

The background of the book cover features a series of flowing, wavy lines in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to a deeper forest green. The lines create a sense of movement and depth, set against a light, almost white, background.

Beyond HAPPINESS

Finding and Fulfilling Your Deepest Desire

*The author of *The Kinslow System**

DR. FRANK J. KINSLOW

Beyond
HAPPINESS

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Published and distributed in the United States by: Hay House, Inc.: www.hayhouse.com® • **Published and distributed in Australia by:** Hay House Australia Pty. Ltd.: www.hayhouse.com.au • **Published and distributed in the United Kingdom by:** Hay House UK, Ltd.: www.hayhouse.co.uk • **Published and distributed in the Republic of South Africa by:** Hay House SA (Pty), Ltd.: www.hayhouse.co.za
Distributed in Canada by: Raincoast: www.raincoast.com • **Published in India by:** Hay House Publishers India: www.hayhouse.co.in

Cover design: Amy Rose Grigoriou • *Interior design:* Nick C. Welch

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First published in 2008 by Lucid Sea, LLC (ISBN: 978-0-615-22679-8).

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kinslow, Frank J.

Beyond happiness : finding and fulfilling your deepest desire / Dr. Frank J. Kinslow.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-4019-3198-8 (trade paperback : alk. paper) 1. Mind and body. 2. Awareness. 3. Healing.

Title.

BF161.K556 2013

158—dc23

2013010970

Trade paperback ISBN: 978-1-4019-3198-8

16 15 14 13 4 3 2 1
1st edition, November 2013

Printed in the United States of America

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For Martina, the essence of innocence, compassion, and love.

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Problems Are Not the Problem

There is a problem that is destroying this world, and it has been kept secret from you. Our parents and teachers have unwittingly protected and propagated this secret out of ignorance, not malice. It has survived the generations by a kind of magic and misdirection. If this problem is allowed to continue unchallenged, it is quite possible that humankind will disappear from Earth in as little as a few generations.

Even the most self-absorbed among us can sense a subtle pulse of insanity threading its way through our everyday existence. We don't have to look as far as the rain forests or the oceans. Damaging environmental forces are at work no farther away than our kitchens and bathrooms.

The environment is a grave concern, but it is not the problem. Around the globe nations are mistrustful—many openly hostile toward each other. Within the borders of these countries, the citizens are restless and discontent. But national and domestic unrest is not the problem. Social structures have become stilted and impersonal. Despite our desperate efforts to deepen family bonds, the family unit continues to disintegrate but the breakdown of the family unit is not the problem. As individuals, the weight of this troubled world pressing down on us has yielded an ever-increasing number and variety of physical and psychological illnesses. And still, as a species, we have not exposed the primal problem, the cause of our deep discontent.

That's the bad news. The good news is that a small number of people—from no specific cultural, educational, and economic background or exceptional philosophical and religious influence—have uncovered the culprit. The one element that unifies these people is that they have learned how to neutralize problems by eliminating the "cause" of all our problems. Now here is the very good news. Their lives have become natural and vibrant expressions of what it means to be human. They are energetic, productive, and loving. They are at peace even in the most trying of circumstances. In fact, calm, peace, and joy are the necessary expressions of one who is living beyond problems.

It is as if we've been asleep. Our sleep is deep and our dreams delicious . . . but dreams are illusions. A wonder-filled life of unimaginable richness awaits us when we awaken. Yet still we sleep. Life cannot be lived from slumber, and the chance to claim our true human heritage is slipping away quickly. A few have already awakened and are trying to rouse the rest of us. If you are asleep, if you have problems, I invite you to awaken to your full stature. Can you find a more immediate or fulfilling labor?

There is a popular definition of insanity that seems to apply particularly well here. It goes something like this: "You are insane when you keep doing things the same way and expect the results to turn out differently." So why is it when we try to do things differently we still end up with the same result—more problems? As we learn to overcome our troubles, bigger ones take their place. Not only are our problems multiplying, but they are also becoming more serious. World war, global warming, and "super bugs" caused by overuse of antibiotics threaten our very existence. Our brand of insanity increases with every problem we solve.

Why is that? Why does increased knowledge bring the need for even more knowledge? And why do we feel less in control? More knowledge about our minds, our bodies, and our relationships hasn't worked so far. There is an information explosion. Data are streaming in from every corner of the earth and beyond at the speed of light. It is increasing exponentially and so are the variety and seriousness

of our problems.

Like most people, I've spent most of my life putting out fires, attacking problems by manipulating my environment. I learned many resourceful systems and philosophies to overcome daily dilemmas. Learning, of course, is assimilation by the mind. All ideas were welcomed by my mind. Like a fly caught in the web of my mental matrix, each idea was injected with the venom of my ego, the weaver of the web. It was a subtle poison that debilitated but did not kill. Once infected, my ideas seemed sane enough. They should have eliminated problems, but my problems only multiplied. So I learned more problem-solving techniques. I made more money, I developed new relationships, I became "spiritual." And still my life was overwhelmed by all manner of emergencies, setbacks, difficulties, and disasters. Like waves breaking on the beach, problems rolled in one after the other.

Then I realized that information gathering had not and could not abolish my problems. It was here that a very peculiar calm descended on me. I realized that hard work, meticulous planning, and good intentions aren't the keys to quiescence. In fact, this very realization had brought me more peace than a lifetime of working and planning.

All along I felt that I was not insane because I was always "doing things differently," but when I stepped back and looked at my life the only word I could honestly find to describe it was *insane*. My life consisted of long periods of a kind of subliminal "quiet desperation." Then when the desperation bubbled up to the conscious level, my behavior became frantic and chaotic. I felt as though there wasn't enough time to reach my goals so I could finally be happy. Every now and again, happiness would pay me a visit. Times of happiness revolved around an event like buying a new car or coming into a little extra money. When happiness did drop in, however, it was never for long. I would be happy for a few hours or a few days, and then it would be weeks or months before it showed up again. It got so I couldn't even enjoy happiness when I had it because I was always worried about losing it. My life was a simple reflection of the fractured madness we have come to accept as normal living.

