

The Holy Experience

Neale Donald Walsch

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Chapter One

All of my life I have been seeking the Holy Experience. All of my life I have known that the Holy Experience would reveal everything. Everything about God, everything about life, and everything about me. The only questions for me have been, what *is* the Holy Experience, and where can I find it?

Those questions have been asked by people all over the world since the beginning of time. Perhaps you have asked those questions, too. This book is the short story of how I found my answers. By telling you this story, perhaps I can help you to find your answers, too.

I hope you will forgive me, then, if I place before you in this book some brief narratives of my life. I know that many of you have read one or more of my previous books, and so you may already have a few of these facts and details. But if you will indulge me, I want to create a context here, in *this* book, within which the remainder of the messages placed here might be considered and experienced. And from time to time a brief excursion into my own past may prove instructive, even if, for you, it is a revisiting of information you already have about me.

I began my search for the Holy Experience by looking where one might be expected to look. I began by looking to religion. It is entirely understandable that I would do that. I was born into a family that believed in religion as a means of getting to heaven. I was raised a Roman Catholic, and by age seven I had a deep and abiding faith in God. I did not doubt for a moment God's existence or God's benevolence.

By age 10 I also did not doubt God's wrath.

I was not taught much about God's wrath at home. In fact, I was taught absolutely nothing about it. I think now, as I look back on it, that my mother did not believe in it. If my father did, he bowed to my mother's wishes not to "tell the kids about it" until it was time.

It was when I was sent to parochial school—St. Ignatius Elementary, on 36th and Mitchell, in Milwaukee—that I learned about a God who could become angry. It was there that I learned about the Ten Commandments. It was there that I learned about sin and punishment. It was there that I learned how to make a Perfect Act of Contrition ("Oh, my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee...") in case I was in a car accident and found myself near death, or for some other reason discovered myself facing Judgment Day at an inopportune moment, not having gone to Confession for a while...

Confession was a big thing to me. We were told at St. Ignatius to go to Confession at least once a week. Saturday was the day set aside in our parish, as it is in most, so that one could receive Holy Communion at Mass on Sunday.

This is where the idea of my own imperfection first came up, as I recall. This is where I picked up the thought that my soul must be “clean” before God would allow me to receive Him under my roof.

Until then I never had any doubt that all I had to do if I wanted God near me as to call out to Him. He would always be there, Mom told me, and I believed her. How could Mom be wrong about a thing like that? How could Mom be wrong about *anything*?

Then I got to St. Ignatius and the nuns told me that, well, it wasn't exactly like that. God *wants* to come to me whenever I call to Him, they assured me, but God cannot be received by an impure soul. Who has an impure soul? I asked. All of us, I was told. We all have impure souls. None of us are worthy of receiving God into our lives.

How can we *become* worthy? I desperately wanted to know. I'd thought that God would come to us always. In fact, I'd been taught by my Mom that God was *with us* always, and that all we had to do to receive God's help and blessing in any moment was to call out to the God who was Always There, and that help would be ours. Now I was being told, “well, not exactly...”

I had to be *worthy* of receiving God under my roof. And the problem was, I was *born unworthy*. It was at St. Ignatius that I learned about Original Sin, and about how I was a sinner every day, and about how God could not come into my soul if I was a sinner, but not to be dismayed, because God could *forgive me* my sins, and *then* come into my soul – but first, I had to confess them.

God could not forgive sins that were not confessed. Hence, the Sacrament of Confession was created by the Most Holy Roman Catholic Church as a means to Salvation. If we confessed our sins, God would forgive them, rendering our souls pure again, wiping the slate clean, as it were. We could then go to Communion. We could receive the living God into our lives through consuming the literal flesh of Christ, who was God's son and who died for our sins.

Confession, as you might now be able to see, suddenly became very important to me. I went as often as I could, the better to make sure that I had no sins on my soul should death come knocking at my door.

As a child I was nervous about this. You may think that I am kidding here, or exaggerating a little, but I'm not. I clearly remember being afraid to go to sleep at night, especially if I knew that I had been a particularly bad boy that day. If I had talked back to Mom, quarreled with my brother, or in some other way had

behaved inappropriately, I earnestly prayed as I squeezed shut my frightened eyes...

*Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.*

I hoped that my earnestness would earn me what my behavior had not.

Part of my nervousness stemmed from the fact that I was not sure which behaviors really offended God enough to keep me out of heaven forever (dooming me to everlasting torture in hell), which would send me to purgatory for only a temporary (if painful) period of exclusion, and which might be overlooked altogether.

(Were *any* overlooked? That was a question I remember asking. Did God overlook *anything*? Was my every thought, word, and deed to be judged? The answers I was given led me to believe this was the case. Who wouldn't be nervous under those conditions?)

And so, I tried very hard to be holy. To be holy, I believed, was to be without sin. It was to live a life without offending God.

Thus, I went to Mass several times a week. I went to Confession often. I prayed to God every night. I walked around the playground with a crucifix tucked in my belt. I became an altar boy. I memorized every prayer there was to memorize. Not just the Our Father and the Hail Mary, but the Glory Be, the Act of Contrition, and the Apostle's Creed. And I had determined in the 7th grade that I was going to become a priest.

I was going all the way.

My search for the Holy Experience had begun.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Two

I wish I could tell you that in the ensuing years I had a wonderful and fulfilling experience of God. I did not.

My first obstacle was my father. When I told him while I was in the 7th grade that I wanted to enter the seminary he made it clear to me in no uncertain terms that that was not going to happen.

“You’re not old enough to make that decision,” he told me. “When you are, we can talk about it.”

I now understood what that was all about. At the time, I did not. I saw my father as cruel and even “anti-God.” I could not understand what he had against my entering the seminary.

In the 7th and 8th grade of Catholic parochial school the priests and nuns really start talking up the priesthood to the guys. If a fellow has any kind of piety at all, this can suddenly start looking like a very attractive option. In my case, it had become something that I *had to do*.

The sisters all agreed that I had “the calling.” I served at Mass every morning, and it was not lost on the priests and nuns how earnestly I prayed, how I had completely memorized the altar boy’s responses in Latin, and how I had “taken” to the whole business of God and the Church.

My father was clear that it was the business of these schools to steer as many young boys into thoughts of the seminary as possible. Dad knew that I knew nothing of females – and he was also smart enough to understand that until I did, any decision about moving into a line of work that required me to be celibate all my life was premature.

He was, of course, dead right. Somewhere during the eighth grade I saw my first picture of a woman without clothing. I know, I know, that was late, relatively speaking, in the life of a boy, but you have to remember

that this was in the Fifties, and things were a lot different then. A year later, as a freshman in high school, I actually saw a real, live girl naked. She, too, was a high school freshman, and we had gotten into a little mischief together. Nothing serious, really. Just a little show-and-tell. But it sure took my mind off the priesthood.

