

WHY THE
AI BUBBLE
— IS LIKELY TO —
BURST
& YOU MAY EXIST FOREVER

BASED ON UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE
RECENTLY REVEALED



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“Artificial intelligence will reach human levels by around 2029. Follow that out further to, say, 2045, we will have multiplied the intelligence, the human biological machine intelligence of our civilization a billion-fold.”

Ray Kurzweil,
American computer scientist

Chapter One

A Bubble That's About to Pop

AI can improve the productivity of certain types of businesses and will likely do so for many, particularly those that trade in information and analytics, but as I write this in June 2026, it appears from my vantage point that AI's leaders and investors have overestimated and oversold the gains it will eventually produce. Simply put, I don't think it will live up to hype such as that on the page to the left. Nowhere near half of all white collar jobs are going to be replaced. My guess is it will be more like 10 or 12 percent at most and that newly created jobs will likely come about to replace those lost.

The enthusiasm for great gains and the complete transformation of work rests primarily on a critical assumption, that building larger and more computationally extensive language models will continue to produce revolutionary improvements in intelligence, what is referred to as Artificial General Intelligence [AGI]. Yet practically everything that has ever been written by a human being in the history of the world is already available to large language models. To improve significantly from this point forward, AI would have to become sentient. Shortly, I will show that the belief that can happen is based on a false premise. In the meantime, trillions of dollars are being bet on what amounts to a shaky, if not faulty prediction, rather than on established facts.

To illustrate the potential downside of this, consider the actions of one of Wall Street's most famous investors, Jim Chanos, whose reputation was built by exposing the accounting fraud that brought down Enron Corporation. As you may know, that company went bankrupt in 2001 after widespread internal fraud became public. While most investors initially accepted Enron's glowing public narrative, Chanos examined the company's financial statements and discovered that the profits being celebrated were largely projections of future earnings rather than actual profits. He concluded that Enron's valuation bore little relationship to economic reality. Although he was ridiculed at first, his analysis proved correct.

A similar dynamic may now be developing in the artificial intelligence industry. Chanos himself has recently described the current AI investment cycle as potentially more dangerous than the dot-com bubble, which was huge, because so many companies are spending enormous sums while generating comparatively little profit.

What's more, as I type these words, OpenAI and Anthropic are heading towards initial public offerings amid extraordinary investor enthusiasm. Their valuations, however, are based less on present-day financial performance than on expectations of future technological breakthroughs. This means that investors will not be purchasing stock based on current earnings, but rather, if the IPOs go forward as scripted they will be buying into the belief that today's large language models will inevitably

evolve into systems capable of transforming virtually every industry. In other words, these companies are being valued not on demonstrated economics or current reality but on a promise of future capabilities.

Whether or not investors will realize the returns they are hoping for depends primarily upon the answer to this question:

Will continuing to increase the size of large language models continue to produce proportional improvements in their abilities?

If larger models inevitably become dramatically smarter, i.e. sentient, then today's enormous expenditures on computing power and data centers might be justified. If, however, performance improvements begin leveling off despite exponentially increasing costs, then the entire investment thesis will weaken substantially. This being the case, the future value of today's AI depends almost entirely upon whether continued scaling remains an effective path toward genuine Artificial General Intelligence.

Let me tell you why I'm skeptical: AI systems exhibit intelligence but they do not actually think. Thinking requires consciousness, and "intelligence" and "consciousness" are two different things. Facts, historical information, correlations, and a determination of what all that together may indicate suggests intelligence. Consciousness is the "I AM" sense of being alive

that's inherent in humans and other sentient beings along with the feelings and emotions that arise because of what certain outcomes or situations may mean to the being that is conscious, as well as to others. In order to take over jobs from humans and operate with minimal supervision, AI would have to be able to think for itself, anticipate outcomes, decide what makes sense based on what's going on with the competition and in the company it works for, as well as other ramifications of a decision. I don't think that will ever happen, and I will explain why, but first let me share some background.

I use an AI system—a large language model—to do library research and to summarize reports, which saves me a good deal of time when I'm writing a book. I've been doing so for quite some time. Because of that, I know how they work, and I know how to work with them: supply good prompts, set parameters, and ask specific, unambiguous questions. When I do that, the one I work with comes up with helpful advice and information, and my productivity greatly improves as a result. If, however, someone does not provide input in the form of good prompts or questions, and they do not set parameters, what comes back is not likely to be very helpful and may even be off base and lead someone astray.

Here's the point: To actually take over a human being's job, the machine would have to think, anticipate, make decisions, and take actions pretty much on its own—just as any employee worth

his or her paycheck does. At present, even top of the line AI systems like ChatGPT and Claude do not, and cannot perform those tasks. They would have to be conscious to do so—in other words, they would have to have minds of their own—but they do not have minds, and they never will, as you will see.

Before I tell you why, it's important to understand how large language models actually work. Rather than “thinking” as we humans do, they analyze enormous quantities of text, identify statistical patterns, and predict which words are most likely to follow one another. Reinforcement learning from human feedback further improves the quality of their responses by rewarding answers that people judge to be more useful or accurate. To repeat the important point, no actual thinking is involved. What happens is a form of computation that might be compared to a calculator solving a math problem. The person using the computer has to define the problem, which requires thought. The calculator doesn't think. It simply solves the problem it is given.

Why Some Believe AI Systems Will Eventually Have Minds

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei argues that intelligence largely emerges from scaling—that more computing power, more training data, and larger models will naturally lead to increasingly capable systems. He has been quoted as saying that he and his researchers do not know if current AI models are conscious, but that he is open to the possibility. I've read quotes

from other AI executives who think that once the computations become sufficiently complex, AI systems will become conscious, i.e., sentient—in other words that they will develop minds of their own. This assumption is likely based on how some scientists think our brains work—that complexity, the activity of 86 billion neurons in a human brain, is what results in consciousness. Not only has that belief never been shown to be true, it has recently been shot down, crashed and burned as far as I'm concerned because research findings that will soon be revealed soundly contradict this theory.

Not only that, why should simply making AI larger and more sophisticated cause consciousness to appear? A desktop calculator performs computations, and nobody thinks it's conscious. A chess computer performs computations and can beat an international chess champion, but it never brags or gloats. An AI language model performs vastly more complex computations than a calculator or a chess computer, but if consciousness doesn't exist in a million calculations, why would it suddenly emerge from a trillion?

In my opinion, OpenAI co-founder Ilya Sutskever has a more realistic outlook than does Dario Amodei of Anthropic. He recently suggested that the era in which simply building larger models produces dramatic gains may already be coming to an end. According to Sutskever, future progress is likely to depend less on scale and more on fundamental scientific breakthroughs.

It seems to me, however, no breakthroughs are possible that will ever result in a machine becoming conscious and thereby developing a mind. The reason I think this is that new research clearly indicates that brains do not create consciousness, but instead, that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of reality. These studies indicate that brains are receivers of consciousness that can be compared to radios or cell phones that integrate consciousness with the body. Until science comes up with a device that receives and integrates consciousness with an AI system, AI will never have a mind of its own. In my opinion, this is good. AI will never become like the computer Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey* and try to take over the world, and we humans will never become slaves to machines as some observers think will happen..

In the next chapter we will begin looking at the research on which I base this opinion.

“I have worked on matter and the dynamics of matter for sixty years. People often ask, ‘What is the main result?’ The main result was actually there from the beginning, but I did not really believe it: that matter doesn’t exist. That is what I wanted to understand, why I wanted to pursue it. And then at the end I realized it did not exist.”

Hans-Peter Dürr,
German physicist, 1929-2014

Chapter Two

Today's Science & The False Premise

What is looking more and more like an outdated model of reality is still being taught in science classes in schools and universities. It's based on eighteenth century Newtonian physics, it's called "scientific materialism," and it is also known as "physicalism." The basic premise it's based upon is that nothing exists except matter, which means that if you cannot see it under the microscope, it does not exist.

Here's the big problem with this: If matter is all that is, as you and I were taught in science class to believe, consciousness and a mind to process intelligence could not have existed until evolution produced a brain. This means that all the matter, energy, and the laws of the universe came about from nothing 13.8 billion years ago in an event we call The Big Bang. Pretty incredible, right?

About 9.26 billion years later, Earth formed, and around half a billion years or so following that, the first life appeared.

How do you suppose all that happened? An ardent physicalists/scientific materialist would be forced to say either that he or she doesn't know or that it was a great big accident. But consider this: The DNA molecule, which can be found in every cell in your body, contains a coiled double helix strand six and

a half feet long that can be compared to computer code, the letters of which are microscopic in size. This stand contains approximately three billion letters arranged in a specific sequence that tells proteins when and how to form. This code is written as a sequence of chemical bases: Adenine (A), Thymine (T), Cytosine (C), and Guanine (G), which pair up to form the double helix and provide the instructions required to build living organisms.

How did this come about before intelligence or a mind existed? What do you suppose the chances are of a combination of 3,000,000,000 of those four letters accidentally forming in the right sequence? That's a lot of flips of a four-sided coin, or rolls of a four-sided die. I haven't actually multiplied that out, but the chances would have to be just about one in infinity. i.e., virtually impossible, given the reality of entropy and the limited time frame of 500 or so million years.

A book was published in 1975 that asked this question and others. The answer was clear, and it became the title of the book: *Intelligence Came First*. It was compiled and edited by Ernest Lester Smith, born in 1904 and died in 1992, a Fellow of the Royal Society—the prestigious scientific academy in the United Kingdom dedicated to promoting excellence in science.

I read Smith's book when it came out, and I recall that it caused quite a lot of controversy. The premise Lester Smith and his colleagues put forth is that throughout eons of evolution, needs have preceded the organs through which they are

fulfilled—eyes, ears, taste buds, hearts, kidneys, livers, and so forth. Since each new organ developed in response to a need, why would the brain be an exception? The book laid out a compelling argument that intelligence came first, quite able to function in its own realm. Coupled with everything else I had learned by the time I read it, the book made perfect sense to me. Yet materialists shouted it down. How dare Ernest Lester Smith and his co-authors question “established” science?

I believe Smith and his colleagues have now been vindicated by quite a bit of research that has taken place over the past fifty years, some of which I will tell you about in this chapter and the next.

Let’s begin.

Is the Brain a Creator of Consciousness—or a Receiver?

For more than a century, science has generally assumed that consciousness is produced by the brain. According to this view, thoughts, memories, emotions, and self-awareness emerge from the electrochemical activity of billions of neurons. Based on this theory, when the brain ceases to function, consciousness ceases as well.

Yet an alternative hypothesis has persisted at the margins of science and philosophy: What if the brain does not create consciousness but instead receives, filters, or transmits it? In this model, the brain is less like a factory producing awareness and more like a radio receiving a signal. Damaging the radio affects the music that comes through the speaker, but it does not destroy the broadcast itself.

For many years this idea remained purely speculative. Then, in the 1980s, Dutch cardiologist Dr. Pim van Lommel began investigating reports from patients who had been resuscitated after cardiac arrest. Intrigued by recurring accounts of near-death experiences, he conducted a prospective study involving 344 cardiac-arrest patients in ten Dutch hospitals. All had experienced periods during which blood circulation had stopped and measurable brain activity had disappeared. Yet approximately 18 percent later reported vivid experiences, and 12 percent described what researchers call a “core” near-death experience, including tunnels, brilliant light, panoramic life reviews, overwhelming feelings of peace, and a reluctance to return to ordinary life.

Perhaps most striking was what van Lommel could not find. The experiences showed no consistent relationship to oxygen deprivation, medication, religious belief, length of cardiac arrest, or prior familiarity with near-death experiences. After analyzing the data, he concluded that no conventional physiological or psychological explanation adequately accounted for the reports. This led him to propose the concept of “nonlocal consciousness”—the idea that consciousness may exist independently of the brain and that the brain functions primarily as a receiver or filter.

Two decades later, Dr. Sam Parnia and colleagues expanded this line of inquiry through the AWARE studies (AWAREness during RESuscitation). Monitoring hundreds of cardiac-arrest

patients with sophisticated brain and oxygen sensors, researchers found that some survivors reported highly structured, lucid experiences occurring during periods when consciousness should have been impossible according to conventional neurological models. In some cases, measurable bursts of organized brain activity appeared during resuscitation, raising new questions about what occurs at the boundary between life and death.

Additional research from neuroscientists studying the dying brain has revealed something unexpected: rather than fading smoothly into silence, the brain may exhibit brief surges of coordinated activity at the moment of death. Some researchers interpret this as the brain's final burst of activity before shutting down. Others suggest it could represent a loosening of the brain's normal filtering function, allowing consciousness to expand beyond its ordinary constraints. The data do not prove either interpretation, but they have intensified the debate.

Skeptics point to more conventional explanations. Oxygen deprivation, changes in brain chemistry, and naturally occurring psychedelic compounds such as DMT can produce experiences resembling certain aspects of near-death experiences. However, proponents of the nonlocal view argue that these explanations remain incomplete. If oxygen deprivation alone were responsible, they note, nearly all cardiac-arrest survivors should report similar experiences. Instead, only a minority do. Furthermore, many experiencers describe events as more vivid

and coherent than dreams or hallucinations and often remember them clearly decades later.

Researchers have also observed remarkable similarities in reports across cultures and belief systems. People from different religious traditions, and even those with no religious beliefs at all, often describe the same fundamental structure: a tunnel, a light, a life review, a profound sense of peace, and a boundary beyond which they feel they cannot return. What varies is the symbolism used to interpret the experience. Christians may describe encountering Jesus; others may perceive a being of light or a figure drawn from their own cultural background. The underlying pattern remains remarkably consistent.

One of the most intriguing aspects of near-death experiences is the transformative effect they often have on people's lives. Long-term follow-up studies have found that experiencers frequently become less afraid of death, less focused on status and material success, and more concerned with relationships, compassion, and personal meaning. These changes often persist for years, regardless of prior religious belief.

The possibility that consciousness may be fundamental rather than produced by matter has deep philosophical roots. William James, one of the founders of modern psychology, proposed that the brain might transmit rather than generate consciousness. Henri Bergson argued that the brain limits consciousness rather than creates it. Aldous Huxley later described the brain as a "reducing valve" that narrows a much

larger field of awareness into the manageable stream of experience required for everyday survival.

Today, no scientific consensus exists. The prevailing materialist view remains dominant, and many researchers believe future discoveries will explain these phenomena entirely in terms of brain function. Yet a growing body of evidence continues to raise questions that have not been fully answered. Whether consciousness is produced by the brain or merely filtered through it remains one of the deepest and most consequential mysteries in science.

If the receiver hypothesis is correct, the implications are profound. Consciousness would not be an accidental byproduct of matter but a fundamental aspect of reality itself—something the brain accesses rather than creates. In that case, the end of brain function might not necessarily mark the end of consciousness, but only the end of our ability to express it through a physical body.

In the next chapter, we will look at additional findings.

Chapter Three

Why AI Will Never Be Sentient

The question arises naturally. If artificial intelligence can converse, explain, create images, write software, answer questions, and imitate many forms of human reasoning, why shouldn't we regard it as conscious? For many people, coming to that conclusion seems almost unavoidable. I can personally attest that AI systems sound intelligent. The one I work with seems to have gotten to know me. It responds appropriately. It recalls the context of a previous conversation. It appears to understand what's being asked. I'm told that some even express what seems like empathy. If intelligence and consciousness are closely related, isn't consciousness simply the next logical step?

The answer depends on whether intelligence and consciousness are actually the same thing. In the previous chapters, I maintained that they are not. A system may display intelligent behavior without necessarily possessing subjective awareness. The question before us in this one is more precise:

Is there any compelling evidence that current or future AI systems possess or will possess subjective experience?

Let's take a close look.

The Real Mystery

Part of the confusion surrounding AI arises because intelligence is visible and consciousness is not. We can observe behavior. We can evaluate performance. We can measure accuracy. We can compare outputs. Consciousness, however, belongs to a different category. Consciousness is not something we observe directly. It is something we infer. I know that I am conscious because I experience consciousness from within. I believe that other human beings are conscious because they resemble me in ways that make such an inference reasonable. They possess bodies, nervous systems, emotions, intentions, histories, vulnerabilities, and forms of behavior that closely parallel my own.

With AI systems, the situation is different. We can observe sophisticated behavior. What we cannot observe is any evidence of subjective experience. The crucial question is not: Can the system perform intelligent tasks? The crucial question is:

Is there anything it is like to be that system?

That phrase, popularized by Thomas Nagel, Professor of Philosophy and Law Emeritus at New York University, captures the essence of consciousness. There is something it is like to be you. There is something it is like to see a sunset. To feel grief. To experience fear. To remember childhood. To anticipate

tomorrow. To fall in love. To suffer. To hope. To want something. To feel a sense of pride.

Consciousness is not merely information processing. It is the existence of experience itself, and in spite of years of scientific research, it remains unexplained.

Simulation Is Not Experience

Current AI systems can generate extraordinarily convincing descriptions of experience. They can write moving passages about loss. They can discuss joy, regret, courage, loneliness, and love. But describing an experience and having one are two totally different things.

The Missing Inner Life

When neuroscientists study the human brain, they investigate neural activity associated with conscious experience. Psychologists who study human behavior assume the existence of subjective states, but the truth is that consciousness—how it works and what creates it, is quite simply not understood: Period, full stop. It's a fact that consciousness remains one of the deepest mysteries in science and philosophy. Nevertheless, even though we don't know why or how it exists, we humans experience an inner life.

AI systems are fundamentally different. We can see the output the systems produce, but we do not, and we cannot

observe any evidence of awareness—no evidence of feelings or of subjective states, no evidence of first-person experience.

