

# How Best To Spend 10 Minutes With An Old Man?

Chris Doris  
with  
Ivor Browne





In 'How Best to Spend 10 Minutes with an Old Man?' artist and psychotherapist, Chris Doris continues a series of works which have utilised silent observation of the self as a present time

process, rather than as a fixed entity. These works employ a series of facilitated, sequential inquiries. They begin with observing the self. They then move to shared attunement to the wider field of relationship.

In this work, Ivor Browne acts as the skilled, facilitating presence in what is a form of joint inquiry into relationship as the ground for both self-formation and transformation. Ivor Browne was Professor of Psychiatry at University College, Dublin and Chief Psychiatrist of the Eastern Health Board. He is still a working psychotherapist and author. Ivor has been practicing Sahaj Marg meditation since 1978.

The old man sits in a large empty room but for two armchairs and a small table. The participants sit outside in silence, awaiting their turn. On entering the room, the participant sits silently, face to face with Ivor Browne. Ivor strikes a singing bowl. Both parties sit in silent self and mutual attunement until the sound of the bowl stops. Then, Ivor inverts the 10-minute timer. His is an open, facilitative presence to whatever the participant construes as priority and possibility within this 10-minute relationship. When the time runs out the bowl is struck once more. Both sit in silent integration until the resonance ends. The participant leaves in silence. What has occurred is held in confidence by Ivor Browne. After a short break, the next person enters. This process continues from 11am - 1pm and from 2pm - 4pm on

June 15, 2013, in the Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, Ireland.

Fundamentally, "How Best to Spend 10 Minutes with an Old Man?" is a form of inquiry into relationship as a conditioned and conditioning process, as well as being the context for transformation. It asks us, 'what becomes visible in response to this invitation to meet briefly at depth?'

As an artwork, 'How Best to Spend 10 Minutes with an Old Man?' is oriented towards emptiness as the ground of physical reality. There are forms, however, that may be extrapolated from this spare work of self-portrayal in relationship. There is the biology of consciousness, the neuroscience of mirror neurones and inherent mutuality. There is the process of self-formation, object relations, psychological constructivism and the like. There is that what we construe as a free agent - a self - may well be a conditioned and conditioning self-process generated through relationship and numerous layers of internalized responses. There is the relational field and its subliminal activities or the Buddhist understanding of self as an inherently insubstantial process. There is the precious capacity of attention and the conditioning of both it and perception. There is the potential for profound transformation in momentary human contact (with a spiritual Master for instance) and its implication for what is viewed as possible and dangerous in this and other relationships.

'How Best to Spend 10 Minutes with an Old Man?' employs the perspective that the necessary and constraining self-system can open to a less conditioned, more spacious state of Being. This can happen through Awareness in relationship.

