

Fall 2017

# Subtle Energies

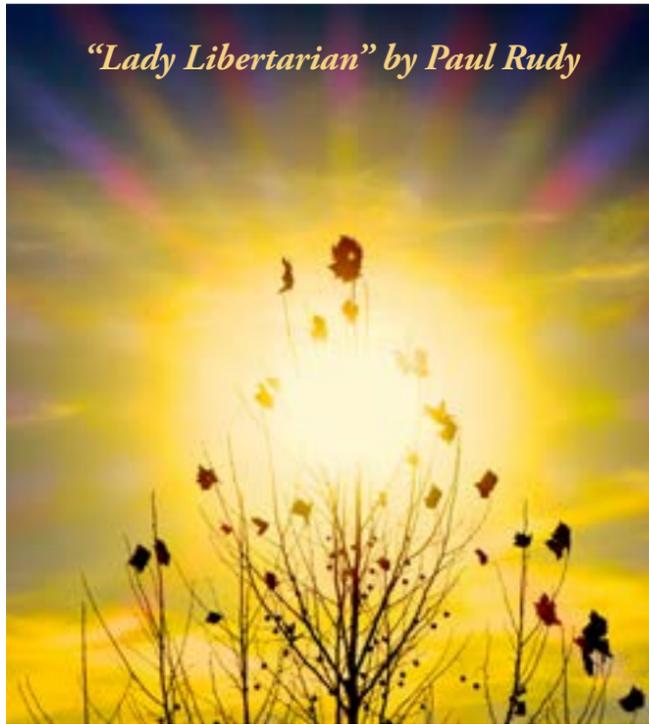
## Magazine

Bridging Science & Spirit



Jeannie Kang . Kate Hastings . Melinda Connor  
Joel & Michelle Levey . Laura Mead . Robert Chender . Christina Donnell

Volume 28, Issue 3



I have seen through the camera lens all my life, but only recently started capturing things that really intrigue my imagination! On Halloween night of 2014, on a cold, moonlit walkabout, I began taking photos on my property at Harmony Farm in northeast Kansas. Photos of the night sky, sometimes with the moon as a backdrop, began revealing many different kinds of orbs, shapes, and configurations I had never seen before. My breath found its way into them as well, creating cosmic designs that look more like supernovas and distant galaxies, than the moisture from my body. I have long been curious about the unseen things of the world, and these photos inspired my imagination. Explained, or unexplained, these images show, to me at least, the magic and mystery of life. When I suspend my disbelief, reality shifts and becomes far more rich than I could have imagined. These images become a welcome sign-post for me on my sojourn through this lifetime. To see more of my photos, go to:



<http://www.paulrudy.net/about-my-photography>



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# Letter from the Editor

“Sunset” by Paul Rudy

This issue of *Subtle Energies Magazine* is of special significance. It marks both my two-year anniversary as Executive Editor and my final issue at the helm of the magazine. I want to take this opportunity to thank Kate Hastings, who served as my associate editor, friend, and advisor throughout my term at the magazine. I would also like to thank the staff of *ISSSEEM*, especially Ann Nunley and Kate Hunter, for granting me the freedom to expand the magazine to explore a wide variety of topics related to subtle energies, as well as to include original art, prose, and poetry. I want to thank all the writers and artists who have contributed their work to *Subtle Energies*. Every contributor to this magazine gives a gift from their heart – sharing deeply of themselves and their work in order to expand and further the community. Lastly, I want to thank the community itself. Every reader of *Subtle Energies Magazine* is furthering the goals and hopes of *ISSSEEM*. Our readership is self-selected to be interested in the field of subtle energies, open to new ideas and concepts, and committed in furthering their knowledge and exploration of the world of consciousness and ideas. I am eternally grateful that you exist and that I had the incredible privilege to serve as editor of a publication that you choose to read.

It was hard for me to envision a “final” issue as editor of the magazine. I wanted this issue to be a special gift to our readers. I decided to ask each

of the authors to focus on an ultimate question for anyone who seeks to move forward into unknown territory – How to Get There? I didn’t define the “how” or the “there” or even the concept of “get.” After all, is there anything to get? Anywhere to go? Is there a how?

Next, I had to choose the authors. You will notice that this issue is much longer than we generally publish. I only wish I could have made it even longer – there are so many incredible voices that I would have liked to bring to you. The voices included here are powerful examples of the depth and richness of this community. Every author in this issue brought something unique to examining the question of how we move forward – individually and as a community.

Jeannie Kang is a Korean Acupuncturist who practices the ancient art of Asian Medicine. She tells us about learning in the old ways, of learning “maan tong” and “su shin” from a Master trained by one of the Greats – a Korean Master who lived in isolation on Mount Tae Baek, where the mountain itself plays a role in how spiritual growth unfolds.

Kate Hastings has spent her life studying sacred space and ritual. She looks at the hero’s journey and the power that rites of passage can play in our lives. Ritual and awareness can help us recognize and appreciate the changes that mark important points of our journey.

Melinda Connor looks at the question of

“How to Get There?” from the point of view of the subtle energies community. She talks about the need for the community to come together to generate agreement and coherence that will move us forward. To this end, she describes a test that looks at measuring ways that subtle energy practitioners move energy.

Joel and Michelle Levey are among the early pioneers of the Mindfulness community in this country. They offer us meditations, a brief history of mindfulness, and a look at places Mindfulness might develop in the future. Joel and Michelle are among the founding members of *ISSSEEM* and continually support this community as it explores consciousness, subtle energies, and how we create healing in our world.

Laura Mead has previously published in *Subtle Energies*. However, she wanted to go deeper – to look at what we are doing here. She tells us a piece of her personal story while also examining the things that truly make us happy – the importance of being present in the moment and being of service to others.

Robert Chender is a Buddhist meditator and teacher who has been practicing for over forty-five years. He asks the lovely question, “What’s Really Going On” and proceeds to look at the ways the answer has unfolded in his lifetime. He starts by looking “out there” – literally by studying astrophysics and then discovers that the space inside is ultimately just as large and far more interesting.

Christina Donnell looks at the Organic Development of Nondual Awareness. She observes development as people begin to explore the inner spaces of consciousness and describes the patterns as people shift from an external, ego, focus to becoming one with the silence of which we’re made. Christina wrote a lovely piece for the very first issue I published as editor and it is a gift to have her energy bringing us full circle back to source in this publication.

Lastly, Paul Rudy provided us with his incredible photography. He especially wanted to share his anomalous sites photos and some of his nature photos. I love the line in his bio when he

says, “My breath found its way into them as well, creating cosmic designs...”

My breath has found its way into this magazine. It has been an act of love, a joy, and a great honor. While there are no answers to the question I posed, the articles in this issue embody themes. You will find a number of ideas, experiences, images, language, and references, repeated between articles. This journey of discovery is unique for each of us – but there are similarities and patterns. We have the ability to learn from each other and support each other on our paths. We are all here together. We are all here now.

I thank each of the authors for sharing of themselves and I thank each reader for choosing to be part of this journey. I invite you to continue to reach out to me with questions, if you are moved by something you read, or if you would like to know more about an author or a topic. I will continue to be available to our readers, the authors and artists who are published in *Subtle Energies*, and our community.



Genevieve Hogan has a B.A. in English literature from Colgate University, a M.S. in Writing Education from Syracuse University, and a Th.D. in Spiritual Healing from Holos University. She has served as editor for several publications including *Hayden’s Ferry Review* and *Subtle Energies Magazine*. She is an energy practitioner in private practice and is honored to serve this community in many ways.

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# *Maan Tong: Ten Thousand Openings*

## *Jeannie Kang*

*“Crowning Glory” by Paul Rudy*

It all started with meeting my mentor and master teacher Dr. Chang. He has been the most influential person in my life. After graduation, and a year abroad, I ended my relationship with my boyfriend. Suddenly adrift, I realized that while I had learned independence, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my psychology degree or with my life. I moved home to give myself time to decide and to be with my mom who wasn't feeling well.

It was through my mom's illness that I met Master Chang. Her friends told her about this doctor from South Korea who was treating people for free! They had to check out this good fortune and so my mother and her friends brought him to our home for coffee. I was curious so I started asking him a whole bunch of questions. I learned that he knew how to read and write Chinese characters and he said if I was really serious about it, he would teach me “chun ja moon”, which literally means 1,000 characters. It requires that many characters to read a Korean newspaper and the skill is no longer taught in the Korean schools because it is too difficult. Instead the schools decided to teach more practical languages like English. But, as I was in Los Angeles and he was offering to teach me here, it felt right. So at 24 I took on the discipline of learning this ancient language. I loved it! It was complicated but so beautiful.

I was learning fast and a few months into this study, Master Chang said to me, “I think you would do really great to study Asian Medicine.” I wonder sometimes if this was his plan all along. I'll probably never know, but this was how I began my study of one of the most difficult disciplines in the world – the ancient Art of Asian Medicine that dates back 5,000 years.

The first thing he insisted I learn was MEDITATION. I had lived in L.A. since I was seven years old. I was so Americanized that this was a whole new world I had no idea existed!! It was one of the hardest things to learn, sitting in lotus position, basically dozing off the whole time, trying to stay awake! It took a while before I got good at it. There came a point where I understood that

I had to find a state of simultaneous existence and non-existence. Once I was able to find my way there it got easier.

Then came the hard stuff... taking away the layers of what he called “peeling away the layers of the onion”..... in Korean you call this “su shin”. It means washing your spirit or soul...like in those movies where a young student goes into the mountains to come out a martial artist or a Taoist or a wiser, calmer, more knowing version of themselves. “Su shin” is at the heart of everything I learned. It is a way of being. It demands that I live in the space of the heart and see through the heart rather than the eyes. It is not a destination, but the journey that I strive for daily.

***The real life is the discovery  
of the inner workings  
of my heart and mind and spirit.***

Master Chang was a Buddhist and I began to adopt the ways of the meditative lifestyle. It made sense to me and it has formed who I have become today. I had 10 years where I entered almost a solitary existence. In the beginning it was hard not to see my friends and hang out with my family, but as I got deeper into my studies, I realized that the real life is in the discovery of the inner workings of my heart and mind and spirit. Over the years, it became easier to be alone with myself, not needing to party and always be around my friends or needing to be in the crowd. Those ten years changed my life forever. The ten years of cultivation changed my life, my habits, my thoughts and actions, even how I speak. My whole being underwent a major transformation. My mind started to work and think differently. As I progressed with meditation, Master Chang began to transmit the real learning - the spiritual embodiment of the lineage knowledge passed to him from his teacher.

He taught me skills including things like how to needle properly, how to find the correct

points on the body by learning how to feel the body, its lines, its grooves, its connectivity to the cosmos.... I practiced on myself for hours, hundreds of points a day. There isn't a point on the body that I could reach that I didn't needle with a one inch to a seven inch needle. I have fainted. I have bled. Bruising from the needles was just my normal day



occurrence. But that practice instilled a confidence that no one can take away from me. Ever.

Master Chang taught me herbs the same way, one herb at a time, one formula at a time. He never let me open a book. He wrote a page of the book and handed it to me that day for me to read over and over again until I digested it completely. This is old school. He said if you give a student a book they think about the end of the book instead of learning what is in front of them. And I knew he was right.

Along with skills, Master Chang taught me deeper knowledge – things that can't be defined by a point or a word. He taught me about "shu shin" and about chi and about how to move it. There is a mind, body, and spiritual connection to it all. I remember one day, while I was giving him a massage, he noticed that I was using brute force. He told me to stop, instead of using strength, to bring the chi within me to my hands and my

fingertips. I had no idea how to relax into cultivating chi in my hands. But I meditated on it, I practiced, and I allowed. I even practiced lifting my body up in lotus position with just my 10 fingertips! It took years. Two and a half years later, on the day of my test, I did my teacher's style meridian massage for three hours. As I worked, my hands got stronger and stronger and I knew that Master Chang felt the chi entering into my hands. At one point, my hands got so strong, even my teacher said laughingly, "OK! too strong!" Still, I continue to meditate and practice. These are ever expanding ways of being. The path will continue to unfold throughout my lifetime.

***I was blessed to study with one of the older generation masters that literally studied in the mountains of South Korea.***

Master Chang was the most influential person in my life. I was blessed to study with one of the older generation masters that literally studied in the mountains of South Korea. His story sounds like it could come out of the story out of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*!! He searched for three years to find The Teacher, as he knew there had to be more than what he was learning. He went to every mountain in Korea where people said there was a teacher famous in this or that topic. He spent years searching, but all he found were men that wanted his money or were willing to give him a piece of information for an amount, but no one who could truly be his Teacher. He was about to give up after the third year of searching. Tired and discouraged, he was running out of money as well as the emotional energy to continue the search.

Then, one day, someone told him of a teacher in Mount Tae Baek. A friend urged him not to give up, to go once more to find out if this could be the one. Exhausted as he was, my teacher reluctantly went. He couldn't give up. He knew there had to be more than this.

It was a long journey and when he arrived



he met an older man. At first glance the old man appeared ordinary. Then Master Chang attempted to meet his eyes - eyes so fierce he could not look directly into them. And so he asked if he could learn from him....

For the first six months all my teacher did was cook and clean for this man. All the man said was "go up the mountains and tell me what you see." My teacher obeyed. Every day he climbed to the top of the mountain. It took two hours to go up and come down. When he returned, his teacher would ask him, "What did you see?"

My teacher would answer, "I saw the trees. I saw the skies. I heard the leaves falling. I peed on the ants. I heard the sound of water in the creek, I spoke to the animals...." Every day similar answers. Every day he went up the same mountain. He thought it was a waste of time. He wasn't allowed in the teacher's room. No teaching was occurring. He was frustrated. This wasn't teaching.

Each day he cooked and cleaned and went up the mountain. He answered the questions – the best he could. The next day he did it again. My teacher wanted to quit. He decided that he was going to tell his teacher that he was done, that he

wasn't going to keep cooking and cleaning and going up the mountain. It was a waste of his time. But when my teacher went to quit, his Master's stare was so fierce that he couldn't get the words out. And so the next day he did it again. He went up the mountain, he cleaned, he cooked, and he told the Master what he had seen.

***The master's stare was so fierce, he couldn't get the words out.***

What he did not realize was that over time - each week, each month, he was going up and down the mountain faster and faster. It took my teacher six long months of cleaning and cooking, for this grand master teacher in the mountains of Tae Baek, for him to realize that something was happening. After six months, he realized he was propelling himself faster up and down the mountain. This realization led to another and that day he hurried down the mountain to the little dwelling where his teacher lived. What had taken two hours now took 45 minutes!

