

ESSENTIAL SPIRITUALITY - ROGER WALSH, M.D., PH.D.  
THE 7 CENTRAL PRACTICES TO AWAKEN HEART AND MIND

*Buy this Kindle book for only \$7.99!*

<http://www.amazon.com/Essential-Spirituality-Central-Practices-Awaken/dp/0471392162>

To be Spiritual,  
is a more **direct experience** of Spirit, Sacred ,...

**"chance favors the prepared Mind"**

Be Here Now - Ram Das live in the moment

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Reaching out to recovering Cathoaulics and part time Christians  
that just 'skim the Spiritual surfaces, but never strive for the 'Inner connection to Spirit'.  
This connection is essential to our Higher Being, minds and souls to the simple ways to connect  
and become more Aware of our 'Inner Light', our soul and our  
Spirit with it's Always Already Direct Connection to our Highest Destiny.

To those that state "I'm Spiritual but NOT religious.  
For 'Seekers' and seasoned 'Seekers of the Way'.  
To those that feel the pull of the Spirit, but could use a wee bit of direction.

Everyone one with an open Heart, Mind and Radiant Soul will be 'Inspired' by learning that these  
'Seven Sacred Services' are common with at least Seven Sacred Spiritual Traditions

Tired of the Dogma?  
Are you stuck in a Church that was choosen for you by an  
'Ethnocentric Authoritative' person in your life  
that you find is just not Inspiring your 'Inner Spirit'?  
At the core  
of most major Spiritual Traditions,  
the practices outlined in the Seven Sacred Services are in common with all.

**You can continue your faith as it is...**  
the Personal Spiritual Path that one embarks upon is in Harmony with these core ways.  
The meditations will personally take you to Calmness, Peace and Tranquility...  
That's not magic... It's just relaxing.

Soon  
you will have gently trained your mind to  
concentrate on just what you want to focus on  
and Daily Practices will simply bring a new way to look at  
most of the things we already do everyday.  
You will be living your life like the Saints do...

In your own way.

Then

Back at Church you will be able to be present in a Deeper perspective,  
Seeking only Deeper Spirit among many others that feel it too.

That's powerful.

Take that Divine Power to look within for the  
Inspiration

to help others to experience this Deeper connection to Spirit...

By creating your own new and progressive ways to help your Church Transcend  
to Higher and Deeper ways that will Integrate with a wider and more attentive group.

~ As a Church member ~

You have a large group of soul seekers with you already at Spirit's door step,  
Eager to feel the Spirit within.

But have not been shown how easy it is to begin your personal 'Way' along your own "Path"

Follow through with the basic outlines in this site and you will be well on your 'Way'

You will feel this 'Inner Pull' more and more...

Many Spiritual Traditions strongly suggest that  
when one feels that Awakening...

Don't just whisper it to deaf ears... rather,  
Shout it from the mountain!

Whatever your spiritual background is:

Perhaps you would like a clean start with a fresh new personal journey within...

It would benefit all to

Let go of

Everything you think you know about:

Yourself - God - Life

Clear your mind of distracting thoughts

- as the Zen Masters explain -

a mind full of useless misleading nonsense

Takes up all the 'room' for ZEN

The same is said for

Tao, God, the 'Universal Light'...

or whatever name you wish to associate the

Ineffable word to represent the concept of

'God'

Which is

Too great or extreme to be expressed, described or comprehended in just  
words

As the Tao states

That can be written...

Is Not Tao:-O

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## Summarize the 7 CENTRAL PRACTICES

Though the seven practices can be done in any order, the following sequence is particularly helpful for learning them, as the progression of chapters in the book will make clear.

The seven perennial practices are:

- \* Transform your motivation: reduce craving and find your soul's desire.
- \* Cultivate emotional wisdom: heal your heart and learn to love.
- \* Live ethically: feel good by doing good.
- \* Concentrate and calm your mind.
- \* Awaken your spiritual vision:
  - See clearly and recognize the sacred in all things
- \* Cultivate spiritual intelligence: develop wisdom and understand life.
- \* Express spirit in action: embrace generosity and the joy of service.

Practice refers to the discipline of cultivating a crucial capacity of mind, such as Wisdom and concentration. Practices are rehearsals of desired qualities, which eventually become spontaneous, natural ways of being.

Ineffable

- Too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words: -

That is your soul

Your Awareness of Spirit and everything that is...

God

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## PRACTICE ONE

### TRANSFORM YOUR MOTIVATION REDUCE CRAVING AND FIND YOUR SOUL'S DESIRE

**The Secret of Happiness**  
**Exercises to Reduce Craving**  
**Find Your Soul's Desire: Redirect Motivation**  
**Exercises to Redirect Desires**  
**The Higher Reaches of Desire**

All you want is to be happy. All your desires, whatever they may be, are about longing for happiness. Basically, you wish yourself well.... Desire by itself is not wrong. It is life itself, the urge to grow in knowledge and experience. It is the choices you make that are wrong. To imagine that some little thing— food, sex, power, fame— will make you happy is to deceive oneself.

**Only something as vast and deep as your real self can make you truly and lastingly happy**

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, 20th-century Hindu sage

This means reducing craving for those things that do not bring true happiness and redirecting desires to those that do. The first practice helps us change our motives by: recognizing our mistaken ideas about what brings happiness relinquishing attachments recognizing and seeking what truly fosters happiness

What we need is a comprehensive, balanced view— a philosophy of life— that recognizes and honors the **appropriate pleasures** and accords each an appropriate place in life.

THE **CURSE OF CRAVING - Attachment - or craving**, and its full-blown cousin, **addiction**, are very different from simple desire. Attachment is a compulsion that screams, “I must have what I desire if I am to be happy.” For example, if I simply desire an ice cream and get it, that’s wonderful; if I don’t get it, it is no big deal. But if I am attached to ice cream, I must have it or I suffer. Desire is simple wanting, attachment a compulsive necessity.

Unfulfilled desires produce little impact;  
**Unfulfilled attachments** yield **frustration and pain**. The Costs of Craving All the great religions regard craving as a major cause of human suffering. Interestingly, Western psychology and society are beginning to agree. Recently we have begun to recognize just how pervasive and destructive attachments are and how powerfully they warp lives and cultures. Our attachment to consumption is poisoning our planet while nicotine, the most addictive and dangerous of all drugs, murders millions of people each year.

In the West we focus on drugs. But the great Sages have long pointed out **that**

**We can become attached, even addicted, to practically anything:**

**Money, power, fame, sex, status, beliefs, food, clothes, self-image**— the list is virtually endless.

Once we are hooked, our attachments distort our priorities and blind us to the True source of happiness - *as Tibetan Buddhism graphically portrays:*

**You are deceived by your addiction to and desire for sensuous objects**

**As is the moth by the flame of a lamp.**

**St. John of the Cross**, a sixteenth-century Spanish monk and one of the most influential Catholic mystics, expanded on this theme in the following exquisite lines:

The Soul that is attached to anything, however much good there may be in it  
Will not arrive at the liberty of divine union.

For whether it be a strong wire rope or a slender and delicate thread that holds the bird  
It matters not, if it really holds it fast; for, until the cord be broken, the bird cannot fly.

***So the soul, held by the bonds***

The Buddha summarized his discoveries in the Four Noble Truths,

Which constitute the very heart of Buddhism:

- 1) Life is imbued with difficulties and suffering.
- 2) The cause of suffering is attachment.
- 3) Freedom from attachment brings freedom from suffering.
- 4) Freedom from attachment and suffering can come from practicing the Eight-Fold Path, which centers on ethics, wisdom, and meditation.

At the center of his teachings lies the recognition of the absolutely pivotal role played by attachment.

The Buddha observed that

**While everyone seeks happiness**

**Nearly everyone proceeds in the wrong way.**

They waste their lives in a never-ending and ultimately futile struggle to fulfill attachments instead of releasing them.

Addictive craving is unquenchable and can never be fully satisfied.

**“What destroys craving?”** asked Shakara, who lived in ninth-century India ...

**Change Your Mind!** - Changing our minds about what we think we need,

Countless other sages have agreed. Some have even argued that

**Freedom from attachment**

Sometimes called detachment, nonattachment, or acceptance

**Is the greatest of all virtues.**

Meister Eckhart, who lived in fourteenth-century Germany and is regarded as one of Christianity’s greatest mystics,

wrote:

I have read many writings, both by the pagan teachers and by the prophets...

To find which is the greatest and best virtue with which man can

Most completely and closely conform himself to God.... And as I scrutinize all these writings,

So far as my reason can lead and instruct me,

***I find no other virtue better than a pure detachment from all things.***

Buddha’s Third Noble Truth:

“Freedom from attachment brings freedom from suffering.”

Likewise, Shakara asked:

**“How is heaven attained?”** - and responded

***“The attainment of heaven is freedom from cravings.”***

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## EXERCISES TO REDUCE CRAVING

**Free yourself from greed, for greed is itself an impoverishment.**

### EXERCISE 1: RECOGNIZE PAIN AS FEEDBACK

Suffering is a call for inquiry, all pain needs investigation. —Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

We crave something and are bewitched by an attachment. The great religions therefore urge us  
to **recognize our attachments so we can *begin releasing them***.

The great religions therefore urge us to recognize our attachments

So we can begin releasing them.

To do this

Either think of some situation in your life that feels pain, or

The next time you feel mental pain - whether it be fear, anger, jealousy, or anything else...

**Stop what you are doing and *look for the attachment that underlies it***.

For example, if you feel angry, it is probably because you believe someone is preventing you from satisfying an attachment. If you reach for a chocolate and become enraged because someone beat you to the last one, it's a good bet that your fondness for chocolate has become an attachment. Likewise, if you feel embarrassed, you are doubtless attached to having people think well of you; if you are jealous, you crave what others have.

#### EXERCISE 2: **EXAMINE** THE EXPERIENCE OF CRAVING

Bringing greater awareness to our experience and behavior is crucial

If we are to understand and change them. This is one reason why

**Developing clear awareness is one of the seven practices.**

Yet usually

**When we are caught in an attachment**

We

**Focus attention on what we are trying to get**

**Rather than on the actual experience of craving.**

Spiritual traditions recommend **deliberately examining the sensation of craving itself**.

To do this

When you next notice yourself captured by a craving, take the opportunity to

**Analyze it carefully and to identify the components of the experience.**

Stop whatever you are doing.

Then carefully explore the experience. See if you can identify the underlying

Emotions, body sensations, thoughts, feelings, and tensions.

Usually what you find is not terribly pleasant.

Craving can feel like a burning in the body accompanied by a contraction and tension of the mind.

There may be clusters of painful emotions, such as anxiety and fear.

Fantasies of who or what you crave may fill your awareness. Your mind becomes agitated, and bursts ***of self-destructive thoughts*** such as "If I don't get this I'll never be happy" race through.

Exploring the experience of craving helps you understand it, recognize its painful effects, and naturally helps you want to relinquish it. **Awareness heals**, which is another reason why **Developing clear awareness is one of the seven practices**. Simply bringing greater awareness to a craving can begin to weaken it and sometimes, as Nisargadatta Maharaj pointed out, “Weak [attachments] can be removed by introspection and meditation.” Examining craving is an essential first step in understanding and healing it.

### EXERCISE 3

#### **REFLECT ON THE COSTS OF CRAVING**

Reflection is a fundamental technique in each of the great religions. It essentially consists of pondering or thinking about an issue or experience

In order to understand it and yourself better

As you will see, it is a vital tool for developing wisdom.

Here you can use it to recognize the costs of craving.

*To do this*

Find a time and place where you can reflect quietly for several minutes without interruption

Begin by thinking of one of the more

***Powerful attachments running your life***

It might, for example, be for pot, booze, nicotine, unhealthy food or a fancy car...

Perhaps worse things like - Gambling, taking big financial risks of questionable ethics...

Then

Consider all the time and energy that go into acquiring it.

Reflect on the effort and money that you sacrifice.

Recall the painful emotions that accompany it, such as anger at people who stand in your way,

Depressed when you feel hopeless about getting what you crave

and worry about losing it once you have it.

Simply allow these costs and any accompanying insights **to come into awareness**.

There is no need to force any particular insights to emerge, and there is certainly no need to

Judge or condemn yourself for having the attachment.

Self-condemnation and self-attack only leave us feeling more deficient and therefore

More prone to cling to the illusory consolations of our attachments.

**The aim of this reflection, and of all reflection, is to**

**Understand, not to condemn.**

### EXERCISE 4:

#### **RECOGNIZE UNDERLYING THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS**

Beneath the emotions and sensations that accompany addictions lurk

Destructive thoughts and beliefs, and it is extremely helpful to identify them.

Perhaps the most common belief is, “I must have something in order to be happy.”

This something can be almost anything: more money, sex, power, a new spouse,

or whatever else it is we crave.

A closely related belief is the basis of the “if only” game.

Here we moan that “If only I had (fill in the blank), then I could be happy.”  
These beliefs emerge into our awareness as thoughts.  
Unrecognized thoughts are extraordinarily powerful and hypnotize us into believing them.  
Their power was suggested by the **Buddha**, who began his teaching with the words:

We are what we think.  
All that we are arises with our thoughts.  
With our thoughts we make the world.

Fortunately,  
These thoughts begin to lose some of their grip on **us**  
**When we recognize them.**

Then we see them as what they are:  
**Simply thoughts that we do not necessarily have to believe.**

For example, suppose you are attached to having people think you are smart,  
but you do something foolish (as we all do, regularly) and are writhing with embarrassment.  
If you explore the thoughts racing through your mind, you may find ones such as,  
“I’ll die if anyone finds out about this” or “I’m the stupidest person in the world.”

A moment’s reflection makes it clear that these thoughts are  
Certainly nothing you have to believe.  
You won’t die of embarrassment, and  
There is an awful lot of competition for the position of the world’s stupidest person.  
You probably aren’t even in the running.

***Recognizing the unreality of such thoughts begins to free us from their grip.***

A good time to do this exercise and to recognize such thoughts  
is when you are in the grip of an attachment, with all the emotional turmoil it brings.  
Then the mind is agitated and related thoughts race through it.  
The problem is that unless we take time to stop and examine the thoughts, we succumb to  
believing them. **The first crucial step**, once you recognize you are being run by an attachment,  
is to stop whatever you are doing.

Take a moment to relax and breathe deeply.  
Then take several minutes to see what you are telling yourself about your attachment.  
If you find yourself thinking, for example,  
“I must have that” or “I’ll die if anyone finds out about this,”  
**Then recognize that these are just thoughts and are certainly nothing you have to believe.**

Once thoughts are recognized as what they really are— just thoughts—  
*Another step is possible.*  
Then you can begin to substitute saner, more realistic and accepting thoughts such as,  
“Okay, I made a mistake, but everyone does that,” or

“Well, maybe it doesn’t matter if people don’t think I’m smart.”  
In this way we can begin to recognize that the thoughts and beliefs that  
Perpetuate our attachments are ridiculous, need not be believed,  
Certainly don’t have to be obeyed, and can be replaced with healthier ones.

Because they are so subtle and quick, thoughts are masters of seduction,  
Seducing us into believing that what they say is invariably true.  
Consequently, identifying thoughts is an important but demanding process.  
We will therefore return to it during the practice of developing clear awareness,  
At which stage it will be somewhat easier. However,  
There is benefit in recognizing even a few attachment-related thoughts and beliefs now,  
because

**Recognizing them reduces their grip, and the grip attachment to us.**

#### *EXERCISE 5: INDULGE AN ATTACHMENT*

This may be a curious way to explore & brings a certain awareness of overdosing on an obsession.  
Many things one obsesses with though, would be fatal if pursued thusly.  
Most Seekers are at the point they can just about do without most trivial desires  
So for the most part, I won't recommend this exercise... Unless  
you find yourself with an uncontrollable attachment or addiction... this will help.

#### EXERCISE 6:

#### **FRUSTRATE AN ADDICTION**

An exercise that complements the previous one is to ***deliberately frustrate an addiction.***

This is a common exercise in the world religions.

When taken to extremes and when all cravings are frustrated, it becomes asceticism.

However

**It can also be done far more gently by  
Selecting *One attachment at a time.***

*To do this*

**Choose something you are attached to— perhaps  
Cigarettes, pot, booze, certain Unhealthy foods, gambling or mindless television  
and decide to go without one for a specific time period, such as a day.**

Be sure to select *realistic goals that you can be reasonably certain of accomplishing.*

It is better by far to decide to go without cigarettes for a morning and succeed

Than rashly to decide to quit forever and fail miserably.

Of course, it is again crucial to ensure that the addiction frustration you choose

Does no significant harm to you or anyone else. During the exercise,

Bring as much awareness to your experience as possible.

You may find it helpful to stop whatever you are doing periodically  
So you can explore your experience more deeply.

Carefully observe the sensations, feelings, and thoughts that arise as you frustrate your cravings.

**Jotting some notes down in a diary can be useful.**

In the evening, take time to reflect on the day and what you learned from it.

What feelings did you have, what fears arose?

What new insights and understandings emerged, what surprised you?

Many people start this exercise *feeling fearful about being deprived*  
but are pleasantly surprised to find that they manage better than expected.

This is why

The exercise not only helps understand and weaken addictions  
but can also strengthen willpower and self-esteem.

The exercise can also be done in ways that strengthen additional capacities.

For example

Going without food by fasting for a day is an ancient and widely used technique.  
Some find that its benefits are enhanced by trying to use each feeling of hunger  
to remind me of the many hungry people around the world.

That way, each hunger pang not only reduces craving, but also  
Elicits Concern and compassion for the hungry.

The exercise then both reduces attachment and redirects motivation

The two key elements of the practice of transforming motivation.

**By redirecting motivation we can focus on what we really want and find our soul's desire.**

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FIND YOUR SOUL'S DESIRE - **REDIRECT MOTIVATION**

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. —*Jesus*

Our attachments are unnecessary psychological and spiritual baggage.

Yet many people worry that relinquishing their attachments will leave them

Apathetic, joyless and unable to motivate ourselves.

This utterly false fear assumes we need attachments in order to 'get anywhere in life'

This kind of belief comes from confusing desires with attachments.

Desires are a necessary and natural part of life;

Attachments are an unnecessary source of suffering.

Since they are different, desires remain when attachments are relinquished,

So we are still motivated to live our lives fully and well.

In fact, we are better able to do so, since we are no longer helpless puppets  
Dancing on the strings of compulsive cravings that distort our priorities and lives.

**Relinquishing attachments leaves us  
Not apathetic, but *calm*,  
Not joyless, but *content*,  
Not indifferent to others, but *more concerned and caring*.**

According to Patañjali, who wrote the classic text on yoga two thousand years ago,  
“When we are established in nonattachment,  
the nature and purpose of existence is understood.”

Consider the great saints and sages. They may be free of attachments,  
but they devote their lives to the welfare of all people and even all creatures.  
Freed from ceaselessly chasing after the physical foursome, they are able to  
Follow their higher motives.

### **HIGHER MOTIVES**

When the mind is less tossed about by the storms of competing cravings,  
It feels the gentle pull of subtler, more mature motives, which are healthier, more refined,  
and ultimately far more satisfying than the desires that usually preoccupy us.

The more mature motives include desires for  
Truth and justice, kindness and altruism, beauty and the sacred, or  
As Plato, the founding father of Western philosophy, famously summarized them:  
***the good, the true, and the beautiful***

These desires are called “higher motives” or “metamotives” and are  
Tremendously honored by the great religions.

Though conceived of in quite different ways— for example,  
The higher chakras of Hinduism or the *user tov* (“good inclination”) of Judaism—  
These higher motives are recognized, revered, and cultivated by each tradition.

**Cultivating them is a central goal of spiritual practice.**

**At the summit of higher motives is the pull to self-transcendence.**

This is the desire to transcend our usual false, constricted identity,  
To Awaken to the fullness of our being, and to  
Recognize our true nature and our true relationship with the sacred.

It is the compelling call to remember who we really are  
To **know**... and even **unite** with...

**Our Source.**

Whether described as the yearning for God, the Moksha drive, or the desire to align with Tao, this pull to enlightenment is a supreme motive; the only one, say the great religions, Capable of ultimately offering true satisfaction and bliss.  
No matter what other desires we satisfy,  
No matter how much money, sex, and power we obtain,  
No matter even how much good we do in the world,  
As long as the yearning for enlightenment goes unfulfilled, we will suffer from “Divine homesickness” and “divine discontent”: the sense of somehow being incomplete, unfulfilled, and not fully at home.

As **St. Augustine**,

One of the most influential of Christian theologians, summarized it,  
“Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.”

Rumi echoed him, saying, “The only real rest comes when you’re alone with God.”

### **The Costs of Failing to Recognize Higher Motives**

By contrast with the great religions,  
Western culture and psychology remain spellbound by - lower motives  
Desires for money, sex, and power, for example  
and are largely blind to the existence of higher motives.

**This is one of humankind’s greatest tragedies.**

But there are further costs to our metamotive blindness.

The higher motives seem to be part of our very nature.

Therefore, to deny them is to suffer from a shallow and distorted view of human nature.

To ignore metamotives means that we are

**Starving ourselves of  
Something essential to our well-being**

We may need the good, the true, and the beautiful if we are to thrive;  
We may need to work for peace and justice if we are to find meaning in life;  
and we may need to express kindness and compassion  
If we are to live and love fully.

In fact,

If we do not honor and express our metamotives, we may well stunt our growth and suffer from “metapathologies.” So suggest the great religions.

A growing number of psychologists agree, including Abraham Maslow, who spent much of his life studying exceptionally healthy people. Maslow combed both religious and psychological literature and found over a dozen specific metapathologies. These include a sense of meaninglessness and nihilism about life, an attitude of cynicism and distrust of others, a lack of values and guiding principles, a feeling of alienation from society, and hopelessness about the future. Maslow was quick to point out that many of these metapathologies are now rampant in Western society and represent a major threat to our culture. That is exactly what one would expect given that

Our culture has so denied and starved higher motives.

The recognition and cultivation of metamotives may be essential,

Not only for individuals, but also for cultures and civilization.  
Fortunately, many great Spiritual Traditions not only describe higher motives,  
**but also offer techniques for developing them.**

Always strive for ways to be  
**Cultivating Higher Motives**

*Confucius's crucial, little-recognized secret:*

The relinquishment of attachments and the maturing of motives that  
Accompany spiritual growth are not a sacrifice.

Rather, they reflect a simple **outgrowing** of *less* mature and less satisfying pleasures.  
Just as the desires of childhood, such as wanting dolls or toys, naturally fall away as we begin to  
enjoy adult pleasures, so too do ordinary adult desires, such as those for fame and recognition,  
grow pale and less interesting as we taste the delights of more mature motives.

We don't need to give up ordinary pleasures and pastimes.

**What we do need to give up is our attachment to them.**

Freed from craving and fear, we may even be able to enjoy them more.

“Strive first for the kingdom of God,” said Jesus, “and all these things will be given to you as well.”

### **EXERCISES TO REDIRECT DESIRES**

We need techniques and exercises, inspiration and support, that we can call on repeatedly to shift  
the habits of a lifetime.

To begin,

It is helpful to view our lives from a larger perspective.

#### **EXERCISE 7: THINK OF A LONG TIME**

Usually we are so preoccupied by the events of the day that we lose sight of the big picture.

The great religions repeatedly urge us to look at our lives and the issues we face  
from a larger perspective. That perspective can be very large indeed.

The traditions encourage us to keep our whole lives and  
Inevitable deaths in mind when making major choices.

Buddhism and Hinduism speak of countless lifetimes, while Christianity urges us to view our lives  
***Sub specie aeternitatis*** (under the aspect of eternity).

**This exercise**

**Offers a taste of such a perception.**

Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit where you won't be disturbed.  
When settled, relax by following the instructions in the next paragraph.

Begin by taking a few minutes to breathe slowly and deeply.

Allow yourself to relax more and more with each breath.

Notice an interesting thing about breathing:

There is no effort required to breathe out.

You breathe in and then simply let go. As you do, the air falls out by itself,  
and the muscles around the chest and shoulders relax automatically.

Allow that sense of relaxation to deepen and spread through the body with each breath.  
Let it flow up into the neck, out into the arms, and down through the abdomen and into the legs.

If you notice any areas of muscle tightness, see if you can relax them.

Continue to breathe slowly and deeply throughout the exercise.

The ability to relax like this is a valuable skill for dealing with stress and tension of any kind.

It will deepen many of the exercises and meditations presented throughout this course.

When you are calm, read through the rest of the exercise carefully

So you know what to do, then close your eyes.

Begin by thinking of a long time, perhaps a period of many years.

Then think of a longer time. Then think of a still longer time.

When you are ready, double the time. Then double it yet again.

Now think of eternity. From this all-encompassing, eternal perspective, look back at your life and  
ponder the following questions.

You do not need to analyze or try to figure out answers.

Rather, simply allow the intuitive wisdom within you to bring answers into awareness.

\* What is really important in your life?

\* What really matters?

\* What would you be better off doing more of?

\* What would you be better off doing less of?

Then take a moment to see if there is any other vital information this

Eternal perspective can offer you.

When you feel complete, open your eyes and bring your attention back to your environment.

As with so many exercises,

**It is helpful to write down your insights in a journal immediately**

Then to take a few minutes to reflect.

As you reflect on your life,

Think of the advice from the eighteenth-century Jewish sage Rabbi Nachman,

Who was famous for his wisdom *and teaching stories*:

“Consider what you are doing and ponder whether it is worthy that you devote your life to it.”

In the light of eternity,

Many of the things and much of the busyness in our lives

Seem rather insignificant. Though this discovery can be difficult at first,

It can also be *extremely freeing*.

It allows us to forgo the time-consuming trivia of  
Worthless pastimes and possessions and to focus our lives on what really matters.

Choices for men and women on the spiritual path are very simple.

They happily choose those friends, activities, and possessions that foster  
Spiritual qualities in their lives, qualities such as love, generosity, joy, and wisdom.

At the same time,

They relinquish whatever inhibits these qualities and distracts them from their goal.  
Thus, their lives gradually become less scattered and frenetic, more simple and peaceful.

#### EXERCISE 8:

##### **DEDICATE AN ACTIVITY TO A HIGHER GOAL**

In Tibetan Buddhism **each major activity**— whether it be meditation, eating, or cleaning—

##### **Starts and ends with a dedication.**

Before beginning meditation, a practitioner will repeat words such as,

“I dedicate this practice to my awakening  
in order that I may serve and awaken all beings.”

At the end of the meditation, the practitioner will close by

Dedicating the benefits to others with words such as,

“I offer the benefits of this practice to the welfare and awakening of all beings.”

These dedications take less than a minute,

Yet can profoundly deepen the motivation and experience of any activity.

This Tibetan practice provides a beautiful example with

The way in which **dedications can transform motivation.**

While changing what we do is essential for spiritual growth,

Changing the underlying motives may be even more vital.

The same act can be done with dramatically different motives and results.

#### EXERCISE 9:

##### **DISCOVER YOUR FUTURE SELF**

In the previous exercises we explored principles and techniques helpful to anyone.

But the great religions recognize that although there are universal practices all of us need to do,  
each of us is an individual and walks a path uniquely our own.

Mohammad suggested,

“There are as many ways to God as there are created souls,”

A large group of *'surface Christians'* staunchly believe or mis-believe... just the opposet,

Thinking they must believe that there is only one & one only 'way to God'...

This 'way' of thinking *seperates*

True contemplative and Spiritual Christians from *the 'surface only Christians'*,

***and perpetuates a 'Self-Defeating' 'way' of worship.***

while

Jewish wisdom holds,

“Each and every human being has a specific task to perform in the world,  
A task that no one else can accomplish.”

