

BEYOND THE MATRIX

WHY REALITY IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK



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*Anyone who has had an experience of mystery knows that
there is a dimension of the universe that is not that
which is available to his senses.*

— Joseph Campbell [1904=1987]

Chapter One: The Illusion of Reality

Hindus call it “Maya,” the illusion of reality that we experience through the five physical senses. Most people in the western world never question it, but some of us, particularly at this moment in the twenty-first century, move through life feeling that something about reality as we experience it doesn’t quite add up. This doesn’t mean there’s something inherently wrong with us. We might get good grades in school, succeed professionally, function well socially, and yet privately sense that the materialist model of reality falls short that we learned about in school and college.

We sense that consciousness is somehow deeper than brain chemistry and electrons jumping between neurons, that identity extends beyond social roles and one’s chosen, or not so chosen occupation, and that the world we experience may actually represent only a narrow band of a much larger reality.

If this resonates with you, you have opened the right book. For generations, such intuitions were dismissed as fantasy, wishful thinking, or spiritual naïveté, but more and more peoples’ eyes are opening to the possibility that’s not actually the case, and many scientists and seekers alike are now attempting to pull back the veil.

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The science taught in the nineteenth, twentieth, and now the twenty-first century told us to regard consciousness as nothing more than a byproduct of neural activity and that human beings are nothing more than highly sophisticated biological machines that pop out of their mothers' wombs and function for a brief period of time before ceasing to exist and returning to oblivion. Yet despite extraordinary advances in science and technology, this explanation has failed to resolve some of the deepest questions human beings continue to ask: Why does subjective experience exist at all? Why does consciousness feel irreducible to matter? Why do near-death experiences, terminal lucidity, mystical states, synchronicities, and other anomalies continue to challenge purely material explanations of mind?

At the same time, a growing number of thoughtful people have begun quietly reexamining assumptions once considered settled. Neuroscientists debate the "hard problem" of consciousness. Near-death researchers document experiences that strain conventional models of mind and brain. Psychologists influenced by the work of Carl Jung increasingly recognize that human beings possess depths of psyche that modern materialism struggles to explain. Philosophers, physicists, and consciousness researchers have begun reconsidering the possibility that consciousness may not be produced by matter at all, but may instead be more fundamental than previously believed. This book explores that possibility.

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It has not been written as an attack on science, but as an examination of where science may be headed. Nor is it an attempt to persuade readers to adopt a rigid metaphysical system or religious doctrine. Rather, it is an exploration of an emerging pattern—a convergence appearing across psychology, consciousness research, near-death studies, spiritual philosophy, and human experience itself.

What makes this convergence particularly striking is that radically different voices often seem to describe the same underlying structure of reality. The teachings presented in *The Spirits' Book*, the psychic readings of Edgar Cayce, the explorations of consciousness by Robert Monroe, the psychology of Carl Jung, the near-death experience [NDE] movement, and even modern cultural myths like *The Matrix* all point toward a surprisingly similar proposition: that we human commonly mistake a limited and conditioned version of reality for reality itself, and that genuine awakening involves recognizing a deeper level of consciousness that is hidden beneath the surface of everyday life.

Whether these convergences ultimately prove to be metaphysically true, psychologically symbolic, or some combination of both, they raise questions that can no longer be casually dismissed. The possibility being explored by some scientists, that consciousness is more fundamental than matter, if found to be true, would profoundly alter how we understand

our personal identity, death, meaning, morality, suffering, and the purpose of human life itself.

This book is an invitation to examine those questions seriously, thoughtfully, and without fear.

Awakening From the Illusion of the World We Experience

As mentioned above, something truly remarkable I've noticed over the years is that radically different systems of thought—separated by centuries, disciplines, and culture—often converge on the same essential insight. Though those I am about to point to are not alone in doing so, as you will see. A nineteenth-century spiritual philosophy, a twentieth-century psychologist, and a modern science-fiction film would not seem likely companions. Yet *The Spirits' Book*, published in 1857, the psychology of Carl Jung who lived from 1875 to 1961, and *The Matrix*, a film released in 1999, all revolve around a strikingly similar proposition: that human beings mistake a limited and conditioned version of reality for reality itself, and that genuine liberation requires awakening to a deeper truth about consciousness, identity, and purpose.

In *The Matrix*, the main character, Thomas Anderson, begins as an ordinary man living inside a world he assumes is real. Only gradually does he discover that the reality surrounding him is a constructed system designed to absorb attention, suppress awareness, and keep human beings psychologically asleep. The power of the film lies not merely in its technological imagery,

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but in the intuition it touches in the viewer—that much of what people accept as reality may, in fact, be a kind of conditioning.

Carl Jung approached the same insight psychologically rather than technologically. He believed most people lived their lives identified with what he called the ego or persona—the socially conditioned personality, the mask constructed through habit, expectation, fear, ambition, and adaptation. For Jung, however, the ego is not the true Self. It is only a fragment of the psyche, a provisional identity mistaken for the whole. Beneath ordinary awareness lies a deeper reality containing unrealized aspects of the Self, symbolic structures, hidden motivations, and what Jung regarded as the greater organizing principle of the psyche itself. Individuation—the central goal of Jungian psychology—was the lifelong process of awakening from identification with the surface personality and becoming psychologically whole.

The Spirits' Book expresses the same idea in spiritual terms. Human beings, it teaches, are not fundamentally physical organisms but immortal spirits temporarily incarnated in material form. Earthly identity is partial and temporary. The deeper self is the evolving spirit, and incarnation itself produces a kind of forgetfulness. Immersed in material concerns, social competition, desire, fear, and ego attachment, people lose awareness of their larger nature and spiritual continuity.

The parallels presented in these works are difficult to ignore. In all three, humanity exists in a condition of partial sleep. In

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The Matrix, people remain trapped because the illusion is comfortable and socially reinforced. Jung believed individuals remain psychologically unconscious because confronting the deeper Self is difficult and destabilizing. Spiritism teaches that material existence easily absorbs consciousness into external concerns, obscuring spiritual awareness. In each case, the ordinary condition of humanity is not one of full awareness, but of limitation mistaken for completeness.

Even more striking is that in all three frameworks awakening is not achieved through information alone. Neo does not become free merely because someone explains the Matrix to him. He must undergo transformation. He must confront fear, transcend limitation, and cease identifying with imposed definitions of reality. Jung taught precisely the same principle. Psychological growth requires confronting one's shadow, integrating rejected aspects of the Self, and relinquishing ego dominance. Knowledge without transformation changes nothing. Likewise, *The Spirits' Book* insists that spiritual evolution depends not on belief alone, but on moral and experiential growth—through humility, self-awareness, love, suffering, and choice.

All three systems also suggest that reality itself is deeply connected to consciousness. In *The Matrix*, perception constructs experience so completely that the apparent rules of reality become malleable once consciousness changes. Jung argued that inner reality and outer experience are intertwined through symbolic structures and unconscious projection. Spiritism

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teaches that even after death, individuals gravitate toward environments reflecting their moral and psychological condition—what the author, Allan Kardec [1804-1869] called “moral affinity.” Consciousness is not merely observing reality from outside; it participates in shaping experience itself.

This naturally leads to another shared insight: fear and ego attachment imprison human beings more effectively than any external force. In *The Matrix*, the system maintains control through fear, distraction, dependency, and unconscious compliance. Jung believed the ego resists individuation because it fears uncertainty and dissolution. Spiritism similarly teaches that pride, selfishness, material attachment, and ignorance keep consciousness confined to lower states of development. In every case, liberation requires movement beyond ego-centered identity.

Beyond this lies perhaps the most important convergence of all: the idea that human life has a developmental purpose.

For Jung, the purpose of life was individuation—the gradual integration of the psyche into greater wholeness. In *The Spirits’ Book*, the purpose of earthly existence is spiritual evolution through repeated experience, moral growth, and expanded awareness. Even *The Matrix*, beneath its action and spectacle, is fundamentally a story of human transformation. Neo evolves from passive conformity into conscious participation, responsibility, sacrifice, and love.

Love, in fact, emerges in all three systems as the highest transformative principle. Not sentimental love, but a state of

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consciousness that transcends domination, fear, separation, and ego fixation. In Spiritism, love and charity are the highest spiritual laws. Jung increasingly viewed psychological integration as inseparable from reconciliation and human connectedness. In *The Matrix*, love ultimately becomes the force that transcends the system itself.

Seen together, these traditions appear less like isolated philosophies and more like different expressions of the same underlying pattern. One speaks in spiritual language, another in psychological language, another in mythic-technological imagery. Yet each suggests that ordinary perception is incomplete, that the ego mistakes the fragment for the whole, and that awakening involves a transformation of consciousness rather than mere acquisition of facts.

The enduring power of these ideas may stem from the possibility that they are not simply imaginative constructions, but reflections of something deeply intuited within human experience itself: that we are more than the identities we perform, more than the systems that condition us, and perhaps that we are participants in a reality far larger than the material surface appearance of it suggests.

In that sense, awakening is not an escape from reality. It is moving beyond the Matrix in order to enter into a fuller, more satisfying version of it.

That, my friend, is my goal for you, the reader of this book.

Chapter Two: The Soul's Journey

What if human beings are not physical creatures who happen to possess consciousness, but immortal conscious beings temporarily inhabiting physical form? What if death is not an end but a transition, suffering not punishment but education, and earthly life not an isolated accident but one stage in a much longer journey of spiritual development?

These are the questions at the center of *The Spirits' Book*, the foundational work of modern Spiritism compiled and edited by nineteenth-century French educator Allan Kardec. First published in 1857, the book presents itself not as speculative philosophy or traditional theology, but as a structured body of teachings communicated through advanced spirits and organized into a systematic exploration of reality, consciousness, morality, and human destiny.

At its core, *The Spirits' Book* proposes a radically different understanding of existence—one in which consciousness is fundamental, the soul survives bodily death, and the purpose of life is the gradual evolution of the spirit toward greater wisdom, compassion, and alignment with divine law.

The book begins with the question of God, defining God not as an anthropomorphic ruler, but as the supreme intelligence and

first cause of all things. God, in this framework, is infinite, eternal, unchanging, and perfectly just. Human beings cannot fully comprehend the divine essence, but they can infer its existence through the order and intelligibility of creation. The universe itself reflects lawfulness, purpose, and underlying intelligence.

From there, the book introduces one of its central propositions: reality consists of both material and spiritual dimensions. Matter is real, but it is not ultimate. Behind the visible, physical world exists a spiritual order inhabited by conscious beings called spirits. Spirits are not supernatural entities in the traditional sense, but the true nature of all human beings. According to the book, every person is fundamentally an immortal spirit temporarily incarnated in physical form.

