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SHAKTI GAWAIN

WITH LAUREL KING



LIVING IN THE LIGHT

This is

Living In The Light

Living in the Light is a comprehensive map to growth, fulfillment, and consciousness. As we grapple with personal, national, and global challenges on many fronts, this classic work is timelier than ever.

Written by:

[Ahmed](#)

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Book Intro

Written by:

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Living in the light

A Guide to Personal and Planetary Transformation

The Beginning of My Journey

I have always had a burning desire to understand how the universe works, what life is all about, and the meaning and purpose for which I am here. In retrospect, I can see that my entire life has been devoted to my search for truth and understanding.

I was brought up in a very intellectual, well-educated, nonreligious family. My parents were essentially atheists, and very early on, I remember having the attitude that a belief in God was a human fabrication, a fantasy, a superstition created to help people feel better about the totally unexplained, and unexplainable, predicament we seem to find ourselves in. Human existence, or any other kind of existence, was simply an accident of nature and had no particularly fathomable meaning. I preferred to admit that I didn't know how we got here or why, rather than to adopt a simplistic explanation merely to gain a sense of security. I believed that truth was rational and anything that couldn't be proved scientifically didn't exist. I also felt somewhat condescending toward people who were weak enough to have to make up a god to believe in.

The positive side of this upbringing was that I didn't get a lot of the rigid dogma and deeply negative messages about right and wrong, heaven and hell, and sin that so many people receive in their early religious training. On the other hand, I had no conscious concept or experience of the spiritual dimension of life, and no answers for the questions I had about the meaning and purpose of my life.

My parents really wanted a child, and were very loving to me. Unfortunately they were unable to work out their own relationship and were divorced when I was two years old. Although I don't remember it clearly, I know this event had a major impact on my life and affected my later patterns in relationship. After the divorce, I lived with my mother who never remarried or had any other children. My father did remarry, and I often visited my father and his other family.

My mother developed a successful career as a city planner in the days when there were few women in that field. She dealt with the usual challenges of single parenting — trying to balance the needs of her child with the demands of her work. Being the only child of a working mother, I developed a strong sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency quite early.

My mother is a very adventurous person. She loves to try new things, and for me, she was a great role model of fearlessness and pioneer spirit. She had been one of the first

educated American women in her generation to have natural childbirth. I was the first baby her doctor had ever delivered without an anesthetic. I was blessed with a very fortunate birth. (On September 30, 1948, at 9:10 p.m. in Trenton, New Jersey, for all you astrologers!)

My mother loves to explore new places and we traveled a lot when I was a child – all over the United States, to the West Indies, Mexico, Hawaii, Europe. We also moved frequently when – ever my mother changed jobs. Until I was about fifteen, I had never lived in one place longer than two or three years.

My mother's family had been Quakers and we still used the “**plain language**” when speaking to my grandmother (saying “**thee**” rather than “**you**” for the Quakers is an acknowledgement of the god within each person). So, on a deep level, I absorbed the profound respect for spirit and concern for humanity that is woven into the fabric of the Quaker religion, which I feel had a strong influence on me later in my life.

When I was fourteen years old I went through an enormous emotional crisis. Triggered initially by the collapse of my first romance (with an “**older**” man of nineteen – I was sure no one would ever compare), it snowballed into a deep and long-lasting existential despair. I took a long hard look at life and recognized that there was really no point or meaning to it. I could see that all the things that were supposed to provide significance in life – education, success, relationships, money – were in themselves ephemeral, meaningless, and empty. There didn't seem to be anything else to fill the void. I was deeply disillusioned and depressed, and basically remained in that state for several years.

In retrospect, I can see that I was going through an experience that all of us must pass through at one time or another (or many times) – what mystics call the piercing of the veil of illusion. It's the point where we begin to recognize that our physical world is not the ultimate reality and we turn inward to discover the spiritual aspect of our existence. At these times, we usually feel, emotionally, that we are hitting bottom, but as we actually hit bottom it's as if we fall through a trap door into a new place – the inner realm of the soul, where we can begin to explore our connection to life in a whole new way. When we can face our fears and move through such a “**dark night of the soul**,” we are greeted by the dawn of a profound new adventure.

New Experiences

Over the next few years, I began to have new experiences, openings, a growing awareness that did not fit into my former rational framework. In college, I studied psychology and got involved in some encounter groups and sensitivity training groups that, in addition to allowing me to release old emotional pain, led me to new feelings of love, joy, and oneness with all. I studied dance and discovered that when I was dancing,

I would often have an exhilarating feeling, as if some higher force had taken over and was moving me in an abandoned and thrilling way.

I had always been interested in Eastern philosophy, so I read books about Buddhism and Hinduism. I practiced yoga and meditation and found that they helped me feel more centered, relaxed, and in tune with myself. After graduating from college I spent two years traveling around the world, living for several months in India, where I gained a deep awareness of the eastern mystical tradition. My travels were a powerful experience for me because with little money and no real plans, I lived by following my intuition. I had set off originally for a vacation in Italy and ended up making a two-year journey around the world. I learned that I could live happily with virtually no possessions and move safely into unknown places. This was one of my earliest experiences of the synergistic things that happen when we trust our inner guidance and follow the flow of our energy.

Getting Conscious

When I returned to the United States, I was hooked on something called “**consciousness**.” I couldn’t have defined what it was but I knew that I wanted more of it and that for me, nothing else mattered as much as my process of personal growth. I felt that if I pursued external goals such as career, money, or relationships, they would ultimately feel empty, whereas if I devoted myself to my own development I would ultimately have the things that my heart desired such as loving relationships, meaningful work, and a sense of abundance, and that it would all come about in a more satisfying way.

I was motivated not only by my yearning to find greater fulfillment in my own life, but by a strong desire to make a contribution toward positive change in the world and in other people’s healing and happiness.

I moved to the San Francisco Bay area, which I recognized as the forefront of the so-called “human potential movement,” and plunged into the earnest pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, healing, and transformation. I took classes and workshops, avidly read new books, meditated, and talked constantly to others involved in the same process. After reading Handbook to Higher Consciousness by Ken Keyes, I went to live at his center in Berkeley where we worked on our growth intensely, day and night, for a year. After that, I continued to live communally for several years with others who were involved in an intensive personal development process. During this time, I did whatever I could to make enough money to live on — housework, office work, odds and ends — while I focused on my real work.

Since that time, over twenty-five years ago, my life has been dedicated to my growth and evolution as a conscious being. I gradually came to understand that becoming more

conscious meant becoming more aware of all that was taking place within me and around me, how my inner world affected my outer world and vice versa. I realized that the more *awareness* I have, the more choice I have in how I create or respond to the circumstances of my life. When we are relatively unconscious, we simply do what we've always done, not realizing there is any other way. As we gradually become more aware, we begin to recognize that other options exist and we can make other choices in how we live.

At first, I imagined that this process involved a straight line from A to B, A being the darkness of ignorance, and B being full "enlightenment." The goal was to move from A to B as directly as possible. If we were dedicated and fortunate enough to achieve enlightenment, we would have completed the process; we would be radiant beings, always filled with light, love, and wisdom.

Eventually, I understood that consciousness is an ever unfolding, deepening, and expanding process with no end point. We are infinite and complex beings, and our human journey involves not just a spiritual awakening, but the development of all levels of our being — spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical — and the integration of all these aspects into a healthy and balanced daily life.

I'm getting ahead of myself, however, so back to my story.

My Name

People often ask me about my name so I thought I'd pause here and tell you about it.

While in India, I became very fascinated with the Hindu religion and began to study it. I had not been raised as a Christian, and that religion had never held much interest for me. I liked some of the ideas in Buddhism a lot, but it seemed a bit intellectual to me. The myths, symbols, and deities in the Hindu religion touched me in a deeper place in my soul. It is a very complex religion and I don't even pretend to understand it, but I grasped a few things.

In the Hindu religion there is a trinity of three main deities that symbolize three aspects of life. Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the preserver, and Shiva is the destroyer. Shiva represents the constant changing of the universe, the fact that everything must constantly be destroyed in order to be reborn. He reminds us that we must constantly let go of everything we hold on to, in order to flow with the motion of life. Many of his fervent devotees give up home and possessions and wander freely, abandoning themselves to following and trusting the energy of the universe. Shiva is also known as Nataraj — the Lord of the Dance (literally, the Lord of Rhythm). They say that it is his dance that keeps the universe in motion. He is depicted as a very beautiful and powerful

man with long flowing hair. (It is said that out of his hair flows the holy Ganges river.) I felt irresistibly drawn to him.

