



# Painting the Sidewalk with Water: Talks and Dialogs About Nonduality

By Joan Tollifson

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## **Painting the Sidewalk with Water: Talks and Dialogs About Nonduality** By Joan Tollifson

These lively talks and dialogs are about seeing through the illusion of separation and waking up to the boundless wholeness that is all there is. Joan's approach is open and explorative, questioning all attempts to conceptually grasp and frame the movement of life. She talks about seeing through the stories and beliefs that create our human suffering and waking up to the simplicity of what is. This book beautifully dissolves the apparent dichotomy between the uncompromising "*this is it, just as it is*" message of radical nonduality and the emphasis on "*being here now*" that is found in many meditation teachings. Joan has an affinity with Buddhism, Advaita and radical nonduality, but she belongs to no tradition. In these talks and dialogs, she takes on such perennial questions as, *Is there a way out of personal and global suffering? Can we choose to stop addictive and destructive patterns? Does being awake take effort, vigilance and practice, or is it effortlessly and unavoidably always already the case? What happens when we die?*

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### **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

This is a wise, humorous and heartfelt book. There is no dogma or extra baggage, just a continual return to the truth that we fundamentally are. --Jon Bernie, author of *Ordinary Freedom*

Through a wider-than-average variety of dialog questions, [this book] offers fascinating insights into the interplay between the absolute and the relative, the sublime and the everyday.

--Greg Goode, author of *Standing As Awareness*

While pointing out the dreamlike nature of this world, Joan does not close her heart and eyes to its beauty and suffering.

--Leo Hartong, author of *Awakening to the Dream*

*Painting the Sidewalk with Water* is a gently relentless tour-de-force saying, in many captivating ways, that it is not necessary for life to be anything other than what it is. --Suzanne Foxton, *Nothing Exists, Despite Appearances* blog

“This is a wise, humorous, and heartfelt book. It's also an important step in the process of creating a straightforward and human expression of non-duality for our times. Reading *Painting the Sidewalk with Water* is like relaxing with a cup of tea next to the fireplace with Joan—there is no dogma or extra baggage, just a continual return to the truth that we fundamentally are. One of the things I love most about this book is that it dissolves the seeming dichotomy between what's often called 'radical non-duality' and traditions that emphasize more structured, intentional practice. As non-duality matures here in the West, it's time we left this illusory dichotomy behind. Ultimately, as Joan points out so clearly, it is fixed views and beliefs—including beliefs about whether we should or shouldn't be doing so-called practices—that are the greatest obstacles to spiritual fruition.”

—**Jon Bernie**, author of *Ordinary Freedom*

“Joan's latest book is wise, honest, down-to-earth, and brave. Through a wider-than-average variety of dialogue questions, it offers fascinating insights into the interplay between the absolute and the relative, the sublime and the everyday.”

—**Greg Goode**, author of *Standing as Awareness*

“This expression of the inexpressible mystery of being cannot be labeled. It is a message from beyond the daily ups and downs of life, and yet it is firmly rooted in ordinary, everyday experience. While pointing out the dreamlike nature of this world, Joan does not close her heart and eyes to its beauty and suffering.”

—**Leo Hartong**, author of *Awakening to the Dream*

“*Painting the Sidewalk with Water* is a gently relentless tour-de-force saying, in many captivating ways, that it is not necessary for life to be anything other than what it is. Unlike many writers on the subject of non-duality, Joan doesn't dismiss the relative nature of ordinary day-to-day life, but rather puts it in its place as

being the ever-changing face of the absolute.”

—**Suzanne Foxton**, author of the blog *Nothing Exists, Despite Appearances*

“This book is a wonderful brew of non-dual considerations, investigations, and excavations. Its detailed descriptions of life’s certainty and doubt, its ups and downs, and the myriad worlds that inhabit a split second are remarkable. In those passages, it’s possible to feel the absurd, mysterious, unformed dance that existence is. The honesty of this account, and its open salute to all that life offers, typifies what it means to be liberated.”

—**Darryl Bailey**, author of *Dismantling the Fantasy*

“Delightfully human, entirely accessible, and very enlightening.”

—**Chuck Hillig**, author of *Enlightenment for Beginners*

#### About the Author

Joan Tollifson talks and writes about what remains when everything that can be doubted falls away. Her main teacher was Toni Packer, but Joan also studied with a number of Zen teachers and spent time with several Advaita and radical nondual teachers. Joan is also the author of *Bare-Bones Meditation: Waking Up from the Story of My Life* (published in 1996), *Awake in the Heartland: The Ecstasy of What Is* (published in 2003 and again in 2006), *Nothing to Grasp* (2012), and she is currently at work on a book about death, aging and non-duality. Joan has been holding meetings about nonduality since 1996. She has lived in Chicago, New York, and the San Francisco Bay Area, and she is currently living in southern Oregon.

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