Discussion Questions for Part I of the assigned reading on Tolle’s A New Earth

1. What does Tolle think of current state of humanity? How are we doing? What evidence does he give, and what does he think it suggests about our overall mental health and well being? (10-13)

2. What is the difference between thinking and consciousness?
   - How does Tolle view thinking (30, 54-55)?
   - For Tolle, what is the problem with words (25-27)?
   - Where would awakening fit into this set of ideas for Tolle?
   - What would be a hypothetical example to clarify his distinction?

3. For Tolle, what’s the difference between a false sense of identity and a true sense of being?
   - First, how does he think we generally construct our sense of identity (27-29)?
     - What are examples of things people identify with (29-30)?
   - Where does the ego fit into this set of ideas for Tolle? What does he mean by the ego? (27-29)
   - What does Tolle mean by content vs. structure? How are these ideas related to the ego? (34-35)
   - What is an identity enhancer (35)? Why would that be a problem?

4. Address the following stories:
   - What is the story about the schizophrenic woman? What is the lesson of that story?
   - What is the story about the intellectual professor? What is the lesson of that story?
   - What is the story about the lost ring? What is the lesson of that story?

Discussion Questions for Part II of the assigned reading on Tolle’s A New Earth

1. Why does the ego like enemies (60, 73-74)?

2. Why does the ego love resentment (62)?

3. What are Tolle’s ideas about nonreaction to the ego in others (63-64)?

4. Does Tolle think that we should just let others walk all over us and that we should just grin and bear it? (63, 74) Does he think inaccuracy should not be corrected (67-68)? Explain.

5. What are Tolle’s ideas about religion (69-72)? How might some see his ideas about “Truth” as self-serving and/or as sacrilegious (71)?

6. How is Tolle’s view of war similar to Zinn’s view (74-75)?

7. According to Tolle, what is the ego afraid of, and how does this explain its aims (80)?

8. Why does the ego like gossip and name dropping (81-84)?
Discussion Questions for Part III of the assigned reading on Tolle’s *A New Earth*

1. What are some examples of roles, and what’s the possible problem with them to Tolle (87-94)?

2. What does Tolle mean when he says unhappiness has nothing to do with who you are (95-96)? Also, why does he say, “don’t seek happiness” (96)?

3. To Tolle, what are some pitfalls in playing the role of parent (97-98)? Also, what are Tolle’s ideas about telling those around you—such as parents—about their egos (99)?

4. What is Tolle’s parenting advice and why? That is to say, what do children want and need (101-106)?

5. Why do we play roles, and what do you think of Tolle’s explanation about this (109)?

6. What is “background unhappiness,” and what sorts of thinking correspond with it (112-115)?

7. For Tolle, why is egoic behavior like paranoid schizophrenia (118-121)?

8. What is the collective ego, and why does Tolle see it as a problem (125-126)?