***The Greatest Teachings  
were held in the daily tasks.***

When he got there, he dropped to his knees in front of his teacher and he cried. My teacher only cried three times in his life and this was one of those times. My teacher cried with joy and wonder, with embarrassment and humility. As he cried, he apologized for not recognizing the teachings earlier. For the greatest of teachings were held in those daily tasks that his teacher had assigned. Within the cooking and cleaning and the climbing of the mountain, lay the foundations for discovering his soul, his “su shin”. He said to his teacher, “You were trying to teach me to shed the skin of my past in the city dwelling life, all the habits, all the bad thoughts, all the life I led as a man, all the mistakes I made in my life. Each time I went up and down the mountain you were teaching



me how to use the chi in my body and how to propel my energy inward and outward! This whole time I was thinking all these bad thoughts about how you were not teaching me anything. I am so sorry teacher.” And as he spoke, his soul felt cleansed. All around him fell tears of joy and elation.

This is when the grand master invited my teacher in and began teaching him one acupuncture point at a time. My teacher, like me, had bruises all over his legs and every part of his body was sore and swollen. He meditated for hours multiple times a day. When he was taught how to find the accurate point for LI4, which is between for thumb and index fingers, it was so swollen from needling it over and over that, after cooking his teacher’s meal, he couldn’t carry the Korean style tray with his hands so he had to carry it with his forearms.

While he studied acupuncture with this teacher he continued his walks up the mountain, learning how to be part of nature and of a silent, meditative Buddhist life. He stayed seven years. By the time he left, birds landed on his shoulders as he sat and animals came to gather at his feet. He began to know many things. Among them that his calling was to be a healer and perhaps a teacher, should the right student come along.

***I carry the knowing with me and more importantly I carry the “su shin”, the way of being that my teacher taught me and his teacher taught him.***

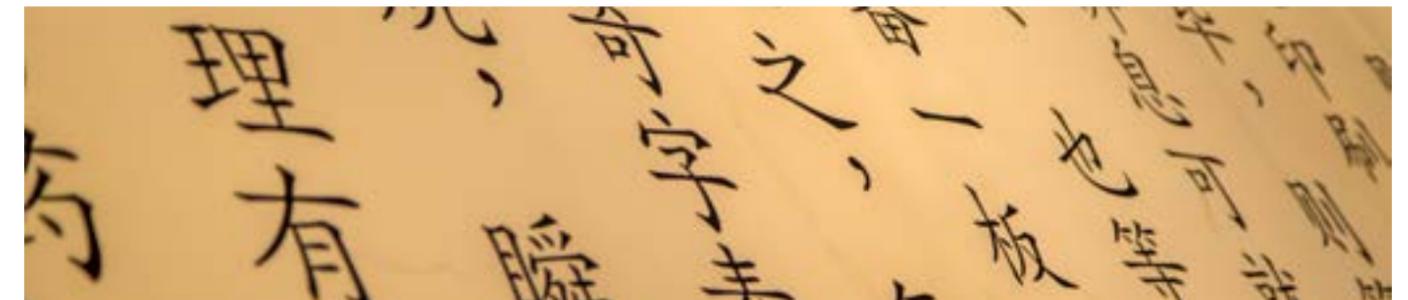
I grew up on these kinds of stories. They fed my drive to know and sent me on a never-ending journey. My teacher taught me the same way his teacher taught him – one page at a time, one point at a time, one herb at a time, and one formula at a time. It’s not a fast path. It took me two and a half years to learn to cultivate chi in my hands, in my body. It took me two years to learn

one acupuncture point for its accuracy. Everything I learned took time and practice until it was ingrained in my body, mind and spirit. My teacher believed that no one could take that away from me. Knowing becomes part of you through hard work, practice, effort, diligence, awareness of the good and the hard, the yin and the yang, and the cycle of life. Whether you know it or not, it is moving and evolving.

I carry the knowing with me and more importantly I carry the “su shin”, the way of being that my teacher taught me and his teacher taught him. I gift that sort of learning to you. May you find your teacher, your path, and your way. Knowing and integration go on forever. All they require is deep listening, listening with your heart, not just with the sounds in your ears. When you listen, the teachers are all around you. Your patients are your teachers.

***“Maan Tong” -  
May your mind know  
ten thousand openings!***

The mountains are your teachers. Take time to hear them. Listen and know. “Maan Tong” – may your mind know 10,000 openings – the openings that come with knowledge, compassion, wisdom, and humility.



Jeannie Kang is the first Korean American woman to serve as the commissioner of the California State Acupuncture Board (CAB) appointed by Governor Brown. She also served at the state, national, international organizations as President of CSOMA, as President of AAAOM, and as the Temporary Advisor to the World Health Organization, respectively. Ms. Kang is highly respected in the practitioner community and throughout the profession as a whole. She is most excited and feels extremely blessed when she is treating her patients.

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# *Rites of Passage*

## *Kate Hastings*

*“Leave Only Footprints” by Paul Rudy*

Each of us is a hero. We each make the Hero's Journey---the archetypal adventure of moving through the experiences of trial, growth, and change in our lives spoken of by Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Edward Taylor, Otto Rank, and others. We journey through our lives, sometimes through the slow progresses of growth and eventual change, other times by accepting the call to adventure, or responding to the involuntary life-changing jolts that disarm and disable us, requiring urgent reinvention of ourselves.

***Rites of passage can aid in the integration of our bodies, minds, and spirits.***

Rites of passage can aid in the integration of our bodies, minds, and spirits, helping us to embody the transfigurations brought about by change and to normalize our new status quo. We miss important growth opportunities when we fail to embrace change through the rites of ceremony. Such rites anchor change and help us energetically and emotionally resolve our new normal. Ceremony helps us close the loop of new identity.

Through ceremony, we can “get on with our lives” with new authenticity and groundedness in our changed worlds. This article addresses individual passages and some ways we can embody what's different about us as we change. Rites of passage are not like interventions. They are not inflicted upon the initiate. They are ceremonies instigated by and developed in close coordination with the initiate, but usually also involve trusted intimates and friends.

Change begins with “the call.” The call can appear in many forms, some almost imperceptible... at first. Sometimes the call comes by simply making a mistake, by taking a chance, or in reaching a state of conflict. Sometimes it comes as an outright call to adventure, a demand of passion to venture forth. Sometimes it comes through a dramatic life event such as the death of a loved one.

Any of these changes signals that we have outgrown our current lives and transformation is on the way. Whatever changes our biography qualifies

as a passage. It signals that we have reached the balance point, that we are on the threshold between what was and what will be and are undertaking an initiation from which we will not return as we were. We are in a new time and place and cannot return to our old selves.

Our heroic victories reveal the treasures previously hidden inside ourselves, but few of us stop to claim our treasure, to recognize and celebrate our new selves, or to complete our cycles of transformation. Life is busy and it's much easier to try to maintain the status quo, to let time pass as we fog-over our need to acknowledge change and embrace the new. Alas, we cannot ignore life changes easily. That's why we become frustrated when our old normal lives are no longer comfortable and, like clothing that's been outgrown, don't fit anymore.

We can think about these evolutions in terms of three phases of transformative change: who we were before we changed, what intervened to present change, and who we have become as a result of what changed. We can use ceremony to work with change, to help ourselves move into our new realities, to authenticate change, and to normalize our new lives both for ourselves and our closest relationships. Through ceremony we acknowledge the old by remembering it, cross the threshold of change by recognizing it, and embody new identity by claiming it. In his seminal book on ritual, *Deeply into the Bone: Re-Inventing Rites of Passage*, Ronald Grimes (2002) tells us “*We undergo passages, but we enact rites,*” reminding us of the important difference between going through an experience and embodying it.

Rituals have existed throughout history and in all parts of the world, giving sociological, spiritual, and evolutionary weight to man's need for rites of passage and celebration. As the first anthropologist to identify rites of passage for people's traditional life changes, Arnold Van Gennep (1960) referred to three aspects of rites that are important in ritual process: separation, transition, and incorporation. Think of it this way: we're living our everyday lives and then something happens that separates us and transitions us from that way of being. We walk through a metaphorical doorway, crossing a threshold over which we leave

our old way of being and emerge into our new reality. We need the energetic incorporation of ritual to help us cross the bridge between how we were before and how we are now.

### ***Rites of Passage:***

***Rites are the mystical underpinnings of transformation.***

The rituals of ceremony, bestowing, commemorating, and witnessing are all ways that energetically help us integrate mental, physical, and spiritual alignment. Rites are the mystical underpinnings of transformation. There is power in “being seen” and in “naming” our changes. Ritual is so important to the embodiment of life passages that in cultures that have abandoned rituals as commemorations of growth and change, people will invent their own, such as gang shootings, genital mutilation, early pregnancy, or other rites to “prove” passages.

Life passage ceremonies can be elaborate or simple as long as they include the three phases of initiation: honoring the previous world (the separation or pre-liminal state of what is now past), referencing the transition (the balance point of the ceremony; the threshold or liminal state poised between the old and new worlds), and celebrating the new (the incorporation of the new, the rebirth or post-liminal state). Butterflies are powerful metaphors for the three stages of transformation, first being caterpillars, then the gooey creatures contained in cocoons, and finally the beautiful beast with wings that emerges from the chrysalis and flies away.

The Wizard of Oz analogy also works because he provided the same “bestowing” of new identities on the Lion, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Man. They each had experienced ordeals that changed them. All they needed to realize their new identities was the ritual which the Wizard hastily created to commemorate their changes. Dorothy, on the other hand, required a bit more journeying to embody her changes.

Literally any personal change benefits from

being commemorated. Divorces, miscarriages, first menstrual periods, getting a new job or losing one, getting a new pet, one’s first car, moving into a new home, learning to ride one’s first bicycle---the list is only limited by one’s imagination in identifying what changes us. Any change that results in a new personal status qualifies as a life change. Although this article deals with individuals’ life changes, rites of passage pertain not only to individuals, but also to our social and cultural constructs. It is not only individuals who experience life-changing forces, but also families and communities whose cultural underpinnings change and require adjustments. A powerful, and tragic, example of group change was the community of Newtown, Connecticut where the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School took place. Residents rejected public commemoration in favor of working with celebrants who helped them integrate how they had changed.

In addition to rites of passage for individuals and groups, other types of ceremonies commemorate annual events such as religious holidays, celebrating the New Year, or feasts and festivals that mark community anniversaries or cultural events such as Independence Day. These rites can contain some of the same ritual elements, but they are conducted for celebration by a group and are not structured like the intimate and privately-held individuals’ rites of passage.

### ***Ritual Elements:***

***We all need life change ceremony.***

When thinking about ritual elements, consider the three-phase ceremony. What items best symbolize *how things were*? What items can provide a *transition*? What represents the *new life*? Any appropriate items can assist, especially if they hold archetypal or symbolic meaning for the initiate. Ceremony ritual elements help as long as their meaning contributes to the process at hand and is personally meaningful to the initiate.

To plan a rite of passage, think about why the



ceremony is taking place. What has happened that needs ceremonial celebration? Then think about the context of the ceremony. Who will attend? Where will it be? What time of year, day, time, etc.? Who will conduct the rite? Then look at the details of the ceremony. What will the spoken words be and in what order? What symbolic ritual elements will be used that are meaningful to the initiate? Will the ceremony require sound, lighting, decorations? Some ritual items might include rocks, photos, mandalas, balloons, masks, candles, flowers, bells, or other personal items. Ritual activities might include lighting candles, rock stacking, burning ceremonies, spoken word, dance, music, walking a labyrinth, making vision boards or affirmation bags, etc. The important determination of what to do will be based on personal meaning.

The formal rites of passage may be enhanced through following up with the initiate's creation of a personal practice such as making a personal shrine, developing a gratitude practice, or some other daily ritual that is established to symbolize and strengthen one's new life. Some people get a tattoo as a reminder of their change. Others may go on a cruise! Twenty years ago I made my Magic Cape (see image) to help protect me from the indignities and perils of having lost an important job that had high profile community visibility. Since then, its fringes have continued to be adorned with more and more new amulets given to me as gifts. A "secret pocket" secured with satin ribbon contains my earliest memory---a blue lamb toy I loved and carried with me as a toddler. I continue to wear my cape for meditation and its

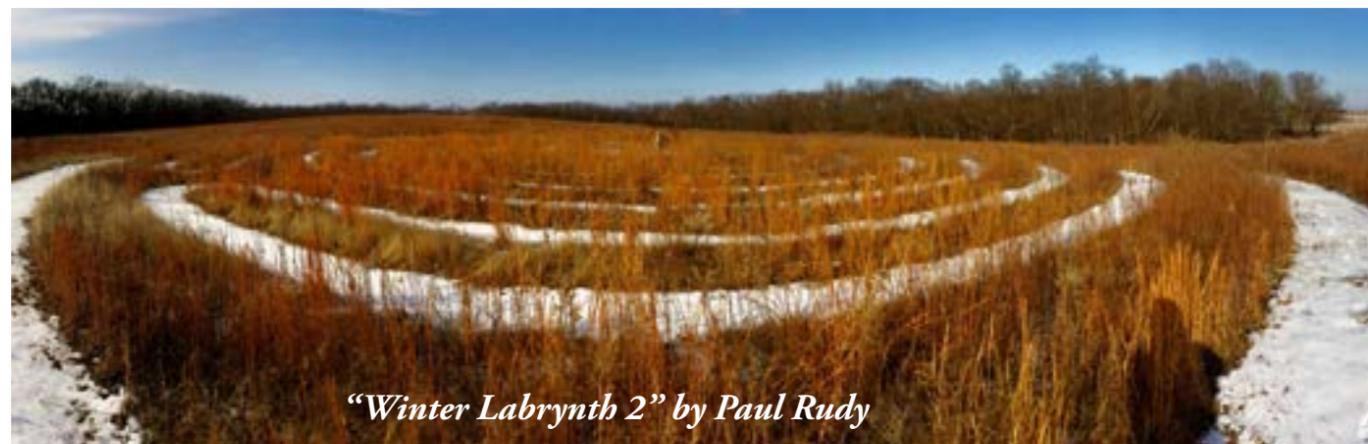
familiar jingling fringes are a reminder of who I have become. I believe it's imbued with super powers of safety, grace, and gratitude.

Celebrants, people specifically trained to assist in developing and conducting ceremony, can help---but they are not required as long as people can build a good ritual based on the foundational ceremonial elements. Celebrants can be found around the world through the International Celebrant Institute. ([www.celebratinstitute.org](http://www.celebratinstitute.org)) As a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant, my practice is focused on the wide range of life changes and individual healings, though other fellow celebrants have specialized in specific areas such as weddings. Occupationally, I've made my living planning and producing public festivals and events.

We all need life change ceremony. What has happened to you that has never been formalized through ceremony? How have you changed because of life passages that have not yet been ritually recognized? A rite of passage may profoundly help you to create order in your life and, in the poignant affirmation of Ram Dass (1971), to "Be here now."

