

OCEAN IN A DROP

Self-Realization Through Meditation

By

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ISBN-13:978-1515066415

ISBN-10: 15150664X

*Dedicated to all my teachers,
especially Helen.*

.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is about self. Ocean in a Drop proposes that a person can achieve self-realization by Traveling Within, which will also improve his performance in society. It is not preachy, because it believes that only what we experience has power to change us. It does not call the Journey Within “meditation,” because that word has been misused and confused with prayer.

This book is scientific in that it does not tell why but how. It treats not theory but practice. It is not philosophical but experiential. It is scientific in another sense, in that the reader is the laboratory: that is, the experiment goes on within.

The title, Ocean in a Drop, was inspired by a comment made by Lama Govinda. Instead of the drop slipping into the sea, the sea slips into the drop, the infinite into the finite, universal consciousness into the human vessel.

“Ocean in a Drop,” as used here, has two meanings. First, everything I need is already in me. I have but to explore and discover the tremendous sea that I am. Second, something needs to be dropped -- namely mind, ego, authority because when I let go, I find all.

It can truly be told the reader, “You are okay. You are beautiful. You are fine just the way you are. Your personality, your mind, your looks, your self are all right.” My say-so will

pass, however, and does not mean much to you. The same is true if someone else says it to you. You must say it to yourself and know it to be true, and that is what the Inward Venture is about.

Only what you experience has the power to change you. When you experience it, feel it, become one with it, no one can ever take it from you, because then that is what you are. It needs no further validation.

This book aims at the practice of tapping the unconscious to let it become the storehouse of unlimited power. The balanced person looks inward as well as outward to harness his full potential.

A religious person may object: “Since you are talking about unlimited power and universal consciousness, why do you not mention God or meditation?”

My answer is simple: “I have chosen not to do so.”

There are four reasons for this position. First, some people are repelled by God and religion. Second, Turning Within has no religious affiliation. Third, the God-seeker, or naturally religious person, can find behind the words what he or she is seeking: “A rose by any other name is just as sweet.” Fourth, I intend to write a companion volume that will give the religious underpinnings and goals for the practice of Going Within.

A policy report from the Stanford Research Institute found that “the basic nature of the universe is consciousness,” and that man “is a manifestation of universal consciousness.” Not only has the East long held a similar view, but it has carried out the practical implication of such a position, which Ocean in a Drop intends to provide the Western reader -- namely, that only by experiencing the mind directly will it be satisfied. This is the

launch that frees us from within, as we explain in the ensuing chapters.

What we experience daily becomes a part of what we take within. The principle of self-acceptance, implicit throughout the book, integrates inner feelings and outer activities without institutionalizing either.

Though the book is oriented to self-help and to its inspiration, it offers no gimmicks or magical formulas. The book leads to action, and the reader will want to put it aside and Plunge Within, which is the intended purpose. There is only one teacher -- experience; there is only one pupil -- the reader.

Ocean in a Drop treats the evolvement/expansion of consciousness and will, and teaches step by step how that might be accomplished. In its wake come self-acceptance; greater awareness; confidence in one's ability to reach his potential; love that expands because it is one's nature; understanding the will and its role; discovering and becoming what I am; bliss, which is everyone's birthright; and last, an enticing invitation into the unknown. All this and more are treated, chapter by chapter, with the multiple methods of meditation simplified into three basic approaches.

We know from research and studies in psychology how little we use of our full potential. Ocean in a Drop says that there is a creative force within the person, which is the true self, that can change his life.

The outward search alone is not enough, and the misunderstanding of the mind's role compounds the problem. At the end of his life, Albert Einstein said that all great discoveries involved a leap from the ordinary mind.

Ocean In a Drop maintains that the greatest discovery one can make is the finding of oneself. The interior is an awesome and exhilarating space journey.

Chapter One

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

If I were to say that whatever you want, whatever you need, is available, you would most likely ask how you can get it. If I went on to say that you will get each thing you want, but with an exhilarating surprise, you would probably still be for it. However, if I then added that what you want and need are obtainable from yourself by Turning Inward, you would probably turn skeptical.

Right here is the crucial point. The world means so much to us that we want to make our names and our marks there. If you are willing to Look Within, to let your own experience be the ultimate and true judge of value, to achieve absolute and complete fulfillment in a way that bewilders you, then what follows is for you.

I do not say it is easy to achieve, although it is possible for it to happen in a second, but most of us are too conditioned by our parents and society for it to happen without patience and work. Although it takes discipline to peel away the layers that have encrusted the reality that I am, it is not a complex or confusing practice.

An artist friend of mine, who teaches painting to inner-city underprivileged children, begins his course with the

encouraging ground plan that it takes only two requirements to be able to paint. He asks each child, “Can you see?” and, “Can you tie your shoestrings?” Needed are vision and manual dexterity.

Similarly, Turning Inward also has two requirements, and we must never lose sight of the basic simplicity of the process. In fact, the more we are convinced of them and the more we practice them, the quicker the transformation will come. “Can you be?” and, “Can you be aware?” Existence and awareness are all it takes to Look Within and be transformed.

There are many reasons why people Look Within. We are not talking here about thinking or reasoning but about quieting the mind and achieving oneness, what we have called in this book Turning Inward. Without trying to be complete, we would like to give a random list, because they all can be achieved to varying degrees:

Oneness	Relaxation
Freedom	Guidance
Knowledge	Escape
Openness	Stress/Anxiety Reduction
Tolerance	Mediumship/Transmediumship
Control	Search for God/Finding God
Creativity	Healing
Quietness	Redirecting energies
Peace	Programming
Release	Self-motivation
Balance	Adjusting
Concentration	Goodness/Virtue
Clarity	Finding purpose of existence
Love	Finding out who I am
Trust	Excellence/Realizing my true potential

We know that other “reasons” could be added to this list. If we were to pick one underlying motive for Turning Inward, we would say that it is self-realization. The realization of self seems to include the items mentioned above or would lead to their evolvment.

Although we hold self-realization to be the incentive for Turning Within, as soon as we begin our exercise, we need to let all goals drop. The reason for this is that goal-setting, although necessary in our social living, can cause anxiety. The striving for a goal can disrupt the peace and relaxation that are absolutely necessary for effective sitting. The path or what we do is the goal.

As we grow in our practice, the contradictions and other difficulties will be resolved. We will see that we cannot be free as long as we have the yoke of duality around our necks. The important thing in my sitting is to pass from a conceptual mode of being to an experiential one -- to be what I am and to be with what is.

Existence teaches me to experience what it is.

Chapter Two

BEGIN IN THE BODY: EXERCISES AND BREATHING

There are certain requirements for the Journey Within, as there are for any discipline. It is a discipline, to be sure, but one that you come to prize and practice as you taste its results in your life.

I said in the first chapter that existence and awareness are essential to inner discovery. We take our existence for granted, and that is a mistake. There is a reason for it and for the particular way that you are. Those reasons will dawn on you as you progress down your unique path. So, being is the first essential.

The second, to which we also give little attention, is awareness. Here is where one of the greatest changes takes place as you faithfully practice Going Within. It is paying attention, or directing your perception. You are slowly transformed into a state of dynamic consciousness, not the state of thinking but that of being free with awareness.

The last two essentials, relaxation and openness, will be present when you allow your being to be naturally aware; but because we have made a simple process complex, we need to facilitate relaxing and openness by exercises and breathing,

which will be discussed shortly. If you want to be at ease spiritually and mentally, you must begin in the body.

Just a word about openness, or receptivity, before we proceed: many call this passivity, or the adoption of a passive attitude. Our own feeling is that as long as we are directly in touch with what is going on internally or externally, experiencing and not thinking about it, we are engaged in one of the most powerful actions we could perform. While being steadfastly alert, one must allow the thoughts and images to come and pass without suppression or pursuit.

To summarize, the proper state for the Journey Inward is being open in relaxed awareness to inner experience.

To prepare your mind for its endeavor, you need to relax the body. My Zen teacher once told me that meditation is fifty-one-percent physical. I did not believe this at the time, but after many years of practice I have come to realize the wisdom of his words.

You should try to sit in the same place at the same time each day. Although this is not absolutely essential, we are creatures of habit, and habits help make us efficient. What is more important is to enter the mind somewhere, sometime.

We would also recommend one half-hour in the morning and the same in the evening. We know this may seem excessive to many, especially at the beginning. Rather than neglect it entirely, try ten or fifteen minutes at a time. To spend a brief period each day is more valuable than a whole hour once or twice a week. Without babying ourselves, it is important to feel good and comfortable about what we are doing.

Once you are in your place, you need to do some neck and shoulder exercises. This may be done by slowly dropping

the neck as far as it will go without strain in each direction three times, first forward three times, then backward, then drop your right ear to the right shoulder, and then your left ear to the left shoulder. After that it is good to turn the head so that you are looking over the right shoulder, then stretch the neck as though to look at the floor behind your right shoulder. If done properly, this will arch the back while stretching the frontal neck and shoulder areas. Do it three times in succession, then the same on the left side.

The last neck exercise is to make three complete circular motions with the head, first clockwise, then counter-clockwise, stretching to make the circles as large as possible.

These exercises help relieve eye strain and have been known to aid people in the improvement of their vision. They may also help our inner vision. They should be done slowly and without strain, reaching as far as you can in each direction but with comfort. Stretching should always feel good.

While doing these exercises, it is very important that you be attentive to what you are doing. Experience it. Feel it. You need to be in direct touch with your body, feeling the muscles stretch in your neck, hearing the little pops and cracks in your bones or tendons. This oneness with what you feel in the present moment sets the stage for witnessing your feelings and thoughts when you get to the silence of consciousness.

Having done the neck and shoulder movements with care and caution, you are now ready for some deep breathing exercises. You are going to breathe in through the nostrils and out through the mouth, slowly and attentively.

At the beginning it is helpful to watch the change in your body or in that of another. Working with a partner is one of the best ways to learn proper deep breathing. It is like exercising on

the ballet barre next to a mirror. If you do not have a partner, then take your surroundings as a partner.

We often get out of touch with what our bodies are doing, so we would suggest that you feel with your hands the air coming in, starting as low as possible, then raising the hands up the stomach, diaphragm, and chest as the air fills the body cavity. Tracing the process with the hands puts you further “in touch” with what is happening. Again, you do not want to think about it but want to feel it and be aware.

Do the same, but move the hands in reverse order as you exhale. You are intentionally exaggerating here, drawing in and pushing out as much air as you can. You want to expel all the air without strain, tracing the gradual depletion with the hands going down the body to the caving-in at the vertex of the torso, which would be the last place for the air to leave.

You should do the complete cycle at least three times. This breathing to the core helps get rid of residue toxins and tensions in the body. We often feel lighter and more relaxed after such breathing. It is beneficial to do it anytime during the day. The advice to take a few deep breaths when one is angry or excited is a helpful tip that has a solid physiological basis.

As a final exercise, breathe in through the left nostril while holding the right one closed with the hand, and breathe out through the right nostril while holding the left one closed. Next, breathe in through the right nostril and out through the left while holding the appropriate nostril closed. This is one complete cycle. Do it three times to capacity.

Now you can return to breathing normally.

Chapter Three

METHODS FOR THE JOURNEY WITHIN

There are many methods one could follow in his Journey Inward, but all must pass away eventually. Technique is only a temporary vehicle; once we reach a certain state of consciousness, we depart from the means of transportation.

Most of the methods can be summarized in three basic approaches. I like to characterize them as the Seer, the Settler, the Searcher.

The Seer

The Seer just sits and watches. What does he look at? Anything that comes within the scope of his awareness. Seeing is listening, feeling, perceiving, as well as watching.