Shakti is the feminine aspect of Shiva. The word “shakti” means “energy” — the energy that everything in the universe is made of. It is the energy of life — the life force running through our bodies. It also means “female energy.” In the Hindu practice of Tantra, there are techniques for enlightenment through channeling one’s sexual energy. In this practice, the man is referred to as Shiva and the woman as Shakti.

When I returned from India I met, and for several years lived with, my friend Marc Allen. He didn’t think my previous name fit me and, knowing of my “love affair” with Shiva, he began calling me Shakti. I liked it and began using it. At the time, I don’t think I realized how powerful the name was, but I certainly realize it now. I feel that the vibration of the name has helped me to emerge into my power.

Gawain is the last name I was born with. It is the same name as Sir Gawain in the King Arthur legends. According to one dictionary definition, it means “battle hawk,” which I think is a wonderful image. To me, Shakti represents my feminine aspect, and Gawain, my masculine aspect.

Creative Visualization

One of the earliest workshops I took was the Silva Mind Control Course. At that time, I was still rather skeptical about this sort of thing and probably would never have gone to it except that my mother had taken the course and highly recommended it to me. I will never forget her description of a technique in which you can imagine what you want to



have happen and it will very often come about. My mind felt doubtful about this but my heart made a leap and I remember thinking, “Ever since I was a child, I always knew that there was magic — that somehow, somewhere, magic really exists. This sounds like the closest thing to it that I have ever heard of.”

I took the course and I was amazed! We started slowly and easily with simple techniques that anyone could accept and do, and gradually, we worked our way into more unexplainable, but very powerful, processes. After five days, I had a strong psychic experience in which, for a period of several hours, I was able to consistently pick up specific information that I had no way of knowing except through my intuition. That experience began to dissolve some of my former limits on what I thought was possible.

The most important technique I learned in that course was the basic technique of creative visualization — relaxing deeply and then picturing a desired goal in your mind exactly the way you want it to be. I started to practice this technique and found that it

was amazingly effective. Quite often the things I pictured came true quickly and in unexpected ways. I became fascinated with the possibilities and took some other classes and workshops on similar subjects. I began to use creative visualization techniques in my life regularly and to teach them to my friends. I read *The Nature of Personal Reality* by Jane Roberts and was powerfully affected by the idea that we all create our own reality. Soon, I began to lead workshops and do private counseling, and eventually wrote *Creative Visualization*. When I got the idea to write the book, I just wanted to gather all the ideas and techniques I had learned from various sources and put them down on paper in a comprehensive way. I thought I would write a little booklet I could give to friends and perhaps sell to my clients and a few interested people. As I wrote it, I was filled with self-doubt: “Who am I to be writing a book like this? I’m no expert.” Some force inside of me kept pushing me to do it, however, so I did. I used creative visualization techniques to help create the book. I got an artist friend to design the cover. Then, I hung the cover up on my wall and kept imagining and affirming that the book was already finished. I found writing it was fairly effortless (except for my nagging doubts) and before I knew it, it had turned into a real book that some friends and I published together.

What I didn’t fully realize at the time was that the book was coming from a higher creative source within me. On a personality level, I had doubts and fears, but because of my inner commitment to myself, I was willing to go ahead and follow the creative energy anyhow. Because I had a natural ability to think and write clearly, was really interested in these ideas, had a good background in the subject, and was willing to take some risks, the universe could use me as a creative channel.

The publishing process was similar. My friends, Marc Allen and Jon Bernoff, and I knew very little about business or publishing, and had no money at all, but we had a desire to write and publish our own books. By trusting our feelings and being willing to risk acting on them, we found that we were led, step by step, in what we needed to do. We made many mistakes in the process (*mostly when we didn’t follow our inner guidance*) and some of them were painful and extremely expensive, but, eventually, we created a successful publishing company, originally named Whatever Publishing, Inc., now called New World Library.

Creative Visualization has been successful far beyond any wild fantasy I might have had at the time I wrote it. Although it was never marketed or publicized in any significant way, other than through word of mouth, at the time of this writing it has sold nearly three million copies and has been translated into over twenty-five foreign languages. Twenty years after its original publication in 1978, the revised edition is still selling steadily. Through the years, I have received countless letters and calls from people all over the world saying it has helped them transform their lives. Of course, this has been quite gratifying to me, especially because I can see that it is the higher power of the universe at work. I have felt like a proud mother, watching my child out there in

the world, doing its work and making its fortune, knowing that it is mine and yet not mine. It came through me and I helped to form it, and yet it is a being, an entity of its own, with its own destiny and its own connection to the creative source.

Listening to Inner Guidance

When I first discovered the techniques of creative visualization and found that they worked, I was excited because I felt that through using them I could create whatever I wanted in my life. I was elated by the feeling that I could have everything I desired!

This was an important step for me as it took me out of the essentially powerless attitude that I had had previously — the attitude that life is something that happens to you and that all you can do is make the best of it. It was in some ways a victim position — giving power to people and things outside of myself. Using creative visualization, I began to realize that the power rested in me, that I could choose to create my life the way I wanted it to be. It was very empowering and very freeing.

As I explored the process of creating my own reality, I gradually began to realize that the creative power I was feeling was coming from a source other than just my personality. For one thing, some of the things I thought I wanted didn't manifest; and, in retrospect, I could see that it was for my highest good that they didn't happen. Other things occurred so miraculously that it was as if some unseen force was putting everything in place. Sometimes I would have flashes of insight and awareness, or future visions, that were highly accurate and seemed to come from a source deep within myself. I became more and more interested in discovering what this creative force was all about and how it worked. I began to realize that "it" (my soul, or higher self) seemed to know more than "I" (my personality self) did about a lot of things. I saw that it would probably be smart to try to find out what that inner guidance was telling me, and follow it. Every time I did that, it seemed to work.

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Chapter 1

The principles

Written by:

[Ahmed](#)

The principles

Part 1

A New Way Of Life

We are living in a very exciting and powerful time. On the deepest level of consciousness, a radical transformation is taking place. As the evolution of human consciousness gains greater and greater momentum, we are being challenged, on a planetary level, to let go of our present way of life and create a new one. In a sense, our “old world” is dying, and a new world is coming into being.

For many of us, the old world was based on an external focus – having lost our fundamental spiritual connection, we have believed that the material world is the only reality. Thus, feeling essentially lost, empty, and alone, we have continually attempted to find happiness and fulfillment through external “things” – money, material possessions, relationships, work, fame, food, drugs, and so on.

The new world is being built as we open to the higher power of the universe within us and consciously allow that creative energy to move through us. As each of us connects with our inner spiritual awareness, we learn that the creative power of the universe is inside of us. We also learn that we can create our own experience of reality and take responsibility for doing so. The change begins within each individual, but as more and more individuals are transformed, the mass consciousness is increasingly affected.

My observation that a profound transformation of consciousness is taking place in our world at this time is based on the changes I see within myself, those around me, and in our society. It is affirmed by feedback I receive from thousands of people I work with all over the world.

Living in the Light is about this transformation of consciousness, within each individual and in the world. My use of the terms “old world” and “new world” throughout the book refer to the old way of living that we are relinquishing, and the new one that we are creating.

For many people, this time may be distressing, because the world situation and/or our personal lives may seem to be going from bad to worse. It's as if many things are falling apart and will continue to do so with even greater intensity, but on the deepest level, I do not feel this is negative. It is upsetting to us to the degree that we are emotionally attached to our old way of living and steadfastly follow old patterns, rather than trying to open our eyes to the profound changes that are occurring.

Paradoxical as it may seem, these changes are the greatest blessing that any of us could possibly imagine. The truth is that the way of life that we have been following for centuries no longer works. While appropriate for its time, it cannot take us where we need and desire to go. The focus on materialism and the external world was necessary in a time when our primary challenge was physical survival. Our patriarchal values and the traditional roles of men and women may have been necessary in order to ensure the protection of our families for a certain period of time in our evolutionary process.