The foregoing definition of insanity warns us not to do the same thing and expect different results. When we gather more information and apply it to solve new problems, we appear to be doing something different. So that must not be the ultimate source of our problems. What is the ultimate problem? To find the answer we must ask ourselves, *What part of the problem-solving process has always remained the same?*

There is only one aspect of this process that has always been the same: the mind. Every problem must first filter through the mind. The primary problem responsible for all other problems is the mind—or, more accurately, how the mind works when left unattended. It is a tool and needs to be guided. It cannot be trusted to run its own affairs. You are not your mind; you are in control of your mind. Or at least you should be. Like Hal, the runaway computer in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, our minds have taken over while we were asleep.

During this "waking-sleep," your mind goes on autopilot. It becomes reflexive and reactive. It does pretty much what it did in the past because you are not consciously there to guide it. Do you see the dilemma? If the mind is running by reflex and memory, how can it fix the problem that presents itself now? If you are asked to do a math problem and are told that it is addition when it's really a subtraction problem, you will get the wrong answer. Your mathematical technique will be perfect, but your answer will be wrong.

We appear to be working our life's problems just fine, but the results just don't add up, at least with any permanency. And when we wonder why things aren't working, we check our work. As long as we believe it is an addition problem, we have no hope of solving it. We do everything right, and the answer still comes out wrong.

In life, we are using addition in a subtraction world. No matter how we try to resolve the problem in our lives, we can only create more: more suffering, more pain, and more destruction. We look around and see that everyone else is doing what we are doing so we must be right. All we can do is rationalize that humans were meant to suffer. *Humans always have and always will*, we tell ourselves in an effort to soothe our deeply troubled souls. But this does not explain those aberrations of humanity who rise above suffering to tell us that we can, and must, do the same. Yes, we were taught to lie by our parents, our teachers, and our leaders as they were taught by theirs. But that lie can be healed in the heartbeat of a generation.

A single fundamental truth has been missed. It is a simple truth that is easily overlooked by our minds. I found it only after more than 40 years of searching, and then only by negation, by subtraction if you will. It is a simple truth that I will share with you in this book. I do not consider myself an authority or particularly learned on this subject. Nor do I have any special talents or gifts that have enabled me to be any more successful than you will be. Inner peace, the freedom from problems, is the birthright of all of us. I am simply sharing what I have learned. I do not feel that I am finished unfolding the wonder that is my life. In fact, the writing of this book has opened me to deeper and fuller expressions of the bliss and love that is my Self. In writing, the hours and weeks washed over me like an ocean deep and silent. I wrote this book first of all for me. But I had you in mind all the time.

The Focus of This Book

Beyond Happiness is a poignant and practical guide to personal inner peace. It clearly identifies what peace is, why it is so rarely experienced, why it is vital to our continued existence, and how it can be realized without a change in lifestyle. Because it is unique among the myriad self-help and spiritually oriented books, it combines the three major methods of teaching in a single, simple presentation broadening its appeal and increasing its effectiveness. The single parent, a CEO, a saint, or a sinner could pick up a copy of *Beyond Happiness* and within minutes experience inner peace.

We are frequently reminded that money can't buy happiness, but it is my experience that money does buy happiness. So does sex, religion, and position. Happiness, however, is conditional. The conditions are determined by the individual. Earning a hundred dollars a day would make a poor man happy and a rich man cry. What makes us happy today may cause sorrow tomorrow. Receiving a promotion can bring with it stressors that far outweigh the raise in salary and status. Once achieved, happiness all too quickly evaporates into the mist of memory, forcing us to live in the past.

Peace is unconditional. It is everywhere, all the time. Money can't buy peace. Neither can peace be realized by hard work, strong will, nor long hours of spiritual austerities. We are living under a perfidious misunderstanding. It is peace, not happiness, that quells the fires of desire and leaves the heart truly content. Peace is the very essence of emotion and thought, and yet beyond the touch of both.

Sustained inner peace is rare. Even the most fleeting glimpse is unknown to many. There is almost universal confusion about what it is or if it has any practical value. Few realize that inner peace is a symptom of how we perceive our Self. The Self is the foundation upon which all thoughts, feelings, and actions originate. The unbounded, unchanging Self is the progenitor of peace. This is the secret, the final mystery.

How Does This Book Work?

Beyond Happiness exposes this secret in a unique way. It approaches the singularity of Self from many different perspectives, drawing on your experience and thus stimulating your interest. The paradox of teaching inner peace is that it cannot be taught. However, there is a way around the apparent incongruity. Each principle for finding peace is introduced to you by stimulating both intellect and heart. This method embraces both the right- and left-brained reader. Traditionally obtuse spiritual teachings are demystified and broken into simple, logical language. Anecdotes, analogies, humor, and heartwarming stories are designed to draw you deeper into the material while creating a more animated bond with the book. The third prong of the trident is the actual experience of peace provided by interactive exercises. Self-awareness cannot be taught, but by using the unique method “Not-Knowing,” supported by eight inner exploration “experiences,” your awareness is gently and continually brought back to Self. This threefold process of unfolding the heart, mind, and experience runs quietly in the background. Up front, it generates a sense of fun, lighthearted exploration, and the quiet excitement of uncovering deeper expressions of your Self.

But how do we resolve the paradox that peace cannot be taught? Technique is a bridge to be left behind once the obstacle is crossed. Belief in technique keeps us dependent on technique, and inner peace must blossom free of dependency. Holding to technique would be like walking back and forth over the bridge whenever inner peace is desired. Permanent peace becomes impossible. As you progress through these pages, you are invited to give up your reliance on technique. It is built into both text and exercise. When you finish this book, you will experience inner peace without reliance on a teacher or technique.