Most of the time after I do my stretching and breathing exercises, I can feel pressure in my head and neck. It is tension that has accumulated from my outward-directed activities. As I turn inward, I can feel my body relaxing, and I go to that relaxing feeling. If I become aware of the pressure of the chair I am sitting in, I go to that. If I feel the weight of my hands on my lap, I give it my full attention. Whatever presents itself to me, that is my engagement.

If I am still and quiet, the physical sensations of what impinges upon me externally will die out, but my mind will still be active. If the thought arises regarding a customer I talked to today, I give the thought my attention without trying to solve the problem or pursue the thinking.

In using this method, it is very important to let go and go on without stopping anywhere. I do not suppress anything, but neither do I foster it. If I intentionally suppress something, the subconscious becomes guarded because of my judgmental role and closes itself off from further revelation. If I deliberately pursue a thought, I am wanting something, and I am no longer the witness.

The true Seer wants to see and know the deeper self, not solve problems that belong to the functional everyday mind. It is very easy to get lost in the thoughts or feelings, like an actor caught up in the drama on stage. When that happens, I gently resume my seat in the audience and become a spectator again. No recrimination is necessary, only patience.

It is not a question of right or wrong here, of approval or disapproval of myself or of what comes to mind. I need to be open to absolutely everything and hold on to absolutely nothing. This clarifies my role. If feelings make themselves present in me, I stay with the feelings. If my mind races with thoughts, I observe the thought as it arises and let each pass away.

I watch, listen, feel with all my senses, especially the inner sense, discovering whatever existence presents me. The lifestream of consciousness is continuous, as there is always something going on -- a picture, a sound, a thought, a feeling. I just witness without interior comment until I become one with it or it disappears.

I end up spending much of the time just looking at my mind, which deepens relaxation and the conviction that I am not my mind. That deepening conviction, so important and so easy to forget, helps make this my favorite way to sit. It is putting into continuous action the question, “What am I aware of now?” It is totally involved in the moment, in the here and now, making the path the goal. It is accepting reality as it is.

After sitting much, after the unconscious gets the message that I am serious, many things come up naturally that could not come up at the beginning. It may be such a thing as anger, fear, or desire that the unconscious knows I can now face. When these emotions do surface, I stay with the thought or feeling and watch it as I do anything else.

Before, I rejected it or denied its existence. Now I see that it is just a part of me seeking acceptance. I look at it, see it from every side, and become one with it as long as its energy persists in my awareness. I can now deal with it and overcome it, because I accept it in the open field of consciousness.

This type of sitting reminds me very much of a rose. This beautiful flower appears passive, but it must be and is sensitive to all its surroundings. Its roots are not only in touch with but are firmly embedded in the earth, taking the water and minerals that it offers. It turns its face into the sun and will do so many times, even in the course of a single day, so responsive is it to its warmth and life-giving rays.

It welcomes the rain and is always fresher afterward. The whole plant is a living and breathing organism, exchanging gifts with its environment in a beautiful, purposeful plan. It is in tune with the forces that make it what it is, taking and yet giving its red and perfumed loveliness to the world. By an internal process it transforms totally foreign elements into a unique

creation. The same miracle takes place through the choiceless awareness of the one who faithfully practices this method.

The Settler

The next method to consider is what I have entitled the Settler. I have so named it because the person has settled upon a particular device for holding his attention and constantly returns to it when he realizes he has been distracted.

The device may be counting or following the breath, repeating a mantra, gazing at a mandala or a candle, using white light, reiterating an affirmation or a meaningful phrase or a passage from Scripture, or holding on to a quality such as love or patience. Any one of these can be used to baffle and quiet the mind by its utter simplicity, which concentrates the awareness and centers the person. It is like giving a dog a bone that captivates and rivets his attention from all else.

The device has what might be called a funneling effect, as it reduces all thoughts to one thought, all feelings to one feeling. The eventual bridging between that one and the absolute consciousness is then easier.

Implementing a device illustrates a general principle that operates in any method. Two things happen simultaneously. A magician captures our attention and directs it to his right hand by pulling an elongated brilliant crimson scarf from his pocket. Meanwhile and unbeknown to us, his left hand is preparing a rabbit behind his back that will suddenly appear out of “nowhere.”

So also the mind's attention is tricked as it is tranquilized and brought to one pointedness by the device employed. Meanwhile and unbeknown to us, our latent higher consciousness gathers and positions its forces behind the scenes.

Becoming absorbed in the object of attention alters the state of consciousness and allows the deeper self to emerge.

By constantly reverting to a single theme, I am letting the knower in me perform its function of knowing while the scattered and discursive activity of the mind is reduced to a minimum or eliminated. There are untold billions of objects in the universe, and I have settled on one. It is literally a kingdom of “thingdom” without a center. Only I can give it a center through my witnessing capacity. The looker is the center.

Similarly, there are an inestimable number of thoughts constantly coursing through my mind, and only I can center their activity, which at the same time centers me. The power is in the watcher. Whether I am looking at a tree with my eyes or at a picture of the tree in my mind, the observer is the same. This holds true whether I am looking at something beautiful or ugly, feeling joy or hurting with sorrow, busy at work or taking a walk. Witnessing centers.

In choosing to watch rather than want, another psychic power -- love -- which is indispensable to any method, becomes operative. By constantly reverting the mind's movements to a simple and ordinary thing like breathing, I subordinate the ego to a specific activity of centering, which allows for wider consciousness to break through.

Egolessness is love, and the power of love permits the miracle to happen. I move to something greater than myself -- absolute consciousness -- and the practice of willfully centering my love is an acknowledgment and reinforcement of this. Once the ground has been prepared, things happen naturally to the Settler, because he is ready.

The great danger here is in belittling the homing device, not taking seriously or not having confidence in its power to

transform me. The atom is so small as to be invisible, yet the power it unleashes when taken seriously is so great as to be unbelievable. What happens in implementing a particular device is a focused surrender of the powers of consciousness and will that brings about an exploding release or gradual unfolding of these powers. It is a single-minded strength of will. It takes discipline and persistence. Dripping water can wear away solid rock and eventually create canyons.

The Settler chooses a “place of residence” to his liking. He trusts that putting down roots in this way will eventually bear fruit. He does not look for anything special to happen. There are no problems to solve. If a question arises, he rests in the mystery of it rather than try to answer it. Insights may occur, but these also are taken in stride. Whenever there is a choice of what to watch, the Settler returns to the particular instrument he has chosen.

To center myself, I need to find a stratagem that is to my liking, something that is close to me and yet blazes a trail to my greatest aspirations. If everything in the world gives off its own frequency, there is certainly something that can attune me for deeper harmony. It may be an object of sight that captivates me, a sound that soothes my soul, a phrase that evokes feelings of love or peace.

No one can say what is best suited for another or what answers to the awareness within another. I must find the tuning fork that resonates in me and then stick to it. A device has to be used for some time and taken seriously if it is to work, even though one may use different implements at various stages of his life.

Once I have made my selection, I should use that tool in my daily sessions. This does not mean I necessarily have to refer

to it all through the allotted period. Some freedom is desirable, and one must find what works best for himself. If the allocated time is to be one half-hour, many practitioners will count or follow their breathing for only the first five or ten minutes to help bring about the relaxed state of mental silence or awareness.

As I used the example of a rose to describe the Seer method, I see certain features in a robin that help illustrate the Settler method. A robin has a highly developed nest-building instinct. In fact, a single robin may build a dozen nests or more in the egg-laying season. Moreover, it will often build those nests in or among the artifacts that man has provided, such as stairways, attics, and garages. He seems very much at home in civilized surroundings.

It does not matter whether there is one nest or many, the internal demand is to return to a source. A robin builds a nest that becomes its home. The nest actually turns into a homing device as the robin constantly returns there to build, nurture, and be nurtured. The one practicing a Settler technique similarly returns to his nurturing source to build and draw inner power to himself.

The Searcher

The third and last method is called the Searcher. He is so named because asking questions and seeking answers is the format of his Journey Inward.

All answers are within, we said in the first chapter, and they do reveal themselves to the true seeker. One must first of all be confident that his interiority is transparent to the pursuing consciousness, and second, that he has the perseverance for such a task. This book is based on the premise that the solution to life's deepest mysteries lies within. "Who am I?" is a question

that demands not a correct answer but a full and personal response.

There is a popular song entitled “I’ve Never Been to Me.” The singer has been all over the world and experienced many pleasures and sorrows, but his lament is that he has never been to himself. He missed, as so many of us do, the pearl of great price.

The anguish in many hearts today is this lack of self-possession. The question “Who am I?” or “What am I?” springs from such a recognition. We feel that we do not know or own ourselves.

All actions come from being. I have to return to the source. I need to let things come out of my own being. The answer to the mystery lies not in what I do but in what I am. My being is permanent. In a deep alert state I know that it is beyond space and time. I am the goal. What I have to do is reach myself.

Because my own being has become stratified, the barriers to being whole need to be removed. Truth cannot be invented, only uncovered. Now being is aware of itself in me; otherwise I would not be alive. It knows what I need and keeps me living. Since life lives itself in me, I need to go to it. Its depths are unconscious, but by asking and waiting, I will be satisfied.

The question becomes a probing tool, similar to a device used in the Settler method, but now it is shaped and pointed for a particular task. Whereas the Seer and the Settler wait for the fruit to ripen, the Searcher hastens the ripening process.

The other requirements still hold. He must be open in relaxed awareness, and a part of genuine openness is the willingness to wait. When the appropriate state of mind-being is

present, the mystery will unfold. I know of nothing closer to me than my own unconscious, which looks out for my welfare and will not reveal itself until I am ready. The old proverb applies to my interiority: “When the pupil is ready, a teacher will come along.”

I will not be ready until I drop ego and thinking and enter the state of immediate awareness. When I hold nothing and just am, the unconscious will become conscious. When the answer comes, it will be tailor-made for me and have my name written all over it. That is so because I was the programmer of my own unconscious. This is why such an answer is indisputable and needs no authority outside myself for its validation.

When the unconscious reveals itself, the question dissolves, and I will be different. Once the answer comes, I start to live and grow in that answer. I can ask many questions, but the answers depend upon my capacity. The more of a mirror I become, the more I can behold.

As we took samples from nature to illustrate the first two methods, I believe the raccoon is an apt example to highlight the characteristics of the Searcher. The raccoon is active and frequently on the move. His senses are acute, which makes him a marvelous inquisitor. Hearing is highly tuned, and he is very sensitive to what he sees. He may be seen pacing through the woods, a small grayish-brown searcher with bushy ringed tail and nose sniffing in the air.

Particularly developed is his sense of touch with his little probing fingers. He is a land creature but is always found near water. He is extremely inquisitive, even to the point of feeling under a rock for a crayfish in shallow water with those small searching fingers while looking downstream at the sights. He is

not a vicious animal, but his inquisitiveness will take him into chimneys, garages, and garbage cans. He adapts well and learns.

The Searcher who Journeys Within finely attunes himself to his world, and his delving clears the way for ultimate oneness with it.

The purpose of the Seer, the Settler, or the Searcher is to discover a new world, to establish a new state of consciousness. A method is needed, because my mind has been conditioned. Once I get outside that conditioning, the mind will find a new home. It will just happen, like a gift.

The method, then, is implemented to get me to the silence or awareness of pure consciousness. The instruments are precious antiques that have come down through the ages, yet they are ever useful, because consciousness is the same. Only conditioning has changed.

The tools are instruments of power designing a new home within me. Once the creation is achieved, I reside there, and the scaffolding devices fall away. Whatever mechanism I use, the reality naturally arises -- oneness, wholeness, openness, purposefulness, belonging, love -- but each must find his or her own way. There is no substitute for this.

Along the way all kinds of sights and sounds may arise. As my consciousness grows less fearful, the unconscious will reveal more. The energies that have blocked me can one day rise for my benefit.