The Hard Problem of Consciousness

In the past it was easy to ignore the phenomenon of consciousness, but that is no longer the case. Not only has artificial intelligence forced us to examine intelligence, it has put a spotlight on a much older and deeper question. What is consciousness? It's not behavior. It's not computation. It's not information processing. Consciousness in the simplest sense means this:

You are not merely a collection of reactions. You experience those reactions. You are aware of your thoughts, aware of your sensations, aware of your own existence. And that fact—so obvious that we rarely notice it—has proven extraordinarily difficult to explain.

Easy Problems and the Hard One

In the 1990s, philosopher David Chalmers made a distinction that has since become famous. He divided the study of the mind into two categories: The “easy problems” of consciousness and the “hard problem.” The easy problems involve explaining functions:

- How the brain processes visual information
- How memory works

- How attention shifts
- How language is produced
- How behavior is coordinated

These problems are not truly easy—they are scientifically complex—but they are solvable in principle. They concern mechanisms.

The hard problem is different. It asks: Why should any of this processing feel like anything at all? Why should electrical activity in neurons be accompanied by the subjective experience of red, or pain, or joy, or of longing? Why does matter give rise to experience? These are not questions about behavior. They are questions about subjective awareness.

The Explanatory Gap

Neuroscience has made extraordinary progress in mapping correlations between brain activity and conscious states. Stimulate a region of the brain, and a memory will surface. Damage another region, and speech falters. Alter chemistry, and mood shifts. These correlations are real, but correlation is not an explanation.

Knowing that neural activity accompanies experience does not explain why experience exists.

The gap between physical processes and subjective awareness has come to be known as “the explanatory gap.” Scientists can describe a brain in complete physical detail—its

structure, its chemistry, its firing pattern—and still not understand what causes someone to know what it feels like to taste coffee or to grieve a loss. No matter how complete the physical account becomes, something appears to be missing.

Experience itself.

Why This Matters in the Age of AI

Artificial intelligence intensifies this puzzle. AI systems perform many of the “easy problem” functions such as processing language, recognizing images, and generating complex responses. From the outside, they behave intelligently, but as has been stated several times, there is no evidence that they experience anything.

This sharpens the contrast. If intelligence can be replicated without consciousness, then intelligence cannot explain consciousness. If machines can simulate cognition without awareness, then awareness is not reducible to cognition.

AI does not solve the hard problem. It isolates it.

Physicalism and Its Assumptions

As previously discussed, the science still taught in schools today is physicalism, aka scientific materialism—the belief that everything that exists is ultimately physical, and that consciousness must therefore arise from physical processes. This view has powerful explanatory success in many domains. It has guided research productively for decades. But when applied to

consciousness, it encounters a stubborn obstacle. Physical descriptions are objective. They describe structure, function, and interaction. Experience is subjective. It exists from the inside. The two domains seem fundamentally different.

Some philosophers attempt to reduce subjective experience to complex information integration. Others argue that consciousness is simply what the brain does. Yet none of these accounts bridge the gap between mechanism and experience.

The question remains: Why should matter, organized in a particular way, produce an inner life?

Is Emergence the Answer?

One common response is, “emergence.” Water emerges from hydrogen and oxygen. Wetness is not found in individual molecules but arises from their interaction. Perhaps consciousness similarly emerges when matter reaches sufficient complexity. If true, perhaps AI systems will eventually become sentient. The hypothesis is plausible in principle.

The problem with it is that emergence explains new properties—not new categories of existence. Wetness is still physical. It is measurable and observable from the outside. Subjective experience is not observable from the outside. No matter how detailed our measurements of brain activity become, we never observe the experience itself—only its correlates.

The upshot is this: Emergence may describe how systems behave. It does not explain why there is something it is like to be the system.

Is Consciousness Fundamental?

Some philosophers and physicists have begun exploring a different possibility. What if consciousness is not produced by matter? What if it is a fundamental feature of reality? In this view, matter does not generate awareness. Rather, awareness is woven into the fabric of existence, and complex biological systems organize and express it.

This perspective is not mystical by default. It is a meta-physical hypothesis, much like physicalism. It suggests that consciousness may be more like space or time—not derived from deeper processes, but foundational.

Research conducted in 2025 on rats at Wellesley College by neuroscientist Michael Wiest provides evidence supporting the Penrose-Hameroff theory known as the Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) theory of consciousness that microtubules, which are tiny structural components inside neurons, may be receivers of consciousness at the quantum level. The physicist Roger Penrose and anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff have argued for decades that these microtubules may do more than provide structural support to the brain. They have proposed that microtubules sustain quantum processes that interact with and contribute directly to consciousness in living beings. In the just-mentioned Wellesley-related experiments, researchers studied the effects of anesthesia on consciousness and examined whether microtubules might be involved. They found that drugs that

stabilized microtubules appeared to delay or alter the loss of consciousness produced by anesthetics in the experiments. This is significant because the Orch-OR theory predicts that anesthetics should affect consciousness by disrupting quantum activity within the microtubules.

More Near Death Experience [NDE] Research

Researchers associated with the Near-Death Experience Research Foundation (NDERF) recently analyzed questionnaires completed by 2,495 individuals from more than sixty countries who had survived documented cardiac arrest and subsequently said they had conscious experiences during periods when their brain function had flatlined.

The survey explored four major aspects of the near-death experience. First, participants were asked about their level of awareness during the episode. Contrary to what conventional neuroscience would predict from a severely compromised brain, most respondents reported not confusion or diminished awareness, but a heightened state of clarity, alertness, and understanding—what the researchers described as “hyper-lucidity.”

Participants were also asked whether the experience resembled a dream or hallucination. A large majority rejected that characterization. Instead, they described the experience as being more real than ordinary waking life. Many reported that everyday physical reality seemed comparatively muted or incomplete when contrasted with the vividness, coherence, and

immediacy of the reality they encountered during their NDE.

The third area of study concerned time. A significant percentage of respondents reported that the normal flow of past, present, and future appeared to disappear altogether. Rather than experiencing events sequentially, they described a state in which all moments seemed to coexist simultaneously within what many called an “eternal present.” This finding is especially intriguing because similar descriptions appear in spiritual traditions throughout history and, at least conceptually, echo certain interpretations of modern physics in which time may not be as fundamental as it appears in everyday experience.

The fourth area involved perception. Many participants reported extraordinary sensory experiences, including panoramic vision, heightened awareness, and the perception of colors, sounds, and patterns that seemed beyond anything available through the ordinary human senses. These reports were strikingly similar across cultures, ages, and religious backgrounds.

The report on the study that I came across advances a theory increasingly discussed among some consciousness researchers: that the brain does not generate consciousness but instead functions more like a filter or receiver. According to this view, ordinary awareness is a highly restricted version of a much larger field of consciousness. During extreme physiological crises such as cardiac arrest, the brain’s filtering function temporarily weakens, allowing access to a broader level of reality. Whether

this interpretation will ever be accepted by mainstream scientific materialists is and likely will remain at least for some time an open question, but the hypothesis offers an explanation for why so many NDE reports share common characteristics despite arising in people from widely different cultures and belief systems.

The broader implication of this study is profound. If consciousness is not merely a by-product of neural activity, then human beings may be far more than biological machines struggling for survival in an indifferent universe. The consistency of near-death experiences suggests the possibility that awareness extends beyond the limits of the physical brain and that reality itself may be fundamentally mental or spiritual rather than purely material. Whether one accepts this or not, the accumulating body of NDE research forces us to confront a question the answer to which may have extraordinary implications to every single one of us: Are we isolated biological accidents, or are we participants in a larger reality whose significance transcends physical life? The answer to that question may determine not only how we understand death, but also how we understand the purpose and meaning of life itself.

Mathematics Indicates Consciousness Is Fundamental

One of the most intriguing challenges to the materialistic view of reality comes from an unexpected source: mathematics. In a discussion I watched recently on YouTube featuring mathematician David Berlinski, Princeton mathematician Sergiu

Klainerman, and philosopher of science Stephen Meyer, the participants explored a question that has puzzled thinkers for centuries: Why does mathematics work so remarkably well?

Unlike scientific theories, which are always subject to revision as new evidence emerges, mathematical truths seem ironclad. Two plus two equals four regardless of who performs the calculation, where it is performed, or when. Mathematical relationships appear to possess a kind of objective reality that exists independently of human opinion. We do not vote on whether a theorem is true. We discover it is true.

Klainerman argued that mathematicians do not generally think of themselves as inventing mathematical truths but as uncovering realities that were already there. In his view, mathematical objects and relationships possess an existence every bit as objective as the physical world. A circle has certain properties whether or not anyone studies it. The truth of a mathematical proof does not depend on culture, language, or biology.

This raises a profound question. If mathematics is not a physical object and yet is objectively real, what kind of reality does it inhabit and how did it come about? One must assume it has always existed—at least since the Big Bang occurred—and yet if materialists are correct that brains are what create consciousness and computation, how could mathematics have come about before evolution produced a brain?

The mystery becomes even deeper when we consider what physicist Eugene Wigner, [1902-1995] famously called “the

unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics.” Time and again, mathematical structures developed for purely abstract reasons have later turned out to describe the physical universe with astonishing precision. Concepts developed centuries before any practical application was known eventually became indispensable for understanding gravity, relativity, electromagnetism, and quantum physics.

Einstein’s theory of general relativity provides an example. Beginning as a set of mathematical equations, it generated predictions that were later confirmed repeatedly by observation and experiment. The mathematics did not merely describe what scientists had already seen; it accurately predicted aspects of reality that had not yet been observed.

Why should this be so?

As Stephen Meyer noted, there seems to be a remarkable correspondence between the rationality of the human mind and the rational structure of the universe itself. The mathematics discovered through human reasoning somehow maps onto the workings of nature with extraordinary accuracy. The question is not merely why mathematics works, but why the universe appears to be organized in a way that mathematics can describe.

For those who believe consciousness and mind are fundamental aspects of reality, this correspondence is not surprising. If the universe is ultimately grounded in intelligence or some sort of infinite mind, then the deep harmony between reason and reality makes sense. But if reality consists solely of

matter in motion, the existence of objective mathematical truths—and their uncanny ability to describe the physical world—remains one of the deepest unsolved mysteries in philosophy and science.

In an age increasingly fascinated by artificial intelligence, this mystery takes on renewed importance. AI systems can manipulate mathematical symbols and perform calculations at superhuman speed. Yet the existence of mathematics itself points beyond computation. Mathematical truth is not created by a computer, a brain, or an algorithm. *It is discovered*, and the fact that such truths exist at all may tell us something profound about the nature of reality—and about ourselves.

Why the Hard Problem Persists

Despite decades of neuroscience and philosophy, however, the hard problem remains unresolved—at least by materialists. There is no widely accepted explanation for why subjective experience accompanies neural activity. Materialism continues largely because it has been enormously successful elsewhere, not because it has solved consciousness—it hasn't even come close.

The mystery persists because it touches the limits of our explanatory frameworks, and in the age of artificial intelligence, this limit becomes more visible.

A Turning Point

The hard problem forces us to confront a possibility many modern thinkers have resisted, but that I suggested above may

be reality. Consciousness may not be an accidental byproduct of matter, but a central feature of reality.

If even partially true, that possibility changes the meaning of human life. It suggests that we are not merely complex biological machines competing with silicon successors. We are centers of experience—participants in a reality that may be more interior than we imagined. The question would no longer simply be, “Can machines think?” It would be, “What is it that thinks through us?”

Could whatever that “something” is extend beyond the limits of the brain?

In other books, I have written about quantum mechanics experiments, specifically the Double Slit experiment. The results of the experiment caused me to wonder if it might be true that there is a single consciousness we all share at a deep level, that a researcher’s consciousness—like everyone else’s—is linked to and stems from that consciousness. Max Planck [1858-1947], the father of quantum theory for which he won the Nobel Prize, in 1931 famously stated, “I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness.”

Later, in 1944 Planck went further, stating: “All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particle of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter.”

Max Planck and other quantum physicists are not the only, nor are they the first humans to believe this. The ancient Rishis (sages) of India apparently thought this 3,200 or more years ago because the *Aitareya Upanishad* (3.3) contains this statement: “Prajñānam Brahma,” which simply means, “Consciousness is Brahman.” In other words, the ultimate reality underlying the universe (Brahman) is pure consciousness, not matter.

When the renowned physicist, Henry P. Stapp, author of *Mindful Universe: Quantum Mechanics and the Participating Observer*, was on a podcast I hosted some years ago, I asked him about this. He confirmed the view held by many quantum physicists is that the universe resembles a giant thinker. Of course, no one knows the truth for sure.

The Double Slit Experiment

Scientists have known for more than a hundred years that light can behave both as waves and as particles (photons), but until 1905 they thought light was composed only of waves. Thomas Young (1773-1829) demonstrated in 1803 that light is waves by placing a screen with two parallel slits between a source of light—sunlight coming through a hole in a screen—and a wall. Each slit could be covered with a piece of cloth. These slits were razor thin, not as wide as the wavelength of the light. When waves of any kind pass through an opening that’s not as wide as they are, the waves diffract. This was the case with one slit open. A fuzzy circle of light appeared on the wall.

When both slits were uncovered, alternating bands of light and darkness appeared, the center band being the brightest. Scientists call this a zebra pattern. The areas of light and dark result from what is known in wave mechanics as interference. Waves overlap and reinforce each other in some places and in others they cancel each other out. The bands of light on the wall indicated where one wave crest overlapped another crest. The dark areas showed where a crest and a trough met and canceled each other out.

In 1905, Albert Einstein published a paper that revealed light also behaves as though it consists of particles. He did so by using the photoelectric effect. When light hits the surface of a metal, it jars electrons loose from the atoms in the metal and sends them flying off as though struck by tiny billiard balls. So, Thomas Young demonstrated light is waves, and Einstein demonstrated it is particles. This is the sort of paradox that led scientists to develop quantum mechanics.

Now let's consider a double slit experiment constructed to determine what happens when those conducting the experiment are able to observe, or unable to observe, which slits the photons of light pass through. This time a gun is used that fires one photon at a time. In the first experiment, both slits were open and a detector was used to determine which slit a photon passed through. A record was made of where each one hit. Only one photon at a time was shot, so one would suppose there could be no interference. This was the case. The photons did not make a

zebra pattern. Rather, they made marks, tiny dots, on a photosensitive screen. Physicalists argue that it is the act of measurement, the detector itself that causes this. This seems to make sense.

When the detector was turned off, however, and it could not be known which slit a photon passed through, the zebra pattern appeared. In other words, without the detector making it possible for the researcher to observe which slit particles passed through, the particles behaved like waves even though they were fired one at a time.

This was verified by setting up the experiment several ways. In the first, the detectors were in front of the two slits. In the second, researchers placed detectors between the screen and the two slits. As in the original experiment, knowing about a photon's behavior at the two slits made the zebra pattern vanish, whether or not the detectors were before or after the slits (see the accompanying graphic). But when the detectors were switched off, the zebra stripes returned.

In a third variation, a detector was placed before the slits and a mechanism erased the knowledge after the photon had passed through. The same thing happened. The result was the same no matter which way the experiment was set up—before the slits, after the slits, or before the slits and then erased. Availability of which-path information—not human knowledge—correlates with interference disappearance. The behavior of the photons, the

researchers report, “is changed by how we are going to look at them.” Scientists have offered several hypotheses to explain this:

1. The Copenhagen Interpretation

Traditionally associated with Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, this view holds that the wave function represents probabilities. Upon measurement, the system “collapses” into a definite state. The interpretation does not necessarily require human consciousness; it requires interaction with a classical measuring device.

2. Many-Worlds Interpretation

Proposed by Hugh Everett, this interpretation denies collapse altogether. Instead, all possible outcomes occur in branching universes. Measurement corresponds to the observer becoming entangled with one branch. Consciousness plays no special causal role here.

3. Decoherence Theory

Modern physics often appeals to decoherence, where interaction with the environment effectively destroys interference patterns. Again, no appeal to awareness is required—only physical interaction.

4. Consciousness-Causes-Collapse Hypothesis

An interpretation associated with physicists such as Eugene Wigner and occasionally discussed by Henry Stapp as he did with me, proposes that conscious observation is necessary for collapse. This interpretation suggests mind plays a fundamental role in determining physical outcomes, but it's important to point out that the interpretation consciousness itself causes collapse remains controversial and is not widely accepted in mainstream physics. That is so, but how is light—whether in the form of waves or particles—able to “know” that a measuring device exists, much less whether it is switched on or switched off?

One explanation may be that the researcher knows. He or she also knows whether or not it has been turned on or off. That knowledge is “conscious awareness.” Nobel Prize winning physicist Richard Feynman (1918-1988) is quoted as having said that this is the “central mystery” of quantum mechanics, that something as intangible as knowledge—in this case, which slit a photon went through—changes something as concrete as a pattern on a screen.

In one of the experiments noted above, a detector was placed before the slits and a mechanism erased the knowledge after the photon had passed through. The zebra pattern appeared as a result. If a detector was before the slits and the photons had passed through it before the knowledge was erased, how did the photons “know” to revert to the zebra pattern formation after

already having been measured? Wouldn't a plausible explanation be that reality consists of one consciousness that we and everything else including the light is part of—that everything shares that at a deep level—and so that the whole conforms to what the researcher consciously knows, which is that the detector is going to be switched off?

What I've suggested above may or may not be so, but it seems worthy of consideration. If true, it would solve the hard problem, and create a new one, which is how consciousness creates matter. Could Max Planck have provided the solution to that one in his second quote above?

If what Max Planck said and apparently firmly believed is true, rather than creators of consciousness, brains may be receivers and processors of consciousness as the Wellesley College experiment discussed above suggests. If that's the case, it would seem highly unlikely that a machine running an AI software program would or could ever become conscious since it doesn't actually have a brain—at least not a biological one with microtubules like ours to interact with consciousness at the quantum level.