At this time, many human beings (and other species as well) on the earth are still struggling for physical survival. Yet there are an increasing number of us who no longer have to be preoccupied primarily with sheer survival. We have the opportunity, and thus the responsibility, to begin looking for deeper fulfillment on spiritual, mental, and emotional levels. We are searching for greater meaning and purpose in our lives, and for ways to live more responsibly and harmoniously on our planet.

While some people throughout history have led relatively meaningful and satisfying lives, I'm afraid that most of us have never found the fulfillment that we have yearned for. Our cultural conditioning has not given us the tools to develop a healthy connection with our inner realms of soul, intuition, and feeling, and to integrate them with our external world.

In a way, it's as if we've been in school for our entire lives, receiving an education that teaches the exact opposite of the way the universe actually functions. We try to make things work as we've been taught, and we may even enjoy some degree of success, but for most of us things never seem to work out as well as we had hoped. That perfect relationship never materializes, or if it does, it soon sours or fades away. Or it may seem as though there is never quite enough money; we never feel truly secure or abundant.

Perhaps we don't get the appreciation, recognition, or success that we want. Even if we do achieve some of these things, we still may suffer from a vague sense that there must

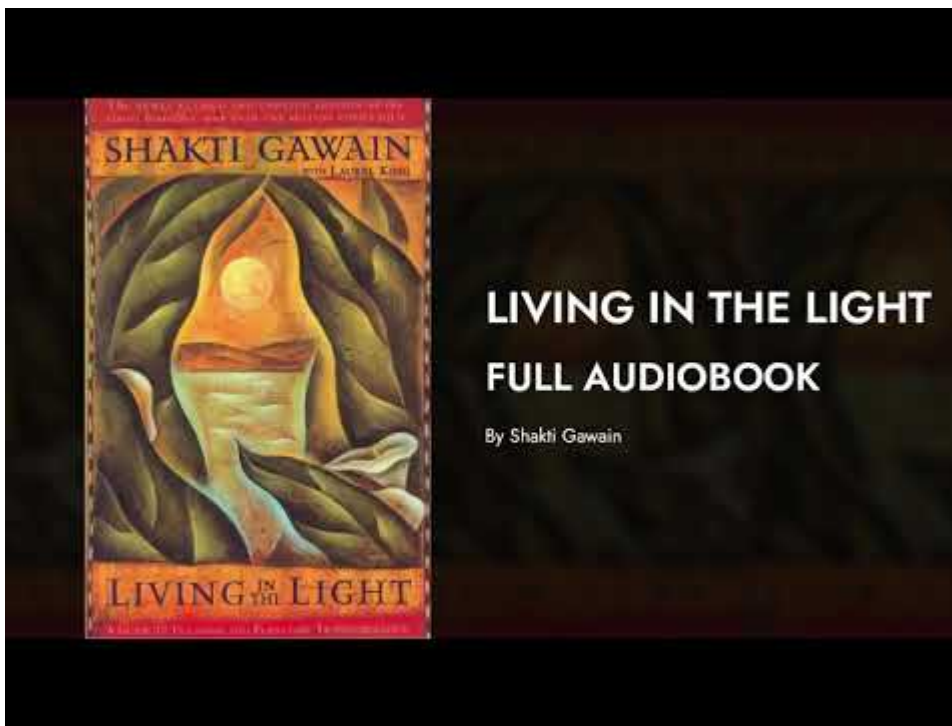
be something more, some deeper meaning. Some of us may actually connect with that deeper meaning and feel increasingly fulfilled and expanded by a growing spiritual awareness. Nevertheless, there are stubborn and sometimes puzzling old patterns and areas of life where we experience great pain and confusion.

Thus, our first task in building the new world is to admit that our “life education” has not necessarily taught us a satisfying way to live. We must learn a way of life that is very different from the way we approached things before. This may not be easy for us, and it will take time, commitment, and courage. Therefore, it’s very important to be compassionate with ourselves, to continually remind ourselves what a tremendous task we are undertaking. It will not be accomplished overnight; in fact, it is a lifelong process.

Just as a baby learns to walk by falling down repeatedly, we must remember that we are babies in the new world. We will learn by making lots of mistakes and often we may feel ignorant, frightened, or unsure of ourselves. But we would not get angry at a baby every time he fell down (if we did, he’d probably never learn to walk with full confidence and power), so we must try not to criticize ourselves if we are not able to live and express ourselves as fully as we wish immediately.

We are now learning to live more fully in accordance with the laws of the universe. We are challenged to explore all aspects of our human experience and to develop all levels of our being – the spiritual, mental, and emotional as well as the physical.

As we do this work, we experience an increasing sense of wholeness, empowerment, aliveness, and a feeling of being “on purpose” in our lives. So, although letting go of the old world may seem difficult at times, it is well worth the commitment and hard work it takes to gradually make this transition into the new world.



Meditation

Sit or lie down, relax, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths. As you exhale, imagine that you are letting go of everything that you don't want or need. Easily, without effort, let any frustrations, tiredness, or worries melt away. This is a time to release an old way of life that no longer works for you. Imagine that your old ways, your old patterns, and all the obstacles to achieving what you truly want are gently dissolved and leaving your body with each breath. Every time you exhale, and release a little of your old limitations, you create more space inside of you for something new.

After doing this for a few minutes, begin to imagine that every time you inhale you are breathing in life energy, the life force of the universe. Within this life energy is everything you need and desire – love, power, health, beauty, strength, abundance. Breathe it in with each inhalation. Imagine a new way of life opening up, filling you with aliveness, vitality, and energy. Pretend your life is exactly the way you want it to be. Imagine this new life is here, now, and savor it.

When the meditation feels complete, gently open your eyes and come back into the room. See if you can retain that sense of newness in yourself. Remember that you are now in the process of creating a new life for yourself.

Part 2

The Higher Power Within Us

The foundation for life in the new world is built on the understanding that there is a higher intelligence, a fundamental creative power or energy in the universe that is the source and substance of all existence. The words and concepts that have been used to describe this power are innumerable. Here are just a few:

Table Caption		
God	Spirit	Inner Guidance
Goddess	Essence	Higher Self
Higher Power	Being	The Universe
Source	Soul	Life Fource
The Tao	The Force	Cosmic Intelligence
Buddha Nature	The Light	Christ Consciousness
Great Spirit	I Am	All That Is

These terms are attempts to express an experience or knowingness that is difficult to convey in words and rational concepts. Each of us has this experience within us; the words we choose to describe it are merely the labels that suit us best.

I seldom use the word God, as it has so many confusing connotations for so many. Frequently, people associate it with early religious training, which is no longer meaningful to them. Some may think of God as someone or something outside of themselves: the “old man in the sky with the long white beard.” I prefer terms such as higher power, the universe, spirit, or inner guidance. In this book, I will use some of these terms interchangeably to refer to our spiritual source, the essential creative

intelligence and power within us. If any of these terms are not particularly meaningful to you, please feel free to substitute whatever word you prefer.

For the first twenty years of my life, my connection to the spiritual aspect of my being was largely undeveloped. I had no conscious experience of, or belief in, a higher power of any sort. I have had to move through many levels of doubt, skepticism, disbelief, and fear in order to arrive at the great trust I now have in the higher power of the universe that is within me and within everyone and everything that exists. I have not accepted anything on blind faith, so in a sense I have had to “prove” everything to myself through my life experiences. As I’ve learned to place my trust in the higher power of the universe and to live in accordance with universal principles, the changes I have felt and seen in my life are truly miraculous.

Those of you who have felt deep spiritual awareness throughout your lives already have a solid foundation to build upon. For those of you who have felt spiritually “disconnected” as I have, I hope my words will support and encourage you to find this inner connection for yourself. There is no specific way to do this; everyone’s experience is different. If this is something that you desire, ask within yourself that you be guided into an experience of your own spiritual nature. This may take some time, but if you desire it, it will happen. The words and exercises in this book may help you with this.

The universe has both personal and impersonal aspects; as I surrender and trust more, I find my relationship with this higher power becoming more personal. I can sometimes sense a presence within me, guiding me, loving me, teaching me, encouraging me. In this personal aspect, the universe can be teacher, guide, friend, mother, father, lover, creative genius, or fairy godmother. In other words, many of my needs and desires can be fulfilled through this inner connection. I often find the most powerful communion with the universe when I am alone, especially out in nature. At such times, the places inside of me that sometimes feel empty are filled with the energy of spirit. Here I find a guiding presence that nudges me in the direction I need to go, and helps me to learn the lesson that lies in taking each step along my path.