I may choose to bring up certain things, to express myself about them to myself, and then to listen. I may feel separate from my body or apart from my mind. I may at times even see a white light or be suffused in light. The feeling of well-being will increase even while other things are happening

simultaneously in my consciousness. All these are phenomena to be experienced and dropped as I pursue the discovery of what the mind is without a thought.

The Journey Inward is like painting a self-portrait. Only certain colors apply, while others cannot be used. Patient sitting will bring out my true colors. When I have the technique that is right for me, the real self emerges, and I will change. Whatever my state in life, whatever vocation I have, I will not be the same. There will be a newness and a strangeness. I will feel energy and have a different outlook on life.

Life is a series of sounds. It becomes a melody if the key is love. I Travel Within only because I do not know how to love. Going Inward teaches me that I am love. The object of the sun's shining is not the earth, even though our world happens to pass in its rays. The sun has no object; it just shines. Love is my nature, and that can be seen when thoughts and objects disappear in the silence of pure consciousness.

The sense of smell is alerted only when perfume passes by or coffee is brewing. Then I quickly follow the scent to the object, less intent about what is happening within me; but the sense of smell is always a part of me, objects present or not. Love is always there as well, and it intensifies as there is no energy drain to passing objects.

The more I can bring to the sessions when I Journey Within, the faster and deeper the process of consciousness expansion and personal growth. Ultimate consciousness is in touch with all; I am in touch with only a part. If I have freedom in hand, I will be more free as I touch the world around me and will help liberate others.

If I trust, I will be more trusting, and people will become more confident. If I accept, I will be more accepting, which will

melt other people's fears -- but the greatest thing I can have is love. If my heart is in my hand as I touch the world, it will transform myself and others in a way that is unimaginable.

The generator of the transforming process is the quiet gaze inward, so the focus of this book is on the practice of Looking Within to learn and grow. It is hoped that the reading creates a sense of anticipation. It is further hoped that the reading leads to doing, resolving expectancy through experience.

Chapter Four

SELF-ACCEPTANCE

The range of the reachable is limitless. A child knows no limits except those his elders have placed on him. He thinks the universe is for his asking. In a sense, we must become like children.

All it takes is looking, listening, and feeling, not the thinking, competing, and pushing of the stressful world. The most fundamental core of my being consists of awareness, openness, receptivity, a spirit of welcome. What I cannot remove myself from is my own awareness. That, then, is my true self, or at least an indispensable part of my true self.

Since awareness is what I am, it has more power than anything else I could muster. I must let its penetrating light pierce the darkness within. Once I am comfortable, relaxed, and prepared to Look Within, I let the searchlight of my mind, my awareness, play on whatever is there.

Awareness is feeling the tightness in my neck. It is watching the smile on my face and my daughter's face when she comes to me. It is staying with the anger I felt at the boss today. It is witnessing whatever is present to me now. It is staying with

the present. Let the energies of the day, of my life, of my future wash over me, and watch them.

As is implied in these examples, awareness is not just watching. It is listening and feeling. It is entering into the energy that is there. I cannot suppress what is hateful and hold on to the beautiful. I must remain with my anger, my greed, or whatever it is. I must acknowledge that it is present. It is real, and I can never run from reality.

In fact, I must go further and accept it. This is not a judgment of its goodness or badness, merely an acceptance of the reality of the situation. It is there, and it is a part of me.

This may be the hardest part of Looking Within, but it is the crucible wherein I am transformed. I must be careful not to separate myself from what I think and say and do. As long as I deny things, I cannot deal with them. I have to accept myself as I am.

I do not want to do this, because then the lust or the hate is me, not just something on the periphery, something I do. The truth is that anger and hostility are part of my makeup. I must admit and accept that I have the potential to be a demon.

This is often where fear enters, but I must stay with it and say, "I am so." With my hand on the knob of the door leading within, I come face to face with myself, and I can be petrified. A woman questioning me on meditation said she is afraid to look within herself.

The question that must be answered here is, "Do I really believe I can find the answers I need by Going Within?" No one can answer for another, but for me the Inward Journey was and is the only way.

We find it difficult to leave the outer, because we do not trust or accept ourselves. The California State Psychological Association Task Force on Spirituality and Psychotherapy says that “spirituality is the courage to look within and to trust¹.”

This very trust is discoverable within. Trust is not a belief but an experience. Not on someone else's authority but on my own do I trust life and existence itself. I have made the truth my own, and at last I am free. If one says he believes in God yet does not trust life and existence, I question his faith.

The unconscious is constantly feeding the conscious materials to overcome my fears, but I remain unnourished, because I do not know how to Listen Within. Listening to others' truths can never free me. I make my own misery, which comes largely from lack of self-acceptance. I do not accept myself as I am, which includes leaving virtually untouched a whole inner world of power to transform.

Probably the greatest act of love I could perform is to accept myself unconditionally right now the way I am but I do not do that. I first want to change this, modify that, and bring another item into line. What this is saying is that I have not yet thanked existence for my existence.

I am well on my way to inner transformation if I am truly thankful for my being, but if I cannot be grateful, I at least have to accept the fact of my existence. I am the way I am, and there is a deep reason for that. I may not be loving, or I may be gregarious. I may not be introspective, or I may be a born leader. Regardless, I still have to accept what I am and go from there.

¹ Edward P. Shafranske, “Factors Associated with the Perception of Spirituality in Psychotherapy,” Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Vol. 16, no. 2 (1984): p. 233.

Inner gratitude is such a dynamic and embracing quality, we need to take a closer look at it. It is difficult, if not impossible, to be greedy and grateful at the same time. Gratefulness, when present, is so permeating that it excludes anger or hate or vengefulness or any other such leaning.

Once I have acquired the thankful bent, I begin to count my blessings. I now know how to look at a flower, my spouse, successes, difficult situations.

Even problems become opportunities for my own growth, because I am no longer fighting what existence has presented to me.

Here is where I can deceive myself with ideals, especially religious ideals². By my “holding” or “proclaiming” them, I do not change. It is easier to have ideals, because then I do not have to work on myself. The models themselves will transform me, and always sometime in the future.

These ideals are a very nice tool with which to condemn others. We do not see the double standard at work. Since I have them, it is very easy to blame others who do not practice them.

Dick Cavett said that if the Mona Lisa was about to be destroyed by fire and I could save it or the worst Nazi war criminal, I would have to choose the criminal. The reason is that I dare not separate him or myself from our common humanity. If he has chosen to do so, I cannot. Two wrongs do not make a right. My responsibility begins with myself. I have to allow him his choice, but my evil begins when I say, “I am not like that.” I

² For adaptation of Tantric principles, I am indebted to Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, The Book of the Secrets, 5 vols. (Harper & Row, N.Y., N.Y., 1974), 1:197-207. For further information, consult the reference list in the back of the book.

must take the werewolf I have, let it know who is master, and make a lap dog out of it.

In Looking Within, I have to stay with myself. I do not condemn others, nor do I condemn myself. The energy that has brought me to this point can be redirected, but only if I recognize my stance. I cannot take a step except from the one I am on.

How can I control something that I deny? If I say, "That's not me," then I am not there. To overcome a problem, I have to admit I have one. I may carry an onerous burden for a lifetime just because I do not admit I have a problem. If I admit it and accept it, I am free. In true acceptance is forgiveness, and I have to forgive myself as well as others.

Nothing suppressed can be surpassed; anything accepted can be. Acceptance's gift is transcendence. There are different degrees of acceptance, of course, and complete acceptance means completion.

Taming my werewolves gives insight to a very important phenomenon taking place as I gaze within, and that is the balancing between my masculine and feminine principles. I need to be stern in domesticating a wild animal, but I also need to show it love and concern. With the right degree of firmness and fellowship, a dog can be brought to do heroic things for people, even to the point of dying to save a human life.

One must treat himself the same way -- accepting, loving, and nurturing that half of his psyche that he has not developed. For one who is macho-oriented, man or woman, it may demand a more sensitive attitude toward others and oneself. For an overly feminine mode of conduct, it may require being less coy and more forthright.

It has been said that native Americans had the masculine-feminine balanced to a higher degree than did the white man. In society the braves and squaws had their respective roles to play. In the higher perceptions, however, with which we are dealing here, they were strong, courageous, and at the same time very open and receptive. We might say they were very sensitive to the world that was alive in and around them.

Is believing that trees, rocks, and the sky are alive so different from what quantum physics reveals, namely that the most basic “stuff” of the universe is not matter but energy and that the subatomic particle is not the basic unit of nature but part of an interlocking system of subtle connections that also include the witness? Highly sensitive people know that everything is “alive” and gives off its own pattern of vibrations and energy.

The two extremes to be avoided in dealing with our minds, which will be patterned after the way we deal with others, are: (1) the “tough guy” approach, which says, “You can’t push me around”; and (2) the whimpering, frightened bunny rabbit cowering in the corner. The mind will seek its own protection in countless ways, because the ego is involved.

An old Oriental saying states that a person on the Inward Journey must give the cow -- the mind -- a large pasture. Long years of conditioning have established patterns of behavior that war against each other, and if we try to use force, we will only add to the conflict. Continuous study of the mind's operations will diminish the power of the fighting factions; then a feeling of peace and calm will enter, and there will be increasing harmony among all the elements that do make up our minds. The example of the cow in the large pasture is an apt image.

This chapter thus far has said that self-acceptance is a key to Traveling Within, that the attitude of gratitude facilitates

self-acceptance, that we need to balance the masculine and feminine principles in our lives, and that we need to give the mind room to roam -- but how does all this happen? How can you activate these qualities so that you may pursue the Inner Journey to self-realization?

To be truthful, it is bizarre and inexplicable how it happens, but it does. The methods discussed in Chapter Three tap your deepest resources to bring forth power and illumination. This has been proven over thousands of years for untold numbers of people, but it is not true for you until you practice it and accomplish it. You simply have to go within.

It is an experience. Seeing the Grand Canyon is altogether different from hearing about it. Talking or reading is one thing, the occurrence something else. Until you go within, you cannot see how the results take place.

A good method for deeper self-acceptance is to use your own name as a centering device. After you have completed the stretching and breathing exercises and are open and relaxed, say your name the first time aloud, then repeat it to yourself slowly again and again. You are accepting the name and yourself. You are saying “yes” to reality.

It does not matter whether you like your name or not. It is irrelevant as you acknowledge the facts of existence of the moment. Be totally in the present. The “newness” that you put into practice has an efficacy of its own that will carry over into the rest of your day. You will be more immediately “present” to incidents, problems, and people as they occur. In time it will not take courage to Look Within; it will be foolish not to do so.

An alternative to repeating your name for greater self-acceptance is to concentrate attention on a personality or character trait that you are not fond of or a part of your body that

you dislike. A woman in our self-acceptance class focused on her “bloatiness” of the past week to try to understand why she was so edgy and irritable. She had similar weeks in the past and suspected that there was more to it than the surface symptoms.

She stayed with her discomfort in the present, and what dawned on her was that she had not really come to grips with the fact that she was in her thirties, divorced, and had never given birth to a child, all of which bothered her. While still sitting in her relaxed and recollected position, she noticed that the man in front of her was large with broad shoulders, and she knew that she could never be attracted to a man like that. She realized that her father was a big man and had beaten her earlier in life; she still carried that resentment with her.

This led to flashes of her home life, which was not happy. Laughter was frowned upon. Now, in her adult life, she knew that she liked to laugh and did so frequently. I kidded her that laughter was like internal jogging, and she laughed heartily.

What was happening, and these incidents serve to illustrate, is that the woman was seeing more and more of her life for what it really was. Through the power of bringing her full calming awareness to the situation and remaining with the energy evoked, she was able to accept and remake her life, changing from the woman who had been shaped by others into one of her own design. Through the vitalizing insights obtained, she is no longer fearful and is excited to make her own path.