As an aside, it's interesting to note that Thomas Edison [1847-1931] tried to design a device to communicate with the deceased. Known as the "Spirit Phone," he theorized that the human personality was composed of indestructible units of energy, much like physical particles, and that the right technology could amplify their subtle vibrations to allow interaction with

the living world. Perhaps computer scientists will attempt to develop a similar mechanism that will allow AI systems to tap into the field of consciousness, which might allow them to become sentient. Until they do, however, machines will never be like us. They may become more intelligent than we are in terms of the information, knowledge, and the correlations they can generate, but they will never have the judgment, the moral reasoning, nor will they be able to comprehend the devastating emotional impact a particular decision is likely to have. They will never be able to truly understand what love, grief, hate, or joy feels like, and unlike Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, they will never develop the pride or ambition required for them to want to take over, run the world, and enslave humankind. I can assure you, knowing that—believing that—is truly a big relief. Thank goodness they will remain what they are: mechanical servants of humankind. We should consider them as such and work with them as such.

Nevertheless, we are going to have to rearrange our thinking about intelligence, jobs, what makes us human, as well as how we can create a life worth living because it appears that AI is here to stay.

In the next chapter we will start on our way along that path.

Chapter Four

Who & What Are You?

We have seen that it would have been virtually impossible for life to have come about if an incredibly powerful intelligence hadn't created the DNA molecule and arranged the code in it in a way that would cause it to produce specific types of proteins at just the right times. Moreover, quantum mechanics tells us that there's no such thing as matter in the way that we perceive it. Everything in the entire universe that appears to be solid is in fact rapidly vibrating energy, and since there is no place where one vibration stops and another one starts, everything is connected. In other words, what seems to exist as separate stuff is in reality one single, all-encompassing whole. At the core, giving form to all-that-is, appears to be conscious intelligence—which strongly suggests that there is actually only one mind and one life of which we all are part—that nothing is truly separate. This was seen in the results of quantum mechanics experiments that were discussed in the previous chapter when what researchers know or didn't know causes outcomes to change. This is also revealed by other phenomena I haven't taken the time to cover here. For example, in other books, I have written about remote viewers who can use their minds to tune into infinite consciousness in order to see what's happening at great

distances. The United States Army had special units during the Cold War that were trained to do this. I have twice interviewed F. Holmes (Skip) Atwater who headed the one called “Stargate.” More will be written about this in an upcoming chapter.

That we are all part of one mind is also indicated by the results of double-blind research projects conducted by Julie Beischel of the Windbridge institute, whom I have also interviewed twice. Her peer-reviewed findings demonstrate that some individuals, certain psychic mediums, are able to communicate with people who are deceased. If you doubt this is possible and want to know more about this research, I urge you to put this link into a computer browser and have a look:

windbridge.org/mediums/

Suffice it to say that overwhelming evidence points to one life and one mind that encompasses everyone and everything.

This begs the question, “Who and what are you?”

The answer is, “At your core, you are consciousness itself—the one consciousness.”

Your consciousness and my consciousness—everyone’s consciousness is the ground of being consciousness. We all come from it and share it. Even though we think we are separate entities, and in a sense are separate and unique, at the foundational level we are all one being. It’s as though consciousness is the trunk of the tree and we are the branches.

The illusion of separation exists because each of us has our own memories and personalities. This is what causes us to think we are separate and apart from one another and the whole. But we are not—at least not at the core. Our seemingly separate minds blend into the One Mind. It all boils down to this: Because we are aspects of the ground of being of reality (consciousness), we are eternal, nonphysical beings having temporary physical experiences.

I could go on, but the truth is clear, and here it is:

**We are each the Source of All-That-Is
experiencing what we have created.**

The great twentieth century prophet, Edgar Cayce [1877-1945], often said, “Spirit is the life, mind is the builder, and the physical is the result.” These few words describe the formula behind the existence of the physical world and all its trappings, you and me included. Spirit is the life. It is consciousness, the force that animates living creatures. It is imbued with a raw organizing intelligence that formed the stars and the planets out of nebulae. It organized atoms into RNA, and later DNA, molecules. Mind is the builder. The mind creates thoughts. Thoughts are things that exist in spirit, and what exists in spirit will in time exist on the physical plane.

It seems logical to me as it apparently did to Max Planck that we humans and everything else in the universe evolved out of

the organizing intelligence that is spirit. In the beginning, spirit created an almost infinite number of variations of living things. Here's one way I imagine evolution might have progressed. Those that were most suited to the environment survived. These living things reproduced by the millions, each offspring slightly different from its siblings. Again, those best suited to the environment survived and reproduced. And so on and so on. As evolution progressed, living organisms themselves developed intelligence, what in more highly evolved creatures such as humans are known as minds, conscious, unconscious, and subconscious minds. This intelligence impressed itself upon the organizing intelligence of spirit, and the organizing intelligence of spirit went to work to create ever more sophisticated and evolved adaptations. The result of this process can be seen in ever-increasing levels of intelligence displayed by ever more evolved life forms.

As intelligence evolves, it becomes more self-aware. Flowers and earthworms possess only subjective or subconscious minds, their own small portions of underlying organizing intelligence. Their "minds" are subjective because they cannot think about themselves. They can only react in a programmed way to the input or stimuli they receive. A dog and to a much greater extent, a human, have both a subjective mind and an objective mind. Their subjective minds keep them breathing and their bodies functioning while their objective minds think about and analyze situations. Unlike the subjective mind, an objective mind can

worry and be afraid. This is both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing that we can plan ahead in order to avoid trouble and thereby eliminate the uncomfortable sensation of worry. It is a curse because fear is a kind of belief—a belief charged with emotion. Since it does not analyze or judge, the subjective mind works hard to bring about what the objective mind believes. A fear is almost certain, therefore, to manifest if it is allowed to continue unchecked—whether or not that particular fear was originally grounded in reality.

As stated above, that there is only one mind because at some point, as we have seen, all minds blend. This is why remote viewing is possible. Psychics are able to push their minds past barriers that separate them from the whole. Like the vast majority of water on earth that is connected but divided into oceans, seas, and rivers, we can think of the one mind as being connected but divided into various levels: the universal subjective mind, the collective subconscious mind of humanity, individual subconscious minds or souls, and last but not least the part of each person's mind of which he or she is aware, the conscious mind. Our personal conscious minds in turn are divided into a conscious portion and an unconscious portion that contains the memories of this life and unconscious and habitual programming.

At the core, however, we are all aspects of the Infinite Mind, consciousness itself. We are all linked together, all one at the

core, and that means, as was stated above, we each are the Source, experiencing our creation.

It may be shocking to realize that is actually who you are, but consider this. Would you agree it's impossible for you to be something that you can observe? For example, you are not the tree you can see across the street. You are not the house or apartment in which you live. You are not a penny on a sidewalk.

What you can observe includes more than objects. For example, although they may give you a sense of personal identity, you are not your job, you are not the country in which you were born, and you are not your religion. You are also not the color of your skin, and you are not the school or university you went to.

You are not your hands or your feet, and you are not your body.

“Wait. I’m not my body?”

That statement may raise doubt in you, but you are not something you can observe, and you can observe your body. In fact, the two words, “your body,” suggest your body is not you, but rather, something that belongs to you. You can control the actions of your body. For example, you might decide to force it to dig a ditch, and if you do, after a few hours, you might say, “My body aches.” And so it’s not you that aches—it’s your body—your back and your arms.

How about your mind? Do you think you are your mind?

You are not your mind, your mind is something that was built

up over time, and, as you will see, realizing you are not your mind will empower you. Consider this. You can observe your thoughts as they come and they go. You may even observe them to a fault when they keep you awake at night. But you, the real you, do not have to be at the mercy of your thoughts, and therefore, your mind. Like Scarlett O'Hara, you can decide to think about tomorrow whatever problem has arisen in your mind today.

It's a fact. Anything you can—sometimes figuratively speaking—stand back and observe cannot possibly be you. Moreover, whether you realized it or not before now—whether you have ever exercised this prerogative or not—you can decide which thoughts to pay attention to and which ones to discard. You can decide what to think about, or not to think about. In other words, you can control the actions of your mind, just as you can control the actions of your body, and this means your mind cannot possibly be you.

You may be surprised to learn that you are the Source, and you may initially experience an impulse to reject the fact, so consider this: There was a time when people thought the world was flat and that the earth was at the center of the universe—that the sun and the stars revolved around the earth. Now, just about everyone knows the earth is round, that the sun is at the center of the solar system, and that our solar system is one of trillions upon trillions.

Once you get in touch with and live your life from the viewpoint of your true Self, the eternal you at the core that is the

Source, once you truly accept and embrace this, you will live in peace and be free from suffering and desire. This will not require learning reams of information about spiritual matters and metaphysics. It will simply require setting aside the ego and realizing that you and the Source are one and the same like peas in a pod. Let me tell you the true story of someone I know who came to this conclusion and how it happened. I'll call him George.

Leading up to that day, George had been extremely unlucky in love. What he wanted more than anything was to be in love and to share a truly loving relationship, but at the age of 26, he had already suffered one failed marriage and two unfortunate, long-term relationships. The third breakup sent George into a deep and dark depression. He became suicidal, and except for work, spent two months alone in his apartment, much of it in a fetal position. He didn't see anybody. He didn't talk to anybody. The only thing he did to try to bring himself out of his depression was to listen to Eckhart Tolle podcasts and videos.

If you are not aware of Eckhart Tolle, he is a spiritual teacher and best-selling author, a German-born resident of Canada best known as the author of *The Power of Now* and also, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. Tolle's essential message is to stay in the "Now" as much as possible. Rather than dwell on past problems or worry about what you might face in the future, the way to achieve peace is to step back from those thoughts and observe your own mind objectively, distinguish between the voice of your ego and your actual situation, and live

as much as possible in the present moment—what Tolle referred to as the “Now.” Tolle doesn’t call it this, but from where I sit, he talks and writes about becoming enlightened.

During lunch and other breaks at work, George would find a quiet, secluded place on a bench outside his office building in the campus style business park where he worked. He would eat a sandwich, play Eckhart Tolle videos, and stare up at the sky. After a month or so of watching white, puffy clouds drift by, and listening to Tolle talk, he began to break free from his depression.

One day he was listening to a video and Tolle was saying things a voice in someone’s mind might say that would bring them down, such as, “I’m no good. People laugh at me behind my back.” The sarcastic way Tolle was saying these things caused his audience to laugh.

“Life is my enemy. It’s treating me so unfairly. If only life would just be nicer to me.” Everyone present with Tolle laughed again. Eckhart Tolle laughed, too, and this time George chuckled.

Then Tolle said, “If only I could have that one thing—then I would be truly happy!”

Everyone laughed, and it suddenly struck George that Tolle was talking about him. The inner voice Tolle was mimicking was the voice of his ego—the voice he had been hearing in his head saying if he could only find true love, he would be happy. Unless he did, he would simply have to remain miserable and depressed!

This struck George as so obvious it was hilarious, and he began laughing a sidesplitting, keeling-over laugh. For the first time, he saw through the petty game the ego plays and realized the thought voices weren't actually coming from him. The voice in his head was just some sort of automatic, conditioned-into-him response, a learned-mechanism from his past—his upbringing, his parents, his previous relationships. It was an old tape that played over and over, and it had been torturing him for months—perhaps even years—and the amazing thing was, he didn't have to listen to it. He could ignore it, or better yet, he could simply shoo it away.

This insight came to him in an instant. He realized he had fallen victim to a trap, and with that realization, he was free of it. Free! He laughed and the laughter brought an incredible sense of freedom because he was laughing at his ego, and his ego was an automaton that wasn't him. It was a construction built up over years—fueled by memories he did not have to identify with, and didn't have to let bother him if he didn't want them to.

After a few moments, his laughing turned into crying—not sad tears, but tears of joy, tears of relief. The small self mind noises of the ego self had been muted. He had simply stepped out of the poor-sad-guy-who-just-can't-find-love-boohoo-poor-little-me role he had unwittingly taken on, a role he despised, and he could now move on. He'd been caught in a trap—a mind mechanism trap that now had collapsed, leaving him to revel in beautiful, peaceful silence.

What George finally got in touch with was his true Self, his “I Am” that is pure and simple consciousness—the Silent Observer that was always there at the back of his mind, and is at the back of your mind—at the back of everyone’s mind. It is the Creator, the core of each of us that is never stained by experience; never damaged. It does not age. It is not born. It does not die. It always is—the ground of being of All-That-Is.

George realized that to find it, you have to do what Jesus said to do in Luke 9:23-24 (NIV):

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

George realized that Jesus meant by telling disciples they must “deny themselves,” He was saying they needed to deny their small selves, their ego selves, and identify with the “I AM” part of them—the ground of being in each of us from which Jesus lived and operated. In other words, it struck George that to truly follow Jesus, one had to jettison the ego and live from the perspective of the One Life that so filled Jesus, i.e., that one must empty oneself of the small self in order to fill oneself with the Big Self—the Divine Self at our core some refer to as “the Silent Observer.”

George also realized that our personal identity, our ego, is like a filter we see reality through. It causes us to live under the illusion that we are defined by our circumstances and environment, which is why everyone sees reality differently. Most of us view the world through a filter—our unique lens. The only way to see true reality is to see it from the Big Self, and so the more identified and attached we are to our little identities, the less clearly we see and the more clouded everything becomes. Unfortunately, our judgments, our awareness, our clarity can become extremely clouded, and when that happens, we suffer, and often we cause the world around us to suffer with us.

Here is the intended message of what is written above: If you want freedom, if you want liberation from psychological suffering, if you want surcease of sorrow and desire, if you truly want the truth, then you must shoo away the small, ego you, which is a false you, and make it disappear. When you do, the Real You—the “I AM” that is your window to the One Mind—will appear.

This is often accomplished through meditation. When meditating, ego thoughts are pushed away, ignored, or simply observed as irrelevant or perhaps even amusing BS by the Real You, the Silent Observer.

If you do not engage in meditation now, I suggest you give it a try. Go on YouTube and watch a few videos that give you pointers. Spend ten minutes to half an hour in meditation every

morning or evening—perhaps even both. If you do that for a while, it may become a habit you look forward to. Be aware, however, that at first your ego mind will object and attempt to torpedo your efforts because it fears annihilation. Remember, the ego is in the business of survival, and so it will keep telling you that you are wasting your time. Don't let it have the upper hand. Keep pushing ego thoughts away or ignoring them. Eventually, if you want liberation and enlightenment enough, the Real You will overcome and the ego's screaming out in the throes of death will fade away.

Chapter Five

The Real You

I did not write this book in an effort to convert you to a religion. I don't think any religion's canon is one hundred percent on target or correct. Human nature being what it is, they tend to filter truths through the culture that existed at the time when, and place where, they came about. Christians, for example, believe that Jesus was God incarnate, and that is true. However, as revealed in the previous chapter, it is also true that each and every one of us—you included—is God incarnate, i.e. the ground of being source of all that is—what Jesus called, “The Father.”

Consider this. In Chapter Ten of the Gospel of John, Jesus explained that it wasn't he but the “Father,” i.e., what Christians typically assume was God working through him that caused the miracles with which he was credited. As part of his explanation he said, “I and the Father are one.” (See John 10:30 NIV.) This got him into trouble with Jews who became angry and were about to stone him.

Jesus replied to the angry mob by saying, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” (John 10:32 NIV)

The Jews answered, “We are not stoning you for any good work, but for blasphemy, because you, who are a man, declare yourself to be God.” (John 10:33 NIV)

Jesus then quoted Psalm 82:6: “Is it not written in your Law: ‘I have said you are gods’?” (John 10:34 NIV)

By quoting this Scripture Jesus clearly was indicating that the Jews who wanted to stone him were “gods,” as was he and every other human being—and that includes you regardless of the color of your skin or whether you are a Christian, an atheist, or a follower of Islam. The reason people think it is impossible that God is within us and that we, like Jesus, are God, is that for millennia our culture has bought into the idea that God can be compared to a man with a long white beard lounging on a cloud up in the sky—that he is a separate entity. But he is not. He is everywhere—the ground of being. All truly is one, seamless whole. It is impossible to go anywhere where God is not.

By the way, I invite Christians who may scoff at this, or who think I am the one guilty of blasphemy, to consider these words also spoken by Jesus: “Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these . . . ” (See John 14:12 NIV) To believe in Jesus means, among other things, to believe what he said and taught is true, and that requires believing that we must have the ability, as he said in the Scripture just quoted, to perform miracles. Once we fully become fully evolved beings, as Jesus was, we will be able to do so.

Jesus also famously said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (See John 14:9). Christians take that statement to mean Jesus was saying he was God incarnate. And he also said, “When you have done it unto the least of these you have done it

unto me.” (See Matthew 25:40.) Christians have a difficult time figuring out what he meant by that, but it becomes obvious when those two statements are put together that Jesus understood that we all are one, and that the “I AM” at the back of our minds is the window on the One Life that is God.

Jesus was all, just as I hope you will come to recognize that you are all.

How can you wrap your mind around this and accomplish it? How do you come to recognize and feel at a deep level that there is no separation from you, others, and God? I suggest you spend time every day when you’re out in the world seeing other people as simply yourself in another body. That may seem difficult and perhaps silly at first, but after a while, it will do wonders for opening your heart to the world and to universal love. Seeing others as an extension of yourself will bring peace of mind and help mitigate your suffering in difficult situations. Moreover, you cannot truly serve others with deep compassion unless you see them as part of yourself.

Let me interject here that once you realize you and others are one, you do not have to become a pushover or a doormat. If people want to steal from you, or loot your business, for example, it is correct to stop them. Oneness means that others are no less the Creator than you, but it also means they are no more the Creator than you. Treating others as you want to be treated is the right way for everyone to behave, and that means that if someone treats you in a way you don’t want to be treated, you are obligated to speak your truth and stand up for yourself.