Fortunately, the task we are called to perform  
is one that, in the depths of our heart, we truly want to do.

**Rumi** encouraged each of us to  
Find our unique path with its specific goals and gifts. He wrote:

**Everyone has been made for some particular work,  
and the desire for that work has been put in our heart.**

The following exercise  
is designed to help you see where your heart is drawn.  
We spend enormous amounts of time lost in fantasies of having specific desires satisfied,  
of getting this new toy, that new car, and on and on. But rarely do we take time to  
Imagine **what we would most like to have and to be.**

This is an exercise to help you recognize these deeper, more meaningful,  
and ultimately more satisfying desires.

This exercise has more parts and questions than most.

There are several ways of doing this and other long exercises.

The simplest way is to read it through, then do it from memory,

Perhaps peeking at the book occasionally if necessary. Alternately,

You can have someone slowly read the instructions and questions to you,  
or you can record them and play them back

Begin by giving yourself time to relax.

Take some slow, deep breaths to let go any tensions you may be experiencing.

When you are ready,

Imagine yourself as you would most like to be at some future time,  
Perhaps a few years from now. There is no need to struggle or force an image or idea to appear;  
let it arise spontaneously and effortlessly. With these kinds of exercises, some people see a  
Clear image while others have more of a felt sense. Either is fine.

Imagine yourself living where you would most like to live and

Having done the things you most want to do.

See yourself having achieved what you want, having learned what you want to learn,  
Having made significant contributions to others, and having healed old relationships  
and established satisfying new ones.

As you visualize your future self,

Look to see where you are and what type of environment you are in.  
Does your future self look different in any way? What is your posture like?  
How do you feel? What emotions are predominant?  
What fears are gone? What strengths are obvious?  
What new capacities are evident?

Now imagine being your future self and ask,

**“Of all the things I have done, what makes me happiest?”**

Allow a moment or two for an answer to arise from the wisdom in your mind,  
and take time to savor and reflect on the answer.

When you are ready,

Move on to the following questions and repeat the same process for each one.

Ask yourself:

- \* Of all the things that I have done, what makes me most satisfied?
  - \* What is the most valuable thing I have learned?
  - \* What is the best thing I have done to help other people?
  - \* What are my most satisfying relationships like?

When you have responses to these questions, then ask:

In order to achieve these goals,

- \* what strengths and capacities do I need to recognize in myself?
  - \* in what ways do I need to stop underestimating myself?
- \* What could I do now to begin achieving these goals?

When you are ready, open your eyes and take a moment to reflect on what you have experienced and learned. Writing down any insights immediately is helpful and will make the details of your future vision more vibrant and compelling.

## THE HIGHER REACHES OF DESIRE

No drives, no compulsions No needs, no attractions:  
Then your affairs Are under control. You are a free person. —*Chuang Tzu, Taoist sage*

As we grow and change, so do our pleasures and the source of our pleasures.  
As infants, our desires are determined largely by our bodies,  
in conventional adulthood, largely by society. But as we mature further, we begin  
***to seek those people and pastimes that are more nourishing for the soul.***

In using the word soul, I do not mean to imply any particular theological view;  
I am using the term ***metaphorically***  
**to point to the deeper aspects of the mind and self.**

At transpersonal levels,  
Conventional norms and guidelines become less helpful.

Spiritual practitioners begin to realize that **they must rely more on their own judgment** and  
A sense of what is appropriate and pleasurable.

They increasingly turn inward to contact  
Their own feelings to see what they truly want and what will bring true satisfaction.  
The source of motivation shifts from the infant's body to the adult's society to the

***Post-conventional person's inner world.***

By following these deeper desires,  
We come to a wonderfully liberating realization:

**What we most truly and deeply want  
is what is best for us and the world.**

We discover that our deepest desires are healthy and altruistic,  
and that to do what is most deeply satisfying is to follow, and ultimately to find, our bliss.

"Follow your bliss,"

A phrase made famous by the mythologist Joseph Campbell,

Is therefore excellent advice ***if it is properly understood.***

It does not mean doing whatever happens to feel good at the moment

It does not mean

Merely pursuing fleeting pleasures and sensations;

and it certainly does not mean doing Whatever you want, regardless of the cost to others.

To do these things is to confuse temporary pleasure with timeless bliss  
and to hurt ourselves and others as a result. This is why

*The Buddha advised:*

There is pleasure And there is bliss.

Forgo the first to possess the second.

Bliss is infinitely more than the feeling of pleasure. Bliss is a taste of our spiritual nature.

To follow our bliss is therefore to do what best expresses and

**Opens us to our true nature and its *Source.***

For some this might be painting or poetry, for others being in nature, for still others  
Helping the poor or sick. All of us face the pleasant challenge of finding out what gives us most  
profound satisfaction and making this a larger part of our lives.

#### THE DELIGHT OF EFFORTLESS BEING

At first,

Reducing attachments and redirecting motives is a struggle.

The inertia of a lifetime is not undone in a day. It is a slow process, but it is also a cumulative one.  
Gradually the old cravings lose their compulsive pull, deeper desires become dominant, and the  
new life direction feels increasingly natural and un-conflicted. With advanced practitioners,  
struggle and conflict largely drop away. Living and growth becomes increasingly spontaneous,  
a condition Buddhism calls

**"Effortless Effort."**

Such people continue to practice— to meditate, pray, and serve—  
but these are experienced as natural, spontaneous activities.

Finally, as awakening dawns and the separate self dissolves,

Any sense of personal striving or doing... drops away.

***The seeker has become a sage.***

The sage continues to act and serve, but such actions are experienced paradoxically as spontaneous, unmotivated responses to each situation,

***Free of personal needs or motives.***

Free of craving, conflict, or compulsion,  
*the sage can*

**Respond easily and appropriately in all circumstances.**

This is the condition of “effortless being,”

Which Meister Eckhart described as “acting without why,”  
and which Taoism calls “nondoing” or “nonaction.”

Buddhism claims that “Not to act is the vital point of great action,”

While according to the Tao Te Ching: Less and less do you need to force things,  
Until finally you arrive **at non-action**... Where

**Nothing is done - Nothing is left Undone....**

**The Master does nothing... yet... Leaves nothing undone**

Most desires arise from a **feeling of lack**,  
but the mind that is infinite lacks nothing.

As the practice of yoga matures, desires cease to be the expressions of need and  
Become instead the spontaneous unfolding of love.

The sages, immersed in the joy of their true nature, no longer act to **find** happiness or the sacred.

Rather,

Their actions express happiness and the sacred, and are part of what Hinduism **calls Lila:**

***The play of the divine.***

These sages are now able, as Ramakrishna exclaimed,

“to experience Divine Bliss flowing through every action, every perception.”

“Follow your bliss” has become “express your bliss.”

**Transforming motivation by reducing craving and finding your soul’s desire is an  
Essential spiritual practice.** Among its many benefits:

It reduces painful emotions such as fear and anger and fosters positive emotions  
such as love and compassion.

It provides a foundation for

Transforming emotions and healing the heart,

**The second of the seven practices common to world religions.**

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## Practice 2

**Cultivate Emotional Wisdom: Heal Your Heart and Learn to Love**

The Gift of Love  
The Challenge of Difficult Emotions  
Exercises to Reduce Fear & Loathing... *and Anger*  
Cultivate Love and Gratitude  
The Higher Reaches of Love

## **THE VALUE OF VIRTUE**

### THE NATURE OF LOVE

Numerous emotions sweep through our minds each day: anxiety and anger, jealousy and joy, love and compassion, and many, many more. But one emotion has long been praised as supreme by the great Spirit Traditions - Is Love

#### **The Search for Love**

To experience and express love has been one of humankind's greatest quests. Love has been the subject of countless myths and poems and the object of study by philosophers, psychologists, and sages. Love is a source of meaning for countless people, a goal for which millions live and die, and a force that shapes countries and cultures.

Though love is much sought, it is little understood; though universally desired, it is rarely wholly fulfilled. Most people feel like helpless victims of love, which seems to overwhelm us like epilepsy and then vanish, leaving us dazed and abandoned. Where and how do we find love? Most people assume it is something they get from outside themselves, from a few special individuals. They hurl themselves into a desperate lifelong search for the perfect person, relationship, or community who will give them the love they crave.

The Pain of False Love Yet this desperate search is based on the same tragic error that underlies all craving; it is driven by an unexamined sense of inadequacy, deficiency, and fear. This error leads to the futile search for something or someone outside ourselves to compensate for what seems to be lacking within. This is a recipe for disaster.

Another lover, a new spouse, or the wild cheers of an ecstatic audience

#### The Pain of False Love

This deficiency-based craving for love brings a plague of further problems. Our sense of well-being seems dependent on the approval and love of other people, We naturally become dependent on, or even addicted to, then. We cling, demand their exclusive attention, and love them conditionally,

### THE CHALLENGE OF DIFFICULT EMOTIONS

Never let the sun go down upon your anger. —St. Paul

### UNSKILLFUL RESPONSES

However,

If we respond to them unskillfully, difficult emotions can all too easily torment and devastate us and those around us. The stakes are very high.

**It is a tragedy  
so few people know how to work effectively with their emotions and  
So few are masters of emotional wisdom.**

***We suffer from three major errors:***

- 1) Judging or condemning difficult emotions as bad or evil
- 2) Ignoring or defensively pushing painful emotions out of awareness
- 3) Indulging or inflaming them, for example,  
by nursing feelings of resentment toward someone who hurt us and gleefully plotting revenge

In these cases

We become what Shakespeare so eloquently called “passion’s slave.”

Mastering and reducing difficult emotions, especially fear and anger  
Cultivating attitudes such as gratitude and generosity that foster love  
Cultivating love

#### EXERCISES TO REDUCE FEAR AND ANGER

There are no chains like hate....

Dwelling on your brother’s faults Multiplies your own.

You are far from the end of your journey. *da Buddha*

#### EXERCISE 1:

##### MOVE FROM VICTIM TO CREATOR

Most people live spellbound by the belief that they are helpless victims of their emotions. If we are to transform our emotions, we first need to recognize our role in creating them.

This exercise gives an immediate taste of this possibility.

Take a moment to be aware of how you feel.

Notice the emotions you are experiencing.

Next,

Think of or visualize someone you like. Then notice any emotions that arise.

Now

**Think of or visualize someone you *dislike* and  
watch the play of corresponding emotions.**

**Put a smile on your face.**

Observe that a gentle wave of happiness follows immediately.  
This exercise takes only a few seconds, but those seconds are sufficient  
***to give a taste of your power.***

## HEALING PAINFUL EMOTIONS

A vital challenge of psychological and spiritual growth involves  
Learning to experience difficult emotions consciously while  
Continuing to live life fully and appropriately.

Taoism and Confucianism summarize this goal by pointing out that the sage  
“Has emotions, but no ensnarement” and “responds to things, yet is not ensnared by them.”  
This is a specific example of the general principle that  
**“The superior person is the master of things; the small person is their *slave*.”**

Understanding and undermining difficult emotions by  
Carefully experiencing and exploring them— or by  
Contrasting them with kindness and generosity.

### **EXERCISE 2: EXPLORE FEAR**

Facing and exploring fear is a powerful means for healing it that can be tested in this exercise.  
Begin by sitting comfortably. Take some time to relax. Remember to breathe slowly and deeply,  
relaxing more with each breath. When you feel calm and comfortable,  
Think of something that makes you afraid.  
For this exercise, it is best to choose a fear that is  
Troubling, but not overwhelming.

Allow yourself to feel the fear and then begin to explore it.  
Notice that the actual sensations of fear seem to be located in a particular part of your body.  
Where is the fear located? How large is it?  
What shape does it have? What does it feel like?  
Is it a tingling, vibrating sensation or more like a hard, solid lump?

Now turn your attention to other aspects of the experience.  
Is there an image associated with the fear?  
If so, what is it?  
What is your posture like, and are there particular muscles that are tense?  
Can you relax some of these muscles as you continue to breathe slowly and deeply?  
What thoughts run through your mind?  
Take a few really slow, deep breaths.

Now explore the experience of fear again. Notice its location right now.

What size and shape does it have now? What does it feel like now?  
Be careful to explore it carefully this second time, because the experience of fear, like all  
experiences, changes constantly. It probably has a somewhat different size, shape,

and feel from those of a few minutes ago.  
What about the posture and muscle tension? And the thoughts and images  
Are they different, too?

Now notice something fascinating and freeing about the experience of fear.

When you look closely, none of the sensations, thoughts, and images that  
Make it up are terribly distressing in themselves. Perhaps the muscle tension or an image is a little  
uncomfortable. However, when we actually experience it, fear is usually nowhere near as  
devastating as we imagine it to be. Rather, it is our unexamined beliefs and fantasies about it  
And our unexplored reactions to it  
that lock us into the painful unconscious cycle of automatic contraction and withdrawal.

Notice something else:

When you breathe slowly and consciously, the body and then the mind tend to relax,  
and as they do the fear begins to diminish.

You have uncovered an important healing principle discovered centuries ago

By meditating and recently by psychologists:

**You can't be relaxed and fearful at the same time.**

**To the extent you can relax— through breathing, yoga, or any other method  
Fear dissolves.**

Now...

Sit in a firm, erect posture with the back straight and shoulders back.

What happens to the fear?

The mind and body are so closely linked that to change one is to change the other.

If you sit firm and erect, a posture associated with strength and courage,

You tend to elicit these feelings and to diminish those of fear.

**This is one reason a strong posture is encouraged in meditation.**

### **EXERCISE 3:**

#### **STAY WITH FEAR**

*da Buddha* would recommend:

What ever you are doing when fear comes through your mind -

**STOP!**

Stop in that posture or at least don't move from that spot

Whether sitting or standing - assumed a meditative mind set right there in the position you had  
when the thoughts of fear arose in your awareness

Don't let this fear pass to 'go covert' & run amok in your psyche while being ignored

Work thru what is causing this fear, anxiety, this fearfulness, this loathing, this feeling of Gloom.

You might not be able to rationalize it away, but at least you can quickly identify the elements  
that are to be dealt with at a time you are ready or at least

Realize that these 'details' are nothing to fear  
Just stuff to work through in a *rational' Big Mind'* way

**EXERCISE 4:  
DO WHAT YOU FEAR AND FEAR WILL DISAPPEAR**

The exercise is very simple.

Start by selecting something that you would like to do, but find a little scary.  
Then make a commitment to do it during a particular time period— perhaps a day or a week—  
each time you have the opportunity.

**Keeping a diary**, telling a friend what you plan to do, and later reporting your experience  
Can be helpful in gathering your courage.

**HEALING THE HOSTILE HEART AND RELEASING ANGER  
Don't let anger or Foe let your compassion to waver**

Releasing anger is a crucial but challenging part of fostering love.

Forgive and forget:

**It sounds so simple *until we try it.***

Then we come face to face with the raw power of anger  
and its insatiable thirst for vengeance and violence.

No wonder Mohammad told his followers:

Who do you imagine to be strong or powerful?

It is he who masters himself when angry.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth

**Is anger's fiery logic.**

To escape anger's vicious cycle,

We need a very different kind of logic and a variety of exercises.

**EXERCISE 5:  
RECOGNIZE THE COSTS OF ANGER**

When you next find yourself bristling with anger, find a place where you won't be disturbed.

Then take time to explore your experience.

Take notice of your body as you bristle with rage

Heart beat increasing? Stomach tightening? Mouth Dries?

What ever happens,

Take notice of so you can identify the range of body experiences that make up anger.

Then

Turn your attention to your mind - what are you thinking?

What thoughts are racing around in there?

When you observe anger carefully in this way, its costs become painfully apparent.

You can see how it overwhelms and obliterates positive feelings and

Consumes the mind with thoughts of vengeance.  
Physically, you can observe how the body goes into overdrive preparing to attack:  
Your blood pressure rises and your heart races.  
It's not a pretty sight and the more clearly you see it,  
The less attractive holding on to anger becomes.

**EXERCISE 6:  
COMMUNICATE ABOUT ANGER**

**The second step in relinquishing anger is to talk to someone about it.  
Simply talking about one's anger, not in order to complain or attack, but rather  
to forgive and release, is a surprisingly helpful process.**

**EXERCISE 7:  
RECALL YOUR OWN MISTAKES**

**A useful antidote to rage is to recall our own mistakes, especially those similar to the one made  
by the person who hurt us. To do this, first recall something you feel angry about. Next, reflect  
on exactly what the offending person did that hurt you. Perhaps he or she forgot to thank you  
for a gift you gave or snapped at you when you made a mistake. When you are clear about the  
offensive action, try to recall times when you made similar mistakes.**

**EXERCISE 8:  
RECALL THE GOOD**

**This exercise involves recalling or learning about the good things that people have done.**

**When you find yourself angry, stop what you are doing.  
Then think of the person or people who hurt you.  
Recall any good deeds they have done, especially any that may have benefited you.  
Even just a simple smile...  
... Now Smile yourself ;-)**

**EXERCISE 9:  
THINK OF LOVING PEOPLE**

**Simply thinking of loving, forgiving people can begin to loosen anger's stranglehold.  
If,  
When your temper flares, you bring to mind the image of a loving friend or  
a kind spiritual teacher, their love and kindness may partly replace your rage.  
It can be particularly valuable to visualize a loving person in your situation and  
to imagine how he or she would respond.**

**EXERCISE 10:**

## GIVE TO FORGIVE

If you are having difficulty forgiving someone, *give them a gift.*

It doesn't have to be big or expensive. What matters is that you want to let the anger go and that your gift is intended to help you do so. It is hard to feel angry at people when you give them a gift.

It is also hard for them to remain angry at you when they receive it.

If 'words' escape you, just a quick note saying such... honestly...

*Look, 'Words' Escape me...*

but my heart seeks harmony and forgiveness

## EXERCISE 11: A FORGIVENESS MEDITATION

For most people forgiveness is a process. When you have been deeply wounded,

the work of forgiveness can take years. It will go through many stages

Grief, rage, sorrow, fear, and confusion— and in the end, if you let yourself feel the pain you

carry, it will come as a relief, as a release for your heart.

You will see that forgiveness is fundamentally for your own sake,

A way to carry the pain of the past no longer.

The fate of the person who harmed you, whether they be alive or dead,

Does not matter nearly as much as what you carry in your heart.

**And**

**If the forgiveness is for yourself**, for your own guilt,

For the harm you've done to yourself or to another,

The process is the same.

You will come to realize that you can carry it no longer

Forgiveness is most powerful and encompassing

*If it extends in these directions:*

**The request for forgiveness from those you have hurt**

**Forgiveness for yourself forgiveness for those who have hurt you**

Sit comfortably and allow the breath to come slowly and easily. Let your body and mind relax.

You may wish to imagine that you are breathing in and out

Through the 'Sacred Cycle' of meditation breath

Turn your attention to any memories or areas of your life where you have not forgiven or been forgiven. Become aware of the associated feelings, of any barriers to forgiveness, and any holding of past pain or resentments. Simply allow the experiences to float through awareness without judging them. When you are ready, begin the process of forgiveness:

### FORGIVENESS FROM OTHERS

Acknowledge the ways in which you have hurt others. To whatever extent you can do so without contracting, allow images and memories of times when you hurt others to come to awareness.

Notice that at these times you often felt fearful, defensive, or confused. There is no need to

condemn yourself for your mistakes; that only adds further fear and defensiveness. Open to the regret you now feel and also to the possibility that you can now release your guilt and pain.

Gently and slowly repeat several times,  
***"I ask for forgiveness, I ask for forgiveness."***

#### FORGIVENESS FROM Yourself

We have all hurt, embarrassed and belittled ourselves in countless ways and probably still carry much of the pain. Now you can begin to let it go.

Allow memories of times when you hurt yourself to come into awareness.  
As each one arises, regard it and yourself gently and lovingly and repeat several times,  
***"I forgive myself."***

#### FORGIVENESS FOR OTHERS

All of us have been hurt many times by others in ways large and small. In addition, we have all added to those hurts by holding onto resentments, closing our hearts, and seeking revenge.

Now you can begin to relinquish these old hurts and additional self-inflicted pains.

Continue to breathe slowly and deeply.

Allow memories of times when you were hurt to come to awareness.

You might wish to begin with some of the smaller, more manageable pains.

See if you can recognize the fear, defensiveness, or confusion in the

Some old hurts dissolve quickly but some may take time

Be gentle and patient

#### The Value of Patience

***At the end of the Way is freedom.***

***Till then, Patience***

*- da Buddha*

Sometimes forgiveness heals both ourselves and the person we forgive,

In other cases the other person may seem unchanged.

We can't force another person to change

***Our task is simply to forgive as fully as we can.***

#### The Higher Reaches of Forgiveness

Only pursue an offender to show him the 'Way' - Lao Tsu

Malice will never drive out malice

If someone does bad to you

*Do good to them*

So that *your* good work will destroy his malice

Important - Forgiving does not mean condoning harmful behavior

## **Forgiveness is relinquishing resentment**

**Not *relinquishing of one's ethics.***

Mature Spiritual seekers may be able to forgive, even love an offender while at the same time insisting that the person cease doing any further harm

A Course in Miracles:

Do you want peace? *Forgiveness offers it.*

Do you want happiness, a quiet mind, a certainty of purpose and a sense of worth and beauty that transcends the world?

Do you want care and safety, and the warmth of sure protections always?

Do you want a quietness that cannot be disturbed,  
A gentleness that never can be hurt, a deep abiding comfort  
and a rest so perfect it can never be upset?

***All this - Forgiveness offers you - and more.***

**Love is also the *Essence* of Emotional Wisdom**

## **Cultivate Love and Gratitude**

**Always Try to Be a Lover - Rumi**

Love is nourished and supported by Generosity and Gratitude

### **Gratitude is the Door-Way to Love**

While forgiveness heals the heart of old hurts

#### **Gratitude**

**Opens it to *present* Love**

Dissolves negative feelings

Anger and Jealousy melt

Fear and defensiveness shrink

Deflates the barriers of love

Evokes Happiness, which is powerfully healing

When one reaches 'Happy'

One is close to perfection. - *Chuang Tzu - da Tao*

Happy

Fosters Kindness and Generosity

Gratitude can be Cultivated  
We don't have to wait until we win the lottery  
We can be thankful and develop gratitude by reflecting on the gifts that are Already ours  
We can be grateful because we are happy  
**but we can also be happy because we are grateful**

### **Exercise 12:**

#### **Say Grace or a 'Dedication'**

*Before, during or after any worthy task*

but

Not in a meaningless rush to stuff one's face  
Be truly thankful for the many people that did their part to  
Help bring this food to your table

When you have bought locally grown food you can  
**Personally thank** the growers and his helpers that farmer's market.  
and as far as imported food goes...

Before you go thanking the folks that make jet fuel & heaps of diesel for shipping shazizzel  
Of course, thank them, but **HEAVELY CONSIDER BUYING LOCALY GROWN FOOD!!**

**This 'Thanking Process' is much more fulfilling when you can  
Personally Thank 'ol Farmer 'Joe' yourself and feel good about not contributing to oceans of  
diesel fuel emissions... and drilling... and wars over oil....**

Many say Grace AND ask for safe return from many of life's commitments  
Giving is a Two way street

### **Exercise 13**

#### **Recall Helpful People**

*Of all the people in this world,  
These people have Truly Transcended the unjust hatred and horrors that have been  
Heaped upon them throughout the ages*

***This Prayer of Jewish faith***

***IS***

***The Golden rule***

*As we recall the compassion shown us by our parents  
So may we dedicate ourselves to turning that compassion  
Towards All the inhabitants of the earth*

*Let me hear an Almighty 'Oy Vay' for Christ's sake! ;-)*

**Glide into your meditative 'zone'...**

Recall two or three people that have been particularly helpful to you.

Recall how they've been helpful.

Take a few minutes to remember their kindness and allow the feeling of Gratitude to arise.

### **Exercise 14**

#### **A Day of Thankfulness**

**1-**

**Think of the people you will meet during this time  
Find a reason to feel Grateful to each person you meet.**

**2-**

**Continue this recollection of gratitude all day.  
Find a reason to be grateful to each one you meet.**

### **The Direct Cultivation of Love**

#### **Exercise 15:**

#### **Recall Loving People**

***Glide into your meditative 'zone'...***

Bring to mind people you know that have been exceptionally loving

Follow your breathing...

Bring to mind the gifts they give

Consider their characters and personalities and behavior.

What qualities make them so kind, helping and loving

Take notice of your mind as you reflect on these people

You may find yourself feeling grateful and loving because,

**Simply by directing attention to specific people, we begin to feel the qualities they express**

These wonderful people have powerful effects on us.

***Think of Loving People and Love arises.***

*da Buddha* warned

Do not look for bad company or live with people that do not care

Find friends who love the Truth

### **To Give is to Receive**

When we give away one of our things or purchase a gift of any amount  
of course we no longer have that item or amount of \$

Yet in the Mind - the Opposite is true  
What ever we intend for another, whether it's Love, Thanks, good luck, well wishes...  
***We get to feel it first with enough sincerity for it to overflow from us to them***  
Win - Win ;-)

Try my own new exercise *I'm making up on da spot here:*

***Practice Random Acts of Kindness***

Start with the gifts of kindness that don't cost any \$ and not a physical thing of value  
But a flower picked yourself or a  
Smile or let someone ahead of you if approaching a line at the same time, or  
Let a car merge in on a street that might not many chances to get in.

As you exude these Loving gestures - Take note on how nice it feels...  
Consider that person waiting and wondering when they'll get to merge in...  
Looking, waiting, scrutinizing, face focused, eyebrows scrunched up...

***Then by some 'Divine Mirical' by your grace***

**A Smile appears, face lights up and an aura glows with happy**

This could be a good time to include the exercise in which  
You treat everyone you meet like a Saint or Sage  
***Knowing that every soul contains that Eternal Divine Essence*** - can  
Inspire us to radiate our Love out towards All souls  
Naturally a 'Resonance' will occur  
***Profoundly to some and subtle to others***

With ***Awareness*** - All can begin to feel this inner pull  
Then we can Integrate ourselves better towards a more sensible Humanity

**Exercise 16:**

**I Will Receive What I offer Now**

***Glide into your meditative 'zone'...***

"A I give, so shall I receive.

I will receive what I offer now."

Think of those experiences and qualities of mind that you would like to  
Give to others and thereby enjoy for yourself.

"I offer love to everyone

I offer happiness to everyone

I offer peace to everyone

To everyone I offer healing

I offer rest to everyone"

Say these things in your mind slowly with feeling and meaning  
Visualize the people receiving and enjoying these gifts.  
Repeat over & over with the focus one follows the breath  
If your thought wonder, gently bring yourself back

This exercise can be extended into other tasks of the day,  
Like dishes, gardening, watering....  
Simply pause, take few slow breaths and begin the sentences for as long as you wish

In a meeting or other sort of group with an intense focus of subject:  
With the dynamics of emotions running high while creative results need to be...  
Created

Take a few moments to get into a quick 'zone' and repeat these lines...  
Wishing happiness to everyone in the room and  
An encouraging vibe towards creativity and the common solution.  
**This can transform your feeling and make you**  
**A calming, healing influence for others.**

### Exercise 17: All Encompassing Love

Put away all hindrances - Let your mind full of love pervade...  
The whole wide world - Above, below, around and everywhere  
Altogether continue to pervade with love filled thought  
Abounding, sublime, beyond measure.  
*da Buddha*

#### ***Glide into your meditative 'zone'...***

Bring your Awareness to a sort of glowing sensation and feelings of warmth from 'within'...  
*as you do*

Think of someone you love dearly  
Visualize this person clearly in your mind's eye  
Be aware of any feeling of warmth and love that arise as you see this person.