We all are on the Hero's Journey. Joseph Campbell (2003) summarized it best when he said:

*"...we have not even to risk the adventure alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero path. And where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world."*



*"Winter Labrynth 2" by Paul Rudy*

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# Come Together

## Melinda Connor

*“Yin Yang Heart” by Paul Rudy*

It is time for the energy practitioner community to come together to create standards for our field, including ethical behavior, standards of practice and cohesion as a community. Acupuncture, Music Therapy, Aroma Therapy, Massage Therapy, Chiropractic and Health Coaching have all developed either national certification or national board certification for their disciplines and many have developed state licensing. It is time for energy practitioners to come together to discern what we have in common and our capability to address various types of issues between different types of practitioner work.

***It is time for the energy practitioner community to come together to create standards for our field.***

Slowly, largely because of funding issues, the scientific community is developing a body of research on our profession. There are 3000 Qigong studies worldwide and over 400 peer reviewed studies on laying on of hands healing that have been done in the US, Canada, UK and Germany. However, because we have no actual standards of competence within our community, most scientists cannot properly assess the level of competence of a practitioner. It translates to science which is being done unevenly at best and poorly at worst. We need good quality science to advance our understanding of our profession and fulfill our obligations to our clients.

In order to create some form of measurement that applies to energy work without relating specifically to one modality or another, an empirical test that measures the practitioner's ability to move and work with energy has been developed. As much as possible, this test uses measurement tools that are standards of measurement in other industries. For example, a multimeter is used by every electrician in this country. Thus, we are able to show that subtle energy work is both real and measurable when performed by a skilled practitioner. Better yet, the

test is designed to measure underlying skills rather than differentiate between various modalities.

Over 400 energy practitioners trained in varying modalities have been tested and there are definite trends being found. Notably, well trained practitioners who have been working for a number of years generally do quite well on all the tests. People who are not practicing energy practitioners, or who have only engaged in weekend introductory courses, are not as successful. While this is an expected outcome, it is useful to have scientific data that suggest that training and practice impact our ability to work successfully as subtle energy practitioners. Another useful trend is that skilled energy practitioners who take the test, find the measurable data reinforcing and useful. Taking the test increases their confidence, gives them empirical confirmation of their skills and allows them a variety of ways to think about the tools they are using.

In order to understand the test, it is helpful to know the various devices being used for measurement and what we are looking for. By understanding and measuring the skills used by Subtle Energy Practitioners, we open the door for better scientific study and expanded knowledge. Below is a list of each of the testing devices used, what the device measures, and why it is relevant to assessing the skills of an energy practitioner.

### **Devices Used in an Empirical Test of Subtle Energy Skills:**

1. **A Triaxial Meter** is used to demonstrate whether the practitioner has the ability to produce an oscillation of amplitude of the extra low frequency magnetic field. A triaxial meter measures magnetic fields in multiple directions. and are often used by electricians, geologists and physicists. Magnetism is one form of subtle energy and this meter tests the practitioner's ability to wiggle a magnetic wave. What is a person who is sick? They are stuck. This test is relevant because by wiggling a magnetic wave, the practitioner will have the potential to move what is stuck and show they can make it wiggle.



2. **A Data Logging Multimeter** is used to demonstrate whether the practitioner has the ability to produce both AC and DC currents. In this case we are measuring the practitioner's ability to produce an electric, rather than a magnetic, field. An alternating current will have a different effect than a direct current, since an alternating current goes back and forth, while a direct current goes in only one direction. Again, this is a chance to show that a practitioner can deliberately make the electro-dermal skin current from their body wiggle.

3. **A High Frequency Meter** is generally used to measure electrical "smog" or high frequency radiation from things like cell phone towers. In this case, we are measuring whether the practitioner has the ability to produce an oscillatory effect in the strength in the signal from about a -75dB to a -45dB. Again, we are looking at the practitioner's ability to move a specific set of frequencies.

4. **A RF Field Meter** is another way to measure radio frequency radiation. In this case the meter is a second measurement of the practitioner's ability to produce an oscillation in the radio frequency range. Practitioners are asked to deliberately change the radio frequencies given off by their hands. Part of this test is to build in redundancy to show that the skills we are measuring are real and have measurable consistency between devices.

5. **A Gas Discharge Visualization Device (GDV)** is used to demonstrate the practitioner's ability to create change in both their personal field and in

a client's field. The GDV uses a small amount of electricity to cause a gas emission corona to be produced by the practitioner's hands. This corona is then analyzed to confirm changes in the body. The practitioner is asked to place their fingers in the machine to create a GDV image of their field, then perform a healing on themselves, after which new images are taken. This same process is done with a client. In both cases, the test is looking for a change in the GDV image that correlates with the focus of healing. While an experimental device in the US, this is a diagnostic device in over 28 countries.

6. **A Calibrated digital pH meter.** In the next test a practitioner is asked to alter the pH of water as measured with a calibrated digital pH meter. Blood is made in part of water. If a practitioner can change the pH of water, they can change the pH of blood. What is the big killer in humans? Inflammation! If you can change the pH you can reduce inflammation.

7. **They are also asked to change the total alkalinity of water.** We are made of over 50% water. The ability to alter the pH of water and the parts per million of dissolved solids, which is the total alkalinity means that a practitioner can impact the human system.

8. **Public Speaking.** The practitioner will demonstrate the ability to answer client questions. Energy practitioners need to be able to communicate effectively with clients about what they are doing and do so in an ethical manner.

9. **Body Reading.** The practitioner will provide intuitive information to the client. Subtle Energy Practitioners are working on an intuitive level. They need to be clear about information and be able to communicate it effectively.

10. **Broadcast Frequency Counter** - looks at whether a part of the body is giving off frequencies in a particular range and counts the number of frequencies. We check when a

practitioner grounds and charges to confirm that the nerve plexus are sending out signal in the 3 MHz and the 3GHz ranges.

11. **Physiology Suite.** When a practitioner works with a client, it is common for the client to attune themselves to the practitioner. Therefore, it is important for the practitioner to be able to control their body response processes so they can be in a state that is supportive of the client. In order to measure body response processes, we test the clinician's ability to control heartrate variability, temperature - heat and cool the hands, blood volume pulse, galvanic skin response, muscle activity and relaxation, and respiration.

*As we come together to create a unified field of practitioners, we generate understanding and power.*

Many of these tests are redundant or similar. We are looking for consistency and for a measurable ability to make the "energy" wiggle. If we can test for those who effectively do this, we will be able to make better selections for research studies and may eventually be able to provide real data on individual abilities that could be useful information for both scientists and potential clients.

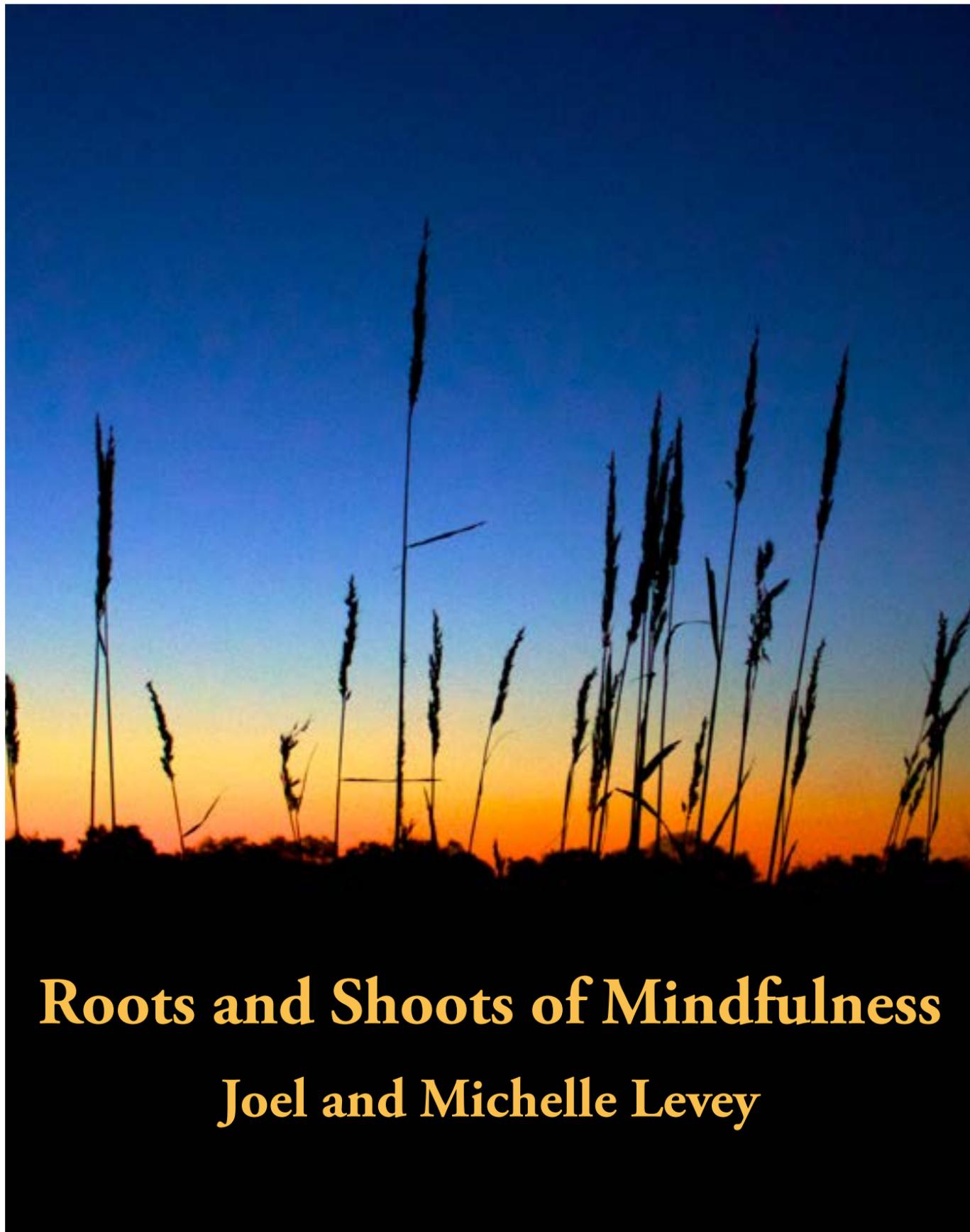
This test is a beginning. By creating standardized forms for measurement, we open a possibility for consistency in measurement and an opening for discussion. A test of this sort helps to move the area of Subtle Energy Practice from the realm of the questionable and psychic into the realm of the measurable and scientific.

Subtle Energy Practices offer a profound and real opportunity for healing. As we come together to create a unified field of practitioners, we generate understanding and power. This is one step in generating data on effectiveness, and in establishing our profession as a profession.



Dr. Connor has trained as a clinical psychologist, neuropsychologist, drama therapist, massage therapist and in over twenty different styles of energy healing and she is ordained as a Buddhist Priest. As a National Institutes of Health T-32 post doctoral fellow, Dr. Connor received her training as a research scientist at the University of Arizona under Dr. Andrew Weil and Dr. Iris Bell and was director of the Optimal Healing Research Program at the Laboratory for Advances in Consciousness and Health under Dr. Gary E. Schwartz. With appointments at multiple universities, Dr. Connor is currently the CEO of the National Foundation for Energy Healing. Dr. Connor has a research laboratory and a private healing practice in Arizona and is the author of ten books.

[www.earthsongs.com](http://www.earthsongs.com)



# Roots and Shoots of Mindfulness

Joel and Michelle Levey

*“Jolly Giants” by Paul Rudy*

*As you begin to read this article, pause for a moment to be mindful of your body sitting here... of your eyes gazing at this screen... of the natural flow of your breathing as you inhale...and exhale... of the sounds arising and passing in the space around you... of the flow of thoughts and mental images in the clear open space of your awareness... of the miraculous process of by which the meaning of the words you see on the screen before you is discerned and comprehended... As you continue to read, experiment with being mindful of the mental associations, imagery, commentary, or distractions that arise in your mind....*

When we first began our study, practice, and research of mindfulness in the early '70s we knew fewer than a handful of people who were involved in this path of practice. As our practice and research matured, we began to develop mindfulness-based programs in medicine, higher education, and business. In the mid '70s and early '80s, we knew of no one else bringing these methods into the mainstream. Gradually over the years a groundswell of insight, interest, and research has emerged, creating a host of benefits and challenges, clarity and confusion, that inspires and confounds the modern mindfulness movement.

Our intent in composing this brief article is to offer an overview of some key perspectives on Mindfulness. For people relatively new to Mindfulness it's helpful to have a deeper understanding of the roots, shoots, and trends of mindfulness in order to have a broader view of the deeper meaning, purpose, and value of this vital practice.

These VUCA times – of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity - are teaching us a lot about the value of mindfulness (Levey, J. and Levey, M. 2015) We are learning that it takes courage and determination to wake up – to be fully present – to keep our hearts and minds open discerningly and objectively, to care deeply, be curious, investigate, and question the nature of reality. To embrace this challenge we risk being continually surprised, frequently distressed, disappointed, confused, or overwhelmed by the joys and sorrows of our complex world, and of stepping out beyond the pale

of worldviews and habituating norms that define our consensus “reality.”

To the degree to which we wake up with mindfulness and learn to open our hearts and minds, the walls of our conventional, familiar, consensus view of reality become more clear, open, and transparent, revealing a deeper, vaster, multidimensional, and interrelated view of the actual nature of reality than we have previously imagined. This is why what we call mindfulness meditation is traditionally known as Vipassana, or “Insight Meditation.” Mindfulness gives us access to insight and the direct, non-conceptual intuitive wisdom that liberates us from our misconceptions regarding the nature of reality and the true nature of ourselves. While engaging in such pursuits is likely to expand our consciousness, it may also narrow the circle of people in our lives-work who can comprehend what we are searching for. As poet William Stafford reminds us:

“There’s a thread you follow.  
It goes among things that change.  
But it doesn’t change.  
People wonder about what you are pursuing.  
You have to explain about the thread.  
But it is hard for others to see.  
While you hold it you can’t get lost.  
Tragedies happen; people get hurt  
or die; and you suffer and get old.  
Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding.  
You don’t ever let go of the thread.”

While mindfulness is certainly widely adopted and practiced, our experience is that surprisingly few people are aware of its deep roots and origins in wisdom traditions—its more profound meanings, value, highest implications, and most intriguing applications. Our intent here is to offer insight, inspiration, and illumination on these facets of the jewel of mindfulness as it shines out in our modern times.