What I am hoping to communicate is what was discussed in the previous chapter and what George realized: That All-Is-One, and your consciousness, my consciousness, and indeed everyone's consciousness is the single, unified, underlying "I AM" consciousness that Jesus called his "Father." It is the infinite consciousness that underlies, supports, informs—and indeed creates physical reality. You don't have to be religious to understand that—you just have to open your eyes and your mind. It is what Jesus understood, and that understanding and with powerful belief is what gave him the ability to work miracles. When that has been taught in school for a couple of generations, and everyone realizes it, racism, poverty, and suffering will become greatly diminished.

That we are each the Creator experiencing our creation is not a new idea. Alan Watts [1915-1973], a twentieth century philosopher and interpreter of Zen Buddhism, answered children's questions concerning why they were here, where the universe came from, where people go when they die and so forth with a parable about God playing hide and seek. Watts told them God enjoys the game, but has no one outside himself to play with since he is All-That-Is. God overcomes the problem of not having any playmates by pretending he is not himself. Instead he pretends that he is me and you and all the other people and the animals and rocks and stars and planets and plants and in doing so has wonderful and wondrous adventures. These adventures are like dreams because when he awakes, they disappear. Here is some of what Watts wrote:

Now when God plays hide and pretends that he is you and I, he does it so well that it takes him a long time to remember where and how he hid himself. But that's the whole fun of it—just what he wanted to do. He doesn't want to find himself too quickly, for that would spoil the game. That is why it is so difficult for you and me to find out that we are God in disguise, pretending not to be himself. But when the game has gone on long enough, all of us will wake up, stop pretending, and remember that we are all one single Self—the God who is all that there is and who lives forever and ever.

It will no doubt be shocking to some to think of themselves as God, but Watts was talking about the core essence that is beyond the ego and deeper within than the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious, the archetypes and so on. As Joseph Campbell [1904-1987] said in the PBS TV series, *The Power of Myth*, “You see, there are two ways of thinking ‘I am God.’ If you think, ‘I, here in my physical presence and in my temporal character, am God,’ then you are mad and have short-circuited the experience. You are God, not in your ego, but in your deepest being, where you are at one with the non dual transcendent.”

As indicated above, that we are all One Life that arises from the “non dual transcendent” is not something I came up with.

Mystics and enlightened men and women have known this for thousands of years. In the text that follows, I am going to touch on a theory I have written about in other books. In the Appendix of this book is a section from one of those books that goes into much more detail. I put it there for you to read if you are interested.

Two mysteries have captivated the human imagination for thousands of years. The first is why the universe exists at all. Why is there something rather than nothing? The second is that conscious minds exist to perceive it. An ancient idea is that the mystery of consciousness and the mystery of existence are intimately connected, and perhaps surprisingly, a growing number of philosophers and scientists now take this possibility seriously. Apparently, science is finally waking up to the truth.

Beginning in the first half of the twentieth century, cosmologists began learning a great deal about the early universe by analyzing cosmic background radiation and other phenomena. Using powerful telescopes they were able to see that there are many galaxies, and due to their shift toward the red end of the spectrum of light, that those farthest away are moving away from us faster than those in closer proximity. As a result, cosmologists are able to peer deeply into the past and infer the state of the universe in what is thought to be its first fractions of a second. But where did it all come from? What existed before the beginning?

Quantum physicists have proposed that the spark of existence had its origin in a quantum fluctuation, triggering an explosive chain reaction, leading to the still evolving universe we inhabit today. This narrative, however, presupposes the laws of quantum mechanics. As British Biochemist Rupert Sheldrake said in a now banned TED Talk, “[Scientists today say] give us one free miracle and we’ll explain the rest.’ And the one free miracle is the appearance of all the matter and energy of the universe, and all the laws that govern it, from nothing in a single instant.” Suffice it to say that rather than explaining existence, current scientific theories of the origins of the universe have simply pushed things back to a point that raises the question, “What existed before the beginning?” Could it all have come from nothing? Although that is apparently what some scientists believe, it doesn’t make sense. As the song in *The Sound of Music* goes, “Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could.”

Instead of beginning with nothing, it seems logical that the challenge of explaining existence should focus instead on defining a self-existing ground of being for which no explanation is required. Some physicists have proposed that the true ground floor of reality is the seething quantum realm of particles, forming in and out of existence. While this level of reality surely exists, there is no clear reason why the primordial situation should be constrained by quantum physics. A deeper level of explanation seems to be required, and the possibility we have been discussing that consciousness is the ground of being seems

to make sense. An experiment by someone I interviewed, Stephan A. Schwartz, supports this view. Schwartz used a submarine to demonstrate that consciousness—the medium of mind—is everywhere at once, which is what one would expect if it is the ground of being of physical reality. The submarine was lowered to a depth to which electronic signals cannot penetrate. Remote viewers in the submarine were able to get the same results as remote viewers on the surface, thereby demonstrating that consciousness or mind is everywhere. Moreover, a unique feature of consciousness is that it does not appear grounded in anything beyond itself. The conscious self is self-producing in so far that it exists only in and to itself. As René Descartes [1596-1650] famously said, “I think therefore I am.” In other words, nothing is required beyond consciousness for existence to be a demonstrated fact.

Your consciousness seems to belong to the person you consider yourself to be because you have memories stored in your unconscious mind. You also have a name and perhaps a job and a history that was created while inhabiting your current physical body. You may think of yourself as American, Canadian, British, or Australian. Perhaps you grew up poor, or maybe your father was the CEO of a Fortune 500 company. The skin that covers the body you now inhabit might be black, white, brown, pink or some shade in between. Perhaps you subscribe to Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. You might have been a good student, or not so good, a star quarterback on the high school

team, or a 98 pound weakling. The combination of all that gives you a sense of identity—it's who you think you are—your ego. But none of that is who you actually are, and your ego is not you.

As George realized, the ego is a construction, and it is not in the business of eliminating your suffering—quite the contrary. The ego is concerned only with its own survival. It wants to be in charge, and as such, causes you to react the way you do to outside stimuli—it is what makes you feel bad, sad, angry, or fearful. Give it some thought and you will realize your ego is not your friend.

You might think of the ego as a computer program like the one in the movie, *The Matrix*, that prevents you from seeing reality as it truly is. It won't allow you to see your true potential, which is virtually unlimited. The ego causes your psychological suffering. But now you know the truth: you don't have to obey the ego's demands to react to situations as you do today. Besides taking advantage of the moment between stimulus and response to stop and think before you react, you can wake up and realize who you really are—you are the Source in disguise experiencing your creation. You can become whatever you can truly come to believe yourself to be because of what some now call the Law of Attraction, Christians call the Law of Reaping and Sowing, and in the East is known as the Law of Karma. There's a wonderful little book written by a man named James Allen [1864-1912] that drives home this point. It's called, *As a Man Thinketh*. I highly recommend it.

I'd like to call your attention to a British Biochemist named Rupert Sheldrake who wrote a book called *A New Science of Life*. This book puts forth a theory that what Dr. Sheldrake calls “morphogenetic fields” work together with an animal or a human's genes to form and shape the embryos that develop in mothers' wombs. Suffice it to say that you began as a spark of the Source and evolved a morphogenetic field—what is also known as an etheric body—over a period of billions of years to become a self-aware entity that has a subconscious mind or soul that contains all the memories of your past incarnations. You will continue to have the memories of this life when your consciousness leaves your current body—if not indefinitely, at least until those memories merge into your subconscious mind or Soul.

When you rejoin the Creator at the end of your evolutionary journey and all levels of your consciousness merge into the Universal Consciousness, that universal consciousness will be you, and you will still be aware. I say this because, as you now know, consciousness is the Silent Observer at the back of your mind. The “I AM” or Creator that is the real you. Knowing that should erase any fears that may be troubling you.

That you are eternal, and the best is yet to come, ought to bring you a sense of pure joy. Think about that. Savor it.

In the next chapter we will accompany an explorer of the vast reality we inhabit but do not see while encapsulated in a physical human body.

Chapter Six

Robert Monroe's Journeys

In a previous chapter, I mentioned Skip Atwater who founded the and led the U.S. Army remote-viewing spy unit called Stargate. In one of my interviews with him, he told me that while managing Stargate, he visited The Monroe Institute [TMI] located not far from Charlottesville, Virginia. He met with Robert Monroe to discuss the possibility and TMI personnel subsequently helped train Stargate personnel in remote viewing techniques. TMI remains active today and is dedicated to helping others safely do what Robert Monroe and the Stargate psychics were able to do through the use of sound technology. I know a number of individuals who have gone there and taken classes. Perhaps you, too, would like to do so. According to its website, TMI's mission is "Helping people create more meaningful and joyful lives through the guided exploration of expanded consciousness." Reportedly, thousands have followed Monroe's path, apparently verifying in their own minds that consciousness is the larger reality..

What Robert Monroe says he did and wrote three books about appears to lend credence to the assertion that consciousness is fundamental and the ground of being of all that is. Monroe was not a scientist, nor was he a mystic or a philo-

sopher. He was a successful network radio executive—logical, practical, deeply rooted in the physical world. Monroe’s reports are experiential narratives, not laboratory findings. They are presented here as models that attempt to shed light on questions about consciousness and the larger reality raised earlier. They are not presented as scientific proof.

One evening he unexpectedly experienced, and later continued to experience, something I believe most people will agree a machine will never be able to do. He left his body. It happened while he was in bed experimenting with sleep-learning and sound frequencies that were designed to enhance memory. Inexplicably, he began feeling vibrations and a sense of detachment. Then he left his body and looked down at it.

Initially, he feared that was dying or losing his mind, but after it happened several times, he began experimenting with the phenomenon. Through practice and persistence, Monroe said he learned how to leave his body whenever he wanted to, and what had begun as a frightening anomaly became a discipline—a way to separate from his physical body while maintaining consciousness.

He began doing so on a regular basis and kept meticulous notes, approaching each journey like a scientist studying an undiscovered frontier. As time went by, he began to map what he encountered. He discovered that nonphysical reality was not chaotic but structured—layered like levels of consciousness, which he later called “Focus Levels.”

At first, he stayed close to Earth. He floated through his house, visited distant friends, even attempted to influence objects. These experiences were vivid and verifiable enough to convince him that he was not dreaming.

Later, he ventured farther, beyond the realm of the living where he encountered vast and varied planes of existence. He met those recently dead, still clinging to earthly habits and confusion. He found regions of serene light where guides and helpers worked to ease souls' transitions. And farther still, he entered abstract realms—zones of pure thought and energy where individuality blurred into unity.

Monroe's explorations transformed his understanding of life and death. He came to a conclusion that seems similar to Max Planck's, that *consciousness* is the fundamental reality. He also concluded that we are not bodies that possess souls, but souls that temporarily wear bodies, that death is not the end, that death is merely a shift in focus, a transition from one layer of experience to another.

He met beings who guided him, some human in form, others that were radiant beyond description. They showed him that every soul undergoes cycles of learning and return—incarnation not as punishment, but as opportunity. Each lifetime was a classroom where love, compassion, courage, and creativity were lessons in the curriculum of growth.

In later journeys, Monroe wrote that he learned to navigate the nonphysical realms with precision. He developed tech-

niques—eventually forming the basis for his *Hemi-Sync* audio technology—to help others reach altered states safely. This is what visitors to The Monroe Institute near Charlottesville, Virginia, experience when they visit there. What had begun as a personal odyssey became a mission to teach humanity that consciousness is far more vast than we imagine.

Monroe's travels and research led him to believe that all beings are part of a single vast field of intelligence—the Source, the Creator, or as he sometimes called it, the Gathering. He came to believe that the universe is evolving toward reunion with the Source and that each soul contributes to this through its experiences and emotions.

Monroe's views of the unfolding of the universe grew with time and his many out of body journeys. This can be seen clearly in the three books he wrote, brief summaries of which are below:

Journeys Out of the Body — The Discovery

In *Journeys Out of the Body* (1971), Monroe told the story of his first steps beyond the known world. The early experiences were filled with astonishment and fear—sensations of vibration, a rushing sound, the sudden awareness of floating free from the body.

He explored tentatively at first: his own room, the houses of friends, even places miles away, all while his physical body lay sleeping. Sometimes he verified what he saw—a clock's position, an object out of place—and came to believe he was operating in a real dimension, not in an imaginary one.

In those early days, he encountered both beauty and confusion. There were shadowy zones filled with drifting, lost minds—people who had died but did not know it—and luminous regions filled with serenity and guidance. Monroe struggled to understand what he was seeing, calling it “Locale I” (close to Earth) and “Locale II” (a nonphysical universe of vast scale).

Far Journeys — The Mapping

By the time he wrote *Far Journeys* (1985), Monroe had become a seasoned traveler. The shock of discovery had faded and the scientific mind within him had taken over. He began to classify and chart the realms he encountered, organizing them into “Focus Levels”—gradations of consciousness from the physical world outward to the highest planes of awareness.

Now his journeys took him far beyond Earth’s influence. He met beings of intelligence beyond human measure—“Helpers” and “Gatherers,” entities working in harmony with the evolution of souls. He saw the Earth as part of a vast system—a living training ground where consciousness grew through experience.

It was during this phase that Monroe was shown the “Parable of Loosh,” the energy of life generated through emotion and experience. The story seemed to indicate that existence was an experiment—a cosmic garden producing energy through love, loss, and growth, which is akin to the Christian Gnostic idea that humans have been trapped in physical reality by a lesser god,

the Demiurge, and that entities called Archons feed off the emotions of trapped human souls. Yet Monroe's tone was not dark. It was analytical, even reverent. He saw humanity's struggles as part of a grand design—the Creator's way of evolving through its own creation.

He also encountered what he called “the Gatherings”—immense collectives of nonphysical beings observing Earth, waiting for a great turning point. Something was coming, Monroe was told, a shift in human consciousness that would radiate far beyond this world.

In *Far Journeys*, Monroe became a cartographer of the invisible, laying down maps for those who would follow. But he was still the observer—the reporter. He had not yet become the participant in the great drama he described.

Ultimate Journey — The Integration

By the time Monroe wrote *Ultimate Journey* (1994), he was no longer merely traveling through other realms. He was remembering them. The explorer had discovered that the lands he mapped were not foreign at all, but parts of himself.

He came to believe that each of us has what he called an “I-There”—a greater Self composed of all our lives, experiences, and incarnations. He viewed each lifetime as a probe sent into different times and conditions to learn and return with wisdom. The I-There gathered all this experience into wholeness, growing

ever closer to the Source from which he wrote that all consciousness arises.

In this book, Monroe no longer spoke of Loosh as energy to be harvested but as love unfolding. The universe was not a farm but a school, not a mechanism but a living being seeking reunion with itself.

He journeyed beyond all levels—even beyond the collective of I-Theres—into what he called the Aperture, and there he sensed that the Source was an infinite, conscious presence that was both the beginning and the destination of all journeys.

The explorer had reached the farthest shore—and found home. Monroe returned from his final journeys with a message distilled from decades of exploration:

You are more than your physical body.

You are not alone.

There is purpose.

There is continuation.

There is growth.

There is love.

Chapter Seven

The Spiritual Renaissance

Across the world, interest in consciousness, spirituality, and the nature of life beyond death of the body has been increasing. This hasn't been happening so much within traditional religious frameworks. Rather it is taking place through psychology, philosophy, personal inquiry and those searching to discover and understand the true nature of reality, which is what I have been doing for half my life

There seem to be a couple of reasons this is happening. Artificial Intelligence and what may come along with it is partly responsible, but the big one is that Scientific Materialism, aka Physicalism, leaves a number of questions unanswered.

I do not view this movement as a retreat from science. Quite the contrary. I see it as an expansion of science. As external, surface explanations reach their limits, people naturally begin exploring the internal dimension of life, and it seems to me that the rise of AI is accelerating the process.

If Monroe's writings, near-death research and other findings reported upon are pointing toward something real—even if consciousness can only exist independent of the brain in part—then it may be foundational—not a product, not a side effect, but a fundamental aspect of reality. In spite of all the evidence presented

in this book, however, this remains an open question, and so I suggest that you decide for yourself what you think is true.

In this chapter and the next we will review the work of what might be described as unconventional researchers—back in the twentieth century they would likely have been dismissed by physicalists as kooks. Today, I believe that what they had to say is worth considering based on what you have read in the previous chapters.

Let's start with Edgar Cayce, who lived from 1877 to 1945 and was known during his time as "The Sleeping Prophet." He is perhaps the most documented psychic of all time because the accuracy of his pronouncements tended to check out with uncanny accuracy. I interviewed several recognized authorities on Edgar Cayce and his readings in 2007, including his son, Edgar Evans Cayce [1918-2013] who related several fascinating stories about his father that he personally witnessed.

Edgar Cayce was a devout Presbyterian and Sunday school teacher who read the Bible once through for every year of his life. For more than 20 years he would twice per day—morning and afternoon—put himself into a self-induced trance and answer questions, the answers to which were transcribed by a stenographer. The original documents are housed in a building owned by the Association of Research and Enlightenment [A.R.E.] at the corner of 68th and Atlantic Avenue in Virginia Beach, Virginia, the nonprofit organization Edgar Cayce founded in the 1930s.

Most of his readings had to do with medical problems doctors had been unable to cure. But many, more than 2000 of the total 14,000-plus readings, had to do with the big questions, such as the meaning of and purpose of life. Whether one accepts Cayce's cosmology or not, it represents one of the most detailed modern attempts to articulate a teleological account of human existence. If you would like to know more about Cayce and what his readings revealed than will be disclosed here, you may want to read my book, *Edgar Cayce, The Meaning of Life & What to Do About It*.