When you are aware of warm feelings, expand your awareness to include people around you.  
Housemates, close by neighbors....

Let your feelings of warmth and love embrace them too.  
Continue to follow your breath and the golden light energy that cycles...  
Next, visualize a larger circle of embrace to include the whole block  
Then the city, the state, country, planet....

Then the universe right up to the 'Edge of the Big Bang' where you will  
***Embrace nothingness and everything at the same time.***

Exercise 18:  
Loving-Kindness Meditation

Buddha meditation

***Glide into your meditative 'zone'...***

Simply repeat short phrases designed to evoke emotional qualities such as  
Happiness, peace, gentleness and... Love

Like exercise 17 - Focus on one dear one and work your way up to  
All beings in All worlds  
But at some point, be sure to include **YOU!** ;-)

Phrases like:

May I be happy, kind, loving, and peaceful, or  
May I be joyful, gentle, calm, and loving  
then progress to:  
May **you** be... then,  
May ALL people be...  
May All Beings be...

You may start by speaking, then fade to your mental voice...  
Don't struggle or force emotion to arise. Merely allow the words to sink into your mind.  
Your task is to relax, repeat the phrases, and  
Be aware of whatever experiences and emotions arise.  
Like always, if your mind wanders astray... Gently bring yourself calmly back to the phrase.

Best to avoid starting with someone you are sexually attractive to  
As this may limit the scope of the meditation

This meditation helps cultivate a loving feeling toward yourself  
But not a recipe for selfishness, but rather for **SelfLESSness**  
Since the ego and selfishness thrive on fear, but dissolve in love

Once you have done this approach a number of times...

*The next stage* is to do this too

**Start with someone you really don't care for**

Expand that to a few or a number of these types of people  
You really don't respect their actions

Even anger, perhaps the toughest of all emotions - Melts in the embrace of mature love  
This does not mean you accept their behavior if it is harmful to others

**I Does Mean that you are liberating yourself from the  
Self torture of uncontrollable rage**

If you start to feel overwhelmed by anger, Stop and return your attention and  
Loving thoughts toward people who are easier to work with.

When your feelings of love are again strong, return to your 'enemies'....  
With love and Kindness

If the negative feelings this person evokes is too strong to work with successfully,  
**then STOP**

Don't strain or struggle or try to force the mind to feel something it is not ready for.  
Remember, part of this meditation involves accepting and loving yourself  
**and your mind** exactly the way you are.

**This is not magic - it is a meditative exercise**

As such, it will take time to blossom, but

With time the feelings will go from

***Slightly subtle to an accumulation of real inner Growth.***

Like all or most other exercises,  
You can extend your practice from your main mediation spot to anywhere and  
Even while doing your everyday simple tasks

From the Christian Bible - "*Perfect Love casts out fear*"

Fear and Love dissipate each other

**The Higher Reaches of Love**

**The supreme purpose and goal for human life...**

Is to

***Cultivate Love*** - Ramakrishna

**Mother Teresa**

*A message addressed to the United Nations*

You and I must come forward and share the joy of loving

But we cannot give what we don't have.

That's why we need to pray.

and prayer will give us a clean heart,

and a clean heart can see God in each other.

**And if we see God in each other**

**We will be able to live in Peace.**

This is my observation as well as I point out  
'What is the main thing all of humanity has in common?'  
Whether we are Aware of it or not  
We all have this 'inner pull' that is attracted naturally to what is...  
**The *essence* of 'God'**

The part of us that is our 'soul' is eternal like the timelessness of God  
Perhaps even more subtle, is our Spirit's direct connection to God  
When we see or feel that 'inner soul' of others and take notice that  
We both resonate with the same '*essence*' and same inner pull  
Towards the same Ultimate destination...  
**We will feel a true interest in seeing that person Shine**  
&  
***we will Shine with them with love and compassion***

When this begins to happen on a larger scale,  
We will be able to work better together towards Global solutions  
We will create a world in which creativity can prosper  
Face it,  
With our current narrow self centered 'ethnocentric' or  
Lower stages of human development  
We will only manage to make things worse...  
THE 'Doom & Gloomers' have lots of reasons to dispare...  
Spiritualist on the other hand...  
Have a natural tendency to find ways to spread Hope, Faith and Love...  
to a majority that,  
Even if they had the '*Time*' to give a shit... they just couldn't  
but when innovatively clever and inspiring Spiritualists find new ways for the average intellect to  
**"*Want to get it*"**

***THERE WILL COME A DAY...***

*when*

**A "*Tipping Point*" will be reached... *When about 10% of us 'get it'***

In which

Common Sense of Heart, Mind and Soul will permeate our every action,  
*Flowing* us along a natural progression of transcendence.

*Until Then...*

PATIENCE!

**LOVE:  
PERSONAL AND TRANSPERSONAL**

Spiritual practices expand and deepen love so it becomes

Both more intense and more frequent

Love

Is the single most potent force in the universe,  
A cosmic wonder that creates, maintains, directs, informs, and  
Brings to its proper end every living thing

Judaism and Tao - that recognize that:

The Ultimate - Lies far beyond the power of words to embrace  
God's essential nature is 'Inscrutable or impossible to understand'

Tao states:

***"The Tao that can be told is not the True Tao"***

Which translates to any form of religion's word for God, JC, the One, the Great Mystery...

Hindu and Christianity states - 'God is Love'

In Islam - Allah is "the all merciful, the all compassionate  
neo-Confucianism -

Love

***"both forms and proceeds from the basic principle of all things"***

*Sufis seek*

**To tastes this Love so fully that**

**The ego dissolves**

Once the ego is effectively dissolved - then only Love and the Divine remain

Ramakrishna - Love awakens us and unites us with the Divine

An ethical lifestyle seeks to avoid doing harm and to enhance the well being of others  
Ethical living both expresses love and further refines it.

**LIVE ETHICALLY**

**Feel Good by Doing Good**

Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain,  
and your neighbor's loss as your own - Taoism

**The Value of Virtue**

A wise person is good to people - who are good  
She is also good to people who - are not good

**This is *True Goodness*** - Lao Tzu

**Rare are those who understand virtue - *sighed Confucius***

**Most people regard ethical guidelines of the great religions as just  
One more set of burdensome rules to be either blithely ignored or blindly obeyed**

Unfortunately, this superficial understanding of ethics completely overlooks their  
Remarkable Spiritual potential.

"Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you"

*Classic Christian version of an older Confucius saying*

But Why Bother?

Unfortunately,

Some ancient answers are based more on fear and guilt than on  
Deep understanding of the benefits of ethical living.

Tales of hideous demons or fire breathing gods, whose idea of a good time is barbecuing us

***If we're not good,***

*imply*

that the main reason for being ethical is to **avoid punishment.**

Likewise,

Being called a worthless sinner and feeling torn by guilt if you make a mistake

Is hardly an inspiring reason to be kind and loving.

There is a better reason for living ethically....

## BENEFITS OF VIRTUE

At the spiritual heart of the great Spiritual Traditions is a far deeper,  
post-conventional understanding of ethics.

This perspective is based more on love than on fear, more on kindness than on guilt.  
At its center is a profound understanding of the way our minds work which makes clear that  
unethical living is destructive to both one's self and other, whereas  
Ethical living can bring happiness and also Awakening.

### The costs of Unethical living

These cause painful emotions such as anger, fear, and jealousy.

If we attack because we're boiling with anger, it is we who will

Burn in the flames of our own resentment;

but most likely you will lash out to a loved one that you feel comfortable venting too...

It's just you are likely to allow your 'anger' to rule your better judgment and lash out in  
destructive ways that will take much time and energy to make right again...

*If that's even possible*

The benefits of ethical living are boundless  
and Crucial towards advanced Spiritual growth

*There will come a Day when*  
Goodness will embody a society, neither through might, nor law,  
But through the natural virtues of a higher Awareness

Speak and act with a pure mind  
and happiness will flow your way ... Just as your shadow is...  
Unshakable.  
Set your heart on doing Good.  
Do it over and over again - and you will be filled with joy.

*da Buddha* calls it '**Right Speech**'-  
- Buddhist -  
Have sensitivity to what you say to others..  
**Offend no one - Yet they speak the truth**  
**Their words are clear - but never harsh...**  
**They do not take offense - and they do not give it.**

Right Action -  
Focus on what is right for everyone - Including Yourself!!

Traps of ritualism  
Don't let old tired rituals degenerate into mindless, repetitive and dreary obligations  
Most of these rituals have people obsessing with the '**surface**' **only depth** of their 'religion', and  
Miss out on the caring about their motives for acting and  
What effects their actions have on others.  
At this altogether too common "religious" stage,  
People tend to blindly follow rules rather than their hearts  
and concern themselves with surface appearances rather than deeper motivations.  
- *The Tao Te Ching* points out -

**When goodness is lost, there is morality**  
**When morality is lost, there is ritual.**  
**Ritual is the 'husk' of True Faith...**  
Therefore,  
The masters concern themselves with the **Depths...**  
and not the **surface**.

This 'revitalization of religion is an absolutely lethal problem for every tradition.  
Not one of the great religions has escaped it.  
The result is a process of "**Truth Decay**"  
whereby effective Spiritual practices  
Fade into ineffective rituals.

Ethical Motives - First, Do no Harm

## HEALING THE PAST

For those that are hunted by past misdeeds...

Undo any damage

Aim for solutions in which everyone wins.

Avoid Attack

Communicate –

Simply telling someone honestly and openly about your pain for the pain inflicted

Your pain may come as guilt or embarrassment over some

Unethical thing you may have done or had a part in.

Communication helps heal

Learn! –

Learn what you can from your experience

So you can proceed more effectively in the future.

Guilt ridden people see their mistakes as unforgivable sins and punish themselves unmercifully.

**They do not heal or learn from the past:**

Rather,

They continue to punish themselves for it and thereby remain tied to it.

**Ethical People,**

On the other hand:

*Recognize their mistake as simply mistakes.*

They heal the past and themselves by correcting their errors, forgiving the themselves,

And become free of the past, their minds cease to be

a junkyard of painful memories and Guilty secrets...

They become fresh and clean to each new moment of experience.

## EXERCISES IN ETHICAL LIVING

Moral virtues and vices **are acquired and firmly established in the soul by** frequently repeating

the actions pertaining to a particular moral habit over a long period of time and

***By our becoming accustomed to them.*** - Maimonides, 12th century Jewish sage

*da Buddha*

Do not belittle your virtues - Saying "They're nothing"...

A jug fills drop by drop - So the wise person becomes brimful of virtue.

### Exercise 1

#### Reflect on Your Good Deeds

***Glide into your meditative 'zone'...***

Then recall three contributions or things you have done that you feel good about

As the memories rise in your awareness, allow yourself to

Save each one and reflect on them.

Notice the feelings they evoke.

## **Exercise 2**

### **Tell the Truth for a Day**

Not like in the movie 'Liar Liar' where Jon Carey was cursed to only tell the truth  
Sometimes the truth got him laid big time & other's just pissed off  
So don't say the your deepest, darkest horrible 'true' feelings  
or even a truth that will hurt  
The Goal is to speak Truthfully and kindly as you can.

If you find you are beginning to lie or stretch the truth or over exaggerate  
HUMBLE UP

#### **Take notes in 'practice journal'**

How often were you tempted to lie or stretch the truth or exaggerate?

The more you do this the less guilt you will incur and  
A sense of strength and integrity will subtly fill your 'way'

## **Exercise 3**

### **Give Up da Gossip**

Avoid gossip in the obvious ways of being cruel and mocking some one that is not present.  
If there a moral to the story that must be told, try to say it about an anonymous party.  
Keep the tale about the moral of the story & not to 'disenfranchise' another.

Avoid gossip

You will be fostering harmony rather than antagonism.  
You won't have to carry the guilt or denial of your 'wrong speech'  
A sense of integrity and strength come from holding to the Truth  
Treating people with respect, and refusing to succumb to hurtful talk

## **Exercise 4**

### **Do No Harm**

Being harmless is a wonderful gift.  
It means we are not acting from, and therefore NOT reinforcing anger in ourselves  
**and that people are *safe in our presence*,**  
This allows them to let down their guard, set aside their defenses and pretenses  
and feel at peace

This exercise can be done by starting with a time period to try your best not to harm anyone.

Practice 'right speech'

& or integrate the practice of treating everyone like a saint or sage

Or perhaps treat everyone like they are your teacher

Genuinely smile with gratitude for the lessons they teach

as ether ways that would inspire you to be

More like or less like.

I had previously read about certain Characteristics that some people tend to have,

I read about them in a matter of fact, yup - I got it.

But,

**Until I met someone that actually lived their '*whole*' life in such an obvious misled perspective.**

This was before I even knew about the 'teacher' exercise:

We struck up a conversation about God & I wrongly assumed there must be a common interest in

Spirituality and getting closer to God thru Deep Contemplative Prayer and *meditating*,

this must have at least ***some*** interest....

Learning that just because one pretends to be or assumes they are, as they say...

on the path to '*eternal life at the Lord's feet*'.

***Doesn't mean they are interested in anything of True Spirituality,***

even if it only would take a few minuets a day....

**Too much Work *some have told me.***

My *naive* hope that since all people have this 'inner pull' towards something that they are

a part of, but which is much bigger, much more profane than what we

currently experience in the here & now.

If we all started with that one common connection,

We could soon build the bridges for a better future.

The astonishing realization of how shallow this person's perspective of God and Spiritual

Hit me like a ton of bricks.

I just couldn't believe anyone would forsake knowledge and the wisdom one can only get by

Experiencing Deep Meditation or Contemplative Prayer.

To be miss-led to believe that they don't need to 'bother' with experiencing their own inner light,

their soul, becoming more 'Aware' of Spirit and it's direct connection to God

How profane this realization was that

***This "Teacher" inspired me***

To spend many weeks of researching and studying many perspectives

to gain a deeper understanding In every regard, I could uncover.

I learned...

A lifetime of knowledge that with much time and meditation

I gained a higher wisdom of many perspectives.

I am grateful to my 'teacher'.

Now I have the wisdom to better help those that seek it within my scope

### Meditation

Just the focused time of quieting the mind and relaxing thoroughly on a daily basis  
Would benefit even '**born *again* atheists ;-)**

*Sad but true*

**There is more spirituality** when an atheist uses **reason** to **deny** God  
Then there is when a 'surface only' faith just uses the 'literal word of the Bible' as **proof** of God  
... It's in da ByeBall... So that proves it!

### Exercise 5

#### Communicate to Heal

Right Speech can be remarkably healing  
Sharing a painful experience can detoxify it and give new insights and perspectives

Select an unethical behavior, ether yours or someone eles's that still disturbs you.

It should be one that you wish to resolve and wish to communicate

Then - Select someone you trust to communicate with.

Ideally, this will be someone wise enough to listen carefully and sympathetically and, of course,  
be able to keep a secret. Typically a close friend is fine.

Find a peaceful place where you won't be disturbed

Your job,

Is to talk as openly and honestly as you can about your pain.

It's better not to give long explanations, theoretical interpretation, or justifications.

Simply talk about your personal experience and especially your feelings.

"I feel..." Is a good way to start...

The 'listener' doesn't have to provide answers or solve the problem

Their job is simply to listen until you feel you have completely finished.

At that point, you can both reflect on what can be learned from the experience.

### Exercise 6

#### Right a Wrong

Reflect on any unethical things you have done that remain unresolved.

Choose one you would like to resolve - and decide how to do it.

It is useful to make a time to do this soon because,

Guilt has a way of helping us procrastinate and forget.

da Buddha warns

Be quick to do good - If you are slow

Then mind, delighting in mischief  
Will catch you

in the pioneering days of  
'running away from home and 'pan handling God for some rich guy at an airport'  
a young visionary Hare Krishna back at moonie-ville flats...

Was Divinely Enlightened to this Profound Wisdom  
(after "Mindlessly setting his bong down on an uneven surface")

If a bong has inadvertently become un-vertical

**Right the Bong** - before it spills

~ da Buddha's bro concurs dude ~

~ Confucius Agrees!

If one's **Balance is in question** -

**"Centering"** the bong properly before letting go

is da way ta go bro

Mohammad 'Pipes' in.... "hEERRe"

JC turned tobacco into bud at a wedding reception that didn't allow alcoholic wine

With a properly balanced bong, many 'Higher' writings have been born

God saw this and was pleased with da weed so made it plentiful and Grow...

like a weed.

Jah was stoked

...and so it was.. With "**Reasoning**"

In a simple event, gathered to smoke "ganja" and discuss matters of Deep Import'.

An Honorary Rastafari lighs da herb says a short '*Dedacation*' beforehand,

da ganja is passing 'pon the lef' han' side fashion,

*Except in times of war when it is passed counterclockwise.*

**It is used to reason with Jah.**

Which was a "Sublime" influence to the words,

"I smoke two joints in times of peace and two in times of war"

;-)

## **Higher Reaches of Ethical Living**

Wish for others whatever you wish for yourself - Mohammad

Do onto others as you would have them do onto you - JC

As the practice of ethics deepens, it's benefits flow into more and more aspects of life

Dissolving old pains, releasing fear and anger, healing damaged relationships, and

Freeing us from the past.

Even Death –

The greatest mystery and source of anguish in life - Begins to lose some of its terror.

As the mental fog of unethical behavior begins to lift,

We can see ourselves more clearly and realize,  
***We are not who we thought we were.***  
Ethical living helps us see through the illusion, recognize our true self, and  
See beyond our Self to our **Source**.

When we recognize our own Self, we also recognize that same Self in others.  
Then we look out on the world and see our Self in all people.  
There are no 'others' to lie to, cheat or mistreat.

At first ethics is a practice  
Then they become a necessity  
And finally, become a joy  
A Shinning Virtue

### Concentrate and Calm Your Mind

Control the mind - Attain one-pointedness.  
Then the harmony of heaven - Will come down and dwell in you.  
You will be radiant with life  
You will rest in  
Tao.  
*Chuang Tzu Taoist sage*

### **Your Meandering Mind**

May you develop mental concentration....  
For whosoever is mentally concentrated, Sees things according to reality.  
*da Buddha*  
Our monkey minds are constantly jumping all around  
and we only recognize a small fraction this frenzy.

### *Can you tame your monkey mind?*

Visualize a white ring with a white dot on a black background  
Try to keep focused for at least two minutes.

It's astounding how much the mind wanders around in a frenzy.

The sacred principle  
Is to be found  
Within one's own mind  
*Wang Yang-ming*  
*also*

*Once one gained knowledge,  
One had a duty to put that knowledge into action.*

Our untrained minds take an enormous toll on our psychological and spiritual well-being, and because, once tamed, a concentrated mind offers enormous benefits.

*Dalai Lama*

Religion is at best a tool to help you train your mind  
*da Buddha*

More than those who hate you, more than all your enemies,

**And the untrained mind does greater harm.**

More than you mother, more than your father, more than your whole family

**A well trained mind does greater good.**

As long as we cannot focus our attention and it leaps unbidden from one thing to another, we are doomed to agitation and distraction.

We all have a sort of 'ADD' - Add is **Badd**

: - O

Folks with clinical ADD have a real challenge with life in general

But most folks could do with just some simple **meditation**

The mind takes on the traits of which we focus on

So

If we focus on specific loving people or fond memories

We will evoke desired qualities such as love and joy. .

Also - what we put into our minds effects our mental health.

If we practice 'unwise attention' and stuff our minds with insane

Tv violence, Greed, Fear & Loathing

This will greatly affect our well being by soon becoming aggressively *edgy*

This '*edgy*' becomes part of our personality,

Along with all the other mindlessly spawned negative attributes.

If there is anything praiseworthy - Think about these things.

*What we concentrate on - We become.*

*Once we can control attention,*

***We can concentrate on anything we wish.***

~ This open enormous possibilities. ~

### **Develop a Peaceful Mind**

Our essential nature is usually overshadowed by the activity of the mind...

When the mind has settled, we are established in our essential nature

Which is Unbound Consciousness. - *the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*

The task to tame the monkey mind is widely understood to be...  
a challenge

Training the mind and attention is sometimes called the art of arts and science of sciences...

It takes time and specific methods, which include:

**Meditation and contemplation, yoga, chanting, and continuous prayer**

### **Meditation - A Universal Practice**

**To know Tao** - *Meditate and still the mind.*

**Knowledge comes with Perseverance**

*Loy Ching Yuen - Taoist Master*

and *THEN*

Wisdom finally comes from Experience of  
Putting Spirit into Action

*RevRog*

Mediation isn't just for Asian or Eastern religions & has been used by Jewish and Christian  
Traditions for thousands of years as well.

Meditation is the chief possession of the mystic

Rabbi Nachman:

A person who does not meditate cannot have wisdom.

He may occasionally be able to concentrate, but not for any length of time

His power of concentration remains weak and cannot be maintained.

Common Elements of Meditation - Two key elements

**Choice of focus** - breath, an image, a word, a prayer.

When attention wanders, gently bring it back to focus

### Transforming the Busyness of Daily Life

Some techniques for concentration are best done during specific practice periods,

Such as morning meditation or prayer.

Others can be incorporated into the general busyness of daily life.

### **Exercise 1**

#### **Do One Thing At A Time**

We do so many things during a normal busy day - We are doing those things to remember,  
With our 'monkey minds' also going in every direction at once & are not even aware of it.

Commit to a specific time - To doing only one thing at a time.

For each activity you encounter - Focus your entire attention on the task at hand

Don't let your mind wander

Focus on your breath during your task, especially when your thoughts wander.  
Do your task in rhythm with your relaxed breath  
Even it requires your full thought power... All in rhythm with breath

When you take restroom break - Make the most of this 5 minute break.

Don't let your monkey mind waste all your precious time & it usually bogs you down with  
unsettling shaziz anyway.

Take that walk with focus calmness - get into a stride and sync breath nice & easy and full  
No, ya don't get to daydream about the cute cubical chick or the report due or the ball game or  
1000's of trivial monkey shazizal that get your heart racing, your breath short &  
'Hyperventilated' like, tummy in a bind, cramped tight muscles in odd places...

**All of this is of course happening without us being slightly Aware of it...**

### ***Until Now***

Start your day with a good morning meditation and some yoga stretches

Get ready for your day without a radio or Tv going, just focus on the shower, teeth brushing...

Prepare your meal with focus, eat your meal with a dedication and  
gratitude for your nourishment.

Enjoy the subtle details of the tastes, the textures, the aromas.

Take your time to chew in a non rushed manner, because you have set aside time to eat relaxed

Continue your day as such - Driving without the distractions of the radio

Breathing steadily, calmly focused on all aspects of driving safely and most of all

Enjoy the Ride!

Some people actually get into a sort of zone while they drive... That may too deep as we need to  
not let our focus drift of the task of being alert to our task of safely driving

No cell phones while driving unless purpose mounted smart phone for maps only...

Better to learn your route before you head out

But when you do talk to someone on the phone - Give them your absolute full attention  
and breath calmly and enjoy each moment,

No rush, but be time efficient with most non personal calls

Later, when we do want to relax the Tv or Music - Then Do JUST that

;-)

Turn on the music at a reasonable level and just sit there and enjoy it as fully as you can  
Even close your eyes and watch the 'concert' with your 'mind's eye'... and Breath like a meditation.  
Some 'music' or relaxing audio can really take your meditations to Deeper levels, and Get you to  
your zone in quickly by helping to focus your concentration and calm your monkey mind

If you need your Tv fix - **Pick out a 'quality' show**

Get your snack & drinks, dim the lights & breath calmly... When ya can

;-)

If you go to a restaurant, pick a quiet one so you can either calmly enjoy your meal

or be able to enjoy conversation with your dinner friends...

Eat your meals with the single task of enjoying your meal.

Don't eat while you work - This is inefficient for either task of eating or working.

Don't watch Tv or listen to the radio or even read.

Reading is one of my biggest pleasures, while I attempted to  
cram every minuet full of da stuff I'm doing.

Reading kept me from really enjoying my meal.

My mind and body is multi tasking in opposing ways.

When you just simply enjoy your meal, the aromas, the textures, the tastes...

You whole digestive system gets in sync with the eating process,

Your stomach becomes receptive to the nourishment that's coming it's way.

Taking the time to enjoy the aromas, even before the first bite, actually gets the 'juices flowing'  
Your mouth waters a bit getting ready to '*grease the skids*' so the food just glides right on down  
to your stomach that has started to do what it does with the food that comin' on down....

Even a '*Born again* Atheist' and

'New spiritualist that are recovering from a life long bout of "**Godaphobia**"  
could appreciate these benefits...

**'Born again Atheist' and "Godaphobics"**

Can take a 'path' to discover their Inner Selves for a long a deep period that will bring a better  
state of mind in the practical 'here & now'...

All without mentioning the "G" word.

In time, ether 'camp' will get over their 'Godaphobias'.

By meditating deeper and living in a 'way' that brings peace, harmony and Understanding within...

How we 'percieve' God will begin to have very Deep but Wordless Meanings.

All that follow their "Path" far enough will naturally cure their own inflictions of,  
"Godaphobia"

The Spiritualist

Is Aware that bringing your meditative focus  
to all tasks at all times

Is an essential step to Higher and Deeper stages.

Most Spiritualist tend to flow into a "**voluntary simplicity lifestyle**"

Less cluttered by excess activates and possessions,

A life outwardly simple yet but Inwardly rich.

## Exercise 2

### Transform Daily Activities into Sacred Rituals

The seemingly simple tasks done with a focused awareness can be

## A profound 'Awakening' for spiritual growth

This just deepens the perspectives of exercise 1 in that even the simplest tasks or Opening a door - First, take one deep, calming breath, and then in direct, calm focus efficiently open the door, no longer hurling the door open and barging right in.

Those few seconds of focused calmness is just enough to put one into a tranquil groove

As you glide *into where ever the door has led you ;-)*

**Driving: - Start by leaving a few minutes earlier!**

Open the door like just mentioned, starting with one calming breath

Don't just hop in quickly - Take your time to just glide in efficiently, no rush.

Once settled, take another calming breath... - Then start the motor, do your seat belt & mirrors...

When you're all set to go,

BREATH two or three calming breaths.... **Then** calmly make your way

Enjoy the ride, **be aware**

### Exercise 3

#### Transform Interruptions Into Wake Up Calls

Our days are often filled with numerous interruptions and minor irritations.

During a conversation with another, a cell phone rings or text...or the boss intrudes or...

Then we sort of 'lurch forward' into this un-expectant annoyance semiconsciously.

***Interruptions can also be used as a wakeup call***

Taking a moment to relax and let go of any annoyance when a child or boss cries out

Allows you to be calm and reassuring

### Stop to Breathe

Numerous traditions use the breath as the most 'centering element' of Deepest Prayer or Contemplative Meditation.

### Exercise 4

#### Three Breaths

Take Three 'meditative Breaths' - Deeply from the diaphragm, allowing our lower tummy to relax and expand to bring in the breath to our deepest capacities.

We bring our awareness to the air and '*God, Light*' that begins to waft by the nose

Down towards our lowest chakra, then visualizing a rush of Light building up from our depths and washing up the back of our spine like a wave churning white and foamy.

This wave washes all the way up to our shoulders and the crown of our wee heads.

Building with a gathering intensity, then popping right out towards the infinite

With daily morning deep meditations, this breathing process can be evoked many times throughout the day to immediately bring you to your zone.

Breathing in I Smile  
Breathing out I relax  
This is a wonderful moment  
or  
In, out  
Slow, Deep  
Smile, release

## **Exercise 5**

### **Take Regular Breath Meditations**

Plan to take numerous Breath Meditation throughout the day  
The Deepest and longest mediation should be reserved for the Morning if possible.  
When you wake, do a few light stretches and limbering, use the bathroom as needed  
Then prepare your heap O' pillows for a long sitting meditation.