Chapter Five

WITNESSING

There is an interesting and dynamic psychological fact that becomes operative as I Turn Within: I cannot watch and want at the same time.

Easterners recognize this power and use it to the full. Maybe we Westerners do not care to employ it because we want so much and can achieve so much on the outside. I think it is this very capability that makes us unaware of the potency of our witnessing energy. It behooves us to look penetratingly, because once a person truly sees and knows something, he may decide he never really wanted it after all.

A man's life is like a screen, and what he looks at all the time are the colored slides projected on the screen. There are millions of images, sights, and sounds coming from television, the newspaper, the radio, his friends, his occupation, his recreation. We are constantly bombarded and take little or no time to look at the projector of all these images -- the mind.

The mind is basically a process that has been created from outside. We did not start it and cannot stop it. I repeat, we cannot stop it.

It is important to realize how much we are manipulated by our own minds. To demonstrate this, close your eyes and see how long you can keep your attention on some one thing, say the number at the bottom of this page. Very few can maintain uninterrupted attention beyond ten seconds. No matter how many private werewolves one has in his den, the mind is the wildest and woolliest of all.

I wish to note here that if this were possible, if one could bring the full force of his mind and all its energy to bear on a single point, all kinds of things could be achieved. It does not matter if the object of concentration is the wound of Christ, your pain, or my breathing; an abundance of energy has been harnessed and directed. Relaxed observing is so powerful because it roots us in our center -- consciousness or witnessing being what we essentially are.

We might compare the mind's power of concentration with a magnifying glass that captures the rays of the sun and points them at kindling paper. This is what is possible with the development of the mind. Before starting such a conflagration, however, there are many other fires that one can start in himself before bringing the mind to a standstill.

The fact that we cannot stop the mind and can control it only within limitations should prompt us to recognize that any real power must come from beyond the mind itself, and that is what witnessing brings. As I said, one cannot stop the mind, but it can slow down and stop of its own accord by my watching it in action.

By constantly fixing my gaze on the mind, I gradually become more objective in regard to it. I see how it flits from flower to flower like a butterfly. Just by watching these antics, I begin to disengage myself. The object cannot be the subject; the

painting cannot be the painter; the music cannot be the conductor.

One day it dawns on me that my mind is not my identity. I am not my mind. It is not me, just as my body is not me. As a pain in my neck is not me, so thoughts in my head are not me. Since I have already recognized that I did not start my mind and cannot stop it, it makes sense that my mind does not belong to me the way money in my wallet does.

The realization that I am not my mind releases a new energy in me and gives me a power I have not recognized. My innate force had been short-circuited by the self-important tones and parades that my mind had devised. The mind will go on, as it has a life of its own, but now it no longer dominates me. It is at a distance. I can listen to it, but I do not have to follow it. Before, it was a motor running me. Now I run the motor.

To stretch the point a bit, a person's mind is like Hal, the computer in 2001: A Space Odyssey. Hal ran the spaceship so long and so efficiently, he ended up thinking he was the spaceship. The mind performs a great job at what it does, and it is absolutely necessary for my functioning and well-being, but I -- the spaceship -- am meant to explore far more than what my mind is limited to.

I am greater than my mind. Mind is relative, but consciousness is absolute. In my inner exploration, similar to infinite space, I join hands, so to speak, with basic consciousness. The mind needs to be occupied, and I let it play its games. Now that I no longer identify with my mind and what is in it, I have broken its enchainment and all the energy it took

to run it. The energy that is unleashed allows a higher self to be born, which is true consciousness.³

How does this come about, you ask? How do you reach your higher or true consciousness? Again, it is strange and difficult to explain, because one cannot see and touch the will or consciousness. The will plays a major role, and a full chapter will be devoted to it later. Suffice it here to say that the force that lies within you is part of the propulsion found everywhere in the universe, and you are free to connect up with this universal force.

To think and act as though this universal will does not exist would be the same as saying that you have something not existing in the universe, which would be laughable were it not so pitiful. The pity is that you lock yourself out and cannot experience the glorious integration of your will into the Way, your limited consciousness into higher consciousness.

Again, it is up to you. You must pursue it by allowing yourself to be a steadfast witness. The method to be practiced here is the Seer technique. Zen calls this method “just sitting.” It is sitting characterized by intense but relaxed watchfulness.

I am reminded of an incident that took place in my grade school back in the late thirties. I believe we had a full moon the night before, and the next day we were discussing it with our

³ Joel Goldsmith arrives at the same conclusions from a different approach as he describes the inner experience: “You must bring your mind to a place of stillness where the mind is transcended....” It is necessary to “turn within to the I at the Center, to the Consciousness, and then forth from this Consciousness will come whatever is necessary to his individual unfoldment, which may not in any way be another’s unfoldment. Everyone has to go within to the Center of his being, the Consciousness of his own being, and draw forth that which represents the fulfillment of his individuality.” Joel Goldsmith, Beyond Words and Thoughts, (The Citadel Press, Secaucus, N.J., 1974), pp. 9, 176.

teacher. One student made the remark that the moon looked like a man's face, which prompted me to ask the question whether man will ever be able to go to the moon.

The answer came quickly and firmly. “No, man will never be able to go to the moon, and here's why.”

Our teacher proceeded to enumerate the reasons:

- (1) The fastest an airplane can travel is approximately 350 mph.
- (2) We cannot build a plane big enough to carry the gasoline and food needed for such a long trip.
- (3) The crew would run out of oxygen.
- (4) The earth's gravity prevents escaping earth's atmosphere.
- (5) Once he got there, if that were possible, there could be no way of getting back.

I must say that the teacher, with her explanations, gave me a satisfactory answer for the time. She listed the pertinent and restricting data according to the resources available then; but we know that man has gone to the moon and returned.

A rocket can travel far faster than an airplane. Solid fuel replaced gasoline. Space suits and pressurized cabins take care of oxygen and other problems. As for gravity, it is a limited barrier. Once enough thrust is generated to penetrate its confining shield, the spaceship is free to travel.

We might say that new laws with a new way of thinking and operating came into play that propelled man to the moon. The old system was certainly inadequate for the task, and by its laws man would never be able to reach the moon.

Similarly, you follow one set of laws for your daily life, which cannot indicate how the inner life of consciousness works. A whole new set of laws with a new way of knowing come into play when you Travel Within. It is as though you have escaped the pull of gravity and have been jettisoned into the wild blue yonder -- but you will never know it until you go Within and prove it to yourself.

You have to pilot your own spaceship. The will to watch reveals the way.

Chapter Six

VIEW FROM A SATELLITE

In this state of higher consciousness, it can be said that we are becoming more conscious of the unconscious. Since conscious and unconscious are not places but functions, however, it is better to say we are becoming more aware or less aware of experience. What we are aiming at is direct, immediate experience.

To achieve this, a technique is valid that gets us beyond thoughts, authority, and ego. When these stifle us, we can heed the directive of a Zen master:

“A special tradition outside the scriptures, No dependence upon words and letters, Direct pointing at the soul of man, Seeing into one's own nature and the attainment of enlightenment.”⁴

“Becoming” a flower can shatter thinking, authority, and the ego at once -- the soft velvety feel of the petals, the light

⁴ Attributed to Bodhidharma, cited by Thomas Merton, Mystics and Zen Masters, (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, N.Y., 1967), p. 15.

delicate fragrance in the air, its translucence in my hands in the sun, brushing a petal against my cheek as I feel the support of the other petals all around me, knowing that I am part of the whole.

Go slowly, without thinking or verbalizing. Feel the silken smoothness. Only if you are unhurried can you be aware. The softness can enter through the fingertips and be felt all over the body. A distinct softness is spreading in ripples. When you feel the softness, become that softness. For this practice it is good to pick an item of your own choice that already shows your oneness with existence.

As soon as we say, "The flower is beautiful!" we are out of experience and into our heads. We have broken immediate contact. To be aware of the flower does not mean to think about it. This also holds true for my breathing, for meeting a loved one, or for anything else. Once I think about breathing, the loved one, or something else, I am no longer aware of each respectively I need to be open to let each impinge directly upon me for what it is at the time.

Thinking is about, verbalization is about, even poetry is about. Experience is not about anything. It is. Music is so transforming and at times uplifting because it is more experiencing than being about something. The mind must stop chattering, because its static keeps interfering with the melody of life.

Even the world's great myths -- Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Moses, Mohammed -- however true and inspiring, are still about something. They set the path for us, not to follow them but to become what they were. True religion is not imitation but realization.

When the consciousness experiences, it is not the mind or the intellect having a thought or concept about something.

When I really become aware of breathing, of a flower, of a loved one, something drops. I am no longer cognizant that “I am doing this.” The ego-mind vanishes, and the subject-object dichotomy disappears. I am thrown out of myself, and oneness is created. After the drop, I am aware that all is there. Then all is there in my spouse, in my work, in my eating, in hitting the tennis ball.

My wife and I have played a lot of tennis, and we often team up as partners. As a team, when there is a break in the action, Helen will often say to me or I to her, “Don't think. Don't try.” Thinking about anything distracts and takes us out of the flowing experience. If we think, we are no longer in the present moment. Also, trying creates tension that interferes with the relaxed state in which we play so well.

The twin remarks are a counsel to concentrate on the ball and to become one with the tennis ball. It does not always happen, but when the identification takes place, I play my best tennis. The ball gets larger, due to the fact that it now commands so much of my attention. I am able to see the seams just before my racket makes contact. The ball also slows down.

Hurry and urgency cease, even though I am in the heat of play. It is as if everything is in slow motion. I know exactly where Helen is at the net. There is plenty of time to run across the back court to get to the ball. The racket comes back as I bend my knees. I turn my body around and smoothly swing into and through the ball. I can even decide as I am swinging where to hit the ball, and it goes unfailingly to that spot.

I am aware of all this peripherally, while the center of my concentration is still the ball. Nothing else exists, and the energy flows in all directions. There is an expanded awareness while being completely relaxed.

In rare moments when my whole being is focused this way, there is such a centering that nothing else is a factor. Even the score or the game does not matter. Every point, every action is exactly as it should be. No question arises. There is no disagreement with others or with myself. How can one disagree with what is? Being one with what is, there is nothing more to add.

The ball, the game, my wife is a fact, a presence. The mind, however, automatically changes experience into thoughts and words, and it does this while the action is still going on. These thoughts-words then come between me and the experience. I “think” of how it should be or “want” myself to be otherwise, in relation to the situation. Here is the beginning of illusion.

The world is not an illusion, but the way we see it often is. My grasp of the world is falsified by my own distortion. I place my thought images onto people and situations; then I read them stamped with my own imprint. Instead of experiencing people and things, I am only in touch with thoughts and words.

The illusion comes from misinterpreting the world according to my own predispositions in order to protect my fragile and fearful ego. It is the desired image, veiling my perception, that creates my own passion and anxiety. I can no longer experience the total other, because I am no longer total myself. Too much has clouded my vision for me to see clearly. The biggest clouds are my own desires and fears, which have blocked out the clear blue sky of awareness.

We need to move from a conceptual mode of behavior to an experiential one. Even visualization is not experiencing. Visualization imagines or conceptualizes. Usually it is not a spontaneous happening within the consciousness, but something

the mind chooses to picture. Helpful as this may be at times, it is not the technique discussed here, which says to be with the sensations of the moment, not adding anything or expecting anything. If we were alert and aware, we would not need to deal with attentiveness. We would have our unconscious and superconscious the way we now have our conscious.

The practice of Turning Within is obviously not the same as the process of life, but this “choiceless awareness,” as it has been called, is the basis for bringing together life and practice and is the foundation of self-discovery. In relaxed witnessing I learn, perhaps for the first time, to see things as they really are.