## Roots of Mindfulness:

Mindfulness as a technical term has its historical origins in the ancient Pali word *sati* used by the Buddha in his teaching on mindfulness

over 2600 years ago. *Sati* literally translates as “memory” -- as in remembering what you are paying attention to in the present moment of awareness. In an attempt to meaningfully translate treasured Buddhist meditation manuals, the English translator Rhys Davids, was the first to offer an English translation using “mindfulness” in 1881, and by 1910 mindfulness had become the generally accepted norm. Davids was inspired to use the term “mindfulness” by its use in an Anglican prayer that says, “Always be mindful of the needs of others.” Interestingly, from this initial choice to translate *sati* as mindfulness, there is an implication that mindfulness is also akin to a newly emerging meme of “kindfulness” which reminds us that we pay attention to what we care about. The widespread use of the term “mindfulness” has endured to this day where we find the meaning of mindfulness continuing to be adapted, as it is incorporated into common use with an ever expanding variety of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) that are emerging within health science, corporate, and high-performance arenas of contemporary culture.

Unfortunately, the meaning of the term mindfulness is also becoming increasingly misconstrued through its association with deep relaxation without mindful awareness, creative imagination visualizations, getting a good night’s rest, “mindfulness chairs,” mindful men’s clothing, or even “mindful mayonnaise”—all of which have little or nothing to do with the meditative practice of mindfulness. Some respected teachers in the realm of mindfulness have gone so far as to say that the word ‘mindfulness’ has all but lost its original meaning.

## Roots of the Modern Mindfulness Revolution

While the teachings of mindfulness practice have endured for millennia since the time of the Buddha, the contemporary “mindfulness revolution” was propelled into modern times by the colonial thrust of the British Imperial Army invading and conquering the Buddhist kingdom of Burma on November 28, 1885.

For centuries the Burmese people regarded

their king as “the protector of the Dhamma” – the liberating teachings of the Buddha which, when taken to heart, have the power to free us of our delusions and confusions by opening our wisdom eyes to directly discern things as they truly are. Mindfulness is the primary practice of these liberating teachings, and its power lies in quieting the conceptual dualistic overlay of thoughts to allow direct insight into the true nature of reality to arise clearly in the mind.

As the Brits marched into the capital city of Mandalay, the Burmese people looked on in horror as their beloved king and his family, surrounded by British soldiers brandishing rifles, were taken from the royal palace and unceremoniously loaded in a oxcart that carried them to a waiting steamship that would carry them into exile. The royal palace was then transformed into an officers’ club for drinking, dancing, and socializing!

A profound wave of concern rippled through Burmese society giving rise to an unprecedented cultural revolution that activated the Burmese people to protect the teachings of the Dhamma. Foremost among these cherished teachings was the practice of mindfulness.

Up to this time in Burma and throughout SE Asia, the teachings and practice of mindfulness had been mostly held within the monastic community of ordained monks and nuns, while the religious practices of the lay community focused primarily on generosity and giving of alms to generate spiritual merit, with the assumption that lay people were unlikely to actually realize enlightenment through practicing meditation. With the advent of the British invasion and the king’s exile, visionary teachers within the monastic community, led by Ledi Sayadaw, launched a cultural revolution intent on teaching and encouraging the practices of the Vipassana tradition of insight meditation that mindfulness comes from, to penetrate more widely throughout secular society. In the decades that followed, a contemplative cultural revolution spread throughout Southeast Asia giving rise to a renaissance and wide diffusion of mindfulness teachings. (Braun, 2014)

## Three Main Streams of Mindfulness Practice:

The next wave of mindfulness revolutionaries appeared as droves of globe trotting spiritual seekers, peace core volunteers, government spooks, and mind scientists who traveled to Asia in the 1960s and 70s intent on seeking out enlightening teachers, wisdom teachings, and liberating contemplative technologies. Word of inspiring teachers and meditation retreats quickly spread through the social networks of those times drawing early waves of contemplative pilgrims to the monasteries and meditation centers of SE Asia to get their first immersive and transformative experiences of intensive mindfulness meditation practices, which were often presented in 10 day silent retreat formats or longer even more intensive retreats.

Through the influence of many of these early adopters of mindfulness, three principle streams of mindfulness practice have flowed into modern Western culture.

One stream of mindfulness practice came to the West through the teachings of Mahasi Sayadaw, U Pandita, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and other Thai and Burmese teachers of the “forest monastery” tradition which emphasized a blend of mindful breathing, noting and noticing of the nuances of momentary changing experiences, mindful walking, mindful eating, integrating mindful awareness into every activity, and resting in open clear awareness without grasping at any momentary experience. This lineage of mindfulness practice is widely referred to as “Insight Meditation” and was introduced to the West primarily through the influence of Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg, and Joseph Goldstein who co-founded the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts in 1975. Kornfield later also co-founded the Spirit Rock Center in Marin, California in 1988 with a number of other teachers.

The wise and creative teachings offered at these two Centers alone have inspired tens of thousands of people over the past

40+ years, giving rise to hundreds of other practice centers around the globe, and playing a significant role in inspiring the global diffusion of mindfulness practice into higher education, medicine, business, military, government, sports, and other arenas of modern life. Within this stream many other respected teachers, including Anagarika Munindra, Dipama, Ajahn Amaro, Ajahn Sumedho, Thannasaro Bhikkhu, Taungpulu Sayadaw, and Rina Sircar, to name but a few, have deeply inspired the diffusion of mindfulness teachings throughout North America, UK, and Europe.

The second stream came to the West from the Burmese teacher U Ba Khin, the Accountant General of Burma, who founded the International Meditation Society in Rangoon in 1952 where he attracted the attention of many international students and teachers. As a lay practitioner and respected lineage holder of the *vedana vipassana* tradition of mindfulness practice, and also a respected accountant, U Ba Khin accepted the invitation from the Burmese government to assume the role of Accountant General and to assume leadership in order to route out the corruption in the Burmese Treasury Department. U Ba Khin accepted this appointment with two conditions. First was that one wing of the Treasury Department would be transformed into a meditation hall where members of his staff could come and meditate at any time. Second, was that everyone on his staff at in the Treasury Department would train with him and participate in at least one intensive ten-day silent Vipassana style mindfulness retreat. As U Ba Khin said, “I refuse to work with incompetence.”

U Ba Khin’s style of mindfulness practice focused on developing concentration through single pointed concentration on the breath, and then the close application of mindfulness by scanning or “sweeping” mindful awareness slowly through the body from the top of the head to the toes, over and over again, for up to 20 hours per day, leading to a profound state of vivid mental clarity and the purification of

embedded congestion within the gross and subtle body. In this austere and intensive style of practice there is only sitting meditation, with no mindful walking, yoga, mindful eating or other practices at all.

In his later life, U Ba Khin passed his legacy of teachings on to seven teachers including S.N. Goenka (a Burmese business man who is widely known in the West), Robert Hover (a former U.S. aeronautical engineer), Ruth Denison (a German pioneer in embodied practices), and John Coleman (a British MI6 agent), each of whom carried these liberating teachings back to North America and Europe. In particular, Goenka's approach to teaching mindfulness has become very popular and widely available in the West and around the world, especially as the teachings and retreats are offered free of charge. After retreats, the students are encouraged to make donations and "play it forward" to freely fund retreats for future students.

A third stream of mindfulness teachings came to the West in part due to the U.S. invasion of Vietnam, where the monk Thich Nhat Hahn and his community were practicing and teaching mindfulness as an integral practice in their non-violent peace work amidst the terrors of the war. As the war raged on and many of his colleagues were brutally murdered, Thay, as his students call him, took refuge in France where he founded the Plum Village international Meditation Center, and began to teach his unique and highly accessible form of mindfulness which emphasizes the practice of mindful breathing, mindful walking, and the repetition of meditation phrases or "gathas" that are synchronized with the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. Developing deeper ease and continuity of meditation practice, phrases such as "calming...", "smiling..." or "arriving... home..." help to calm and focus the mind, and quiet the tendency toward random narrative during meditation practice. Today there are hundreds of centers around the globe teaching Thay's style of mindfulness practice.

One of Thay's greatest gifts of contemplative technology for modern practitioners is the encouragement to bring a gentle, heartfelt, compassionate inner smile into mindfulness practice, to help us to "smile to our sorrow" and realize that "we are more than our sorrow." This convention of smiling with practice has rapidly diffused through the networks of mindfulness instructors, and over the past 20 years has become a new norm of how mindfulness is often introduced and practiced in the West.

Beyond these three primary streams, there are other streams, lineages, and teachers who emphasize a variety of aspects or approaches to the practice, and there are also many teachers and centers that weave together teachings and practices drawn from these different traditions.

### **Kindfulness: Mindfulness Blossoms As Compassion and Lovingkindness**

"Being present with kindness and compassion  
is being mindful."  
- Jon Kabat Zinn

As the practice of mindfulness deepens and matures, it flowers and fruits as engaged compassionate concern and creative altruism, embracing and responsive to the needs, not only of ourselves, but of all beings who suffer and experience vulnerability or injustice in their lives, society, and world. As many of the foremost Western mindfulness teachers and movements have matured in their practice, the nature and tone of their teachings have warmed, shifting from a more austere and terse focus on "bare attention" and taking on a more heartfelt, though often fiercely compassionate, tone that encourages their students to blend their mindful awareness with a merciful, open hearted approach to mindfulness practice.

It is becoming increasingly more common for mindfulness teachers to expand their studies and practice of mindfulness to draw inspiration from traditions that give greater emphasis to heartfelt qualities such as gratitude, genuine friendliness, compassion, lovingkindness, self-compassion, and engaged social justice action, into mindfulness education and training. This heartwarming, compassionate impulse may be integrated into mindfulness practice simply as a gentle, merciful, inner smile as one musters the courage to look within and mindfully, wholeheartedly embrace the tension, apprehension, sadness or rage found there. Or it may be intentionally cultivated as a robust practice of meditation such as lovingkindness—or *metta*—wishing well to ourselves, others, and all beings; or generating radiant compassion regarding and embracing the presence of suffering in our lives, relationships, and world; or activating an explicit dedication to practicing mindfulness with an intention of realizing one's true nature and highest potentials for the benefit all beings.

As mindfulness matures into kindness (Braum, A. 2016) on a societal level we are witnessing the emergence of more university programs that explicitly include compassion science and encourage compassion-based practices as part of their curriculums. Among the most respected programs in today's world are: Stanford University's CCARE Program (Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education) (<http://ccare.stanford.edu>); The Greater Good Science Center (<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu>) connected with Stanford and UC Berkeley; University of Wisconsin's Center for Healthy Minds (<http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org/cihmDrDavidson.html>); Mind and Life Institute; and Max Planck Institute's Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences' ReSource Program (<https://www.resource-project.org/en/home.html>)

## **Mindfulness, Collective Intuitive Wisdom, & Human Flourishing**

"The world we have made as a result of the level of the thinking we have done thus far creates problems that we cannot solve at the same level of thinking (i.e. consciousness) at which we have created them...  
*We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humankind is to survive.*" -- Einstein

Could it be that the global surge of interest in mindfulness is an evolutionary impulse perfectly responsive to the challenges of these VUCA times? From our many years of practice, research, and work bringing mindfulness to organizations and communities around the globe, it seems that the greatest value and most highly leveraged application of mindfulness may be to follow Einstein's advice and equip individuals and innovative teams with the skills necessary to raise or refine the level of their personal and collective consciousness in order to source the intuitive wisdom and guidance necessary to bring forth breakthrough, disruptive innovations and solutions to complex global problems.

As the key to accessing the most subtle dimensions of intuitive wisdom, the greatest value of mindfulness in this age may be in its capacity to liberate us from our collective ignorance by opening our minds to the wisdom we need to flourish together in this beautiful and fragile world.

One of our most cherished visions and aspirations is to develop cohorts of altruistically motivated, sincere and disciplined individuals and teams, intent on employing mindfulness for accessing or "sourcing" insight from deeper, subtler strata of personal and collective intuitive wisdom, in order to bring forth the insights and innovations necessary to resolve the dire challenges of these treacherous times while promoting human flourishing and thriving for generations to come. (Levey, J. and Levey, M. 2008)



*Pause for a moment to imagine that you can expand the boundless clear sky-like dimension of your mindful awareness to encompass and be aware of the inner mindstates and quality of being of all things and all beings around the world.*

*Imagine that you can sense the degree to which each being is awake and present, or mindless, distracted, or asleep.*

*Like a vast luminous topographical map of the inner states of consciousness of all beings, envision that wherever there are beings who are truly mindful and awake, there is a spike or spire of awareness or presence, and to the degree that a being is awake and their minds and hearts are open, the spire is higher and brighter.*

*Envision also that you can discern the groups of people who are gathered in mindful ways.... Those rare groups of people who have developed the personal and shared protocols to be fully awakened and present together.... Those sitting in meditation rooms and circles together... those who are sitting in boardrooms and in meetings within organizations such as Google, LinkedIn, British Parliament... those who have the collective wisdom and intelligence, the capacity and dedication to really show up, to be awake and fully present together, to gather and activate all their highest, deepest, truest human resources to coalesce together in order to do the best work and make the wisest decisions that they can, in order to create ripples of benefit and blessing for all their stakeholders throughout the world at this time and rippling out to bring benefit for generations to come.*

*Can you imagine how rare and precious it is for a person to be awake that they are awake - to “know that they know”? To be in the presence of others who just like them are dedicated to cultivating the qualities of mind necessary to re-engineer, or re-sculpt their nervous systems to allow energy and information to stream unimpededly, and superfluidly in order to morph and evolve themselves to be –what the Buddha described as a rare form of sentient being, called an Arya – one whose wisdom eyes are opening, as compared to a “worldling”, which is a being whose wisdom eyes are occluded and still closed and dominated by mindlessness, distraction, deluded views of reality, neurotic and compulsive self-concern and selfishness. In contrast, those whose wisdom-eyes are opening have at least had a glimpse of the true nature of reality. They are dedicated to learning and practicing the skills of mindfulness necessary to continue to open their wisdom eyes, in order to directly realize the highest, deepest, truest potentials of themselves and others, and living a truly selfless way of life dedicated to helping others to awaken as well.*

*“New Pioneers by Mark Henson (by permission - <http://markhensonart.com/politics>)*

## **Mainstreaming Mindfulness: Encouraging Trends**

In search of a deeper wisdom and true-hearted love, thousands of seekers went to monasteries, ashrams, temples, and retreat center to study with the babas, lamas, gurus, shamans, and wisdom keepers of a myriad of indigenous and contemplative traditions in the 60s and 70s. Some percentage of us became serious students, practitioners, researchers, and teachers of these treasured inner science traditions as they have streamed into modern Western culture.

As many of us returned to the West from Asia, out of a wish to share more widely what we had learned we made our way into graduate programs in psychology, medicine and health sciences, contemplative science, positive psychology, tech, human resources,

ethnobotany, psychopharmacology etc. After graduate school, many stepped up into roles as professors, researchers, science editors for global new papers, heads of research institutes, faculty at medical schools, teachers in public schools, leaders in HR departments in leading companies around the globe, consultants, and other influential roles in society where we could widen the circles of our influence to help ease the stress, anxiety, confusion, overwhelm, despondency, and helplessness that are so prevalent in our society.