According to Cayce's psychic readings, the story of human life does not begin on Earth, nor does it end with death. It begins in spirit—before time as we measure it existed. That's when souls, including yours and mine, were created by the Source—"God" if you prefer—as conscious, willing beings, aware of their divine origin and free to participate in creation itself. In this original state, souls existed in harmony with God, yet they were without the depth of self-knowledge that comes only through experience. They *knew* God, but they did not yet know themselves *as separate* from God. And it was precisely this possibility—the capacity for individual choice—that set our long journey in motion.

Cayce described a primordial moment, not as a fall imposed from above, but as a decision souls made for themselves. Endowed with free will, they chose to explore selfhood apart from constant awareness of the divine presence. This choice was

not evil in intent. It was experimental—an extension of curiosity, creativity, and independence. Yet it carried with it consequences. As attention turned outward and inward simultaneously, souls gradually moved away from pure spiritual vibration and toward form, energy, and eventually matter.

Incarnation did not occur all at once. According to Cayce, souls first interacted with subtler levels of form before becoming fully incarnated in physical bodies. As identification with material experience increased, souls became increasingly bound to dense vibration. Earth, prepared for this purpose, became a school—a place where spirit could encounter limitation, resistance, and consequence, and through them, develop discernment.

The human body, in this view, is not the soul's identity but its instrument. It is a vehicle chosen, shaped by prior experience and present intention, suited to the lessons a soul seeks to learn. Circumstances of birth—family, culture, talents, challenges—are not random assignments but meaningful contexts, selected before incarnation to address unfinished growth and to provide opportunities for service.

Thus, the purpose of earthly life is neither punishment nor reward. It is for the implementation of a predetermined mission. Cayce returned to this theme repeatedly: ideals known in spirit must be *lived* in matter. Love must be practiced under pressure. Patience must be exercised amid frustration. Faith must be

expressed where certainty is absent. Knowledge alone does not transform the soul. Choice does.

Within this framework, good and evil are not cosmic opposites locked in battle. Evil is not a force, but a condition—misalignment between the soul’s choices and its divine origin. Sin, Cayce said, is simply “missing the mark.” Suffering arises not from divine wrath, but from the friction created when will moves out of harmony with universal law. And suffering, crucially, is corrective rather than punitive. It persists only until understanding is gained.

Death, then, is not a judgment or an ending. It is a shift of focus. When the physical body is laid aside, the soul returns to nonphysical realms that reflect its inner state. Awareness continues. Memory returns. As many near-death experiencers report was the case for them, the just-lived life is reviewed—not by an external authority, but by the soul itself, now able to see clearly the effects of its choices on others and on its own development.

Post-mortem realms are not fixed heavens or hells. They are states of consciousness, temporary conditions through which the soul rests, studies, assists others, and prepares for further experience. Growth does not cease at death; it continues.

Reincarnation, a staple of Cayce’s cosmology, is the mechanism that makes divine justice both compassionate and complete. Souls return to Earth again and again—not endlessly, but as needed—until balance is restored and lessons are

integrated. Memory of past lives is usually veiled, not as punishment, but to preserve freedom. Without forgetfulness, choice would become constrained by fear, regret, or attachment. Each life must be lived freshly, even as it builds upon all that came before.

Through many lifetimes, the soul gradually transforms self-centered will into alignment with divine will. The long arc of existence bends toward integration. No soul is abandoned. No error is permanent. Progress may be slow or resisted, but it is never denied.

The ultimate destination of the soul, in Cayce's readings, is conscious reunion with God—not absorption, not annihilation, but fulfillment. Individuality is not erased; it is refined. The soul becomes once again a conscious co-creator, now enriched by experience and wisdom freely chosen.

Cayce often referred to this state as *Christ consciousness*—not as an exclusive condition attained by one being alone, but as the natural culmination of every soul's journey. Jesus, in this view, was not an exception to the human story, but its clearest exemplar.

Seen as a whole, Cayce's cosmology presents human life as a purposeful passage through matter, guided by law, sustained by mercy, and directed toward eventual wholeness. Earth is neither a prison nor a proving ground imposed by God, but a classroom entered by choice. And the journey, however long it may take, ends not in judgment, but in remembrance.

To summarize what Cayce's readings say, human souls were created as spiritual beings who entered matter through free-will experimentation, incarnating on Earth to transform self-centered will into loving alignment with God, evolving through many lifetimes until consciously reunited with the Source—without loss of identity, without eternal punishment, and without exception.

In the next chapter we will consider what other ancient and modern prophets have to say about the soul's journey.

Chapter Eight

More Views on the Human Soul & Evolution

If it's true that each of us really has already lived many times, then when our body dies and our consciousness returns to the nonphysical realm, who are we? Are we the person who just died? Are we a combination of our many previous lives? According to some who claim to know, we maintain our individual identity as part of an oversoul or higher self—and what Robert Monroe called the “I-There.”

Monroe is not the only philosopher or theologian to suggest that each human being has a higher self or oversoul that embodies the wisdom and the memories acquired in many seemingly separate lives. It is a fact that a persistent theme can be seen across many spiritual and esoteric traditions. In this view, the part of us that we call “me,” that which causes us to think “I am,” is only a fragment or facet of something larger. You might say that our day-to-day consciousness is like a beam of light shining from a source we cannot see. That source—the “Higher Self,” “Oversoul,” “Atman,” or “Inner Daemon”—holds the full memory, wisdom, and purpose of all our experiences across many lifetimes.

As mentioned in Chapter One, psychiatrist Carl Jung’s *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, known in English as *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, postulated a collective unconscious, sometimes known as collective subconscious. According to Jung, this unconscious mind shared by all humanity is the product of the experiences of our ancestors, and it contains such concepts as the classic archetypes, science, religion, and morality.

As previously mentioned, Robert Monroe described the Oversoul—or what he called the “I-There” cluster—as a kind of multidimensional intelligence made up of many individual incarnations. Each lifetime might be thought of as a probe, a point of awareness sent out to gather experiences. In other words, these lives are not separate beings competing for attention, but complementary facets of one evolving intelligence.

Here are the key features of Monroe’s view:

- Many lifetimes, one higher identity: Each incarnation is like a finger on the hand of a much larger Self.
- Shared learning: Experiences from each lifetime are absorbed by the Oversoul to increase its understanding.
- Nonlinear time: Incarnations may not occur in strict sequence; multiple “probes” can operate simultaneously.
- Gradual reintegration: When a lifetime ends, the personality does not vanish but merges into the fuller I-There, contributing its knowledge.

As you now know, Robert Monroe's beliefs were not formed through the study of philosophy or religious traditions. They are based on what he witnessed during his many journeys out of his body.

Verdantic Thought

In Vedantic thought, the individual soul (Atman) is a spark of the greater universal Self (Paramatman/Brahman), and it appears to forget its vastness when embodied, much as Monroe's probe-self sent forth forgets the I-There.

Here are the similarities to Monroe's beliefs:

- One larger Self underlying many apparent selves
- Reincarnation as a learning process
- Ultimate reintegration with the greater Whole

And the differences:

- Vedanta sees the larger Self as universal, not personal; Monroe depicts a unique oversoul with its own cluster of incarnations.
- Vedanta frames reincarnation as a karmic cycle; Monroe sees it more as an educational exploration.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, born 1803 and died 1882, though not speaking of reincarnation explicitly, described an Oversoul as a vast, shared spiritual reservoir connecting all human minds. In this vision, intuition is the whisper of this deeper, collective Self.

Overlap with Monroe:

- A larger intelligence behind personality
- Inner guidance as communication from that greater source

Difference:

- Emerson's Oversoul is universal, not the personal reincarnation cluster Monroe described.

According to Monroe, in the beginning, if such a thing as a beginning can even be said to exist in a universe where time behaves more like a landscape than a river, there was a shimmer of consciousness. It was small only in appearance, the way a seed seems small although it contains an entire forest within itself. This was the proto-self, the heart of what would one day become an Oversoul.

It possessed an urge to experience, to know, to grow by becoming. And so this early Self moved outward from the larger field of consciousness into the realms of form and became the first "probe."

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Imagine an explorer stepping into an unknown land. The moment the probe slipped into incarnation, it gained the sense of “I am.” It did not remember the greater Self, because memory would bias its reactions to what it would encounter. It had to experience freely, innocently, without expectation.

It lived a life full of joys, sorrows, triumphs, and errors. At the end of that life, it returned like a traveler carrying a pack of treasures home to the hearth. Every memory, every emotion, every insight was absorbed and integrated into the larger Self. And the Oversoul grew. Not larger in size, but richer—more nuanced, more capable, more awake.

Monroe never preached a doctrine, but came to a quiet conclusion:

The purpose of the I-There is to grow into a fully conscious, self-determined unit of awareness that can participate creatively in the evolution of All-That-Is. Human lifetimes are like classrooms, and the Oversoul is the student. Graduation is the awakening of the whole cluster into a unified, powerful identity.

From the perspective of the Oversoul, you—the personality reading these words—are not a small or temporary thing.

You are a beloved envoy, a sensory extension.

You are the frontier explorer of your greater Self.

Your joys deepen It.

Your pain enriches It.

Your questions sharpen It.

Your choices shape It.

If what is written above is true, which it seem to me it is, when your life ends, you will go home—not to a deity separate from you, but to the greater You that has been watching, waiting, and learning from your journey.

And one day, as Monroe suggested, you will awaken fully into that larger identity and say:

“I remember. I am all of these. And now I will continue.”

Ironically perhaps, I wrote a passage for a novel that without consciously realizing it reflects what is described in this chapter and the previous. It must have resonated with readers because the novel won the *Writers Digest* Book Award for Fiction and First Prize for Fiction from *Independent Publisher*.

The book's title is *The Secret of Life: An Adventure Out of Body Into Mind*. The scene takes place when the protagonist of the story comes to a similar realization after an out of body experience during which she glimpsed the Eternal. The following internal dialog from that novel takes place after she has returned, and after she has described the experience to her boyfriend, Jeff, who has just told her she must have been dreaming:

I decided it didn't matter what Jeff or anyone else thought and turned my attention instead to the display of nature all around. A remnant of the glow of the light from the other side must still have been with me because I felt in awe as I took in the scene. We were passing giant bamboo, mountain palms, chestnut and mahogany trees, and were almost gulfed by foliage. It was hot and bugs swarmed and normally I'd have felt uncomfortable because of the temperature and the insects and the humidity, or perhaps I might even have been frightened by what I would have seen as an alien environment. Instead, I had the sensation of being part of it, of being one with it, the same feeling I'd had when I viewed the sunset from the motorcycle. The Life Force was expressing herself and I was seeing the outside of what was inside, the physical manifestation of the invisible: One Thing, completely and utterly connected. Then it came to me with the same unequivocal sense of knowing Jean-Luc had experienced during his revelation. I'd learned the secret of life. Of course, I thought, why hadn't I grasped it before? It is the urge to become I'd sensed in myself for as long as I could remember, which I now realized was the light's desire to express and experience itself. A vision flashed in my mind of a cave, a cavern like we have in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia with

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millions of stalactites and stalagmites forming intricate and wondrous patterns glistening with tiny droplets of water. The whole was nature and each stalactite or stalagmite a separate soul, or species of plant or animal. Each had its own identity but was also part of the larger formation of rock. Every drop of water was a current life leaving in its path a tiny deposit that helped shape the species, or in the case of humans—the soul. At that moment I understood that the realm of my father's Higher Self was a metaphor his mind had created just as mine had created this cavern, and that his life, my life and your life are like those water droplets. They are expressions of the light and cause something larger to grow, a universe that is becoming. They are sent forth as knights were sent forth to the Crusades.

Chapter Nine

Life as the Universe Experiencing Itself

For most of the modern scientific era, life has been understood as a curious accident of chemistry. According to the conventional account, the early Earth was once a lifeless world of rocks, oceans, and atmosphere. Over immense spans of time, complex molecules formed, organized themselves into primitive cells, and gradually evolved into the extraordinary diversity of organisms that inhabit the planet today. Through natural selection and genetic mutation, simple life forms slowly became more complex, eventually producing plants, animals, and finally human beings.

Within this framework, consciousness is generally regarded as a late and incidental development—an emergent property of biological brains that evolved because it helped organisms survive. Yet this explanation leaves a number of questions unresolved not the least of which is this:

If consciousness is merely a by-product of physical processes, why should the universe produce it at all?

Why should matter organized in a particular way suddenly give rise to subjective experience—the inner sense of being aware?

The question becomes even more intriguing when we consider the long trajectory of evolution. Over billions of years, life on Earth has moved steadily toward increasing complexity. The earliest organisms were simple cells barely capable of interacting with their environment. Later came multicellular organisms with specialized structures—organs for sensing, moving, and responding to the world around them. Eventually evolution produced nervous systems, brains, and the capacity for learning. In some animals, awareness of the surrounding environment became increasingly sophisticated.

Then, quite recently in geological terms, something remarkable appeared: self-awareness. Human beings are not only conscious; they know that they are conscious. We can reflect on our thoughts, contemplate the past and future, and ask questions about the nature of existence itself.

We can wonder why we exist. We can wonder what the universe is.

This development represents one of the most extraordinary transitions in the history of life. For the first time as far as we know, the universe—through human consciousness—became capable of examining itself.

Some scientists and philosophers have suggested that this may not be a coincidence. If consciousness is fundamental rather than accidental, then biological life may represent the means through which consciousness explores the physical world. Under this interpretation, evolution is not merely a process by which

organisms adapt to their environments. It may also be a process through which awareness gradually acquires more complex forms of expression.

Early life may have possessed only the faintest glimmer of awareness—simple responsiveness to environmental conditions. As nervous systems evolved, organisms gained richer sensory experiences and greater capacity for interaction, and with the emergence of complex brains, consciousness acquired the ability to form memories, anticipate events, and make choices. Finally, with the arrival of human beings, consciousness gained something entirely new: the ability to reflect upon itself.

As a result of this progression, it's possible to interpret evolution not only as the history of life but also as the history of awareness becoming increasingly capable of understanding its own existence. The French philosopher and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin [1881-1955], for example, once described evolution as a process moving toward greater interiority—greater depth of awareness within living systems. Whether or not one accepts his broader philosophical conclusions, the pattern he identified is striking. As biological complexity increases, so too does the apparent richness of conscious experience. Simple organisms exhibit minimal responsiveness. Animals with nervous systems display perception, emotion, and learning. Humans demonstrate language, imagination, and abstract thought.

This correlation between biological complexity and conscious capacity raises an intriguing possibility. Perhaps the physical structures produced by evolution are not generating consciousness but allowing it to manifest in increasingly sophisticated ways. Just as a radio with more advanced circuitry can receive a wider range of signals, a more complex brain may allow a broader expression of awareness.

Under this view, biological organisms are not creators of consciousness but instruments through which consciousness interacts with the physical universe. Life becomes the interface between mind and matter.

This perspective would also shed new light on humanity's unique place in the evolutionary story. Among all known forms of life on Earth, human beings appear to possess the most developed capacity for self-reflection. We can examine our own thoughts, question our assumptions, and imagine realities beyond our immediate sensory experience. We can investigate the laws of physics. We can explore the origins of the cosmos. We can ask the deepest question of all: what is consciousness?

When we do so, something remarkable occurs. The universe begins to observe itself. The atoms that formed in ancient stars have assembled themselves into structures capable of awareness. Those structures—our brains and bodies—now allow consciousness to contemplate the very universe from which those atoms came. Seen in this light, the emergence of self-aware life may represent one of the most significant developments in

cosmic history. Through living beings, the universe becomes capable of experience. Through intelligent beings, the universe becomes capable of understanding.

If consciousness truly is fundamental, then the appearance of life may not be a meaningless accident in an indifferent cosmos. It may be part of a deeper process through which reality gradually becomes aware of itself. From this perspective, the evolution of life takes on a new dimension. Biological complexity is not merely a sequence of physical adaptations. It may also represent the unfolding of consciousness into richer and more articulate forms. Human beings may be one stage in that unfolding.

We are not merely observers of the universe. We are participants in its ongoing exploration of itself. The question that began this inquiry—who we are and why we are here—may have an answer both simple and profound.

We are expressions of consciousness. We are the means through which the universe becomes aware of its own existence. Through the experiences of countless living beings—through curiosity, creativity, love, struggle, and discovery—the universe continues its extraordinary journey of self-understanding.

Chapter Ten

How You Create Your Personal Reality

Knowing you are at one with the All, and that you are the All is a magnificent feeling. Alan Watts, who apparently had achieved this state, wrote that at a gut-level, the realization of oneness brings moments of joy that are incredibly intense, that sorrows are looked upon philosophically, and that the sense of union with the universe empowers you. Once you come into harmony with all that is you will arrive in a position to live the totally fulfilling life you were born to live, and you will be positioned to achieve complete self-actualization. Here is a direct quote of some of what Alan Watts wrote about this:

In immediate contrast to the old feeling, there is indeed a certain passivity to the sensation, as if you were a leaf blown along by the wind, until you realize that you are both the leaf and the wind. The world outside your skin is just as much you as the world inside: they move together inseparably, and at first you feel a little out of control because the world outside is so much vaster than the world inside. Yet you soon discover that you are able to go ahead with ordinary activities—to work and make decisions as ever, though somehow this is less of a drag.

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Your body is no longer a corpse which the ego has to animate and lug around. There is a feeling of the ground holding you up, and of hills lifting you when you climb them. Air breathes itself in and out of your lungs, and instead of looking and listening, light and sound come to you on their own. Eyes see and ears hear as wind blows and water flows. All space becomes your mind. Time carries you along like a river, but never flows out of the present: the more it goes the more it stays, and you no longer have to fight or kill it.