Finally, breaking free of technique quickly leads to what I call *momentum*. Momentum is characterized by an intuitive regeneration of peace when it is lost. It is the experience of those who strive after inner peace that the very effort pushes it even further from their grasp. In times of trauma, peace is lost completely, obscured by a vortex of abhorrent emotions and unyielding thoughts. After momentum dawns, when inner peace is lost, it is automatically reestablished without effort or forethought. At this point life's thorny problems cannot stick, and living becomes more free and frictionless.

Beyond Happiness is written in common, simple language. It is a workbook without the work. The matter-of-fact approach to traditionally profound or obtuse principles keeps your mind fertile while the exercises remove clutter and increase mental clarity. I make a concentrated effort to define pivotal words that may cause confusion. Make sure you frequently refer to the glossary. You'll find it of great assistance in easing your transition to momentum.

I will never ask you to take my word on faith. I encourage you to draw from your own experience and empirically test the concepts in question by performing the related exercises herein. Only then will you be able to break down the mystery of the Self into easily digested, bite-size pieces. This one-two punch of providing a clear understanding and supporting it with a relevant and significant experience affords you an animated and direct experience of your Self.

Please accept my invitation to read this book and share its message with others. It is an innocent invitation to join in the celebration of life. It is an offering from one heart to another, from Self to Self.

~

WHO AM I?

“I yam what I yam.”

— POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN

I’ve Retired from the Game

I’ve never completely sold out to adulthood. I remember the bliss of drawing with a stick in the dirt or watching clean white clouds slide slowly across a deep cerulean sky. Or watching in wonder as a dewdrop struggled with each sympathetic breeze to break free from a spider’s web. The child’s eye is the saint’s eye.

I have always felt that childhood and adulthood should not be at war with each other. I felt this as a child, in training for adulthood. Most of us give in, you know? Then we forget. We are seduced by the sheer power of becoming an adult. I was a child in post-WWII Japan. I was ten years old when I first became aware of the battle between the innocence of being and the accountability of control. It happened like this. . . .

I had taken up the sport of judo. Early every evening after dinner with my family, I left for the dojo with my rolled judo-gi uniform hanging over my shoulder by its brown belt. I walked past small, dimly lit houses that crowded over the narrow, twisted streets of Yokohama like neighbors over the backyard fence collecting the last crumbs of gossip before darkness demanded silence. Thin, gray smoke from the wood-burning hibachi stoves stretched out in the still air like spirit snakes. Hanging motionless, they would breathe in the darkness, then rise, stealing slowly across the wooden shingle roofs. Soon the Soba-man would come. And like a fisherman’s net thrown on still waters, the soulful sound of the noodle vender’s “Soooo-baaaa” settled into the houses, gathering the thoughts of the dwellers within like so many silver fishes. I would turn from the street onto one of the scores of tangled footpaths that separated the homes. In a few steps I would find a courtyard with a small garden and the house where I learned judo from my master.

Sensei was one of four tenth-degree black belts in the world at the time, the highest recognition in the sport. Although I felt it, I didn’t know until sometime later that he was a man inspired by peace. He didn’t speak much, but when he did, his peace penetrated more deeply than his thoughts.

My peace, on the other hand, was waning. I was in training for adulthood. As an American, I was bigger than my Japanese counterparts. Instead of technique, I preferred to use force to subdue my opponents. One evening sensei built me up as the strongest in the class. That night I was to *rando* (competitive practice) with a boy who came up to just above my navel. Full of recent accolades, I felt confident of the outcome. I remember to this day the vision I had of how I would win the match. I planned to make an intricate and rather exotic move, catapulting this half-pint through the paper window and out into the courtyard. But fortunately for me, it did not happen at all as I had planned. This is a painful story, so I’ll keep it short. My slippery little opponent repeatedly refused my offer to leave class early via the side window—in fact, he made a counteroffer I couldn’t refuse. I remember looking at the ceiling quite a few times that evening. Though not at all a part of my original thinking, I was

somehow getting used to the idea. I think the behavioral modification people would call “reconditioning.” My back and the mat, heretofore veritable strangers, were becoming old friends.

Although the match probably only lasted ten minutes, it seemed to take ten hours. All those present in the dojo were politely hiding their smiles while Tsunami Devil, as I had come to call him, and I bowed to end the match. To rub salt in fresh wounds, one of the other students told me that the boy was only six years old. I hadn’t seen him in the dojo before, nor would I again. I think he was a ringmaster. I am certain his sole purpose was to make the rounds to the different dojos and humble overinflated egos dressed in judo attire.

The very next night, which I had contemplated missing altogether, sensei taught us the Belly Water System. It was a mind-over-matter technique that increased the strength of the body by quieting the mind. As I practiced the technique, the anger and humiliation I had been carrying inside since the night before drained like water from a broken vessel. I was empty. What took its place was a calm presence that just seemed to observe what I was doing. I had been reunited with my Self. In that presence I was safe, complete. I felt the kind of unshakable peace that comes from no other source. I remember it so clearly because of the contrast. I went from feeling anger and frustration to being surrounded by a quiet inner strength. It took only seconds. Looking back, I’m sure this was all by sensei’s design.

This peace stood out clearly in my mind for another reason. I hadn’t been having much of it by that age. The wonder of life was fading. I was already succumbing to the promise of power through force. My parents, teachers, and even my peers were showing me that if I wanted to get what I desired—what they desired for me—I would have to practice self-discipline, exercise great presence of will, and work very hard. The fly in the ointment was that I had just rediscovered the peaceful power of childhood and I liked it. On one side I had playful presence nipping at my heels; on the other, I had the assurance that I would be successful beyond my wildest dreams if I could only learn to control myself and my environment.