For those with a busy day, 20 minuets will do wonders  
When you have sufficient time available - keep moving that 'minimum time' longer  
Sacrifice an hour of Tv for an hour of Deep meditation  
On days you have more time, don't set a limit and  
See how long you can sustain 'Pure Thought'

The other meditative perspective is to incorporate this Breathing cycle into  
many opportunities throughout the day... Like mentioned above and any time you get the 'cue' to  
'Down shift' and relax for a moment.  
By practicing a 'Deep' daily meditation - You will be able to quickly  
'Glide into your flow', anytime, anywhere

Several times an hour, when 'shifting gears'... You can  
Center yourself in the Oneness of the Moment  
These short moments will be like the Spiritual Stepping Stones  
That gets you across your new day and new horizons.

## **Exercise 6**

### **Sustained Concentration on the Breath**

With regard to internal factors, I do not envision any other single factor so helpful as  
**Appropriate Attention** - da Buddha

Each morning you achieve a Deep meditation for as long as your time available  
Once a week, extend this a bit longer  
One a month extend this as long as you reasonably can  
Once a year, find somewhere in nature that calls to you for days of contemplation and

Don't expect profound life changing experiences or Immediate solutions to  
Major life issues you may be facing...  
However, all these things really do typically occur...  
But mostly when we are not trying to evoke a specific solution to our life issues  
Free your 'Daily mind' with your daily meditation  
Free your bigger Weekly issues with your longer weekly & monthly meditations  
But  
Relish your main yearly retreat in nature or guided experience  
With an openness to your Deepest Spiritual Calling  
This may be the time to focus on that 'yearly' or Major Life Issue that really does require  
Your most Deepest Contemplation  
Ideally or once you reach the point in your life which you are comfortably beyond the  
Harsh consequences of... Life  
And your daily, weekly, monthly meditation takes it all in stride...  
Allow yourself to feel an openness to the apparent resonance of the 'Essence common to all'  
With the opportunity to experience a very Deep Awareness  
We seem able to 'bear witness' to subtle but very profound realizations

## Exercise 7

### First Breath, Last Breath

An interesting perspective...  
Imagine that you are an infant just born to this world.  
Freed from the womb, you about to take your first breath.  
Each breath is a new, life giving experience.  
Take time to enjoy this fully.  
Now Imagine you are at the end of your life. You are dying, and any breath,  
***This breath right now may be the last.***  
Give it your full attention, use it to relax and release fear, clinging or concern  
With each out breath, simply let go.  
This is a good general exercise plus helps one glide into the concept of death.  
One day we will be breathing our last breaths.  
Peace and stability of mind developed from meditations such as this will be one factor that  
determines how peacefully and easily we die.

### Sacred Sounds

Meditations on sacred sounds or as a 'sound track' to most any meditations.  
Nature has countless organically Sacred Sounds  
From the obvious waterfalls, babbling brooks, ocean waves of all types,  
and Trees with rustling leaves  
Rain  
Bamboo Forests - Come to Maui &...

Lie on your back and look up at the 50 to 100 feet tall Bamboo trunks  
Or assume your favorite meditation sitting - Close your eyes  
The sounds of the wind gently knocking the giant Bamboo together creates a sound that is  
'otherworldly' and Enchanting

Meditating by your own pond with a babbling waterfall sound is great.

**Some** 'new age-ish' 'atmospheric' mood 'music' is nice.

Sound wave technology like the iAwake folks, seems to be helping many to  
Quickly and Deeply help you focus to your zone by using the frequencies your brain  
will be at during the various levels of deep meditation.

Used with headphones, this can really help block out the distracting sounds of life, allowing you  
Attain your focus faster and maintain your concentration longer,  
Even in busy cubicles and households.

Many religious traditions have some of the worlds most profoundly moving music arrangements  
Enjoyed with an open mind, they can seemingly call out to your inner soul...

Most Deeply Spiritual folks and all religious folks will quickly find  
How the name of '**God**' can be remarkably evocative and powerful when used in meditation.

To those 'Recovering Catholics' or 'Godaphobes' who are struggling with *the 'G' word*  
Since the day they threw out the '**dirty bathwater dogma**' of their previous religion  
Even though some concern was used to *attempt* to save  
the '**Spiritual Baby**'

Inherently, many precious items got thrown out as well.

You may have cleaned up some items or words for occasional use later on when you begin to  
"Seek Your 'Way'... Such as '**soul**', **Spirit**...

You have effectively thrown out the 'things' that just didn't make sense to you like,  
All the dogmas, the myths, the magic, the miracles, and  
Certainly all the Biblical Conspiracy theories

After learning how many times 'religion' have been wrong about  
so many things during their 'atrocious' history...

And How many 'religions' adamantly state that Their religion is the ONLY TRUE one :-O

When one has taken the time to point out that there is currently over 4200 religions  
on this tiny planet and they **can't all be right, nor can they all be wrong**

The main thing they all have in common is

**God**

**In wordless contemplation there is a universal communion with our True Inner Self  
Our True Face and the Oneness that percieve in a 'Non-duel' relation.**

**This is Spirituality.**

**Religions... all 4200+ 'relgions' have their heart in the right place but often allow egos to cloud  
their perscetive by dismissing all other 'ways' to be simple dead wrong.**

**Egos will be the hardest things to humble.**

**We have been ruled by them constantly so far.**

**For the totally non religious and never had been...**

Great! - Zen would say

For your mind is not full of myths, magic, miracles and other distracting dogmas

and you are more receptive to

Looking Within and Going Beyond

Perhaps, like many, You feel that

A truly **personal** 'path' to seek your inner Spirituality

Is the most common sense direct approach

When you meditate 'Within', seeking this 'inner Light' and soon become Inspired

Soon you somehow feel a bit awkward when you realize,

That everything points back to "The ONE"

With a new-age zeal, you confidently address this 'ONE' as,

The Great Mystery or just the "Universe" or other 'word'.... Except the "G" word:

God

Continue your Spiritual meditations and

Sooner or later you will be cured of

**"Godaphobia"**

**Awareness Reveals one's True Self**

*and*

*~ each will find it in their own way ~*

**Spirituality is**

**Medicine for the People**

I'm out to cure

**Godaphobia**

The use of '**God**' can be remarkably evocative and powerful when used in meditation.

What ever word you resonate with the most is a good start.

Jah, Christ, Lord, the One, the Great Mystery, Allay, Buddha, Krishna... or just...

God

It's what it really is all about... So get over it ;-)

**Exercise 8**

**Repeat the Name of God**

Before you Glide into your zone - determine the length of this meditation.

For starters 15 to 20 minutes will be good.

After a regular sitting, in time you can increase your focused time.

You can set an alarm if you must be done in time to do your busy day  
a Clock that you can take a peek at is good, just don't obsess with watching the clock.

Glide into your zone with your sustained breath meditation

Get deep and relaxed - take enough breaths to be aware of yourself, noticing any tight spots

Relax these... Then begin:

Gently repeat your *favorite name* of God, first as a whisper

Then soon you can just repeat within your mind.

Some folks can take this opportunity to speak the many and various names and attributes of God

While at the other end of the 'spectrum' - the One, the Great Mystery, the Universe...

There is no reason to strain or attempt to *make 'something happen'*.

All you have to do is repeat the name over & over, slowly and gently again & again. ..

In time you will discover for yourself that

"God's name cannot be heard without a response, nor said without an echo in the mind

That calls you to **'remember - which is the first steps to 'Awakening'**

*Ramakrishna proclaimed from his direct experience of practicing several religions -*

**"Every revealed Name of the One Reality possesses**

**Irresistibly Sanctifying Power"**

Do this **earnestly - in your own way** that you will **'grow** into'

Let it encompass your entire conscious being.

Let it be - the only thing you desire

Let the 'inner pull' of our soul, sail with Spirit to the One

A variation to this meditation - is to visualize your 'Inner Spirit'

Connect with the essence of your soul - Feel the subtle warmth of your Glow

The same 'Glow' that we feel 'pulled to' and resonate with

Follow that 'Pull' to its 'Source'

Where the Timeless essence of our Soul are swept along with Spirit and delivered

To the only place it can possibly go

## **Exercise 9**

### **Contemplative Prayer**

Typically, most think of prayer as  
a request or a dialog or at least a monolog with God,  
while we await the silent subtle response within...

Contemplative Prayer has a different form.

Here the focus is on the repetition of a Spiritually significant word, phrase, or sentence.

Almost any phrase can be used, providing only that it is Spiritually meaningful and

Calls forth positive feelings of your heart and mind.

Some folks may choose words like Love, Peace, or Grace.

Others may want to use a line for Sacred text like:

'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me'

or

Jah Rastafa Tafari Yahweh "I and I" - Abba Keddu...

1963 United Nations address - Halle Selassie stated:

"We must become members of a new race, overcoming petty prejudice,

owing our ultimate allegiance not to nations

but to our **fellow men within** the *human* community."

### ***Create your own phrases to invoke a Deeper Awakening***

Some non religious folks have trouble with the concept of ***groveling at the feet of a 'lord'***

Although this concept is popular in many traditional ethnocentric religions,

This approach requires modification to 'resonate' with most individuals.

***Find your own words that do this for you.***

This technique is almost the same as saying 'God' as above.

As with all meditations, the experiences can vary widely.

At one extreme,

There may be an up-welling of undigested emotions and painful or awkward moments.

At the other extreme, there may be periods of calm and tranquility.

Both experiences are valuable. The release of old conflicts from the unconscious awareness.

Continue to repeat the "*sacred sound*" of your words, rather than get caught up in the conflicts

that arise. Just take notice of them, embrace them for a moment, and then let it Be...

and just let the 'sacred sound' return your focus.

Occasionally the mind may become very calm and still, so still that all thoughts, including the

sacred sound, may cease. At these times you have a choice:

You can exert a slight effort of will and gently restart 'the sound' so that it continues unceasingly

throughout the practice period.

**Alternatively,**

*and I seem to resonate with is the TM or Christian Centering Prayer way -*

When you have reached a point of '*such calmness*',

That no thoughts arise, including the 'sacred sound'...

You then make no effort whatsoever and **simply rest in the silence.**

This ***silence of the mind*** unveils the profound experiences of the sacred

That lie ***beyond*** thoughts and images.

TM describes this as "Transcendental Consciousness" and the  
Centering Prayer as "***the presence of God***"

### **Establishing a Routine**

Setting time aside each day for meditation is invaluable.  
Freed of distraction and demands, the mind can come to rest, slip loose from trivial pursuits,  
and give full attention to what really matter.

### **How much and how often?**

More is better of course,  
but it is way better to have easily managed daily practices.  
Rather than too long of an attempt which is not compatible with one's busy life and or  
One's focus has just not gotten to a point  
To sustain focused concentration for long extended periods...  
yet.

Best to start with about 15 to 20 minuets for the first two weeks of daily meditation.  
Within two months of daily meditations, you could reasonably achieve  
30 to 60 minutes or more a day.  
A few more months you may have the concentration of focused attention required for  
Hours of conscious mediation.

### **Progress on the Path**

**Like learning an instrument,  
*It takes a while before one can 'carry a tune'***

But with each little baby step,  
there is joy.

When one masters their instrument, there is profound joy whenever they perform.  
There are noticeable joys and benefits right away with meditation.  
And these become Deeper and more profound with Practice.  
Truly a source of delight for you and those whose lives you touch.  
At the very least, your pracites will lead you to be a  
Calming Voice of Reason with Unconditional Love and Compassion

### **The Higher Reaches of Concentrations and Calm**

When, through the practice of yoga meditation,  
The mind ceases its restless movements, and becomes still...  
One ***realized*** the **Atman** (self) - It satisfies one entirely.  
Then one knows that infinite happiness, which can be realized by the purified heart,  
but  
***Is beyond the grasp of the senses.***  
*The Bhagavad Gita*

As Spiritual practice deepens, concentrations and calm increase.  
They yield a peace so unshakable and profound that the Buddha called it  
The highest form of happiness.  
Christians describe it as "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding".  
**This peace is the *doorway to the Divine*.**  
When the mind is focused and unperturbed, it opens effortlessly to its Source.

This was humankind's earliest and most important spiritual discoveries:  
A Tranquil, concentrated mind is a mind primed for awakening.

Those who have gained tranquility through the practice of Spiritual disciplines,  
Behold God in their own consciousness - *da Gita*  
Christian contemplatives claim,  
"The Path leading to Heaven is that of complete stillness"

### **Continuous Concentration**

There seems to be praise for one who can spend his 'whole' life praying the Jesus prayer.  
That's great, unless he's married, or has a job, or goes out of his house...

Find moments each day that allow you to **'be at one with'**.  
Go with the flow in a Zen like fashion.  
Soon you will find ways to connect one 'Zen moment' to the next.  
Thus  
Achieving a constant calmness.  
Use the inspiration one gains through this calmness for the betterment of all.

The mind of the sage being in repose - Becomes the mirror of the Universe  
*Chuang Tzu*

A calm mind offers a clear mirror with which to look out at the world and in at ourselves.  
Less compelled by compulsive needs, less troubled by painful emotions,  
Less perturbed by ethical lapses, and less disturbed by wandering attention,  
We can now begin to Awaken Sacred Vision

### **Awaken Your Sacred Vision**

See Clearly and Recognize the Sacred IN All Things

Wherever you turn - There is the face of God. - *da Koran*

### **The Healing Power of Awareness**

**The True person** - sees what the eyes see-  
and does not add to it something that is not there.

Tzu

As the Jewish Talmud observes,  
We do not see things simply as they are,  
But also as We are

Our minds mold and shape everything we experience.  
Yet our untamed minds have minds of their own.  
What we perceive is selected by our desires, colored by our emotions, and  
Fragmented by our wandering attention.

What we see outside us reflects what is inside us.  
The result: We do not see ourselves or the world clearly or accurately.

Ancient sages to modern shrinks have pointed this out  
*da Buddha* calls it - **Mindlessness**

We live semiconsciously because our awareness is clouded and our spiritual vision asleep.

### **The Cost of Unconsciousness**

What we get from each moment depends on the attention we give it.  
Usually the quality of our experience reflects the quality of our awareness  
Usually we bring far less than full awareness to our experience.

Lost in past memories and hypnotized by future fantasies,  
We sleepwalk through life, and the costs include,  
Absent-mindedness, alienation, automaticity, and illusion...

### **Absent-mindedness**

It's sad we so rarely open to this **present** moment:  
The costs range from forgetting where your keys are, to missing out on  
so much life as we stumble mindlessly through our '*daze*'.

We all know the symptoms -  
We are reading a book and suddenly realize with don't know what we just read  
and the monkey mind is off on a tangent.

We go to a meeting and later all we can recall is our fuzzy recollections of our daydreams.  
Having trouble following along in a social conversation?...

Focus

### **Self - Alienation**

The most important voyage of discovery -  
Is the voyage across the abyss that  
Separates  
**Us from Ourselves.**

We are strangers to ourselves: We do not know our own minds,  
Our inner depths, or so and what we really are.  
Consequently, we identify with the external, superficial aspects of ourselves,  
Especially with the body.

We believe we are egos wrapped in skin.

*da Buddha* calls this - "**Wrong View**"

Yoga describes it as - "Identification with the senses"

**Psychologist agrees that we are painfully out of touch with ourselves.**

A great deal of the distress we endure consciously or not, takes its toll.  
We live in ignorance of our 'True Self', our own 'inner Homeland world' of  
Our subjective experience within.

Until we discover that ancient fact a new and uniquely for each of us as an individual, we are  
condemned to wander seeking solace where it cannot be found,...  
In the outer world.

### **Automa-ticity**

After decades of semiconscious living, these habits are deeply ingrained.  
Most of us, most of the time, behave and act mechanically - like machines.

The specifically Human Power, of Self-Awareness is asleep

And the human being, like an animal, acts - more or less intelligent-  
Solely in response to various influences.

Only when a man makes use of this power of self-awareness does he  
Attain to the level of a person, to the level of freedom.

**At that moment he is Living... *Not being Lived* -**

***a Buddhist - Buddha-Buddhi***

***Unhealthy Forces Arise in Moments of Mindlessness***

### **Life in Illusion**

Hindu - Maya

Christian - Veil

Islam - 70,000 Veils :-O

BillnTedism - Head up Thine Arss-ness...

### **Benefits of Living Mindfully**

Concentration allows us to direct attention to whatever experiences we wish,  
While mindfulness allows us to explore them sensitively.

To Live mindfully is to bring greater awareness to each activity,  
To be present in each moment, and to catch subtle experiences that all too often go unnoticed.

Mindfulness has Five benefits.  
It enhances our awareness of relationships, the world around us, and the world within us.  
It's also free us from automaticity and heals the mind.

### **1 - Interpersonal Sensitivity**

Mindfulness makes us more present with each person we meet,  
More aware of the other person's feelings and the many messages conveyed by  
Subtle Body movements and vocal tones.

This allows us to attune to their motives and emotions and to be  
More empathic with their feelings.

These are essential skills, vital for anyone who want to enjoy good relationships.  
Empathy is an especially crucial skill, and research shows that  
Meditation is one of the few methods known to enhance it.

### **2 - Refining the Senses**

We certainly don't need to give up sensory pleasures - but,  
We need only to **give up our 'Attachments'** to them  
and then Refine our Senses through Awareness

By living in the moment as they come, we allow ourselves to be more aware of the  
Simple pleasures from the details we would otherwise miss.

*Doing this involves*

**Bringing with you the tranquility of your deep meditation with you all day.**

This will also in turn bring Deeper Awareness to the Inner worlds of your meditations  
and the workings of your mind

*Patanjali* - From meditation... Is born intuitive clarity, and the finest  
Hearing, Sight, Tastes and smells

**- Refined sense offers three gifts-**

**They enhance the appreciation and pleasure of each moment**

Since each experience is more rich and satisfying, there is **less craving** for more experiences.

**The appreciation of quality - replaces the raw hunger for quantity**

Refining senses is an excellent mental training that fosters beneficial qualities such as  
concentration and calm'

*Patanjali-*

Experience of the finer levels of the senses establishes the settled mind

### **3 - Knowing One's Mind**

O Seeker,  
Know that the Path to Truth is within you  
*Sufi Sheikh Badrutdin*

As Awareness matures, it is able to observe not only the outer, but also  
The inner world with increasing precision.

**Much that was formerly Unconscious - *becomes Conscious.***

Making the unconscious Conscious has been the essence of deep psychotherapy ever since Freud.  
It has been the essence of much meditation for 1000's of years.

**Meditative awareness can penetrate far below the levels reach by psychotherapy.**

Meditation is somewhat divided into two types.  
Concentration meditations as just discussed - which focus and calms the mind by  
Holding attention on a single object such as breath or a mantra.

The other type is "**Awareness Meditation**  
Allows attention to move from one object to another and which  
Explore all experiences with care and precision.

Concentration meditation provides a foundation for awareness meditation.  
Together they play a crucial role in awakening spiritual vision and are enormously helpful for  
understanding the depths and the workings of our mind.

Without awareness training, we are strangers to ourselves.  
We remain prisoners of our subliminal psychological dynamics  
Moved by unconscious motives and directed by unrecognized thoughts and beliefs

*Sri Nisargadatta*

We know the outer world or sensations and actions,  
But our inner world of thoughts and feelings - we know very little.

The primary purpose of meditation is to become conscious and familiar with our inner life.  
The ultimate purpose is to reach the source of life and consciousness.

#### **4 - Freedom from Automaticity**

*da Buddha* realized

That every sensory experience is automatically and immediately followed by a feeling,  
Pleasant if we like the experience, Unpleasant if we don't, and Neutral otherwise  
These feelings in turn elicit immediate responses:  
Craving for the Pleasant and Aversion to the unpleasant ones, and  
Inattention to the neutral ones

In the next instant.  
Craving hardens into ***Clinging*** to the experience

This vicious cycle - the chain of dependent origination' eventually  
Drives us right back to the 'experience' again...

But all this only occurs during moments of mindlessness  
By bringing our Awareness more to focus we stop the Automatic vicious cycles  
and then we have a conscious choice of how to respond  
da Buddha experienced and noted what modern psychologists call '**De-automatization**'  
The possibility of breaking automatic habits by bringing awareness to them.  
Each moment of mindfulness  
weakens the chains of condition and bring us closer to liberation.

## **5 - The Healing Power of Awareness**

Mindfulness heals

Many of the unhealthy and self-destructive things we do spring from  
Automatic, unconscious responses.

We feel anxious and find ourselves smoking or drinking,  
We feel lonely and suddenly find ourselves eating the whole box of chocolates...  
Feel hurt so we lash out a loved one.

These responses are born from mindlessness and cured by '**MindFullness**'

*da Buddha psychology -*

### **Benefits of Mindfulness**

- 1 - It inhibits unhealthy mental qualities such as greed and anger
- 2 - Cultivates and strengthens healthy qualities such as joy and Love
- 3 - Promotes the optimal balance of healthy qualities.

Modern psychologists agree  
Awareness by and of itself - can be curative

Fully functional people are able to experience all their feelings,  
Afraid of none of them,  
Allowing awareness to flow freely in and through their experience.

## **Exercises in Awareness**

**Mindfulness** - Is helpful everywhere - *da Buddha*

So far

We've diminished the discoloring effects of wayward emotions, attachments  
and unethical actions, and reduced the frenzy of our wandering attention.  
You have begun to settle and clear your mind.

You will experience how  
The seven sacred practices interact and support each other.  
Now we can add **methods that specifically foster mindfulness.**

## **Exercise 1**

### **Eat Mindfully - Enjoy the Food**

Eat Zenfully - Treat yourself to experience your meals with full attention  
No Tv, no working, no computer, no smart phones, no reading even though it's a  
Grand pleasure and a luxury of time we just don't have enough of.

Reading keeps one from really enjoying the meal,  
With mind and body multi-tasking in opposing ways.  
When you just simply enjoy your meal, the aromas, the textures, the tastes...  
Your whole digestive system gets in sync with the eating process,  
Your stomach becomes receptive to the nourishment that's coming it's way.  
Taking the time to enjoy the aromas, even before the first bite, actually gets the 'juices flowing'  
Your mouth waters a bit getting ready to '*grease the skids*' so the food just glides right on down  
To your stomach that has started to do what it does with the food that coming' on down....

**Eating can be a very spiritual experience -**  
*Bring the tranquility, focus and calmness of meditation to your meal*

Say or think some words of gratitude to everyone involved that helped put this food on your table.  
Say or think a 'dedication' declaring the energy from this food's nourishment will go to  
Strengthening my body, to clearing my mind, so I can experience the Wisdom within  
So that I may help others with a Deeper sense of Love and compassion.

When you take a bite - Put your fork down so you are not encouraging yourself to munch  
obsessively or compulsively - Take time to chew properly.

There is no need to hurry.

Pay close attention to every sensation, the main tastes... And then the subtle background tastes...  
Enjoy your meal - If, like in meditation, you find your mind wandering -  
Just bring your focus back gently.

***Meditative munching*** is recommended to do for any meal you can.  
Starting with Breakfast works in conjunction with the transaction of your morning  
Deep meditation and Zen Yoga stretches.

## **Exercise 2**

### **Mindful Music**

Music has a remarkable power to evoke emotions and stir the soul.

When the Jewish prophet Elisha sought Divine inspiration, he cried,  
**"Get me a musician"**

We rarely give music a chance to offer its full benefits.  
Rather, we half listen while we drive, do other things.  
Both the delights and benefits can be enhanced by Mindful Listening.

Choose an inspiring piece of gentle and soothing music  
Or Do a search for meditative music,  
*There are many hours of free 'relaxing peaceful music online*

Sitting in a comfortable meditation sitting  
Glide into your zone, but  
Soon shift your focus *from* your breath... **To the music**  
- Listen as fully as you can -  
Take notice of the new '*sound-scapes*' as they arise  
Meditative music will tend to calm you... and take you away...  
If you find your thoughts have drifted away to other thoughts, just smile,  
Enjoy the thought for a moment, and let it go.  
**'Let it Be' & Let it Go'**

### **Exercise 3**

#### **Become A Good Listener**

Listening carefully and attentively as someone speaks is a gift.  
Recall the arrogant bastard that continues to multitask while you speak  
This repugnant self absorbed character trait is Typically reserved exclusively  
For future X Bosses & 'ex-spouses'  
However, anyone can slip into this 'foo-paw' during a momentary lapse of Mindfulness  
:-O

**Become a Good Listener - Let this be *Your Gift* to all that you converse with**  
It costs nothing and feels great!  
Other people will enjoy your full attention, while you learn more about them,  
Train your attention, and sensitize your awareness

### **Exercise 4**

#### **Find Beauty in This Moment**

Treat yourself to taking a moment - Two or three times each day,  
To look around and find something of beauty.  
It could be anything - Relish the simple beauty of the clouds, or sunset, or happy child...  
Then bring your awareness to your 'inner self', notice how it feels inside too  
Relish these sights and sounds of beauty.

Then bring these feelings along with you into the day's groove.

## **Exercise 5**

### **Heighten Awareness of Your Body**

Honor your body without worshiping your body  
Regard your body as your temple and your inspiration is  
Less self centered and more of a serving for your Spirit  
and the wisdom to help others.

The body can become, in Shakara's words -  
"A vehicle of experience for the human spirit"

The body suffers the stresses of life and stores all those sore muscles that  
Tense with every flinch of life.  
Bringing awareness to one's body, can help identify and then heal.

### **The Buddhist Sweeping Meditation**

Glide into your zone...

Once there - turn your attention to the top of your head, if there are any tensions there, mentally loosen & let 'em go. If they are really 'glowing' then take a moment to massage your head for a moment then gently return to your breath... and your head...

Then your forehead, then the back of your head, the base of your head. Eyebrows, checks...

Flex your face with a big smile, a big 'O', a big pucker....

The let 'em all go.

Work your way down your entire body

First, imagine a muscle or body part, then flex or tighten, then release fully.

Work your way all the way down to your toes.

Then, allow your focus to universally be at one with your entire body.

Feel it glow, breath.... Feel the calm power of your being

*All is*

*As it should be*

## **Exercise 6**

### **Mindfulness Meditation**

Designed to enhance awareness through Insight meditation

Glide into your zone and really visualize the golden light of breath  
cycle thru it's path throughout - Within and Beyond

Notice the ever changing current of dozens of sensations that make up the breath cycle.

The more clear and sensitive your *awareness* becomes,

**The more sensation you can observe in a single breath**

Before long, another experience will catch your attention.  
There may be a sound nearby or in the distance,  
A tickle in the body, a thought or image in the mind.  
Whatever it is, if your mind is drawn to it,  
Allow your attention to shift to this experience and explore it carefully.  
If it is a sound, try to hear the vibrations. If it is a body sensation, explore it deeply.  
Finally,  
Try to catch the subtle, fleeting, and powerful of all the mind's creations -

### **Your Thoughts**

They whiz by fast & dissolve quickly... Or linger annoyingly.  
Simply observe and study them and they will change and pass away by themselves.  
When they do, simply return your attention to the breath and begin exploring it again.

There is no need to struggle with heavy mental calculations and engineering a solution to these thoughts...

Emphasis on simply being open to all experiences without wishing they were different or trying to change them, is a superb method for developing the patience and persistence require  
To run this race of life

## **Exercise 7**

### **Mindful Speech**

**Carefully observe and refine the emotions and motives of your speech**

Are you trying to look good, to impress, belittle someone or defend yourself?