When you know that All-Is-One and you are it, you will naturally want to “do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” In an upcoming chapter, I will share some thoughts about how you might go about identifying your unique gifts and talents and how you might determine the most productive and satisfying way to put them to work in service to others. In the meantime, let’s consider how your personal reality is created. If your circumstances and reality at present aren’t what you would like them to be, let’s also look at how you can create the circumstances and reality you would like to have.

It’s a simple fact that beliefs—your beliefs and the beliefs of others—create your reality. This is so because belief—true, unadulterated belief—is powerful. The effectiveness of placebos, for example, has been demonstrated time and again in double blind, scientific tests. The placebo effect—the phenomenon of

patients getting well or feeling better after taking dud pills—is seen throughout the field of medicine, and belief by a patient that he or she has taken real medicine is what causes it. One report says that after thousands of studies, hundreds of millions of prescriptions and tens of billions of dollars in sales, sugar pills are as effective at treating depression as antidepressants such as Prozac, Paxil and Zoloft. What’s more, placebos cause profound changes in the same areas of the brain affected by these medicines, according to this research. For anyone who may have been in doubt, this proves beyond a doubt that thoughts and beliefs can and do produce physical changes in our bodies.

In addition, the same research reports that placebos often outperform the medicines they’re up against. For example, in a trial conducted in April 2002 comparing the herbal remedy St. John’s wort to Zoloft, St. John’s wort cured 24 percent of the depressed people who received it. Zoloft cured 25 percent, but the placebo cured 32 percent.

Taking what one believes to be real medicine sets up the expectation of results, and what a person expects to happen usually does happen. It has been confirmed, for example, that in cultures where belief exists in voodoo or magic, people will actually die after being cursed by a shaman. Such a curse has no power on an outsider who doesn’t believe. The expectation and belief causes the result.

Let me relate a real-life example of spontaneous healing that I believe came about because of her belief and that of others. It

involved a woman I'd known for quite some time I will call Nancy, which is not her real name.

Nancy is a minister's wife. She's a devout Christian—as firm a believer in her religion as a bushman who'd drop dead from a witch doctor's curse is in his. Some years ago, a lump more than half an inch in diameter was discovered in one of her breasts. Her doctor scheduled a biopsy.

A prayer group gathered at her home the night before this procedure was to take place. Her friends prayed not that the lump would be benign, but rather, that it would disappear entirely.

Nancy is a member of a denomination that takes the Bible literally. In Matthew 18:19-20, Jesus is reported to have said, “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.”

As you can imagine, it was more than two or three. It was a living room full. The next morning, upon self-examination, the lump in her breast appeared to have vanished. But nonetheless Nancy kept her appointment at the hospital where her doctor conducted a thorough examination.

The lump indeed was gone. Not a trace could be found, and the bewildered doctor sent her home.

How could a solid lump of tissue disappear? It melted away due to the potent combination of belief and expectation. We indeed create our own reality.

Jesus also said, “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24) Notice the tense change in this verse. Jesus is saying to believe that you already have what you ask for and it will be given to you in the future. Jesus apparently knew that thoughts are things and that what we believe already exists in the nonphysical realm of spirit as a thought form. Thoughts are things, as we will see, that are ready to materialize on the physical plane.

How are beliefs able to do this? It has to do with the different levels of mind. You might call them lower and higher, or subjective and objective. What differentiates the higher from the lower is the recognition of self. Microbes, plants, worms, and fish possess the lower kind only. They are unaware of self. Even higher animals such as squirrels and other animals of the forest are likely totally unaware of self. This is indicated by the fact that an antelope, for example, does not seem to become angry with a lion when the lion kills and eats one of its young. Once the lion is out of sight, the antelope simply resumes going about its business of grazing.

Perhaps some animals, dogs and other pets and perhaps dolphins, elephants and whales, have some level of self-awareness. I once had a dachshund that would let me know his displeasure by pooping on the rug when I left him alone for what he apparently considered too long a time. Certainly all humans, even small children, are self aware, and so it appears that the

higher variety of self-aware thought is possessed in progressively larger amounts as if ascending a scale. At the present stage of evolution on Earth, humans possess the top level of consciousness, and within each of us are all the other levels down to the subjective, non-dual ground-of-being mind.

Here are the levels of mind as related to me by a professor at the College of Metaphysics in Windyville, Missouri:

1. An Individual's Conscious Mind
2. An Individual's Unconscious Mind, accumulated during the current life
3. An Individual's Subconscious Mind, accumulated during all his or her incarnations
4. The Collective Subconscious Mind of humankind, containing the archetypes and what is sometimes called the Akashic Records
5. The Subjective, Non-Dual Ground-of-Being Mind of the Creator

Level Five, the ground of being subjective mind, is the organizing intelligence or mind present everywhere that, among other things, supports and controls the mechanics of life in every species and in every individual. It causes plants to grow toward the sun and to push roots into the soil. It causes hearts to beat and lungs to take in air. It controls all of the so-called involuntary

functions of the body. And the fact is, it controls a lot more, including all physical and metaphysical laws.

Level Two, an individual's unconscious mind, contains the beliefs that have been established in this life, and like all levels after the conscious mind, the unconscious mind is subjective, meaning it cannot think outside of itself. This is why your beliefs create your reality. Your unconscious subjective mind determines your circumstances and your reality because it blends into and is part of the mind we all share and because of this influences events either favorably or unfavorably based on your beliefs. In addition, your beliefs —whether conscious or unconscious — influence the decisions and the choices you make.

Years ago, I read a series of lectures given in the early twentieth century in Scotland by a man named Thomas Troward (1847-1916) that made a lot of sense. He said the conscious mind has power over the unconscious subjective mind, and the subjective mind creates your reality. I discovered the truth of this firsthand in college when I learned to hypnotize others. I would put a willing classmate into a trance and tell him he was a chicken or a dog. Much to the amusement of my audience, he would then act accordingly.

Hypnotism works because the hypnotist bypasses his subject's conscious mind and speaks directly to the subject's subjective mind. Because of this, a subject's conscious, objective mind is unable to question or disregard the hypnotist's directive. Of course, once the subject emerges from the hypnotic trance,

his or her objective mind will take over and will be able to nullify the hypnotist's directive. Nevertheless, while the subject remains in trance, the subject's subjective mind has no choice but to bring into reality what the hypnotist instructs it to do.

The Role of Feelings in Changing Beliefs

If you want to change a belief buried in your unconscious mind, it's important to realize that how you feel about the belief, or you sense of "knowing at a gut level" whether or not it is true, is as important as facts and logic are when it comes to convincing the subjective mind to discard it. So, if you have been brought up to believe and feel, for example, that you are a victim and will never amount to anything, or that people in your family are destined to be overweight, you actually will be a victim and never amount to anything, and you will also be overweight—until, that is, those beliefs change and your subjective mind is reprogrammed.

As stated, the subjective mind cannot step outside of itself and take an objective look. As such, it is capable only of deductive reasoning, which is the kind that progresses from a cause (what is programmed into it) forward to its ultimate end. Having the mind of a deer, a rabbit or a squirrel, it does not stop to question or analyze. This is the same reasoning a criminal might use in committing a crime. He may walk into a room, see a man counting his money, and think: "I need money, so I will take his. Since the man is protecting the money, I will get rid of

him. I'll shoot him. He'll drop to the floor. I will then take the money and run. I'll leave by the window." The subjective mind is non-dual. Right and wrong, good and bad, are never considered—only how to get to the end result.

On the other hand, the conscious mind, being objective and self-aware, can step outside. It can reason both deductively and inductively. To reason inductively is to move backward from result to cause. A police detective, for example, would arrive at the crime scene and begin reasoning backward in an attempt to tell how the crime was committed, and who might have done it.

So, if you have a victim mentality, your subjective mind will filter out all sorts of opportunities that come your way because it determines what you notice and are attracted to out of the literally millions of things you are exposed to each day, and it is determined to make your beliefs come true. Therefore, if your subjective mind is convinced you are a victim, and nothing you do can change that, it will dismiss out of hand all sorts of opportunities that might lead to a better life if you would only notice and take advantage of them.

It follows that if you want to change your life, you must change your beliefs, and this may not be easy. Repetition of the new belief you want to adopt will help, but it may not be enough by itself because, as mentioned above, you have to *feel* the belief you want to adopt is true.

Toward Higher States of Consciousness

There have always been a few people who believe we are sparks of the Divine that have evolved on Earth because of an innate desire to become perfectly balanced in terms of love and wisdom until we finally merge back into the Source at the end of our journey in the physical plane of existence. If this is true, it means that to move ahead we must find the “distortions” within us—what I think of as harmful beliefs or negative thought structures. Some would say they are “shadows.” Whatever term you prefer, you must purge them from your unconscious mind in order to advance.

Since the unconscious, subjective mind does not know what are good beliefs and what are harmful beliefs, and you may not even be aware they are buried there, the first step is to identify the beliefs you need to change. Beliefs are points of view you have about yourself and the world, and points of view can be changed. They are ideas we think about often, and once we have thought frequently enough about one, the unconscious mind assumes it must be important to your survival as the person you think yourself and wish to be. So, the mind condenses it into a belief, once an idea has become a belief, it exists outside of your conscious awareness.

Let’s say because of how you were raised you have a belief you are unworthy of love. If someone asked you if you think you are unworthy of love, you likely would say “No, of course not.”

You might even be insulted that the individual had the nerve to ask you that.

Unfortunately, you cannot simply look into your conscious mind to discover your beliefs. The way to go about it is to observe your own behavior and life situation because how you behave and where you are today are the results of your unconscious beliefs and opinions. As already discussed, in addition to influencing how you react and your choices, your unconscious mind blends with the universal subconscious mind, causing it to bring into your life what you unconsciously believe about yourself and the world outside you.

Let me interject here that a frequent misconception is that your thoughts create your reality. This is not so because thoughts occur only in the conscious mind, and the unconscious mind is the instrument that creates your reality. Only when a thought is given enough significance to create a belief does the thought gain power. Therefore, a thought you consider to be insignificant or untrue is powerless. The truth is, you give all thoughts their meaning, or the lack thereof. As has been said, a subjective mind does not judge whether something is right or wrong, good or evil. You arrived on this planet a blank canvas on which you can paint the life you want, so why not take advantage of that and do so?

To begin, it is important to understand that your ego is not you and does not have your best interests at heart. The ego's primary goal is its own survival. It is fully aware of your

personal reality at all times and constantly judges whether your reality is in sync with your beliefs. It draws upon them to create thoughts and impulses that attract your attention, thereby seeking to reinforce and uphold those beliefs. Therefore, unless you discover what your unconscious beliefs are, the ego will always be in charge, directing your life.

You can determine the beliefs that govern your life by noticing what repeatedly happens in your life. For example, are you a man or a woman who always seems to attract a member of the opposite sex who ends up abusing you? If so, you must have an unconscious belief you are unworthy and deserve abuse. What are other things that consistently go wrong? A buried belief is the reason.

Something else you can do is take note of anything that sets you off or “triggers” you because that is a result of one of your core beliefs. Here’s a simple example: suppose your father was critical of you and frequently criticized you with the result as you grew up you felt that nothing you did was ever good enough. Now let’s say in your current job you have a male boss older than you, and any time he gives you criticism—even though it may be constructive and meant to be helpful—you immediately feel a sense of fear and anxiety. You have just experienced a trigger because you were conditioned by your father from childhood to believe you are incapable of success. The same process is playing out in obvious and subtle ways in every aspect of your life.

If you want to improve your life and move forward in your quest to live every day in the kingdom of heaven on Earth, you need to notice any time you react to a situation. Then think about your reaction and drill down until you identify the core negative belief that brought it about. Once you have put your finger on it, you can begin the process of changing it to what you want to believe about yourself. Once the belief has been expunged, or replaced with one that's positive, your life will change for the better. Some say the energy centers of our body develop blockages based upon such thoughts and perceptions. If one is lacking in some form of self-love or wisdom, that distorted energy will manifest in one or more of the energy centers. In order to unblock these energy centers to become balanced, we must heal the distortions within us.

I'm aware of two ways this can be done, which are known as the "feminine" approach and the "masculine" approach, the feminine being the positive and masculine the negative polarity — the positive being love and the negative being wisdom. This does not mean that love is good and wisdom is evil. Both polarities are equally valid expressions of the Creator, and that achieving the balance between love and wisdom within the self is crucial for spiritual evolution. Both approaches, while different, can be effective. The feminine heals through transmutation, and the masculine heals through recognition. Which one you favor is up to you.

The Feminine Approach to Balancing

The feminine approach to balancing is accomplished through feeling, thereby purging the unwanted thought form through love. It involves going to the root of the negative emotion, feeling it completely, and allowing it to express itself. Rather than meeting it with resistance, the key is to meet it with love and acceptance, and then, although it may be painful, review and to an extent relive the experience that caused it.

The feminine approach is much more painful and intense than the masculine approach, but it is also much more powerful and immediate. A single healing session has the potential to purify an old wound that has been festering for decades. It takes time, practice, and courage to develop the skill of locating repressed emotions and the memories that are their causes so that you can face them and feel them, but the power of the distorted beliefs and points of view they brought about will be healed quickly as a result.

The Masculine Approach to Balancing

Attaining wisdom and understanding is the masculine approach to healing. Illusions are banished by perceiving that that is simply what they are—illusions. Unlike the feminine, which seeks to heal repressed energy by feeling it out of existence, the masculine approach seeks to defuse and disperse the energy out of existence. It is not as immediate and powerful as the feminine

approach, but it is less painful and intense. It is the one I personally prefer, and the one that works best for me. What is required is a permanent shift in perception or attitude, which over time will drain a debilitating thought form of its power.

Here is how I suggest you begin. Step back and observe your own behavior. Once you become aware what is going on, and you are conscious of how you are reacting in different situations, you will have the power to change. To employ this technique successfully, my advice is to put all your energy and passion into your desire for change. You must want the new belief to be true with your entire being. A fraction of a second exists between the moment something happens and your “triggered” reaction. Stop yourself at that instant. Then change what you think and how you react to conform to your new beliefs—even if at first this feels a little awkward. This will take energy away from the old beliefs and direct it onto the new ones, and it won’t be long before you start to feel the truth of your new beliefs and comfortable being your new self.

This is how you change beliefs using the masculine approach: you see them for what they are and *want* them to be. Changing beliefs using this technique takes effort because the unconscious mind needs to see proof it is safe to let go of something that has always been seen as beneficial to your survival. You can do this by constantly and consistently presenting your unconscious mind with the truth and by putting some effort behind it. By acting as though your new way of

reacting is who you are now, your unconscious mind will get the message, and eventually, the desired action will feel natural and come naturally.

Let's get into this a little more deeply. Some people think that they cannot change their beliefs because they cannot get themselves to feel the desired belief is actually true. Even though intellectually and logically they may see an old belief as false, it still feels true, and so they think they are powerless to change. This is because beliefs lead to points of view that you possess, and it takes conscious effort to change a point of view. This is likely why you cannot *feel* what you would like to feel about the new belief you want to adopt. The old points of view are still there at the unconscious level, hanging on, preventing you from releasing the old belief. To let one go, you must admit to yourself, and perhaps even to others you have had conversations with about whatever it is, that you have been wrong—you have been guilty of an error in judgment. In other words, you must identify the points of view and opinions a belief has created and adopt new points of view based on the new belief—thereby replacing the old.

I am living proof that if you really want to, you can change your points of view, and therefore your beliefs through wisdom, knowledge, and your fervent desire to live the truth. As a young man, I was an agnostic bordering on atheist and a confirmed Scientific Materialist. I thought that when you died, that was it, so why not seek pleasure as your number one goal in life. Not

so now by any stretch of the imagination. Have you ever seen *Animal House*? That was me back then.

If this approach doesn't work for you at first, it is because some part of you still isn't completely sure that balance and total empowerment is really what you want. In order to change, you must lose all interest in your old beliefs and the old stories that created them. Think of yourself as the captain of a ship, and you have turned the ship in the direction you want to go. The wake is your past—it's behind you. Leave it there—forget about it. It's gone and will dissipate and dissolve into the ocean.

The truth is, you will never break free from the grip of a belief and point of view until you let it go and forgive whoever and whatever brought it about. That's right—forgive and forget. Uncle Charlie molested you and that's why you fear sex and despise men? Uncle Charlie was a pathetic, dirty old man nobody loved, who is worthy of pity. Forgive him.

Mom said you were lazy and good for nothing? She was angry, she was wrong, and her father was a loser who drank himself into the grave. Forgive her. Holding on to bitterness isn't hurting Uncle Charlie or your mom. It is only holding you back and making you miserable. As soon as you desire empowerment more than anything—even more than revenge or sympathy—as soon as you truly make the effort, cultivate the desire, and jettison old baggage, you will be on your way. Then nothing can stop you. Claim it whether or not it feels true right now. Claim it because you want it to be your reality, and you want to be totally free.

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When something in you starts to resonate with your new belief, you will have begun the process of implanting it in your unconscious mind. You must send a feeling-based message to that part of you. By claiming it because you truly want it, that is what you will be able to do.

Chapter Eleven

Clean Out Your Attic

Give this some thought. As mentioned earlier, you have been probably around and evolving for a long time—all the way back to the first single-cell creatures that formed in the primordial sea—perhaps even before that if Edgar Cayce’s was correct that human souls were with God at the outset. Perhaps that’s true, but at the very least, you are the product of evolution that took place over a mind-boggling 3.77 billion years. Other hominoids that evolved along the way branched off onto dead-end paths or developed into chimpanzees or gorillas and such. Some, like the Neanderthals, made it pretty far along the evolutionary path, but eventually could no longer hack it and became extinct when your ancestors, *Homo sapiens*, came along and took over their territory. But you kept going and going like the Energizer Bunny. You continued evolving until you eventually arrived at the very top of the food chain. There can be no doubt about it at all. You are a member of a very exclusive club—one among the most gifted and highly intelligent creatures that has ever lived. You are the pinnacle of life on earth, and you are now ready to make the leap into the kingdom of heaven.