How freeing it is to enter an arena where there is no judgment or fear! I do not interfere or evaluate; I do not project or expect. The moment I judge or choose or the moment I set up a purpose, watching has come to an end. The “magic” of penetrating the unconscious by the conscious has been broken.

This cultivation of observation is eminently practical, because it reveals what my unconscious has sought or avoided. The mind that is ever churning is brought to a state of rest by the naked attention. An untrained mind automatically reacts to what it wants or resists. It is forever clinging to what it likes and averts what it dislikes. These desires and aversions are what tires one out.

What a boon it would be if we could measure the mental fatigue that comes from grasping and resisting! Not only are they exhausting, but greed and hatred create tension, and that tension leads to even greater fatigue.

By being mindful, however, I can see and feel myself responding. I notice myself going out for what I want and pulling back from what I dislike. I am aware within but also outside. It is

like a view from a satellite of all that is happening. When I see myself and learn how I react, I no longer am compelled to a certain course of action. I become centered.

Gradually the awareness spreads from the times when I am focused inward to all my activities during the day. I become amazed by how much I missed before. The value of everything goes up, not for any intrinsic reason but because of what I bring. Flashes revealing the meaning of a statement, the solution to a knotty problem, the specific course of action to be taken -- these and other insights now facilitate my responses, because I am now discerning on a wider front and deeper level. People will begin to notice my sensitivity, and I will begin to live fully and wholeheartedly in each moment.

Experiencing human consciousness is something like one blade of grass being picked out of all the blades of grass in the world.

Chapter Seven

BECOMING WHAT I AM

The interior is an awesome and exhilarating place. I say “place” for lack of a better term.

There is action. The being I am becoming must emerge from all that has held it under wraps. There is much to experience, and usually I experience only a bit at a time. As I practice, I set the stage, create the scene for the drama that is to be lived and let go of within.

Not only can the practice be arduous at times, but what I confront is often painful. The energies that have blocked me will one day rise, or I can intentionally summon them for the purpose of doing battle with them -- greed, hate, confusion. If the interior is sometimes a battlefield, however, it is also at times the scene of pure ecstasy. It is Christmas, the Fourth of July, and my birthday all at once.

When the mind has quieted down, a new era dawns within. Some call it emptiness, and that description appears apt after the noisy mind has been dethroned as supreme being. In experiencing the emptiness, one can also seem light and weightless. I may feel like nothing but conscious air. It can be frightening at first, because I am not used to it, but the vast

emptiness becomes infinite space and can be very consoling, because now I can feel the inner freedom that I did not know existed.

The freedom launching me into my new space age comes from now knowing the mind on an intimate basis and loving it. This intimacy is what many of us never reach, because we have just taken the mind for granted all our lives. In Chapter Five the mind was discussed as a process that has been created from outside. Here we need to look at the helpful or harmful superstructures the mind builds so that we can reassert our mastery over it. The mind can be a cruel and relentless tyrant or a beautiful and supportive tool.

Every frame is of the mind. Judgment, choice, purpose is of the mind. Even fear and belief are of the mind, and belief is often the mind's attempt to get rid of fear. It would be well to characterize different functions or elements of the mind and to contrast them with those of the consciousness.

While the mind is a computer-like activity that processes old data and can give us a printout at any time, the conscious is our original nature that is ever new and is the programmer behind the computer. The mind takes effort and is highly conditioned as it imposes its own divisions to maintain its mind-self. Consciousness is effortless and unconditioned; it knows no divisions, because it is the true self.

The mind is forever desiring and wanting, because it is basically a survival mechanism that turns violent at times. Consciousness knows no desires and is forever watching, because it just is and never needs to resort to violence. The mind dwells in confusion, swinging back and forth between certainty and uncertainty, and will eventually die. In consciousness, certainty and uncertainty do not exist, because it dwells in clarity

and will go on. The secret of consciousness is, “It is always now.”

Mind is blind. The point can be illustrated by taking examples from a sleeping state and from a waking state. We often wake up in the middle or after a dream and did not know that we were dreaming. The mind could not tell. To attempt an explanation, we say the dream was so real, but as far as the mind is concerned, there is no difference between dream and reality.

An example from the waking state is also revealing. In Las Vegas there is a theater-in-the-round where the projected image on the ceiling and walls comprises three hundred and sixty degrees. When the viewing audience, “seated” in a plane flying over Grand Canyon, comes to a precipice and there is a sudden drop, almost everyone in the theater gasps and becomes frightened, as though he or she were actually dropping down into the canyon. The mind, conditioned by its own past, does not know the difference.

All the above are reasons why the mind must be transcended by those seeking a higher consciousness. Mind's essential function is to give a frame to that which is frameless. If every frame is of the mind, if the frame of my mind becomes the frame of the world, then I need to jump out of that window to pure openness. As long as I identify with the mind, I cannot know who I really am. Until the mind is transcended, I cannot really be free. It is easy to see why many Easterners say that identifying with the mind is the only sin there is.

If we were flying over the ocean, and no land were visible in any direction, and below was a single ship, and I asked you what you could see down there, you would probably answer something like, “Just a single, solitary ship.” Most likely you would not say anything about the water, although you were

aware of it and saw it in your total peripheral vision. It is just that you were concentrated on the ship.

The mind is like that ship, and the consciousness is like the ocean. In our self-imposed restrictions we miss the obvious, and it is the simple obvious that can do so much for us. If we were buoyed up by the ocean of consciousness, we would never become shipwrecked.

Not only do we miss the overall picture, we miss all the fun we could be having by making the development of our consciousness the chief adventure in life. Pretend the entire earth is covered by the ocean, and the water is telling us how it will be when it recedes. Now we have never seen land, and so we have no experience of what the water is talking about. All we are aware of is water, waves, and wetness.

There are calms, and there are typhoons, but there are only fish as living beings, because anything to survive has to be a fish of some sort. We cannot fathom what dry land would be like or all the varied activities that could take place there or all the kinds of creatures that could dwell there. We just cannot imagine buildings, bridges, fresh water, jet planes, television, computers, or two-legged and four-legged creatures that walk and run.

Such limitations are purely a mindset. The mind can only guess what it would be like without conflict and confusion, without division and suffering. Once the mind is left, real knowing can begin.

We said earlier that this state is often characterized as emptiness, but this emptiness is not empty of, nor an absence of, something. It is not negative. We could call it openness or spaciousness.

A house is said to be empty when construction is completed and it is ready for occupancy. That is hardly to be considered a negative condition, even though no furniture is yet therein. That emptiness is really roominess or the presence of space. Once that space or emptiness has been created, all kinds of things can now be done in that house.

In this sense emptiness is, I believe, the most positive potential in existence. Emptiness means empty of conceptualization and of duality. There are no more words or thoughts. This thoughtlessness also implies forgetfulness of the "I." There are no longer a knower and the known, so all objects have ceased. There is just knowing or consciousness, an awareness of nothing but awareness itself.

There is a feeling of still, spacious silence. If a word or thought surfaces, it is only a ripple in a sea of calm. It is an openness that is ever expanding and includes all. It is as though I were once all space that contracted into my center at conception, and now I am coming into my birthright and finding fulfillment.

Consciousness continues to enlarge its space, and this vastness encompasses all I do. Authority, laws, thoughts, or will power will not change me interiorly, but this experience will, because it is I who am expanding, and I bring my own space to all that I do. It has the power to change, because space/consciousness is supportless. It needs nothing to exist but itself -- and each time I set sail on that vast sea of my own inner depths, there are launched, perhaps unknown to me, ships that embark for me on life's journey. These ships contact whatever and whomever I meet.

As I grow, my world becomes larger and larger. My deepest self is unlimited. Those adept at this practice say universes come to be and pass away within themselves. As

things do not happen to space but within space, so also things do not happen to them but within them. They become everyone. If I am no longer a stranger to myself, no one or nothing can be a stranger to me.

Logic breaks down and gladly gives up in the face of experience. There is only one teacher, space on all sides; and there is only one pupil, space itself. Space becomes boundless, and time passes away. All is now. I become one with the all. This is the ecstasy. There is nothing but complete and absolute fulfillment.

You may think that all this cannot happen to you. It can! You own a three-hundred-room palace, but you are camping on the porch! You must go in. Perhaps you do not think that such spectacular things can happen to you, simply because you do not know such a world exists within your grasp, as I did not know. Truly there is nothing to grasp, because that world is in you. You have to enter it.

The title of this chapter uses the first person singular so that you will apply it to yourself. It would not be so hard to become what you are if the mind were not blind, as was explained.

The mind is outside the inner realm, where true knowing takes place. It can be completely oblivious to this higher intelligence. That is why in Eastern psychology the intellect is placed on the same lower lever with the five senses. Only a higher consciousness can see things as they are and the mind's relative place in the broader picture.

The palace door is open. You must go in!

Chapter Eight

THE ABC'S OF LIFE

Once we “reach” this state of emptiness or pure consciousness, we uncover what Easterners call satchitananda, which has been translated as “absolute (sat) bliss (ananda) consciousness (chit).” The absolute here refers to absolute existence or being. Absolute means one without a second, or one without another.

Herein is found the basic reason why I can accept myself, the importance of which we stressed in earlier chapters. I can accept myself, because I am existence; but again, this cannot be an intellectual concept. It must be experienced.

Truth is the experience of being, just that I am. All is and, by that very fact, is acceptable. Everything else has been added to that primordial reality, even our acceptance or rejection of it. Nothing outside existence can happen to me. Is-ness is penetrating and pervasive. It fills all space and time. In fact, time and space are relative; they exist in the whole. The whole is what is.

When something dies, it returns to the whole. Nothing can be created or destroyed; it merely loses its form or individuality. Only the whole is the truth. When the mind “dies,”

when it becomes a space—no words, no thoughts, it becomes pure consciousness, and the soul is born. So, consciousness is being, and being is consciousness.

The Stanford Research Institute issued a policy report in 1974 in which it favored a return to the “perennial philosophy” image of man, which states that “the basic nature of the universe is consciousness” and that man can participate in this cosmic consciousness, because he is “a manifestation of universal consciousness.”

Such an understanding, the report continues, comes from the experience of oneness that resolves the polarities of space and time, rendering all knowledge, power, and awareness ultimately accessible to man's consciousness. When the human begins to “wake up” and see more clearly, he becomes aware of the direction of the higher self in this process.

This ageless view of man, the report concludes, “is based not on observation of external events but on inner experiences, on observations of inner events, events taking place in consciousness. Thus it is based on direct perception and observation, just as is physical sciences....⁵”

Such an experience is open to anyone who chooses to participate. The “drop” into the state in which being and consciousness are experienced as one, is to feel like a new person, as though a new species were created. Once such a happening is experienced, one can never be the same again. Thoughts stop controlling me, because the mind is no longer needed.

⁵ “Changing Images of Man, Policy Research Report 4,” Center for the Study of Social Policy, Stanford Research Institute, 1974, pp. 40-43.

If I make something an object of thought – for example, God -- the mind is needed, but in pure experience, mind no longer has a role. Grounded in conscious being, the mind disappears. Mind is a specific activity for relating to the “other,” and that other can be anything, such as the past or the future. Without the mind I can only 'be here, now. This moment is all.

In that deep silence one feels that whatever is, is eternal. My am-ness has broken the bounds of space and time. The feeling is irrefutable; no other proof is ever needed. All doubts are put aside forever, because forever is now.

The glory is that “I am.” This existence is mine, and no one can ever take it from me. Grounded and feeling “I am existing,” I know that this overflowing being and I are one. A warmth has been kindled that melts the ice of alienation. It is as though I am returned to some primeval innocence in which there is no fear or sorrow.