Still, I remained enamored of religion itself as an institution. I may not become a priest, I thought, but I will always be devoted to God.



It didn't take long for me to realize that I was not going to find it possible to remain devoted to God through organized religion. Many people have, of course, and so this is not an indictment of religion. It is simply that I could not find my own way to the Holy Experience, I could not get in touch with the Transcendent Reality, through this vehicle.

Religion, to me, presented too many complications, and I experienced the Transcendent Reality as Without Complication. Indeed, it was Utter Simplicity. Religion, to me, generated too many conflicts, and I experienced the Transcendent Reality as Without Conflict. Indeed, it was Total Peace. Religion, to me, offered too many contradictions with my own inner truth, and I experienced the Transcendent Reality as Without Contradiction. Indeed, it was Absolute Harmony.

Utter Simplicity, Total Peace, Absolute Harmony. That is how I experienced God. Religion did not. I soon found this out.

The how's and why's of my personal experience do not seem so important now. It seems sufficient to note in broad general terms that the singular difficulty I had with religion was its insistence on teaching of a needy God – indeed, an angry, vindictive and violent God – who was going to punish me for my sins – and, indeed, punish all the world.

I simply did not experience God in that way. Chalk it up to my mother's early teachings, perhaps, but for some reason my internal guidance system kept steering me away from such an idea about God.

I searched everywhere within the religions of my culture, but could find no place of comfort. Then I explored the religions of other cultures. Still no simplicity, peace, and harmony. Finally, I left religion altogether.

It would be a quarter of a century before I returned to a deep and abiding faith in God, born of a new *understanding* of God that changed everything in my perception of who and what God is.

How that came to pass is described in *Conversations with God – Book 1* and in the semi-autobiographical *Friendship with God*. The simple and peaceful and harmonious *answer* I came to is articulated wonderfully in *What God Wants*.

So what have I learned through my conversations with God, my friendship with God, and my experience of communion with God?

I have learned what the Holy Experience is. And I have learned how to move into that experience at will. I have not yet learned, however, how to sustain it. I can't see to "hang onto" it through the whole of my life. Indeed, I'm not even sure if I want to.

All of this is what will be discussed here. And all of this discussion will, I hope, help you in moving closer to your own experience, in unveiling your own truth, about these things.

I should like now to begin this discussion with my definition of the Holy Experience, which kind of seeped out of me unexpectedly only recently, as I was responding to a question emailed to me by a man in Maine. Let me share with you here that question and answer, and you'll see what I mean.

(The question at first seems to have nothing to do with the topic at hand. But wait. It was in the process of responding to the question that my definition of the Holy Experience popped out. See what you think.)

Hi Neale...I have been struggling recently with what "mission" means in a pluralistic world. Mission has had so many different objectives throughout history – converting others to the "true" faith; extending God's kingdom; doing justice for the poor and marginalized, etc.

Our world seems very near-sighted when people consider their faith the "true" faith and others as condemned to Hell. Since all of us have a some-

what different conception of what "faith" means, what is each person's responsibility to other peoples- both people of other faiths and people of no faith?

Should we try to show others what we consider "true", or should we only try to share with others, learn from them, and build reciprocal friendships? What does it mean to be a person of faith- ie. Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, or otherwise- in a pluralistic world?

Thanks for any comments or insights you may have Neale!

Matt, Natick, MA

Dear Matt...The only True Mission is the mission of the individual soul. Every other mission is an extension of that. The mission of the individual soul is to know itself as it truly is, in its own experience. This is accomplished by creating itself as that. Life is not a process of discovery, it is a process of creation.

The hitch here is that, in Ultimate Reality, it is not possible to create anything, because everything that ever was, is now, and ever will be has already been created. So the Process of Creation turns out to be, after all, not actually Creation, but Perception. It is about seeing what has always been there, knowing what has always been true, and experiencing the Only Experience There Is. We call this, loosely, God.

The challenge here is that one cannot experience The Only Experience There Is if it is, in fact, the only experience there is. This is because in the absence of That Which Is Not, That Which IS, is not.

Put simply, in the absence of black, white is not. In the absence of cold, hot is not. In the absence of up, there is no such thing as down. None of these things can be experienced, save in relative terms. The same is true about God. And, for that matter, about the human soul. For the human soul IS God, in part. It is a holy and individuated part of That Which IS.

If there is nothing that is NOT That Which IS, then That Which IS cannot be known in Its own experience. Nor can any Part of It. It cannot be known in relative terms, but only in the Realm of the Absolute. And in the Realm of the Absolute, That Which IS cannot experience Its own magnifi-

cence. It cannot know the glory of Itself, the wonder of Itself, the Truth of Itself. This is the condition faced by your soul---and this is the reason that physical life as we know it was produced.

Physicality produced a solution to the conundrum—a solution that is ingenious and spectacular: *create an entire reality based on Illusion*. That phrase in itself, “reality” based on “illusion,” is a contradiction in terms, but it gets the idea across.

And so we find ourselves in this Alice in Wonderland world (an Alice in Wonderland universe, really) in which we swear that what is So is Not So, and that what is Not So is So. It is a "wonderland" in the sense that it allows us to experience the True Wonder of Who We Really Are. We do this by calling forth the Opposite of Who We Are, and by experiencing ourselves in relation to that.

Suddenly, we have a point of reference by which we may know ourselves. (Remember that I said that the mission of the individual soul is to know itself as it truly is, in its own experience.)

All of this lays down the theological basis for my (finally!) direct answer to your direct question. That which is opposite to us, that which is "not us," exists for a very holy reason: so that we may announce and declare, express and experience, become and fulfill Who We Really Are. Therefore judge not, and neither condemn. Raise not your fist to the darkness, but be a light unto the darkness, and curse it not.

Our "mission" vis-a-vis people of other faiths is to accept them exactly as they are. Not to seek to convert them, not to judge them, and certainly not to condemn them.

Now Matt, you have placed your question inside a riddle that offers two choices---yet these choices are not, in truth, mutually exclusive. It does not have to be one or the other, as you have posed it. You have asked: "Should we try to show others what we consider 'true', or should we only try to share with others, learn from them, and build reciprocal friendships?" I believe we can do both.

As we share with others, learn from them, and build reciprocal friendships, we DO "show others what we consider true." In fact, that is the

most effective way to show it! Thus, we set people free from their own limiting beliefs about us. This eventually will set them free from their own limiting beliefs about *themselves*. Soon they, too, will know Who They Really Are.

And so, Matt, walk through the world not as one who seeks to convert or convince others of anything, but simply as one who seeks to know others as everything. When you know all of it as everything, then you know yourself as everything as well. You see yourself in every other person. Indeed, in every other thing that exists. Suddenly, the magnificence and the glory of Who You Are becomes apparent to you. It becomes part of your experience.