Spirits, however, are not perfect beings when created. They begin simple and inexperienced and evolve gradually through experience, choice, and moral development. This process unfolds across multiple lifetimes through reincarnation, which *The Spirits' Book* presents as the central mechanism through which justice, growth, and learning become possible.

Without reincarnation, the book argues, many aspects of human existence would appear arbitrary and unjust. Why are some born into suffering while others are born into privilege? Why do some possess extraordinary talents early in life while others struggle? Why do individuals seem morally and psychologically unequal from birth? Spiritism answers these

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questions by proposing that each life is connected to and flows from previous ones, and that the soul carries forward tendencies, lessons, debts, and opportunities from prior incarnations. It is interesting to note that much of this reflects some of the findings and conclusions resulting from more than 60 years of study and research into children's memories of past lives by the Division of Perceptual Studies [DOPS] at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. If you want to know more about this research and the findings, I recommend that you read my book, *Life Goes On: Evidence for Reincarnation That Makes Sense to Christians & Open-Minded Skeptics*.

Earthly life, according to *The Spirits' Book*, is not random. It is educational. The human body, therefore, is described as a temporary instrument through which the spirit gains experience in the material world. Why leave the spirit world to come here? Physical incarnation creates limitation, resistance, and forgetfulness, conditions that are necessary for growth. Human beings enter life partially veiled from their deeper spiritual identity so that choices may be made freely and authentically rather than through coercion or overwhelming certainty.

Within this framework, suffering takes on a radically different meaning than the way it is often regarded today. It is not viewed as divine punishment or evidence of abandonment by God. Instead, it is understood as corrective, developmental, and often self-created through the misuse of free will. Every action produces consequences, not because God imposes

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arbitrary rewards and punishments, but because moral law is built into the structure of existence itself.

Spiritism rejects the idea of eternal damnation. No soul is permanently condemned. Progress may be delayed, resisted, or slowed, but every spirit is ultimately destined for advancement. Divine justice is inseparable from divine mercy.

One of the book's most distinctive teachings concerns the nature of the afterlife. Heaven and hell are not described as fixed geographical locations where souls are sent by external judgment. Instead, they are states of consciousness corresponding to the moral and psychological condition of the spirit itself.

After death, individuals naturally gravitate toward environments and communities that reflect their dominant inner nature—a principle Kardec, the author, describes as “moral affinity.” Spirits who cultivated love, humility, wisdom, and compassion during earthly life find themselves in harmonious spiritual conditions. Those dominated by selfishness, pride, hatred, or material obsession gravitate toward troubled and conflicted states. These conditions are not imposed externally. Souls inhabit the environments compatible with what they have become. In this sense, heaven and hell are continuations of consciousness rather than imposed verdicts.

This teaching creates one of the book's deepest moral implications: human beings are continually shaping their future condition through their present thoughts, actions, and intentions. Spiritual evolution is not determined by belief alone, but by character.

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The spirit world itself is portrayed as highly organized. Spirits exist at many levels of development. Some remain close to earthly concerns and attachments, while others progress toward wisdom, service, and increasingly refined states of awareness. More advanced spirits assist less developed spirits, guiding and influencing humanity toward moral improvement.

Communication between the physical and spiritual worlds is presented as possible under certain conditions through mediums and other forms of spiritual perception. Yet *The Spirits' Book* repeatedly warns against sensationalism and superstition. The purpose of spirit communication is not entertainment or fortune-telling, but moral and spiritual education.

At the center of the book's ethical system is the law of love and charity. The highest spiritual development is not measured by intellectual achievement or mystical power, but by the cultivation of compassion, humility, forgiveness, and service to others. The moral teachings of Jesus are treated with particular reverence, though Spiritism interprets them philosophically rather than dogmatically. Jesus is presented not as an exclusive divine exception, but as the highest moral example humanity has yet known.

The book also places enormous emphasis on free will. Spirits evolve through choice, not compulsion. Every soul possesses the capacity to advance, stagnate, or temporarily regress. Human freedom is therefore essential to spiritual growth. Yet freedom does not eliminate responsibility. Individuals continually shape

themselves through repeated choices, gradually forming habits, character, and destiny.

Another important theme running through the work is the progressive nature of both individuals and civilizations. Humanity itself is evolving. Moral, intellectual, and spiritual progress unfold collectively as well as individually. The suffering, conflict, and inequality visible in the world are understood as features of an unfinished process rather than evidence of cosmic meaninglessness.

This evolutionary view extends beyond Earth. *The Spirits' Book* suggests that many inhabited worlds exist throughout the universe, each serving as environments suited to different levels of spiritual development. Earth is neither the center of creation nor its highest expression. It is one stage in a vast cosmic order of learning and progression.

Despite its metaphysical scope, the book consistently returns to practical moral questions. What matters most is not abstract speculation, but how human beings live. Pride, greed, vanity, hatred, selfishness, and material obsession bind consciousness to lower states. Compassion, humility, honesty, forgiveness, and service elevate it. Because of this, Spiritism rejects empty ritualism. Genuine spiritual progress depends not on external ceremony, but on inward transformation. Prayer is meaningful when sincere and accompanied by moral effort. Religion without ethical development is considered spiritually incomplete.

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One of the reasons *The Spirits' Book* seems to resonate with modern readers is that it attempts to reconcile spirituality with rational inquiry. Kardec repeatedly emphasizes observation, coherence, and philosophical consistency. Spiritism presents itself not as blind faith, but as a framework through which consciousness, morality, suffering, and human experience may be understood more comprehensively.

In many ways, the book anticipated later developments in near-death experience research, consciousness studies, and psychologically oriented spirituality. Its descriptions of consciousness surviving bodily death, life review, morally structured post-mortem environments, and progressive spiritual evolution parallel themes that reappear in the writings of Edgar Cayce, Carl Jung, Robert Monroe, Emanuel Swedenborg, and many modern researchers exploring the nature of consciousness.

Underlying the entire work is a profoundly hopeful vision of existence. Human beings are not abandoned in a meaningless universe. Life has direction. Suffering has context. Growth has purpose. Death does not erase identity. No soul is eternally lost. The universe described in *The Spirits' Book* is lawful, developmental, and morally structured—not through external punishment, but through the natural consequences of consciousness itself. The spirit evolves slowly across many lives, gradually awakening to its deeper nature and learning to align itself with the principles of love, wisdom, and service.

Seen as a whole, *The Spirits' Book* presents not merely a theology, but a complete philosophy of human existence—one in which consciousness is fundamental, reality extends beyond the material world, and the ultimate purpose of life is the progressive refinement and liberation of the soul.

Edgar Cayce's View of a Soul's Journey

Although separated by nearly a century, very different cultural environments, and distinct methods of revelation, the cosmologies presented by Edgar Cayce [1877-1945], known during his time as “The Sleeping Prophet,” and that of *The Spirits' Book* converge so closely on many essential points that they often appear to be describing the same underlying reality using different words. Both present human beings not as accidental biological organisms, but as immortal conscious entities engaged in a long process of spiritual evolution extending far beyond a single earthly lifetime. Both reject eternal damnation, affirm reincarnation, interpret suffering as educational rather than punitive, and describe the afterlife as psychologically structured rather than governed by arbitrary judgment.

Yet beneath these similarities lie important differences in emphasis, tone, metaphysics, and spiritual orientation. Kardec's Spiritism presents a structured philosophical system focused on moral law and progressive evolution. Cayce's readings present a more fluid, experiential, and deeply Christian cosmology centered on soul alignment and what he called “Christ

consciousness.” One approaches the soul’s journey through organized spiritual philosophy; the other through visionary metaphysical narrative. Together, however, they form two of the most comprehensive attempts to explain why human beings exist, why suffering occurs, what happens after death, and where consciousness is ultimately headed.

Both systems begin with the same foundational premise: the soul existed before earthly life and survives bodily death. Human beings are not fundamentally physical creatures who develop consciousness, but spiritual beings temporarily incarnated in physical form. Earthly identity is therefore provisional. The body is an instrument or vehicle, not the true self.

In *The Spirits’ Book*, spirits are created by God, simple and ignorant—not morally corrupt, but undeveloped. Through experience, free will, and repeated incarnations, they gradually evolve toward greater wisdom, compassion, and harmony with divine law. Reincarnation is central because it provides the mechanism through which justice and progress become meaningful. Inequalities in human life are not arbitrary. They reflect differing stages of development and opportunities for growth accumulated across many lifetimes.

Cayce similarly taught that souls pre-existed earthly life and incarnate repeatedly in order to learn, develop, and eventually to return consciously to divine alignment. Yet Cayce’s cosmology adds a more dramatic mythic dimension to the origin of incarnation itself. In his readings, souls originally existed in

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spiritual unity with God but gradually moved toward materiality through the exercise of free will. Souls became fascinated with individuality, self-expression, and experience apart from complete awareness of the divine source. The descent into matter was therefore not punishment, but experimentation—a movement into separation that eventually produced forgetfulness, ego-identification, and spiritual fragmentation.

This distinction reveals one of the most important differences between the two. Spiritism focuses primarily on progressive evolution from simplicity toward perfection. Cayce focuses more explicitly on the soul's temporary estrangement from divine awareness and its eventual return. Kardec's spirits are evolving upward; Cayce's souls are returning home as they evolve through experience.

The emotional tone differs accordingly. *The Spirits' Book* is systematic, ethical, and instructional. Cayce's cosmology is more existential and inward, emphasizing longing, remembrance, and reunion with the divine. Yet despite these tonal differences, both systems agree on the central purpose of earthly existence: growth through experience and choice. Neither views Earth as meaningless, accidental, or merely material. Earthly life exists because certain forms of development can occur only under conditions of limitation. In both systems, incarnation creates resistance, uncertainty, emotional complexity, and moral challenge—all necessary conditions for the formation of character and consciousness.

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For Kardec, earthly life is fundamentally educational. Spirits incarnate in order to learn lessons impossible to learn while in the spiritual realm. Pride, selfishness, hatred, greed, and material obsession are gradually overcome through repeated encounters with consequence, suffering, and relationship. In short, human beings evolve morally through the experience of cause and effect (karma) and through the effort expended and hardships endured while dealing with and overcoming difficulties.

Cayce agrees entirely with the developmental purpose of incarnation, but he frames it in more relational and spiritual terms. Earth exists not only to educate the soul intellectually or morally, but to teach alignment with divine love. Knowledge alone is insufficient. Ideals must be lived. The soul must learn patience amid frustration, compassion amid suffering, humility amid success, and love amid separation.