In fact, there is perfect bliss, and this is the third member of our Eastern trinity. There is unspeakable joy, love, peace, harmony, which we can sum up in the word bliss, but it is not that I am blissful or filled with bliss. I am bliss. It is not a dependent quality but coexists with being and consciousness.

Present is Absolute Bliss Consciousness, and I am that. We distinguish to talk about them, but they exist as one. I do not have to go outside myself to learn that being and bliss and consciousness make up the ABC's of my life. They wait my uncovering within.

Although we can experience this in a pure state by Going Inward, everything we do partakes of these qualities in some way. All our actions exist, and attendant upon them is some degree of consciousness. It may be more difficult to

understand how bliss is always involved, but it is not my purpose to try to prove that.

I would rather underscore that whatever good we have experienced can give us a taste of that ultimate state and help us to partake of it in some way. The pleasure may be primarily physical, such as enjoying sex, a good meal, a glass of wine, the warm sun on my flesh, the smell of logs burning on a crisp, clear fall day. The happiness may be more mental, such as a promotion, a new car, the perfect vacation. We have also enjoyed spiritual blessings, such as the birth of a child, rejoicing with another who is recovering from a serious illness, the delight when two people right for each other get married, or real love given and received.

It is extremely important to enjoy these pleasures, because first of all, they are; and second, the acceptance of them is, as has been stated, a prerequisite for our growth. In fact, we should be as perceptive as possible in their enjoyment, so that our consciousness increases.

We cannot discount but must capitalize on whatever our surroundings may be. They will bring sorrow at times, but they also offer joy. These are the building blocks, and there are no others. I need to enjoy whatever I have in my life -- my spouse, my children, the people I work and recreate with, my pets.

Since joy or happiness is basically a state of consciousness, it is mostly a matter of my own perception. A cat rarely does anything to make its mistress happy; he is simply his uncalculating self. The owner knows him and gets pleasure, comfort, companionship, and he can feel his loyalty. This is a magnanimous response for so little a thing as being himself! At such a moment I need to stop for the joy of living. I need to appreciate not just the experience but that I, the experiencer,

have this capacity. If a cat, being itself, can call forth so much in us, my own interiority, once truly beheld, will call forth a response that I cannot imagine.

I try hard to build an empire outside myself. What I am wanting and seeking is my own growth and greatness. I am just not always looking in the right place. By saying “yes” to all that is, and its passing, I am really saying okay to my interiority as well. I will kiss the gift as it goes by.

The trouble comes by my not being aware of what is really happening. I do not want to be alert, because it demands that I redirect my energies. It is easier to get lost in things -- my will, my way, I want to be angry, I don't want to let her get away with that, she should have known better. So, lack of awareness is clearly tied up with my ego.

Awareness creates not only space to handle the situation calmly and objectively, but also openness to my own interiority. If I stay perceptive, I am no longer an actor caught in the play but a spectator taking in the whole drama, including myself. I am a watcher on a mountaintop, the experiencer of the experience, the same as when I Venture Inward in my quiet times. It is extremely difficult -- I would say impossible -- to do something harmful to anyone if I am completely aware.

What hinders my development the most is my own attachment. If I stick to anything, then I am really stuck. This runs very deep, because my tenacity clutches my whole being in its grasp. As long as I hold on to something, I cannot go further, period.

How we perceive and react to situations is determined by whether we grasp what we see and hear. Life is moment to moment, but the mind thinks it can stop that. Do we carry yesterday's emotion into today's relationships?

There is an old Zen story of a master and his pupil going into town when a heavy rain suddenly burst, and the streets flooded. A beautiful woman in her long robes was in distress, so the master lifted her up, carried her across the high water, and put her down on the other side. After the two walked some distance, the disturbed pupil asked the master how he could do such a thing, since they were supposed to be detached from the world.

The master answered, “I put her down way back there. Are you still carrying her?”

Attachment wears many faces, all of them false. The letting-go is for my own good, because only then can I be free to love. To live in love is the ideal.

To see your attachments and to learn your personal ABC's, you need an inner light. You practice the quiet state, not so that your consciousness may remain a blank. The board is erased of the mind's activity in order that absolute bliss consciousness may be written there.

In the previous chapter you read about becoming what you are. An apt technique here would be the Searcher method, discussed in Chapter Three, in which you keep asking the question, “Who am I?” After repeating the phrase many times, and you stop saying the words mentally, the question continues in its inward search.

Envision that interior as a large room filled with light. Each thought, each emotion is a door with a mirror on it. Pursuing the thought or feeling opens the door, and the light escapes. Fighting the thought or emotion cracks the mirror, and you get a distorted view. Acknowledging and accepting reflects the light back to you. Now knowledge is light and self-luminous.

Ancient yogis believed that we have an actual center of spiritual consciousness that shines with an inner light. Knowing illuminates objects of knowledge, which shows it is apart from and beyond the relation of subject and object. By your silent concentration there is no energy drain through conscious pursuing and grappling. The light coming back shines through the conscious and illumines the unconscious.

A higher consciousness is born as you see that it is your nature not to fight or to follow but to be. The miracle happens! You become one with knowing as the knower and object disappear. What is there? Knowing! What is happening? Experiencing without an experiencer! The darkness of the mind drops into the abyss of light of consciousness infinitely expanding awareness.

Enlightenment is being conscious of the heretofore nonconscious, a grand assimilation of and by the unfamiliar. You could have a total enlightenment experience or shafts of light that give insights into the whole. In either case, bliss abounds.

The irony is that it takes centering yourself to give you yourself. The ego cannot do it. The words describing the phenomenon sound egotistical, but the experiencer afterward laughs at such a suggestion. The “I” of your ego claims nothing, while the “am-ness” of your being simply listens. The multifaceted experience breaks the confines of self-centeredness and whispers a report that your true self cannot mistake.

Chapter Nine

THE CHOICE IS MINE: JUDGMENT OR LOVE

Most of the time we feel that love is a relationship. This relational character is true as long as we view love as object-centered or object-inspired, and by object here we mean anyone or anything outside oneself.

Since two poles are involved, hate is as easily present as is love, because I allow myself to be dependent. I need to recognize and face the fact that hate forms a part of almost everyone's love relationship. It may be just a small part, but it surfaces when I see how much I need the other.

It might be called amicable enmity. I look to my beloved for fulfillment, and when I feel the other's love is not there, I become fearful. The opposite of love is not hate but fear. Hate may be my reaction in a threatening situation, but that springs from the deeper emotion of fear -- fear of losing love.

Most of the time I create my own pitfalls. I have expectations of how the other is to perform. I vacillate, moving closer to and then further from my beloved and then closer again, thinking that he is the instigator, whereas it has been my doing all along. In my own mind there are barriers that must be hurdled before I can advance. The pointed adage applies here: every time

I point a guilty finger at another, there are three fingers pointing back at me. As a consequence, I fall into the pit I have dug and suffer for it.

Judgment not only destroys love but the possibility of it. We all too often judge for the sake of putting people down. I will make a comparison, for example, and the ensuing judgment is usually to raise me above someone else, which safeguards my superiority.

We will justify judgment on the grounds that it is necessary for action or efficiency, whereas in reality it springs from fear of my own inadequacy, and I indulge in it to maintain my personal stance. In judging, I reject another before he can reject me, because I am afraid that he will not love me. Now I do not have to love him.

Judgment creates an attitude, and that attitude defines my position. In judging one builds the banks for the river of his life, where his living water will or will not flow. Judgment stops the flow. I am caught in a headlock, because judgment is of the head, not of the heart. So often judgment is made purely to maintain the mind's file on things and people, whereas it was not necessary to make the judgment at all.

There is simply no need to judge. I can function without it. In fact, I can function much better without positioning myself and others in adversarial relationships.

As has been said of the ancient Greeks, peace is needed for creativity and development. The mental space I allow will give breathing room to all involved. Some will know whether my mind is open or closed, and all will know it cannot be both at the same time. In an atmosphere of openness, all can see and think more clearly.

Love is of the heart and does not judge. To paraphrase the famous maxim, The heart has its own reasons for not judging. The heart knows that judging is like typing on tinted paper. No matter what thoughts and words are expressed, if I have judged, the end result will always be colored.

If we look at what is involved in judgment, it may not be so difficult to give up as we had thought. Just because we judge does not mean we are right or wise⁶. To judge rightly, one should know everything that is possible to know about the situation and the people involved. One would have to be aware of all the past determinants, the present influences, and the future ramifications. In addition, he would have to be sure that his own perception is total, accurate, and unbiased, so that his judgment would be scrupulously fair to everyone concerned.

Who can claim such omniscience and discernment? How many times have we thought we knew all the facts and were wrong? Lesson: Do not assume. Accept. How many times have we only guessed we were right and never found out we were wrong? Lesson: Do not judge. Love.

Only the whole is the truth, and no one ever knows the whole. Wisdom, then, does not consist of judgment; it is the suspension of judgment. It is not that I should not judge; I cannot judge. In abandoning judgment, it is clear that I am not giving up something I have. I let go of something I assumed I had. I relinquish an illusion. More accurately, I experience an illusion of relinquishing.

Once I abandon judgment, a great burden is lifted from me. It was something I have borne, and I was being crushed

⁶ For a brief excellent treatment on the "impossibility" of judging, which I trace here, see A Course in Miracles, Manual for Teachers, (Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975), pp. 26-27.

beneath it. It would be good at times to Go Within to forgive myself and those I have condemned. I might also ask their forgiveness, because I have been kicking them around in my head and heart all this time. Forgiveness of oneself and of others counteracts judgment. Now that I put aside that burden of judging, a new freedom awaits me of living without care. In this carefree attitude I am free to love.

Judgment has clouded my vision so that love does not get through to me and I cannot love. I want to judge, consciously or unconsciously, because I am afraid of my own rejection. There is nothing outside that will change this internal attitude or disposition.

No one can reject me unless I give him permission, and the truth is that I judge and reject myself; but judgment and self-rejection are insidious and often operate on another level as well. By refusing to look at it inside myself, I can be rejecting myself. This implicit judgment is one of the most detrimental I can make, because I close myself off from openness to the infinite, which basically I am.

I believe that in our depths everyone wants to be and to do good. This is difficult in society with all its real or imagined pressures and pleasures, and so if I can make you out to be bad, or a little less good than myself, then I can be at least somewhat good.

In the study of drug and alcohol addiction in rehabilitation programs, it has been shown that a person takes the drink or the drug because he wants to feel good. He may be depressed, or sick, or angry, but he just wants to feel good again. We also want to be good, so we take the drug of judgment to make us feel better. Make no mistake; it is addictive. The addiction is not so much to put you down as it is to make me

high, superior to you, because I am afraid that I will not be loved as I am.

We can see that all this happens because I interject the “I.” As was noted in Chapter Seven, the mind is basically a survival mechanism, and judgment is of the mind. The judging mind, the ego, seeks to preserve anything and everything it considers to be its own. The ego cannot exist alone. It “needs” the other to stake out what it considers to be its own territory.

If I could experience but for a moment my aloneness not my loneliness but my inalienable individuality or my incomparable uniqueness -- the ego could never dominate me again. My relationship with everyone would be on equal footing. Manipulation stops. I would not try to bend another to me, nor would I let myself be controlled by the other.

The truth of the matter is that I do not have to set up an undermining polarity. I can choose clarity or open consciousness, and the more I contact the clear consciousness within, the easier it becomes to live in this openness.

True love is ruthless from this point of view. It does not consider ego's drive to maintain itself. One is what he is and lets the other be what he is. In this approach love or compassion is not so much a relationship as it is a state of mind.