More than a half century has passed since I rediscovered peace in that Yokohama dojo. And I have learned to control my environment, but not as I was encouraged to do by my teachers. I let my Self do that for me now. I’ve retired from the game.

Awakening

Peace, I have discovered, is a symptom. It is the result of neither understanding nor effort. For the most part, it comes altogether too infrequently and always when unlooked for—that is, if you don’t know how to look for it.

We will uncover the secret of finding inner peace as we pass through the pages of this book. I have devoted my adult life to the pursuit of peace. I spent years in silent meditation, literally sequestered on mountaintops in exotic and faraway lands. I dedicated several hours of each typical day to meditation, to finding and holding on to peace. After 35 years of devoted “spiritual” work, I was no closer to enjoying sustained inner peace than when I had started my journey. Despondent and frustrated, I finally gave up the cause. I gave up everything that defined my life and found only a desert in its place. There was no peace there either. I had just the faintest spark of hope left.

One day while sitting in the Borders bookstore café in Flint, Michigan, and staring into a Styrofoam cup of tasteless green tea, the last ember of hope winked out. When it died, nothing moved. The universe had stopped breathing. Barely perceptible within that stillness was a pinpoint of peace. *A*

my awareness was drawn to it, I felt like Alice falling down the rabbit hole. As I fell I became smaller, like a pebble thrown off a high bridge. Just before I winked out, there was an explosion. It felt like the big bang except instead of fire and stone, there was peace. The force of the explosion filled my universe with stone-solid peace.

Sitting there at the table, the sun broke through the clouds warming my back, and the café filled with chattering while a jazz CD played overhead. I sat still, cradling in my hands the cup of lukewarm tea. Everything was exactly as before except the room was now filled with a clear and vibrant light, the face of peace. How the entire universe had poured into that little café already overflowing with bodies and books, I cannot say. But it was there, and nobody noticed. Galaxies and the stuff of creation passed effortlessly through our bodies, and still nobody noticed. My breath was not moving, but tea streamed down my face, falling on the table on either side of the cup. A young student studying with her friends at the next table met my gaze, then quickly turned away.

As if by some unseen cue, my consciousness shrank to an infinitesimal wrinkle in a shimmering burst of energy, smaller than the smallest subatomic particle. I watched as clouds of raw energy congealed and converged with other clouds. From these amorphous vapors sprang the animate souls of trees and seas and the fertile earth, only to dissolve back into energy without form. I was everywhere—greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest.

As those swirling energies of creation faded, I again found myself back in the mundane present we confidently call the “real world.” Immediately the people and music, the smells of coffee and toasted bagel, swam back into my awareness. They were anything but mundane. My tears were drying; I saw more clearly. Everything appeared crisp and clean and lighted from within. All form was energy here, too. But there was something hidden deep within the finest form of energy. It was unknowable, but I was aware of It. It was intelligent and aware. Most of all it was compassionate—no, It was Compassion. And, somehow, I was It.

Momentum

The intensified state of inner peace and bliss lasted for five weeks or so. As I went about my daily chores, I found a kind of effortlessness had crept into my routine. I sometimes felt separate from things, as if peace had lifted me above the din, and yet I was so fully a part of all that has been created as to be one with it. I don't believe this transformation was observable by family or friends. It was every bit as subtle as it was profound. I don't think the intensity diminished so much as it was assimilated. I got used to it, and everything seemed normal, as before—except for one thing: something so wonderfully delicious and completely normal that I wrote this book to tell you about it.

Since that day, I no longer have to search for peace. Yes, I lose it—sometimes for the greater part of a day, sometimes longer. But it always comes back. And it does so without any effort on my part. Inner peace returns to me like a child returns to his mother when he has been too long away. We embrace as parent and child and continue on together, not minding so much the rigors of the routine world.

I call this spontaneous return of peace *momentum*. It means that struggle and frustration, anxiety and discontent, are winding down, losing their hold on you. Negative forces, starved of the tumultuous emotions that sustain them, become harmless specters. Normally when we are upset we can stay that way for days or months, or even years. Your mind becomes preoccupied with the problem, rehashing the offending event and rehearsing scenarios in your mental court of law. Your mind is overtaken by

thought, missing the tenderness each moment presents.

Actually, runaway thinking does not need a precipitous event to draw the mind away from the moment. Have you ever driven to work and remembered almost nothing about the drive itself? When it was otherwise occupied, your body and your car drove your mind to work. You might say that there is nothing worth noting on the way to work anyway, but that is not the point. And, you would be wrong. This common consciousness is a problem. More accurately, it is a symptom of something that is deeply wrong.

That is why I've written this book. First, I would like to interest you in discovering your own inner peace. You have a simple choice: peace or problems. Ultimately that is your only choice. Second, I would like you to know how simple it is to be at peace. You do not need to devote your life to finding it as I did. That is actually the perfect way to ensure that you don't find peace. I would like you to experience firsthand how peace eliminates problems, allowing you to enjoy the richness and beauty that is your life. Finally, I want you to reach momentum. When peace effortlessly perpetuates itself in your life, my work is done. So before we go to the actual experience of peace, let's take a look at two questions that must be answered.

What Do You Want?

At first glance, the question "What do you want?" seems innocent enough. Wanting is automatic. It appears pretty simple, really. A desire comes and you want the object of that desire. If you're hungry, you want food. If you are lonely, you want companionship. But where do these desires come from? Some we know come from physical or psychological needs like thirst and love. Others don't seem to have a particular need attached to them. You might, for instance, want the red convertible sports car instead of the more practical family sedan. Or, how about the desire for buns of steel when the ones you presently possess are fully functional? What causes this "wanting without needing" desire that can be so unsettling and ultimately so destructive?

