Santosha Ma: I tried a version of Adi Da's dynamic in my teaching work. I tried a version of Rama's, and I tried a version of other teachers. Throughout, none of it rang true! So I just winged it and adapted, winged it and adapted, based on my own heart, my own receptivity, and how the people could benefit, or weren't benefiting from it. I just kept adapting. I didn't try one mode and then just stick to it no matter what was going on.

I have a rich life, and if it was over tomorrow, it was perfect, in a happy way.

Torrey: See, I feel the same way now.

Santosha Ma: Good!

Torrey: I've had a rich beautiful life.

Santosha Ma: Good! Whatever goes beyond this, when you arrive here, you are free! You are free to express and do what you want, and no one can tell you otherwise. If it turns out you don't like it, it's OK! You don't like it, try something else. If it turns out you like it, you might want to keep proceeding.

Torrey: It's just like you said, it's not embarrassing anymore. Even whatever happens now, it's not embarrassing anymore, it doesn't matter anymore.

Santosha Ma: No! There was a certain point where I felt discouraged and disgusted by some of Adi Da's domination and possession, and patriarchal way of being and teaching. I just

wanted to throw out everything. Then at times it would keep coming back, and I would accept certain aspects. You keep having to ask yourself, 'In what I accept and honor, does that inhibit any of my life and my expression, my own empowerment?' If it doesn't, then you can say, 'OK!'

The same way with any situation or anybody you meet. I can go along with anything as long as it's not deranging myself. It can be weird and unusual or whatever. I'll check it out, and I'll be alright. Then I will either go toward it, or walk away at a certain point. I feel free to investigate it. But I don't want these crazy spiritual escapades!

I wasn't part of that theater, but in my own earlier life, I was with a group of creative people, musician types, and we explored sexual things. But I didn't believe it was going to lead to my greater freedom and spiritual understanding, or that it was going to show me where I was Narcissus! Because I always knew that if sex wasn't really based on a dimension of actual, true companionship and cooperation toward further growth, individually, and toward a family, then it wasn't about anything!! You could have a life, never have sex and be completely free, or have a lot of sex and be completely free. Or you can fuck around with it for pleasure and power dynamic games if you want, and that's all corruption! That's all there is to learn about it.

My sexuality has nothing to do with other people. I've come to that conclusion and feeling. It's nobody else's business. I'm not defined by a secret life of anybody or anything sexually. At any time, whatever response I want to have to it is my own responsibility, and my own business. If that involved eventually meeting someone who has a good emotional intelligence and dynamic that I feel is really enjoyable, then I'm free to do what I want! They won't be able to dominate me with anything. It just has to be really, mutually creative, cooperative, and loving. But if life never brings that, that's fine.

Emily was talking about her own relationship with this man. She's thinking of going into another dimension of the emotional sexual aspect with him which she hasn't entered yet. I said, 'You know, if you love him, go ahead! If you don't like it, pull out! It doesn't have to be all about your tendency, your pattern, or you have to struggle with each other, or call each other on anything. You just do whatever you want, at any time!'

Otherwise you'll never be able to go forward, to see and find out if this is what you want. Once you know you want it, some certain struggle is inevitable, and you are OK about it! Any experience that is intentional will have its good points and bad points. Some will have just bad points and you'll want to leave it. Others will have good points and you'll want to treasure it and continue to do it, to develop it. Others will have good and bad.

It's simple. But to not engage because you see some kind of psychological disadvantage that *might* happen within yourself, I feel then, when are you ever going to be really free to be emotionally related? Or sexually related to somebody where it's not possession, domination games, and power dynamic games? Or not, 'You're here to make me feel loved, but I don't

have to have any response like that, or come up to that for you!?' When are you going to learn all that and get past it?

A full life is when you learn all that and you are free. You are free to engage in a truly incredible way with your own life and the relationships you have with it, and you are happy with it. You have to please yourself first.

It seems like Adi Da did please himself first! But it didn't go that well for other people! (*laughs*)

Torrey: No! He didn't want other people to please themselves first! He wanted them to please him!

Santosha Ma: Well, that's the patriarchy! You know, if you're pleased and the other person is not pleased with you, and you can't find a way to make it mutual, then that dynamic is not for you. How can you have a whole community of people, or even nine women or twelve women where that's all going to work? Obviously, one could have gotten to the place where she was empowered on her own understanding and her own ability to stand ground! To not be dominated and possessed by him, either physically, emotionally, sexually, or spiritually, and just say, 'Hey!'

Torrey: That was only you, though.

Santosha Ma: But I never got to be with him!

Torrey: No, so he never saw it.