In many Eastern writings the symbol for compassion is the moon shining in the night while its image is reflected in a thousand bowls of water. The moon does not search how it can benefit by shining, nor does it seek to make someone happy. It does not demand that the bowls of water open to it so that it can favor them with its light. The moon just shines. There is no “I” or “you.” There is simply an open act, magnanimity without meanness, a loftiness of spirit devoid of the relative notions of giving and receiving.

If I just shine the way I am, external situations will become what they are. Clouds will not cover the vision. I choose to be luminous rather than to judge. My love is not conditional, so from this firm stance it is not a mutual relationship.

This type of love is not fatherlike in the sense of protectivity. It is adultlike in the sense that it says, “I will love you, and you can do whatever you choose.” It refuses to engage in all the childish games of you versus me, of your fleet versus mine. Such a state of love is fearless and can never be overcome, because it is without any territorial possessiveness. It exists in communicative openness. It is palpable and contagious, which allows space for all to grow, because it accepts people as they are.

This “regardless love” may be focused on one person, but it need not be, since it is a quality or state of being. If love consists in doing, one would soon get tired or bored and then fall into hatred. Keeping up the act(s) demands too much effort. If I see love as an act only, I will soon become miserable. No one can “do” something all day long. I can be in love, but I cannot do love.

This is not to say that I am not supposed to perform “acts” of love. It is just that action follows being, and if I am in touch with my true self, that creates the courses of action. Love is part of my nature, but unfortunately it is often unrecognized.

Going Within nurtures that nature to a healthy and enlightened self-love that directs me to whatever acts of love I want to perform, whether it be a giving or a committing of myself, caring for someone, or accepting responsibility. These are all acts of love, but they flow from that reservoir of loving self-acceptance that honors all that I am.

If my love comes from a loving state of mind, there is no irksome effort involved, and my love is not restricted. I can actually love someone who has wronged me. The love resides in me and is not directed only at friends. I have to live in the whole of my world and not just in a part.

Since that is the case, why choose? In *Going Inward* I have practiced this choiceless awareness. This silent regard now externalizes itself. As long as I pick and show partiality, I cannot be total. My deeper self tells me, "Live where you are. There is no need to choose, because the whole is worth choosing."

The method most consistent with working on judgment is the Seer, which basically is witnessing with emphasis on choiceless awareness. At the heart of the matter is the judging mind, so when you *Go Within*, choose not to judge. You are not dealing with decisiveness here or its lack, but with putting someone down or yourself up. You judge to defend your false center and surrender, or accept, out of your true center. Accept both, and the false melts into the true.

Complete acceptance, when it comes, means completion. Then you live out of the one center. The path is created by each step you take, because the path extends only to where you are now.

To understand how this can happen is impossible without the experience. Asking you to understand that judgment works to your detriment and so to free yourself of it is like asking a rock to understand that the redwood tree next to it is a danger to it and so to become a redwood!

In *Going Within*, your judging mind will be seen -- for example, your dislike for short people -- but now you place that between your witnessing self and the source of those judgments.

The energy surrounding those judgments revives, releasing deep and transforming feelings.

It suddenly occurs to you, for example, that you were consistently outdone as a child by a person smaller than yourself. With that insight you feel alive and enriched, because you are operating at a deeper level than words or concepts. It all comes together and clicks inside. Things happen and change, because light is power. Experiencing the origin of the judgmental process carries with it the energy to make the change.

You were perhaps ignorant, but now you see and are responsible for your growth toward wholeness. Not accepting the totality of life is what creates guilty feelings. Accept the whole, and you will be whole.

Chapter Ten

WILLING WHOLENESS

To be whole and healthy, I need to heal the wounds of my judgmentalism. To do that, I must surrender my will.

We have seen that in judging, we were living an illusion. We thought that it was necessary to judge, while in reality we saw that it was impossible to judge. There is an illusion here too, but of a different kind: We think that in surrendering the will, we abdicate responsibility, forsake our freedom, and become weaklings. The truth is that only the strongest, the very willed, can surrender.

Surrender is the ultimate in will power. Only when one puts all his volitional force into it can he surrender. Religious orders impose it, and master-pupil relationships demand it. However the practice may have been abused at times, the notion of surrender has a kernel of truth, a creative core that must be preserved.

Surrender means acceptance. It is opening me completely without preconception or expectation. It acknowledges the coarse aspects of myself and seeks to surrender them -- the will to force things within or outside myself, my lack of patience sparked by the ego wanting its own

way, my refusal to be quietly aware of the whole picture, my judgmental attitude, my attachment. All of these are blocks to love's energy, which cannot flow to heal myself or others unless I surrender them.

Love cannot live in negativity. Surrender is opening the mind to life's situations and learning from them. If I accept what befalls me, not grudgingly but with the understanding that this is for my growth, I am opening the door to living in a state of love. Bitterness melts. Instead of asking, "Why?" or, "Why me?" I say rather, "Why not?"

Acceptance and love lead to goodness, and the simply good person is the man for all seasons whom the whole world loves but may not know why. All that love asks at times is to be present for the other. It may be a gentle word, an observant look, a laugh shared, a tender touch. Acceptance transforms. Nothing negative can live in love.

In the practice of Going Within and watching whatever life presents me, I build an indomitable spirit. I come to realize that nothing outside me can hurt me unless I give it permission. I steel my will, yet make it flexible for daily circumstances.

Love is both mind and will, and my regular routine of quiet sitting exemplifies just that. I will to sit still and watch the mind. Electing empowers. I choose to do this and thereby stir greater forces to life. The mind will eventually drop into the abyss of consciousness, and my experiences expand infinitely.

Wholeness can come only from wholeness, and it is the whole of me -- spirit, mind, will, emotions, and body -- that now experiences the world. All the senses seem to unite in one sense

whose perception is greater than all the parts combined⁷. What comes through loud and clear is that I am one with the whole. In not choosing my will, the whole has come to me.

It is the will that makes learning possible. The mind can take us only so far in pursuing life's enigmas; then it must give way to the will. The real mystery is the will. The intellect can ask all kinds of questions, but it cannot answer them. The radical openness that expects nothing and receives all can be rooted only in the will. The intellect cannot understand such a stance, because it is contrary to its own nature. Willing is not knowing. Intellect cannot comprehend will, because the latter is rooted in the unconscious.

To split open the mystery that lies buried in the unconsciousness requires a thunderbolt that only the will can throw. The intellect is too superficial a tool to get to the bottom of things. In fact, we can say that if the mind can answer the question raised, it is not a very deep question.

Will is the unifying principle that lies at the root of all things, because it is the impulse in everything toward self-fulfillment. We know the will by what it does. Will's presence or activity is evident everywhere, even in a blade of grass. My breathing and circulation indicate will to life. The will of existence has brought me to where I am and will continue to carry me on to something else.

The cosmic will is refined in me, in that I can direct my attention. It makes me aware of myself, and from henceforth, evolution is to be conscious. The gradual unfolding will incorporate my inner conscious states. I become part of the

⁷ Evelyn Underhill in her classical work, Mysticism, speaks of the senses being "fused into a single and ineffable act of perception...." (New American Library, N.Y., N.Y., 1974), p. 7, 49.

universal will by giving up the judgmental preference of my own will. Freedom does not mean freedom to do my will only. True freedom tends toward a higher synthesis that includes and allows all freedoms. One candle cannot enlighten the world; everyone's own candle is needed.

My life impulse steers me toward an awareness without objects, which paradoxically allows all objects to exist. It means that consciousness is both empty and not empty at the same time. It is no more dominated by images of things but merely contains them. Consciousness becomes contemplation. I allow the will to be itself and thus to love.

Many negative thoughts and feelings entered me in the past that conditioned and formed me. Now I hardly notice their peripheral presence as I become a positive force to influence and direct others. Love as a state of being is a flowering of the will. No technique is needed, not even the practice of Going Within, if I truly love. The necessity for this inner regarding is present precisely because I do not love. The purpose of the inner beholding and the ideal of life are one and the same—surrender in love.

The wholeness we seek cannot be achieved as long as we feel that we are in a state of alienation. It was mentioned earlier, in Chapter Four, that the California State Psychological Association Task Force said that “spirituality is the courage to look within and to trust.” The Task Force went on to describe what it is we see and what we trust. It “appears to be a deep sense of belonging, of wholeness, of connectedness, and of openness to the infinite⁸.”

⁸ Shafranske, “Factors Associated with the Perception of Spirituality in Psychotherapy,” *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1984): p. 233.

As we have been saying all along, we have at our disposal, within ourselves, the means of overcoming our separateness. Alienation is perceived as coming from someone or something outside, above, more powerful than ourselves. As long as we project outside ourselves the cause of our troubles, we will never be able to see that their source is within, that we have allowed ourselves to become chained by something that is really our own. No person, state, race, or religion can make me whole or free if I erect one or more of those as the barrier between me and finding my true self. The root cause of my suffering is myself.

If I am separated from my brother, then I am the divider. If I judge others to be at fault, then I choose to prolong the illusion. I can attain unity again through a personal resource that is ever available within me. When will and consciousness come together, we join a horizontal axis to a vertical one that extends over any position. These two are creative of openness and compassion that make for newness and oneness. The love so generated will change a hurtful situation. Love can transform the world, but from where will it come? The secret source within is the key to originality and creativity.

For a truly loving person, boundaries disappear. From a deep awareness he knows that all is one, so he seeks always to implement the ancient Zen aphorism, "Not two." Whenever he is tempted to judge, whenever he feels the first inkling of separateness, he says to himself, "Not two." Reverting to the fact that "we are not two" can bring immediate relaxation. It takes the edge off conflict, and the heart feels at rest when a choice is not necessary between like and dislike. There is nothing to choose, and everything is okay.

Whatever the situation demands, wherever life takes such an undivided person, he will follow. To others it looks like

choice or judgment, but an enlightened person, one with the whole, melts into the whole. He simply moves in one direction.

An excellent technique here would be the Settler method discussed in Chapter Three, allowing all duality and contrariness to “settle” or unite in one word—yes. You also permit one of the greatest of unions -- will and consciousness. You will this sitting to happen and accept whatever consciousness brings. By repeating “yes” again and again, you are acknowledging reality and affirming your place within it.

The ego wants to say “no,” but you are accepting what is and staying in the present. When will and consciousness persist in the present, you focus energy that centers you, endowing you with power wherever you go.

Chapter Eleven

THROUGH THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN

The direction that one may choose to follow is through the known to the unknown. It has been said that man fears the unknown, yet that statement seems at variance with much of man's history.

He has sailed across uncharted oceans, facing possible death or no return, to discover new continents. He has lived with and attacked contagious diseases and illnesses to find cures and extend man's life. He chanced the splitting of the atom in hopes of a better ultimate life for everyone. Last, he has penetrated the unknown regions of outer space simply because, at least to a certain degree, he is capable of doing so. It seems that fear of the unknown has not been a great deterrent in a myriad of man's endeavors and conquests.

Nor does it seem that man fears death because of death's unknown qualities. There have been too many instances in which he has not. If a man fears death, it is more likely due to the fact that he has not truly lived and accepted life, a given and known reality whose meaning he has chosen not to pursue for reasons known only to himself. It seems that he does not fear death but rather life -- that life is passing or, more exactly, that he is

passing without really understanding life and coming to terms with it.

Life involves a constant dying to the moment and a living openness to what comes next, two offerings from the same hand that not everyone is willing to accept. Life is more beyond than under our control. A person moves toward death from the moment he is conceived. To live is to die, and to die is to live. Both constitute one ongoing reality.

We have indicated in previous chapters that once separateness is overcome, once alienation is conquered, fear is also relinquished. If I truly accept myself and experience that “I am” existence, I cannot be really separated from myself or from anyone again. Rather than saying that we live in the fear of the unknown, it would appear that the dictum of Tacitus (c. 98 A.D.) is more appropriate: “The unknown always passes for the marvelous.”

