

# Continua of Practice Series

## CONTINUA OF PRACTICE: ADAPTATION TO SURRENDER

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by Rodney Smith | June 9, 2015

“Awakening: A Paradigm Shift of the Heart,” Chapter 5 will deepen your understanding of this talk.

Some of the continua are a shift in the predominant organ of use (from mind to heart), other continua are the qualities that arise from this shift (from unconscious to conscious), others have to do with the perceptual alteration that occurs (from separation to non-separation), and still others like this week’s topic deal with the internal activities associated with moving to the right side of any continua (from adaptation to surrender). We start our spiritual journey wanting to change our lives in meaningful ways, but there is only one way that we know how to do that. We try to alter our inward life to fit our desired outcome. We nourish a calming and relaxing attitude, we effort a more focused awareness, we begin to struggle less with our annoyances, and simplify our lives so there is less stress and tension. This works well and over time we feel more inward space from these accomplishments. For many, this is as far as they wish to go; for a few others these tasks are the foundation from which they move toward a deeper abiding

If we desire to move further along the path than these adaptive responses, the path shifts radically. Up until now, we have served ourselves well and established a better life, but we are still front and center within the life we are living. This is the counter-influenced moment on the scale, where we must switch from adaptation to surrender. Adaptation simply means changing our inward monologue to fit the changing circumstances. We might say to ourselves, “I feel hot and tired. Just relax into the heat and soften your resistance. Now, that’s better and I feel more comfortable.” We actively adapt our lives to be more dharmically oriented, releasing here, loosening there, turning away from one thing, and cultivating another, but this has kept us within our own self-control. Adaptation is something initiated by us and under our volition. The next step is out of our control and is far richer but more problematic. We are being directed toward faith, which is the release of our own control. Surrender is releasing our narrative, the very process that connects the sense-of-us to the activities of mind and body. Surrender is what we do when adaptation no longer works. By surrendering our narrative we are releasing our separation and no longer shoring up that distortion through continuous modifications.



See [Series Overview](#) for a description of this diagram.

## FOR YOUR CONTEMPLATION

How much will you fight to protect your comfort level? If someone interrupts a comfortable focus like reading a good book or watching or listening to your favorite program, what is your response? Is it an adaptation or a complete surrender? That is, do you feign listening to the person or begrudge the interruption but reluctantly concede the need to have to listen, or do you completely change focus dropping any desire to return to your book for the duration of the conversation? The difference is subtle but spiritually significant. When you surrender, you drop the narrative that binds you to the alternative, in this case how much you would like to continue reading. When you adapt to the distraction, the narrative continues and pulls your attention away so you are only half listening.

*This series is based on the book, "[Awakening: A Paradigm Shift of the Heart](#)" (Shambhala 2014).*