If you take the time to explore this simple question with me, I promise you that your life will change not a little, but profoundly and in the most genuinely sincere ways. You will discover a hidden world just beyond your thoughts. This is no shadow world or reflection of other realms you already know. The world beneath the question is deep and wide and pure. It is the world from which your present life draws its breath. It is the final answer to the question, "What do you want?"

This book can open many exciting doors for you, but in the end there is only a single door you need to walk through. It is not necessary to look beyond this single insight. You may need some preparation before you can walk through that door, but that is easily remedied. There's lots of work to be done and even more fun to be had. You are about to embark on a voyage, not from here to there, but rather from here to here. You will come to realize that to be complete, you do not need to go anywhere. Nor need you do anything! This voyage might better be thought of as an expansion, a kind of perceptual opening that ends with the realization that life is already perfect.

If this statement seems fantastic or unbelievable, then get ready for a wild ride. Come along with me and you will discover for yourself the remarkable life you have been missing. You will uncover the science of seeing and the art of being. There are no problems in nature—only human-made problems. When a human sees his or her true nature, problems dissolve like the sun melting into a placid sea.

In the beginning you will be invited to learn in the same way you have throughout your life, in

linear, goal-oriented manner. Generally we are in the habit of manipulating things that results in some amount of control over our environment. That is the normal way, but not the natural way. And it has its dangers. There is another broader means of living that includes the goal-oriented behavior but far exceeds it in scope. This is a kind of functioning that comes not from the mind, but beyond it. While it is impossible to explain, it is easily experienced once the proper rules are applied. The art of "being" will blossom automatically as you continue to read this book. You will see it in the ease and joy that begins to seep into your daily life. Time will slide effortlessly by, and problems will lose their grip on you. Your appreciation of even the most mundane experiences will at times overwhelm you, filling you with gratitude and joy. Like a child in love with the world, you will begin to see through the eyes of innocence.

Your experience will always keep up with your understanding, making your knowledge complete. For instance, when I introduce the concept that peace can be found between your thoughts, it is only fair that I show you how to experience that inner peace for yourself. You will not have to take anything that I say on faith. You will prove me right or wrong by your own experience when you perform the exercises. And while we are on the subject of these designated exercises I call *experiences*, it might be well to take a look ahead to see what's in store for you as you progress through the book.

In the first experience, you will learn how to stop your thinking. It is offered as an illustration to support the point that you are not your thoughts. You still exist even when your mind is silent. While this experience is used to demonstrate a point, it is also exceptionally functional. If you do no more than practice this first exercise (and don't worry if you have previously tried to clear your mind of thought but failed; you'll have no trouble doing it this time), you will find yourself enjoying more energy and better health along with enhanced moments of intimacy with family and friends. And that's just the first exercise. There are seven more that will show you how to boost your immune system, reduce stress-related conditions like digestive difficulties and high blood pressure, and increase energy and mental clarity. But more important, you will learn to overcome physical and emotional pain and the fear of death, and you will also learn to eventually eliminate problems.

If you're getting a little excited about this knowledge, then hold on to your hat. Overcoming pain and eliminating problems is just the fluff. Make no mistake, these experiences are invaluable for achieving specific results. If it is the mastery of life you are after, then you must step away from doing and learn to be. And that is what I am here to tell you. The underlying theme of this book is that Being is more effective than doing. If you want to have the ultimate joy and peace that life has to offer, you cannot *do* anything to get it. The wholeness of life is beyond the pieces.

No matter how much money or power or how many friends we have, we can never get enough to be completely happy. For that, we must have inner peace. When we learn new skills or develop new relationships, we do so with the idea that we will control more of our environment. In our minds, more control means more happiness. Somewhere deep inside is the hope that if we can control enough of our world, we will attain permanent happiness. This is a dangerous misconception, and much of this book is devoted to dispelling the illusion. Controlling the parts in an effort to control the whole has never worked. Do you know anyone who is always happy? I rest my case.

What is happiness anyway? Is it what we are truly striving for, or is that too a delusion? I will deal with this in detail later, but for now it is important to know that happiness is not what we ultimately want. It is not our deepest desire. Happiness is part of the problem, not the cure. Happiness, like the red sports car, is what you desire, not what you need. As you will see, no matter how successful you are at finding it, happiness will never bring you what you really need. Happiness depends on

conditions. If the conditions line up in accordance with your definition of happiness, then you are happy. If they don't completely fall into place, then you are less happy. And you are unhappy if things don't go your way. Have you ever noticed that the harder you struggle to hold on to happiness, the less of it you actually seem to have? Why is that? Why is happiness so fleeting?

We are happy when things go right. But how often do events live up to our expectations? When we look back over a lifetime, it's easy to see that the times we were really happy were but momentary peaks. Those brief peaks of happiness are surrounded by the persistent and repetitive flatlands of the common life. Sure, we nurture a subtle sense of accomplishment when we are able to snare happiness, however briefly. It becomes a kind of assurance that we really are okay and that things are going to go even better. But we almost never look beyond this fragile sense of contentment, afraid of the unknown forces that are brewing deeper in the mind, just beyond the light. Doing so would disturb that delicate illusion we work so hard to maintain. Fortunately, we don't have to swim forever in those murky waters.

The impermanent nature of happiness is a great teacher, but I'm afraid we have been poor students. We have fallen asleep in class. That single lesson is being repeated over and over and over again. And still we blissfully snore away our lives as just a hint of spittle gathers at the corner of our mouths. When we do awaken, we will realize that the single lesson to be learned is this: Being is freedom. Doing without first being is bondage. Being is the simple act of not-doing. Not-doing means that we first become aware of pure awareness and then watch as our world is created through the Self. Knowing the Self effortlessly dissolves problems and the sufferings that accompany them. The result is inner peace and prosperity beyond any dream.