Santosha Ma: As I said, at any time in my history, if I got to be with him, as soon as I would see that dominating behavior, I would want to get the hell out of there! I've already lived a life where I've been responsible for my own life, and generating a beneficial effect on others. To want to go back and be treated in any way that I wasn't really happy? I can suffer a child's insecurities, or immaturities, but an adult, and a spiritual master? What would I want to do that for?

You guys were all like my children for a long time, and I said, 'Come on!'

Torrey: 'Let's have a different relationship!'

Santosha Ma: Yes! You kept adapting, and you adapted because I kept adapting.

Torrey: We had to! We loved you, and we wanted to stay, so we had to grow up! Lucky us!

Santosha Ma: Yes, figure it out, and it gets better. It never got better for anybody there. In the last year of his life he didn't even want to talk to anybody! He didn't want to enjoy that

contact! He was too 'transcendental and cosmic' for any of that! He totally went to the Shiva-dissociative method. But he was always talking about being fully incarnate here!

Instead, everybody should just have been having a good time with him toward the end!

Torrey: It should have been very sweet.

Santosha Ma: Very sweet.

Torrey: That's how it is with you.

Santosha Ma: Yes.

Torrey: That's what I was feeling yesterday, it's such a sweet time with you. You are so loving, unbelievably accepting.

Santosha Ma: We don't know how much time we've got left! It's a good thing. The fact that we are going to die and pass out of life, a lot of people react and say, 'Well, why bother?' Spiritual people really use that a lot! 'Why bother to be in life in a way that you are actually generating experience and dynamic with others, that is enjoyed by both parties? Why bother?'

Same thing with owning your own space and empowering yourself there, and telling the truth there! You don't have to, but why not?! You're just going to die!

Torrey: You're going to be happier, I can tell you.

Santosha Ma: It does open up a space where you get all the psychological oppressive crap out. You don't have to carry it around with you anymore. It's a story that happened to you, but you're not carrying it anymore.

Torrey: It doesn't mean anything except what you learned.

Santosha Ma: Yes! The gem of learning. Understanding.

At this point in my life, I really feel happy not only that I am already free, that happiness of that realization. But just the pleasure of my life is happy, even though I am aging and suffering all that. I am happy in the pleasure of life as well! Whoever, no matter how convincingly spiritual they are, or just ordinary or great or egoic they are, I can meet them on any terms.

But I don't think there is anybody that can tell me anything that I need to improve on in my happiness, because I am really happy! In my life, I am happy with the pleasure of my life, even though there is suffering in it. I haven't seen anybody able to have the artistry, the capacity, the empowerment to live my life in this way that I am truly happy with. I don't want to be like

anybody else. I don't want to know anybody at any expense that I have to give up my authentic, happy, pleasurable enlightened life. I don't want to have to do anything like that.

Yet my door is completely open! They can come! There is no hierarchy to come through. Say you show up, and you want to learn how to be with me. You want to stay with me. Then you'd figure out how to do it! And I'll figure out how to do it with you! If nobody comes, it's fine. I'm living a happy, pleasurable life.

I'm sure there will be interesting and unusual events still to happen in my life. I'll take on different things that I'll be enjoying. I'll be suffering health crises, and the crises of my friend's health, or their suffering, and I'll be helping them get through it. We're here together. I don't have a big community, I don't want a community.

There's no hierarchy and different levels you have to get through! None of that here! You do whatever you want, because if you choose it, then you get to be liable for whatever happens, and you know it's you choosing it.

Torrey: And then you can learn.

Santosha Ma: You can learn! If somebody else dictated to you, or dominated your choices, then no, you don't get to learn. It only happens through you owning your own suffering, through your own choice, that's how. Whatever suffering Adi Da put people through, it doesn't make any sense to anybody. They don't understand it. It has to be their own choice directly, and if they chose poorly, it is chosen *directly*.

You can't just bond to a great force, a great idea, a great transmission, somehow be given this special thing called enlightenment, and everything will be great and there will be no suffering. You still have to live a life. You still have to deal with that there is suffering. You are going to encounter it in all sorts of manners.

How free is your freedom, and how deep is your love? How deep is your enlightenment if all of it becomes a terrible ordeal and burden to you? Poor Rama killed himself, and Adi Da was always blaming his community and everybody around him, and Tripura, for whatever didn't happen that he thought should have happened, or wanted to happen.

Torrey: That's not clear, what he actually wanted to happen.

Santosha Ma: I don't know! The thing is, he dominated our lives so much, but we get to know so little about the man. And that's what Julie said! She wished she had asked him more personally how he was experiencing things. But that would have de-mystified and humanized enlightenment, and I don't think he wanted to do that. Have we covered everything? Are you good?

Torrey: I'm good! That was more than I ever imagined! Thank you.