Meditation

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Each time you exhale, relax your body more and more. Then take a few more deep breaths and, each time you exhale, relax your mind. Let your thoughts drift by without holding onto any of them. Allow your mind to go out of focus. Relax your awareness into a deep place within you.

Imagine that there is a very powerful presence within you. This presence is totally loving, strong, and wise. It is nurturing, protecting, guiding, and caring for you. At times

it can be very strong and forceful. It can also be very light, joyful, and playful. As you get to know and trust it, it will make your life exciting, meaningful, and fulfilling.

You may get an image or a feeling or a physical sensation that represents this higher presence. Even if you don't see or feel a thing, assume it is there regardless.

Relax and enjoy the feeling or thought that you are being totally taken care of by the universe. Say this affirmation to yourself silently or aloud, "I feel and trust the presence of the universe in my life."

Chapter 2

Intuition

Written by:

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Intuition

Part 1

Intuition

Once we acknowledge the higher power of the universe, the obvious question arises: “How can we contact this power and gain access to it?” After all, if there is within us a superior wisdom or a deeper knowledge than we normally experience, by tapping into it, we should be able to receive valuable guidance in how to live well in this confusing world. This realization began to dawn on me many years ago as I undertook my journey of consciousness. I have since discovered that the knowingness that resides in each of us can be accessed through what we usually call our intuition. By learning to contact, listen to, and act on our intuition, we can directly connect to this inner wisdom and allow it to become our guiding force.

This is where we find ourselves in opposition to life as most of us have been taught to live it in the old world. In modern western civilization, we have learned to respect and even worship the rational, logical aspect of our being, and to dismiss, depreciate, or deny our intuition. We do acknowledge the ability of animals to seemingly understand things that are way beyond their rational capacity; we call this instinct. But it’s a mystery that defies logical explanation, so we shrug our shoulders and dismiss it as something vastly inferior to the magnificent human ability to reason.

Our culture’s entire value system is firmly based on the belief that the rational principle is superior and, in fact, constitutes the highest truth. The western scientific tradition has become our religion. We are taught from a young age to try to be reasonable, logical, and consistent, to avoid emotional, irrational behavior, and to suppress our feelings. At best, feelings and emotions are considered foolish, weak, and bothersome. At worst, we fear they may threaten the very fabric of civilized society.

Our established religious institutions often support this fear of the intuitive, nonrational self. Once based on a deep awareness of the universal spiritual principle in every being, many religions only pay lip service to that idea now.

Instead, they seek to control the behavior of their devotees, using elaborate rule structures purported to save people from their deep, irrational, and basically “sinful” natures. And according to many psychological disciplines, the dark and dangerous instinctual nature of man must be controlled. From this perspective, it is only the rational part of us that is capable of harnessing this mysterious force and channeling it into healthy, constructive modes.

In our worship of the rational and fear of the nonrational, we deny not only our emotions and our instinctual energies such as sexuality and aggression, but also our natural intuitive sense, which is meant to be a primary guiding force in our lives.

Generally, less technically developed societies approach life with a deep awareness of, and respect for, the intuitive element of existence. Every moment of their daily lives is guided by a strong sense of connection with the creative force. However, it is their very lack of technical development that has contributed to their gradual destruction or subversion by modern civilization. Two examples relevant to most Americans are the Native American and African cultures. Both of these groups were devastated by their contact with European/American culture. However, a deep curiosity, respect, and appreciation for Native Americans has begun to surface in our awareness in recent years. And the African culture, forcibly brought to this continent, has probably done more than any other culture to keep the intuitive power alive in our country through its strong and soulful connection to spirit.

In human evolution, it seems that as our rational capacity has evolved, we’ve grown increasingly fearful of the other aspects of our natures. We’ve attempted to control these “dark forces” by creating authoritative rule structures that define right and wrong, good and bad, and appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a very heavy-handed way. We justify this rigid approach to life by blaming everything on nonrational nature — from our personal emotional dramas to social ills such as drug and alcohol addiction, crime, violence, and war.

The truth is that all aspects of our being are integral, important, and valuable parts of us. The more we distrust and suppress these energies, the more likely they are to eventually burst out in distorted ways. In other words, our problems are not necessarily caused by our emotional, nonrational nature running wild and uncontrolled; instead, both personal and social problems are more likely to be the result of fear and the suppression of our emotions, instinctual nature, and intuition. In this book, we are focusing on how we can reclaim the power of our intuitive sense.

Once we accept the reality of a higher power that is channeled to us through our intuition, it becomes clear that many of our personal problems and the ills of the world are actually caused by not following our intuition.

Our rational mind is like a computer — it processes the input it receives and calculates logical conclusions based on this information. The rational mind is finite; it can only compute the input it has received directly. In other words, our rational minds can only operate on the basis of the direct experience each of us has had in this lifetime.

The intuitive mind, on the other hand, seems to have access to an infinite supply of information. It appears to be able to tap into a deep storehouse of knowledge and wisdom — the universal mind. It is also able to sort out this information and supply us with exactly what we need, when we need it. Though the message may come through a bit at a time, if we learn to follow this supply of information piece by piece, the necessary course of action will be revealed. As we learn to rely on this guidance, life takes on a flowing, effortless quality. Our life, feelings, and actions interweave harmoniously with those of others around us.

It is as if each of us played a unique instrument in a huge symphony orchestra, conducted by a universal intelligence. If we play our part without regard for the conductor's direction or the rest of the orchestra, we will have total chaos. If we try to take our cues from those around us, rather than the conductor, it will be impossible to achieve harmony — there are too many people, all playing different things. Our intellect is not able to process so much input and decide on the best note to play at each moment. However, if we watch the conductor and follow his direction we can experience the joy of playing our unique part, which can be heard and appreciated by everyone, and at the same time experience ourselves as part of a greater harmonious whole.

When we apply this analogy to our lives, we see that most of us have never realized a conductor was present. We have lived the best we can, using only our intellect to understand our lives, to figure out the best course of action. If we are honest with ourselves, we will readily admit that we are not making great music under the guidance of our rational mind alone. The dissonance and chaos in our lives and in the world certainly reflects the impossibility of living this way.

By tuning into the intuition and allowing it to become the guiding force in our lives, we allow our inner “conductor” to take its rightful place as the leader of the orchestra. Rather than losing our individual freedom, we receive the support we need to effectively express our individuality. Moreover, we will enjoy the experience of being part of a larger creative process.

I don't fully understand how the intuition functions in such an amazing way, but I definitely know, through direct experience and through observation and feedback from the many people I have worked with, that it does. And I find that the more I trust and follow this inner intuitive “voice,” the easier, fuller, and more exciting my life becomes.

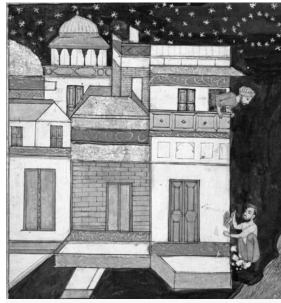


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Meditation

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position in a quiet place. Close your eyes and relax. Take several slow, deep breaths, relaxing your body more with each breath. Relax your mind and let your thoughts drift, but don't hold onto any thought. Imagine that your mind becomes as quiet as a peaceful lake.

Now focus your conscious awareness into a deep place in your body, in the area of your stomach or solar plexus. It should be the place in your body where you feel that your "gut feelings" reside. This is the physical place where you can easily contact your intuition.

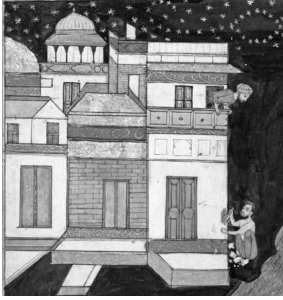
Imagine that you have a wise being living inside there. You might have an image of what this wise being looks like, or you might just sense that it is there. This wise being is really a part of you — your intuitive self. You can communicate with it by silently "talking" to it, making requests, or asking questions. Then relax, don't think too hard with your rational mind, and be open to receiving the answers. The answers are usually very simple, they relate to the present moment (not the past or future), and they feel right .