Emphasis on love as the central organizing principle runs more strongly through Cayce than through Kardec, though it is certainly present in both. Spiritism teaches that love and charity are the highest moral laws. Cayce goes further, presenting love not merely as ethical conduct, but as the vibrational principle that gradually restores unity between the soul and God.

Their views of suffering also strongly converge. Both reject the notion that suffering is divine punishment imposed by an angry deity. Instead, suffering reflects the operation of spiritual law within a developmental universe. Actions produce consequences. Choices shape consciousness. Misalignment

generates friction. Growth often requires confrontation with the results of prior decisions.

Neither system sees suffering as meaningless, but the tone differs slightly. Spiritism tends to explain suffering through moral causality and spiritual progression. Cayce places somewhat greater emphasis on soul intention and pre-incarnational planning. In many Cayce readings, souls participate before birth in selecting conditions, relationships, and challenges suited to their growth needs. Difficult lives are not punishments, but opportunities to grow and evolve chosen at deeper levels of awareness.

Both systems reject eternal damnation completely. This is among their most radical departures from traditional Western theology. In neither worldview is any soul permanently condemned. Progress may be resisted or delayed, but all beings are ultimately destined for advancement. This reflects another profound shared principle: divine justice and divine mercy are inseparable.

In Spiritism, heaven and hell are not fixed places but states of consciousness corresponding to the spirit's inner condition. Spirits naturally gravitate toward environments and communities aligned with what, as you recall, Kardec calls moral affinity. Loving, compassionate spirits inhabit harmonious conditions. Selfish or hateful spirits inhabit troubled states generated by their own psychological orientation.

Cayce's descriptions of the afterlife are remarkably similar. Souls enter nonphysical realms corresponding to their

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vibrational and moral condition. Consciousness continues uninterrupted. Individuals review their lives, encounter others, continue learning, and prepare for future development. Heaven and hell are experiential conditions, not imposed verdicts.

Both systems therefore describe reality as morally structured from within rather than governed externally through reward and punishment. This inward moral structure is one reason both systems resonate so strongly with modern near-death experience research. The life review reported in many NDEs closely parallels Cayce's and Kardec's teachings that the soul confronts itself after death with heightened clarity and expanded awareness. Judgment arises internally through understanding rather than externally through condemnation.

Yet despite these similarities, important differences remain regarding the ultimate destiny of the soul. In *The Spirits' Book*, the soul evolves gradually toward perfection through the universal operation of moral law. The emphasis falls on progress, wisdom, and harmony with divine order. The spiritual universe functions almost as a vast educational ecology in which every experience contributes eventually to growth.

Cayce, while equally evolutionary, frames the soul's destiny more personally and spiritually. The ultimate goal is conscious reunion with God through the attainment of what he called Christ consciousness. Jesus, in Cayce's view, represents not an exception to humanity, but its fullest realized possibility. The soul's journey culminates not merely in moral refinement, but

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in restored unity with divine love while retaining individuality. This gives Cayce's cosmology a more mystical and devotional dimension than Kardec's comparatively philosophical system.

There is also a difference in metaphysical atmosphere. Spiritism often reads like a spiritual sociology of the universe—highly structured, rational, and orderly. Cayce's readings feel more archetypal, symbolic, and fluid. They incorporate Atlantis, cosmic cycles, astrology, soul groups, and broader mythic themes that are largely absent from Kardec's more disciplined framework. Even so, the overlap remains extraordinary.

Both systems describe:

- consciousness as fundamental
- the body as temporary
- reincarnation as developmental
- moral law as intrinsic
- suffering as corrective
- death as a transition
- heaven and hell as psychological-spiritual states
- spiritual evolution as universal

Both also profoundly diminish the centrality of fear-based religion. Neither system is organized around salvation through dogmatic belief. What matters is not professed doctrine, but actual development of consciousness. This may be one reason

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both systems continue to resonate in modern culture despite institutional resistance. They preserve spiritual meaning while avoiding many of the harshnesses associated with traditional doctrines of eternal punishment, exclusion, and rigid theological division.

In both Cayce and Spiritism, the universe is fundamentally developmental. Human beings are unfinished. Consciousness evolves. Reality is structured morally but not vindictively. Love, humility, service, and self-awareness elevate the soul because they align it with deeper principles embedded in existence itself.

When viewed together, Kardec and Cayce appear less like contradictory systems and more like complementary perspectives on the same immense process. Spiritism provides the architecture: moral law, reincarnation, spiritual affinity, progressive evolution. Cayce provides the interior atmosphere: soul memory, longing for reunion, Christ consciousness, and the emotional-spiritual drama of separation and return.

One explains the mechanics of spiritual development. The other illuminates its meaning. Taken together, they offer a vision of human life radically different from modern materialism. Human beings are not accidental organisms briefly conscious before extinction. They are enduring centers of awareness participating in a vast evolutionary process extending across lifetimes and dimensions of experience. Earthly life is neither meaningless nor final. Suffering has context. Death is transition.

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And the soul, however slowly, moves toward increasing integration, wisdom, and love.

Whether one interprets these systems literally, symbolically, psychologically, or metaphysically, they converge on a single transformative idea: that consciousness is larger than the physical body, and that the true journey of human existence is ultimately inward, developmental, and spiritual.

Chapter Three: Who and What You Are

Could *The Spirits' Book* and Edgar Cayce's readings be pointing toward the truth—that you are an eternal soul temporarily inhabiting a body? It's up to you to decide. However, research conducted over six decades at the Division of Perceptual Studies [DOPS] at the University of Virginia has produced evidence that seriously challenges the assumption that consciousness is created by the brain.

Charlottesville is only sixty miles or so west of where I live, and my youngest daughter attended and graduated from UVA. As a result, I have toured DOPS from top to bottom, spoken to many of the researchers there and have twice interviewed Jim B. Tucker, M.D., who until recently was the head of DOPS. The indication that the brain does not create consciousness, but rather is a receiver of consciousness that integrates it with the body, is based on a great deal of evidence which I have laid out chapter-and-verse in other books.

It falls into four categories:

1. Recovery of lost consciousness in the moments or days prior to death among people who have been unconscious for prolonged periods of time.

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2. Complex consciousness ability in some people who have minimal brain tissue.
3. Complex consciousness in near-death experiences when the brain is not functioning or is functioning at a greatly diminished level.
4. Memories, particularly among young children, accurately recalling details of a past life.

The brain certainly influences consciousness—there can be no doubt about that. Consider what happens, for example, when someone has too much to drink or gets knocked on the head. Moreover, as the result of many eons of evolution, the brain may also filter out much of reality so that we see and hear only what we need to in order to survive in the physical world.

This makes sense when you think about it. Back when we humans were hunter-gatherers, too much stimuli competing for attention could have put us in danger. We might have failed to notice a lion or a bear creeping up on us.

Research into the effects of mind-altering drugs seems to suggest that the filtering of reality for our own good and survival may be a possibility. In recent years, for example, scientists at major research institutions including Johns Hopkins University and Imperial College London have begun studying psychoactive substances such as Psilocybin, DMT, and related compounds because of their remarkable effects on consciousness, identity, and perception. Many participants in these studies report

experiences strikingly similar to descriptions found in mystical traditions, near-death experiences, and depth psychology: a temporary dissolution of the ordinary ego, an overwhelming sense of interconnectedness, transcendence of time and space, heightened meaning, and the feeling that consciousness may extend beyond the narrow boundaries of the personal self.

Brain imaging studies suggest these substances temporarily quiet parts of the brain associated with self-referential thinking and ego maintenance, particularly the Default Mode Network, allowing unusual states of awareness to emerge. Mainstream science does not conclude that such experiences prove metaphysical realities, but many researchers acknowledge that they challenge simplistic materialist assumptions about mind and raise serious questions about whether the brain produces consciousness entirely—or instead functions more as a filter or receiver of a deeper field of consciousness.

One of the more controversial but intriguing areas of modern consciousness research involves the possibility that quantum-level processes may play a role in conscious awareness itself. Traditionally, neuroscience has treated consciousness as something emerging entirely from large-scale electrochemical activity among neurons. Yet some researchers have argued that this approach may overlook deeper processes occurring at levels far smaller and more subtle than classical brain models usually consider.

Among the best-known of these proposals is the Orch-OR (Orchestrated Objective Reduction) theory developed by

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physicist Roger Penrose and anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff. Simply put, the theory suggests that tiny structural components inside neurons known as microtubules may support forms of quantum coherence associated with conscious experience. While highly debated and yet to be established scientifically, the theory is significant because it represents a serious attempt to explain why consciousness appears so fundamentally different from ordinary computational processing.

Critics argue that quantum theories of consciousness remain speculative and that many extraordinary claims made online about “quantum spirituality” go beyond what current science justifies. At present, no scientific consensus exists that quantum mechanics explains consciousness. Yet what makes these discussions important is not that they prove ancient spiritual ideas, but that they reveal growing recognition among at least some scientists that consciousness may not fit comfortably within strictly reductionistic models of mind.

Even more significant may be the broader philosophical implications. If consciousness cannot be fully reduced to mechanical computation or classical brain chemistry, then the possibility reopens that awareness may be more deeply woven into reality than materialists assume. This does not establish the existence of a soul, reincarnation, or transcendent dimensions of mind, but it does suggest that the nature of consciousness remains one of the deepest unresolved questions in science.

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For many observers, this emerging uncertainty is itself profoundly important. The wall that once seemed to separate science, philosophy, and spiritual inquiry may not be disappearing, but it is becoming more permeable. Questions long dismissed as merely religious or mystical are increasingly returning to serious scientific and philosophical conversation—not because science has abandoned rigor, but because consciousness itself continues to resist explanation.

Another question materialists have difficulty answering is how life on Earth came about. A number of people who are smarter than I think that it could not have come about by chance because the odds of it happening all by itself are incredibly long. The truth is that no one knows. In 1953, chemist Stanley Miller and Nobel Prize-winning scientist Harold Urey conducted what became one of the most famous experiments in the history of origin-of-life research. Attempting to simulate conditions on the early Earth, they created a closed glass apparatus containing water, methane, ammonia, hydrogen, and water vapor—substances then believed to resemble the primitive atmosphere and oceans of ancient Earth. The water was heated to imitate evaporation from primordial seas, while electrical sparks were introduced to simulate lightning in the atmosphere. After several days, the liquid inside the apparatus changed color, and analysis revealed that amino acids—the fundamental building blocks of proteins and living organisms—had formed spontaneously from the chemical mixture.

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The experiment was important because it demonstrated that complex organic molecules associated with life could arise naturally under certain conditions without direct biological intervention. The experiment did not, however, create life. It produced only some of the chemical components necessary for life, not living cells, DNA, metabolism, or consciousness.

