

# **SPIRITUAL BYPASSING IN THE THERAPY ROOM**

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# SPIRITUAL BYPASSING

“There is a certain temptation, which I can observe in myself as well, to try to use spiritual practice to rise above the difficulties of unresolved personal problems and emotions. ... Insofar as we want to get away from difficult personal issues and emotions – all the sticky, messy things that keep us rooted right here – we may try to use spiritual practice to do that. I have come to call this tendency to try to avoid or prematurely transcend basic human needs, feelings, and developmental tasks, “spiritual bypassing”” (Welwood, 1984, p.64)

# ANATTA-BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY (ABCT)

“According to the teaching of the Buddha, the idea of self is an imaginary, false belief which has no corresponding reality, and it produces harmful thoughts of ‘me’ and ‘mine’, selfish desire, craving, attachment, hatred, ill-will, conceit, pride, egoism, and other defilements, impurities and problems. It is the source of all the troubles in the world from personal conflicts to wars between nations. In short, to this false view can be traced all the evil in the world” (Rahula, 1974, p.51)

# LIBERATION UNLEASHED

- [www.liberationunleashed.com](http://www.liberationunleashed.com)
- A global movement dedicated to helping you to free your mind from the illusion of a separate self
- Direct Pointing: A one-to-one dialogue between a seeker and a guide triggers a shift in perception known as crossing the gateless gate (Ciunaite, 2016)
- Launched in September 2011
- Over 200 guides, over 2,000 successful seekers

# Liberation Unleashed

## A phenomenological study of helping others to see through the illusion of a separate self

**Abstract:** This study examines the experience of those who help others to see through the illusion of a separate self. The Buddhist doctrine of *anatta* is reviewed and its potential for the basis of a 'third-wave' cognitive behavioural therapy is explored. The organisation Liberation Unleashed (LU) is introduced and its online method of guides helping seekers to see through the illusion of a separate self is described. Using a qualitative approach the study examines the experiences of six LU guides. The six participants were interviewed and the data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Witney, 2017)

# WARNING SIGNS

- “the attempt to bypass the developmental tasks of identity formation and object constancy through a misguided spiritual attempt to “annihilate the ego” has fateful and pathological consequences”  
(Engler, 1984, p.52)
- “to see the self as an irrelevant illusion isn’t just unhelpful but also counterproductive. It will actually intensify and extend the suffering of the separate self, not end it” (Taylor, 2017, p.247)

# TABLE OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Number of Years as an LU Guide</b>	<b>Number of Successful Guidings</b>
P1	5 years	173
P2	3.5 years	44
P3	1 year	6
P4	2.5 years	28
P5	2.5 years	13
P6	1.5 years	15

# THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

**What percentage of Liberation Unleashed dialogues lead to the shift in perception known as crossing the gateless gate?**

# THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

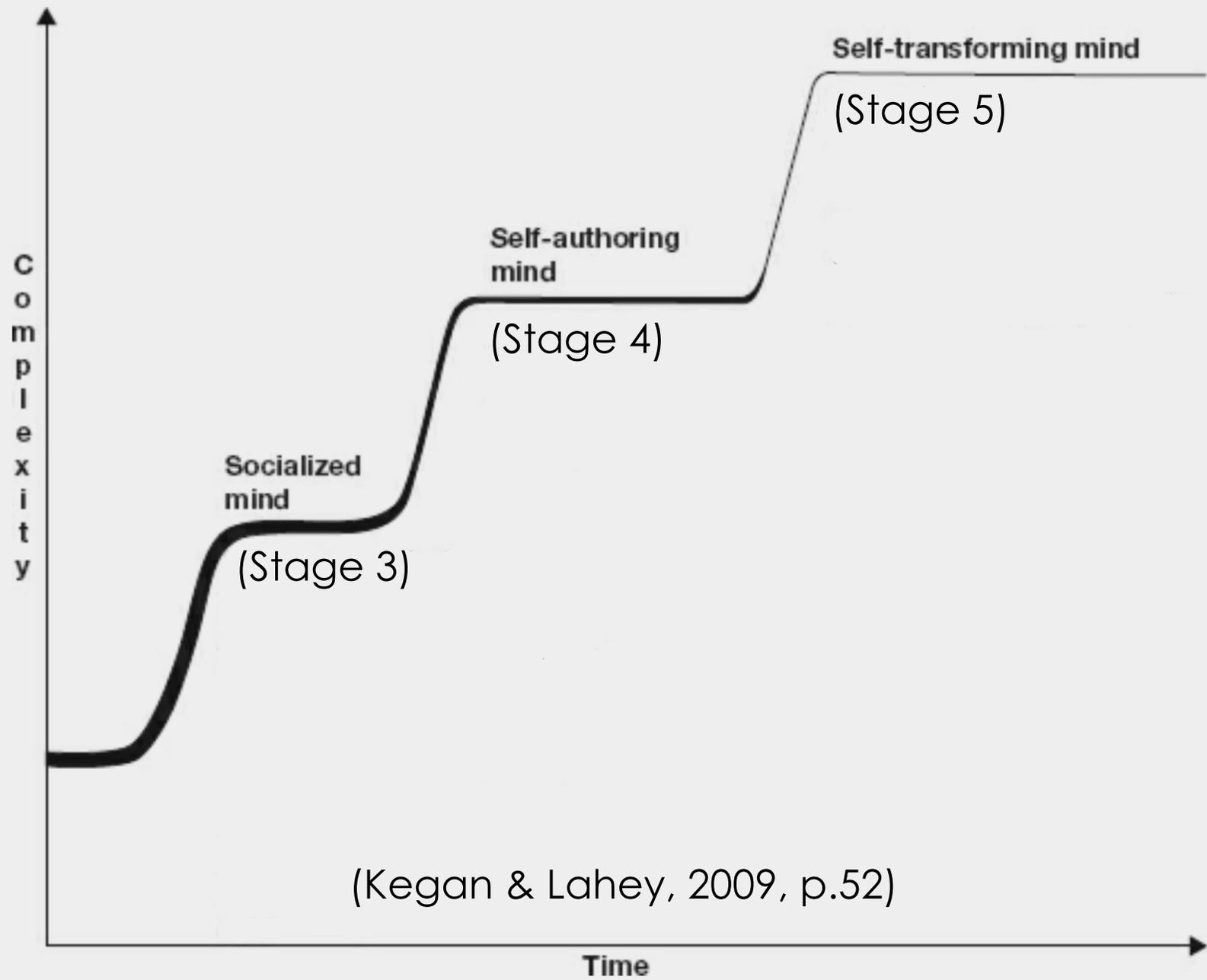
What percentage of Liberation Unleashed dialogues lead to the shift in perception known as crossing the gateless gate?

45%

# THE EVOLVING SELF

- “both a sense of self and a sense of no-self seem to be necessary – in that order – to realise that state of optimal psychological well-being which Freud once described as an “ideal fiction” and the Buddha long before him had already described as “the end of suffering”” (Engler, 1984, p.53)
- “If you want to understand another person in some fundamental way you must know where the person is in his or her evolution ... Because the way in which the person is settling the issue of what is “self” and what is “other” essentially defines the underlying logic (or “psychologic”) of the person’s meanings” (Kegan, 1982, p.113)





## BEYOND STAGE 5

“Do I think that the fifth order is the highest stage of development? No! I think that eastern and western literatures which think about higher states of development actually converge on an idea of a kind of egolessness ... The highest state of consciousness would be one ... where we're able to fully take the world's perspective, where there's no kind of subjective distortion any longer. You can call that egolessness, you can call it a form of enlightenment” (Kegan, 2013)

# SUBJECT-OBJECT THERAPY

- Subject-Object Interview self-identified “spiritual teachers”
- Analyse the transcripts and identify “Stage 5” participants
- Qualitative analysis of the interviews
- Develop “Subject-Object Therapy” from the findings
- Subject-Object Interview self-identified “spiritual seekers”
- Analyse the transcripts and identify “Stage 4” participants
- Practise “Subject-Object Therapy” with the participants
- Interview the participants about their experience
- Qualitative analysis of the interviews
- Present the findings

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