

My Non-Opening

By Max MacArthur

I have recently been 'opened'. The helpers — all of whom were very good to me — say I have. I say I have not. But they very kindly and gently insist that I have. In my opening, I just stood there, while the others did their latihan. This was the first time I 'witnessed' the latihan. I say 'witnessed' within inverted commas, because during the entire proceedings I had my eyes closed, as recommended. I didn't feel a thing. Is this normal?

The helpers all say they felt they had a very strong latihan when they opened me. Although I was touched by their vote of confidence, I really felt nothing. Well, if practising the latihan is a crime, there isn't a shred of evidence to convict me, while all those around me would have no defence.

From the time I first made contact with a helper, I attended all the pre-latihan sessions over three months without fail and with great eagerness. In that time, the helpers told me about Bapak, nafsu, animal and vegetable forces, ancestors, the prophets from Adam to Mohammed, etc. I wasn't interested in coming up with my own opinions, because I was intent on receiving the latihan. I had read so much about the benefits the latihan has had for so many practitioners. If the latihan is what it is cracked up to be, I wanted to receive it.

Following my 'opening' I persevered and attended all the latihan, but nothing has happened to me. 'Why am I so special?' I mockingly ask myself.

I try looking for articles in Subud Vision on experiences of the opening or 'first latihan', as some prefer to call it. So far in my search, I find very, very little written about it. To be fair I haven't finished reading all the articles in the six Volumes. David A, in his 'Awaiting My Opening' makes no mention of what happened in his opening. If there are articles where the authors describe what actually happened in their openings, I'd be interested to read them. I can name only two so far: Bronte Grivell's 'Open to Whom' (with only a very brief description) and Michael Irwin's 'How I Latihan'.

In fact, what I would most welcome is information from people who didn't feel anything at all in their 'opening' but didn't 'scoff, but remained to pray' and were subsequently opened.

This is not only important to me, but to all newcomers. All inquirers should be thoroughly prepared by the helpers on what to expect in their openings: whether they move or shout, or whether nothing happens. That way, there would be no surprises, and what is most important, no disappointments. Otherwise, what is the three-month wait for? And if nothing happens, what next?

I must admit I'm disappointed. Perhaps I've concealed my disappointment too well. If it is normal that nothing happens in an opening, then please tell me that. One of the helpers has told me that perhaps they have not stressed to me enough the importance of being patient, sincere and submissive.

But how long can one be patient, when in the meantime you have nafsu, Ramadan, change of names, sab'r, Bapak-speak, etc. thrown at you while you remain unconvinced you have been opened?

Do I feel like throwing in the towel? Yes, especially when it comes to attending the latihans. To stand there for half an hour without feeling any benefit while all the others are having a whale of a time can be demoralising ('What the hell are you doing here, old son?' I find myself continually asking). Why go to the beach when you can't swim? If only people were truly able to put themselves in the shoes of others, especially those they are trying to help! Is this the reason why many have left Subud very soon after their 'openings'? Perhaps they weren't opened after all? But how do you survey people who have left? Aren't they, in fact, the most important participants in a Subud survey?

But I digress. I am the one who needs help.