Over time, scientists also questioned whether Miller and Urey's simulated atmosphere accurately reflected conditions on the early Earth. Nevertheless, the experiment remains a landmark in science because it suggested that the chemistry leading toward life might emerge naturally, while at the same time leaving unresolved the far deeper mystery of how nonliving matter eventually became living, self-aware organisms.

I read a book about fifty years ago called *Intelligence Came First* that offered that—the title of the book—as an explanation, i.e., that intelligence or mind is fundamental. The theory was shouted down with a vengeance at the time. Nevertheless, some scientists today are openly speculating that consciousness may be fundamental—that it may be the bedrock of physical reality.

Today's scientists, and the authors of *Intelligence Came First*, did not originate this theory. Almost a hundred years ago, Max Planck [1858-1947], the Nobel Prize winning physicist and founder of quantum theory, said this: "I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about,

everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness.”
(Quoted from an interview in *The Observer*, January 1931)

Planck also said, “As a man who has devoted his whole life to the most clear headed science, to the study of matter, I can tell you as a result of my research about the atoms, this much: There is no matter as such! All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particles 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.”

Well, now, there you go. If Max Planck was right—you decide whether you think so or not—then consciousness is what existed before the Big Bang. What looks like solid stuff is actually energy put in rapid motion by consciousness. It is trillions of tiny bits of energy spinning and vibrating like mad as in $E = MC^2$.

If consciousness is fundamental, and everything including what looks and feels like solid matter comes from it, it means perhaps that when our egos, memories or beliefs are peeled away, consciousness is what's left. If so, *The Spirits' Book* may be correct because if consciousness is fundamental, it raises the possibility that individual identity may arise from a deeper field of awareness not dependent upon the body, and that each of us is that awareness encased in human bodies, having temporary physical experiences. It seems a possibility worth considering.

How Consciousness May Create the Biosphere

Here is one theory I'm aware of concerning the creation of life and evolution that may or may not point in the direction of the truth if what has been written above is true. It goes like this: In the beginning consciousness imbued with organizing intelligence created an almost infinite number of variations of living single cells, and these living things reproduced by the millions, each offspring slightly different from its siblings. Those best suited to the environment survived and reproduced.

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.

The theory continues as follows: 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 and this includes deeply held fears so it's best to think deeply and expunge them.

The One Mind Theory

If there is only one mind because we all come from it, some researchers I've interviewed think that at some point all minds come together and blend. Like the vast majority of water on earth that is connected but divided into oceans, seas, and rivers, we might 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 appear to be divided into a conscious portion and an unconscious portion that contains the memories of this life and unconscious and habitual programming.

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If consciousness is fundamental rather than produced entirely by the brain, an important implication follows naturally: personal identity may not be as dependent upon the physical body as modern materialism assumes. The brain may shape, filter, and localize conscious experience during earthly life, much as a radio receives and organizes a signal without creating the signal itself. If so, the dissolution of the body at death would not necessarily extinguish consciousness any more than smashing a radio would destroy the broadcast.

This does not prove reincarnation, but it does make the idea philosophically conceivable in a way that strict materialism does not. If consciousness can exist independent of the body, then the possibility arises that awareness may persist beyond physical death and perhaps enter new forms of experience or embodiment. In that sense, reincarnation ceases to be merely a religious doctrine inherited from ancient traditions, and it becomes a hypothesis about the continuity and development of consciousness itself.

The Implications of the One Mind Theory

It may be shocking to consider that the ground of being consciousness may actually be who you are when the layers of mind and your beliefs are stripped away, 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?

If consciousness is fundamental, you are not your mind. If consciousness is fundamental, 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,

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does 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 seems hard to refute, assuming consciousness is fundamental, that 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—it would make sense that you can decide which thoughts to pay attention to and which ones to discard—that you can decide what to think about, or not to think about. In other words, that you can control the actions of your mind, just as you can control the actions of your body. If so, this means your mind cannot possibly be you.

Some contemplative traditions and post-materialist philosophers have suggested that down deep you may actually be the ground of being consciousness. You may initially experience an impulse to reject the possibility, 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.

If consciousness is indeed fundamental, it may be true that you are ground-of-being consciousness, and not your ego, your thoughts or your beliefs, but rather, the Silent Observer that is

always present at the back of your mind. If so, you can escape “The Matrix” whenever you wish.

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 can decide to believe and to do whatever you want to believe and do. As an example of how effective this approach to life can be, let me tell you the true story of someone I know who escaped The Matrix and how it happened. I’ll call him Henry.

Leading up to that day, Henry 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 Henry into a deep and dark depression. He became suicidal, and except for work, spent two months alone in his apartment, much of it in the 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

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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 breaking free and stepping out of *The Matrix*.

During lunch and other breaks at work, Henry 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 Henry chuckled.

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

Everyone laughed, and it suddenly struck Henry 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!

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This struck Henry 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.

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What Henry 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 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.

Henry 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.

Henry 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 Henry 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.”

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Henry 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 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 by the Silent Observer that may actually be the genuine you.

If you do not engage in meditation now, you might want to 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 your ego will try to torpedo your efforts because its job is to be in control. As you know, 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. My experience has been that if you truly desire liberation, the observer you will overcome the ego, and its attempts at interference will eventually fade away.

A Necessary Word of Skepticism

One reason subjects like consciousness, near-death experiences, reincarnation, mystical states, and spiritual awakening remain controversial is that thoughtful skepticism is not only understandable, but necessary. Human beings are meaning-seeking creatures. We are vulnerable to self-deception, selective memory, emotional projection, cognitive bias, and the tendency to impose patterns upon ambiguous experiences. History is filled with superstition, false revelations, pseudoscience, manipulative spiritual movements, and sincere but mistaken interpretations of unusual psychological states.

For that reason alone, caution is warranted whenever anyone claims certainty about the hidden structure of reality.

A committed materialist would argue that all conscious experience ultimately arises from brain activity and that

extraordinary spiritual experiences, however compelling they may feel subjectively, are products of neurological processes rather than evidence of transcendent realities. Near-death experiences, for example, may be interpreted as hallucinations generated by an oxygen-deprived or chemically altered brain. Mystical states induced through meditation or psychedelics may reflect unusual neurological configurations rather than glimpses into a deeper metaphysical truth. Feelings of cosmic unity, ego dissolution, synchronicity, or transcendence may reveal more about human psychology than about the structure of the universe itself.

Even Carl Jung—whose work deeply influences this book—often approached spiritual phenomena psychologically rather than metaphysically. He repeatedly warned against confusing symbolic truth with literal certainty. A dream, vision, archetype, or mystical experience may possess profound transformative value regardless of whether it represents an objectively external reality. In Jung's view, psychological experiences can reveal truths about the human condition without necessarily functioning as scientific proof of spiritual cosmology.

These objections deserve to be taken seriously. In fact, one of the central problems in consciousness studies is that subjective experience itself is extraordinarily difficult to evaluate objectively. Human beings experience love, beauty, meaning, awareness, and suffering directly and intimately, yet science can only observe the neurological correlates of those experiences from the outside. Even the most advanced brain imaging

technologies do not fully explain why subjective experience exists at all—a dilemma philosopher David Chalmers famously called “the hard problem of consciousness.”

This does not mean that materialism has been disproven. It has not. Modern neuroscience has made extraordinary contributions to our understanding of perception, cognition, memory, emotion, and the relationship between mind and brain. Damage to specific brain regions clearly alters personality, awareness, and behavior. Chemistry affects consciousness profoundly. Few serious thinkers would deny the intimate relationship between brain function and conscious experience.

The real question is whether correlation fully explains causation.

Does the brain create consciousness entirely, as the liver secretes bile? Or does the brain function more like a filter, receiver, or localization mechanism for a deeper field of awareness not yet fully understood? At present, no scientific consensus exists.

What makes the question increasingly difficult to dismiss is not any single phenomenon taken alone, but the convergence of many different lines of inquiry. Near-death experiences, terminal lucidity, veridical perception reports, the persistence of consciousness under conditions where normal cognition should be severely impaired, mystical states across cultures, Jungian depth psychology, and the enduring recurrence of similar spiritual intuitions throughout human history all continue to

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point toward the possibility that consciousness may be more fundamental, mysterious, and expansive than strict materialism allows.

None of this constitutes definitive proof. But neither can it be casually dismissed.

Perhaps the most intellectually honest position, at least for now, is one of disciplined openness: skeptical enough to resist superstition and wishful thinking, yet open enough to recognize that reality may be stranger than our current models fully explain.

That is the spirit in which this book is written.

Chapter Four: Journeys Beyond the Body

Not far from Charlottesville, Virginia, and the Division of Perceptual Studies is The Monroe Institute [TMI], an organization that exists to study and to help others learn about consciousness.

During the Cold War, TMI researchers and employees trained Stargate personnel in the remote viewing techniques they used to spy on Soviet Bloc nations, which they were able to do from the comfort of their headquarters in Fort Meade, Maryland. TMI remains active today and is dedicated to enabling others, through the use of sound technology, do what Stargate psychics were able to do. 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 visited TMI over the years, verifying in their own minds that consciousness is the larger reality. I have interviewed several individuals who maintain that they have done so, and I have also twice interviewed Skip Atwater, who founded and ran Stargate during the Cold War and later ran The Monroe Institute.

What Robert Monroe, the founder, said he did and wrote three books about appears to lend credence to the assertion that

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consciousness is fundamental and the ground of being of all that is. Monroe was not a scientist, nor was he a mystic or a philosopher. He was a successful businessman—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 is very unusual. 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

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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 the one Max Planck, who developed quantum theory, came to: That *consciousness itself 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 techniques—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 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, 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 Source’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,

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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 Five: The Deeper Self

As interest in consciousness, spirituality, and the possibility of life beyond physical death continues to grow, many thoughtful people have begun looking beyond traditional religious systems in search of a deeper understanding of human existence. This search is not occurring only among mystics or spiritual seekers. Increasingly, psychologists, philosophers, neuroscientists, near-death researchers, and ordinary individuals dissatisfied with purely material explanations of reality are asking questions that modern physicalism struggles fully to answer.

What, exactly, is consciousness? Why does subjective experience exist at all? Why do so many radically different traditions across history describe human beings as more than physical organisms? And why do so many contemporary explorations of consciousness—from near-death experiences to psychedelic research to depth psychology—seem to converge toward similar intuitions about identity, interconnectedness, and the nature of reality itself?