Many people have had this experience momentarily. They have had it in meditation, perhaps, or in a moment of pure silence, or in the midst of an impactful interaction with another (such as sexual union or laughing or crying together, or walking through the woods on a sunlight morning, or swimming in the ocean, or, simply, washing dishes.) I call this The Holy Experience. It is when we know Who We Really Are.

While many people have had this experience momentarily, the trick is to have it continually. That was the yearning of the Buddha. It was the journey of the Christ. It is the opportunity placed before each of us. Many Masters have shown us the way.

The way is for us to BE the way. "I am The Way and The Life. Follow me." This is what all Masters have declared. This is what all Students have understood. Therefore, do not look for your Master, BE the Master for whom you have been looking. Do not seek the Truth, BE the Truth you have been seeking. And do not attempt to change another, BE the change you wish to see.

That is your mission, Matt, and there is no other.

Bless you, Matt, with the knowing of Who You Really Are. May God be experienced through you, and in the living of your life.

Love always, and all ways...

neale.



So there you have it. In responding to Matt's inquiry I stumbled upon one definition of the Holy Experience. It is a definition that works for me. After all these years I can say that I know what I have been searching for since I was a child. I have been searching for the experience of knowing Who I Really Am.

All my life I have been trying to figure this out. Who am I? *What* am I? Why am I here? What am I supposed to be doing? Is there any reason for what I am doing? Does anybody care? Is there any *outcome*, other than the doing of it? What is the point of life?

These are the questions that plagued me as I tried to make some sense out of my life. There is a possibility that they have been plaguing you, too. If they have, boy, have you come to the right book.

The Holy Experience

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Chapter Three

I said it before and I'll say it again. All my life I have been trying to figure out...Who am I? *What* am I? Why am I here? What am I supposed to be doing? Is there any reason for what I am doing? Does anybody care? Is there any *outcome*, other than the doing of it? What is the point of life?

The Holy Experience brings us the answers to those questions. The Holy Experience *is* the answer,

The Holy Experience is when you know the difference between Divinity and humanity, and *when that difference disappears*.

Divinity and humanity can become One in your experience, and when that occurs you have entered the Holy Moment. You cannot enter this Moment, however, until you know the difference—and why it exists.

The difference between Divinity and humanity is that Divinity seeks only to distribute, and humanity seeks only to gather.

Did you hear that?

That is not the only difference, of course, but it is a milestone difference. It is a major difference. So let's not gloss over it. Let's not read past it and move on, without really grasping its implication. Let's state it again. I said...

"The difference between Divinity and humanity is that Divinity seeks only to distribute, and humanity seeks only to gather."

Divinity understands that it is only through the distribution of Itself, the giving away *of* Itself, that it can be magnified and glorified. Humanity believes that it is only through the gathering *to* itself, the bringing *to* itself, that it can be magnified and glorified.

So there you have it. Giver and Gatherer. That's the difference.

It is an astonishing difference. It is an exact opposite. That is no small distinction. Yet when it is deeply understood (not simply casually comprehended), everything becomes wonderfully clear at last, and the chasm between the two may finally be closed.

Divinity seeks nothing for Itself. Human beings will find it difficult

to seek nothing for themselves so long as they imagine themselves to be human. That is because humans imagine themselves to have needs. Divinity does not. Divinity has not such thought about Itself. (Nor any such thought about you, incidentally.)

So in order for humanity to seek nothing for itself, humans must understand themselves to be Divine. They must understand that humanity is not separate from the Divine, but IS the Divine, or a division of it.

You might say that humanity is a “division of the Divine.” This helps people wrap their minds around the concept of Oneness with Divinity. Many folks have a very difficult time seeing themselves as Divine. Yet if you tell them that they are *part* of that which is Divine, many people can go there. They can hang out in the place. They can embrace the concept. Partial magnificence is acceptable, total magnificence is not.

So we might say for our purposes here that humanity is a division of the Divine. That Which Is Divine created many divisions of Itself, and one of those divisions is called humanity.

Even as a large company or corporation may have a division here and a division there without any of those divisions being in any sense separate from, or *other than*, the whole, so, too, does the Divine have a division here and a division there without any of those divisions being in any sense separate from, or *other than*, The Whole.

It is possible to be a division of something without being divided from it.

That’s an important concept for you to grasp if you are to have the Holy Experience. Please let me say it again. I said...

“It is possible to be a division of something without being divided from it.”

Think about that for a minute. Hold that concept in your mind.

Humanity, as a Division of Divinity, is neither separate from, nor other than, The Whole.

This is the one thing that most of humanity has not understood. This is the one thing that most of humanity’s religions have not taught. In fact, most of those religions have taught exactly the opposite. They have taught

that humanity IS Separate from Divinity. Some have called this separation The Fall of Man, and in that description they are correct. The idea of Humanity's Separation from Divinity HAS been humanity's downfall.

From Downfall to Upliftment: Reversing the Effect

The transformation of humanity's downfall into humanity's upliftment may be achieved through a simple reversal of thinking. It is a shift from Separation Theology to Unity Spirituality. It is the reunion of God and Humanity.

It is easier to experience Reunion with God on an individual basis than it is collectively. That is because it takes a great deal more energy to alter Collective Consciousness than it does to alter Individual Consciousness. Yet Collective Consciousness can be altered when the alteration of Individual Consciousness reaches critical mass. When sufficient individual energies are lifted, the entire mass is elevated to a new level.

The work of Conscious Evolution, therefore, is the work of changing consciousness at the individual level. *That is why every effort to do so is critical.*

Every individual undertaking, every individual thought, word, or action which leads to the transformation of the Self and to the lifting of any other being, is of extraordinary importance. It is not necessary to move mountains to move mountains. It is necessary only to move pebbles.

We must become People of the Pebbles. We must do our work on a person-to-person basis. Then we shall move mountains. Then the mightiest obstacles shall crumble, and the way shall be made clear.

So let us undertake to deeply understand, on an individual level (and then to *demonstrate* on an individual level) how and why it is possible for The Divine to want nothing for Itself, and to seek only to distribute.

We begin by coming to clarity on who and what The Divine is.

The Divine is Everything. All that is seen and all that is unseen is The Divine. All that is known and unknown is The Divine. All that is experienced and unexperienced is The Divine. All that is here and all that is not here, all that is now and all that is forever, all that is limited and all that

is unlimited is The Divine. All that is comprehensible and all that is incomprehensible is The Divine.

There is nothing that Is that is not The Divine.

Divinity is everywhere at once, and thus, it is nowhere in particular. Divinity is NOWHERE. Divinity is NOW/HERE.

All of this has been given to us in *Conversations with God*. None of this is new. It has been given to us a thousand times before *Conversations with God*. It has been given to us a thousand times since. Indeed, in every moment in every way, through a thousand individual manifestations of Itself, is Divinity revealing Itself. Yet we do not see. Or we see, but do not believe.