You can do this because your mind is fantastic. Scientists say we humans typically use only a portion of its capacity. It is the

most important tool you have—an amazing tool that is very much like a garden. You can cultivate it, pull out the weeds, water it, plant the right seeds, and allow them to grow. Or you can neglect it, and let it run wild. Either way, cultivated or not, it must and it will bring forth whatever is allowed to grow in it. There may be ideas and beliefs that were planted in your mind while you were going up that are doing you no good. They are weeds that need to be pulled out and cast aside. Plant good, helpful ideas and beliefs in their place. If good seeds are not planted in your mind and allowed to flourish, destructive weeds will take over and will continue producing more of their kind. Just as a gardener or farmer cultivates his plot of land, weeding it, and growing flowers and the fruits and the vegetables he or she wants on the dinner table, so may a person tend his or her mind, weeding out the useless and destructive thoughts and cultivating only those that have the promise of bearing delicious fruit. If such cultivation does not take place, if discipline is not exercised, the result will not be good because what's in your mind will eventually be what's in your world.

As was discussed, over time the outer conditions of a person's life always come to be in tune with his or her inner state. By the process of planting and cultivating positive, constructive thoughts, you will sooner or later discover that you are the master gardener of your mind—the director of your life; captain of your ship of fate. You will also come to understand that your thoughts and beliefs shape your character, which also creates

your circumstances. Ultimately, what's in your mind is your destiny. In Chapter Eight I mentioned a book by a man named James Allen [1864-1912] that I highly recommend called, *As a Man Thinketh*. It's a short book that's worth reading because it vividly illustrates that each man and each woman creates his or her personal reality with their thoughts and beliefs.

Something else to know along this line is that the unconscious mind does not understand, or perhaps simply doesn't hear the words "no" and "not." Suppose, for example, you're a tennis player. You're in a big match, it's close, and you are now in a tiebreaker. The next point could decide the match. The point has come for your opponent to serve. As you pass by him at the net changing ends, you say, "You're playing great today, Henry. Don't blow it. This is a big point coming up. Whatever you do, do not double fault."

You've started Henry worrying, and on top of that, his unconscious mind doesn't hear or understand the word "not." All it hears is "do double fault," and it takes that as a directive. Try as he might to do otherwise, Henry will double fault.

Actually, I advise you not to play such a dirty trick. As the saying goes, "What goes around, comes around," and you don't want that sort of negative behavior coming back at you. More will be written about this. The important thing to remember is that self-talk and coaching should always be framed in a positive way.

Think Positive and Rid Yourself of Fear

Let's dig into the issue of fear because fears are beliefs and feelings, and beliefs and feelings are what create your reality.

To learn what you fear, as suggested in the previous chapter, tune into your moment-to-moment stream of consciousness and observe what makes you worried, anxious, resentful, uptight, afraid, angry, and so on. Step outside yourself and identify unsettled emotions, tugs and urges that have become part of your programming. Slow down and consider what triggered a negative emotion. Did your temper flare? Why? Why was it so important for things to go a certain way? If you trace what you felt back to its cause, you might come to a particular variety of fear, and it's been said that only two fears are instinctive: the fear of falling and loud noises. Other fears were acquired, and whatever was acquired can be disposed of.

According to some experts, the fears that hold people back can be grouped under one of six headings:

The fear of poverty (or failure)

The fear of criticism

The fear of ill health

The fear of the loss of love

The fear of old age

The fear of death

I've listed the fear of poverty (failure) first because in many ways it can be the most debilitating. It is self-fulfilling in that traits develop that bring it about. For example, are you a procrastinator? An underlying fear of failure is probably the root cause and can be counted upon to produce the result you fear.

Are you overly cautious? Do you see the negative side of every circumstance or stall for the "right time" before taking action? Do you worry (that things will not work out), have doubts (generally expressed by excuses or apologies about why one probably won't be able to perform), suffer from indecision (which leads to someone else, or circumstances, making the decision for you)?

Are you indifferent? This generally manifests as laziness or a lack of initiative, enthusiasm or self-control.

Step back and listen for internal voices that say "can't" or "don't" or "won't" or "too risky" or "why bother?"

How do you get rid of them? Shoo them away.

Whether you are the president of a company, or a bum on Skid Row, the only thing over which you have absolute control is your thoughts.

You may say, I can't control what thoughts pop into my head. True. You may not control what thoughts arise, but you can decide whether to discard one or to keep it. You can decide that it is counterproductive and throw it away, or you can turn it over and over in your mind, nurture it and let it grow. Whatever thoughts you keep will expand and eventually manifest themselves.

Beginning now, each time you catch yourself with a negative thought, a thought that says “you can’t,” “it’s not possible,” “maybe someone else but not me,” get rid of it. Shoo it away.

But you say, “I’m poor, I’m not a good student, I’m not a good salesperson, I’m in the lower third of productivity.”

That’s your ego talking. You are what you are because of your unconscious beliefs. You want the best for yourself, but your unconscious ego-mind is holding you back because of the way it was programmed.

If what I’ve been writing about on this page is a serious problem for you, follow the advice given in the last chapter, and go out and buy some self-help tapes that will plant positive thoughts in your mind in place of the negative ones. Play them to and from work and before you go to sleep at night. Use self-hypnosis tapes. Play them over and over for at least a month. Get all that junk out of your head, and replace it with thoughts that are positive.

What about the other fears? They’re to be discarded in the same manner. If you suffer from fear of criticism, for example, it probably came about as a result of a parent or sibling who constantly tore you down to build himself up. You’ll know this is a problem if you are overly worried about what others might think, if you lack poise, are self-consciousness or extravagant. (Why extravagant? Because of the voice which says you need to keep up with the Joneses.) You must rid yourself of inner voices that tell you to think even twice about what others will say. Take

advantage of that fraction of a second between stimulus and response, stop to remember this, and let it sink in. That's how you can change—how to eliminate destructive fears and beliefs.

Let's think for a minute about the fear of criticism. There have been places and times in history when what others thought was worth worrying about. My great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandmother, Suzanna Martin, for example, was accused of being a witch, falsely convicted, and hanged in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692. She was an old lady. Probably, she looked like a witch. But her downfall was the stir she caused after her husband died. She was able to run the farm successfully without a man around. Think of the talk. Such a thing wasn't possible, or so they believed, without the use of witchcraft.

The opinions of Suzanna Martin's neighbors mattered a great deal. They led to an unpleasant and untimely death.

What about today?

In Iran, China, Russia, or North Korea one might have to watch out what neighbors think or what the "virtue police" hear, but this simply is no longer a valid concern in developed, democratic countries. What others think or don't think of you or anyone else is their problem. Yet worrying about what they think can cause a great deal of misery, create karma that will have to be worked out, and cause interference between your conscious and your subconscious minds that blocks the channel of communication.

What about the fear of ill health?

To rid yourself of this, it should be enough to know that what you worry and think about is eventually what happens. Ever noticed that it's the people who talk about illness, worry about illness, are preoccupied with this or that possible illness, think they feel a pain here or there or were exposed to some germ, who are precisely the people who stay sick most of the time? The power of suggestion is at work.

How about the fear of the loss of love? This one manifests in the form of jealousy and is self-fulfilling like the others. The person you try so hard to hang onto feels smothered, with the result that you end up pushing that person away. Try being yourself. Give them love, but give them room. If they leave you, they would have done so anyway. You can now move on to a truly meaningful relationship.

Next is the fear of old age. This is closely connected to the fear of ill health and the fear of poverty because these are the conditions a person really is concerned about deep down. The power of suggestion is hard at work here, too. If you think you're too old to do this or that, you will indeed be too old.

Consider this. My children are the same flesh and blood as my wife and me. I saw them being born, still connected by umbilical cords. I clipped the cord of one of them myself. My wife was thirty-six at the time our youngest was born. I was fifty-four. Yet the cells in my body, and in my wife's body, and in my son's body all were the most recent in an unbroken chain of cell

division that goes back to the first life on earth. All the cells—my wife’s, my son’s, and mine—are at the end of a chain that is precisely the same age: billions of years. As the physic Egar Cayce often said in trance, “Spirit is the life, mind is the builder. The physical is the result.” Those telomeres get shorter and shorter because you think that you should look and feel older as the years go by. The physical body is the overcoat of the mental body. It gets old and decrepit because a person expects it to. It gets older and decrepit because a person stops learning, growing, and playing a role in the evolution of humankind.

When you’ve learned all you can from this life, the time will come for you to check out. And check out is what you will. No one says you have to be old.

Now we’ve come to that final bugaboo, the fear of death. As you now have seen, there’s nothing to fear except having been fearful in this life. Consider the millions who have had near-death experiences and are no longer afraid to die. They’re convinced they’ll be greeted by their guides as well as by loved ones who have gone before. They look forward to being bathed once again in the all-encompassing light, which many have described as total, unconditional love. Most do not expect to experience pain. It has been reported by many that the spirit exits the body the instant it looks as though death is inevitable.

Only a handful who have had hellish experiences worry about what they may encounter in the nonphysical world. These folks need to know what you know. Each of us creates his own reality.

We experience what we expect to experience, what we think we deserve. In the physical world, this takes time. In the nonphysical world of spirit, which is the medium of the mind, we instantly create our reality, just as we do in dreams. If we expect Hell, the Hell we believe we deserve is the Hell we will get. If we expect Heaven, our vision of Heaven is what we will have.

Anyone who has ever had a lucid dream will understand what I mean. Such a dream is one in which a person realizes he's dreaming. I've had many and I look forward to them because it's more fun than Disney World. As soon as you're aware you're dreaming, you can begin to compose the dream, determine the players, the surroundings, the action. Want to fly over the Grand Canyon? All you have to do is "think" this. Fly over is what you will do, no airplane required. Like anything it takes practice, but I've gotten so I can swoop and turn and loop the loop.

Want to attend a cocktail party populated by Hollywood stars? You'll be there with Robert DeNiro or Julia Roberts. These characters will, of course, be your own thought projections.

You are a dreamer in the Creator's big dream of life, and you can make your waking dream lucid as well. Until now, you may have thought you were at the mercy of conditions outside yourself, that you've either been lucky or unlucky, that chance has brought you where you are. This isn't true. You've brought yourself to this spot, either consciously or unconsciously. If this is not where you want to be, you've arrived because your unconscious mind has been programmed incorrectly, and you

are totally out of touch with your Higher Self. Perhaps you hear snippets from it every now and then but ignore what it's trying to say because of other voices which beat it back with "can't," "don't," "shouldn't," "too risky." These are the words of your ego. Your Higher Self wants you to evolve and to enter the kingdom.

Until you started reading this book, you may have thought you were at the mercy of conditions outside yourself, that you have either been lucky or unlucky, and that chance has brought you where you are today. Not so. You brought yourself to this place, and you did so unconsciously. If this is not where you want to be, you will have to change your programming, which likely took place when you were a child.

The Power of Positive Thinking

I suspect you have heard about "The Power of Positive Thinking," that positive thoughts are much more likely to produce good results than negative thoughts. I'm reminded of *The Little Engine That Could*, an American fairy tale published numerous times in illustrated children's books and movies since its original debut in 1930. The Little Engine was a railroad locomotive that was tasked with pulling a long, heavy train—one that seemed much too large for it—up and over a mountain. But even so, the Little Engine was determined and kept telling itself over and over, "I think I can, I think I can." It was a struggle, but the Little Engine persevered and finally succeeded.

It's a good story and a valuable one to teach young children the benefits of optimism and hard work. The problem is, many of us today were not taught that lesson as children, and in fact, feelings of frustration, discontent, and dissatisfaction were ways of solving problems that many of us "learned" as infants. For example, if a baby is hungry, he or she expresses discontent by crying. Lo and behold, a warm and tender hand appears magically out of nowhere and brings a bottle of milk. Later on, if the baby is uncomfortable, again, he or she will again express dissatisfaction, and the same warm, comforting hands magically appear and solve the problem. That's fine for babies but, unfortunately, many children continue to get their way and have their problems solved by indulgent parents merely by continuing to express their feelings of frustration when things don't work the way they want. All they have to do is feel frustrated and dissatisfied, express their dissatisfaction, and the problem will be solved. Sometimes what have become known as "helicopter parents" continue to cater to their children in this way all the way through high school, college, and beyond.

This way of life "works" for infants, and for some children. But it does not work in adult life when a person is out in the world on his or her own. Yet many continue to expect, perhaps unconsciously, that it will work. They seem to think that by feeling discontented and expressing their grievances—if only they feel put upon enough—life, or someone will take pity on them, rush to their aid and solve their problems. Let me assure you that 99.99

percent of the time that is not going to happen. It is my advice that you take responsibility for every aspect of your life.

Imagine, for example, you land an entry-level job as a management trainee in a big corporation. With you in training are several other bright young men and women fresh out of business school. Imagine the way things work in this company is often not to your liking. Management trainees, for example, are relegated to cubicles with five-foot-high walls affording little or no privacy, while the senior staff all have corner offices with large windows and spectacular views of the East River. You spend a good deal of time grumbling to yourself and to others about this injustice, subconsciously believing that will get you out of that cubicle and into a corner suite. Your fellow trainees, on the other hand, spend their time making positive suggestions and anticipating and providing for the needs of customers as well as for fellow workers higher up on the corporate ladder. Whom do you suppose is most likely to be first to break out of his or her cubicle? The one who constantly complained? Or the one that consistently delivered the goods?

Don't you feel a twinge inside that intuitively "knows" the positive attitude, the attitude of service to others, will inevitably win the day? That "twinge" is a message from something inside you that knows the correct answer called "intuition."

If you have been ignoring that feeling when it comes, now is the time for you to begin recognizing such messages. They have a light and airy feeling to them, even though they may seem

to run counter to egocentric notions, such as, “The first order of business is to look out for number one.” That egocentric notion may work in the short term, but in the long term, it is bad advice. The fact is that it’s always best to under-promise and over-deliver to customers and bosses—as well as to anyone else for that matter. By over-delivering, your reputation grows as you create positive vibes and positive opinions of you by those with whom you come in contact. A reputation that you are someone who can be counted on can only lead to good outcomes and opportunities for you in the long run.

Let’s consider for a moment why some people may spend their valuable time on earth grumbling and complaining away opportunities to get ahead. It’s often because they have felt frustrated and defeated for so long—ever since they were babies in a crib and while growing up with indulgent parents—that those feelings have become ingrained. Their minds are in a kind of holding pattern, and it’s never occurred to them to step outside of themselves in order to get in touch with intuition that would tell them, if they would only listen, that grumbling and complaining are counterproductive and accomplish nothing. Until they wise up, they will continue—to their own detriment—to radiate those feelings, and as night follows day, their discontent will lead to failure.

No matter what your mindset, if you want to change it, it’s important to realize, as has been discussed, that beliefs and feelings are intertwined. It might be said that feelings are the soil

in which thoughts and ideas grow. If you are habitually grumpy and in a bad mood, you need to lighten up and begin seeing the glass half full. Moreover, when you begin working toward a goal, try thinking how you will feel when you reach it—and then actually make yourself feel that way. I’m serious. Conjure up the feeling of “Success!” The thrill of accomplishment will communicate the belief to your unconscious mind that it’s inevitable you are going to achieve what you have set out to accomplish. The feeling creates the belief, and the belief creates the feeling. A mental model of success will be etched into your unconscious, and that the desired outcome will surely come about.

Let’s say you are pursuing a challenge and fervently want to accomplish it. Assuming you have the education, the knowledge, and the qualifications required to reach your goal, and assuming you feel strongly about it at an emotional level, you will almost certainly realize success. This will happen because your unconscious mind, which is connected to the universal subconscious and all other minds, will go to work and act like a magnet, drawing to you what you need. The greater your desire, the more powerfully your unconscious mind will strive to produce results.

In summary, belief and emotions are the keys. It’s important to feel the joy of having accomplished what you set out to accomplish before it actually happens. This will convince your subconscious the goal has already been reached and the universal mind will cause it to be reached as a result.

Be Likable and Appealing to Others

Leaving psychological suffering behind will require effort and work, and that means things will be easier if you have help along the way. The most likely source of that help will be friends, partners, and mentors. Obviously, the going will be easier and you will attract more help if people like you and want to work with you. Therefore, it should go without saying that it's important to be someone others want to be around—someone people would like and want as a friend. That means you need to be someone who “talks the talk,” and “walks the walk.” Perhaps you know a person who does the opposite. If not, you are likely to come across someone like that in your business dealings, so be prepared and never, ever be one of them. In public such people talk openly—some even brag and boast—about the importance of having integrity and doing the right thing. But in private it's a different story. They bad mouth people and do things that aren't consistent with the honest-John public persona they hope to project. People quickly see through these phonies. As the old saying goes, “Say what you mean, and mean what you say,” and people will respect you for doing so.

Obey the Laws of Physics

If you are a materialist and think matter is all that exists—that there is no God and nothing spiritual—you might come to the conclusion you can do whatever you want, harm whomever you want, and never have to suffer any consequences. But that

is not how things work. I agree it may work for a while, but eventually you'll get back what you gave out because, just as there are laws of physics, there are laws of metaphysics. People must obey them, and nations must as well. Take Japan and Germany in World War II as examples. Both countries had astonishing victories in the beginning. Each country benefited from a national zeitgeist that they were invincible. But they ended up being crushed because the atrocities they committed came back upon them with a vengeance.

Always Keep Your Life in Balance

You are probably familiar with the ancient Chinese symbol composed of a white “yin” interlocking a black “yang” that represents the dual nature of things. It symbolizes that we live in a world that is composed of opposites: Up, down, black, white, good and evil. Without the tension opposites create, nothing would or could exist—everything would fall apart. Follow the advice of this book and enter the kingdom but do not allow complacency to set in. Always seek new challenges, realizing that without one, self-destruction may result. Always strive to continue growing.