In an inspiring recent book, *Stealing Fire*, Kotler and Wheel state that, “Eighteen million Americans now have a regular practice (Clarke T. C., et al. 2015), and, by the end of 2017, 44 percent of all U.S. companies will offer mindfulness training to employees (National Business Group on Health and Fidelity. 2016). Since rolling out their program, Aetna estimates that it’s saved \$2,000 per employee in health-care costs, and gained \$3,000 per employee in productivity (Pinsker, J. March 10, 2015). This quantifiable return on investment helps explain why the meditation and mindfulness industry grew to nearly \$1 billion in 2015 (Wieczner, J. March 12, 2016). What had been

the domain of seekers and swamis is now a staple of HR.” (Kotler, S. and Wheal, J., 2016)

In our work and travels with hundreds of leading medical centers, universities, organizations, and governmental groups around the globe over the past 40+ years we are heartened to see an ever widening diffusion of mindfulness teachings. Here are some of the most inspiring examples we have seen:

- **Contemplative Science:** The rapidly emerging field of contemplative science brings together the best of technology, neuroscience, and inner technology inspired by the wealth of the world’s wisdom traditions giving rise to innovative programs and research in hundreds of universities and respected institutes around the globe. Mind and Life Institute’s International Symposiums on Contemplative Studies have brought together thousands of people from around the world to share their research on mindfulness and many other contemplative practices. (<https://www.imconsortium.org>)

- **Leadership and Contemplative Science:** While a myriad of leadership developments are being offered in our world today, few have seriously addressed the development of moral, ethical, and contemplative capacities of leaders. One of the most relevant and inspiring initiatives we have seen in this regard is the Mind and Life Institute’s Academy for Contemplative and Ethical Leadership (ACEL) that we were fortunate to help birth. (<https://www.mindandlife.org/legacy-programs/accel/>)

The ACEL charter states,

“In this time of disruption—unprecedented social and ecological change—many hunger for leadership marked by the consciousness, conscience, and capacity to catalyze and influence the larger systemic changes now needed. This is the time to focus on individual leaders *in the context* of a deeper understanding of how teams, organizations and networks can shift a larger social field.”

“The purpose of the Academy for Contemplative and Ethical Leadership is to seed a new field of inquiry, practice, study, and research that can advance understanding of the role of contemplative practices and mindfulness in leadership for our time.”

The charter of ACEL is to explore: “The role of contemplative practices—individual and collective— in the cultivation of empathy, compassion and ethics in leadership formation; the role of contemplative practices in the formation of collective intelligence, creativity, innovation, and authentic commitment for the long haul; and how contemplative practices, both individual and collective, may play key roles in moving the social field from familiar dysfunctional patterns, and giving form to more life-enhancing patterns on behalf of the common good.”

Can you imagine how different our lives and world would be if all leaders in our world had the opportunity to engage in such a deep, transformational development of mindfulness before they step into positions of power?

- **Mindful Law:** Nearly a decade ago Rhonda McGee took a bold step to introduce the first course on Mindfulness in Law class at Berkeley Law School. Since then, 40+ law schools have followed her lead with programs on Mindfulness and Contemplative Lawyering as essential skills for professionals in the judicial system.

- **Mindfulness in Medicine:** Mindfulness is an essential element of the core curriculum within the 70+ medical schools that participate in the Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine. (<https://www.imconsortium.org>)

- **Mindfulness in Government:** In recent years, British Parliament’s Mindfulness Roundtable which involved over 120 MPs and Lords from different parties of the government who have trained in mindfulness, gave rise to the development of the Mindfulness Initiative and the Mindful Nation UK Report which encourages the



Levey & Levey, 2017

integration of mindfulness in four domains of British society: health care, education, criminal justice, and the workplace. (The Mindfulness Initiative: Mindful Nation UK Report. 2015)

The Mindful Nation UK report articulates the concept of “mental capital,” by which is meant the cognitive and emotional resources that ensure resilience in the face of stress, and the flexibility of mind and learning skills to adapt to a fast-changing employment market and longer working lives. It argues that “developing the mental capital of the nation will be crucial to our future prosperity and wellbeing.... Qualitative research shows that mindfulness develops exactly these aspects of mental capital, encouraging a curious, responsive

and creative engagement to experience. This should be of real interest to policymakers given the importance of improving productivity, and nurturing creativity and innovation in the UK economy.”

From recent conversation with leaders of the Mindfulness Initiative, our understanding is that leaders in seven other global governments have already launched mindfulness-based programs, seven more are seriously considering such initiatives, while representatives from another 35 countries have inquired about the benefits and potentials for developing similar mindfulness programs within their governments.

• **Wisdom 2.0:** Since its inception in 2010, the Wisdom 2.0 conferences have brought together thousands of organizational leaders and consultants from around the planet interested in the interphase of mindfulness, meditation, yoga, leadership, innovation, organizational health and performance, social justice, quality of life, and bottom-line business results. With leaders and presenters from Google, Ford, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, PayPal, Zappos, AETNA, Blackrock, Burning Man, Slack, British Parliament, U.S. Congress, and many other leading organizations to explore the many wise and helpful ways that mindfulness and related practices is delivering measurable value in our lives and world of work. (<http://wisdom2conference.com/About>)

• **Mindful Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** With an ever increasing wealth of affirming data, robust programs are integrating mindfulness with

social and emotional learning into a wide array of primary and early childhood development learning programs around the globe.

From our extensive work, travels, and research it is clear that these methods, when properly contextualized and introduced, are regarded as profoundly relevant, easily accessible, and able to consistently deliver inspiring personal and organizational results that are almost universally gratefully received.

For a monthly update of compelling research on mindfulness and mindfulness based practices visit: <http://GoAMRA.org>

These are just a sampling of the significant and inspiring trends that we are seeing in the diffusion of mindfulness into the mainstream mindstream of our world.

## Secular Adaptations of Mindfulness

Many of us who immersed ourselves in mindfulness study and practice in the 60s and 70s went to graduate school, and then moved on to assume leadership roles in mainstream organizations, inspired to develop creative ways to skillfully introduce mindfulness practice into healthcare, higher education, sports, business, and government where a wider spectrum of people, who would not ordinarily seek out explicitly meditative practice, could come into contact with the universally beneficial aspects of mindfulness practice.

The first secularized versions of mindfulness training emerged simultaneously on both coasts of the U.S. in 1978. On the East Coast, Jon Kabat-Zinn, a molecular scientist with a deep interest in yoga and Zen, developed Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. The same year, on the West Coast, Joel Levey, a psychologist, professor, and mindfulness practitioner with about 10 years of study and practice, introduced a Mindfulness and Mind-Fitness-Based Stress Mastery Program into graduate programs in Holistic Health Studies and Consciousness Studies at Antioch University, and to patients and staff at Group Health Cooperative Medical Center, a large HMO in the Seattle area. Both Kabat Zinn's and Levey's programs proved to be clinically efficacious and culturally accessible, and were readily adopted by students, clinical patients, and staff within the medical centers, universities, organizations, and communities that they served.

Inspired by the success of these early, innovative, mainstreamed mindfulness programs, a wide range of MBIs (mindfulness based initiatives) and new "brands" of mindfulness training began to emerge. These MBIs include:

- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) from John Teasdale
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) from Hayes, Zettle, et al.
- Wheel of Awareness from Daniel Siegel, UCLA

- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) from Marsha M. Linehan, University of Washington
- ReSource Training from Tania Singer, Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences
- Refuge Recovery from Noah Levine.

### Important Considerations:

When mindfulness practices are extracted from the cultural, motivational, and ethical contexts in which they were originally developed as profoundly transformative and liberating practices, and then repurposed, reformulated, branded, commodified, or aggressively marketed for use in a secular context with the beneficial, though often narrow purposes of reducing stress, enhancing attention, or boosting performance, a host of potent potentials intrinsic to the more traditional, holistic, and spiritually significant practices are often discarded. Among the most potent contextual elements of mindfulness teachings that are most usually disregarded or "snipped off" in the Mindfulness Based Initiatives are:

- Creating a cognitive frame of reference, or reverence, that regards mindfulness as a profoundly "relational" and ennobling practice, connecting one's life, practice, and quality of being to a wider sphere of meaningful influences and interrelationships. This includes traditional practices of refuge, dedication, and explicitly altruistic motivation in one's mindfulness practice. Such a relationally meaningful sense of dedication and purpose for one's practice expands the significance of mindfulness from a self-development practice—dedicated to reducing one's own personal distress, enhancing one's attention, or boosting productivity—to encompass a wider, more altruistic expanse. This expanded approach to mindfulness practice actively encourages developing a foundation for practice based on ethics, humankindness, cultivation of curiosity, lovingkindness (metta), compassion (and self-compassion), generosity, altruistic motivation, and dedication.



- The traditional holistic systems view of “wise mindfulness” within the integral liberative context of the Noble Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha. In this comprehensive approach, “wise mindfulness” is intimately related to “wise view” regarding the actual nature of reality. When a “wise view” congruent with reality is established, then “wise intention” emerges; with “wise intention” in place, “wise speech” arises; with “wise speech”, helpful “wise actions” flow; with “wise action”, wise and non-harming modes of livelihood come into being; with “wise livelihood” established, “wise effort” arises which nourishes, deepens, and sustains “wise mindfulness.”

To ignore or compromise any of these noble factors diminishes the wisdom and liberative power of all of them. To extract mindfulness from this framework of enlightening wisdom that frees us from fallacious views of reality, and aligns us with the actual nature of reality, with a motivation that is in harmony with, and discerningly optimizes the circumstances of our lives and relationships, rather than creating stress or harm to ourselves, others, or our world, is to sadly miss the vital potency and extra-ordinary potential of understanding and practicing “wise mindfulness.”

- Cultivating mindful discernment of those qualities of being and actions that are “wise” and to be encouraged and developed, as well as being vigilant for the arising of “unwise” sub-optimizing tendencies that are not to be encouraged or fed into. This ethically discerning approach to mindfulness provides a much broader context and meaning for mindfulness practice than a more narrow approach limited to a non-discerning, “anything goes” quality of open awareness.

- The recognition of the following vital indicators of progress in mindfulness practice:

1. Becoming ever more aware of change and impermanence at subtler and subtler levels of experience;
2. A profound sense of vibrant, aware,

selflessness that arises through the recognition of “wise view” revealing all things to be interdependent, interwoven, and multidimensional;

3. The recognition that any tendencies to reify or hold on to any fleeting experience will surely lead to frustration and suffering;
4. The heartfelt valuing of naturally emerging compassion regarding the suffering of confused and vulnerable beings; and
5. A deep sense of wonderment regarding the nature of reality.

While many of the secular adaptations of mindfulness include some of the elements listed above, they often fail to encourage and value the vital inclusion of these factors as an intrinsic part of the practice. While we can certainly carry on with whatever form of mindfulness practice or MBI that we are involved with, it is helpful to expand our understanding of these important considerations as we participate in the expansion of the “mindfulverse” of our modern times.

### Certification of Mindfulness Teachers:

As traditional mindfulness practices continue to be adapted for mainstream, secular use, there is an ongoing debate regarding how to establish wise quality standards and qualifications for mindfulness teachers. One movement to maintain the integrity and quality of teachings has been for various universities or agencies to certify the qualification of instructors. While in theory this seems a wise strategy for preventing well-meaning, though misguided, novice practitioners from promoting themselves as qualified mindfulness teachers, such certification is often based on expensive university certification programs that emphasize the secular, therapeutic, and scientific aspects of mindfulness with less focus on understanding or practicing traditional mindfulness teachings.



## Source Traditions of Mindfulness

“What is mindfulness? Mindfulness is to be aware of everything you do every day. Mindfulness is a kind of light that shines upon all your thoughts, all your feelings, all your actions, and all your words.

Mindfulness is the Buddha.

Mindfulness is the equivalent of the Holy Spirit, the energy of God.

Doing everything in our daily lives in the presence of God is mindfulness.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

While the early roots of mindfulness are most clearly articulated within the Theravadan tradition of Buddhist inner science, the universal nature of mindfulness as a natural resource, is not limited to Buddhist, Asian, or modern secular variants, but has flourished and been honored throughout the ages by many of the world’s great wisdom traditions.

The mystical Kabbalistic teachings of the Jewish tradition regarding the indwelling (feminine) presence of God -- the *Shechina*— encourage practitioners to align and attune with the experience of this living universal Presence within them. Serious practitioners within this tradition devote a whole day of each week, the Sabbath, to cultivating and abiding in this sacred presence.

In mystical Christianity, mindfulness is related to “practicing the presence of God.” As Sister Bernedette Roberts so eloquently observed, “Emptiness is two things at once: the absence of self and the presence of the Divine. Thus as self decreases, the Divine increases.”

As mindfulness is making its way into Arabic culture, one translation for mindfulness that has emerged is, *Alyagadha althehneya*, which can be translated as, “Your mind being present.” According to Faraz Rabbani, “Mindfulness (taqwa) is to shield oneself from all that displeases Allah. The mindfulness of faith (iman) is to shield oneself from eternal punishment through faith. The mindfulness of submission (islam) is to



shield oneself from sin through obedience. The mindfulness of spiritual excellence is to shield oneself from heedlessness and distraction through complete turning to Allah Most High.” “Foremost of the mindful (muttaqin)” refers to being the most virtuous, honored, and beloved of Allah’s servants—those of the greatest mindfulness (taqwa).”

(<http://halagah-online.com/v3/images/stories/jalanku.jpg>)

The deep nature of mindfulness is made explicitly clear in the teachings on the nature of mind found within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Some years ago in London the Dalai Lama explained that “... there are two kinds of mindfulness: contrived and natural.” While we can “practice” contrived mindfulness through effort and intention, “natural mindfulness” is engaged simply by remaining “naturally and gently in the essence of awareness itself.” He explained that as soon as the mind is disturbed by ordinary notions and reifications, we become lost in identifying with the contents of the contrived

mind. Yet underlying this ever-changing creative display of mental activity is our true nature, or home, of natural mindfulness, an elusive though accessible quality of effortless, abiding, natural awareness (*rigpa*) that is the ever-present dimension of awake awareness within each of us in every moment of our lives. The Dalai Lama acknowledges that this experience of natural mindfulness, or *rigpa*, “is beyond words, thoughts, and expression and is difficult to communicate.”