We do not believe the evidence of our own eyes. We do not hear the truth in the sounds of silence.

Yet, for those who have ears to hear, listen.

And Watch.

Observe.

Observe the Self.

Watch over your Self.

Look at what you are doing on this day. Are you spending most of your energy gathering, or giving? And if you are giving, are you giving in order to gather? Do you do the work you do in order for it to pay off for you? And what, exactly, is the payoff? What are you gathering?

God, of course, cannot gather. That is the one thing that God cannot do. God cannot gather anything. That is because everything God would gather, God is. There's nothing to gather.

I gather that you understand this.

What, then, to do?

Yet if God cannot gather, and if you are God, then you cannot gather, either. Perhaps you've already noticed this. Perhaps you've already noticed that, even if you do manage to collect a few things along the way, sooner or later it all disappears. At the end, none of it is there. You go on, but none of it goes with you. What is it that they say? "You can't take it with you."

In fact, it's all starting to disappear right now. You don't have the friends you had. You don't have the stuff you had. You don't even have the feelings you had. Everything you thought was "you", or that at least helped to define you, has disappeared. There is nothing that is permanent. There is nothing that stays. Everything goes.

Which is an interesting fact about life.

Everything goes.

And when you understand this, everything goes.

There are no restrictions anymore. You can do anything you wish, say anything you wish, think anything you wish, because you're not trying to hold onto anything anymore. What's the point? You can't hold onto it anyway. It's all going to go away. In the end, if not before.

This may sound like a desolate and despairing scenario, yet the truth is, it's liberating. You can't have anything forever. If you had it forever the having of it would mean nothing.

The Holy Experience is knowing this.

Each moment becomes truly holy, because each moment ends. It cannot be held onto forever. Not a single moment can. Therefore, every single moment is sacred. Like a snowflake, the moments fall and form a collection that melts into the stream of our lives that evaporates into nothingness, disappearing from sight but not from Reality, condensing and forming cloudy formations, spirits who then drop down like snowflakes, starting the whole cycle over again.

Each snowflake is utterly magnificent, cryingly, achingly, tearfully beautiful, unfathomably perfect.

As is each life.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Four

I had the Holy Experience today. I had it this morning. I am still having it as I write this.

The experience feels interestingly like a new beginning. So many things are changing in our world, and so many things are presenting themselves for change in my life. I experienced this morning that I want to change how I am, becoming more loving, more patient, more compassionate, more giving.

Yes, much, much more giving.

This is wonderful, this feeling of willingness to change and to become a larger version of myself that I am having today. It is part of the continuing adventure, of the never-ending process, that is the expansion of my humanity and the evolution of my human soul.

Just when I think "the game is over," *it never is!* This is what is so extraordinary about Life. Even after what we imagine to be our death, life is not over. *It never is and it never will be.*

I don't know why I am feeling all this right now, why I am knowing this as part of my experience today more than usual, but I am. It just feels like a new energy is coursing through me. And that feels good. I thank God for it. I thank God for letting me get up today with such revitalized energy, even at my age. I am not a young man any more, but my heart feels young as ever.

I think that part of what is behind all of this may have to do with the fact that I spent the entire weekend going over the "script" of my life. No, I mean really, not figuratively. I had the screenwriter and the producer/director, and the director of photography of *Conversations with God: The Movie* at my house for the past three days going over the first draft of the script for the film, and that kind of experience can throw one into deep introspection, as you might imagine.

I haven't lived my life the way I would have liked to. I mean, I have made some choices that have been hurtful to others, and I so regret that.

Yet I see now, as I review the entirety of my life, that certain things had to happen exactly as they have happened in order for me to be here now, just as I am. And I am clear that the God of my understanding forgives me completely and utterly for my offenses, holding me in the cradle of Her love, embracing me in the warmth of His compassion and deep understanding, encouraging me now and giving me the strength to move forward with my mission in this life.

My mission is plain and it is simple: to give people back to themselves. This is the mission of all of us, and each of us is playing it out in the way that is natural and perfect for us.

We have been sent here to experience and to express ourselves in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever we held about Who We Are, that we might know ourselves as God would have us know us--as part of the Everlasting Divine. We have been given the gift of God's joy and God's peace in our heart, and offered an invitation to share it with everyone whose life we touch--regardless of exterior appearances that sometimes seem to make it impossible to do so.

I have come to see that all of life's circumstances, conditions, events, and experiences have been sent to me as gifts, creating a Contextual Field within which I might choose how I wish to experience myself, and decide what part of that interior experience I shall now express in physical form. And so I thank God for each and every manifestation of life now producing that Contextual Field. I shall judge not, and neither condemn.

This living without judgment is the hardest part for me, but it is the beginning of the Holy Experience, and as I have looked at the depth of my life these past three days it has been made clear to me that so many people would have to live without judgment of ME in order for me to feel the love that is all around me. And so, the least I can do in exchange for this unspeakable blessing is to offer the same in return, and to live without judgment of others. For who among us shall cast the first stone?

I was invigorated this morning by this freedom-giving thought: I am forgiven, by God and by all those who love me. I choose now to forgive *myself* as well, thus to dwell in the joyful place of enlivened creation. For nothing good is created from guilt, and all things wonderful emerge from joy.

What a *joy* this life is, with *all* its sadness and pain, its strife and travail, its tests and its obstacles. What a joy to be alive and experiencing all of it, and to be able to choose which *part* of it to internalize and call my own. Having this choice, and *exercising it*, is the Holy Experience.

The end is the beginning

I said in the last chapter that each moment in life is truly holy because each moment ends. This is not something that everyone knows. Everyone knows that each moment *ends*, but everyone does not know that for this reason each moment is holy.

And even while everyone knows that each *moment* ends, many people hope that no really wonderful *experience* ends. This is a contradiction in terms, yet people still engage in this wishing. They hope that their perfect relationship will never end, or that their perfect job will never end, or that their particular and present happiness, however it is showing up, will never end—*but it always does*. This does not mean that it will not or cannot be replaced by a new happiness, but the present happiness will always end.

That is something that is very important to remember. It is also important to know that the end of our present happiness is the beginning of our new happiness. Now if one's happiness is tied to present and particular circumstances, one's happiness is always and forever in jeopardy. Yet if one's happiness rides the tide of all events, and, indeed, *creates them*, then one has discovered and embraced the Holy Experience

It is the very *fact* that each moment is like a snowflake, breathtakingly beautiful, awesomely perfect in its design, absolutely individual and unlike any other, that makes it so remarkable, and renders it holy.

Do we not fall in love with people for this exact reason? Why not, then, fall in love with moments in precisely the same way? *Deciding to do that is the beginning of the Holy Experience*. It is the Choice Point of Sacred Creation.