Throughout this book we have examined several frameworks attempting to address these questions. *The Spirits' Book* presents

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human beings as immortal spirits evolving through repeated incarnations. Edgar Cayce described souls journeying through many lifetimes in search of reunion with the divine. Carl Jung explored the possibility that beneath the ordinary ego lies a far deeper organizing structure of the psyche. Robert Monroe reported experiences suggesting that consciousness may exist independently of the physical body and participate in levels of reality extending beyond ordinary perception. Again and again, these traditions suggest that what we call the self—the ego, the memories, beliefs, attachments and so forth—is not the deepest level of our being. This possibility has appeared throughout history in many forms.

In Vedantic philosophy, developed by the ancient Indian rishis (sages) about 2500 years ago, the individual self, or Atman, is understood as an expression of a deeper universal consciousness known as Brahman. The apparent separation between individuals is regarded as part of Maya—the illusion generated by identification with the temporary world of form and personality. Spiritual awakening, therefore, involves recognizing that one's deepest identity transcends the limited ego-self. The language differs from Spiritism and from Monroe's writings, but the underlying intuition is remarkably similar: the personality is not the whole of what we are.

Carl Jung approached the same possibility psychologically rather than metaphysically. He repeatedly suggested that beneath the ego exists a deeper organizing principle of the psyche, which

he called the Self, which, in Jungian psychology, is not merely the conscious personality. It's important to note that Jung did not insist that the Self was metaphysically divine in a theological sense. He approached such questions cautiously. Yet many readers of Jung have observed that his psychological model often closely parallels ancient spiritual traditions.

The "Self" described by Jung begins to resemble what contemplative traditions have long described as the deeper spiritual identity beneath ordinary consciousness. Even modern neuroscience, despite remaining largely materialist in orientation, has begun encountering phenomena that complicate simplistic assumptions about identity and consciousness.

Research into meditation, near-death experiences, mystical states, and psychedelic experiences increasingly suggests that ordinary waking consciousness may represent only a narrow band of possible awareness. As previously discussed, studies involving psilocybin and related substances, conducted at institutions such as Johns Hopkins University and Imperial College London, have documented experiences in which the ordinary sense of self temporarily dissolves, often producing profound feelings of interconnectedness, transcendence, unity, and expanded meaning.

This does not prove that mystical experiences reveal ultimate metaphysical truth. But it does raise an intriguing possibility: what we ordinarily experience as the self may be, at least in part,

a constructed perceptual filter rather than the deepest level of consciousness itself.

This possibility also helps explain why so many traditions describe spiritual awakening not as acquiring something new, but as remembering, uncovering, or awakening to something already present beneath the conditioned personality.

As you now know, Robert Monroe's writings explored this idea experientially. Monroe described what he called the "I-There," a larger identity of which individual incarnations were temporary expressions. Each lifetime functioned as a kind of probe or extension gathering experience, learning, emotional development, and understanding before reintegrating into the larger whole. Whether interpreted literally or symbolically, Monroe's model again reflects the same recurring pattern: the ordinary personality may not be the ultimate center of identity.

The same phenomenon appears in near-death experience research. Many individuals reporting NDEs describe a temporary separation from the physical body accompanied by an overwhelming sense that their earthly identity represented only a small portion of a much larger awareness. They often report encountering states of consciousness characterized by profound clarity, interconnectedness, expanded understanding, and unconditional love. Some describe the realization that their earthly fears, ambitions, conflicts, and social identities suddenly appeared strangely small when viewed from a broader perspective.

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Again, none of this constitutes definitive proof of an afterlife or transcendent metaphysical reality, but the convergence itself is difficult to ignore. Psychology, contemplative traditions, near-death research, mystical experience, and post-materialist philosophy repeatedly point toward the possibility that human beings are not merely isolated biological mechanisms struggling briefly for survival in a meaningless universe. Rather, consciousness itself may participate in a reality deeper and more interconnected than materialism assumes. If so, many of the psychological problems characteristic of modern civilization begin to appear in a different light.

Much of contemporary life encourages almost total identification with the ego-self:

- career,
- status,
- ideology,
- social image,
- accumulation,
- productivity,
- tribal affiliation,
- external achievement.

Yet if the deeper intuitions explored throughout this book contain even partial truth, then overidentification with these temporary structures may produce precisely the alienation, anxiety, emptiness, and fragmentation so many people now experience.

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The question then becomes: What would human life look like if consciousness is indeed more fundamental than matter?

Perhaps identity would no longer be viewed as temporary and accidental, but developmental. Perhaps death would appear less as annihilation and more as transition. Perhaps morality would no longer be understood merely as social convention, but as something connected to the structure of consciousness itself. Perhaps suffering, while still painful and tragic, would acquire context within a larger developmental process. And perhaps the purpose of life would no longer center exclusively on survival, competition, and consumption, but on growth in awareness, understanding, compassion, and integration.

None of this requires abandoning science, rationality, or critical thinking. Quite the opposite. The deeper exploration of consciousness may ultimately require more intellectual humility rather than less. The history of science repeatedly demonstrates that reality is often stranger, more subtle, and more complex than earlier generations assumed.

This does not mean materialism is totally wrong, but it does mean the question remains open. It is precisely within that openness that the perspectives explored throughout this book become increasingly interesting—not because they have conclusively solved the mystery, but because so many different traditions, experiences, and lines of inquiry appear to converge toward surprisingly similar intuitions.

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Perhaps consciousness is more than neural activity. Perhaps identity extends beyond the temporary personality. Perhaps human beings are participants in a larger developmental process unfolding across dimensions of experience we only dimly perceive. Perhaps these systems function symbolically rather than literally, expressing deep psychological truths about meaning, growth, morality, and human transformation.

At present, no one can say with certainty, but what can be said is this: the old assumption that consciousness is fully explained, fully understood, and reducible entirely to blind material processes no longer appears secure. That realization alone may mark the beginning of a profound shift in how humanity understands itself.

Chapter Six: 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?

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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, 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.

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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

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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 it seems unlikely to me that the appearance of life was 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 Seven: The Mind and 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

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to go ahead with ordinary activities—to work and make decisions as ever, though somehow this is less of a drag. 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.”

How to Create the Life You Want

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.

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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.

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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

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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

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

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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, which I believe it is, 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 the beliefs 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.”

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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

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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 that 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.

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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 Source, 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

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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 of 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 a 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. But 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

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it because you want it to be your reality, and you want to be totally free.

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 Eight: Why You Are Here

If it's true that consciousness is fundamental and is the ground of being from which everything comes, how and why did reality come to be what we experience today?

There are several theories. One is that it all began as subjective consciousness—consciousness directed inward that possessed the desire to figuratively step outside itself, consider itself, and come to know itself.

To do so required creating aspects or units of itself that would somehow come to believe they were separate and apart from it. If this is so, we are those aspects, and the physical universe was created in pursuit of that goal in an event dubbed “The Big Bang” by the English astronomer and mathematician Fred Hoyle [1915-2001] during a BBC radio broadcast in 1949.

There are other theories, of course. I've spoken to people who say they believe that Source created life and physical reality to be a form of amusement. According to this theory, Earth might be compared to a theme park like Disneyland where living creatures, which are surrogates of Source, can come so that Source can experience adventures and the joys and sorrows of life through them.

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Here's another theory. One man told me in all seriousness that he believes Earth can be compared to Devil's Island, which is a remote, rocky outcrop off the coast of French Guiana that served as one of history's most notorious penal colonies. Operating from 1852 to 1953, it was infamous for its brutal tropical conditions and for housing French political exiles. In this view, Earth is a place deviant souls are sent to get them out of the way and perhaps to rehabilitate them.

Another I've heard is that life was formed in an effort by the Source to grow and evolve and perhaps eventually to replicate itself. This one seems to fall in somewhat line with *The Spirits' Book* and Cayce in that according to them the purpose of life on Earth is the growth and evolution of souls toward perfection.

I don't believe anyone can know for sure. If I had to pick one, I would say it's likely a combination of Cayce's cosmology and *The Spirits' Book's*, that Earth can be compared to a school for souls that we are headed toward reunion with the Source.

Whatever the case may actually be, it appears that the universal subjective mind, this underlying organizing intelligence that is the ground of being, is not God as God is normally thought of by Western theologians. The universal subjective mind does not sit back and make decisions or grant wishes or answer prayers. It follows laws impersonally as it simultaneously pushes toward growth and evolution.

When it comes to prayer, the efficacy of which I have written about and provided evidence for in other books, the more help

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needed the more help given. In all matters, there's evidence that whatever outcome will result in maximum growth and evolution seems to receive top priority. In the vast majority of cases that I'm aware of, the universal subjective mind appears to make what appear to be negative or tragic events work in such a way that will produce the maximum good in the form of growth and evolution. This may be the meaning behind the Apostle Paul's words in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him."

The universal subjective mind cannot step outside itself to analyze a situation. Only objective minds can do that, whether of angels or demons or human beings. Being non dual, it does not make judgments or consider good or bad, but rather, progresses pushes toward the desired result, which is growth and harmony. Therefore, it does not play favorites or hold grudges. According to Jesus, "[God makes his] sun to shine and its rain to fall on the evil and the good." (Matthew 5:45)

The subjective mind also appears to be the regulator and the builder of the body, which is likely why placebos, sugar pills, often outperform real medicine in clinical tests as noted in Chapter Seven. People are told they are receiving powerful medicine, they believe it, and the subjective mind goes to work to deliver on that belief. Moreover, the experience of Edgar Cayce and other psychics indicates that a patient's subjective mind is able to diagnose the character and causes of a disease

from which someone the psychic is trying to help is suffering and to point out suitable remedies.

The subjective mind has also been shown to bring about spontaneous healing, as was the case with Nancy who suffered from a lump in her breast. Through prayer, the subjective mind of an individual or individuals can work in concert with the universal subjective mind to bring about healing like Nancy's.

That the subjective mind is impersonal in and of itself is shown by its readiness to assume any personality a hypnotist chooses to impress upon it. The unavoidable inference of this is that any personality the subjective mind may appear to possess comes about as the direct result of an association with the particular objective mind of its owner. In other words, the personality the objective mind impresses upon it is the personality it assumes. Since the subjective mind is the builder of the body, it will build up a body in correspondence with the personality thus impressed upon it. Moreover, the personality of the God our objective mind assumes will be the personality of the God we have to deal with. The subjective mind simply plays back to us whatever we impress upon it. If we assume a loving and forgiving Father God as Jesus said to do, this indeed will be our God. (If you happen to prefer a loving Mother God, instead, that sounds just fine to me. Go for it.) But if one believes in an unforgiving, wrathful and capricious God who hates Westerners as some Islamic extremists apparently assume, then this is their true God.