Inner peace is a result of being aware of pure awareness. "Well," you say, "I am already aware." Yes, that is true enough. You are aware of thinking this and doing that. But are you aware of pure awareness? Out of pure awareness comes all created things. The first created thing, the first glimmering of individuality that is born of pure awareness is Self. Are you aware of your Self? "Of course," you answer indignantly, "I am aware that I am reading this book. I am also aware of my body and that I have a job and a family." Those things make up what I call "me." They are the particulars of your individual life. Your Self is not at all the same. As you will see, your Self is indescribable and indestructible. Being aware of your Self adds that element of indestructibility to your existence. When you are indestructible, you lose all reason for worry, and inner peace dawns. It's just that simple. The outcome of becoming aware of your Self has to be inner peace. Inner peace is a symptom of problem-free living. But it is much, much more.

As you continue to read this book, a remarkable change will begin to take place within you. In the beginning you may want to learn how to specifically quell disturbing emotions or overcome your fear of death. I encourage that, at least initially. Learning in this way is like fighting a battle. The plan of attack is to conquer the problem with knowledge and technique. There is nothing wrong with enlisting a specific approach to remove some form of provocation, but you must not think that you can ever know or do enough to be free of problems or free in peace. You may not have a comprehensive understanding of inner peace or may not even care if you do. Either way, it doesn't matter. This is a very intimate journey that only you can take. I have no plans for you. I have discovered a way of living that includes the "normal" life but enriches it beyond belief. It is my intention to meet with you where you are comfortable. While there is only one door, there are many paths leading to that door. I will approach the single lesson from different perspectives, allowing you to choose which ones you feel most comfortable with. I will show you how a slight shift in your perception will release your tendency to struggle, replacing it with a fluid ease that embraces life rather than clashing with it.

Nothing is given up except fear and suffering. It is a pure life that all are able to live if they so choose. In fact, your deepest desire, the one from which all other desires spring, is to “Know thy Self.” That is the starting point and the final destination. As you proceed from chapter to chapter, I will never let you forget that. Not only is it the driving theme of this book, but it is also the underlying current of your life.

So far I have asked a lot of questions and only hinted at some of the answers. They are coming. We must first consider a couple of points, but in a few more pages, you will be offered your first “experience” of Self. Make sure that you are faithful to the exercises so that your experience is fertile. I want these words to come alive for you, and the only way that can happen is if you hear the music for which the lyrics were written.

How Is Pure Awareness, Self, and I Different from Me?

Words have more impact on us than we normally give them credit for. I like to be very clear about what a word means and how it is used. Many people have the unrewarding and ultimately destructive habit of taking a position on an issue without clearly defining the pivotal words they use. For instance, a woman will ask her man, “Do you love me?” He answers, “Yes, very much.” And off they skip down the highway of bliss, each believing love is the same for both of them. If ignorance is bliss, they will not remain ignorant for long. Their relationship will force them to examine what it means to love, or it will slowly erode from the inside.

Do you doubt that many people take firm stands on wobbly words? Ask a friend to explain in some detail the words *friend* or *terrorist* or even to describe the taste of a banana. It can be a very eye-opening exercise. Your friend’s description is guaranteed to be different, possibly significantly different, from your own definitions. We fall into the habit of thinking that other people see things the same way we do when, in fact, that is never the case. The one thing that can be said about people is that everyone is different. Our perspective on the world is completely unique, shared by no other being. We are relative beings. At least that is the way we live our lives. We live as if there is no foundation, no common point of reference that holds true for all humans. We are like specks of dust floating aimlessly in a dimly lit room.

If there were a universal point of reference, what do you suspect it might be? Would it be outer space or inner space, within the mind or beyond it? Well, it just so happens that there is a single point of reference shared by all of humanity. It is common not only to humans but to all life, all creation. It is the stuff of the sages. It is the Self. (*Note: The meaning of the words Self, I, and I Am are interchangeable and give us a chance to view this single concept of Self from different, more enlightening perspectives.*)

Our basic nature, the Self, is the first creation of pure awareness. Pure awareness is impossible to experience with our senses. We can’t see, taste, or smell it. Quantum physics calls pure awareness the *implicate order*, the non-form from which energy and form are created. The mind can think *about* it, but we are helpless when it comes to *thinking* it. Those are mental processes, and pure awareness eludes the probing fingers of the mind. Pure awareness has no form, nothing for those mental digits to grab hold of. Every thought and thing comes from pure awareness, and yet it has no substance, nothing for the senses to appreciate or the mind to embrace.

Is this getting a little too abstract for you? Stick with me on this. It will be well worth your time. Your mind is just having trouble trying to examine something that cannot be examined, but it can be

experienced. Or more accurately, the realization of pure awareness is experienced in your mind and nothing, a total lack of experience. And that is coming up.

Even though pure awareness is unbounded and without form, it produces a primal progenitor from which all energy and form emerge. Quantum physics calls this first and formless field *zero point vacuum state*. I call it Self. I do that because the language of quantum physics only emphasizes its impersonal side. Self is both impersonal and infinitely intimate. Self is unique in all creation. It has a foot in both worlds: the unchanging, all-permeating pure awareness and its dynamic creation, the field of birth and death.

Self is continually sustaining and protecting the thing you call “me,” the part of you that has a body, a mind, a history, and future hopes and fears. Self is like a warm coat in winter. Even if you are busy with the business of living and have forgotten that you are wearing the coat, it’s still keeping you warm. It doesn’t matter if you do not completely grasp the concept of pure awareness and Self. These things are far harder to talk about than to experience. In fact, both pure awareness and Self can be experienced even if you have never heard of them.