Echoing the Dalai Lama’s wisdom, Anam Thubten, a wise and popular contemporary Tibetan teacher, offers the insight that, “Pure consciousness is present in each of us right now and we can be aware of it, but we cannot practice it or attain it. We can’t attain it because it is already present within us and it’s not the effect of a cause. It is not the result of our spiritual practice because it is already present in each of us. Therefore, the only thing we can do is practice being aware of it in the moment.” (Thubten, A. The Magic of Awareness. 2014)

Mingyur Rinpoche offers further insight

regarding this effortless approach to mindfulness, saying that, “What do we recognize? Awareness: the ever-present knowing quality of mind, from which we are never separated for an instant. Even though normally we do not recognize awareness, we can no more live without it than we can live without breathing....Discovering our own awareness allows us to access the natural steadiness and clarity of the mind, which exist independent of (ever-changing) conditions and circumstances, and independent of our emotions and moods.” (Mingyur, Y. Rinpoche, and Tworkov, H. 2014)

This ancient wisdom is echoed by Jon Kabat-Zinn in his lucid foreword for the Mindful Nation UK Report, when he explains that, “Basically, when we are talking about mindfulness, we are talking about awareness – pure awareness. It is an innate human capacity that is different from thinking but wholly complementary to it. It is also ‘bigger’ than thinking, because any thought, no matter how momentous

or profound, illuminating or destructive, can be held in awareness, and thus looked at, known, and understood in a multiplicity of ways which may provide new degrees of insight and fresh perspectives for dealing with old problems and emergent challenges, whether individual, societal, or global...

Awareness in its purest form, or mindfulness, thus has the potential to add value and new degrees of freedom to living life fully and wisely and, thus, to making wiser and healthier, more compassionate and altruistic choices – in the only moment that any of us ever has for tapping our deep interior resources for imagination and creativity, for learning, growing, and healing, and in the end, for transformation, going beyond the limitations of our presently understood models of who we are as human beings and individual citizens, as communities and societies, as nations, and as a species.” (The Mindfulness Initiative: Mindful Nation UK Report. 2015)

*To appreciate the deep value and relevance of mindfulness, pause for a moment and imagine holding in one hand all the moments of your life when you were fully present, mindful, and vividly awake to what was going on within and around you. In these moments of mindful presence you were able to recognize options and discern wiser choices. If someone were talking to you, you were listening and attuned to the people in the conversation. If you were eating, you were aware of the tastes and textures of the food. If you were walking, you were mindful of movements, sensations, and attuned to your surroundings. If you were thinking, you were aware of the nature of your thoughts.*

*In your other hand, envision holding all the moments of your life when you were mindlessly going through the moves, letting habits of mindless inattention rule. In these moments of mindlessness, you relinquished the power of discernment and choice, and unconscious mindless habits dominated your life. Envision all the precious moments that passed by unnoticed, un-lived, never to be fully known.*

*Pause for a moment now to compare the relative balance and proportion of the moments of your precious life that you hold in each of your two hands. What thoughts, feelings or aspirations are you mindful of?*

*Having done this exercise with thousands of people around the globe, when people are honest with themselves, on average, most admit they are mindful only five to ten percent of the time. By extrapolation, this means that if you live to be one hundred years old you will have only been mindfully present for five or ten years of your entire life. If you have a child that is ten years old, you would have missed as much as nine years of the precious moments of the life you share. Is this good enough – or do you aspire to shift this balance? With practice, this is certainly possible!*

*While such reflections are humbling, when taken to heart, this kind of deep reflection helps to illuminate the profound and vital importance of mindfulness and the promise that mindfulness practice holds for reclaiming your life from the habit-demons of mindless inattention.*

*Mindfulness, or mindlessness, which will you choose, moment-to-moment, in the precious moments of your life to come?*

As this article comes to a close, we invite you to pause for a moment to mindfully reflect on how it has touched, inspired, or spoken to you. Notice the ideas or beliefs that have been clarified, confirmed, or challenged. Be mindful of the feelings and emotional tone of your experience, as well as any curiosities and questions that may be present for you. Are there any intentions or aspirations that you are aware of as you come to the end of this article?

If we have left you with a deeper appreciation of the relevance of mindfulness, a glimpse of its more profound dimensions, or deeper insight regarding the complex issues of how mindfulness is expressed in our times, then we have succeeded in fulfilling our intentions.

And if you are motivated to begin or deepen your personal practice, or to explore the deeper waters and true nature of mindfulness, then our hearts are especially warmed and delighted.

Through the interfusion of our minds in the interdependence of our writing this article and you reading it, may ripples of inspiration and benefit extend to all beings that they too may awaken more fully to the precious moments of their lives and live with ever deepening wisdom and compassion.



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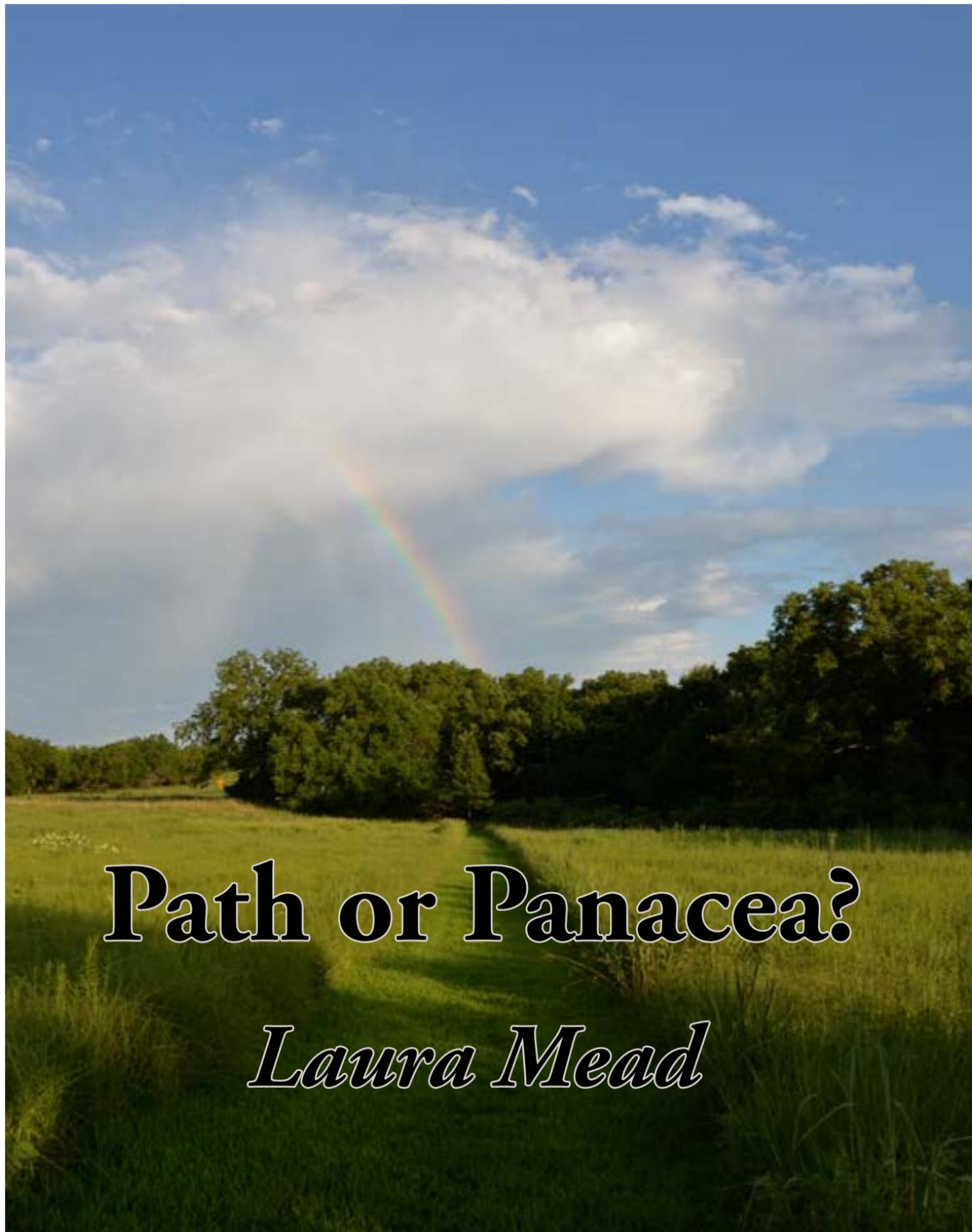
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<http://WisdomatWork.com/mindfulnesspioneers/>



# Path or Panacea?

*Laura Mead*

*Photo by Laura Mead*

If we are striving to get “there,” it must be that we are not happy/content with where we are. Where do we want to be? What is it we are looking for? In the years I have asked myself that question, it has been over 35 of them now, the answer has changed. My initial search for a panacea eventually became a path of discovery and understanding.

Initially, I wanted to know what life was “really all about.” As a teenager growing up in rural Vermont, I was interested in answers. In a world where one in every two children live in dire poverty, ([www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats](http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats)) I was very fortunate. I grew up in a safe and stable environment with adequate food, shelter and clothing. As a bonus, I had two loving parents as well as multiple siblings and scores of extended relatives to provide love and connection. But I still kept looking for more, for meaning. Through amazing luck, as a teenager I was given the opportunity to spend the summer in Ojai, California with a couple of my beloved cousins. While there, I was introduced to J. Krishnamurti (in writing and in person) as well as a variety of mystical writings by Theosophists. I was entranced by these ideas, which prompted my thinking to move into new pathways. On another level, these writings awakened an already existing knowing -- a remembrance of wisdom that resides at the deepest levels of being.

*These writings awakened an already existing knowing -- a remembrance of wisdom that resides at the deepest levels of being.*

I dabbled in what I thought of as meditation when I came home from Ojai. I found books on Transcendental Meditation, perused the works of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (who had a center in Vermont just north of where I lived) and discovered Richard Alpert, aka Ram Dass. These were my teachers and my guides. My favorite publication was the book by Ram Dass called, *The Only Dance There Is*. Publicly, I presented myself

as a “normal” teenager since I had few friends who shared these interests, and they found it weird when I brought them up.

At the age of nineteen, while working as a banker at a savings and loan in Vermont, I met and fell in love with a customer of mine. We shared many interests, including meditation. He was a Zen Buddhist meditation practitioner and I learned formal meditation from him and his teacher in a most unusual setting. Soon after we began dating, Wayne became ill with a very aggressive form of cancer. As I spent time with him each day in his hospital room, we would practice meditation together. His Zen teacher would come to visit periodically, attendants in tow, and we would all meditate and chant the Heart Sutra and the Long Life Prayers in Wayne’s hospital room.

Wayne died approximately six months after his initial diagnosis. His ashes were scattered at his monastery in the Catskill Mountains of New York in a formal ceremony with more than 400 monks, nuns and lay practitioners in attendance -- with me leading the procession as his informal “wife.”

After this experience, as time passed, I bounced between what I thought of as “spiritual pursuits” and “regular life.” I intentionally kept them separate. In my late 20s, I had what might be called a spiritual crisis/awakening. For a variety of reasons, it became impossible for me to keep these two aspects of myself separate anymore. It was time to integrate.

I discovered then that when I allow myself to “live the questions” rather than seek the answers, synchronicities would arise. One of those synchronicities involved meeting Dr. Elmer Green, who became a very close, lifelong friend. It turned out that my favorite spiritual book -- *The Only Dance There Is* from my teenage years -- was based on a series of talks that Ram Dass gave at the Menninger Foundation, organized by Elmer Green. “Isn’t that entertaining!” as Elmer would say.

At that point, in my late 20s, I began to search in earnest for meaning and happiness.



*Photo by Dave Kendall*



*Photo by Dave Kendall*

I changed careers from banking to massage therapy. In my work, I was stunned to discover that most people were dealing with some form of chronic pain on a daily basis. In the beginning, my work served as a pain reliever, nothing more. I then discovered other techniques that were designed to help people heal rather than just offer pain relief. I studied bodywork therapy rooted in traditional Chinese medicine. In addition, I spontaneously began seeing and working with the energy in and around people.

I made two discoveries very quickly. I discovered that physical ailments and people's life stories are interrelated -- not just our thoughts and feelings, but our life situations, family history, and even where we physically live in the world impact our health. Secondly, I discovered that even when people found that interventions healed their chronic pain, their level of happiness and wellbeing did not change. They had a honeymoon period certainly, but within days,

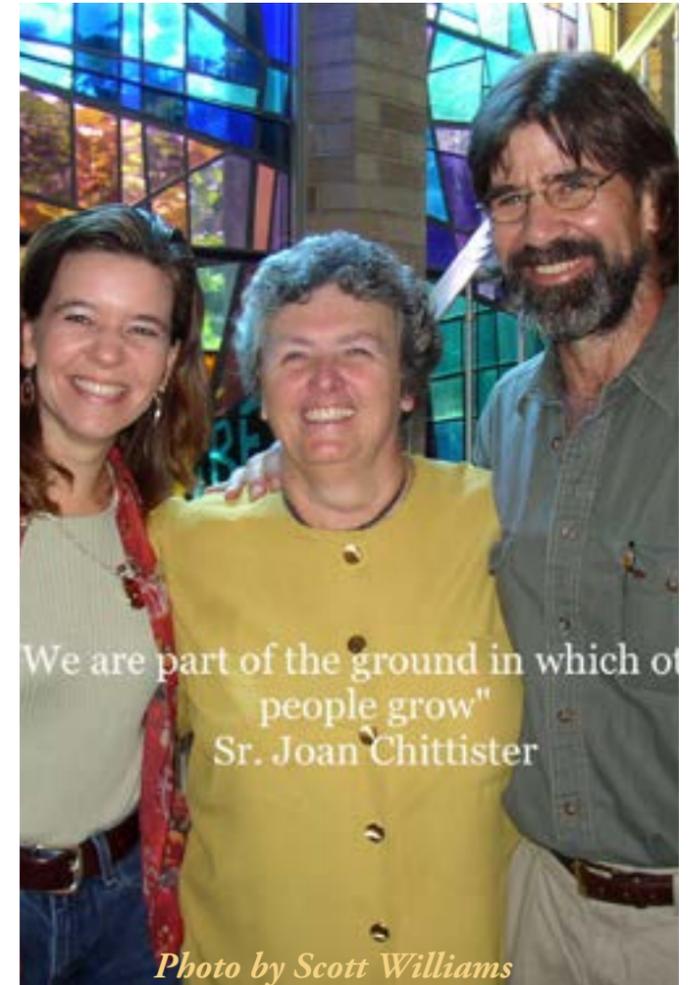
weeks or months, their level of happiness went back to what it was at the outset. All too often, a *new* worst thing had taken the place of the *old* worst thing. In later years, I learned that this is true of most acquisition and loss -- right after a significant event occurs there is the shake-up period, but then things stabilize back to where they were before the event. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2012/11/28/why-winning-powerball-wont-make-you-happy/#ff92519593a1>)

The idea that we as individuals can personally maintain total control over what happens in our lives is just plain silly. Of course, we have some impact, based on our thoughts, choices and actions. But there are many other factors involved in our physical and mental health, including heredity, karma, environmental toxins, and other influences beyond our personal control. Then, when we consider things such as jobs, the stock market, our partners, children, housing, the environment and so on, our ability to control those things and people becomes even less.