Or

**Is your intention to speak born out of a desire to inform, help or heal?**

Become aware of your intentions before you speak and you will begin to  
Integrate the practices of awareness, ethics, and emotional transformation.

## **Seeing the Sacred in All Things**

Be aware of the tragedy of our mindless meandering through life  
Free yourself of the ignorance of Spirit.

The cold, cruel modern world of science and empirical 'black & white' versions of reality  
Can only prove physical things at this point

## **A New Manner of Seeing**

Reaching the 'mental and Spiritual nature of ourselves"  
Is what spiritual practices are designed to do.  
Christians and Plato describes this new manner of Seeing as

"The eye of the soul"  
Sufis - "The eye of the heart"  
Taoist - "Eye of Tao" or the "inner eye"

This new manner of Seeing represents a flowering of intuitive awareness that  
Recognizes the sacred in all people, in all things, and within ourselves.

### **The Sacred Within**

This profound awareness  
Penetrates far below the ego's restless turmoil  
To the sacred core of our being.

St. Augustine

Describes how he turned attention inward  
"and beheld with *the eye of my soul...*

The Light Unchangeable"

He concluded

***"It is with the interior eye that Truth is seen",***  
"Our whole business therefore in this life is to  
**Restore to the health of the eye of the heart *whereby***  
***God may be seen"***

### **The Sacred World**

I get a glimpse occasionally of a feeling or even a voice,  
Perhaps my inner voice trying to reach out and say  
*"Everything is as it should be"*

When things are reasonable, then this is easy to go with  
but if things are particularly undesirable  
One needs to really relax into the subtle realms of the situation and  
Seek a reasonable 'way' out.  
Like in meditation, gently acknowledging where we need to be and  
Making our 'way' back on track.

### **Transformed Relationships**

Christian Contemplative Thomas Merton left a wonderful description of how other people  
appeared to him ***when his own vision awoke:***  
Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts,  
The depths of where neither sin nor desire can reach,  
the person that each one is

In God's eye.  
If only they could see themselves as they really are.  
If only we could see each other that way  
There would be no reason for  
War, for hatred, for cruelty,...

***We would fall down and worship each other.***

Perception is not a passive process, but rather is an active creation, and  
The state of the world we perceive reflects the state of mind within us.  
The range of perceptual possibilities is vast and extends from what can be called  
**Paranoia** through **Pronoia** (opposite of paranoia) and **Transnoia**.

With **paranoia**, we are consumed with anger, project it outward,  
and see a hostile, terrifying world full of people conspiring to attack us.

With **Pronoia**, we see the Love and kindness within us mirrored by the people around us,  
Who seem eager to help in whatever ways they can.

With **Transnoia**, the world and all people are perceived as expressions of the transcendent and as  
part of a vast plan to awaken and enlighten us.

Spiritual practices heal paranoia, and by opening the eye of the soul,  
They allow us to live and love in '*pronoia*' and '*transnoia*'

### **Exercises in Sacred Seeing**

To recognize the sacred is not so much to see new things, as it is to see things in a new way.  
The sacred is not separate or different from all things, but rather hidden within all things.  
To see the spiritual in ourselves and the world is to recognize what is always already present.  
This 'new way' of seeing is an innate gift that needs to be cultivated.

### **Exercise 8 Open to the Sacred in Nature**

Certain sites in nature have long been recognized as spiritually potent.  
Places of great beauty - stark deserts, majestic mountains, great forests, the meeting places of  
land and sea - can all be sources of spiritual inspiration and renewal,  
Though with our busy lives - we rarely give ourselves time to draw on them.

Plan to put yourself into nature as part of your practice  
Even if it's just a walk around the block, even if you live in the ghetto the sky is beautiful  
Take a bike ride to get out of da hood a bit further that will take you to a spot of beauty.  
Find new reasons to pull off the road for a scenic view.  
Treat yourself to the splendor of nature ***and breath it all in.***

There is no need to do much.  
Simply open yourself to the surroundings and appreciate the magnificence of the scenery,  
the varieties of plant and animal life  
Feel how being in such beautiful, naturally soothes and heals.

## **Exercise 9**

### **Recognize the Inner Light**

Glide into your zone...  
Follow your breath deeply... Release any tensions anywhere.. Then breath some more...  
Now visualize someone you love standing in front of you.  
Take a moment to experience the warm feelings you have for this person.  
Recall their characteristics that inspire you...  
Imagine that an Inner Light is radiating from within this person  
This glow grows in intensity until the body almost disappears  
Now imagine  
That standing next to your radiant friend is someone you do not like.  
See the light from your friends illuminating and filling this person until he or she begins to radiate  
light just as your friend does.  
Recognize the same radiance in them both.  
Now begin to feel their radiance illuminating and filling you until your body begins to  
Fade into the background as you also become a radiant source.  
In this vision, there is no difference between you, your friend, and the disliked person.  
You have united with them in what Taoism calls  
**"the radiance of the Tao within"**  
Yoga knows this as  
- **"The Inner radiance which is free from sorrow."**

This radiance may begin to dislodge feelings of anger towards the disliked person.  
Likewise, the feelings of affection for your friend may extend to include  
Both your enemy and yourself.  
When this happens, you can glimpse the possibility of loving all people equally.

As always, end gently, slowly open your eyes and  
Maintain these feelings throughout your daily activities.

## **Exercise 10**

### **Surrounded by Saints**

*da Buddha*  
"If we are to be free,  
We must make each person we meet our ultimate object of reverence"

*Whenever you can*  
View and treat everyone you meet as  
A Holy person or a peaceful, loving compassionate one of Wisdom  
Naturally with reverence, kindness and delight!

*Then...*  
*Do this always*  
*RevRaj*

Seeing the Sacred in others,  
Helps us recognize the Sacred in ourselves.

## **Exercise 11**

### **See Teachers Everywhere**

View everyone you meet as a teacher  
Treat them with '*some amount of*' reverence, kindness and delight  
Not so much that you overly inflate their egos, encouraging them to  
Spout more self centered, non sense.

Set a neutral, but inspiring natural tone, vibe or personality.  
Be aware of the qualities of each person that **you like and inspire you to be like** more often  
and

Be aware of the qualities that **you do not like**, but inspire you nevertheless.

**When someone is being an 'asshole' - Just smile and *thank him*,**  
Internally thankful for the real life lesson in person to demonstrate

How Not To Be!  
PRICELESS!

Typically, there are good people and bad people...

But most, if not all people have both good things and bad things about them.

Take special care when in the presents of someone you really don't particularly care for

***With an extra Heaping of patience*** - Look for, and almost encourage out this person

**Things that are really good, or at least, sort of good.**

Take a grain of goodness in this otherwise 'bad' person, and try to bring about a blossoming that  
will inspire this person to use their gifts to inspire others...

Then - next time you see this person - Don't dread another encounter with this lost hope

Perhaps the seeds of Light you plant today, will become their beacon of Hope

... Until then... PATIENCE!

## **The Higher Reaches of Vision**

The new seeker will ask

"Show me where the Tao is to be found"

*Chuang Tzu replied*

**"There is nowhere it is not to be found"**

*Please release yourself from the man made myth of the 'devil'*  
Many Religions are guilty of terrifying kids with myths of evil things...  
**That lurk in 'dark places'**

The True God is not capable of being afraid of the dark  
***Ones that know this can see the beauty of God in the darkest places***  
Don't be Scared of the dark - See the Wonder of it all.

**Dedicated practice** brings both a remarkable continuity and extraordinary depth of awareness.  
What were **once rare glimpses of the sacred, Blossom into recurrent recognitions**  
*Ultimately - a continuous presence.*

To best refine this Presence, thru focused practice, is to  
Evolve your meditations to incorporate many of these 'daily activity' exercises that bring to your  
waking conscious the ability to turn off the 'monkey mind' and focus properly on the task at hand.

The goal is indeed to allow as much of your day to be in 'Mindfulness'  
Being calm, attentive and 'buoyant'

Take your practices into your most mundane tasks,  
Allow the moment to be a blessed moment,  
A moment you take the time to witness the  
Glow of your own Inner light and peace and oneness of the moment.

Breathing deeply in the cycle of our meditations, brings us immediately to our zone....

***Be fulfilled that your task will help others in some way.***

These others, we see and serve *their* inner light, which resonates to **our** inner light,  
And in that subtle observation,  
the gentle pull of our Spirit **illuminates our Source.**

*Walking in the company of two other men I am bound to be able to learn from them.*  
da Buddha

## **Ecstatic Vision and the Dark Night of the Soul**

As spiritual practice matures, as the moments of clear awareness increase, the eye of the soul  
opens and begins to recognize the sacred in all things.

There is indeed though, an emptiness when these visions fade from non practice,  
Often during times of our overwhelming & hectic careers

There are many new ways to streamline the rigors of spending a lifetime of devotion  
to only one religion or Spiritual Tradition,  
Plus the nagging inner question of...Wow -  
**With over 4200 religions,**  
**How do I pick the 'Right One' :-O??**

If you are fortunate to **use your own Free Will** to choose a reasonable Path for yourself,  
As opposed of that choice being 'Ethnocentrically made for you by an authoritative person.  
**It would certainly seem wise to make note of the commonalities with most religions.**  
Roger Walsh brilliantly points out 7 spiritual practices that are common with the  
7 most popular Spiritual Traditions.

- Please note-

I have nothing but Hope, Faith, and Love for all religions of **Peace....**

It's just that

Most folks that are 'Ethnocentrically submitted to a religion,

**Do not, for the most part, seek a deeper spiritual Path within themselves,**

Nor seek anything deeper than the 'surface only' associations with their "faith".

The 'superficial - 'In Name Only' game...

Give's 'em a false sense of being righteous, and with the

Contentedness of the *promise* of everlasting life at the *feet* of the "Lord"...

They have no desire or inspiration to "**work painfully hard at becoming closer to God**"

- as I'm told

But these shallow surface only approaches have been ingrained for so long,

That even their view of **God and Spirituality** is so far off from

**Even their own religions contemplative Saint and Sages.**

Although anyone can do these simple and basic meditations,

Deep contemplative Prayers and make simple everyday task things of Divine service,

Thus

Creating a noticeably stronger Spiritual connection between our own

Soul, Spirit and God...

The majority of many religious "practitioners"

React to this almost like you are talking blasphemous

Like –

"We didn't hear this at our church, so you must be recitin' evil... "

Even when you're attempting to talk about getting personally involved with the

*Very same Divine One*

:-O

So much distracting time is wasted with the 'demand that a true believer  
MUST believe in the Literal physical existence of "Satan", Lucifer, the devil,...

~ The Biblical Scape-Goat ~

So many "*religious*" folks actually spend most of their 'divine time' fretting over  
Biblical conspiracy theories, ***who is the anti Christ is this week***, the devil and  
**Endless misinterpretations** of what those cave dwelling profits were trying to say.  
Careful which 'path' you choose –  
**Many 'Churches' have self defeating 'ways'.**

~ Regardless ~

There are so many 'ways' to maintain a practice for the modern busy lifestyle  
**Ken Wilber's - Integrated Life Practices**  
Takes meditation perspectives ranging from ancient Zen to modern psychology and  
breaks all this into many  
**'one minuet meditations'.**  
These can be done several times during a very busy day.

The internet has now made it so that  
**Information ignorance** has become  
**A conscious decision to be...**  
***Stupid***

Fine if that's how one wants to use their 'Divine Right of Free Will.'

Ken Wilber's Integrated Life Practices along with Roger Walsh's 7 Sacred Practices  
Makes being Spiritually ignorant,  
Yet another profound reason to **fully** utilize your Free Will  
***Use it Wisely***

### **Transforming Flashes of Illumination Into Abiding Light**

For those that continue to be inspired more and more with their practice path...  
Those initial glimpses gradually become a recurrent vision,  
Peak experiences extend into the plateau experience, and  
Flashes of illumination transform into abiding light.

The desired start, such as mindfulness or awareness of God,  
Becomes an increasingly natural habit.

While before the mind automatically fell into unconscious distraction,  
Now it starts to fall into clear awareness.  
Where before constant effort was required, now a mere intention may suffice.

This is a crucial stage of advanced practice.  
In Buddhism, this is known as '**Effortless Effort**'.

In Taoism and Sufism - **Continuance**'

**"The ability to remain in divine communion in the midst of worldly activities"**  
***Eventually this remembrance continues into the night.***

## **Dream Yogas**

The world's religions have long regarded dreams as spiritually significant.

Usually spiritual dreams occur infrequently,

However, a person that does intensive practice day after day develops a formidable  
Mental momentum, and the effects of practice - Whether prayer, mindfulness, mantra, or koan  
- Begins to penetrate into dreams.

Finally,

There arrives a time when the practice continues unbroken throughout the day and night.

At first the meditative focus becomes somewhat *aware* in dreams.

With time they begin to have Lucid Dreams - they recognize they are dreaming while dreaming.

---

The following are personal accounts of various forms of 'Lucid Dreams'...

Peak Psychic Awareness and just some trippy dreams.

They are only mentioned as a way to portray how some of these 'Dream Yogas '  
were brought to my awareness in both awake time and in my dreams...  
and can manifest in any of our lives, when we are aware enough to  
"Be the Witness" of 'such' things

---

When I was a kid,

I'd occasionally have a typical scary monster dream.

I'm not sure if it was my natural boy curiosity with monsters or my  
Natural compassion for misfortune ones....

But

At first when I'd have a scary monster dream, it was... **Scary.**

- I made a sort of commitment to myself that

***Somehow-***

**The next time I had one of these dreams,**

**I'd find ways to become the hunter *instead* of the hunted.**

I'd find things to fight back with the monster, and even find machine guns to finally kill the beast...

But for some reason, the beast never stayed dead

:-O

***And for some other reason I decide to make friends with the monster,  
and we had lots of fun doing things kids would do if they could play with a monster***

***;-).***

I had changed the outcomes of many of these types of dreams, not just once here & there... but I was living them and making conscious decisions all throughout these certain dreams.

I seemed to have this Lucid Dreaming control during many of my flying dreams,  
Mostly as a young kid, but some very in depth ones as a teenager.  
In my early 20's I engaged myself in very deep focused mediations,  
Among the avenues pursued was:  
Astral Travel, remote viewing and guiding my (*lucid*) Dreams towards Flying experiences.  
Thinking back now,  
I hadn't even heard of the term 'lucid dreaming' at the time,  
I only had a strong desire and an inner feeling that I could influence my dreams.

I recalled as a young kid, I'd often have flying dreams.  
I thought nothing of it, it was natural and really fun.  
By the time I was in my late teens and trying to influence my dreams so I could fly...  
I knew all together too much about gravity & reality... **We simply can't Fly!**

***Buuuut,***

**I've done it before in dreams...** Somewhat naturally as a kid...

Here's some cool shaziz that I almost forgot about - during that 2 week time of  
Very accelerated 'awareness peak', when all of my 'senses' were very much Extra Perceptive...

### **The Flying Dream**

I fall asleep one particular night during this ESP period like usual...

Except

This time I'm dreaming that I wake up, open my eyes and look up at my ceiling,  
Then my perspective is about a foot from the ceiling, I'm looking closely at the  
The fabric of the American flag I had tacked up to the ceiling.

I then

Turn my gaze to see myself sleeping below on my bed, for some reason this  
Didn't seem too strange and I returned my view to the flag...

Then my view got right up to the fabric,  
Then my view zoomed really far and the spaces between the treads to so big I could  
Easily float right through to the textured ceiling.

Zooming my view to microscopic...

The spaces between the electrons seems wide enough for me to  
Float right up thru the layers of the roof  
and in a moment,  
I found my perspective just above my roof.

I turned I gazed out to the street and then in that moment, I had the perspective  
of standing on the street late at night; a familiar perspective,  
As I had walked those streets late at night for years.

So I began walking down the street and crossed the creek to the park near my house  
As I had done for years.

Walking in this park late at night is surreal when it's not a dream,  
So the feeling I was having then **was sort of knowing** I was in a dream, but at the same time,  
This dream was very real and very much my reality as far as I knew and felt-  
I was using what I considered my own thoughts and thought patterns or way of thinking...  
To influence my interaction with the new perceived space

So

I'm walking along and see a telephone wire hanging like it does between the poles

From my normal standing perspective, I look up at the wire about 50 feet up & out.  
Then my perspective zooms into a view of nearly up to it.

But

When my rational thoughts would kick in, I'd think, holy cow, I'm 50 feet up wow...  
Then I'd begin to fall, but somehow willed myself to try to focus my perspective  
Up and over the wire...

No use... but it did slow my return to earth... Kind of like a big moon walk.

I kept walking along 'like normal'. At this point I know I am not in my normal 'dimension'.  
That's not particularly the word that came to mind then;

Then,

There was only the very real sensation of being somewhere very, very real,  
That allowed one's thoughts to move through, navigate to places,  
and let perspectives **become** 'where "I" am.

When the next wire line came into view.

I intentionally did not 'try' so hard, in fact, I wasn't even trying to fly or moon walk over the wire,  
I just wanted to moon walk up and glide, however close I could without much focused effort.  
It felt inspiring to feel this moon walk, gliding up almost to the wire, and without clinging or  
grouping or attachments... I just let it go.

I effortlessly moon walked up eye to wire view and lingered... then floated down.  
The next wire I effortlessly flew over, glided down and made a big moon jump...  
this time

I did not glide back down... I flew all over the park...  
When finally the desire to see the perspective of going back home...  
Because then I suppose the dream was ending.

- Flyin' Kid -

Just before 3rd grade we moved to St. Louis and stayed about a month this this  
A big hotel with a pool, while we waited for our new home to close escrow.

It was summer time and all I had to do was swim at the pool all day and  
Look out our 10th floor window. Sometimes I'd imagine how cool it would be to just  
Glide right down to the pool from out this window.  
I must have been in a 3rd grade Zen moment sitting there gazing out the window;  
Body too tired to move around like a normal 3rd grader  
After swimming all day...  
So I just sat in a Zen like way for long periods...  
Well, long for a 3rd grader.  
I took it all in like a Zen witness  
But that's all it did... Until I dreamed at night...  
I had numerous versions of this while we were there, and for years after.

In my dreams,  
I would awake like normal - But I'm dreaming...  
But It really felt like I just woke up and starting a new day in the big new place.  
This time...  
While sitting staring out the window, I felt confident that I actually could  
'Glide right on down to the pool'  
Kind of like sizing up a big jump off the high dive or cliff into the water below.  
It's a dream & don't seem to know it  
so little details on how the window would be able to open enough to dive out...  
You just can't do that, even back then.  
But  
Those thoughts don't even cross my mind,  
As I looked down at the pool, **I just imagined** (while I'm dreaming)  
What the view would be from much closer to the pool, then the next thing I know...  
Instead of diving out the window with all the fatally fast falling...  
I just began to 'Be' there where I had 'imagined'.  
  
From this height I quickly spotted my next desired 'view to be',  
Which was not much higher than the a high dive.  
At this point with the pool so close, part of my 'rational mind' started to  
doubt why I'm not immediately falling...  
Then I started falling,  
I attempted to make an attempt to fly to slow down...  
which almost sort of worked ...but did a big refreshing splash down...  
Safely of course... It's a dream remember  
;-)  
The rest of the dream is like a kid that has found a new toy, this flying thing...  
Which faded in & out of various regular dreams...

**The 'Otherworldly Presents'** :-O- St. Ferdinand park over creek bridge.  
My friend Ron w. & I had just decided to head for home from the park,

after 'hangin' out wit da boyz'... It was just before '*midnight-ish*'  
Walking along the big wide grassy rolling park spaces on our way home,  
Is quite transcendental. Everything is surreal and quite...

Your senses tingle

My 'awareness' was already off the charts for that epic period in every imaginable sense.

As we walked in silence, I became vaguely aware of another 'presents'...

Like someone was very near but I could not see or detect anyone physically near.

While crossing da bridge,

I felt compelled to stop in the middle and enter what I can only now call '*my zone*'.

How or why I came to 'entering my zone', it was really like a natural urge to just

Stop, look, learn, listen, observe, take it in.... very deeply, and

Fairly quickly I'd be in a zone that brought my life's focus directly into whatever I peered into.

While peering straight ahead, standing in the middle of the bridge and looking out over the

Deep creek below, I sensed the movement of a presence off to the side of my vision...

I then turn my zone gaze directly at this 'dark figure'.

This figure

Appeared to be studying ***me as if I had no awareness of its presents.***

But when it realized I was fully watching its every move it became very noticeably *surprised*.

It tried to go one way, then another, then stood there trying to disappear...

When nothing seemed to shake my attention,

***It seemed to engage me.***

:-O

**Run, Run very fast....**

That's what Ron was thinking, he told me he wanted to just run home fast.

At first he did put a move on towards home,

Then, curiously walking back a bit & stood as far away as he could & still see

If something truly evil-is was going to happen.

This... "**Entity**",

This being, this presents, was like the presents of someone that really is

Standing there in front of you, I was aware of where its head was,

Body and feet must have been...

but,

When it had figured that there was nowhere near that I could not see it.

It turned its amazing attention to me.

Then drifted right in front of me on the bridge, it was now

Hovering over 30 feet above the creek below.

It was never more than a shadowy outline of a presents, no features except black,

but not just black, more like

**'Black hole black',**

a black of such pure emptiness that just seems to want to

***pull you in soul first.***

but instead...

at first,

It seemed to engage me psychically with easy to follow images and familiar or comforting feelings,

***then the images came fast and faster and more complex...***

It was quickly feeling like I was now looking into a 'soul vortex',

With a feeling that if I fully "let go" of my 'here and now',

I'd be pulled into this black hole abyss that was really pulling hard

on what feels like my "**soul**"

Or - I had the very strong feeling, that,

What ever was pulling something deep inside me, towards this... Pure emptiness...

It was like it was

Pulling at '**what ever it is about 'us'**

***That make us 'us'.***

This 'us' or 'me'...

Was a very real and strong feeling that 'what ever 'I' am, is contained presently within 'me'...

And this... This thing,

This presents, wants me to let it take me away somehow to an unimaginable place...

***uuugh - Nope – Not ready yet.***

come back when us 'hairless apes' evolve enough to keep up.

Of course IF this was my bizarre opportunity for 'enlightenment' & I said "uuugh - Nope" :-O

And now many decades later, every meditation I do,

***I'm trying to experience 'Pure Emptiness'***

*That was sure a big mystery... and still is.*

*Then*

*About 15 years go by*

*and this time*

***I was ready to keep up and go for a ride***

*;-)*

### ***Spirit Quest***

In my late 20's or early 30's - while in an out of the way section of Yosemite,  
Sitting in the deep beauty of nature, enjoying a transcendental introspective meditation.

I had come to this place in nature with a mental or spiritual focus

Like one does when they come to a 'cross road of life'

This happened to be a rare time in life when nothing seemed to be going wrong

There were no crises of impending doom... Everything was cruising right along.

So the 'theme of this nature trip' was to explore 'within'.

What am I

Who am I

What are we

***Basically, the meaning of Life questions.***

I entered a deep zone and began the traditional meditation of  
Visualizing the presents of a spirit guide or a helpful being of love

This image

For me begins with the awareness of a faint blue glow.

Once I resonate with this glow, I begin to allow it to shine brighter in my awareness.

Personal human physical characteristics didn't typically come to focus, but

Sometimes took more shape as my inquiry deepened.

In this **amazing connection** I was *engaged with the Ether...*

**I had a deep inquiry with a being**

That informed me that

**We** are indeed

**'Of the same'**

(Please note that never but once before had I had such an encounter, as written about above  
and never since this one amazing commune with...

*a representative of the "Great Mystery"*

that just informed me that

**We** are indeed

**'Of the same'**

- At no point did we ever 'talk with words'-

Thoughts came to me as if 'I' had thought them,

but they didn't come in words or sentences...

It came more like a feeling and a mental image of thought.

So didn't just blurt out my questions...

All I had to do was to just begin to think of my question and ponder it deeply myself...

then in a moment I was sort of transported through what seemed like a cosmic worm hole tube

that seemed to race across time and space to bring me to my answer.

This experience I **later** view in some Deep astonishment was

Portrayed in the movie with Jody Foster - 'Contact'

and wow –

It was so simple it felt a bit un-dramatic compared to

The experience of getting to that place thru the wormhole effect.

- The moment I get to 'this place' –

What had just been a deeply pondered is burning question of Life

- Was resolved with a pure and clear, unequivocal answer-

Which simply arose in my awareness as 'a Knowing'

It was like a burning question of Life, that one could spend a lifetime of pondering...

Like – What do I do when I get this "almighty cross walk of life"

And the answer comes just as the thought of an image of the "don't walk" sign was turned to the

"walk Now" sign... and you walk.

I had a few of these questions that I could not come to grips with for many years  
Both were answered this way, **in a moment....**  
And in a way that **left no need inquire further.**

I had 'inspired the knowledge' about who we were & why are we here.  
The feeling I got was, that our souls go from life to life evolving and growing.  
**When we all 'get it'** – we get to move up to higher stage of development,  
But **we** can't achieve that higher stage until **we** all get it,  
Like **we** can only collectively evolve like a 'chain'  
**We** are only as strong as our weakest link.  
**So helping others was clearly communicated to me.**

The other Profound wisdom I recieved was  
We must not leave a wake of litter  
We must not leave a place in worse condition than we found and enjoyed.  
This Translated to  
Living a Non Polluting way that is in Harmony with Nature.  
Leave nothing but foot prints.  
This also Trancended to include of most importance  
One's Legacy  
Don't leave a messy and questionalbe 'Legacy' for others to be Uninspired by forever!

### **Molecular bonding element removal tool**

OK, this isn't a flying dream, as this theme is going but...  
Now that I'm recalling from that 2 week period of extreme ESP around age 16...

I was a 'summer' life guard at the Henry the 8<sup>th</sup> Hotel.  
But,  
They gave me plenty of extra work in the winter season to keep me working.  
One odd job was to remove the diving board so no one would be tempted  
To dive into a partially filled pool.  
*In the freezing winter, swimming pools must be drained to a certain 'pipe' level  
So when the water froze, nothing would be compromised.*

They didn't expect me - the skinny teenager, to be able to undo the bolts  
Since no one has been able to do this for the last few years;  
There was a 'don't dive' sign to be put up the very likelihood that I  
Could not undo the ¾" steel bolts.

So with my little wrench in place I give a wee tug.... NaDah – No ElBudger-ahh-roo...  
I try harder – Zlich.  
I really try to focus my physical strength.... Grrrrrrrr umphf!

It's cold outside,  
Almost snowy cold. No one is around.  
I'm getting paid my the hour....  
So this inspires me  
To relax, take some deep breaths... Zone out....  
Not so much in a wise guru way....  
More like another way to goof off and still pretend I'm working  
;-)  
Just like in those recent dreams where it seemed natural to 'zoom into' things...  
I somehow was naturally compelled to 'zoom in'.  
I just sort of lean closer to have a look.

Then ***I zone out and zoom*** in to a view of a few inches away.  
Then a few mill-meters away,  
Then a few microns away  
Now the molecular structure of solid steel now seems to be  
Laid out in front of me...  
Along with an obvious bonding structure.

It seems obvious that if I simply dissolve the bonding elements of just one or two junctions...  
The steel would break down with little effort.

***How this came to me? ...***  
I'm just throwing this 'Life Mystery' in with all the other 'peak' experiences  
during that two week period.  
buuuuttttT.

I now work the wrench with not all that much effort,  
instead,  
I'm seeing the bonding elements of the molecular structure, just sort of  
Pop or dissolve...  
The wrench, then 'almost' effortlessly twisted the ¾" steel bolt clean off.  
Wough.... woe... wwhhaaugh-OH.