The experience of Self is exceedingly subtle and sublime. Chances are you have already been with your Self and not even known it. And that is a problem. If you are unaware of Self, you cannot know your deepest desire. In the next few pages, I will hand over the keys that will open the door to Self. The only prerequisites are that you are a human and you are conscious. That’s all it takes. Self discovery is your birthright.

Why is it important to be aware of your Self? It’s more than important—it is vital. To know Self is to become free of hopes and fears. That’s what happens. When you “Know thy Self,” as Socrates encouraged us to do so long ago, your security becomes unshakable. Then your feelings become strong and positive, and your thinking is clear and decisive. In addition, your senses (hearing, sight, taste, and so on) become sharper and more vibrant. And your body will age more slowly. It becomes relaxed and languid and far more resistant to stress and disease. Not bad dividends for such a simple discovery.

Take a moment to think back to your childhood, and then revisit some part of your adolescence. Now remember a time during your 20s, 30s, and so forth, until you reach your present age. Think about what you are doing right now. Over your lifetime your interests and feelings have changed, your body has grown and aged, family has matured, and friends have come and gone. But there was a part of you that was with you as far back as you can remember and is still with you today. It has remained unchanged.

When you said, “I want my mommy,” “I hate gym class,” “I will love you forever,” or “I don’t like loud music,” you were identifying things, events, and feelings that were happening to “me” but not to your Self or “I.” The things and feelings of your life like wanting mommy and hating gym class have changed and now reside in that part of your past called the memory. Things changed but “I” did not.

When you say, “I am hungry,” you are identifying both sides of your existence: the unchanging “I” and the changeable “me.” You are saying that the “I” part of you is observing the “me” part of you being hungry. “I” is like a silent witness just enjoying the scenery of your life. “Me” is the scenery. “I,” your indestructible and unbounded Self, has always been with you. It has not aged or changed in any way. Alfred, Lord Tennyson spoke to this mystery of enduring changelessness in his poem “Sonnet of the Brook” when he penned: “For men may come and men may go, / But I go on forever.” We could just as easily, but far less eloquently, say that my security, feelings, thoughts, body, and environment may come and go, but “I” go on forever. It certainly is not as stirring to the soul, but it does get the point across.

The senses and the body are like horses pulling a chariot through life, and the driver of the chariot

your mind. Your Self, the “I,” is the passenger, the witness to all that comes and goes during the life and times of “me.” It remains unaffected and free from the forces of the world. It is the still center of peace. If we identify with the driving nature of our minds, we can never be at rest. When we perceive life from the seat of the Self, we remain untouched by the apparent effort and struggle that passes by on the road of life.

“Me” is ever changing, and “I” never changes. Although the mind seems to know where it’s going, it really is lost without the subtle encouragement of the “I.” “I” is like the GPS; it doesn’t *do* anything, but without it, the mind has no point of reference. When we do not have awareness of “I,” we are swept away by the mind, body, and senses—the components of “me.” The horses and chariot run away with the passenger.

During those rare times when, for a few valued moments, we are able to keep the chaotic world at bay, we may find ourselves asking, *What does it all mean?* or *What is my purpose for being?* And when no answer comes from “me,” we escape through overworking, television, drugs, sex, making money, spending money, or anything else that will divert the mind from those uncomfortable quiet moments. The answer is simple. As soon as we become aware of “I,” a kind of stillness comes over us. “I,” the Self, is first felt as a gentle peace. In time, when peace becomes stronger, joy and a sense of awe enter our awareness. The feeling is like watching a beautiful sunset, but no sun is needed. Nothing is needed. Peace and joy begin showing up at the most peculiar times and in the most peculiar places. One day you will be amazed to find inner peace showing up right in the middle of some traumatic event like an argument or an emergency at work. Peace, the result of Self-awareness, begins to intermingle with non-peace. It is the blending of “I” and “me” that deepens the life experience and broadens our view of the world.

When we become aware of our Self, we become like an ocean. At the bottom it is still and silent, and on the surface we find foam and bubbles and waves. The unpredictable, ever-changing surface is like “me.” “I” resembles the quiet depths. However, even the greatest wave is still made of water. The silent water at the depths we call “I,” and the tumultuous water on the surface we call “me,” but in the final analysis, it is all water. “Me” is simply an active expression of “I.” Living only on the surface of the ocean means we identify with turbulence and change. We rise and fall with our hopes and fears, only to be dashed on the rocky shores of illusion. Simply by becoming aware of the depths of “I,” we effortlessly enjoy stability and serenity. The storms of the surface still rage on, but from the vantage point of “I,” we remain untouched.

Another way we can refer to “I” is by saying, “I Am.” By saying it this way, we are pointing out that “I” doesn’t do anything—it just is. “I Am” means that only “I” exists, nothing more. I like using “I Am” because it has a tendency of deepening the sense of “I.” René Descartes, the celebrated 17th-century French philosopher, is best known for saying, “I think, therefore I am.” Oddly enough, René had it backward. If you’ll pardon the pun, he had “de-cart before de-horse.” He should have said, “I Am, therefore I think.” If we follow Descartes’s reasoning, when he stopped thinking, he would no longer exist. That simply is not so. This reasoning would make sense to someone who is always thinking, surviving only on the surface of the ocean of Self. But what would happen if your thoughts just stopped? Would you really become nonexistent? Would you just turn off as if some fateful finger flipped your light switch? I say no. And I will prove it to you in the next section.

When you say, “I am hungry” you are acknowledging both the changing and the unchanging aspects of your being. I Am + hungry = “I” + “me.” Normally we devote all our attention to the hungry “me” and ignore the flavor of “I.” Satisfying only the carnal hunger, you will still leave the table famished for the fullness of “I.” Both sides of the equation must be balanced. Your problems will not disappear

and peace will not flourish until you become aware of your Self.