If you don't receive an immediate answer, let go and go about your life. The answer will come later, whether from inside of you in the form of a feeling or idea, or from outside through a person, a book, an event, or whatever.

For example, you might say,

"Intuition, tell me what I need to know here. What do I need to do in this situation?"

Trust the feeling that you get and act on it. If it is truly your intuition, you will find that it leads to a feeling of greater aliveness and power, and more opportunities begin to open up for you. If it doesn't lead to these things, you may not have been truly acting from your intuition but from some other voice in you. Go back and ask for clarification.



It takes practice to hear and trust your intuition. The more you do it, the easier it will become. Eventually you will be able to contact your intuition, ask yourself questions, and know that in that wise being within you, an incredible source of power and strength is available to answer your questions and guide you. As you grow more sensitive to this guidance you will gain a sense of knowing what you need to do in any situation. Your intuitive power is always available to guide you whenever you need it. It will open to you as you become willing to trust yourself and your inner knowledge.

Part 2

Becoming a Creative Channel

To whatever degree you listen to and follow your intuition, you become a “creative channel” for the higher power of the universe. When you willingly follow where your creative energy leads, the higher power can come through you to manifest its creative work.

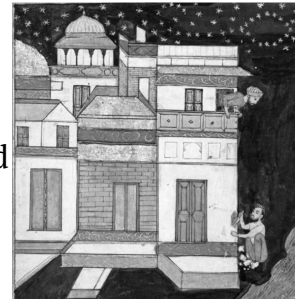
When this happens, you will find yourself flowing with the energy, doing what you really want to do, and feeling the power of the universe moving through you to create or transform everything around you.

In using the word channel, I am not referring to the psychic process of trance channeling. Trance channeling involves a medium who goes into a trance state and allows another being to speak through him or her. By channeling, I mean being in touch with and bringing through the wisdom and creativity of your own deepest source. Being a channel is being fully and freely yourself and consciously knowing that you are a vehicle for the creativity of the universe.

Every creative genius has been a channel. Every masterwork has been created through the channeling process. Great works are not created by the personality alone. They arise from a deep inspiration on the universal level, and are then expressed and brought into form through the individual personality.

A person may have great technical skill, but without the ability to connect with a deeper source, his work will be uninspiring. The difference between a technician and a channel was clearly demonstrated in the movie *Amadeus*. The composer Salieri knew how to write music but he didn't know how to tap into the creative source. Mozart wrote music

that was both technically perfect and wonderfully inspired, and he did so easily, spontaneously, without thought or effort. From his early childhood on, music just seemed to bubble up and overflow from within him. I'm sure he had no idea how it happened and could not have explained to anyone else how to do it.



Such genius has always seemed mysterious and unexplainable, a God-given talent possessed by only a few. It seems to come and go at will — sometimes it's there, sometimes it's not. Because of this, many creative people fear their talent will suddenly disappear. They don't know how they got it so they have no idea how to recover it if it vanishes.

Creative people often function as channels in only one area of their lives (such as one of the arts, science, or business) and may have no idea how to do it in other areas of their lives. Thus, their lives can be terribly out of balance. (See the section on Highly Intuitive People in the chapter on Trusting Intuition.) This is one reason why we often equate genius with emotional instability.

I believe we are all geniuses — each in our own unique way. We will discover the nature of our particular genius when we stop trying to conform to our own or other people's models, learn to be ourselves, and allow our natural channel to open. Through trusting and acting on our intuition, it's possible to bring our natural creative inspiration into every moment, in every area of our lives.

When I speak of a channel, I have an image of a long round pipe with energy flowing through it. It's somewhat like the pipe in a pipe organ, with the music coming through.

This channel image has three important features:

1. It is open and unobstructed inside so that the energy can move through freely.
2. It has a definite physical form; a structure surrounds the open space so that the energy is directed in a particular way. Without this structure, the energy would be free-floating, without any focus.
3. It has a power source — something that moves energy through the channel.

In a pipe organ, the power source (the organ) sends energy through the open pipes. The particular combination of open space inside each pipe and the structure — the size and shape of the pipe — causes a certain note to be sounded. The power source is the same for all the pipes and the energy moving through them is the same, but because each one is a different shape, each one makes a unique sound.

We can think of ourselves as channels similar to these pipes. We have a common power source (the universal life force) and the same creative energy flows through each of us.

Our body and personality form the structure that determines the unique direction and function of each of us as a channel. It is up to us to keep our channel open and clear and to build and maintain a strong, healthy, beautiful body/personality structure as a vehicle for our creative energy. We can do this by constantly tuning in, asking where the energy wants to go, and moving with it.

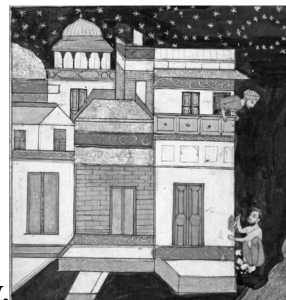
A strong body/personality structure is not created by following anybody else's rules or good ideas about what you should eat, how you should exercise, or anything else. It is created primarily by trusting your intuition and learning to follow its direction . When deciding what to eat, how to exercise, or anything else, gather information from reliable sources, then check in with yourself to see what feels intuitively right for you, and do your best to follow your own inner guidance.

Most of us have had occasional experiences of trusting our intuition and having things work out in amazing ways. The following true story is a good example of this. A few years ago, my editor, Becky, had achieved what many people think of as the "American dream." She had a husband and daughter, a good job, money in the bank, and owned her own home. Yet she felt an emptiness inside.

She felt an inner prompting to leave her job and pursue a career in publishing. Her husband did not support this idea. In fact, he pointed out that she didn't have the "formal education necessary" to obtain a position in a publishing house.

Becky and her husband eventually separated, and she decided to make a move. She had been reading many books, including *Living in the Light*, and knew that she wanted to work for a publisher in the field of personal growth. Her intuitive feeling was that she needed to move to Northern California.

It was the most difficult and courageous step she had ever taken. She found herself in a



new community with no friends, no job, and no money. She had no luck, at first, obtaining a publishing job, and so she looked for any kind of work that would enable her to survive. Many times she questioned her choice to take such a risk, yet she kept feeling a deep sense that she was on the right track.

Finally, she found work in another field. She was able to get back on her feet financially and she regained her confidence. She continued her search for a publishing job, and this

time she was successful. She happily took a cut in pay and position to take an entry-level job at New World Library — the company she had always hoped to work for. Finally, she felt, she was at home. As of this writing, Becky has been with New World Library for six years.

She has her dream job as the editorial director.

By following her inner guidance, even through very difficult times, she found the perfect place to express her creativity and make her contribution to the world.

You may have had a similar experience, where listening to your intuition about something proved so fruitful and fulfilling. If so, the next step is to become more conscious of the process so you can recognize when you are following the flow of energy, as opposed to blocking, fighting, or trying to control it. The more willing you are to surrender to the energy within you, the more power can flow through you.

I know most of us have had experiences at certain times when we've felt life energy, wisdom, and power flow through us, when we have felt momentarily "enlightened." We have a brief moment of clarity and power and then it goes away again. When it goes away, we feel lost and unsure of ourselves.

The more you practice trusting and following your intuition, the more consistently you will feel that sense of "flow." At these times you may find yourself right where you want to be at every moment. You'll be where the energy is the greatest for you, doing what you want to do, and watching miracles being accomplished.

Your energy may have a transformational effect on others, as well.

As you strengthen the commitment to trusting yourself, everything in your life may change. At first, as you begin to let go of your old patterns, it may appear that things in your life are falling apart. You may find that you have to let go of certain things you've been attached to. Some relationships in your life may dissolve or simply "fizzle out" from lack of energy. Old pastimes may no longer interest you. You may even lose your job or decide to leave it.

Of course, these changes can be upsetting and frightening. Over time, however, you will find that this is all part of the transformation you are going through. As you learn to be true to yourself, you will find that you attract people, work, and other circumstances that reflect your evolution and development.

Maintaining Your Focus

In order to live fully and creatively, it's important to stay focused on following your own energy. This focus allows your channel to remain open to the energy flowing through. It's so easy to lose your focus, to get lost in other people, external goals, and desires.