***That sort of was inspired out of a day dream –***  
I then repeated the process with the other bolt with the same results.  
Wow.

Ultimate Yield Strength  
 $y * a = s$

Take the minimum yield in psi of the ASTM grade (see our Strength Requirements by Grade Chart for this value), multiplied by the stress area of the specific diameter (see our Thread Pitch Chart).  
This formula will give you the ultimate yield strength of that size and grade of bolt.

**Example: What is the ultimate yield strength of a 3/4" diameter F1554 Grade 36 rod?**

**36,000 psi \* 0.334 in<sup>2</sup> = 12,024 lbs**

This is the minimum requirement for F1554 grade 36. In other words, a 3/4" diameter F1554 grade 36 anchor rod will be able to withstand 12,024 pounds force (lbf) without yielding.

***Not bad for a skinny teenager***

; -)

**The UFO 'dream'...** backyard, half past da middle of da night.

Huge, low, slow moving silent...

***Except for a sort of eeriness...***

If it was a dream, then while I'm dreaming...

It was a dreamed that I woke up & saw some interesting lights, occasional reflecting on things outside my window that I had never seen before... Very vaguely....

There were strong winds blowing and stormy clouds, but no rain.

I got out of bed and went outside to watch these big clouds rolling along and feel the strong winds... Then I noticed those vague lights occasionally lighting up parts of the clouds.

Interesting, I thought and stood there taking it all in,

Then the clouds cleared a bit and reveled a huge, slow moving flying ship of sorts.

It was so big I could never see the whole craft, kind of like when you stop for a train to by,

It just goes & goes... and you never see the whole train...

If I had to guess,

it was similar in size to an aircraft carrier.

As it went by, it's apparent width increased to somewhat indicate perhaps a

Wedge or big arrow shape.

That's all, it just moved on and was gone in less than 5 minutes, possibly just half that time.

No alien abductions, no anal probes or mating with a super hot space chicks... No matter how much I was eagerly raring to go off an experience 'such perilous behavior'... ; -)

It would seem quite a stretch of the imagination... but what are dreams anyway?

So why not? I just rolled with it.. Like I do... & sometimes I get lucky.

I had more than one

**Sleep walking experience.**

This one particular evening, I had been fully engaged in one of my first extension speaker experiments. I had obtained some big speakers and put them in a sort of enclosure and was very eager to finish wiring them into the family stereo...

But it had gotten really late, they already let me keep working past my bedtime, but after it was their bedtime, I just had to stop for the night & finish first thing in the morning.

Somehow,

I think I've woken in the morning and I can now finish wiring up the speakers.  
So here I am with the lights on and I'm working away with the finishing touches when my  
Mom & dad come in to see what the heck I'm doing in the middle of the night.  
They said I told them that I'm finishing the speaker hookup...  
but I was sort of out of it, not really there.  
They convinced me it was not the morning yet and I should go back to bed.  
It seemed like the thing to do, so off to bed I went.

One more interesting experience -

### **The Migraine Headache Cure**

From around 3rd to 6th grade I would very occasionally get a very bad headache.  
Who knows why,  
but we did not know too much about hydration & Gatorade was not yet invented...  
I played hard outside all day long so I could have just been dehydrated... Who knows.  
They gave me these super headache pills, only to use when it's real bad.

#### ***Some how -***

Once when I was suffering through an intense episode,  
Instead of taking the super pills...  
I was inspired to visualize the inside of my head.  
In a purposely metaphorically image,  
I visualized the 'brain sphere' with my aching cranium.  
There I saw before me was a meandering footpath, that led to a  
small bridge over a babbling brook...  
There seemed like there should be great beauty to bestowed here but...  
It was very dark, I could hardly see.  
There was a thick, dense black 'void' material., So black it obscured everything.  
**It built with a pressure that needed a release.**  
Taking on the zoomed in perspective of being right up at the top of my skull,  
I could see a close up of the natural 'bone head' parts and noticed if I looked even closer,  
The spaces between the plates were really big enough for the dark smoke of my headache to rise  
up and out of my head.  
There was a light, beyond my head that shown brightly in,  
As the blackness escaped out of the top of my head.  
Then,  
There was nothing but Light  
Illuminating my beautifully 'head space', in a view...  
Of a fairy tale Hobbit wonder world.  
No Super Pills were required many times with the use of this Visualization.

*Back to*

### **Dream Yoga**

The Deepest Contemplatives have very strong recommendations for a person to  
Apply themselves to the attainment of this ability -

To control his thoughts in a dream.

But even as astonishing as these various forms of lucid dreaming indeed are -

This is not the summit of sleeping practices.

Even more remarkable experiences are possible.

**You can Witness your dreams -  
and you can remain aware during non-dream sleep.**

To "witness" your dreams is to observe them calmly and with equanimity

Without being caught up in them.

In this way the practitioner cultivates imperturbable awareness

Both day and night.

The results are, as Patanjali explained:

The mind begins to experience the Self as separate from activity,  
and is naturally drawn towards Enlightenment.

Advanced practitioners are able to maintain awareness, not only in dreams,  
but also in the non-dream sleep.

When we are aware of ourselves passing from state after state of consciousness

To a brief state of luminous and peaceful, dreamless rest-

Which is the true restorer of the

energies of the waking nature,

A coherent knowledge of sleep-life is....

Possible.

When this capacity matures, Awareness remains unbroken throughout the day and night.

Practitioners are able to watch themselves fall asleep, dream, rest in dreamless pure awareness,  
and eventually awaken the next morning, **All without losing consciousness.**

**Plotinus** named this ability "**ever-present wakefulness**";

TM meditators describe it as "**cosmic consciousness**".

When this state is stabilized,

The spiritual vision is awakened and remains awake day and night,

Throughout every experience and activity.

~ Ken Wilber ~

The world's most profound Living philosopher of our times and Spiritual Pendent:  
In lucid dreaming, you start to manipulate the dream, you **choose to effect the dream.**

With cosmic consciousness - There is no desire to change anything that arises.

**You simply and innocently Witness it.**

It's a **choice-less awareness**, a mirror-like awareness, which  
Equally and impartially reflects whatever arises.

So you remain conscious during the dream state, witnessing it, not changing it  
(All though you can if you want, but one usually doesn't desire to change anything)

Then,

As you pass into deep dreamless sleep, you still remain conscious,  
Nor you are aware of nothing but vast pure emptiness, with no content whatsoever.

But 'aware of' is not quite right,

Since there is no duality here.

It's more like, there is simply pure consciousness itself, without

Qualities or content, or subjects or objects,

A vast part emptiness that is not "nothing " but is still unqualified...!

Since the Ego,

Exists mostly in the gross or corporal state, with a few remnants in the 'subtle' state,  
Once you identify with constant consciousness - or that which exists in all three states –

then you break the hold on the ego, since it barely exists in the subtle and

Does not exist at all in the 'causal emptiness' or

In the deep sleep state which is one type of emptiness.

You cease identifying with ego, and you identify with pure formless consciousness as such,  
Which is colorless, space-less, timeless, formless - pure clear emptiness.

You identify with nothing in particular, and therefore you can

Embrace absolutely everything that arises.

Gone with the ego, you are one with the All.

You Still Have Complete Access to,

The waking state ego, but **you are no longer only that.**

Rather

The very deepest part of you is one with the entire Kosmos in all its radiant glory.

You simply are everything that is arising moment to moment.

You do not see the sky - You Are the Sky

You do not touch the Earth - You Are the Earth.

You do not hear the rain - You Are the Rain...

You Are - What the Mystics call...

**"One Tastes"**

## **Create Spiritual Intelligence**

Develop Wisdom and Understand Life

Happy are those who find wisdom.... *She* is more precious than jewels,  
Nothing you desire can compare with her... *Her* ways are ways of pleasantness,

All her paths are peace... Get Wisdom, Get Insight

Do Not Forget - *Jewish Torah*

## **What is Wisdom?**

Knowledge studies others,  
Wisdom is self-known

Wisdom is essential not only for sane lives and societies, but also for  
Awakening.

Both Jews and Christians claim "the Greatest Good is Wisdom"

Koran - "those to whom wisdom is given, they truly have received abundant good"

In Hinduism - cultivation of wisdom is one of the major spiritual paths.

Buddhism - **Wisdom is considered the preeminent spiritual capacity.**

## **What Wisdom Is Not**

Wisdom is simply **not** knowledge or intelligence  
Nor is it equivalent to dramatic experiences or personal power.

### **Intelligence**

Is the ability to learn, understand, and think clearly and logically.

These are crucial capacities and can be employed to cultivate and express wisdom.

However, wisdom is much more than simple intelligence, because wisdom results from

**Applying intelligence to understanding the central issues of life.**

### **Knowledge**

Wisdom is more than knowledge

Taoism is very clear that "He who is learned is not wise" - *Whereas*

Knowledge simply *acquires* information,

**Wisdom requires *Understanding* it.**

Knowledge looks at things objectively, Wisdom examines them subjectively to recognize their  
implications for life and how to live life well.

Knowledge is expressed in words, wisdom is expressed in our lives.

Knowledge empowers

Wisdom empowers and Enlightens

*Buddhist claim:*

One momentary glimpse of Divine Wisdom, born of meditation,

Is more precious than any amount of knowledge.

### **Dramatic Experiences**

Even powerful spiritual ones are not proof of wisdom.

Anyone who does long term intensive spiritual practice will sooner or later be visited by remarkable experiences,  
Including ecstatic vision, powerful emotions and penetrating insights.

Yet,  
Visions and insights can be wrong, and all *experiences* will eventually disappear.  
It is crucial how we relate to and learn from our experiences.  
This is one of the vital secrets of spiritual practice.

Be careful of '**spiritual materialism**' - the tendency to become  
Attached to spiritual *experiences* and pervert them to **egocentric purposes**.

Of course, deep experiences can lead to wisdom. But they must be  
Carefully examined, tested, discussed with a teacher, and  
**Used for learning and nonattachment.**  
Wisdom can grow from experience, but  
***Is considerably more than just experience.***

### **Personal Power**

Wisdom is more than personal power.  
One of a powerful person presents, a commanding stature and overtly confident...  
Does not directly translate to...The traits of Wisdom.

#### ***Nor does 'psychic power'***

The Great religions agree that psychic powers are possible... But also agree that,  
Psychic powers are not signs of wisdom or spiritual maturity.  
They are infinitely less important than the goal of 'Liberation'.  
and, they generally view psychic powers as mere sideshows, not to be deliberately sought.

da Buddha's story

About the worth of psychic powers-  
Pointing out the yogi that could walk across the water  
- Only saves a few pennies of boat ferry passage-  
Thus reducing one's life long dedication to 'possibly attaining these powers...

#### ***Only to save a few pennies.***

The pursuit of psychic powers will cost you a priceless amount of effort,  
and only provide pennies of 'almost' *possible* pleasure.

I can attest to this, as I had spent over a dozen years in the mental focus required for such things...

Only to learn,  
In order to fully achieve these skills,  
A truly balanced All perspective approach on All levels of mental and Spiritual development  
Would be required to sustain that skill.  
Otherwise, only trivial results will occur...  
Despite experiencing some very profound 'Peak' experiences.

## Defining Wisdom

Wisdom is

Deep understanding and practical skill in the central issues of life,  
Especially **existential and spiritual issues**.

Existential issues are those crucial and universal concerns all of us face  
Simply because we are human.

They include

Finding meaning and purpose in our lives;

Managing relationships and aloneness;

Acknowledging our limits and smallness in a universe vast beyond comprehension;

Living in inevitable uncertainty and mystery;

and dealing with sickness, suffering, and death.

A person who has developed deep insights into these issues - and,

***Skills for dealing with them-***

Is indeed wise

## The Two Aspects of Wisdom

Visionary or understanding aspect -- and a practical or applied aspect.

### Vision and Understanding

The visionary aspect of wisdom comes from seeing deeply and clearly,  
Penetrating below surface appearances to recognize the deeper nature of things and life.

This requires highly refined awareness - characterized by,  
Clarity, subtlety, and penetrating power.

This penetrating power comes mostly in the form of concentration.

da

***Buddha buddies bodaciously boast basically*** that  
**Concentration** is the preceding or immediate **cause** of  
Wisdom Vision

Provides the intuitions from which understanding is born.

Clear, concentrated vision sees things as they are, and,

Understanding is born from

Actively investigating and analyzing *the way these are*.

**Investigation** is so illuminating that Buddhists list it as  
**One of the seven factors of enlightenment,**

Those qualities and capacities of mind essential for deep awakening.

A neo-Confucian sage promised:

"If one investigates into, sharpens, and refines himself,

A morning will come when he will gain self-enlightenment.

Wang Yang-Ming - Regarding his own enlightenment -  
"Investigate things so that knowledge may be extended to the utmost. "

By investigating things, wisdom is able to identify crucial principles and implication for living well.

At a simple level,

It recognizes cause-and effect relationships such as,

"This kind of behavior leads to suffering; that way of thinking promotes happiness"

**Wisdom is able to create whole psychologies and philosophies  
That precisely formulate and explain the visionary insights of wisdom  
and their practical applications.**

**The Visionary aspect of wisdom sees and explores three things:**

**Life - Mind - the Nature of Reality**

### **Life**

Wisdom explores and reflects on the nature of life,  
Especially on the causes of happiness, and the causes and cures of suffering.  
It sees that there is an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering in the world.  
Most of it caused by people blinded by destructive forces such as greed or hatred.

Wisdom

Sees that some actions - for example, unethical or greedy ones-  
Lead to short pleasure and much greater long term pain,  
Whereas others - for example, ***being ethical and generous*** –  
**Leading to enduring well being.**

**So often people fail to recognize this,**

So they live in ways that thwart the possibility of happiness.

Visionary wisdom sees that conventional way of living is rife with suffering.

Practical wisdom begins when a person recognizes

**There must be a better way to live and commits to finding it.**

***The quest to awaken begins***

### **Mind**

Wisdom recognizes the awesome power of the mind to both create and cloud our experienced,  
to produce ecstasy and suffering, and to learn or stagnate.  
Once you appreciate the all-consuming power of the mind,  
Learning how your minds works and how to train it

**Becomes vital goals.**

### **The Nature of Reality**

**By probing deeply into their own experience, wise people  
See Deeply into the Fundamental Nature of Reality.**

In doing so, they begin to rediscover aspects of the perennial philosophy.  
For this is no mere *theoretical know*, but is rather  
A direct personal recognition born of their penetrating explorations of  
Life, the world, and the mind.

**Wise people learn a great deal that - *remains hidden to the ordinary person,***

Yet, paradoxically they also learn there are limits to learning.

Knowledge is always partial.

The intellect, limited, our understanding finite  
in an Infinite universe of unfathomable mystery.

Recognition and acceptance  
of these limits are aspects of wisdom and also,  
We will see - **Essential means for developing it.**

### **Practical or Applied Wisdom**

Practical wisdom is skill in living, especially in responding to the central, existing issues of life.

It is a way of living that expresses the visionary and understanding aspects of wisdom.

Vast Vision and profound understanding lead to an appreciation of 'natural law', and also of  
'natural ethics' and the 'natural lifestyle. '

Basically, legal systems, ethics, and lifestyles rooted in and harmonious with, and  
Awakening us to the fundamental nature of reality.

People at all stages of development may strive to be ethical and kind, but perhaps  
Only mystical experience and its resultant wisdom provide an unequivocal answer to the  
fundamental question, "Why be moral?"

Without a direct recognition of our unity with all people, and all life,

We can only try to think our way into justifying a moral life,

By considering ideas of justice and different people's viewpoints.

Such reasoning is obviously very valuable, but may also be limited,

Mystical experience provides the foundation for mature wisdom,  
Which in turn fosters matures transpersonal ethics, motivation, emotions, and service.

Wisdom leads us to live harmoniously and compassionately with others.

These centuries old claims have recently found support from

Researchers who concluded that the wise people they studied,

**"Transcended personal agendas and turned to collective of universal issues. "**

da Buddha calls this the Union of Wisdom and Compassion.

***Wisdom naturally finds expression in service to others.***

Even with ***a wee bit of*** Wisdom, one can easily point out what *seems* obvious,  
to help others that, in their current stage of development and  
state of ego rampant emotions,

Just can't see the simpleness of the solution that should be just as plain as day.

## **Awakening Wisdom**

The heart of the great spiritual traditions holds the accumulated wisdom of

**Thousands of years and thousands of sages.**

*The keys to wisdom lie there.*

*Refining motivating and relinquishing attachments* allow wiser choices.

**Ethical living and Transforming emotions**, reduce the clouding effects of anger, guilt, and fear.

The mind becomes an agile instrument for developing wisdom.

This development starts with a crucial recognition

### **The Wisdom of Ignorance**

Recognizing our ignorance in the face of this immense mystery is an

Accurate reflection of our human condition.

It is actually an enormous relief.

It empties our hearts of pride and prejudice, and open our minds to new possibilities,

Leaving them clean and empty vessels into which wisdom can flow.

The 'fear of not knowing' is then replaced with

Awe and delight in the

Never-ending wonder of life.

This Christian text recommends the following reflection as a means for

**Releasing old concepts and opening to the sacred.**

*It is best read slowly and quietly allowing the words to work their healing effects.*

Let us be still and instant, and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had,

and every preconception that we hold of what things mean

and what their purpose is, of what the world is for....

***We do not know***

### **Simply do This 'exercise'**

Glide into your zone -

Be still and lay aside all thoughts of what you are

and what God is:

All concepts you have learned about the world;

All images you hold about yourself...

Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught,

Nor one belief you ever learned before from anything.

Forget this world, forget this course of direction and

Come with wholly empty hands unto your God

This is an old meditation I just made up:

I'm using my intelligence to gain information,  
so that I learn more of the knowledge required,  
In order that I can create a daily practice that will lead to...

Wisdom

Let this Wisdom guide me to new innovative ways to  
Show others that have **Love** and the **Desire** to seek  
Intelligence to gain information,  
So that they can learn more of the knowledge required,  
In order that they can create a daily practice that will lead to...

Wisdom

### **Most Important step**

*is when you can...*

Use your *mature* Wisdom to boldly go out and  
Show others that DO NOT have **Love** and DO NOT HAVE the **Desire** to seek  
ANYTHING beyond the narrow perspectives of their  
Emotional View of life that is running on the 'auto-pilot' of egos.

This is where your calling is.

Find the Inner strenght and courage to

**Give A Shit**

*When No One Else Will*

Let this Wisdom

Gide All Beings to new innovative ways to  
Shine With All Others

Life

Is all about Stepping Stones

*RevRog*

### **Sources of Wisdom**

*- da Buddha -*

Those who would, may reach the utmost height - But! ...  
They must be eager to learn.

Eventually our daily practices will give us experiences to learn wisdom  
Everywhere and from everybody, every situation, and experience to which we bring  
An open, inquiring mind.

The great spiritual traditions collectively advise these top universal paths towards wisdom

***Seek wisdom in these most profound moments***

1 -in Nature

2 - in silence and solitude

3 - from the wise

4 - in Ourselves

5 - from reflecting on the nature of life and death

**Nature - Birthplace of the Sacred**

The Christian Desert Fathers, shamans, yogis, Taoist, and American Indians all agree that nature sensitizes us to the sacred and is a superb setting for self-discovery and the birth of wisdom

American Indians value vision quests - periods of prayer and fasting in the wilderness-

They hold that "the only true wisdom lives far from mankind".

Here on Maui we hold that "the only true tranquility is... far from the mainland"

; -)

Whether it is a mountain peak, a forest valley, or an ocean shore,

Somehow nature sifts the trivia from our minds

and reminds us of the timeless and important.

**Silence and Solitude**

It is in the silence of the heart that God speaks - *Momma t*

The spiritual power of nature or of any situation can be further enriched by silence and solitude.

Many people fear being alone and do everything possible to avoid it.

But solitude is very different from loneliness.

Loneliness is a painful feeling of lacking something.

Solitude is a deliberate choice to take time alone in order to foster and enjoy

Serenity, sensitivity, and the other benefits that ensue.

These benefits have been recognized for thousands of years.

Consider the examples of the religious founders:

Buddha's long years of meditation in the forest,

Mohammad's prayer in a cave, or

Jesus's forty days in the wilderness.

All would have agreed with the Native Americans that:

"The power of solitude is great and beyond understanding."

In solitude

- Even more so in silent solitude

We escape the superficial demands of society that, according to the Koran, are "but diversion and distraction" from spiritual life.

Silence allows the mind to rest. Then the inner chatter of thoughts and fantasies ceases and  
Inner silence mirrors the outer silence.

When silence reigns both within and without, we can hear what can never be spoken,  
The wisdom that waits beyond words.

“For is not silence the very voice of the Great Spirit?”  
asked Black Elk, a Native American wise man.

Certainly wise people the world over have thought so.

According to Father Thomas Keating,  
“Silence is the language God speaks and everything else  
***is a bad translation.***”

*~ To this I point out ~*

We would never have fought a war if we sought God in this way...  
Without Dogmas, Pride, Supremacy and Egotistical "leaders" to lead us to battle

With all the good intentions of the Bible, throughout history  
it has been translated, re-translated and many times the words and meanings are  
***'Miss-translated'*** in ways to serve the current state of affairs

and the way men rule, inspired by their  
Limited view of God, Self serving agendas and their  
Almighty UNDEVELOPED EGOS.

*... But that was history. For most of the world*

We can now feel free to look within without fear of church and state

*Taoism holds out the promise:*

In stillness

The mind becomes clear.

In clarity, it becomes bright

and this brightness is

The radiance of the Tao within.

An early Zen master warned that when we seek the sacred:

The more you talk and think about it,

The further astray you wander from the truth.

Stop talking and thinking,

and there is nothing you will not be able to know.

Periods of solitude foster reflection and refreshment, and they have found further benefits,  
including enhanced creativity and physical health. Periods of silence and solitude can be  
interspersed with periods of companionship and discussion.

Each can enrich the other, and

Each of us must find the balance that best nurtures and awakens us.

The great religions agree that the most enriching of all friendships are with the wise.

## The Wise

The Buddha, Lao Tsu, Confucius, Jesus, and Mohammad; also the great men and women of old who preserved and invigorated these traditions, such as The prophets of Israel, the sages of China, and the yogis of India.

Jewish wisdom recommends: Let your house be a meeting place for the wise... and drink in their words with thirst. As usual, the Buddha summarized it beautifully:

If you are awake in the presence of a master -  
**One moment** will show you the way...  
Follow the awakened And set yourself free.

We no longer have to walk hundreds of miles to glimpse a saint.  
Now we can invite wise people from around the world into our homes and  
Drink in their words through books, tapes, and videos.  
With the internet every question imaginable can be answered now in milliseconds.

Not only saints and sages can inspire us. There are many degrees of wisdom, and  
Those that are only a few steps ahead can help,  
as can friends traveling the path with us.

“What should we prize most dearly?” asked Shakara.  
“Compassion and Friendship with the holy,”  
The Buddha urged,  
**“Find friends who love the truth.”**

### KNOW YOUR SELF

Self-knowledge is the shortest road to the knowledge of God. —Islamic sage

The fourth arena that wisdom explores is self-knowledge.  
As practice deepens, we gradually awaken to a startling realization:  
We do not really know ourselves. Of course, we know our habits and  
The personality we put on each day and pretend is our self.  
But we come to realize that we don't really know our own inner depths,  
How our mind works, and our deepest Self.

So many wise people have urged, pleaded, even begged us to “know yourself.”  
“I must first know myself,” exclaimed Plato, and when a disciple asked Mohammad,  
“What am I to do that I may not waste my time?” he replied,  
“Learn to know yourself.”

**The rewards of self-knowledge are profound because  
Our Self— our true spiritual Self— is the doorway to the sacred.**

St. Augustine prayed,  
“Let me know myself, Lord, and I shall know you,” while Mohammad promised,  
“Those who know themselves know their Lord.”

To know our outer self is to know the **self and mask** we show to the world:  
Our surface emotions, habits, and personality.  
This is the self visible to everyone.

\* Our inner self is visible only to ourselves. However, to know it well  
Requires that we consciously look inward.

Our secret hopes and fears and fantasies live here,  
Hidden from others and partly hidden from ourselves.

Our self-image,  
The picture of who and what we think we are, also lives here.

\* This is not who we really are but merely a superficial belief or image.

One of our costliest spiritual errors is that  
We mistake this puny self-image for our deep self.

\* Our deep self is our true Self: the Atman, Buddha nature or imago dei  
That is the goal of spiritual practice.

## **Finding the Secret of Life**

**It is so close, so obvious, that few recognize it.**

*As Lao Tsu said:*

My way is so simple to feel, so easy to apply,  
That only a few will feel or apply it.

When we finally turn attention inward, we discover that we are not who we thought we were.

To know ourselves is to recognize that we are far, far more than we believed.

It is to exchange our shabby self-image for our true Self and to discover that

Our True Self is a sacred Self and a doorway to the Divine.

What is the secret of life?

***You are!***

## **Learning to Know Your Self**

Three techniques are especially important:

Meditation, Studying Oneself, and Self-Acceptance.

In the words of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj: We are slaves to what we do not know; of  
What we know we are masters. Whatever vice or weakness in ourselves,

we discover and understand its causes and its workings,  
we overcome it by the very knowing.

The primary purpose of meditation is to become conscious and familiar with our inner life.  
The ultimate purpose is to reach the source of life.

The power of inner exploration and meditation is increased by also studying our outer self.  
This means

Giving careful attention to everything we say and do. It means trying to  
Learn from every experience. We observe what we say and do, our habits and relationships,  
strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures. In this way every  
Experience, every person, every interaction becomes a lesson, and  
The world becomes a schoolhouse for the soul.

According to Jewish sages,  
“The wise man learns from every phrase he hears, from every event he observes, and  
From every experience he shares.” Through doing this,  
“You will be able to use every experience  
As a means of drawing closer to God.”

This effort to learn from all experiences is a superb exercise. It takes little extra time or effort, and  
yet it transforms each experience— and eventually one’s entire life— into a continuous  
opportunity for learning.

### Self-Acceptance

The third key element for deep self-knowledge is self-acceptance.

Self-acceptance does not mean puffing ourselves up or feeling superior to other people.  
Rather, it means relinquishing self-attack and condemnation.  
According to both modern psychology and some areas of ancient wisdom,  
**self-acceptance is vital to psychological and spiritual health.**

The amount of neurotic pain caused by self-condemnation causes us to  
**Cling defensively all the harder to old familiar ways.**  
“Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses,” observed Carl Jung,  
“and so acceptance of one’s self... Is the acid test of one’s whole outlook on life.”  
Research shows that self-acceptance is one of the very  
**Best predictors of life satisfaction.**

Be of the understanding that there are many religions that demand you  
***Feel the guilt of being born miserable sinners.***  
*For he*  
that could look upon a newborn baby and spew these despicable un-truths,  
Is Dangerously out of touch with the ‘Truth’ and is

Critically ingrained with many other pathological psychosis.

**The proverbial 'Road to Hell' – Is Paved with 'yuckers' like this.**

This type of misleading religious approach typically does not attempt to metaphorically distinguish that we shouldn't burden ourselves with self-condemnation and contempt,

Since:

The hypothetical "sin" we are born with is the fact that,  
We are all born ignorant of our True Self, our Spiritual Connection to God.

We have to seek this ourselves in our own 'Way'.

With the use of our Divine 'Free Will', with Grace we will find that 'Path',  
and be blessed to find the Wise and Saintly Sages to give us guidance.

NOPE!

All ya gonna get is **a self loathing psychosis**

... *Just sayin'...*

Self-loathing, which can be a terrible barrier to well-being and growth.