~~You are about to discover that when you stop thinking, the mind will cease to exist but “I” goes on forever. So, when the thought of hunger disappears, all that is left is I Am. When anger dies away, there only exists I Am. All worldly turmoil dissolves into the boundless embrace of “I,” the wholeness of Self. And when the mind and body resurface as the wave of “me,” they draw deeply from the ocean of “I.”~~

Now for the Good Stuff

An identity founded on change means never being completely at rest. That means you really never know your real nature. Your Self is the part of you that never changes. Let me say that again. Your Self is *unchanging*. Take a moment to think about that. This is not a philosophy, nor is it fanciful thinking. It is more concrete than a stone. Your Self does not age, get tired, or suffer fear or pain. When you come to know Self completely, you will no longer suffer or be hurt by others. How can that happen? All that is needed is just a slight shift in perception. This perceptual shift can be made quickly, easily, and with little effort. All the talk in the world will never get us any closer to the experience. The key to opening the adult heart and releasing the innocence of the inner child is learning to pay attention to what you are doing right *now!* You have everything you need, so let's get started.

Experiencing I Am is the essence of simplicity; however, it may take several times for you to get the hang of it. Not because you can't do it, but because you may at first be looking for something different. Not to worry—it is a natural human function and everyone can do it. Just be easy on yourself, follow the simple directions, and you will soon be shaking hands with your Self.

Several great teachers in the 20th century used this technique to stop thinking. It is a direct approach, not needing thought or meditation. Here's how it goes:

Experience One: How to Stop Thinking

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Just follow your thoughts wherever they may lead you. Don't guide them or judge them. Simply watch them come and go. After you have watched your thoughts for five or ten seconds, ask yourself this question: “Where will my next thought come from?” Then be very alert to see what happens. Just wait and watch.

What did happen? Was there a short break in your thinking while you waited for the next thought? Did you notice a space, a kind of gap between the question and the next thought? Okay, reread the instructions and perform the exercise again. I'll wait. . . .

There, did you notice a slight hesitation in your thinking, a pause . . . between thoughts? If you were alert after you asked where your next thought would come from, you will have noticed that your mind was just waiting for something to happen. The momentary break in your thinking is the mind trying to decide what to think next. In his book *The Power of Now*, Eckhart Tolle says it is like a cat watching a mouse hole. You were awake, waiting, but there were no thoughts in that gap. Please do this exercise several more times and pay attention to the gap, the space between thoughts. It may be very fleeting, but it will be there. Once you become aware of this mental pause, it will get wider, deeper, and longer.

You have experienced this gap many times before, but I'll bet you haven't paid much attention to it. When your mind is “me,” it is not interested in stillness. On one level it considers stillness

counterproductive. The mind abhors a vacuum. At the very least, your mind considers the gap a nuisance, something that must be filled.

Don't most of us get a little embarrassed or rattled when we can't think of what we want to say? It's right on the tip of our tongue, but no matter how hard we try, we can't get the answer out. The harder we try, the deeper that word gets buried. When does the answer come? It comes when we stop whipping our thoughts into a frenzy and allow them to settle down. As soon as we stop trying and become quiet, or begin thinking of something else, the word flies out of our mouth as if it were shot from a cannon. The wayward word didn't come from the active mind. It came from the depths of the silent Self.

Here's what I mean. If someone asks you your name, you answer without hesitation. The response is sure and automatic. When you are asked what you had for breakfast, there is a short gap in your thinking while your mind looks for an answer. If the question is more difficult, the mind will take longer to produce the answer. What this means is that the mind is waiting for the answer to take form out of that silence. You see, the mind does not create answers. It doesn't create anything. It only reflects what is created in the Self. This is a very bitter pill for the mind to swallow, for it has fallen in love with the illusion that it is the creator.

Our mind, always in a hurry to own the answer, becomes impatient with what appears as wasted time. Constant mental activity is a smoke screen. It tries to cover up the fact that creation comes from stillness and not from activity. It wants to grab on to the answer and start using it to gain more control. The inattentive mind is wasteful and hurtful.

When you ask your mind, "Where will my next thought come from?" it is forced to stop and pay attention. Its natural tendency is to take the first thought that pops up and run with it. But if you resist this tendency to be "productive" and watch to see where your next thought really comes from, you will be rewarded with a glimpse of your Self, the pause that refreshes. You have just found the answer to the question "What do you want?" It is the answer to our original question "What is my deepest desire?" The spawn of all other desires and the torment of the ever-restless mind is that profound, deep longing to know thy Self.

Now that you know where thoughts come from, I recommend that you do this simple experience for one minute, once every hour. Take a minute at some time during every hour and stop your thinking. (If this is impractical, then do it when you can for longer periods such as 5, 10, or even 20 minutes. Shorter, more frequent visits to Self are more valuable for our purposes.) When other thoughts push their way in, don't fight them. This will always happen because it is the nature of the mind to think. Just keep reintroducing the question with *complete awareness*, until your time has passed. Be consistent and you won't be sorry. At first you will probably have to close your eyes, but very quickly you will be able to do it with your eyes open. Soon thereafter you will be able to have this experience while driving, conversing with a neighbor, or during an urgent project for work.

It won't take long for you to realize how life changing this innocent experience can be. You won't have to do any more than to observe the gap between your thoughts on a regular basis; the rest will be taken care of for you. You will become more relaxed, creative, energetic, and friendly. In a few days you will feel a deeper sense of peace. In a few more days, the experience will come without effort. When it does, it is important to keep to your schedule of one minute an hour, and look on the spontaneous visits from Self as a blessing. After some time you will reach momentum, the point at which peace automatically renews itself when lost. Now all you need to do is sit back and enjoy the ride.

Here is a quick review. When we forget the Self, we forget that thoughts are created out of "I Am

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