And the problem is, we do exactly that: we lose our connection with ourselves. As long as we are overly focused on the outside there will always be an empty, hungry, lost place inside that needs to be filled.

If I'm in love with someone and begin to think of him as my source of joy, then I lose myself. I have to remind myself that the source of joy and love is already within me, that I am experiencing love externally only because it is inside me. I try to keep the focus on the universe within and at the same time feel the universe coming through my lover to me.

For me, it's a constant discipline to remember to go back inside to connect with my intuition. I'll remind myself regularly during the day to do this. If I find myself getting lost in my outer activities, I'll check back inside to see if I'm being true to my feelings. This keeps the flow of the universe moving through me.

As we learn to pay attention to our intuitive feelings, follow our own energy and live our truth, we find that we feel more and more of the life force moving through us. That feeling of greater aliveness is so wonderful that it becomes our major focus and source of fulfillment.

We feel less attached to the externals of our lives. Whether or not things go as we have planned seems less important when we feel that our satisfaction is coming primarily from sustaining our connection to our own life energy. Ironically, when we stay true to ourselves in this way, the externals of our lives reflect our inner integrity. We attract to us and create around us exactly what our hearts and souls truly desire.

Living as a Channel

Channeling works in two ways: energy either flows through you to others, or from others to you. For example, as I write my book, I focus on the energy flowing from the universe through me to others. Then, when people say to me, "I just love your books; they've changed my life," I am conscious of appreciation coming from them to me, and through me, back to the universal source.

As you become increasingly conscious of the flow of life moving through you and through everything and everyone else, your body will become capable of channeling more energy. The more energy you are willing to receive, the more you'll be able to give.

To become a clear channel for the universe presents the highest challenge and offers the greatest potential joy and fulfillment for every human being. Being a channel means living fully and passionately in the world, having deep relationships, playing, working, creating, enjoying money and material possessions, being yourself, yet maintaining your profound connection with the power of the universe within you, learning and growing from every experience that you have.

Then you can watch the universe create through you; it can use you to do its work. Living as a channel is an ongoing learning process that's available to anyone who is willing to make the inner commitment.

Group Channeling

As we develop the ability to trust and follow our intuition, we learn to open and strengthen our individual channel so we can bring more power, creativity, and love through us. When we come together in a relationship or in a group, each individual channel becomes part of a bigger channel. A group channel is created that is more powerful than any of us can be individually.

When many bodies and minds are willing to surrender, open up, and grow, these combined energies create a very strong, open structure that allows a lot more energy to come through from the universe. The process intensifies tremendously and everyone gets a powerful "boost" from the energy, which is capable of pushing each of us to the next level of our growth. Even though we may all be in somewhat different places and going through different things, each person receives the inspiration, the support, the push, or whatever is needed to enable them to take the next step on their journey. A group channel can open us up to a deeper level of awareness, and in the process, we share more of ourselves and find that we are healed of things that have held us back.

This is one reason I love teaching workshops and working with groups. My friends call me an "energy junkie" because I'm always attracted to situations where the energy is most intense and expansive. I love the way my personal growth process is accelerated by the intensification that happens in groups.

I have found that in leading a group, I usually need to start with a certain amount of structure and take responsibility to clearly maintain the leader position. As the group continues, I can let go of the structure more and more and gradually allow the spontaneous energy of the group to take over.

As everyone surrenders and opens up, the group channel is formed. This process can be confusing and chaotic at times because, as the leader, I am no longer "in control" in the usual sense of the word. It can arouse my fears and everyone else's, but I find that when I'm willing to move through the fears, something powerful and beautiful emerges through the group channel. The universe leads us into new places and new discoveries that we would not have had an opportunity to experience if we had stayed within a more formal structure. I find the process of group channeling very exciting and rewarding.

In a sense, everyone living on this planet is a part of a gigantic group channel — the mass consciousness of humanity. This world, as it is now, is the creation of the group channel. As each one of us, individually, surrenders to the power of the universe and

allows that power to transform and enlighten us, the group channel is affected accordingly. The mass consciousness becomes more and more evolved. This is how I see our world being transformed.

Meditation

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and relax your body. Take another deep breath and relax your mind. Continue to breathe slowly and deeply and let go of all tension or anxiety. As you relax, you find yourself in a deep, quiet place inside. Allow yourself to just rest in that place for a few moments, with nothing you need to do or think about.

From this deep, quiet place, begin to sense the life force within you. Imagine that you are following your own energy, feeling it, trusting it, moving with it in every moment of your life. You are being completely true to yourself, speaking and living your truth. You feel alive and empowered. Imagine that you are expressing your creativity fully and freely, and let yourself enjoy that experience. By being who you are and expressing yourself, you are having a healing and empowering effect on everyone you encounter and on the world around you.

Chapter 3

Exploring Our Many Selves

Written by:

[Ahmed](#)

Exploring Our Many Selves

Part 1

Exploring Our Many Selves

We are all born with an infinite number of different qualities or energies within us. One of our most important tasks in life is to discover and develop as many of these energies as possible, so that we can be well-rounded, and experience the full range of our potential.

We can think of these energies as different archetypes, sub personalities, or selves within us. In a way, it's as if there are many different characters living inside of us, each with its own task and purpose.

Since the physical world is a plane of duality, for each of these energies within us, there is an opposite energy. In order to experience wholeness and balance, we need to develop and integrate both sides of every polarity.

Most of us, however, are not accustomed to thinking in this way. We have been taught to think in a linear, exclusive fashion – good/bad, right/wrong. So if one quality is good or desirable, its opposite is bad, or undesirable.

For example, many of us have been taught that it is virtuous and admirable to give to others; a person who gives a lot is a good person. Therefore, taking is thought to be selfish; a person who takes a lot for himself might be judged as less worthy than a giving person.

Someone else with different values might think of this in an opposite way. He might admire a person who knows how to take a lot for himself and think of that person as smart and successful, while looking down on someone who is less aggressive and more giving as being foolish and easily taken advantage of.

Either way, one polarity is honored while the opposite is devalued. In reality, both giving and receiving are equally important and valuable. If we give too much and aren't able to take or receive equally, we become depleted and resentful. If we take too much and are unable to give, we lose the satisfaction of making a contribution, and incur the

resentment of others. If we can give and receive more or less in balance, we experience a healthy sense of satisfaction.

From the time we are born, we begin to experiment with expressing the different energies within us. At that time we are completely dependent on our parents or caretakers for our survival and well-being, so we are extremely sensitive to their reactions to us. If we express an energy that invokes approval and positive attention, we are likely to continue to develop that quality. On the other hand, if something we do draws disapproval, criticism, or punishment, we are likely to discontinue it (unless that is the only form of attention we can get, in which case we may continue it).

Fairly soon, we have a pretty good sense of which energies help us get our needs met and which ones seem to cause us more problems than they are worth. This varies greatly according to each individual, family system, time period, and culture.

As we grow up, we continue to develop the energies that seem to work best to meet our needs. We become very identified with these qualities; that's who we think we are. These dominant energies become our primary selves — the inner characters whose job it is to take care of us and make our lives work as well as possible.

There are usually a group of primary selves who work together as a team, making most of our decisions for us. For example, some of my primary selves are the super-responsible one, the pleaser (**who wants to make everyone happy so they will like me**), the pusher (who wants me to work hard and accomplish a lot), the caretaking mother (**who takes care of the child in other people so that they'll feel good with me**), the consciousness teacher/healer. There are a number of others on the team as well. They have all worked very hard to make me a worthy, well-loved, and successful person.

For every primary self, there is an opposite energy, which oftentimes has been repressed or denied because one way or another we got the message that it was not okay, or because it simply hasn't had space to develop. These energies become our disowned selves. They are usually buried within our psyche and we either don't know about them at all, or we are aware of them and try to hide them from the world. The disowned selves make up our shadow side, the parts of ourselves that we are embarrassed about, ashamed of, fearful of, or uncomfortable with. Our primary selves are usually working hard to make sure that we don't show these disowned selves to the world, since they are convinced that this would invite criticism, rejection, abandonment, or some form of disaster.

The problem is that each of these disowned selves carries an essential energy that is an important part of us. In fact, we are often in desperate need of these qualities in order to bring healing and balance into our lives. As long as we fear our shadow side, however, we can't access the energies that we need.