We need a middle way between inflated pride on the one hand  
and self-loathing on the other.

The middle way is simply to see ourselves as we are,

Without exaggerating either our virtues or our failings.

This is simple self-acceptance. Self-acceptance does not mean denying our shortcomings or

Giving up our efforts to heal them. It does mean recognizing and

Working on our shortcomings without attacking and belittling ourselves for having them.

**EXERCISES IN WISDOM**

Nothing indeed in this world purifies like wisdom. —*The Bhagavad Gita*

"The world is the activity of one's teacher," say Tibetan Buddhists.

This is transnoia:

The view that the world and all life experiences are calls to learn and awaken.

The challenge is to open to and learn from these experiences.

**EXERCISE 1: COMMIT TIME TO SILENCE AND SOLITUDE**

For most of us the real challenge is finding uninterrupted time for silence and solitude.

Any time we have to ourselves is usually filled with work, errands, or distractions.

This is unfortunate,

Since the Jewish Torah points out:

Wisdom... Depends on the opportunity of leisure.

**Only the one who has little business can be wise.**

**{See – Being an unemployable biz flop has its benefits ;-)**

Make time for some quiet, introspective contemplation time.

This is also and in conjunction with your daily meditations.

You may, if you wish, Glide into your zone...

or

I recommend finding a comfortable stance to gaze out at the  
endless beauty of the nature you are viewing

If you have more time, move to a relaxed, reclined-back comfy position.

You may seek healing for recovering from a major 'life' event.

You may need to ponder one of life's hard choices.

It's great when 'life' allows us to indulge in the grace of contentment while quietly reflecting the  
cool things about life that has happened and the prospects of an even brighter future.

## EXERCISE 2: REFLECT ON "THE FOUR MIND-CHANGERS"

Imagine you are about to begin one of the longest and most intense spiritual exercises  
Any human being ever undertakes: you are about to begin a Tibetan Buddhist three-year retreat.

For three years and three months, you and a small group of fellow practitioners will stay in a  
secluded house and devote yourselves day and night to continuous spiritual practice.

How do you begin?

What exercises develop the wisdom and motivation to inspire you for

**Three long years?**

*What you do is*

Spend the first month reflecting on **Four Profound Ideas**.

These ideas are known as "**the four mind-changers**" because they help us understand

The nature of life and change our minds and lives accordingly.

They are reflections on these facts:

Life is inconceivably precious. Life is short and death is certain.

Life contains inevitable difficulties. Our ethical choices mold our lives.

Begin by taking time to relax and quiet the mind. Then explore

One idea and its accompanying discussion slowly and thoughtfully.

Allow related ideas and associations to come to mind.

If emotions emerge— such as gratitude for life or fear of death— explore them.

Consider what implications the idea has for your life and whether you wish to make any changes.

Give yourself time to savor the idea and its implications. When you are ready,

Move on to the next idea.

Life Is Inconceivably Precious The gift of life is priceless,

Blessed are those fortunate to have "well-favored" lives, favored with the time and resources,  
Remarkable are the ones that seek teachers and friends that support spiritual practice.

Our challenge is to make optimum use of this priceless opportunity,

Not to be seduced by petty obsessions and trivial goals,

but rather to seek the greatest of all goals:

Our awakening and the awakening and welfare of others.

The sages' goal of emphasizing the brevity and uncertainty of life and to inspire us.

Without recognizing our mortality,

***We tend to squander our lives in petty pursuits,***

Tranquelize ourselves with trivia, and forget what really matters in life.

When we recall, as Christian monks remind us, "Death is certain, the hour uncertain,"

Then we remember we don't know how long we have, and we are inspired to live more fully,  
bolder, and more impeccably.

This is why a brush with death can be so life-transforming;

It strips away our denial of mortality and shocks us into reassessing our lives.

*The great astronomer Carl Sagan*

*had just this experience and afterward wrote:*

" I recommend almost dying for everyone; its character-building.

You get a much clearer perception of what's important and what isn't,

The preciousness and beauty of life. "

I've tried this

a few times... accedently off course...

**Once** I hit a nasty bump while mountain bike riding down a very steep cliff  
and flying off the trail...

**Once**, I was grabbed by the undertow of the Missouri River...

*Each experience presented me with the classic 'Life Review',*

In which my entire life seemed to pass by my mind

in a ***dis-connected timeless fasion,***

Allowing me to savor the sensations of my entire life...

Each time (so far;-), I was somewhat 'enlightened' to a view I'm not normally aware of,

Each time (so far;-) I was then inspired to

***Get on with it,***

Wake up, climb back up the mountain or swim to the surface and back to shore.

**There are things in life** that are indeed beyond empirically physical evidence,

but are as **real and tangible as what must be one's Soul.**

Life Contains Inevitable Difficulties, Life is not only short, but difficult.

There are times of great joy, love, triumph, and delight, moments when we are

Beside ourselves with happiness. But there are also times of inevitable sorrow:

Of sickness and loss, of grief and despair. There are also incomprehensible amounts of  
unnecessary sorrow: of senseless oppression and torment, slaughter and suffering.

None of us escapes life unscathed. It is crucial to recognize this and not gloss over

The inevitable difficulties of life, because

"If a way to *the Better* there be,

It exacts a full look at the **Worst.**"

Our Ethical Choices Mold Our Lives All that we say, do, or think affects our lives and

Creates consequences that haunt or help us. Burn with rage, and anger sears itself into our brains;  
speak with love, and love conditions our minds.

*This is the principle of karma.*

**Ethical living is absolutely essential to our well-being.**

### EXERCISE 3: SPIRITUAL READING

#### and **Reflecting on Spiritual writing**

By reading and reflecting on the words of the wise, their ideas and perspectives  
Gradually become our own. Each of the great religions has a treasury of the sayings of the sages  
and urges us to read and reflect on their words. The way in which wisdom literature is best read is  
very different from our usual approach, so different that

**Christians call it Lectio Divina, divine reading.** Father Thomas Keating,  
The originator of Centering Prayer, explained: We tend to read the Scriptures as if  
They were just another book to be consumed. Lectio is just the opposite.

**It is the savoring of the text, a leisurely lingering in divine revelation.**

With sacred reading we are seeking *insight* rather than facts,  
*Transformation* rather than information. Consequently,  
The reading is slow and reflective, a few sentences or even words at a time.

To begin,

Choose some writing that resonates with you. It might be an ancient sacred text,  
the words of a modern sage, or perhaps some of the quotations in these writings.

Read from your selection slowly and reflectively,

Allowing the words to sink into your depths.

If related thoughts arise,

Feel free to ponder them; if insights arise, explore them;

If feelings surface, accept them; if hopes or prayers emerge, pray them.

Of course,

If you become lost in irrelevant thoughts or fantasies,

Simply return to reading.

Done in this way,

Sacred reading

Merges into meditation and prayer.

### EXERCISE 4: RECOGNIZE YOUR TEACHERS AND THEIR GIFTS

Who are the people who have been your greatest teachers?

They may have been family members, friends, coaches, or even children.

They may even have seemed at the time to be adversaries or people you disliked.

As you remember them, write their names down.

Then list the special qualities that made these people so helpful  
and the lessons you learned from them.

Next,

Reflect on the qualities in you that made you receptive to their wisdom.  
Finally, allow feelings of gratitude and appreciation for these teachers to emerge.

At some time, you may wish to express these feelings to them.

This will obviously be a gift to them, but it will also be a gift to you, because

To express gratitude is to strengthen it.

### **EXERCISE 5: ENJOY THE COMPANY OF THE WISE**

This exercise is very simple. Make a list of those people you know personally

Who seem wise or who want to learn and become wise. Then consider how you could spend more time with them. Could you visit them or invite them to visit you?

Could you assist them in some way or work on a project together?

Could you start a group to study this book together and encourage each other to do the exercises?

Choose an approach you would enjoy, and begin.

### **EXERCISE 6: DISCOVER YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE**

Like many great saints, Gandhi was both simple and profound  
and could convey important ideas in a few words. Once he was seated on a train;

As it began to move a reporter rushed up to him and begged,

“Do you have a message for the people?” Gandhi was observing one of his days of silence,

Days when he would communicate only a few words, and then only by writing.

Leaning out the window as the train gathered speed and the breathless reporter ran along side,

Gandhi scribbled, “My life is my message.”

#### ***Gandhi's life***

**of simplicity and service was his message, and**

Each of our lives is also a message, a reflection of the philosophy that underlies it.

Whether we know it or not,

Each of us has developed and lives by a philosophy of life.

This philosophy includes beliefs about the nature of life and our self,

What is beautiful and true, and what is worth devoting our life to.

Much of this philosophy lies deep within us, unconscious and unrecognized, but

Some of it can be brought to awareness rather easily. Gandhi demonstrated this possibility.

Asked **what his philosophy of life was, he needed only Two words:**

**“Renounce” and “Rejoice.”**

Renounce or **let go of attachments**, and

Rejoice in the freedom and delight that a life free from craving offers.

To discover your own guiding philosophy,

First relax,

Then close your eyes. - When you feel calm, gently ask,

“In just a few words, what is my philosophy of life?”

Then allow a response to emerge from the depths of your mind.

There is no need to struggle or try to figure out an answer. That would be using the intellect, which is not the deepest part of your mind. Rather, simply remain quiet yet alert and patiently trust your inner wisdom to provide a valuable response.

When it does,

**You will discover some of the deepest principles guiding your life.**

### **EXERCISE 7: REVIEW YOUR LIFE**

Periodically reviewing your life and behavior is widely regarded as

**Extraordinarily beneficial— and essential for a deep spiritual life.**

Without it, we blunder along without learning from our experiences or our mistakes.

“Those who ponder upon their conduct bring much good to themselves,”

Holds an ancient Jewish saying.

This pondering is best done in the spirit of gentle inquiry aimed at understanding and accepting, rather than judging and condemning oneself.

Self-inquiry should not be confused with self-condemnation; self-examination aims at learning, not punishment. Rabbi Nachman urged:

Make sure to set aside a specific time each day to calmly review your life.

**Consider what you are doing and ponder whether it is worthy that you devote your life to it.**

It is helpful to have a systematic method. The end of the day is a particularly valuable time for self-examination, since then we can review the full day’s activities and their lessons.

One approach is to sequentially review the day from the time you got up.

It is not necessary to recall all your activities; the major events and experiences will suffice.

As each activity comes to mind, simply reflect on it and

See what you can learn from the way you felt and acted.

Jewish tradition calls those who faithfully do this evening review “masters of nightly recollection.”

It is crucial to remember the goal of the review, and of all self-examination:

The goal is to learn, not to blame; to grow in wisdom, not to fall into guilt;

To appreciate our strengths as much as to recognize our weaknesses.

We can learn as much, and sometimes even more, from our mistakes as from our good choices, as the following story makes clear.

After a long, hard climb up the mountain, the spiritual seekers

Finally found themselves in front of the great teacher. Bowing deeply,

They asked the question that had been burning inside them for so long:

**“How do we become wise?”**

There was a long pause until the teacher emerged from meditation. Finally the reply came:

**“Good choices.”**

**“But teacher, how do we make good choices?”**

**“From experience,”** responded the wise one.

**“And how do we get experience?”**

**“Bad choices,”** smiled the teacher.

Regular self-reflection fosters good choices.  
Wisdom and well-being flourish, while painful feelings, such as worry and guilt, gradually wilt.  
As Confucius pointed out,  
“If, on examining himself, a man finds nothing to reproach himself for,  
What worries and fears can he have?”

### **EXERCISE 8: CORRECTIVE VISUALIZATION**

When self-examination reveals foolish things we said or did, how are we to heal them?  
It is useful to correct as many aspects of the problem as possible.

For example,

If we hurt someone, the first priority may be to apologize.  
As we discussed in the chapter on ethics, this will help heal the relationship.  
If we damaged or destroyed something, it may be helpful to repair or replace it.  
This will heal the loss.

**It is also important to heal any destructive emotions  
or habits that caused the foolishness in the first place.**

One useful method for this is corrective visualization, a technique suggested  
More than a hundred years ago by a Jewish teacher, and now widely used by psychotherapists.

Here

We visualize ourselves handling the situation more skillfully.

Take a few minutes to relax.

Recall a time when you spoke or acted in a way you now regret.

As vividly as you can, imagine yourself back in that same situation.

Visualize the place you were in and the people who were there.

Recall what you were doing and how you felt. Then allow yourself to watch the scene unfold and  
watch yourself, make the error and observe the consequences.

Now restart the visualization from the beginning and again allow the scene to unfold.

However,

**This time see yourself making a wiser choice**

*and notice how you feel as you do so.*

For example,

Perhaps a friend made a hurtful comment and you flew into a rage and lashed back,

Thereby damaging the friendship. In replaying the scene

You might see yourself taking three deep breaths and then making a joke about the comment.

If you wish,

you can replay the scene several times and try different types of skillful responses.

Just a few minutes doing this exercise can bring a sense of healing, offer new insights, and

Begin to establish healthy new habits.

### **EXERCISE 9: CONTACT YOUR INNER TEACHER**

We think of wisdom as something we must learn, and that is partly true.  
Yet the great religions also assure us that wisdom already resides within us.

Our minds are extraordinary miracles—“ the greatest of all cosmic wonders,”  
According to Carl Jung— and contain untapped sources of wisdom and understanding.

***We know more- than we know we know.***

The inner source of wisdom has been called by many names: for example,

The Hindu’s “inner guru,”

The Tibetan Buddhist’s “personal deity,”

The Christian Quaker’s “still small voice within,”

or the psychologist’s “higher self.”

Whatever the name, the implications are the same. We have within us remarkable wisdom that  
will guide and help us if we learn how to recognize and draw on it.

The **following exercise** is one way to do so.

Close your eyes and relax.

Imagine yourself in a beautiful place, perhaps your favorite beach, mountain, or garden.

See yourself there and enjoy the feelings this special place evokes.

In just a moment you are going to invite into that place an extraordinarily wise person.

It may be a great spiritual teacher, or

It may be an unknown wise man or woman.

Whoever it is, this person will embody qualities such as great  
Wisdom, love, and complete acceptance of you just as you are.

Invite this wise person into your place of beauty and introduce yourself.

Take time to savor the experience of being in the presence of a person of

Deep wisdom and boundless love.

*What does it feel like*

To be with someone who understands and loves you completely?

What fears and defenses melt into nothingness in the presence of someone

Who accepts you just the way you are?

Here is an opportunity to learn and get advice about anything that concerns you.

Take a moment to think of the questions you would most like to ask.

Then ask your first question and wait quietly for the answer.

There is no need to try to make anything happen.

Simply relax and allow the wisdom within you to respond. When you are ready,

Ask your next question, wait for a response, and

Continue with any further questions.

Next,

Ask the wise person if he or she has anything to tell you.

Again, just relax and wait for an answer.

Then ask if there are any questions the wise person has for you.

Finally, ask the wise person if he or she will be available to you in the future

At any time you request help or do this exercise.

Then express your thanks for the gifts of this meeting.

Now

Imagine yourself beginning to merge with the wise person so that your

Bodies, hearts, and minds melt into one.

Actually, you already are one, because the sage and the qualities such as

Love and wisdom are creations and part of your own mind.  
Feel that you have absorbed the qualities of the wise person and explore the experience.  
What is it like to be wise? What does it feel like to be fearless and to have  
No need to defend yourself in any way?  
What is it like to feel boundless love and care for all people, including yourself?  
And what does it feel like to accept and love yourself completely, just as you are?

After you have savored this experience, gently open your eyes.  
Try to make the transition slowly and gently so you can bring back the qualities you experienced.  
Take a moment to reflect on the fact that these feelings  
Wisdom, fearlessness, love, and acceptance— are not new or foreign to you.  
They are actually aspects of yourself that you projected onto the wise person.  
True, these qualities are not fully developed or always accessible to you yet, but  
They are available and await your attention to grow and flourish.

This exercise can be repeated whenever you wish to experience and nourish positive qualities.  
It can also be done when you need guidance with a difficult question or choice, and  
It is especially valuable during times of confusion.

You may wish to visualize a 'blue light being'.  
This is a similar meditation to visualizing one's spirit guide and asking any profound questions of  
life or issues about your life's crossroads...

Rather than attempting to personalize these general characteristics into a physical appearance  
with all the distractions of boy, girl, hair color, body shape... Then get even more distracted by the  
endless unnecessary images of the physical.

Instead, imagine a 'Spirit Guide, a higher Spirit or Soul, or Divine Being...  
or what ever represents a 'Higher' being of conscious to you.  
Let only their *essence* be felt with no concern for surface features.  
Concentrated one's 'Awareness' towards taking in this essence...

Try to image...

The Unimaginable...

The physical-less form of the un-formable.

... So just keep the image simple – Just a glowing light.

It can be of any color you wish.

Some are already used to Gold light – *I prefer an aqua marine Blue.*

But you can choose pink, purple or rainbow if you wish...

Just as long as it seems right & don't make a big fuss over the color, because,  
Your main focus is the deep characteristics of loving, compassionate, wise and  
Complete acceptance of you just as you are.

THE HIGHER REACHES OF WISDOM

Those who know others are wise,  
Those who know *themselves* are **enlightened**. —Lao Tsu

In addition to the visionary and practical wisdom recognized by philosophers,  
There is a still more profound, transcendental wisdom that  
Gradually illuminates spiritual practitioners.

This transcendental wisdom flowers as practitioners assimilate the  
Novel insights each stage of development unveils.

The challenge

Is to incorporate these insights into an ever wider, deeper, and  
More comprehensive understanding of mind, self, and reality.

We can briefly trace the major insights and challenges that face practitioners as they  
Penetrate through three major stages: subtle, pure consciousness, and nondual.

### **SUBTLE WISDOM**

As awareness becomes more lucid, it penetrates into the subtle depths of the psyche,  
Far below the usual conscious mind, and far below even the realms of the  
Unconscious usually explored in psychotherapy.

Here the practitioner uncovers transpersonal forces that are initially faint and subtle, but have  
enormous transformative power: archetypal images, sacred visions, and  
Emotions such as boundless love and compassion.

Practitioners must learn how to assimilate these novel experiences into their  
Understanding of reality and find ways to express this understanding in their lives.

The central insight of subtle wisdom is that  
the **psyche is multilayered**, and that

Within its depths are powerful transpersonal forces that must be  
Appropriately experienced, integrated, and expressed.

### **THE WISDOM OF PURE CONSCIOUSNESS -**

**B**reaks through into the realm of

Pure consciousness, Mind, or Spirit.

Here, there are no objects, thoughts, or things, no time or change,

No minds to suffer or bodies to decay and die.

There is only the bliss of unbounded awareness,

Transcendent to space and time,

Eternally free.

*Shankara* - "The knower of the Atman does not identify himself with his body.

**He rests within it, as if within a carriage."**

The practitioner discovers that though all things change and all bodies die,

There is a realm beyond things and bodies, and therefore beyond all change, suffering, and death. This understanding naturally weakens attachments to the world and its transient pleasures, which pale in comparison to the bliss of the Divine.

The key insight of this level of wisdom is that a sacred realm of pure awareness is our True nature and our home, and that by awakening to it, suffering can be transcended and divine bliss directly known.

The challenge of this level is to stabilize this insight and to reorient your behavior so you experience and express this realization in more and more of your life.

### **NONDUAL WISDOM**

At the level of pure consciousness, the practitioner can experience either The world or the transcendent realm of awareness, but not both simultaneously. At the non-dual stage, transcendent consciousness remains, but at the same time Awareness of both inner and outer object returns.

However,

These objects reappear in a radically new way. Now, as experiences arise, they are Immediately, spontaneously, and effortlessly recognized as Creations or manifestations of consciousness.

Instead of appearing as separate, independent entities, all things are seen as Expressions or projections of consciousness, the divine play or Lila of God.

Infinite consciousness, Mind, Brahman, or God is recognized as  
All beings, all things, and all worlds, or  
As Meister Eckhart put it,

**“All things become nothing but God.”**

The moment he attained enlightenment, the sixth Zen patriarch exclaimed,  
“Who would have thought that all things are **the manifestation of the Essence of Mind.**”

The seeker becomes a sage.

She now looks out at the world and in at the mind, but  
Wherever she looks, sees only God.

The Christian mystic Angela Foligno exclaimed:

The eyes of my soul were opened, and I beheld the plenitude of God,  
Wherein I did comprehend the whole world,  
Both here and Beyond the sea,  
and the abyss and ocean and all things.

In all these things I beheld naught save the divine power,

***In a manner assuredly indescribable;***

so that through excess of marveling  
The soul cried with a loud voice, saying,  
“This whole world is full of God!”

This is the recognition of Nonduality,  
Of the utter inseparability of spirit and matter, of  
Mind and manifestation, of inner and outer, personal and transpersonal,  
Sacred and profane, Self and God.

According to Ramakrishna,  
**This ecstatic vision is available to us all**  
***As soon as we prepare ourselves for it:***

### **WHO CHANTS THE NAME OF BUDDHA?**

If all things are now experienced as inseparable aspects of the Divine,  
So too is the sense of self.

The sense of one's self as an ego—  
a self limited to the body, forever separate from all things—  
Dissolves in the blazing light of divine consciousness,  
To be replaced with a recognition of oneself, and everyone and everything,  
As aspects of the divine.

There is no longer a separate ego looking out at a material world,  
but only God looking at God, consciousness observing its manifestations,

*Shankara -*

I am neither this object, nor that.  
I am that which makes all objects manifest.  
I am supreme, eternally pure.  
I am neither inward nor outward.  
I am the infinite Brahman, one without a second.  
I am Reality without beginning, without equal.  
I have no part in the illusion of "I" and "You," "this" and "that."  
I am Brahman, one without a second, bliss without end,  
The eternal, unchanging Truth.

An awareness that there is only God:  
The recognition that all people, all creatures, all life— and  
*Certainly Not the ego*

**Live in and are lived by the Divine.**

The sage happily worships everyone.  
The psychotic suffers from ego disintegration;  
The megalomaniac suffers from ego inflation;  
**The sage delights in ego transcendence.**

To confuse them is to commit the "pre-trans fallacy:"  
The trap of confusing pre-personal regression with transpersonal progression.

What a world of difference between them!

### **THE LIBERATING POWER OF WISDOM**

Wisdom is a spiritual capacity of enormous liberating power.

Seeing the way we and reality really are correcting the false beliefs and delusions that lock us into  
**our self-defeating sense of self and ways of being.**

Wisdom dissolves our mental prison, reduces our suffering, and speeds our awakening.

By loosening the bonds of egoism,

Wisdom also fosters concern and compassion for others.

### **PRACTICE SEVEN**

**EXPRESS SPIRIT IN ACTION EMBRACE GENEROSITY AND THE JOY OF SERVICE**

Where there is hate, let me bring Love—

Where there is offense, let me bring Pardon—

Where there is discord, let me bring Union—

Where there is error, let me bring Truth—

Where there is doubt, let me bring Faith—

Where there is darkness, let me bring Light—

Where there is sadness, let me bring Joy—

**Because it is in giving oneself that one receives;**

It is in forgetting oneself that one is found.... —*St. Francis of Assisi*

### **The Spirit of Service**

Both Jesus and Mohammad emphasized, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” But  
Somehow it doesn’t often feel that way.

Giving, whether of our time, money, or possessions, can

Feel more like a hardship than an opportunity.

Just like living ethically and lovingly, openhearted giving is a skill to be cultivated  
and can be difficult at first. However,

Generosity matures as we mature and eventually flows spontaneously  
and enjoyably as spiritual life deepens.

### **IN PRAISE OF SERVICE**

“Make it your guiding principle to do your best for others,” urged Confucius.

When Mohammad was asked, “What actions are most excellent?” he replied,  
“To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted,  
To lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the injured.”

### **We All Want to Help**

All the major spiritual traditions regard ‘service to others’ as a  
Central core of human desire and

Essential for Spiritual Growth.

Human beings seem to be genuinely altruistic. We all have a desire to help.

### **Barriers to True Generosity**

This desire may initially be quite weak and delicate.

Conflicting forces such as greed or emotions of fear and anger.

These powerful forces scream for gratification and all too easily obliterate concern for others.

The sad result is either miserliness or a mask of false generosity.

When greed rules our minds, we compulsively acquire all we can, and  
The thought of parting with our precious possessions fills us with dread.

Under the sway of **attachment** and fear, even giving to others can spring from unhealthy motives.

We can become attached to people just as easily as to possessions.

Then we may shower these people with gifts in a desperate attempt to gain their affection.

This may look like generosity, but it is actually a form of manipulation driven not by

A joyful desire to share, but by a desperate need to be liked.

Giving becomes a manipulative ploy in the service of our own neediness.

### **The Growth of Generosity**

The '7 Practices' will transform generosity from a painful burden,

To an enjoyable spiritual opportunity, by,

Strengthening the qualities of mind, such as love and gratitude, that fosters generosity,

While awaking barriers, such as greed and anger, that inhibit it.

Ancient wisdom and modern psychology agree that

The desire to help and the pleasure it brings grow as we grow.

Growth of generosity develops through stages.

Buddhism describes three stages:

#### **1) Tentative Giving:**

Here we offer our gifts hesitantly and

Ambivalently, fearful that we might miss them later, and

More concerned with our own fears than another's needs.

#### **2) Brotherly or Sisterly Giving:**

Here we give willingly, happy to share our blessings with others,

**Motivated** by their well-being as well as our own.

#### **3) Royal Giving - Generosity**

Is now so highly developed, so effortless and spontaneous,

That we naturally want to give the best of what is ours

To maximize the happiness of others.

Others' well-being is now as important as our own, and  
Their happiness can only increase ours.  
At this stage it is clear that serving others can be  
A spiritual practice, a privilege, and a joy

### **THE JOY OF SERVICE**

You don't have to serve on par with *Momma T*  
To inspire **many** with 'the little things' that 'make one's day'.

There are many potential opportunities throughout one's day to offer the  
Simple services of kindness, respect and a desire for others well being...

*Arising as*

### **'Random Acts of Unconditional Aloha'**

#### **Helper's High**

Psychologists also state the benefits of generosity.  
Generous people tend to be happier and psychologically healthier than selfish individuals

And to experience a "helper's high."

As people age, they increasingly find it is their legacy  
Their contributions to the world and future generations  
That gives meaning and satisfaction to their lives.

Taking time to make others happy makes us feel better than  
Devoting all our efforts to our own pleasures.

Our service to others serves us in several ways:

It weakens negative forces and strengthens positive ones within our minds.  
When we share our possessions, time, or energy, we loosen the heavy chains of  
Greed, jealousy, and fear of loss that bind us to our egos.

Likewise,

When emotions such as love and happiness are expressed as kindness,  
They grow stronger in the process.

We also experience ourselves, what we intend for others.

If we boil with hatred and revenge,  
It is our minds that are convulsed and torn by the anger  
Long before we want it on someone else.

On the other hand,

When we desire happiness for others,  
Thoughts of happiness first fill our own minds, then overflow into caring action.

This is one reason why generosity can alleviate painful feelings and help lift depression.

## **SERVICE AS THE SUPREME PRACTICE**

So esteemed are generosity and service that some traditions regard them as  
The essence of spiritual life, the practice upon which all other practices converge.

From this perspective,  
**A crucial goal of spiritual life is to equip oneself to serve effectively.**

Even the supreme goal of enlightenment is sought, not for oneself alone, but  
To better serve and enlighten others.

With this goal in mind,  
Some practitioners temporarily withdraw from involvement in the world in order to  
Pursue their spiritual practice as intensely as possible.  
They do this in the hope of awakening quickly and thereby being able to awaken others.  
If they succeed,  
These seekers become sages and the sages dedicate themselves to the  
Welfare of all people and all life.