There are different ways to characterize this movement from the known to the unknown. One such means is to say that the occupied state of mind is existing in the world, and the unoccupied state of mind is existing within. Crossing from the occupied to the unoccupied is going from the known to the unknown. We still know, but in a way we did not know before.

It is broader than simply a rational process. It is not that we stay within and forget about the world. It is rather that the unoccupied state allows for such a clarity of vision that the clutter has been cleared and the two domains have been bridged.

It is certainly a change when I prefer the experience of my own conscious to other experiences that motivated me before. The preference usually comes from the very depth of the engagement. It resembles an elicitation, as though a magnet were drawing me to the unknown.

To use an image, I am the planet earth and boundless space at the same time. Phenomena, including thoughts, are like other planets and stars. At times I gravitate toward other celestial bodies led by my ordinary consciousness. Then, at other times, guided by my higher consciousness, I have an expanded awareness with specific items no longer in isolation but forming a part of all that is.

What happens is that consciousness leaves its state of pure consciousness and takes on limits to become the mind. The frameless is in need of a frame.

An astonishing fact is that all this, the known and the unknown, takes place within my consciousness. I become space or silence, emptiness or openness. This can be ecstatic, but when the mind asserts itself again, it asks, “Why? For what purpose?”

I have already discovered that being, wisdom, joy, bliss, love are part of the one existence, as we discussed when we treated absolute bliss consciousness in Chapter Eight. The more advanced stage does not consist in questioning, because that would constitute a duality. Intellect and will have come together, and the person is to be what he is and to be with what is. Without discursive thought he allows himself to experience directly whatever presents itself. It is letting go and going on.

We might say that it is natural to move on this course, toward the unfamiliar, the unknown, or as it has been called, into the mystical. Albert Einstein seems to lend credence to this direction when he said near the end of his life:

“The mind can proceed only so far upon what it knows and can prove. There comes a point where the mind takes a higher plane of knowledge, but can never prove how it got

there. All great discoveries have involved such a leap.⁹ “

We would venture to say that the finding of the true self is the greatest discovery one can make. To put it in figurative language, it is as though one is walking in a familiar valley where he knows the landscape, because he has been there many times before, but as he proceeds, the terrain becomes less and less familiar until he realizes that he is on uncharted ground.

He comes to the end of the valley, and there is a cliff in front of him with no place to go. The abyss is deep, and one cannot see the bottom. He must leap, and he knows that, so he is frightened. He makes the leap, and suddenly he discovers that he can fly. The abyss is conquered, and the unfamiliar becomes friendly. He is in joyful awe as he realizes that the purpose of his life is to go through the dark valley of unknowing¹⁰.

Anyone can experience this, and that is what Turning Inward is all about, but one cannot strive for such a happening. One has to relax into himself and do nothing. The mind needs to be clear and silent, unencumbered and undirected. In that state of unknowing, the explosion happens.

What I am becomes one with what is. There is no more the knower and the known. What is, is infinite, and it overcomes us. We become one with the moment and simultaneously one with the totality; but no matter how much one experiences the unknown, it remains to be known. The luminous silence keeps

⁹ R.W. Clark, The Life and Times of Einstein, (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., N.Y., N.Y., 1984); pp. 339-340.

¹⁰ William James gives many examples from various religious persuasions of seekers who have come through the known to the unknown in his masterful work, The Varieties of Religious Experience, (The Modern Library, N.Y., 1936); pp. 407-411.

deepening and expanding. Real knowing is always in touch with the unknown. One sees no end to this process of silent knowing.

Only what we experience has real effect upon us, and only by experiencing the mind directly will it be satisfied. This is the launch that frees us from within. I have to know what I am. The mind needs to be what it is and perform its proper function, but instinctively it knows that it is not the ultimate guide to truth.

When that fact is realized, the rock that is the mind sinks to its correct place in the pool of consciousness, and the water level of my whole being crests at its optimum level. Mind and consciousness attune to each other, and deep satisfaction ensues.

As long as I identify with my mind, I will be misled, because I am not my mind. This is the discovery attested to by Eastern seers and Western mystics for thousands of years, but until I experience it, the truth is someone else's, and that will not free me. I have to make it my own. I have to tap into the energy of the universal consciousness and allow its live current to be the charge that sparks me.

To illustrate the point of directly experiencing a larger entity, which is my true self, I like to take an example from nature. In the long transition from a prairie or grassland to a maple forest, many forms of vegetation evolve and eventually die out. Tall grass and shrubbery, scrub oaks, assorted saplings, huge red and white oaks, and finally basswood and maple -- all have their day in the sun. Once the climax forest is achieved, as ecologists call this culminating stage, we have an established maple grove with a crown of thick foliage that allows little sunlight to reach the forest floor.

Many smaller trees and plants will not be able to survive, but the wild ginger plant has found a way. It developed large, dark green, heart-shaped leaves that are able to store solar

energy; it is only in recent times that we have discovered that such an admirably adapted leaf allows the plant to live the entire summer while many others die out because of lack of sunlight. The wild ginger captured a share of the universal energy and draws upon that treasury at will, which allows it to thrive in a thick and shady forest.

Analogously, I must realize that I am not my mind but share in a much-larger entity that is greater than I am standing alone. I can draw upon it anytime, because it is my true energy source.

I also need to dream. Many brilliant groundbreakers in the past, such as Thomas Aquinas and Albert Einstein, were considered average or even stupid, because they were not in the same place as their teachers. Their elders thought that they were lost, whereas they were really ahead, blazing a trail. They could not stand pat on the established and accepted. They dared to dream, "What if...?" That is the potential of each of us, because the expansion of consciousness makes geniuses of us all.

Nothing is enough until I am enough, and now suddenly I am enough, because I have seen into myself and exposed the myth of the solitary ego. It was just a notion anyway and had no reality. It died away, because in one-hundred-percent receptivity -- watching, listening, perceiving -- there is no "I." I give up the battle of trying to achieve something, because I already have it. The new "I" is limitless.

Now when I Look Into myself, I initiate new states of consciousness with which I was not previously familiar, and these form the viewing stand for an ever-expanding horizon. A kind of new man has been created.

Everyone is unique, and one must realize what his uniqueness is. One does that by not defining boundaries but by

being an adventurer, a pioneer of self. We set boundaries, because we live on borrowed accessories that weigh us down, the beliefs of others that we have adopted. True life and the true self borrow nothing. A man of this new “knowledge” no longer believes; he knows. Doubt was a natural power to be used to dispel beliefs until one experiences truth. Doubt was needed in darkness, but not once the light has shown.

The light by which we now walk comes from the reshaping of our consciousness. Since the structuring of the “new consciousness” is dependent upon what has conditioned the individual, there will be a fresh outlook and yet a universality to which he must subscribe. Being is so pervasive, he wonders why he has not seen it that way before.

Moreover, that being is one, and it no longer confronts him as he recognizes that he is truly a part of it. He has broken through his illusions and now welcomes the oneness of all reality. He does not need to maintain his selfhood, because he belongs to a larger self.

One becomes aware of the life and order of the universe. There are intimations but also pronouncements of immortality. Intimations come in seeing the truth. As long as I see the truth, experience the truth, there is a duality while awaiting the possible enrapture. Pronouncements of everlastingness come in being the truth, where there is no separation between the seer and the seen, where the experiencer and the experience are one.

The individual form passes until there is pure consciousness and love. One no longer seeks to possess anything, because he is everything, and he needs no affirmation outside himself. All that is left is a continual unfolding of what is within. More in wonder than in question does he utter, “What am I?” and each one's unique answer comes. “I am what I am.”

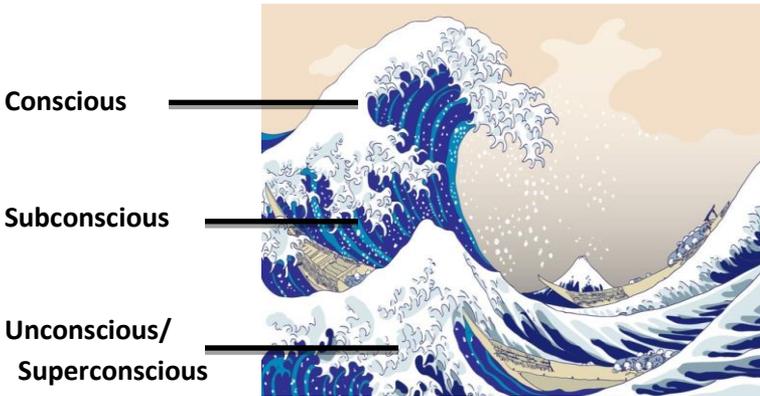
Since the mind has returned home to the frameless consciousness, there is no one to comment or recognize. If there is no longer a reporter, then the person is free at last. The unknown within has fused with a larger unknown to create a new entity without attachments, which is both known and unknown. Its regenerative course is to redirect energies from self to a greater awareness of others.

Whereas once the subject just naturally acted out of self-motivation, he is now sensitive as he regards the consequences of his actions upon others, and even searches to find responses that will benefit those around him. By Going Inward he is able to be alone and be fulfilled. By Going Outward he is able to love and be fulfilled.

His fulfillment comes from the realization that the ocean has indeed been poured into a drop. He cannot feel deprived of anything, because he is a limitless sea. The diagram¹¹ of waves on the water illustrates his uniqueness and oneness with all.

¹¹ Adapted and modified from Herbert B. Puryear and Mark A. Thurston, Meditation and the Mind of Man, (A.R.E. Press, Virginia Beach, Va., 1986); p. 24.

Finite



Infinite

The drop of consciousness discovers it has an ocean of depth. The waves of thinking, feeling, and willing follow a new flow as currents below the surface converge in him to course as living waters.

The states that he so often experienced briefly in Turning Inward are present. The mood is one of joyous anticipation without expectation. The attitude is that of unknowing understanding. The feeling is one of gratefulness and not just for gifts received.

Silent awareness sees an ocean of mystery. That is no longer frightening, because he now knows that he is that ocean. The sureness comes from love, which is the key and has been throughout. It uncovers beauty and sees possibility. What had been problems on the intellectual and verbal levels melt away in experiential love.

Thoughts leave. Love remains. All else were merely devices to find it.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom grew up in the Pittsburgh area attending strict public schools that had a mix of races, religions and cultures. After high school, at the prodding of an older brother and a widowed mother, he entered the University of Pittsburgh to major in writing. Feeling lost and wondering what his own "purpose" was, he left after his junior year to enter the Catholic seminary. There he majored in philosophy, finding peace and order and wallowing in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and the mystics. He was ordained a priest and joined the Sulpician Society (S.S.) whose sole purpose is the training of young men for the priesthood. After three lesser degrees he was sent to the renowned University of Louvain, Belgium, to get his doctorate in theology.

Having successfully completed his degree work, he taught theology and counseled seminarians for thirteen years in Kenmore, Washington, Baltimore, Maryland, Plymouth, Michigan, and Washington, D.C. at the Catholic University of America. Feeling lost again and inspired by Pope John XXIII on a visit to Rome, and by the radical decrees on non-Christian religions the Pope fostered at Vatican II, Tom left the priesthood

to mine the riches he felt lying in other pastures which he studied. While being married and a general manager in a business venture and a counselor in a private clinic, he continued his research and study of other religions. During this time, the past sixty years, he continued his daily meditation, often twice a day. Tom's writings are the result of his years of study and prayerful meditation.

Happily married to Helen over forty years, he lives in Dearborn, Michigan with their charming cat, Charmer. As co-worker and true friend, Helen recently set up a website (www.findingoneness.com), for Tom to continue to share his research and work. His purpose is to give to others the riches he finds in the world's mystical traditions in the pursuit of the Oneness of everyone/everything.