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If we believe that God favors us and showers us with abundance and opportunities for fulfillment and joy, then this will be our experience. If we believe that God will punish us for our transgressions, we will indeed be punished. Our beliefs become our reality. All we need to do to change our reality is to change our beliefs. The same is true in matters of health. If our fixed belief is that the body is subject to all sorts of influences beyond our control, and that this, that, or the other symptom shows that such and such an uncontrollable influence is at work on us, then this belief impresses itself on the subjective mind, and the subjective mind by the law of its nature accepts it without question and proceeds to fashion bodily conditions in accordance with the belief. Once we fully grasp this realization, we shall see that it is just as easy to externalize healthy conditions as the contrary.

What else do we believe we now know?

Our current incarnation is likely one in a long line that may date back to the first life on earth or another planet. Our physical bodies are projections of our morphic fields in combination with those of our parents and their genes, and the morphic field of our species. When we die, our morphic fields—which include our individual subconscious minds, or souls—will return to the spirit, or mental, realm. There, it is likely that we are members of an oversoul and a group of souls on a similar level of evolution and vibrate at a similar frequency. These souls cooperate to help one another advance. Some souls on Earth in

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physical form, and others in the realm of spirit, work as teachers and guides to help others advance. Still others, such as Jesus, Moses or Buddha may be ascended masters who have returned to earth from time to time to help others find the way. It appears that Jesus was one such bodhisattva and the embodiment of the Christ-consciousness.

This consciousness exists in spirit and is the likely end goal of earthly evolution, which is why it makes sense to me to follow Jesus. He gave us the teachings we need and set an example to follow. He showed us the way and in the process sacrificed himself for us to do so. No matter what path you follow, however, it seems to me important to work toward the end goal in a systematic way.

As the Cayce readings indicate, it appears that each lifetime on Earth usually has a particular purpose. It may be to learn a particular lesson. It may be to help others in some way. Some individuals appear to have missions they agreed to before an incarnation. When this is the case, the circumstances of one's life support the accomplishment of that mission.

A reader of the Akashic records at the School of Metaphysics told me that I have a mission and that it is one of leadership. In striving to learn just what this mission of leadership entails, I've earnestly tried to think back as far as I can to the very first thing I can remember. Occasionally, I've had glimpses of what may be my most recent previous life. One that recurs is being in an airplane, a World War II fighter. I'm the pilot. I'm in a tight bank

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desperately trying to outmaneuver an enemy aircraft diving from two o'clock with cannons blazing. (I'm not sure which side I'm on, but I'm either German or American. Not Italian, French, British or Japanese.) My plane is hit. I go into a spin.

Actually, I do not know if this is a true memory or a scene from some long-forgotten movie that I saw as a child. I was born in 1944, so the timing is right for either.

Once, when I was in France, I took a flight in a small plane piloted by an old man, a friend of my father-in-law, who offered to turn the controls over to me. He asked if I'd ever flown a plane.

"Never," I said.

"Here. Give it a try."

I did, and as I'd expected, it wasn't difficult. From the moment that I took the controls I was able to bank and turn.

The old man was amazed. "Go on," he said. "Keep going."

I circled the field we'd taken off from.

"Take her down," he said. "You can do it. Land the plane."

I continued to circle until the runway was directly ahead, then started down. A few hundred feet from touchdown, I lost my nerve, and returned the controls to him. But I'm almost certain I could have landed that plane.

He said he'd been flying more than fifty years and had never seen someone who hadn't flown a plane handle one as I'd just done. The vision flashed in my mind of being in the cockpit of that World War II fighter. I could almost feel my hands on the joystick.

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I've had other experiences that seem to bring back memories of former lives. There is, for example, a castle in France that gives me a strong sense of déjà vu each time I approach. It's as though I'm returning from the Crusades.

Other places in France give off a similar sense of familiarity, but they are not from the same life. They are ancient sites where Druids lived, worked, and worshiped.

I was a Druid. I can feel it as surely as I feel eyes on my back. Even though I was born in America, my life unfolded in such a way that I was led to spend a good deal of time in France so I'd remember. My guides are friends from that epoch. The last time I saw their faces was the moment before I left the causal plane and was born in the physical body I still inhabit today. They were dressed in long purple-gray robes and were gathered close around me, laughing and joking. It was a kind of farewell party. They were kidding, jostling me, saying, "Don't worry, we'll be with you. Only you won't be able to see us. Not until you return." I have not experienced anything in this lifetime close to the love that I experienced at that moment. I was bathed in a delightful aura of so strong that it cannot be described. And joy. Such joy. Nothing comes close.

I do not remember being born, but I do remember looking up from my crib. Even then, I did not have the sensation of being the center of the universe that logic says an infant would have. I knew I was separate and unique. I recall wondering where my friends were. I possessed no memory, but their faces flashed

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before me, and I felt snippets of the love and joy they had for me. I missed them. Where had they gone? I longed to be in the glow of their presence.

At last faces did appear and disappointment settled in. They were not my friends. I did not know these people whom I later came to realize were my mother and father, brother and sister.

And so began this incarnation. As I grew, I had the feeling it was in my power to work magic. I tried my hand at magic in small ways and it worked. But as I grew, I repeatedly was told that magic did not exist. Nothing that I couldn't see existed. Only matter was real. In time, I came to doubt myself and to believe what I was told. As my doubts and false beliefs increased, I lost it. Only now, after many years, am I regaining the power bit by bit—as at last I pursue the mission I came to carry out.

I now have come to understand my mission is threefold: To be a guide to my sons and daughter until they no longer need me. To continue my own evolution. To help lead others to a clearer understanding of who and what we humans are. This is the purpose of this book. This book represents an important part of my effort to lead others to a better and more comprehensive understanding of life and its purpose.

In other lives, you too knew why you were here. Not so long ago, perhaps when we were Druids and worshiped nature gods and cut mistletoe from the sacred oak tree with a golden knife, you looked up at the great arch of night sky and saw a million stars. This filled you with a sense of mystery. In the mornings,

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the sun miraculously rose in the east. Its rays shot across the heavens and lit the underbellies of clouds, pink and orange. In such moments, you understood that you were one tiny facet of a wondrous creation more astounding than words could convey. You felt communion with all that surrounded you. But unlike all that surrounded you, in some ways you felt separate and distinct. Even so, the owl, the deer, and other woodland creatures were your cousins, and you recognized them as such. You worshiped them, and their spirits, and they returned the favor by providing you with the food you ate and the clothes you wore and the covering for your dwelling that kept out rain and snow. The membrane that separated your mind and thoughts from the mind and thoughts of all creation was very thin—so thin that at times when you lay on your back and gazed at the stars, you felt yourself merge with your surroundings. At such times, you knew all. You knew your purpose. Creation and you were one single being. And this was ecstasy.

In time, though, you came to understand that you were different. Other creatures were driven by instincts, which were predictable. The course and timing of their migrations, their habits of reproduction and birth could be plotted like the seasons. These events were as sure to happen on schedule as the Summer and Winter Solstices. The animals had no choice. But you could behave as you pleased. You could stay another day, take a different route. Have your babies in the fall or winter.

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Even so, you lived your life in accordance with the spirit that guided you with a higher understanding than your own. To do otherwise would have been foolhardy. And if you lost touch, if you were unable to contact the spirit on your own, the shaman or the Druid could be counted on to help you regain it.

Unconsciously, you knew your purpose. It was built into the cycles of time, of spring and summer and fall and winter, of birth and life and death and sleep. And rebirth. It was to grow and to evolve. It was to evolve and expand, to join with creation and eventually to become what you had come from. You would be a new creation. You would become so by remaining conscious of your separateness but rejoining and absorbing the all into yourself. It was the way of nature and could be seen in the deer and the rabbit and the bear. You had become separated from the mother of your soul as the woodland creatures had become separated from the mother of their birth. This was the way, the wheel of life, as surely as the seed that fell to earth would someday grow into a giant oak.

But time went by, incarnations came and went, and you lost sight. You lost the sense of sacredness of all-that-is, and you lost touch with your purpose. This was as it had to be. For your destiny was to grow and evolve to a state that encompasses all, while at the same time retaining your own identity. For this to be possible, it was essential that your sense of separation become strong and indelible. So you began to view the world not as one whole, but as separate pieces. It no longer seemed unified, but

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rather a collection of rocks, trees, individual plants and animals. Even the animals became to you as though they were constructed of distinct parts, such as hearts, eyes, kidneys and bones. You lost touch with the invisible. You ignored your intuition and the call of the spirit and came to believe the senses of the physical world provided what was needed for you to know and understand. Your separation was now utter and complete. You were lost and fell into deep despair. A sense of hopelessness descended upon you.

This was necessary. You had to lose your soul before you could find and reclaim it. But the state of being lost is dangerous. Now, you and others are in jeopardy of eternal separation. If you continue on a path away from your soul, you may wander much too far. When you next cross to the nonphysical plane, you may find that the way is not clear. You may be misled by entities you mistakenly believe to be benevolent, and they may gain power over you.

It could be that humankind has reached this point on the spiritual journey. Like a flock of sheep, we are slowly climbing a mountain. Will all of us make it? The oak produces many acorns but only a small number reach self-actualization in the form of full-grown trees. This is not difficult to understand. The way is hard. It requires courage, perseverance and a willingness to change. Men and women hang onto their self-centeredness. It is not easy to let go. To grow requires sacrifice. And we are lazy. And often weak. But Cayce and *The Spirits' Book* both say all

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humans will eventually arrive at reunification with the Source. Nevertheless, laziness is not the only difficulty that must be overcome. We are surrounded by a culture that pushes us in the wrong direction. The one constant message is to pursue success and happiness through what seems on the surface to be the most direct route. Grab all the gusto you can get. Get your fair share. Or more. Go for the gold. These are the battle cries.

But it is fool's gold.

Not until our intuition and our experience communicate the error of this thinking will we be free to follow the correct path. Indeed, there is hope; one branch of science, quantum physics, denies the very existence of what society tells us we should pursue—materialism. Quantum physics says there is no material as such, but rather that matter is energy, conscious energy, when we look beyond surface illusion.

Moreover, there can be little doubt that all creation is one connected whole, with no separate pieces. We are the whole, and the whole is us. What happens here influences what happens there, even if it is halfway across the galaxy. Energy takes time to travel, but information is transmitted instantaneously because only one mind exists. A slit that is opened changes the field, provided someone knows that it is open. The act of observing changes the outcome because the known cannot be separated from the knower.