The power and the inspiration

There is nothing more profoundly inspiring and absolutely em-

powering than this fact that each moment is new. It is born, it lives, and dies, in NOW.

Right here, right Now, is each moment born. Right here, right Now, is each moment lived. Right here, right Now, is each moment ended. It is all happening at one Time, in *this moment, right Now*.

The wonder of all this is that This Moment can be recreated from moment to moment, or created in a new way, with whatever modifications, enhancements, alterations, or adjustments that we choose.

We are not who we were yesterday. We are not even who we were a moment ago. Nothing is. And yet it can be, if we choose for it to be. All we need do is recreate it.

In life we can recreate ourselves as we just *were*, or we can recreate ourselves *anew*, in the next moment. We are always remaking ourselves. It is never a question of whether, but of how. Are we recreating ourselves as we were before, or in the *next grandest version of the greatest vision ever we held about Who We Are?*

The Holy Experience is the experience of recreation. It is the experience of Total Knowing that the Totality of You is Never Known. It cannot be, because it has not yet been created.

Understanding infinity

Everything that ever was, is now, and ever will be, *is now*. And so, in the language of the Realm of the Absolute, there is nothing that has not been created. Only in the language of the Realm of the Relative could the statement be made that the Totality of You cannot be known because it has not yet been created.

In truth, all of You has been created. Yet all of You has not yet been *experienced* by the individuated part of You that is the localized expression of the Universal Self.

The only way for the individuated part of You that is the localized expression of the Universal Self to experience all of You is to recreate parts of You until all of You has been Known. Yet the All of You is infinite and eternal. Therefore, it cannot be known or experienced in any relative sense, but only in an Absolute Way. Since the Local You does not *know*

that it is the Universal You, it imagines that it is *creating*, rather than recreating, itself in each moment. This is its conceit.

The Holy Experience is the dropping of this conceit. It is the shedding of this illusion. It is the lowering of this veil. This happens when we come to know that we are not who we thought we were. It occurs when we understand that we are nothing at all, except exactly what we are right here, right now. And that we can change that at our absolute discretion.

Who are you right now? What are you? Are you confused? Are you frustrated, finding all this difficult to follow? Are you annoyed that you are not "getting it," or overjoyed that you are?

You are none of these things unless you say that you are. And you cease to be these things the moment that you say you are not. That moment is the holy moment. That experience is the Holy Experience.

When you understand the truth of Who You Are, you understand infinity. You can actually *experience* this understanding. That is, you can embrace it not only intellectually, but *experientially*.

There are at least five areas in which you can do so. Many more, I am sure, but five that I can immediately think of. You can experience infinity in:

1. **Love**
2. **Wisdom**
3. **Abundance**
4. **Energy**
5. **Divinity**

These five areas of life expression have, in my mind as I think of them, several sub-areas. And so the complete listing looks to me like this:

1. **Love/Relationship/Sexuality**
2. **Wisdom/Awareness/Consciousness**
3. **Abundance/Wealth/Health**
4. **Energy/Creativity/Aliveness**
5. **Divinity/Joy/Peace**

These are the areas of life expression in which it is possible to encounter or create the Holy Experience. But before we get into that, let me see if I can more closely describe the Holy Experience by more broadly defining it.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

I have already given several indications in this manuscript of what I believe the Holy Experience is. Now let me say, please, that it is all of this—and more.

The Holy Experience is as varied and as infinite as Life. It is a particular aspect of Life that *explains life TO life through the process of life itself*.

The Holy Experience is the experience of knowing, and of knowing that you know. It is the experience of being, and of being what you are being. It is the experience of having, and of having what you have.

I know that all of this may sound like just so much gobbledegook—circular talk getting nowhere—but if you will have a little patience, I think you will be well rewarded.

When I speak of the experience not only of “knowing,” but of “knowing that you know,” I am speaking of two distinctly different encounters with life.

CwG tells us that there are those who...

...do not know, and do not know that they do not know.

...do not know, and know that they do not know.

...do not know, but think that they know.

...know, but do not know that they know.

...know, but pretend that they do not know.

...know, and know that they know.

All of us fall into one of these six categories. So it is one thing to know, and another thing to know that you know.

Now the truth is that *all of us know* all that there is to know. Yet not all of us remember this, and so we have the experience of not knowing, or

of knowing, but of not *knowing* that we know. In the moment that we know, and *know* that we know, we have had the Holy Experience.

Because this experience is so vast, it is almost more difficult not to have it than to have it. Yet most people still manage to not have it—even though half the world is yearning for it. That is because half the world does not understand that it is yearning for that which it already has.

For instance, peace.

The world's people yearn for peace, yet they do not experience it, nor do they demonstrate it. That is because they do not understand that they *are* peace. And in denying that which they intrinsically are, they deny themselves the experience of it.

This is what I meant when I said, just a bit ago, that the Holy Experience is being, and of being what you are being. To give you an example of what this means, or of how this could “show up” in real life, I can remember my father raising his voice at me in frustration when I was in high school because of the poor grades I kept bringing home.

“You’re smarter than this,” he would say, waving my report card at me. He was right. It was one thing for me to “be” smart (I was), but quite another for me to be *being* smart in my daily life—that is, to be *acting like that*. I was not *demonstrating* what I was, I was not *demonstrating* what my father knew me to *be*. I was IT, but I was not *being IT*.

To be or not to be, that is the question.

Similarly, it is one thing to have everything in life, but if you are “having none of it” (that is, if you do not *believe* that you have it, or cannot *acknowledge* that you have it), then you may as well not have it at all. You will not experience having it because you are not willing to “have” what you have. You are not willing to hold what you have been given.

That is why the marriage vow says “to have and to hold.” You can have something, but if you do not hold it, it is just the same as not having it at all. It is as if someone had given you a great gift, but you dropped it the moment you got your hands on it. You let go of it. You still have it. It is still in your possession. The person who gave it to you has long since disappeared. But you will not pick it up and hold it. And so it lies there at your feet, as useless as if you did not have it at all.

I cannot tell you how many people I have seen ignoring their talents in exactly this way. They have been given great gifts, but they will not pick them up, they will not use them.

And so the Holy Experience is knowing that you know, being what you are, and having what you have. It is a large experience. It is a huge experience. It is the experience of who you are, writ large.

Is the Holy Experience something you create?

Okay, now I said earlier that there are five areas in which it is possible to encounter or create the Holy Experience. You may have read that sentence and glossed over the word “create.” You may not have given it a second thought. But let’s think about it now.

Is the Holy Experience something that we *create*? Whoa. For many, many people that would be a new thought. A *whole* new thought. Because many people think of the Holy Experience as something that comes over us, or something that we encounter along the way. It is something we stumble on, or open ourselves to through prayer or meditation or fasting or the like. But it is not something that we consciously *create*.