So much of the popular media and self-help books seemed to be saying that the meaning of life is about being personally happy and that personal wellbeing comes from having a certain kind of relationship, lots of money, good or perfect health, a great job, having lots of stuff and, and, and.... They imply that if you simply get those things, you will be happy. But that was not what I saw playing out in my professional bodywork/energywork practice nor in my own life. What I did observe is that we create our reality and the foundations of genuine happiness not by controlling the world but by learning how to consciously create our responses to what arises around us.

This realization marked the transition for me from panacea to path. I began to notice that there was a group of people I knew, or with whom I worked, that had a remarkably better quality of life than other people. They were not the healthiest or sickest nor the wealthiest or poorest. Some had wonderful relationships while others did not. I began to investigate and I discovered the people with a remarkably better quality of life shared three commonalities. First, they were meditators.

They came from different paths and lineages. Some were engaged in religious practice, some were not. But they were all meditators. Second, although they associated with different lineages, they all practiced two particular types of meditation -- one to focus attention and the other to cultivate qualities of the heart, such as kindness and compassion. The third quality they all shared was a dedication to being of service to others.



*Photo by Scott Williams*

***As my friend and teacher,  
Sister Joan Chittister says:  
"We are part of the ground  
in which other people grow."***

Photo by Laura Mead



**These people, who exuded a sense of genuine happiness, were not so interested in what they were receiving from the world, but were more interested in what they were bringing to the world.**

These people, who exuded a sense of genuine happiness, were not so interested in what they were *receiving* from the world, but were more interested in what they were *bringing* to the world. There seems to be some science behind this approach. (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201304/how-reset-your-happiness-set-point>)

In other words, the day-to-day ups and downs did not seem to bother them very much. They were interested in health and wellbeing certainly. They sought good relationships and jobs and enjoyed pleasurable experiences just as anyone would. But the key was that their wellbeing did not depend upon circumstances being one way versus another. Their focus was on caring for others. It did not ignore or negate the need for taking care of oneself, but taking care of oneself in order to be able to help others. I call this being *divinely selfish*.

I think back to my experience so many years ago of sharing the journey of what turned out to be

the end of Wayne's life. Throughout the process of his diagnosis, surgeries, chemotherapy and other treatments, Wayne remained dedicated, committed and passionate about getting better and living a full life. But even during the worst of his illness, he found time to ask about me and my wellbeing, to speak kindly to the nurses and even to make jokes when things seemed heavy.

I remember one instance when I was visiting Wayne in the hospital. A blood transfusion tube came out while I was giving him a hug. It was a crazy scene with blood shooting out of the hose all over both of us and the room. We hit the call button for the nurse and as she opened the door to this scene, which must have looked like something out of a horror movie, Wayne deadpanned and said, "We got into a fight and Laura pulled out my transfusion tube so she could win." I protested loudly, worried that the nurse would believe him, as he broke into a huge grin. We all started laughing hysterically and what could have been a very unpleasant situation became an opportunity for connection. While it is sad that Wayne died so young, throughout our time together he was very happy, present and exuded a sense of wellbeing that was contagious to those around him.

In my experience, in order to begin the journey to "there," we need a foundation for our spiritual path that includes focus, compassion

and dedication to the service of others. With this foundation, we can learn to "live the deeper questions." We create the foundation for wisdom to arise and guide us.

One often thinks of the spiritual path as a journey that takes you up a mountain to the peak of enlightenment or realization. To me, that image seems to focus on where one is going and can appear somewhat isolating. Another way we can look at the spiritual path is that it is a journey that begins every moment and never ends. Even enlightened beings are said to continue to be available to offer help to others. By actively cultivating a foundation of focus, compassion and being of service, we set the stage for being fully present in each moment. And when we do, we may discover that space and time are an illusion and we are all already at the top of the mountain ... together.

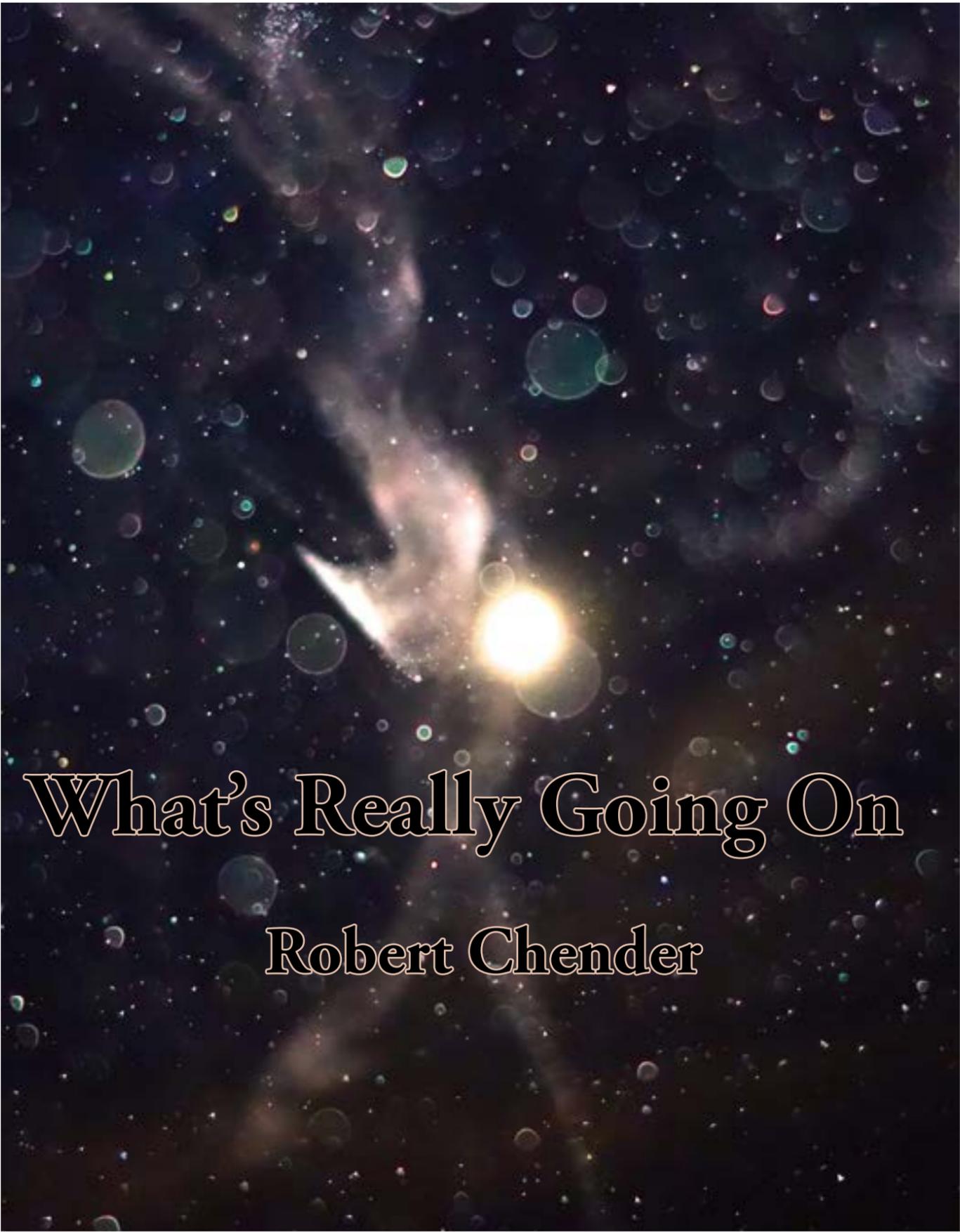


Laura Mead is a practitioner and teacher of meditation. She spent 25 years as a certified Bioenergy and Bodywork Practitioner. Laura was the first person authorized to teach Wirkus Method of Bioenergy. She taught with Margaret and Mietek Wirkus for a number of years until she moved on to assist her husband Dave Kendall in starting a video production company. She also creates and teaches art through her own business Prairie Hollow Creations.

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**Dedicated to Wayne Lewis Jacobs  
Born: August 24th, 1952  
Died: November 16th, 1985**



# What's Really Going On

Robert Chender

When I was very young, certainly by the time I was 3, I became aware of an anomaly – I was the center of the universe (as are almost all young children, to themselves and maybe even to their parents), and yet there was all this *space*. Things went on outside of my knowing about them, and how could that be? And where? As I learned to read, *The Golden Book of Astronomy* (1955 edition) fell into my small hands, and I started to get a sense of the bigger picture. There was outer space, there were other planets, and most immensely there were other galaxies, and great reaches of (presumably) empty space between them, and the numbers of galaxies, not to mention the numbers of stars, were beyond my ability to comprehend (then, as now). The earth was a backwater planet on an outside spiral arm of a nondescript spiral galaxy, and there was all this space, and I longed to know it. What that meant, I didn't know, but I wanted to comprehend it, to know it, to be it.

As I became somewhat older, I used to haunt the Hayden (now Rose) Planetarium, regularly traveling through space in their wonderful "sky shows" (I lived close by, and in those days some 9 year olds were permitted to roam New York City streets on their own). I also spent quite a bit of time in the adjacent American Museum of Natural History, examining dinosaur fossils and dioramas of exotic and ancient animals, and developing a sense of deep history – again recognizing that this time and this place weren't especially important and that there was a grand scheme of things into which I had been dropped, and my job, or my longing, was to be able to – what? Be it? [Grok](#) it? (Useful word, that.) Explain it? I couldn't explain it to myself, but the longing was there.

My father encouraged me in my curiosity, as his was at least as great as mine. He explained to me that in space there was nothing, not even nothing. I didn't understand it, but I recognized this as a sort of [koan](#) (not that I knew what a koan was, then), and now I see it as a sign of his spiritual realization. Alas, he died young, before I was out of my teens, and so much of his insight remains opaque to me.

My brother, 4 years older than I, started

to sit zazen in college, and soon after became a student of [Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche](#), the great Tibetan Buddhist master, and so interesting books were in the house. I found and read [An Introduction to Zen Buddhism](#) by D.T. Suzuki, with a long preface by Carl Jung. For as long as I can remember I had been longing for space, and the way I had previously understood that was materially – there were 3 dimensions of space and one of time, and they went on pretty much forever in each direction, and I wanted in. But here were stories of Zen masters who apparently were not bound in time and space, who could live in the space of "nothing beyond nothing". I was clear to me that they knew what I didn't know, and furthermore that what they knew was what I wanted to know – how to understand the cause of suffering, and how to cease suffering. I had an aha moment – my longing for space was actually a longing for inner space, and not outer space; for [infinite kindness](#) rather than infinite distance. So I changed my intended college major from astrophysics to East Asian Studies, and started to practice Buddhism with Chogyam Trungpa. 45 years later, I continue to practice with him.

***My longing for space was actually a longing for inner space, and not outer space; for infinite kindness rather than infinite distance.***

In retrospect, I realize that the question that drove my spiritual search (for the astrophysical search was also a spiritual search, and I would guess that many astrophysicists are drawn to their discipline for the same reason as I was) was to know what's really going on. As a child, I would sometimes ponder [the senses that animals have that humans don't](#) – bat sonar, magnetic senses of pigeons, infrared vision of many, to name a few – and I understood that what we humans see and otherwise sense isn't necessarily what's there. This gave me a healthy sense of skepticism with respect to any assertion of "how things are", particularly coming from religion but also any ideology.

I knew that there were other people who

had a way of seeing which I didn't have, perhaps having better developed senses, and I wanted to explore and perhaps emulate that way also. These are the shamans, oracles, psychics, who process energy and heal the sick, both physically and psychologically, and perhaps have insight about the future. I was fortunate to have friends who dabbled in these areas and would from time to time have "readings" about the future and the present, some of which were more useful than others. One such friend, who has since passed away, was an "automatic writer", which I understand now to be a kind of journaling for others. She alerted me to the upcoming visit of a certain healer, M.

***The skill I did have, as a result of my many years of meditation practice, was to be able to tell the difference between what I was thinking based on my desire, aggression, or aversion and what arose in my mind apparently spontaneously unconnected to my klesas.***

M (as she told me later) and I recognized each other. It was not the kind of recognition that one has when one has met someone previously; M and I had never met. It was the recognition that she and I had work to do together, and the work started

by acknowledging that she needed to become a Buddhist and I needed to train as a healer.

M has profound gifts and skill in seeing and pacifying sources of suffering in others. We started to speak from time to time, and she trained and encouraged me to start to work directly with others, and I gave her meditation instruction and introduced her to various Tibetan Buddhist teachers (as it was clear to me, and to her, that Tibetan Buddhism was the path that she would follow).

I was quite hesitant at first in practicing healing work. I did not accept payment, as I did not have faith in my skills – who am I to pick metaphors, or visions, out of the air and present them as healing modalities, I would think. My intuition had been underdeveloped until then – as an aspiring astrophysicist, and then later a lawyer, intuition wasn't high on the list of skills I thought I should develop, even though I was also a Buddhist practitioner and teacher of many years. The skill I did have, however, as a result of my many years of meditation practice, was to be able to tell the difference between what *I was thinking based on my desire, aggression or aversion, and what arose in my mind apparently spontaneously unconnected to my klesas*. It was that spontaneous arising, in relationship to others, that I eventually learned to trust and offer as a fulcrum on which my clients could begin to heal.

That trust was quickened by a telephone conversation with M in 2001. I called her to, not

to put too fine a point on it, whine about my self-doubt around my ability as a healer. She paused, and said, "Listen! You have to do this. This is your life's work." I felt as if I had been hit in the head – everything dropped away, and I had a vision of who I was, or would become, that was new and different than how I saw myself up to that moment. M later said to me, "I didn't say that," meaning that while it came out of her mouth it wasn't she who was delivering the message. But the message came through loud and clear.