If consciousness is fundamental, we are creatures of the mental realm, the dimension that supports and informs physical

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reality. Without this realm, nothing on the physical plane would exist. The one mind is composed of memories, morphic fields that contain the history of each species. If true, they contain information which shapes our noses, our feet, and our world. The overall field is composed of fields within fields within fields. Your soul is a field that has been built to its present state over many incarnations. You came out of it and will return to it. Your present physical body is a projection of this field. Perhaps you evolved into human form from the first one-celled creature that lived in the sea over many millennia.

Today, you are who you believe yourself to be in your heart. You must accept and take responsibility for yourself if you are to advance. If you do not like yourself, you must forgive yourself and resolve to begin anew, remembering that you get back what you give. Give kindness. Receive kindness. Pay respect, receive it. Bestow wealth, be wealthy. Hold love in your heart for yourself and others, and love will come back to you. Hold hate or bitterness, and your life will be filled with bitterness and hate.

To change, you must forgive. You must forgive yourself as well as others.

You came into the physical world to learn this because you needed the thickness of matter to slow down the process of creating your world. In this way, you learn lessons that remain with you.

Love is what you must learn. Once you have learned to love perfectly, without selfishness or hesitation, the time for a new

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creation will be at hand. You will become part of that and will continue to evolve. Or you may not. The choice is yours. Until you learn to love unselfishly, you will continue on the wheel of life and death and rebirth.

Remember, too, that fears block you as surely as bitterness and hate do. Therefore you must learn to trust. Put yourself and your fate in the hands of the Divine. Once you learn to trust rather than to fear, and once you learn to love instead of to hate, the channel between your ego self and your subconscious mind will open wide. This will lead to a new self.

Did you select this book and click “buy now” because you want to move beyond the Matrix and self-actualize? Have you read all the way to this place in this final chapter because you want change to occur that will result in your life becoming the one you really want rather than what someone else, or our culture, thinks it ought to be? You now have the power because you now know what the ascended masters know. You know that underlying and giving form to reality is a force that is the opposite of entropy, an organizing force that fosters growth and evolution. You know that a key way is to align with the force and in effect to become an agent of it. Now that you have this knowledge, it’s time to create the vision of what you want your life to become. It’s time to identify the steps you can take to bring about the personal reality you truly desire.

To create a vision of your highest, actualized self, you need to take time to think. And I am not talking only about your

morning or afternoon meditation time, that fifteen minutes to half an hour you spend once or twice each day tapping into your higher self and recharging your batteries. I'm talking about taking serious time. I'm talking about taking an entire day at the very minimum.

Here is what I recommend: As soon as possible, once you have finished reading this final chapter, set aside a full day. It might be a Saturday or a Sunday, or some other day you have off from work. Plan to spend a full eight consecutive hours alone, except for bathroom breaks and lunch. Go to a library. Leave your cell phone and computer in the car because you don't want to be disturbed. Take a pen or half a dozen pencils and a legal pad, find a secluded spot, and get comfortable. Write at the top of the first page, because science has not yet figured out how to extend life indefinitely, "I am now 101 years old, I am on my death bed, and I'm looking back. If I'd stayed on the course I was on when I was (the age you are now), would I have any regrets? Instead, having changed direction at that time and lived an incredibly successful and fulfilling life as a result, what about it was most important to me? What were my biggest accomplishments? What else stands out?"

Write down everything, and I mean everything that comes to mind. Don't self edit and take your time. Taking time and having time to take is important because your mind works differently when it's rushed because of a looming deadline. It's virtually impossible to go deep with that clock ticking in your

head. That's why it's important for it to be totally relaxed because you have all day. Sit back, relax, and let go. There's nothing else to do or to think about but the life ahead of you that you want for yourself.

Once you reach a point where you cannot think of anything else, go back, look over what you have written and arrange the items in descending order with the most important one first.

Having completed that task, go to the next blank sheet and put the number-one most important thing at the top. Then write down what you would need to do, what you can do, what changes you would have to make, and what actions you would need to take, to create the conditions for that number-one thing to happen.

Once you have done this, do it for items two, three, four, and so on down the list. Realistically, this may take more than a single full-day session. So, as soon as possible, take another full day and another if necessary. Remember, this is not a process to be rushed. Once you are finished, you will have the first draft of a life plan, and you will have created thought forms that will manifest provided you nurture them, hold on to them, and act upon them.

Going forward, as you take the steps you have set out for yourself and row your boat in the direction of the flow, I suggest you set aside a full day once each month to update, add to, and refine your plan.

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Life it seems to me is a dream the Source is having, and you are a character in the dream. You have a role or roles to play. Before you arrived here on earth, you took them on, and you made a solemn vow to carry them out. What you will have done by taking the time I've suggested in the preceding paragraphs that you take is recall that solemn oath and the vision you had before birth of the self-actualized you. Now you have a choice to make. You can either make good on your promise, or you can renege. If you renege, you will view the consequences when the time comes for your life to be replayed before you and your guides. So, go to the library. Take time to think, and plan.

But getting it right may not be easy. It will take courage. To get started, you must clear the junk from your mental attic. That's why you must set aside full days to work on this with no interruptions. You must also take time to forgive yourself and others. You must get past your fears and replace them with positive belief. You must learn to trust. You must commit to change. You must be willing to suffer hardships. You must give up the "certainties" of the world you have created up to this point in your life.

Once you have a plan, you need to stick to it. Devoting a half-hour once, perhaps twice each day to meditation and a full day each month will be important. In between, keep listening to the still small voice. When you review your life, you will think about the decisions that brought you here. Were they the right decisions? Did you feel good after you made them?

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Remember to try to discover why your soul chose the circumstances of your birth. You will think back to what you loved to do as a child. You will ask for guidance, and you will receive it. You will follow your bliss.

Remember to begin to trust your intuition by following the direction you receive when making small decisions. Eventually you will follow the gentle voice you come to know inside as you make the big ones. This may be frightening at first. It may be frightening because you will not know if it is indeed leading you toward your desired destination. But after a while, after you have learned how to trust, not knowing will become part of the fun, like opening packages at Christmas. You will be on an adventure as thrilling as any attempt by Indiana Jones. You will be the director of your own lucid dream.

Or you may finish this book, put it down and forget about it. No doubt this is what many will do. They've spent their lives doing what others told them. They've carved out a place for themselves. It isn't all that exciting or fulfilling, and it can be difficult. But they've become comfortable with who and what they are. Why change? There's no proof they're in danger of getting so far away from their soul and their source that they may never find the way back. No conclusive proof can be produced that a nonphysical realm exists. No scientific experiment shows that any part of a human being survives death. Those who died and were resuscitated? Many scientists still maintain it was all in their heads. A trick of the brain; a lack of oxygen. Besides,

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it's so much trouble to change. And what would people think? Things are comfortable the way they are. Life isn't so bad. Why rock the boat? And this Martin fellow says that once a person gets started, he or she won't want to stop, and may end up changing completely, as though all they wanted was to remodel the kitchen and end up rebuilding the entire house.

Sun room done? Now how about the den? Oh, and you need a wing off to the side. And a second-level master bedroom with sky lights and a fireplace.

All the while this renovation is going on, dust and debris are piling up, and the person occupying the house has to live in the middle of it.

"Wait a minute, I had a nice little bungalow," you may be tempted to say. "All I wanted was a new kitchen. You're turning this into a mansion. When will the job be completed?"

The architect, your higher self, will shake her head and say, "Not for a very long time, I'm afraid. You'd best get used to it."

Maybe you don't want a mansion. If this is the way you feel, I doubt there's anything I can say now to change your mind. You might as well stick with the bungalow.

I'll tell you something from personal experience, though. There is no greater joy in life than doing what you are here to do. Getting there may be difficult, it's true. But if you listen and persevere, if you earnestly follow the path laid down, you will receive help. After a while you will begin to sense unseen hands guiding you and the way will become less difficult to find. The

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trials won't be as hard to bear. There will be blind alleys, of course. There will be disappointments. There will be tough lessons to learn, but gradually you will come to a gut level understanding of what your existence as a human being is about. You will come to a gut level understanding of how you fit into the scheme. You will feel at one with it all and yet maintain your sense of self. You will come to know what you are doing. You will see outcomes materializing well before they arrive. You will choose what to pursue and what to avoid.

When you arrive at this point, you will realize that you have come to power, spiritual power, and with this realization will come joy. Can you imagine the buoyancy you'll feel? Whether it's mastery of a sport such as tennis, mastery of the card game of bridge, a musical instrument or a foreign language, the arrival at the state of really knowing what you are doing always brings joy.

And abundance. Not so much in the form of money, but the true riches of the universe, which will flow effortlessly to you because you are working with the universe, instead of rowing upstream.

And health. Your body will respond to the new life you've found. No longer will there be any reason for aches and pains. No longer will there be any thought of or reason to contemplate the possibility of death, for you are on the path to Eternal Life. You will be a vibrant, living cell in the larger body of

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humankind, fulfilling your purpose and your promise. You will grow every day and help others do the same.

Yet with all this will come a sense of deep humility because you will know that it is not you who brought you here. It is your subconscious mind and the mind of God. Perhaps there will be some small pride in knowing that you finally have learned how to listen. But you will be careful to guard against feeling a sense of pride in any form. One of the lessons you will have learned on the way is that support is withdrawn from those who believe they are accomplishing great things on their own. The saying, "Pride goes before a fall," is true. The prideful soon learn how little they can accomplish on their own.

There will also come a sense of aloneness. Not loneliness, because you will have friends, you will have family, you will have others who are with you on the path. But few, if any, will have arrived where you have arrived. Few will be the number with whom you can share your feelings and insights. Few will understand them completely. If you want a sense of what this is like, read the Gospels. Time and again you will witness the frustration Jesus experienced. Often, even his closest Apostles could not grasp the truth of his words.

Despite all this, there will be a new, deep understanding of your true worth. It will be impossible to continue to think of yourself as meaningless or insignificant once you understand that grace exists for you, that guides are constantly with you, that you and the universal subconscious mind are one, and that in

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reality you are the very Force of Life itself seeking expression and self-awareness.

In closing, let me say that my wish, my prayer, my hope is that you will put to work the special talents and gifts that only you possess for the benefit of the greater whole and for creation. My wish is that you will answer the call to adventure when it comes, and in so doing enter with me into what Jesus called God's Kingdom.

Until now, perhaps, fear and doubt have been holding you back. Now you know you have much more to fear by rejecting the call. You know that by answering the call you choose life over death. You now know that the forces of the universe will fold in behind you and give you their support. You will be pulled forward and be pushed along by the hands of grace. Each step will be guided. All you need to do is be aware, be watchful, and expect things to break your way. Stay the course. Believe. As you grow more and more attuned, as you put your talents to work in the service of others, abundance will begin to flow. You will find new joy and be led to Eternal Life, now and forever.