Yet it can be. It is true, we can encounter the Holy Experience or we can create it. If we wait to encounter it, it might be years, perhaps a lifetime, before we do so—IF we do so. Yet if we choose to *create it*, we do not have to wait one moment longer. We can have it right here, right now.

I know of five steps to creating the Holy Experience:

- 1. Believing that it is possible for you to have it**
- 2. Understanding that you are worthy of having it**
- 3. Knowing that you are having it**
- 4. Declaring that you are having it**
- 5. Sharing it with others, so that they may have it**

We will explore each of these steps in the next five chapters, and in the five chapters following that we will look at the areas of life expression in which you can create the Holy Experience if you now choose to.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Five

The first step in creating the Holy Experience is **believing that it is possible for you to have it.**

Now you may think that this is an elementary step—almost a *given*. Yet many people find this a very difficult step because they find it hard to believe that any kind of “holy experience” can happen to them.

(1) Some believe it is impossible to have the Holy Experience because they do not believe that such an experience even exists.

(2) Others believe it is impossible to have such an experience because, while it may exist, they do not know what it is or how to access it. They believe it is understandable and accessible only to ascetics and monks and holy ones—people who have devoted their entire lives to the search for inner truth and higher realities.

(3) Finally, still others believe that while it may be accessible to regular, ordinary people, they, themselves are not worthy. They believe this for one reason or another. Some feel that there is something specific that a person has to be, do, or have in order to enter into the Holy Experience. It is reserved for a special class of people who, while they may be ordinary, are single-minded in their determination to know of this experience, and are clear that their particular doctrine—which tells them that there is only one way to have the Holy Experience—is absolute and correct and is to be applied without exception. Others feel that because of their own behavior in this life they are not sufficiently “holy” to have the experience in any event.

It is with these varying ideas that people approach the Holy Experience—and life itself. And ideas, of course, rule all human experience. The idea that one has about anything produces one’s reality

around that. And where do ideas have their birth? In how you look at things. Your *perspective* about a thing is what creates your idea about it.

I have become more and more clear about this with every passing year since the publication of the first *Conversations with God* book in 1995—ten years ago to this writing. And now, in the latest and final dialogue book, *Home with God* (ATRIA Books, March 2006), this progression is described specifically.

According to the text:

Perspective creates perception, and perception creates experience. The experience that perception creates for you is what you call "truth."

Because I know this I try very hard these days to look at everything from the perspective of my highest desire. This means not looking at things through the prism of what I expect or imagine or think realistically will happen, but rather, seeing things as I *choose* and *desire* for them to happen.

This is not easy. I find that I have been *programmed by society itself* to look for the worst in everything, to anticipate the least desirable outcome, to worry about and fret about and agonize over how bad things can be, rather than how good something could turn out. I have had to fight this tendency toward pessimism all my life. What's funny about this is that I am *at the very same time* the supreme optimist. I believe that I walk in luck, that God is always with me, that everything good happens to me, and that I can get out of anything—any jam, any situation—and land on my feet.

So how these two sides of me got to juxtaposed I don't know, but they are. Fortunately for me the positive side shows itself 80% of the time and the negative just 20% of the time—but both sides are definitely there. So I have to remember to *think positively* and *eliminate negative thoughts* from my mental diet.

(Incidentally, a wonderful help in this regard is the book *Ask and It Is Given*, by Jerry and Esther Hicks. It shows you how you can use your feelings as creative tools, and I highly recommend it.)

Positive thinking about the Holy Experience

Now when it comes to anything having to do with God I have been

blessed with absolute faith. I am utterly convinced that (a) there IS a God; (b) God is “on my side”; (c) the power of God can be used at all times in the creation of my inner reality and my outer experience.

Because I believe this, the idea of my having the Holy Experience is not even a little bit of a stretch for my imagination. I know that this experience exists and I feel sure that I can have it. I am *convinced* that I am *going* to have it. I believe that everyone has the opportunity to have it. I believe that it is ours for the asking. The result of this is that I enter into the Holy Experience on a regular basis. My next goal, my next step, is to remain in it much more of the time, to live in it, to have my being within it and to come *from it* in the day-to-day of my life.

If you are in this place of mind as well, or if you can go to this place now, you have taken the first step toward having the Holy Experience. Yet how can you go to this place if you do not know that it exists, or doubt that you are worthy of being there? Those are the key questions. Let’s take the second one first.

The issue of worthiness

This may very well be the biggest stumbling block of all. At first blush you may think that not many people believe themselves to be “unworthy” of holy encounters (or of much of anything, actually), but you would be amazed to find that low self-esteem and lack of self-worth are among the most prevalent mental and emotional afflictions (along with loneliness) suffered by people in the world today. This is especially true in terms of our relationship with God.

Why?

It is really quite simple.

Many millions of people have been raised to believe that they were born in “original sin.” That is, insofar as God is concerned, they were *unworthy at birth*. This, they have been told by their religion. Therefore “unworthiness” is, for many people, *an article of faith*. Not to believe in one’s own unworthiness is not to believe in the Word of God.

Other religions teach us, as well, that we are all sinners, and while they may not claim that we were unworthy at birth, they now pretty much

agree that life in human form has turned us into less-than-perfect beings, unworthy of sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty unless we are *saved*.

Indeed, most religions, not only just a few, teach that some form of purification is required in order to qualify for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. Paradise, it seems, comes at a price.

We must all, we are told, repent of our sins and walk the narrow path. How many of us have done so with sufficient success to meet the requirements of God is arguable—or so conventional wisdom goes.

It is not difficult to understand, given these continuous teachings from our elders, how it comes to pass that millions upon millions of people do indeed think of themselves as unworthy to meet God—and meeting God, of course, is what the Holy Experience is all about.

Defining the experience

Oh, yes, perhaps we have not made that clear before. That IS what we are talking about here. That is what we are discussing. When we talk about the Holy Experience we are talking about meeting God. It is a face-to-face meeting, too, not something that exists only in conceptual constructs. We are talking about looking at Divinity directly, seeing it right there in front of us, knowing it as part of us, experiencing it as integral to us, and merging into this experience as our *felt reality*.

This is precisely the experience that we have following our death, and God has made it clear to us that we are not required to wait until death in order to have it. We may embrace—and, indeed, *create*—this experience at any time. But we must feel that it is possible, and that we are worthy, to do so.

How, then, to shake off our own thoughts of unworthiness?

The first step is to re-identify ourselves. We must decide again—and for many decide anew—who we are. So long as we imagine that we are *other than* who we really are, thoughts of our unworthiness will be possible. The moment that we re-identify ourselves, assuming our true and real identity, the idea of unworthiness as it relates to us becomes impossible to conceive.

Ending separation

Currently, most people imagine themselves to be separate from God, from each other, and from everything else that is. In truth, we are all intrinsically connected with everything—including that which we call Divinity. When we drop our idea of Separation—which is part of what I have called the Earth's "Separation Theology"—any thoughts of our unworthiness drop with it.