***"You have to do this.  
This is your life's work."***

Since then I have continued on my path, as a meditation student and teacher, a secular mindfulness teacher in business contexts, as a healer to those who seek me out, and as a husband, father, friend, and lawyer. You can find me at:

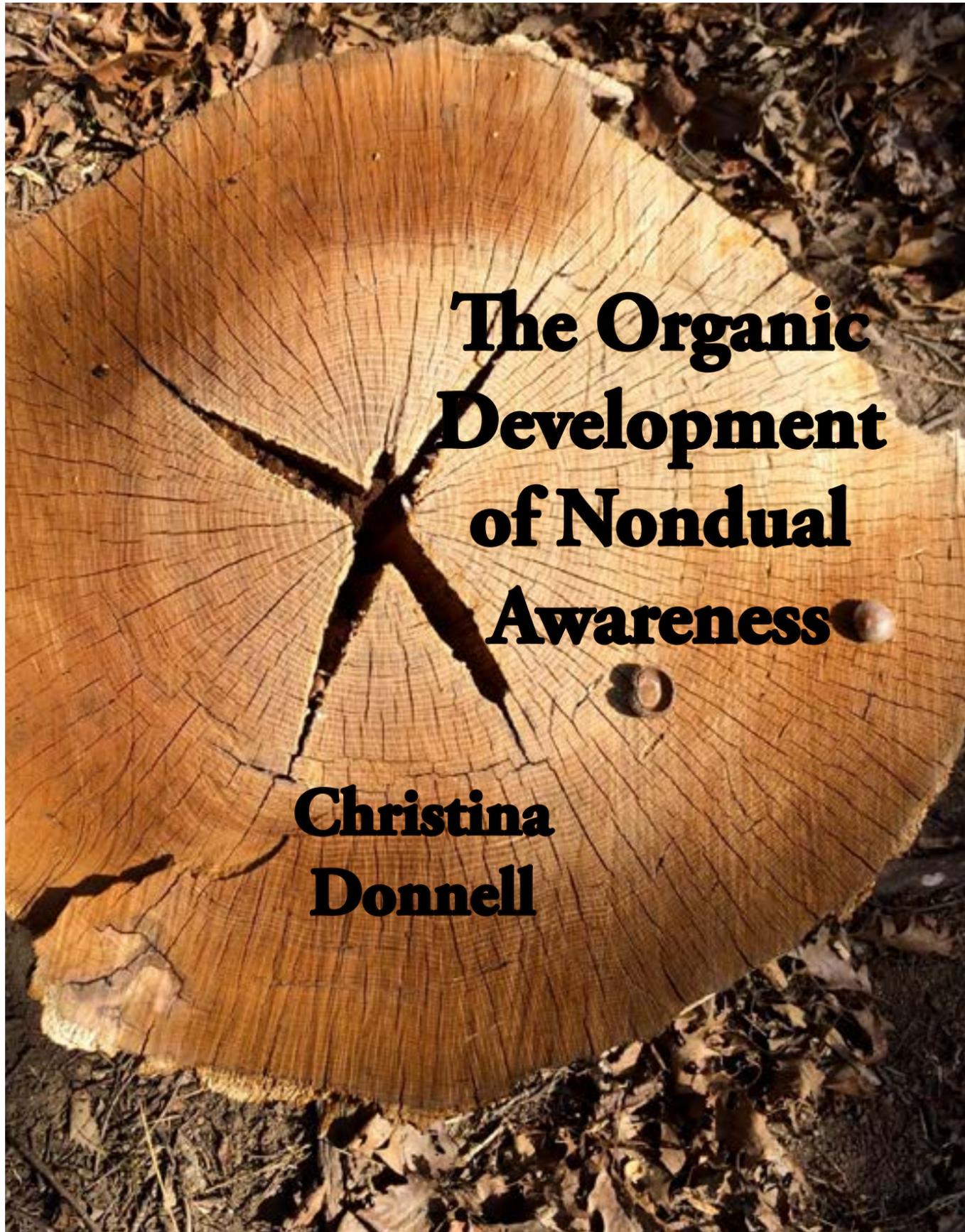
[www.robertchender.com](http://www.robertchender.com)



Robert Chender is a Buddhist teacher and an intuitive healer. In the corporate world, Robert blends his extensive knowledge of both mindfulness practice and business to help companies transform their organizational culture, and coaches senior executives. He also delivers mindfulness programs to non-profits, focusing on helping reduce the stress experienced by many front-line humanitarian workers. He teaches and presents across the U.S, as well as in Europe and the Middle East. Robert graduated from Vassar College and the NYU School of Law.



*"Looking on" by Paul Rudy*



# The Organic Development of Nondual Awareness

**Christina Donnell**

*“Osage Creation” by Paul Rudy*

Whether I am walking in the Andes at 19,000 feet and know an avalanche will soon occur, or awoken in a dream as a pair of hands protecting a woman’s head as she catapults off a motorcycle, these events play out in our everyday world. In the case of the motorcycle accident, verification came five years later. A colleague referred to me a woman seeking spiritual guidance due to an experience she had with a “personal angel” whose hands guided her head to the pavement during a motorcycle accident. The angel then disappeared upon the arrival of emergency responders. Our culture calls these nonlocal, precognitive events – prophetic, clairvoyance, teleportation, telepathy. I feel they are simply a by-product of nondual awareness or unity consciousness.

Since writing *Transcendent Dreaming: Stepping Into Our Human Potential*, a book on the quantum nature of the unitive experience granted by lucid dreaming, these occurrences now happen regularly while I am in a wakened state. For example, it is my morning custom to meet the early dawn with a walk. Often, in the quiet, where every thought has subsided, there is stillness in which everything is moving. The brain and the mind become intensely still. Then, a sense of measureless expansion occurs where there is no longer a me, that tree, those foraging songbirds, the stars – only an awareness of the movement of all things happening at once, and being united to the substance sustaining it all. The whole of it sings through-out the molecules of the body.

Here, the gentle presences of other things slowly appear through direct knowing. I’m aware of the night star, the dawn, the elm tree struck by lightning a half mile away at the creek. I feel whatever it is that links us, and know upon looking up I will see the star above me that has flooded my being with its being, and upon walking further will see the elm tree that was struck by lightning. It is a holy thing.

There are wide plains inside me beyond time and space, and everything is played out in the body made of silence. This strange remaking of consciousness is an active ongoing development. I’ve spent years bearing witness to a vast growing

silence in every cell of the body that continues to grow. There is an undulation within the stasis of such breadth. It disturbs nothing. It moves nothing. It clashes with nothing, and it carries the universe in its undulatory movement smoothly. This perceptual modality is mysteriously protected from thought.

***There are wide plains inside me beyond time and space, and everything is played out in the body made of silence.***

Knowledge seems replaced by something that has nothing to do with thought and less and less with vision – something of a different order which is a new type of perception. You simply know, and have a feeling of indescribable connectedness. It is far greater than thought and wider than vision. Seemingly, perception and feeling become fused and the unitive experience arises.

I consider the emergence of nondual awareness an organic process. It is a movement of awareness toward deeper levels, a larger reality. It is a remaking of consciousness consequent on the emergence and growth of an *innate* perceptual modality. A modality dormant in most humans. The awakening of this perceptual awareness involves the body and results in our innate capacity for apprehending the Absolute – the home of union.

Our body has an innate capacity for apprehending the Absolute. There is a palpable silence which is a substance – textured and layered, permeating every cell of our body. Its presence resonates throughout the fibers of our flesh,



extending inwardly, and is connected to the same silence of the cosmos outwardly. Our body is the necessary meeting point where the inward stillness meets up with the immense silence of the cosmos, and the unitive experience is born. Upon entering the great layers and folds of the substance of silence, the infinite appears on its own accord inside the body and consciousness of it may be stabilized, enriched, and defined. When we find the entry into this vast stillness, our lives are irrevocably changed – and a monumental transition takes place: the unitive experience emerges.

In this article, I would like to explore the organic development of nondual awareness, and introduce three phases of orderly growth, meaning the gradual process of change by which the unitive consciousness matures. I use the word phase rather than stage to denote something very important. The notion of phases rests on interior changes, charged with energy and then subsequently discharged. While the external appearance remains the same, the value as a stimulant has changed. Therefore, in certain phases of nondual awareness, there is an extension of normal consciousness, and a release of latent capacities. The amount, the degree, the plane of energy assimilated in the exchange can be quite significant.

The development of unity consciousness is an inner discipline. It discloses what is already present inside us, rather than setting out on a path looking for something new. There is only attention and its awakening. New capacities emerge by developing dimensions of attention that go beyond usual awareness. Silence must be entered,



*“Warlocks” by Paul Rudy*

and one must deeply participate. Participation in the Silence *is* the remaking of the consciousness. From here the body’s innate perceptual modality emerges.

So, if we are going to explore unity consciousness, we simply can’t leave out the medium in which union emerges. Silence *is* its medium, as the painter’s medium is color and the musician’s medium is sound. In the development of unity consciousness, the medium is silence, and it is a reservoir to which we may endlessly return. There we are privileged to drink as often and deeply as we desire. Unity consciousness is indeed an organic process, and I’ve come to refer to the phases of development as The Gathering, The Stillness, and the Surrender. Respectively, each denotes reaching deeper layers of the Silence and greater interior changes.

## The Gathering

*Silence is  
a kind of touch.*

The first phase trains one in complete attention, bringing full awareness into the present moment, and quieting the mind to do so. It lifts you to a new level of perception whereby a new inflow of life is received. It requires quieting the surface consciousness – thoughts, images, emotions.

Silence is a kind of touch. To be fully with silence requires that we develop a capacity to be present to both the subtlest qualities of its touch and to the way this touch resonates our interiority. When silence announces itself, you have begun to find the way out of separation consciousness.

This phase is less valuable for itself than for the training which it gives, the new pathways it develops. Here, we are less concerned with the stillness of the mind, but with a simple retreat of its conditioned ways in to the ground of essence. It is the most difficult phase for most of our attention is allocated to surface movement.



*“Madonna with Child” by Paul Rudy*

## The Stillness

*The surface mind begins to surrender the strings of reality wholly, allowing consciousness to sink into the stillness and silence from which the Absolute appears -where everything is nurtured into existence.*

In the second phase attention passes to a state characterized by intense stillness in which it rests in that reality to which it yet dares not surrender. When one comes to this point, the brain becomes very still – yet, it is highly sensitive, vigorous, fully alive. Will and imagination are silenced bringing a state of emptiness. In this state of emptiness there is a sense of a mind that has penetrated its unknown depths. The difficult terrain of emptiness is truly the fertile soil of change, yet it is deeply alarming and hard to trust, because the conditioning of everything you know so well is essentially dying into another plane of consciousness.

The surface mind begins to surrender the strings of reality wholly, allowing consciousness to sink into the stillness and silence from which the Absolute appears – where everything is nurtured into existence at every moment. These, you are participatory with, within the Silence. Experiences of passive union begin to occur in this phase.

When we are within the realm of silence our sense of activity is radically different. There is no longer a you that does things. We are being changed, spiritually enlarged by our act of participation – not observation. Here, there is no reality centric to a Self, and we allow the revelations that flow from the Silence to give rise to their thinking through us.

## The Surrender

*One surrenders to the deepest layers of the Silence and is merged within it.*

In the third phase, one soaks in the Silence and energizes on those high levels of energy from a deeper reality, which are dark to the intellect, but radiant to the heart. It is a manifestation of that indivisible power of a different kind of knowing through unity. One surrenders into the deepest layers of the Silence and is merged within it. When the Absolute appears, it is given to us and we know it, as we cannot know it by the ordinary devices of thought.

There is a turning of attention *from* the world of multiplicity, with which the intelligence is accustomed and able to deal, *towards* new powers of perception which we never knew we possessed. Instead of sharply perceiving the fragment, we apprehend, yet know not how, the solemn presence of the whole. This awareness is balanced by a great ongoing sense of expansion, of new worlds made ours, as we receive the inflow of its life.

In this state in which the consciousness of the Self recedes, one is conscious of being in immediate relation with the Absolute, of participating within it. This revealed reality is apprehended by way of participation, not by observation. And this experience of the “Whole” seems to be given rather than attained.



In withdrawal from the busy, surface consciousness one sinks down to the ground of Being and the apparent Universe. Our being experiences the ‘Substance of All that Is’. Multiplicity is resolved into Unity: a unity with which the perceiving self is merged. Here, experiences of non-local awareness occur, and there is an enhancement of vitality, equanimity, and joy.

This incredible eternity is stamped into the core of our being. When our awareness and attention can touch here, a different way of existing and serving in our world unfolds. The Self is lifted to another plane of consciousness and becomes an agent of the Absolute—an energizing center. Sometimes I liken it to a destiny of incarnating the eternal in time. For this, we humans are made. One simply needs to bring awareness down into every cell of the body, remain quiet there, and meet the Silence. You cannot understand, there is only to *be* it.

Until you have tasted the degree of this inner fulfillment, you hardly dare dream that it is possible. This fulfillment gets deeper and deeper, more and more complete; and you know, with a certainty that is born of experience. We can slip into unity consciousness with the same ease as we slip into the seamless embrace of water. Something very ancient, eternal within us, already trusts that this embrace will hold us. The source of these living waters is stamped in the very core of our being. It is the Substance of All that *Is*.



*Christina Donnell, Ph.D. is the Director of the Winds of Change Association, an educational organization dedicated to offering programs that tend our evolving consciousness. Christina is a natural born, pragmatic mystic, spiritual teacher and public speaker. She is the author of the award-winning book, Transcendent Dreaming: Stepping Into Our Human Potential. Her latest offering is the Unitive Life audio series which is a rich foray into silence and the emergence of non-dual awareness.*

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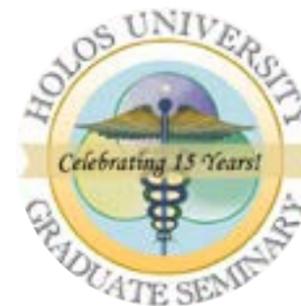
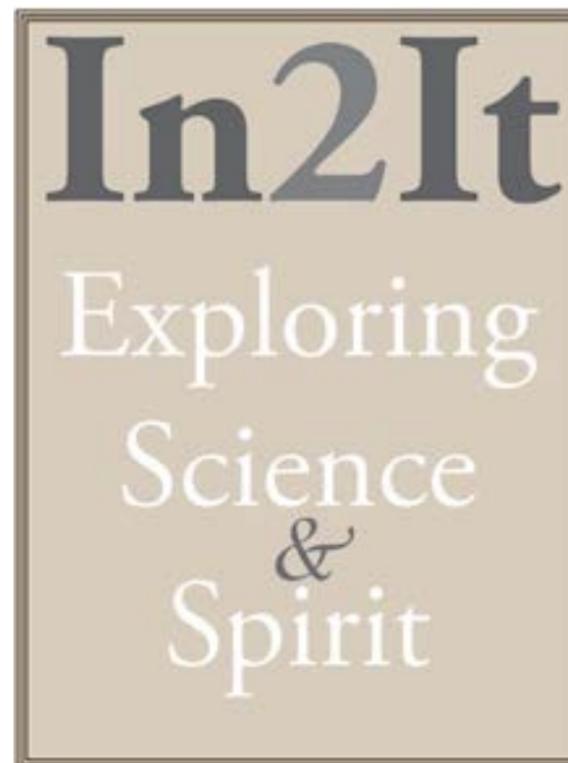
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*Dr. Susan Russell*

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