With their own questions answered,  
The confusion of the world begs to be cleared.  
With their own pain healed,  
The suffering of others tugs at their hearts.

With their own egocentric motives cleansed, the desire to serve assumes prominence.

The sages are now ready and motivated to return to society and contribute.

This two-step process of secluded practice followed by service is what  
Historian Arnold Toynbee called  
"The cycle of withdrawal and return."

In his study of world history, Toynbee observed that the cycle  
Marked the lives of the people who had contributed most to civilization.

*He asked:*

Who are... The greatest benefactors of the living generation of mankind?

*I should say:*

Confucius and Lao Tsu, the Buddha, the prophets of Israel and Judah, Zoroaster, Jesus,  
Mohammed and Socrates.

In short, those people who had a profound spiritual realization then  
Devoted their lives to service.

Service as Means Service is not only an expression of awakening, but also a means to awakening.  
Few of us are likely to withdraw from the world for a prolonged period and  
To go through one great cycle of withdrawal and return.

Most of us will go through many cycles, withdrawing for perhaps an hour each day,  
a day each week, and for some weeks each year.  
Such rhythms are built into many traditions  
There is certainly no need to wait for enlightenment before serving,

Abraham Maslow concluded from his study of psychologically healthy people:  
The best way to become a better helper is to become a better person.  
But one necessary aspect of becoming a better person is via helping other people.

So

**Oone must and can do both *simultaneously*.**

### Difficulties Are Potential Contributions

Wonderful talents and profound spiritual insights are priceless gifts, but  
We don't need them to serve effectively.  
Even those things we regard as our failings and deficiencies can contribute  
If we are willing to acknowledge them openly and  
Use them to help others.

### **DEVELOP A GENEROUS HEART**

All that one gives to others one gives to oneself.  
If this truth is understood, who will not give to others? —Ramana Maharshi

### THE PRINCIPLES FOR CULTIVATING GENEROSITY

The first six practices lay the groundwork for generosity.  
**Here are the central principles for cultivating generosity directly.**

### **Seek Inspiration from Others**

We live in an era in which all the great Wisdom Traditions can be easily accessed,  
Where basic information about many practices can be studied from the Inspiration of others.  
So even when you can't hike the 1000 miles into a remote desert for a few years...  
You can access the vital essentials from the world's most Inspiring Saints and Sages.

### **Find How You Would Like to Help**

Here is a little-known secret about service:  
It's okay to have a good time. In fact, it's more than okay— it's a gift to everyone.  
It is a gift to yourself because service then is a pleasure rather than a chore.

Find ways of giving or service that incorporates the creative things you love by  
Making best use of your unique talents.  
Your Labor of Love – Can be a gift to the world.

### **The Right Motivation for Giving**

The motivation with which we do anything is crucial.  
We may help one person and walk away feeling wonderful.  
We may help someone else and later seethe with resentment.

If so,

It's a safe bet that our actions were contaminated by inappropriate motives.

When we give with the *hope* of getting something back, because we are

Motivated by guilt, or because we are afraid to say no,

***We set ourselves up to suffer.***

***Externally***, it may look like generosity.

But such giving feels very different and afterward can cause your emotional egos to run rampant to places one should not let oneself go... Inflaming regret and resentment.

The underlying motives with which we give  
Determine their emotional and spiritual effects.

It is so important to explore our motives for giving.

If we find feelings of openheartedness and genuine caring,

Giving is a wonderful way to express and strengthen them.

But

If we find a contracted heart, tension, or annoyance, perhaps it might be better to

First, take time to explore and resolve these feelings.

Often it is essential to say "yes" to a request and to give as generously as we can.

**At other times it may be completely appropriate to say**

***"No, this does not feel right."***

Jack Kornfield points out: *that Jack and the Beanstalk said... Just kidding ;-)*

There is no formula for the practice of compassion.

Like all of the great spiritual arts,

It requires that we listen and attend, understand our motivation,

and then

*Ask ourselves*

**What action can really be helpful....**

Instead of holding the ideal that we should be able to

Give endlessly with compassion for all beings "except me,"

**We find compassion for all beings *including ourselves.***

Start Small

Another key principle for developing a generous heart is to be willing to start in small ways.

This strengthens generosity and helps us to give more wholeheartedly later on.

The Buddha was very aware of this, and so when a rich but stingy man came to him he

recommended a gentle program of

***Gradually increasing giving.***

Giving - It is fine to start small.

We would all like to end world hunger and wars. It might make sense, however, to  
Start by bringing a meal to a sick neighbor, working with a charitable group,  
or  
Supporting an abandoned orphan in a war-torn country.

Mother Teresa repeatedly urged:  
Don't look for spectacular actions. What is important is the gift of yourselves.

It is the degree of love you insert in your deeds. Compared to the magnitude of  
Suffering in the world, our contributions may seem insignificant, but to the  
People who receive them, they may be life-saving.

### THE YOGA OF AWAKENING SERVICE

When combined with the right motivation, service is transformed into awakening service,  
or what Hindus call karma yoga. Karma yoga has two aspects, both aimed at  
Changing and purifying motivation.

#### Acting for a Higher Purpose

The first aspect is to do our service and work in the world, not for ourselves alone,  
but for a higher purpose.

#### Releasing Attachment

The second element of karma yoga is to  
**Release attachments to the results of our contributions.**

Usually, when we contribute something,  
We have definite ideas about the outcome we want and the recognition and rewards we deserve.  
This is a recipe for disaster.

If things work out differently from what we expect, or if we are not lavished with praise, our  
attachments go unfulfilled and we suffer accordingly.

If we mindlessly cling to our attachments we may boil with anger or slide into depression.

On the other hand,

We can recognize these emotions as a wake up call.  
They are the screams of our frustrated ego, reminding us that we can  
*Stay attached and continue to suffer, or let go and come to peace.*

One way to reduce attachment is to do good works quietly,  
Without the fanfare and trumpet-blowing that would  
Draw attention, swell our egos, and puff up pride.

Awakening service is a delicate balancing act. We work and contribute wholeheartedly, yet  
At the same time we try to relinquish attachment to our fixed ideas of  
How things should turn out and to our attachment to recognition.

The Bhagavad Gita summarizes the challenge as follows:

Do your duty, always;  
but without attachment.

That is how [one] reaches the ultimate Truth;

By working without anxiety about results.

In fact...

Many others reached enlightenment simply because they did their duty in this spirit.

By learning as much as we can from serving, we simultaneously grow in wisdom and effectiveness.

To do this means bringing a desire to learn and grow to all that we do.

Each act of service and every result of that service becomes a source of learning.

With this attitude each success or failure and each emotional reaction

Becomes a kind of feedback.

If the project we are working on turns out well, we try to learn why.

If we make a mistake, which of course we will, many times,

We explore this also.

Our mistakes can prove just as valuable as our triumphs, sometimes even more so.

With this perspective, there is no need for guilt or self-blame;

These are merely sorry substitutes for learning.

Sufis call one who has learned to accept and learn from any outcome  
a "Contented self."

A person at this advanced stage is a living example of Confucius's claim  
"The person of benevolence never worries."

**- These three elements -**

Dedicating efforts to a higher goal,

Relinquishing attachments to specific outcomes, and learning from experience

***Are the keys to effective awakening service.***

By combining them,

We create a spiritual technique of enormous power.

Through awakening service we simultaneously purify motivation, weaken cravings,

Serve as best we can, and learn how to serve and awaken more effectively in the future.

One enormous advantage of awakening service is that it

**Transforms daily activities into spiritual practices.**

With its help we need not change what we are doing so much as

***how and why we are doing it.***

Awakening service is a superb practice for those busily engaged with work and families.

With this approach, work and family, far from being distractions from spiritual life,

Become central to spiritual life, and each project or family activity  
Can be transformed into a sacred act.

When I served my father, mother, husband and others, I simply considered them as  
Different manifestations of the Almighty and served them as such.

As with all practices, awakening service initially requires effort.  
But over time the effort becomes spontaneous and service becomes joy.  
Gradually, awakening service extends to encompass our lives and  
Each activity within its healing, awakening embrace.

*As it does so,*

**We begin to recognize *who we really are,***

## EXERCISES IN GENEROSITY AND SERVICE

Be kind to all...

The best people among you, are the ones who are benefactors to others. —*Mohammad*

### EXERCISE 1: TURN WORK INTO SERVICE

Much of what we do each day is already service.  
Whether it is cleaning, cooking, or accounting, a lot of it is for the benefit of other people,  
whether they are clients, friends, or family.

Whether we do it as service or drudgery, however,  
Is up to us.

Take a few minutes to think about your daily activities.  
Is there one you would like to do for a day in a spirit of service?

It could be a complex technical task at work or something as simple as shopping.

Choose an activity. Then think of ways in which it helps people.  
Perhaps your work will allow others to get their work done more easily;  
Perhaps the shopping will feed your family and friends. ..

Concentrate on these benefits, then choose to see and  
Do your task as a service to these people.

With practice

The rewards of helping become increasingly obvious.

As they do,

You may wish to see more and more activities  
From the perspective of service until it ***becomes a natural way of life.***

### EXERCISE 2: USE THE POWER OF DEDICATION

By changing our motives, we transform our actions and ourselves.

Pause for a moment before each major activity,  
Whether it be reading or cleaning.

Then,

Instead of simply proceeding automatically with only your own well-being in mind,  
You dedicate the activity to your own awakening so that you can better help and awaken others.

At the end of the activity, you pause again.

This time you offer whatever benefits you have gained from doing the activity  
to the benefit of all people and even to all life.

Remember that what you want for others you experience and strengthen in your own mind.

Give away qualities such as love or patience that you gained from helping or meditating,  
and they, together with generosity, flower more fully.

When you feel ready, experiment with beginning and

Ending some of your activities with dedications.

One place to start is with your quiet time of reflection, meditation, or prayer.

Here, in the sensitivity that sacred silence offers, you are most likely to remember

To do the dedications and to be able to feel the benefits they bring.

As these benefits become apparent, you may wish to dedicate more activities

For example, work, play, cooking, and eating— in this way.

This transforms these activities and also makes it clear that even

The most humble of daily activities can serve the process of awakening.

### **EXERCISE 3: CHANGE PAIN INTO COMPASSION**

“Downward comparison,” comparing oneself with someone who is worse off,

Is an effective strategy for combating feelings of pain and depression.

It can also be an effective means for cultivating compassion.

#### **To do this exercise,**

Think of some difficulty you are having; it could be physical, psychological, or spiritual.

Next, think of people who are suffering even more from the same kind of difficulty or

Related ones. If you know specific individuals suffering in this way, bring them to mind.

Think of all the suffering your difficulty has brought you.

Then think of all the suffering these people must be experiencing.

Allow yourself to feel their pain. Recognize that just as you want to be free of pain, so do they.

Let compassion for them arise as you hope or pray that they become free of pain.

### **EXERCISE 4: PRACTICE ALL-EMBRACING KINDNESS**

The essence of this exercise is very straightforward: Simply try to be as kind as you can to as many people as you can during a specific time. This period of time could be an hour, a morning, or a day.

If you wish, you can extend your help to include creatures as well as people.

Mother Teresa devoted practically every waking moment of her life to this exercise and summarized it by saying,

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.”

Many of your actions will probably be very simple, such as visiting a friend in need of comfort, smiling at a stranger, or helping a child who has fallen...

In crowded places we can just be pleasant, smile often, exude good vibes and make people feel cared for.

### **Exercise 5**

#### **Awakening Service**

Involves three steps

- 1 - Begin an activity by dedication to a Higher purpose larger than your own satisfaction.
- 2 - Relinquish attachments to your **ideas** of how things **ought** to turn out.
- 3 - Learn from the Process

Do you suffer or enjoy, lament or learn? Awakening service offers a choice.

A simple way to begin this exercise is by choosing a contribution you are already making.

It is helpful if this contribution is one you make regularly,

So that you have multiple opportunities to learn from it.

By dedicating to a larger purpose,

Looking for and releasing attachments to a particular outcome, and learning from the whole process, you transform your contribution into awakening service.

### **Exercise 6**

#### **Helper's High – Give Anonymously**

Is there a gift you could give anonymously? If so, make it and observe the feelings that arise.

Then, if possible, observe the people enjoying your gift and the

Further feelings this evokes in you.

### **Exercise 7**

#### **Take Time for Awakening Service**

A practice will be much more efficient if a reasonable schedule can be applied and adhered to.

For this exercise –

**Select a time period to devote to this Awakening Service,**

*But not to take away from any other meditation routine, you already have.*

1) Begin by dedicating the time and all that you do during it.

2) Then, wherever you are, whoever you are with, and whatever you are doing,  
Look for ways to help.

3) Whatever you do, try to do it in a spirit of service.

4) Whenever you serve, try to do it as awakening service in which you  
Learn from each activity while releasing attachments to the way things turn out.

On the surface, your day may seem routine, - Externally not much may seem unusual  
But Inside is a different story. – Now you have a larger purpose for your day and all you do.  
Now, each activity becomes a source of satisfaction, each meeting a spiritual encounter, each  
twinge of fear, or anger – a clue about a lurking attachment, and each experience a welcome  
opportunity for learning.

Of course, there will be days when we are riding a wave of inspiration,  
Everything seems to flow effortlessly...  
Then there will be days struggling just to focus much less concentrate;  
Those days will challenge our spiritual drive and  
Even our ambitions for many other *useful* desires.

But since we are ordinary human beings,  
We simply try to practice what the saints and sages do, knowing we will often fail,  
but also knowing they once struggled and failed as we do now, and that each effort, each exercise,  
each dedication carries us one step closer to recognizing that  
Our true nature is the same as theirs.

### **The Higher Reaches of Generosity**

How much good can one person do?

Awakening, contributing, and finding out how much good we can do  
Are definitely games worth playing.

*A logical extension of previous exercises.*

Instead of dedicating an hour or a day to optimal service, however,  
We simply allow this goal to infuse more and more of our lives.  
This doesn't necessarily mean helping harder, but it may mean **helping smarter**.

An enjoyable challenge is to look for ways in which our contributions can be most effective,  
Our service most strategic and beneficial.

As the old saying goes, "Give people a fish and you feed them for a day.  
Teach them how to fish and you feed them for life."

Gandhi would suggest the importance of taking time for quiet reflection before acting.

When the mind comes to rest and awareness clears, we open ourselves to inspirations and can act more clearly and effectively.

By combining contemplation and karma yoga,  
We go into ourselves to go more effectively out into the world, and we  
Go out into the world in order to go more deeply into ourselves.  
Work in the world and work on ourselves, then becomes alternating waves of  
One great flow of awakening and service that guide and fulfill our lives.

**Service and Spiritual Vision**  
**As awakening and service continue,**  
***Spiritual vision begins to awaken.***

As it does, we begin to recognize who we really are and who we are serving.  
We begin to recognize behind the masks of  
Fearful faces, hungry bodies, and broken bones that we are actually serving  
Buddha, Christ, Elijah, and All the children of God.

Those whose eyes of the soul are wide open,  
No longer see a distinction between themselves and others.

Generosity and service are now spontaneous and effortless responses, as natural as  
One hand helping another, for who would not want to help their Self?

Those who have reached it assure us that we are all capable of it and that  
The sacrifices involved are actually far less than the sacrifices involved  
In continuing to live unconsciously and selfishly.

Gandhi said:

I claim to be no more than an average person with less than average ability.  
I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have  
If they would make the same effort, cultivate the same hope and faith, and  
Simply dedicate themselves to the truth.

**A World In Need**

We find our circle of concern spontaneously extending— beyond our family and friends,  
Beyond our nation and particular religious tradition  
To eventually encompass **all people and even all creatures.**

Einstein expressed this process as only a genius could:  
A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space.  
He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest,  
A kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.  
This delusion is a kind of prison for us,  
Restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion  
To embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

So we look for ways, however small,

To serve all living creatures and all of nature in its beauty.

This can seem a daunting process until we remember the words of the wise.

Jewish wisdom reminds us,

***“It is not for you to complete the work, but it is up to you to begin it.”***

We are not necessarily called to do world-shaking deeds,

But we are called to do what we can

With as much wisdom, awareness, and love as we can.

The Jewish tradition holds that each of us carries a spark of the Divine within us;

Jesus called those who follow his example “the light of the world,”

While Basque shamans describe human beings as walking stars.

As we do the seven practices, the sparks within us blaze and we become ever brighter stars.

It becomes our priceless privilege to help shine away the darkness of pain and ignorance and to  
light each other’s way, until the sea of human sorrow becomes

***A shoreless ocean of light.***

## **ENJOY YOUR SELF AWAKENED HEART, AWAKENED MIND**

Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours,

Yours are the eyes through which, is to look out Christ’s compassion to the world;

Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good;

Yours are the hands with which he is to bless men now.

—St. Teresa of Avila

The journey of awakening is the most remarkable adventure any human being can undertake.

No other activity is ultimately so rewarding for ourselves or so helpful to others.

Like any adventure,

***the more wholeheartedly we play, the more fulfilling it is.***

Do the 7 Practices as fully as possible,

For they constitute the very heart of spiritual practice and propel awakening.

Makes these practices a regular and increasingly central part of your life.

There is a rhythm to spiritual life, and each of us needs to use the gifts of growing sensitivity and  
clarity to realize the practice that is most appropriate at any given stage.

At one time you may want to focus on emotions and relinquish anger, at another you may

Feel the need to study for greater understanding,  
Later you may feel pulled to contribution and service.

Make practice a regular part of each day.

### **FIND SPIRITUAL FRIENDS AND COMMUNITIES**

One of the great tragedies is that so few people know it is possible to awaken,  
Still fewer understand how to do it, and even fewer seriously attempt it.  
In most communities there is little support for the values and practices we are cultivating.

That is why it is so valuable to find friends who are on similar paths and  
Who share the same values. Such friends are an enormous gift.

They can offer inspiration and encouragement, share insights and discoveries, and  
During difficult times offer comfort and support. When people come together with  
A shared commitment to use their relationships to foster each other's learning,  
Spiritual growth accelerates dramatically.

The Buddha recommended:

If the traveler can find A virtuous and wise companion  
Let him go with him joyfully And overcome the dangers of the way.  
But if you cannot find Friend or master to go with you....  
Travel on alone Rather than with a fool for company.

### **FIND A GUIDE**

Spiritual friends are extremely valuable. But a friend who has practiced longer,  
Traveled the path further, and understands it more deeply can be invaluable.  
Such a person, rich in wisdom and kindness, may become a guide or teacher.

They walk their talk, living and relating in ways consistent with their message.  
They treat everyone, including students, with kindness and respect.  
Their major concern is with awakening,

The practices work not only by cultivating positive qualities, but also by uncovering and  
Bringing to healing awareness old, painful memories and emotions.  
This frees us from the prison of past pain and opens us to present possibilities.

To practice for the benefit of all people— even all creatures— is to  
Expand our circle of care and to cultivate emotions such as love and kindness.  
Over time it becomes increasingly obvious that the happiness of others is our own and that to  
practice for the benefit of all is not a sacrifice but rather a delight.

Our spiritual work not only helps us, but is,  
According to Ramana Maharshi,  
“The best help you can possibly render to others.”

Our task is simply to do our practice as fully as we can.  
In this way we gradually learn to awaken ourselves,  
To love and serve life in all its infinite forms, to see the sacred in all things,  
and to care for our troubled world.  
Our world is in desperate need of healing.  
But it also rests in good hands, because it rests in yours.  
And ***in you*** rests the Source of all healing, and  
All that is needed to awaken you and the world.

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"I am just a servant to the Drive of my Spirit" - RevRog

Spirit is the '*Vehicle*'  
That carries our Soul to the Source with Spirit's Direct connection to God  
A Soul can flow with Spirit resonating in one's ***Enlightened*** Conscious mind  
An **Awareness that Reveals one's True Self**

**Spirituality is**  
***Medicine for the People***  
*And*  
~ *each will find it in their own way* ~

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***'extra credit'***  
***;-)***

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When we can achieve free, non polluting energy from endlessly renewable sources  
When we learn how to create perhaps a 'superfood' that ends world hunger  
Imagine  
How much Humanity could accomplish if  
Instead of each country spending Every available \$ Dollar towards Weapons of War  
We spent just a reasonable amount on making this planet a much better place for  
All humanity and allow the "work week" to decrease to about 30 hours  
Freeing us all to pursue our heart's desires...  
Within a decade, humanity would solve every known issue and  
Create a utopia on Earth for All by solving the above mentioned goals  
Which would further decrease the amount of work required to earn our basic costs of  
living  
Thus allowing any and All to fulfill their heart's desires

When the fear of starving or the fear of the onslaught of  
Environmental issues that will severely challenge 'life' as we've known it and  
The Critical need for earning the money for our **basic** energy needs  
To cook our food, keep our house warm  
Along with the costs to feed and house

*There will come a day*

When most of these basic human needs will be met  
So no one has to live in Fear for so long... As we have been.  
Imagine the wonderful creativeness we would produce if collectively  
We were all free to pursue our heart's desires  
Researchers, psychologists, philosophers, and science folks that  
Just require a simple, quiet living space  
To do their creative research.  
Artists would flourish without the currently required 'suffering or starving for one's art'  
syndrome that has plagued humanity from the beginning.

*There will come a Day*

When we are not tied to the burden of money and the high costs of our  
Basic human essential needs

Anyone at anytime could take the time off their chosen creative path  
To spend the time to seek a Deeper Awareness of their inner Self...

**"Where do all the souls go Bob?" - Out To Pastor eye Wreckin'**  
They're on a 'Timeless Holiday' ;-)

We've had at least 108 billion births here so far  
We got less than 8bil... 7,366,218,999  
So what up with the other 100bil?  
...Just Sayin'...

**Life Is Precious! - Don't Waste it!**

**Ponder this** - (then move on & get back to 'Reality' ;-)

**A soul is Timeless** - so there is

**No beginning nor is there an end.**

When we first hopped out of da tree and became Aware of our Consciousness

**Where did the first human souls come from?**

Since the 'timeless soul' couldn't just **start** right then with the smartest monkeys

Where did these smart monkeys get their souls?  
**"Timeless Eternal" souls don't evolve up from monkey *minds I wouldn't think*  
but why not?**

"We" are only Assuming this eternal & timeless thing...  
Still, we are using these '*definitions*' to describe the '**un-describable**'  
Timeless... Is just our best 'guestimen't of the character that is our Soul.  
So our Eternally Timeless Souls could have ether come from the  
Collective Heavenly Hangout for souls that perhaps had  
Previous existences on 'other worlds'  
or - *Earth's first souls* -

Evolved up from the accumulation of our physical evolvemments.  
As our minds grew to become more and more aware of its consciousness  
It would only seem natural that our first souls would have evolved from our  
Parents & their parents & like the Christian texts on souls states  
*Somehow this seems to me the most plausible*

Ken Wilber's Holon theories which accumulate mountains of knowledge from the Big Bang  
thru to the development of human consciousness and distill it into,  
'Things typically tend to transcend to higher and deeper stages'.  
So in that light, it's not likely at the soul from another highly developed world would end  
up 'De-volving' into a monkey... but then, "It's" often referred to as  
"The Great Mystery"  
a mystery that so very few have any level of "Knowing"

Looking at the figures 108bil total births - the less than 8 bill we got now  
This makes the conundrum of the where do all the souls go, Bob? - A Trivial Distraction

With the 'evolving souls' theory, we now have a total of nearly 8 billion souls  
That have lived about 108 billion life times.  
This sort of takes away from my statement that 'Life is Precious' from above.  
The answer to the ponderousness of - If one truly believes in God and an afterlife,  
Why not just end this one when it gets to be a drag...

Well, for one thing,  
**We'd have to start all over poopin' in diapers and  
Go through school all over  
:-O  
*So buck up princess & git 'er done here & now ;-)***

Theravada Buddhism generally denies there is an intermediate state—though some early Buddhist texts seem to support the idea--but asserts that rebirth is immediate.

Within Japanese Zen,

Reincarnation is accepted by some, but wholly rejected by others.

A distinction can be drawn between "folk Zen", as in the Zen practiced by Devotional lay people, and "philosophical Zen".

Folk Zen generally accepts the various supernatural elements of Buddhism, such as rebirth.

Philosophical Zen, however, places such emphasis on the present moment that

Rebirth may be considered irrelevant because,

Even if it does exist, it can never be consciously experienced - Specifically, in Zen

The past and future are considered to be merely ideas which are held in the present.

Because, as living beings rebirth can only be viewed as something which

May have happened in the past or that might happen in the future,

We must essentially reject the present moment, or Dharma, in order to even consider it.

For this reason,

Rebirth is often either rejected or considered unknowable in Zen

and **therefore a distraction**

Anyone can skim through a book, but until you make it a practice

Those memories of things read ~ will fade in a short time

A few weeks of guidance will save a lifetime of seeking

and put you on the fast track **towards** that 'Inner Pull' we all feel to some degree

'Life Practices' are like any 'practice'

The more you do ~ the better you get

A Spiritual Understanding has countless benefits for the 'here and now'

but also will make the 'transition' to our next 'journey' a

Monumentally magical moment of a lifetime

and tends to evoke a feeling of wanting to see

How much 'Good' they can do on their days remaining

When the Day comes when

We all get to blossom into our Spiritual Path sooner in life

In a way that is all encompassing, all including,

All Quadrants, All Levels

~ AQAL ~

But then most of humanity, at least in the good 'ole USA  
Has thrown the "Spiritual Baby " out with the dirty bathwater of religious dogma

Rightly so, for all the atrocities caused by the power, control and dogmas of 'religion'  
In the 1960s...

Began an age where "No one tells ME what to do, or fight a war, or cut my hair, or get a  
job, or come home on time, or Pray this way or...nanananananana... ME ME ME!

***and that's Fine to question authority...***

but

Not only is there a major avoidance to anything deemed slightly "religious"  
But a strong stigmatism has embedded itself in our society towards anything that is  
remotely associated with religion such as  
God, Spirituality, our soul, our consciousness, our awareness, our growth...

Mentioning the "G" word at a get together & soon you will find yourself  
Talking to empty chairs.

You might be able to speak vaguely about Spirituality,  
As long as you don't mention the "G" word.

What everybody needs is a more common sense approach  
Starting from wherever one is coming from.

Folks with A 'surface' only depth into ***any*** religion  
Can begin to Transcend their narrow views such as  
Only WE get to goto the Heaven - 'cause our faith is the ONLY True way

All people from any "Faiths" can take these simple steps towards a Deeper Connection to  
Spirit that will help them Transcend older ways that can use some improvement or  
modifications to better suit our current world conditions.

While staying True the core 'Ways' that a great religion was based on

### **What are the *True* core ways & the *not true* ways?**

This profound question is easily confirmed by comparing ones religious practices to the  
7 Sacred Ways of 7 Sacred Spiritual Traditions

Dr Roger Walsh's book that points out the big obvious 7 Sacred Practices that  
Are common to the 7 major Spiritual Traditions to date.

It is truly inspiring when one first expands their view to see that many other religions are  
practicing the same 'ways'.

Each of the these particular 7 practices has many sub categories with many 'exercises for real life daily practices and meditations to Deepen your Spiritual Awareness and to Truly Broaden your collective embrace of humanity

Spiritual Pandit and modern day Sage philosopher Ken Wilber points out That there are indeed over 22 sacred practices in over 22 Spiritual traditions and if we keep looking for ways we all have in common We will be on the right track towards a harmonious humanity

A more harmonious humanity will more likely have the combined creativity to solve many of the issues we have created... so far

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