Robert Heinlein, the famous science-fiction writer, included a line, said many times by many characters, in his novel, *Stranger in a Strange Land*. The line was, "Thou art God." In his book, Heinlein had many people greeting and saying goodbye to each other in this way. The line, and the book itself, though meant to be "fiction," offers a powerful statement of what is really so.

On the day that you embrace your True Identity as Divinity Demonstrated you will abandon forever your thought that you are somehow not "up to" the Holy Experience, or being included in God's Kingdom.

God's Kingdom is right here on Earth, and the Holy Experience is *life itself*, lived as a demonstration of the unity of everything, in joyous celebration of the wonder and the glory of All That Is.

Many people have a very difficult time with this idea of their Oneness with God, however, and this makes it virtually impossible for them to drop their idea of separation from God and embrace their true worthiness at last.

In *Home with God* this matter is addressed head on. Here's a preview of what the dialogue with God in that soon-to-be-published book reveals...

I've often heard the analogy that I am, to God, as a wave is to the ocean. The same stuff, exactly. Just smaller in size.

That analogy has indeed been used many times, and it is not inappropriate.

So now, let us define this “ocean.” Let us propose here that God is The Creator. Very few people who believe in a God at all have an argument with that.

If it is true that God is The Creator, this means that you, too, are a creator. God creates *all* of life, and you create all of *your* life. It’s that simple.

If you think of it that way you can hold it in your consciousness.

You and God are creating all the time—you on the micro level, God on the macro. Are you clear?

Yes, I see! There is no separation between the wave and the ocean. None. The wave is one *part* of the ocean, *acting in a certain way*. The wave does the same thing the ocean does, in smaller degree.

That is exactly correct. You are me, acting the way you are acting. I give you the power to act as you are acting. Your power comes from me.

Without the ocean, the wave does not have the power to be a wave. Without me, you do not have the power to be you. And without you, my power is not made manifest.

Your joy is to make me manifest. *The joy of humanity is to manifest God.*

Now there’s a statement.

Here's another...

Life is God, made physical.

What is important to understand is that there is no single way in which life makes God physical. Some waves are small, barely a ripple, while other waves are huge, thunderous in their sweep. Yet, whether minuscule or monstrous, there is always a wave. There is no time when there is not a wave on the ocean. And while every wave is different, not a single one is divided from the ocean itself.

Difference does not mean division. Those words are not interchangeable.

You are different from God, but you are not divided from God. The fact that you are not divided from God *is why you can never die.*

The wave lands on the beach, but it does not cease to be. It merely changes form, receding back into the ocean.

The ocean does not get "smaller" every time a wave hits the sand. Indeed, the incoming wave demonstrates, and therefore reveals, the ocean's majesty. Then, by receding into the ocean, it restores the ocean's glory.

The presence of the wave is evidence of the existence of the ocean.

Your presence is evidence of the existence of God.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Six

The second step in creating the Holy Experience is **understanding that you are worthy of having it.**

We touched upon this briefly in the preceding chapter. You might say that the first step in creating the Holy Experience is believing that such a thing is possible, and the second step is believing that such a thing is possible for *you*.

As I said in Chapter 5, most people who suffer from unworthiness around this picked up their thoughts from religion. Many people have been told that they are sinners, that they were born in sin, and that they will die in sin, their only hope for salvation being their constant call for forgiveness, and God's mercy in granting it.

Others have been told that even if they were worthy of seeing God—which is what the Holy Experience is all about—they would not be able to see God anyway, because God is so magnificent and utterly unfathomable that God *cannot* be seen, comprehended, or experienced.

Conversations with God tells us that both of these premises are false.

No one is “born in sin.” Indeed, sin itself does not exist. There is no such thing as “offending” God. Nor is God subject to stress, anger, frustration, or disappointment. That is simply not the nature of That Which Is Divine.

Perhaps this is a good juncture at which to undertake a brief review of just who and what God is.

In *The New Revelations* we were told...

“God is not a singular Super Being, living somewhere in the Universe or outside of it, having the same emotional needs and subject to the same

emotional turmoil as humans. That Which Is God cannot be hurt or damaged in any way, and so, has no need to seek revenge or impose punishment."

We are told something else there as well, something perhaps a bit more unexpected:

"God needs nothing. God requires nothing in order to be happy. God is happiness itself. Therefore, God requires nothing of anyone or anything in the universe."

Now if these statements are true (and I believe they are), there is no reason for us to worry about God being angry with us, nor to assess ourselves unworthy of God's love, or of God's presence in our lives, or of the Holy Experience.

Two years later, in *Tomorrow's God*, we were given an even more comprehensive close-up view of God and the nature of Divinity, with some of the earlier revelations being essentially repeated, but with new ones added. Few of the ideas found there, however, are held by the majority of people in today's society. Nearly all of these concepts violent most people's most fundamental beliefs about God. Yet if we were to embrace these concepts, I believe that our whole lives would change.

Here is what that extraordinary text tells us:

** Tomorrow's God does not require anyone to believe in God.*

** Tomorrow's God is without gender, size, shape, color, or any of the characteristics of an individual living being.*

** Tomorrow's God talks with everyone, all the time.*

** Tomorrow's God is separate from nothing, but is Everywhere Present, the All In All, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Sum Total of Everything that ever was, is now, and ever shall be.*

** Tomorrow's God is not a singular Super Being, but the extraordinary process called Life.*

** Tomorrow's God is ever changing.*

** Tomorrow's God is needless.*

** Tomorrow's God does not ask to be served, but is the Servant of all of Life.*

** Tomorrow's God will be unconditionally loving, non-judgmental, non-condemning, and non-punishing.*

Stepping away from arrogance

Given all that we have now come to know about God, any thoughts of unworthiness melt away. This assumes, of course, that we *accept* these new understandings and embrace them as truth.

In order to do this we would have to be willing to step away from practically everything we have been told in the past about God and ourselves. We would have to consider the possibility that there may be something we do not know about God, the knowing of which would change everything.

We would have to give up our spiritual arrogance.

That may seem like a strong phrase to use, and it may not even apply to you, individually. Yet the fact is that the vast majority of the world's people who believe in a God are, in fact, spiritually arrogant, in the sense that they have adopted as their particular conceit the idea that all there is to know about God is now known, all there is to understand about God is now understood, and all there is to explore and say about God has been explored and said.

It is all right there, they will tell you, in the doctrines and dogmas of their particular religion. It's a complete road map, and all we have to do is follow it. It's the surest path to our salvation. Indeed, say some, it is the *only path*.