For example, if one of your primary selves is power, and you are very identified with being strong, competent, and independent, it is very likely that you have disowned your vulnerable side, the part of you that feels dependent on others and has needs for love and support. From the point of view of your power primary self, your vulnerable side might seem disgusting, and way too dangerous to show to the world for fear of being hurt. You might be completely unconscious of having a vulnerable side, or you might be aware of it but not want others to see it for fear of their judgment. Strangely, you will find that you are constantly attracting vulnerable people into your life, and you may at times feel very judgmental toward them for being so “weak.”

Believe it or not, you need to consciously accept and “own” your vulnerable side. Without it, you cannot have real intimacy and closeness with others, and you can’t really receive. You are out of touch with a very important part of your human experience.

Life has an amazing way of confronting us with, and reflecting to us, the exact energies that we need to discover within ourselves and integrate into our lives. This happens through our dreams, where we are often shown symbolically the relationships between our primary selves and disowned selves. It happens constantly in our relationships, where others reflect to us the various different selves within us. Our imbalances show up in every area of our lives from our health to our finances.

How do we become conscious of the many selves within and bring them into balance in our lives?

The first and most important step is to begin to recognize and become aware of our primary selves. What qualities and energies are you most identified with? Can you begin to notice the selves within you that automatically make most of your decisions and run your life?

We want to honor and appreciate our primary selves for how much they’ve done for us, while separating a bit from being totally identified with them. As soon as we become conscious of them as energies within us rather than who we are, we are beginning to develop what is called “aware ego.”* Aware ego is the ability to recognize and hold all the different selves within us, so that we can have conscious choice about which ones we bring through at any given moment.

Once we have some awareness in relation to our primary selves, the disowned selves start to come forth. The primary selves usually remain our strongest qualities, but we begin to feel more balanced and our lives begin to work better as we begin to integrate the energy from previously disowned selves. The disidentification with the primary selves, the development of aware ego, and the acknowledging of the disowned selves is a gradual process that happens over a lifetime. Every step we take in this process, however, can make a big difference in our lives.

Our intuitive wisdom is one of the energies or selves within us. If we were encouraged to trust our intuition at an early age, or had an intuitive parent figure as an early role model, our intuition may be a primary self. Since our culture tends to deny or devalue the intuitive function, however, for most of us it is a disowned or relatively underdeveloped self, while rationality is usually one of the primary selves.

If rationality is a primary self, and intuition is disowned, in order to get in touch with our inner guidance, we may need to separate from over-identification with our rational side. We do this by recognizing it as one aspect of who we are, and beginning to notice how it operates in our lives. Once we become more aware of it in this way, we are no longer so identified with it and we can begin to have more conscious choice about how and when we use it. This creates space to explore our intuitive side as well.

If intuition is a primary self, we may have difficulty thinking logically or dealing with practical matters in a grounded way. In this case, we may need to develop our rational, practical side in order to ground our intuition in the physical world.

Owning Our Shadow Side

There is a simple universal principle: Everything in the universe wants to be accepted. All aspects of creation want to be loved, appreciated, and included. So, any quality or energy that you are not allowing yourself to experience or express will keep coming up inside of you or around you until you recognize it as a part of you, until you accept it and integrate it into your personality and your life.

Many people who are involved in personal growth become very identified with the energies and qualities that they think of as being “spiritual” — peaceful, loving, giving, and so on. In attempting to develop these aspects of themselves, they often deny and disown other aspects that they consider to be “unspiritual” — aggression, assertiveness, gut-level honesty, human vulnerability. Unfortunately, this simply creates a huge shadow side within them, which contributes to the collective shadow of denied energies in our world.

For some, it can be quite shocking to realize that if we overidentify with peace and love, and disown our inner warrior, we are not contributing to world peace. Quite the opposite, in fact. If we don't own our inner warrior and channel him in a constructive way in our lives, he retreats into the shadows of our individual and collective psyche, and actually contributes to the perpetuation of war on our planet.

If we truly want inner peace and world peace, we must do the difficult but fascinating work of owning and appreciating all aspects of who we are — truly making peace with

ourselves. Real consciousness involves holding both sides of any polarity, not identifying with one. Exploring and embracing our darkness is the only way we can truly live in the light.

Meditation

Get in a comfortable position in a quiet place. Bring to mind one of your main personality characteristics or primary selves. Get a sense in your body of how that energy feels. Now imagine an opposite energy, which may be disowned or less developed in you. Imagine what that energy would feel like. What would be the positive benefits of developing more ability to contact that energy? How could that bring more balance into your life?

See if you can feel a balance of both of those energies at the same time. For example, if you are an outgoing person, you might balance that with a quieter, more introspective energy. If you are hardworking, you might balance that with the energy of relaxation or playfulness.

Part 2

The World as Our Mirror

The physical world is our creation: we each create our own version of the world, our particular reality, our unique life experience. Because I am creating my life, I can look at my creation to get feedback about myself. Just as an artist looks at his latest creation to see what works well and what doesn't, and thereby improves his skills, we can look at the ongoing masterwork of our lives to appreciate who we are and to recognize what we still need to learn.

We're creating our lives as we go along; therefore, our experiences give us an instant, ongoing reflection of ourselves. In fact, the external world is like a giant mirror that reflects our consciousness clearly and accurately. Once we have learned how to look into that mirror and perceive and interpret its reflection, we have a fabulous tool for self-awareness.

Understanding that the world is our mirror can help us see our lives as a reflection of our beliefs, attitudes, and emotional patterns. Viewed in this way, the external world can teach us about hidden aspects of ourselves that we can't see directly. The process is based on two premises:

1. I assume that everything in my life is my reflection, my creation; there are no accidents or events that are unrelated to me. If I see or feel something, if it has any

impact on me, then my soul has attracted or created it to show me something. If it didn't mirror some part of myself, I wouldn't even be able to see it. All the people in my life are reflections of the various characters and energies that live inside of me.

2. I always try to avoid putting myself down for the reflections I see. I know that nothing is negative. Everything is a gift that brings me to self-awareness — after all, I'm here to learn. If I was already perfect I wouldn't be here. Why should I get angry at myself when I see things I've been unconscious of? It would be like a first grader getting frustrated because she wasn't in college yet. I try to maintain a compassionate attitude toward myself and my learning process. To the extent that I can do this, the learning process becomes fun and really quite interesting.

I am learning to view my life as a fascinating and adventurous movie. All the characters in it are parts of me played out on the big screen so that I can clearly see them. Once I see them and recognize their various feelings and voices inside myself, I can understand that they are all important and valuable parts of me that I need for my full expression in this life.

If the movie portrays problems, hassles, or struggles, I know I must check inside to find out where I'm not being true to myself or have more learning and healing to do. I also know that when I'm trusting and being myself as fully as possible, everything in my life reflects this by falling into place easily and working smoothly.

Problems Are Messages

If there are problems in your life, the universe is trying to get your attention. It's saying, "Hey, there's something you need to be aware of, something that needs to be changed here!" If you pay attention to the small signals, you will learn from them, but if you don't, the problems will intensify until you get the message and start to pay attention. If you accept that every time a problem occurs the universe is showing you something, you will make rapid progress on your journey of self-discovery.

When something "negative" happens, it's tempting to say, "Why does this happen to me? I'm doing the best I can but nothing seems to be going right. I can't understand why I keep having this problem." If you find yourself doing this, try to open up to another way of looking at things. Go inside and say to the universe, "I know you're trying to show me something. Help me understand what it is."

After you do this, let go of focusing on it, and go about your life, but stay open to the message that will be coming through. It may come in the form of an inner feeling or awareness, some words from a friend, or something unexpected that happens to you. The message may come through immediately or it may take quite a while. One of my clients was fired, quite

unexpectedly, over two years ago. At first, he was devastated, but after a few months of “getting his bearings,” he went into business on his own. His business is now doing very well, but it was only a few weeks ago that he understood the message that his firing reflected. As he was talking to a friend about working for other people, he suddenly realized that the firing incident was trying to tell him that he was ready to be in business for himself, rather than working for other people. For him, this realization not only affirmed his present course in life, but it also finally resolved the sense of failure about being fired that had lingered with him since the incident.