I feel sadness for Scientific Materialists and nihilists, whom I suppose are inevitably one and the same. If they hold on to the belief that the purpose of life is the mindless duplication of DNA, how meaningless and insignificant they must believe themselves and others to be. How hopeless and yawning must be the gulf of separation of their ego minds from their souls. Surely, the anguish and anxiety they experience daily is intense.

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And to what end?

They'll be in for a surprise at death. And not a happy one. Instead of the end of their consciousness, their consciousness will leave their bodies. And where will it go? A friend of mine, a psychic, won't go near graveyards because of all the confused souls who hang around the plots of ground where their bodies are planted. These lost souls don't know what to do or where to go. And if by chance they somehow enter the tunnel that leads to the next plane of existence, they may find it completely dark—indeed according to Betty Eadie's experience recounted in *Embraced by the Light* they may be unable to see the light at the end of it. Imagine their desperation when, contrary to their expectations, there's no end to the end of their lives.

I feel gladness for you and joy that I might have been a conduit in bringing a deeper understanding of yourself. Now you know who you are, where you are going, and what the possibilities are. My sincere wish is that my efforts have helped you move another mile on the journey. Thanks for taking part of it with me.

Keep moving ahead. Remember always to look for the light. Expect it to be there, and it will. Go for it.

Remember always: As you believe, so will it be for you.

Afterword

What follows is not intended as doctrine, nor as a final answer to the mystery of existence. It is, rather, a reflection on what the convergences explored throughout this book may imply if they are pointing—even imperfectly—toward something real.

If consciousness is fundamental, then the implications reach far beyond spirituality, religion, or personal enlightenment. They challenge the assumptions upon which much of modern civilization has been built.

For more than a century, the dominant worldview of the industrial and technological age has treated human beings primarily as biological mechanisms—temporary organisms produced accidentally by unconscious physical processes in a purposeless universe. Consciousness, under this model, is little more than a byproduct of electrochemical activity in the brain. Meaning is subjective. Identity is temporary. Death is extinction. The universe is indifferent.

This worldview helped produce extraordinary advances in science, medicine, engineering, and material prosperity. Yet despite these achievements, something within modern civilization appears increasingly fractured. Rates of anxiety, depression, addiction, loneliness, alienation, and existential

despair continue to rise amid what is now unprecedented technological capability. People possess more information than any generation in history, yet many feel less certain about who they are, why they exist, or what ultimately gives life meaning.

Perhaps this crisis is not merely economic, political, or psychological. Perhaps it is metaphysical. If human beings are not merely biological machines, then it seems to me a civilization organized around that assumption will inevitably produce forms of suffering that no amount of material abundance can fully resolve. If consciousness is fundamental, then the reduction of human identity to productivity, status, consumption, ideology, or algorithmic behavior represents not enlightenment, but a profound misunderstanding of who and what we are.

This possibility may help explain why so many people today feel inwardly divided. The modern world trains individuals to construct identities almost entirely from external conditions: occupation, politics, achievement, social approval, physical appearance, tribal affiliation, and accumulated possessions. Yet the deeper self explored throughout this book—the observing awareness beneath the conditioned personality—cannot be satisfied by external acquisition alone. Something within us continues searching because something within us senses incompleteness.

This may also explain the growing fascination with consciousness itself. Interest in meditation, near-death experiences, psychedelics, Jungian psychology, contemplative

traditions, and post-materialist philosophy is not occurring randomly. Nor is the renewed interest in ancient spiritual traditions appearing at the precise historical moment when artificial intelligence is beginning to challenge long-held assumptions about human uniqueness.

The rise of AI may eventually force humanity to confront a question far more important than whether machines can think: What, exactly, is consciousness?

If intelligence alone can be simulated, replicated, and perhaps surpassed technologically, then human value can no longer rest primarily upon information processing, calculation, memory retrieval, or productivity. Civilization may soon discover that many qualities once considered uniquely human are reproducible by machines. Yet subjective awareness itself—the felt interiority of experience—remains unexplained.

A machine may process language. It may imitate emotion. It may outperform humans intellectually in countless domains. But whether computation alone can ever produce genuine conscious experience remains unknown. If consciousness ultimately proves irreducible to matter, then humanity may be standing at the threshold of one of the greatest philosophical transformations in history.

For centuries, science progressively displaced humanity from the center of the cosmos. Copernicus displaced the Earth. Darwin displaced biological exceptionalism. Freud displaced conscious rational control. Now artificial intelligence may displace intellectual superiority itself. Yet paradoxically, these

developments may ultimately return humanity to a deeper understanding of consciousness rather than eliminate it.

The great irony may be that the more completely science explains the mechanism, the more mysterious consciousness itself becomes. This possibility would place modern civilization in a position remarkably similar to that described symbolically throughout this book. Like the prisoners in Plato's cave, like Neo inside the Matrix, like Jung's ego trapped within conditioned identity, humanity may have mistaken a partial model of reality for reality itself.

None of this requires abandoning science. Quite the contrary. Science remains one of humanity's greatest achievements precisely because it demands disciplined observation, intellectual humility, and openness to revision. The danger does not arise from science itself, but from prematurely assuming that current models have already explained the deepest nature of consciousness and existence.

The history of science repeatedly demonstrates that reality is stranger than previous generations imagined. Newtonian certainty gave way to relativity and quantum mechanics. Solid matter dissolved into probabilistic fields. Time became elastic. Observation itself appeared entangled with physical outcomes at the quantum level. Again and again, reality proved less intuitive, less mechanical, and more mysterious than human beings expected.

Beyond The Matrix

Perhaps consciousness studies now stand at a similar threshold. If the perspectives explored throughout this book contain even partial truth, then the implications are profound. Death may not be annihilation, but transition. Identity may extend beyond the conditioned ego. Consciousness may participate in reality more deeply than current models assume. Human life may possess developmental purposes beyond survival and reproduction alone. And civilization itself may ultimately evolve toward a more integrated understanding of mind, meaning, morality, and interconnectedness.

This does not imply naïve utopianism. Human beings remain capable of cruelty, delusion, domination, tribalism, and self-destruction. History offers no guarantee of progress. Technological power without corresponding psychological maturity may prove extraordinarily dangerous. In many ways, the modern world appears to be experiencing a widening gap between external power and internal wisdom.

This may be the real crisis of our time.

We have learned to manipulate matter with astonishing sophistication while remaining deeply confused about consciousness, identity, and the structure of meaning itself. Yet perhaps this confusion is evidence of a transition to a new level of understanding.

The traditions explored throughout this book—Spiritism, Jungian psychology, near-death research, Monroe's explorations, contemplative traditions, and related philosophies—all converge

upon a similar intuition: that awakening begins when human beings cease identifying exclusively with the conditioned ego-self and begin recognizing participation in something larger than the isolated personality.

Whether interpreted spiritually, psychologically, symbolically, or metaphysically, this shift changes everything. Fear loosens. Death appears differently. Competition softens. Compassion deepens. Meaning expands.

Life ceases to be merely a struggle for survival and becomes participation in an unfolding process of awareness itself.

Perhaps this is why so many wisdom traditions insist that genuine transformation is ultimately inward rather than external. Civilizations rise and fall. Technologies advance. Economies fluctuate. Political systems evolve. Yet beneath these shifting structures remains the enduring human question: Who—and what—are we?

The answer may not lie in returning backward into superstition, nor in surrendering ourselves entirely to reductionistic materialism, but in moving toward a larger synthesis—one capable of integrating scientific rigor with the undeniable depth of conscious experience itself. If so, humanity may still be in the early stages of understanding its own nature, and perhaps that is the deeper meaning of “escaping the Matrix.” Not escaping physical reality. Not rejecting science. Not withdrawing from the world. But awakening from the illusion that we are only the temporary masks we wear within it.

Beyond The Matrix

Perhaps the ultimate truth is not that reality is unreal, but that reality is vastly deeper, more interconnected, and more conscious than we have yet fully understood.

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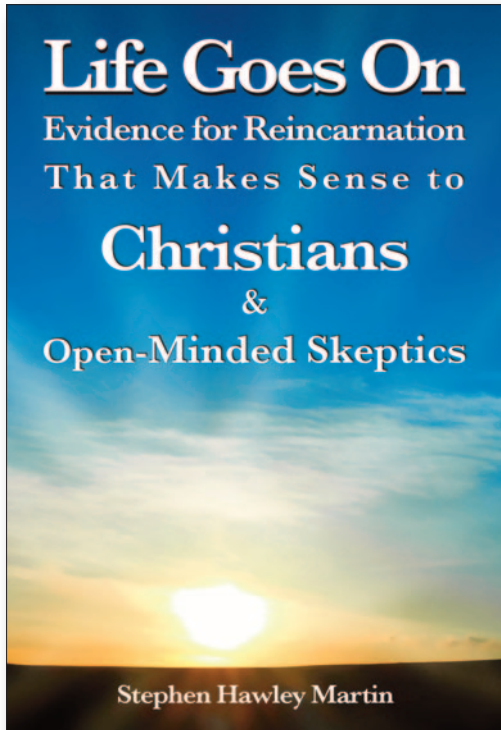
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About the Author



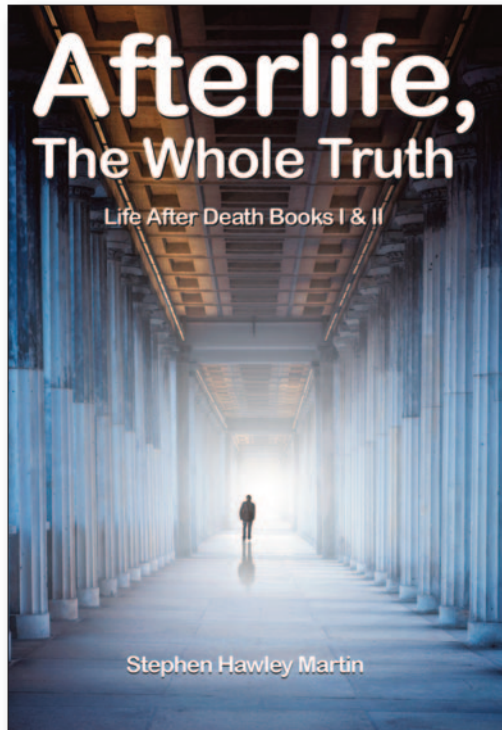
Stephen Hawley Martin is the author of more than three-dozen books, including five published novels, half a dozen business management titles, and quite a few self-help books and metaphysical investigations. He is a former principal of the world-renowned advertising agency, The Martin Agency, the firm 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.

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