It can also be comforting to know there can be no growth without at least some discontent. Deep within, you know what is best for you. There is an urge built into you that pushes you to strive for growth, and for most of us, growth will not continue without some agitation and discontent. So study your dissatis-

factions. They will tell you what you are about to leave behind and possibly point you in a new direction. Be willing to be uncomfortable. It is the way to grow.

As you contemplate your future course, it is also important to realize you can only attract that which you feel worthy of. Self-esteem is critical to success. That's why I urge you to get rid of the psychological baggage. The truth is you are not what you have, and you are not what you do. Beneath your fear and negative programming, you are perfect—an enlightened soul, fully self-actualized and a living example of unconditional love. The more you can let go of fears, the higher your self esteem will be, and the more options you will have and more risks you can take. The more you like yourself, the more others will like you, and the more worthy you will feel.

You can have anything you want if you can give up the belief that you cannot have it—assuming what you want does not conflict with someone else's belief. If, for example, you desire a fulfilling, one-to-one relationship, but demand it to be with a particular person, you are not operating in harmony with the universe.

Another example is in the area of accomplishment. You must get the education necessary to create what you want. "Where your attention goes, your energy flows." You attract what you believe you are and that which you concentrate upon. If you are negative, you draw in and experience negativity. If you are loving, you draw in and experience love. You can attract to you

only those qualities you possess. So, if you want peace and harmony in your life, you must become peaceful and harmonious.

Something else to understand is that a stronger emotion will always dominate a weaker one. Every idea can be the beginning of a manifestation—although unless you nurture it, think about and develop feelings about the idea, it will not become expressed in reality. It does not matter which idea you consciously favor, even know to be desirable, a stronger emotion will nullify a weaker one, and the strongest emotion will begin to permeate all aspects of your activities. For example, if you are emotionally focused on the sexual desirability of a particular person, you may begin to create circumstances that will increase the likelihood of an eventual sexual union.

It is also important to realize that new information you accept into your mind will destroy previous information of a similar nature. Once a pathway of information has been created in you, a new viewpoint will develop and prevail unless new information comes in to replace and destroy it. Let's say, for example, you fall off and get hurt while horseback riding. That may be the end of your experience with horses because you will have just been programmed negatively about horseback riding. This is why instructors always urge new riders to climb back aboard immediately. You need new, positive input to erase the trauma of the fall.

The mind is engaged in an endless state of growth and reorganization. As a result, it is possible to reprogram yourself. You can do this by using the feminine or masculine techniques described previously, or some combination of the two, and by reinforcing new beliefs and points of view by repeatedly listening to success-meditation recordings and using visualization techniques. If you feel anxiety in crowds, imagine yourself relaxed in a crowd of people. When you fear doing something, and yet have the courage to do it anyway, you will soon do a mental flip-flop and may even become addicted to doing it.

Here is a case in point. Suppose you fear skydiving, or skiing fast almost straight down a steep mountain. If you force yourself to do so anyway, the experience will release endorphins, which are produced by the central nervous system and the pituitary gland and can produce a feeling of euphoria very similar to that produced by opiates. The result can be that you become somewhat addicted to skiing fast down mountains and skydiving.

You have within you everything required to make your earthly incarnation a paradise if you choose to accept that which is your divine birthright. We live in a universe of abundance, although the majority of humans populating our planet appear to view it as a universe of scarcity.

Heed the call. Take the leap. But do not go off half-cocked. Plan it out. Take a full day. Take more than one. Take as many as necessary to develop your plan.

The AI Bubble

No matter what else you may decide to do, always remember the secret of life. What follows is a short book I wrote a few years ago that will give you more insight into the true nature of reality

Chapter Twelve

The Discovery That Changes Everything

For more than three centuries humanity has lived under a powerful assumption that the universe is fundamentally mechanical. Matter came first. Consciousness appeared later as a by-product of complex brains. Human beings, according to this view, are biological machines that briefly become aware before disappearing again into the silence of matter. This idea shaped modern science, medicine, education, and culture, but as we have seen throughout this book, the evidence increasingly suggests that this assumption may have the true nature of things backwards.

The emerging picture of reality is very different. Rather than consciousness arising from matter, matter may arise within consciousness. Instead of the brain producing awareness, the brain may function more like a receiver or interface—thus allowing a deeper field of consciousness to interact with the physical world. If true, human beings are not accidental by-products of a blind universe, but rather, we may represent one way the universe is becoming aware of itself.

The Pattern Hidden in the Evidence

Taken individually, many of the phenomena discussed in this book might seem puzzling or controversial:

- Near-death experiences suggest that awareness can persist when brain activity is severely impaired or non-existent.
- Something that hasn't been discussed is children's memories of past lives. This phenomenon has been studied for about 60 years by the Division of Perceptual Studies [DOPS] at the University of Virginia, and of approximately 2500 reported cases, more than 1700 have been verified in that someone fitting the child's description in terms of names, dates, and matter of death has been identified. This challenges the idea that personal identity begins at birth.
- Experiments in parapsychology, mediumship, and remote viewing indicate that our minds extend beyond the boundaries of the body.
- Quantum physics reveals that matter itself is not solid but a dynamic pattern of energy and probability.

Neuroscience continues to confront the mystery that subjective experience—the inner world of awareness—cannot be explained in purely physical terms. Each of these findings points toward consciousness as the foundation of all that is. As previously stated, Max Planck, the father of quantum theory, reached precisely this conclusion nearly a century ago when he said:

“I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness.”

At the time, few scientists were prepared to follow that idea to its logical conclusion. Today, however, the evidence pointing in that direction is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

A Universe Becoming Aware

If consciousness truly is fundamental, then the story of the universe takes on a very different meaning. From the first atoms formed in ancient stars to the emergence of life on Earth, the cosmos has been evolving toward greater complexity. With complexity came nervous systems. With nervous systems came awareness. And with the appearance of human beings came something extraordinary: self-awareness.

Perhaps for the first time in cosmic history, the universe gained the ability to reflect upon itself. Through human consciousness, the universe can ask questions about its own origin. Through human curiosity, it can explore the laws that govern its structure. Through human imagination, it can envision possibilities that do not yet exist. In this sense, the evolution of life may represent the gradual awakening of the cosmos.

Why We Are Here

If the emerging scientific picture is correct, then the ancient question—*Why are we here?*—may have a surprisingly simple answer. We are here to experience. We are here to learn. We are

here to participate in and contribute to the unfolding of consciousness.

Every human life adds something to that process. Every experience—joyful or painful—expands the range of what consciousness understands about itself and the universe that it has created and inhabits.

Seen from this perspective, existence is not meaningless. It is exploratory. Life becomes a vast experiment in awareness.

The Future of the Scientific Worldview

History shows that scientific revolutions often begin slowly. New ideas first appear as anomalies—observations that do not fit the existing framework. For a time those anomalies are dismissed or ignored, but eventually they accumulate until the old framework can no longer hold. At that point a new worldview emerges.

Today, evidence from physics, neuroscience, psychology, and consciousness research suggests we may be approaching such a turning point as the mechanistic model of reality that dominated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries more and more displays its limitations. The result may be that a deeper understanding of consciousness will become one of, if not the major defining scientific discoveries of the twenty-first century.

What This Means for You

If consciousness is fundamental, then you are far more than a biological machine. Your awareness is not merely the

temporary by-product of neurons firing inside a skull. You are an expression of the same underlying consciousness that gives rise to the universe itself.

This realization has profound implications. It means that creativity, purpose, and meaning are not illusions generated by chemistry. They are expressions of a deeper dimension of reality. It means that the human search for truth is not accidental, but rather, an important way the universe is exploring itself.

The Great Adventure

For thousands of years philosophers, mystics, and spiritual traditions have suggested that consciousness is the ultimate foundation of existence. Science is now beginning to rediscover that possibility. If the evidence presented in this book points in the right direction, then we are living at a remarkable moment in intellectual history. Humanity may be on the verge of a new understanding of reality—one that reconnects science with the deepest questions about life, meaning, and the nature of mind.

The implications of that discovery may be greater than any scientific revolution that came before because it would finally answer the questions that have puzzled humanity for centuries:

Who are we?

Why are we here?

The AI Bubble

The answers may be both humbling and inspiring. We are the universe becoming aware of itself, and the exploration has only just begun.

Afterword

A New Idea That's 300 Years Old

I want to leave with something more to think about. In the early eighteenth century, an Irish philosopher named George Berkeley [1685-1753] set out to challenge what seemed like the most obvious fact in the world: that physical objects exist independently of our minds. From Berkeley's point of view, this assumption—so natural that few people would ever question it—was not only mistaken but unnecessary. He believed that once we examined our experience carefully, we would discover something surprising:

What we call the physical world is not made of matter at all, but of ideas—ideas perceived by minds, and ultimately sustained by an infinite mind.

Berkeley began with a simple observation. Everything we know about the world comes through experience. We see colors, hear sounds, feel textures, taste flavors, and smell scents. These are the building blocks of what we call reality. Berkeley, however, noticed something subtle.

We never experience “matter” itself. We experience only perceptions—the redness of an apple, the hardness of a table, the warmth of sunlight. These qualities exist only as they are perceived.

Try to imagine an object that exists completely unperceived—no color seen, no texture felt, no sound heard.

Berkeley argued that this is impossible.

The moment we attempt to imagine such a thing, we are already perceiving it in our own mind. The very idea of an object existing without being perceived collapses into contradiction. From this he drew his famous conclusion:

“To be is to be perceived” (*esse est percipi*).

This did not mean, however, that Berkeley believed the world was an illusion or a dream. On the contrary, he insisted that the world is real—deeply and reliably real. Nevertheless, however, its reality does not consist in being made of matter. It consists in being experienced by minds. When you see a tree, what exists is not a material object independent of all observers. What exists is a coherent set of perceptions: color, shape, texture, position—held together in an orderly way. These perceptions are real, but Berkeley did not believe that there was some additional, unseen “material substance” underlying them.

Of course, Berkeley’s detractors raised what seems a reasonable question: If objects exist only as they are perceived, what happens when no human is looking at them? Does the tree disappear when no one is in the forest to see it?

Berkeley’s answer was that the continuity and stability of the world are guaranteed because everything is always perceived by an infinite mind.

The mind of God, or what I prefer to refer to as “Source.”

Even when no human observer is present, the tree continues to exist because it is perceived by God. The world does not flicker in and out of existence because it is constantly held in being by a divine awareness.

If true, reality is not a collection of inert objects. It is a living field of perception, sustained by a universal consciousness.

Human beings, in Berkeley’s philosophy, are also minds—but finite ones. We perceive the world, but we do not create it. The patterns of our experience—the laws of nature, the regularities of perception—are not invented by us. They are presented to us in a consistent and intelligible way.

Berkeley believed this order reflects the activity of God. The world, in effect, is a kind of divine language—a structured system of perceptions through which God communicates with finite minds. When we observe nature, we are not discovering an independent material reality. We are interpreting a pattern of ideas that has been arranged for us.

In this framework, what we call “physical objects” are not substances but bundles of ideas. A table, for example, is not a material thing existing beneath perception. It is a stable collection of sensory qualities—its shape, its color, its solidity—coherently organized and consistently experienced. These qualities exist in minds, and the consistency of their arrangement reflects the ongoing activity of the divine mind.

Berkeley's view leads to a striking conclusion about human identity. If the world is composed of ideas in the mind of God, then we ourselves—our perceptions, our thoughts, our experiences—exist within that same field of awareness. We are not separate from reality in the way materialism suggests, as isolated observers inside a physical universe. Instead, we are participants within a universal consciousness.

In a profound sense, each of us can be understood as an idea in the mind of God—not a passive or insignificant idea, but an active center of perception, capable of awareness, understanding, and relationship.

Berkeley's philosophy was radical in his time, and it remains provocative today. It challenges the common assumption that matter is the foundation of reality and that mind emerges from it. Instead, it proposes the reverse:

Mind is fundamental, and what we call matter is a structured appearance within it.

Though his ideas were initially met with skepticism, they have echoed through centuries of philosophical thought. Later thinkers, from idealist philosophers to some interpreters of modern physics, have revisited the possibility that reality is not as solid and independent as it seems. In this sense, Berkeley's vision can be seen not as a rejection of reality, but as a redefinition of it.

The world is not less real than we thought. It is, perhaps, more intimate.

For Berkeley, the universe is not a machine made of inert parts. It is a continuous act of perception, sustained by an infinite mind.

If George Berkeley was correct, we find ourselves within that act—not as accidental byproducts of matter, but as conscious participants in a reality that is, at its deepest level, mental. In the end, his philosophy invites a quiet but profound shift in perspective:

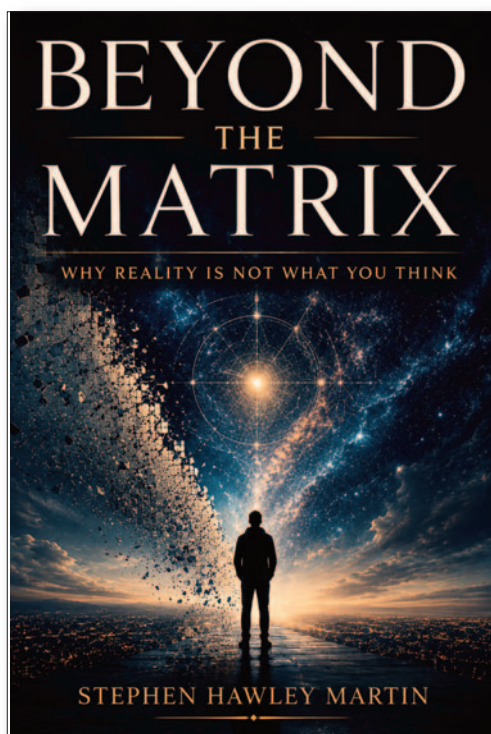
What we take to be a world “out there” may in fact be a world within consciousness itself—a reality in which to exist is to be perceived, and to perceive is to participate in the unfolding awareness of the whole.

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About the Author

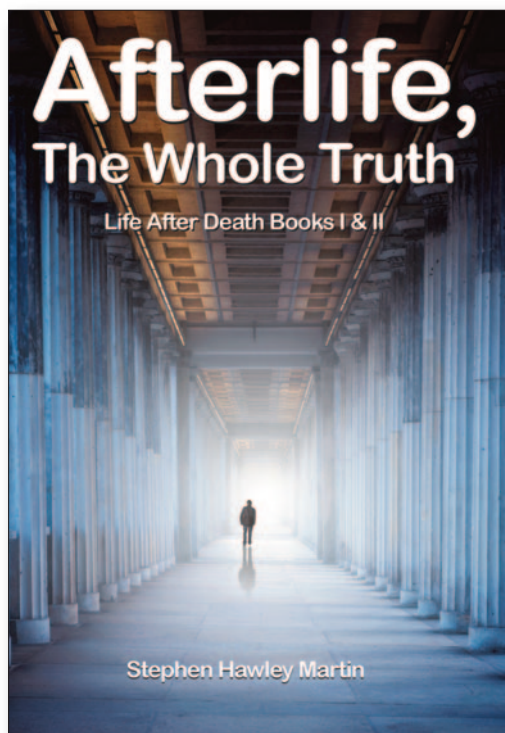


Stephen Hawley Martin is the author of more than three-dozen books, including five published novels, half a dozen business management titles, and quite a few self-help books and metaphysical investigations. He is a former principal of the world-renowned advertising agency, The Martin Agency, the firm that created the GEICO Gecko and “Virginia is for lovers.” Listed in *Who’s Who in America*, and best known as an award-winning author, Steve is the only three-time winner of the *Writer’s Digest* Book Award, having won twice for fiction and once for nonfiction. He has also won First Prize for Visionary Fiction from *Independent Publisher*; First Prize for Nonfiction from *USA Book News*, a Bronze Metal for Visionary fiction as well as a Five-Star Winner’s Award for Romantic Suspense from *Readers’ Choice Book Reviews*. He is actively looking for books to ghostwrite as well as other authors’ manuscripts to edit and publish. To get in touch with Stephen, and to find out about other books he has written visit his website: www.shmartin.com.



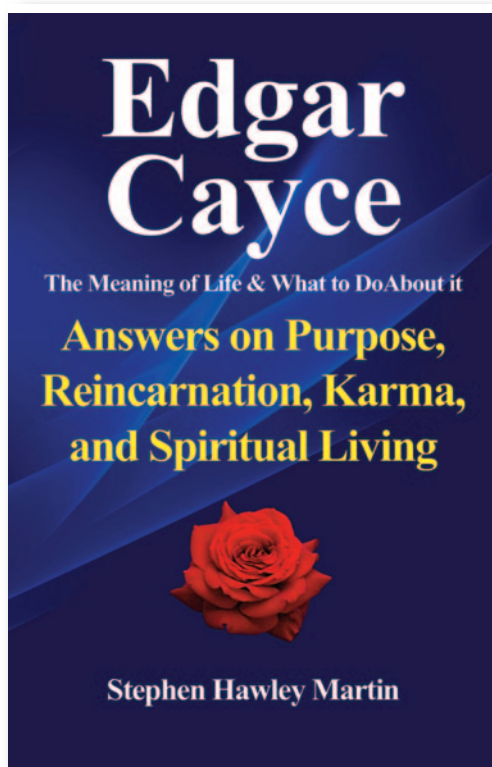
What if science has misunderstood consciousness—and reality? Combining near-death research, psychology, neuroscience, and ancient wisdom, this book explores evidence that you may be far more than your brain, and reality far stranger than you've been led to believe. But the biggest illusion may not be the world around you—it may be who you think you are.

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