Interpreting the Reflection

The trickiest part of using the mirror process is learning how to interpret the reflection you see. Once you do get a message, but you’re not quite sure what it is, how do you find out?

It will not help to over-analyze or obsess about it with your rational mind. It is far more effective to turn to your intuitive self, to ask the universe for help. Simply sit quietly, take a few deep breaths, and focus your awareness within — to the wise part of you that is in touch with the wisdom of the universe. Ask this part, either silently or out loud, for guidance or help in understanding the message. As you tune into your gut feelings and get a sense of what feels right in the moment, act on this feeling.

After acting on the feeling, try to be aware of the external and internal feedback from your actions. The external feedback is how well things work. Do things seem to fall into place and work easily? Then you’re surely in tune with your inner guidance. If you’re struggling to do something that doesn’t happen easily, it’s a message to let go and check back in to find out what you really want to be doing.

Internal feedback will come to you as feelings. If you feel empowered, more alive, then it’s right. The ultimate key is aliveness. The more the universe moves through you, the more alive you feel. Conversely, every time you don’t follow your inner guidance you feel a loss of energy, loss of power, a sense of spiritual or emotional deadness.

In being true to yourself you will feel more alive, but you may also feel uncomfortable. This is because you are risking change! As you undergo certain changes, you may experience various intense emotions such as fear, grief, or anger. Allow these emotions expression; after all, your inner guidance has to move through years of accumulated unconsciousness, denial, doubt, and fear. So let your feelings come up and wash through you — you are being cleaned out and healed.

At times like this, it is very important to have emotional support and a safe place to explore your feelings and do your healing process. If possible, I recommend finding a good therapist or support group — an environment where you are encouraged and

supported in experiencing your own feelings and needs, expressing yourself honestly, and trusting your own sense of what's right for you.

When you are growing and changing rapidly, your inner doubts and fears will often be reflected in the reactions of those around you. If your friends and family question or judge the changes in you, recognize that they are simply mirroring the doubting, fearful voices in you, such as, "What if I'm doing the wrong thing? Can I really trust this process?"

Respond to such feedback from others in whatever way you feel is appropriate: reassure them, ignore them, argue with them, whatever. The important thing is to recognize that you are really dealing with your own inner fears. The conflicts you may experience with others are mirroring the conflicts within yourself, between the parts of you that want to grow and change, and those that feel safer to do things the way you've always done them. Affirm that you are learning to trust yourself more and more. You will be amazed to see how frequently others will begin to mirror your increasing self-trust and confidence by responding to you with trust and confidence.

Here are some ways that the mirror of life reflects us:

- If you judge and criticize yourself, others will judge and criticize you.
- If you hurt yourself, others will hurt you.
- If you lie to yourself, others will lie to you.
- If you are irresponsible to yourself, others will be irresponsible in relation to you.
- If you blame yourself, others will blame you.
- If you do violence to yourself emotionally, others will do violence to you emotionally, or even physically.
- If you don't listen to your feelings, no one will listen to your feelings.
- If you love yourself, others will love you.
- If you respect yourself, others will respect you.
- If you trust yourself, others will trust you.
- If you are honest with yourself, others will be honest with you.
- If you are gentle and compassionate with yourself, others will treat you with compassion.
- If you appreciate yourself, others will appreciate you.
- If you honor yourself, others will honor you.
- If you enjoy yourself, others will enjoy you.

Changing Old Patterns

It's very important to realize **عندما يريد العالم أن يتكلم** that you may not be able to change your old patterns overnight. Sometimes things seem to change rapidly, once you've

recognized the message, but sometimes it seems like you keep doing the same thing and getting the same unpleasant results long after you feel you know better. It takes time for the personality to change its habits, so you may have to watch the same old movie repeat itself a few more times.

If you feel your progress is too slow, ask the universe for help, and reach out for human help as well, by finding a therapist or support group. Change happens not by trying to make yourself change but by becoming conscious of what's not working. You can then ask your higher self for help in releasing the old and bringing in the new pattern. Remember, the darkest hour is just before the dawn — change often occurs just when you've given up, or when you least expect it.

فهو يتحدّث بلغة يونيكود. **تسجّل** الآن لحضور المؤتمر الدولي العاشر ليونيكود (Unicode) ، **يتكلّم** عندما يريد العالم أن **Conference**)، الذي سيعقد في 10-12 آذار 1997 بمدينة مايننس، ألمانيا. و **سيجمع المؤتمر بين خبراء** من كافة قطاعات الصناعة على الشبكة العالمية انترنت ويونيكود، حيث ستم، **على** الصعيدين الدولي والمحلي على حد سواء مناقشة سبل استخدام يونيكود في النظم القائمة وفيما يخص التطبيقات الحاسوبية، الخطوط، تصميم النصوص والحوسبة **متعددة اللغات**.

Using the Mirror Process

In using the world as your mirror, you must deal with the external realities of your life in whatever way you need to handle them. But as soon as possible, before, during, or after you deal with the externals, check inside to find out what is being shown to you.

For example, if someone is angry at you and blames or criticizes you, you may need to say to them, “Stop blaming me. I don’t want to hear your judgments and criticisms of me. If you can talk about your own feelings, I’ll be glad to listen, but if you keep attacking me, I’m going to leave.” If they take more responsibility for their feelings (for example, “I felt hurt and angry when you didn’t call me yesterday”), then you will probably be able to continue the conversation on a more productive level. If they continue to blame you and focus on your faults, you may need to support yourself by walking out of the room and refusing to continue the conversation until they stop their attack.

Either way, you have handled the external situation. Now, as soon as you get a chance, check inside yourself and ask, “I wonder what this person’s anger is mirroring in me?” You may realize that you have been feeling very angry and critical toward yourself lately. Or perhaps you will discover that a part of you is upset because you haven’t been paying enough attention to yourself. When other people want more from you, it’s usually an indication that you want more from yourself. It may in fact be a signal that it’s time to show up and be more present with your own needs and feelings. Interestingly, other

people in our lives often start feeling better when we become more present with ourselves.

A friend of mine discovered that her boyfriend had been seeing another woman and lying to her about it. She was very hurt and angry, particularly to discover the dishonesty. They had a long talk in which she was able to express her feelings to him. Then she took some time alone for a while to sort things out on her own.

When she was alone, she asked herself, “Is there some way I’m lying to myself, some way I’m not being totally truthful and honest with myself, that would cause me to attract a dishonest man?” She let go of thinking about it and went to work. By the end of the day she realized she had often felt this man was not fully present with her, was not being real with her. But in the past, she had denied and covered up these feelings because she was afraid to confront him with what she felt and intuitively knew. Thus, she effectively lied to herself and supported him in his deceptions as well.

She realized this was a lesson in learning to trust her feelings more and to have the courage to express and support them. She started to do this more with her boyfriend, and they eventually worked out a more honest, communicative relationship. She might also have chosen not to continue the relationship. What matters is that she received the gift from it — learning to trust and express her feelings.

If you are emotionally triggered by something a person does, the two of you are probably mirrors for each other. It may appear that you have opposing viewpoints, but internally you are probably similar. One of you is acting out one side of the internal conflict, while the other plays out the other side.

For example, one person may want more commitment in a relationship, while the other wants more freedom. They become extremely polarized on this issue and truly believe they want opposite things. However, if one person suddenly switches her position (the one who wanted commitment suddenly wants freedom), the other person often swings to the opposite polarity. The reason for this is that they are attempting to resolve an inner conflict they both have — the desire for closeness and security and the need for independence and autonomy (which may feel like the fear of loneliness versus the fear of entrapment).

Once people look inside and become more aware of their feelings, they often recognize that they have simply projected their inner conflict onto the outside world so that they could recognize and deal with it. If a person truly and unequivocally wants a committed relationship, he will simply attract another person who wants the same thing. If someone feels completely clear about wanting to explore being with many partners, he simply does it. By using the mirror process, you can recognize what you really feel and learn to be more honest with yourself. Once you recognize an internal conflict, you can

acknowledge that both polarities are really within you and find ways to honor both of the energies.

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A leader in the world consciousness movement, Shakti Gawain has taught popular workshops for over 20 years and is the author of several bestselling books, including *Creative Visualization*, *The Path of Transformation*, *The Four Levels of Healing*, and *Creating True Prosperity*. She lives in Mill Valley, California, and on Kaua'i.



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