Yet that path has not brought humanity to its salvation, but rather, to its knees. It is time now to do something that we have not been willing to do. It is time to *question the prior assumption*. Our prior ideas about God and Life and each other may very well be incomplete. I do not believe that they are "wrong," but I do believe that there is more to know, that there are gaps to close, that there are blanks to fill in our understanding of who we are, who God is, and what life is all about. I believe that the gathering of this knowledge (presuming that we have the courage to do so), the closing of these gaps, and the filling in of these blanks will render obsolete all question of your worthiness for the Holy Experience.

Forgiving ourselves

Yet even if we accept that God will never judge us and never has, there is still the question of our own self-judgment—the harshest judgment of all.

And so a major process for us, a huge portion of our internal work and of our personal preparation for the Holy Experience, has to do with self-forgiveness. Almost always, it is easier for people to embrace the idea that God forgives them than it is to forgive themselves. We have a whole list of “wrongs” we imagine ourselves to have done in our lives, and we can’t forget them.

We, and only we, know the inner workings of our mind, the quiet scheming of our heart, the sad assessment of our soul, as we look at our lives and give ourselves a grade.

The trick here is not to try to forget them, but to do just the opposite. Remember them, and remember them vividly – for it is what you resist that persists, and what you look at that disappears. That is, it ceases to have its illusory form.

Remember all of your alleged wrong-doings, then do two things at once: (a) agree with yourself never to repeat those behaviors again, and (b) allow yourself to let go of any guilt you have about them, replacing all guilt with regret.

Guilt and fear are the only enemies of man. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross used to say that (it was one of her most oft-used lines), and she was profoundly right. So get over your guilt about what you’ve done in the past. Get over it. Get over it.

Get over it.

All of us have made mistakes – and for some of us they have been some pretty big whoppers – but that has nothing to do with your worthiness to see God, to be loved by God, and to have the Holy Experience.

Indeed, *part* of the Holy Experience is understanding that.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Seven

The third step in creating the Holy Experience is **knowing that you are having it.**

In truth, one does not *create* the Holy Experience at all (nor, for that matter, does one create anything). One simply shifts one's perspective, allowing one to notice that the experience is already occurring and is just waiting for us to notice it.

All things that are now, have ever been, or ever will be, *are now*. In our Timeless Multiverse (we do not live in simply one Universe, but in a multiplicity of universes—something that science is about to tell us), nothing will ever be created again. Everything already exists in the Eternal Moment of Now. It was *all created at once!* Ours is to merely reach into that Moment and all that it contains and, with the tool of our perspective, pull out anything that we wish. Like a magician pulling a rabbit from a hat, so, too, do we experience the wonder and the magic of Life.

Remarkably, few people are aware that they are now having the Holy Experience. There are two reasons for this.

1. Most people do not know what the Holy Experience is.
2. Most people do not know what they are.

Our extraordinarily limited perspective allows us only a very limited perception. You can only see what you are able to see. Thomas Aquinas put this eternal truth wonderfully in his *Summa Theologica* when he said: "The

thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower." Total Knowledge, True Knowledge, is not possible for Aspects of Being or Individuations of Divinity of limited perspective—and *all Individuations of Divinity hold a limited perspective of Ultimate Reality by virtue of the fact that they are Individuations.*

Yet all is not lost, for the *degree* to which one's perspective may expand is, in human terms, beyond extraordinary, and, in cosmic terms, virtually unlimited. This presents a dichotomy, for how can a thing which is inherently limited be virtually unlimited? The solution to the paradox lies in the fact that we are unlimited in what we can ultimately know and experience of ourselves—and the moment we know and experience all that there *is* to know and experience, we will immediately create *more* to know and experience. So we can know our Selves completely, and the moment we know our Selves completely, we do not. We accomplish this neat trick by simply changing the definition of "completely." Only a God could do this, and that is, of course, exactly who we are.

Reversing the paradigm

Earlier I said that "knowing" you are having the Holy Experience is the third step in "creating it." Some people will see this as a juxtaposition of *knowing* and *creating*, and, of course, it is exactly that. Such a juxtaposition is required when we speak (as most of us usually do) within the limited understandings of our current perspective.

Allow me to explain.

Many people believe that creation precedes knowing. That is, we create a thing, and then we know about it. This is how it seems to work in the actual living of our lives. Yet what I am saying here is exactly the opposite. We cannot create anything that we do not know about. Knowing *precedes* creation, and produces it. This is a reversal of the paradigm within which we experience ourselves. With such a reversal comes a complete turnaround in our experience.

Knowing is part of the act of creation. It is the first part. It is what must happen before anything else can happen. When one thinks about it logically, it becomes obvious that this is true.

Conversations with God tells us that the three Tools of Creation are:

- Thought
- Word
- Deed

The first step in the creation of anything is to have an idea about it. An idea about something is your Thought about it. It is what you “know” about it. So, knowing is the beginning of creation.

That initial thought may come to you in First Form as a picture, or a feeling. Eventually, you shape that thought into a Word, or several words, or many. This is the second Tool of Creation.

Finally, you turn your Words into Action—the third Tool of Creation—and you have creation.

This is an elementary way of understanding the process of life. It is an extremely primitive perspective. Yet it works. For people living within the paradigm of an extraordinarily limited perspective, this crude device, these three very crude tools, can seem like magic.

In truth, as I have said here, there is no such thing as Creation, there is only a Knowing that everything has already been created, and that ours is to merely Call It Forth. This is a higher level of understanding, and is demonstrated through consistent and predictable physical manifestation by very few people, whom we have called masters and avatars. The rest of us may produce such demonstrations on occasion (perhaps even on several occasions, but rarely on many and never on every), and such moments inevitably lead us to deeper comprehension.

Deeper comprehension is, of course, the Holy Experience. It is Knowing more fully, through the demonstration of it, Who We Really Are.

Thus it is possible for everyone, and not only masters, to have the Holy Experience (or, in more accurate terms, to Know that we are always having it). This, of course, is the promise of God, and the pledge of all true religions.

Knowing you are having the Holy Experience is as simple as knowing that you are Life. All people know they are living, but few people know they are life. And what is life? A *process*.

You are, therefore, a process.

Knowing what you are

Very few people think of themselves in this way. They may think of themselves as something that IS, but they seldom stop to ask themselves, “is *what?*”

Others think of themselves as a being, a sentient biological creature. Yet they seldom stop to ask themselves, a creature being *what?*

Still others say that they are not their body, but rather, they are that which is *using* the body as a tool. But a tool in the creation of *what?* Themselves, they say. Yet what is that? They will not know until they have created it, they say. And they are right. Profoundly right.

And so, we are all nothing more than a process. We are also nothing less, which is saying a great deal. For we are the process called Life—and that is All There Is.

Our identity becomes more clear to us when we really *hear* those last words—because “all there is” is but another way of saying, “God.”

Putting this into practice

None of this verbal explanation will mean anything, of course, if we cannot put it into practice. None of it has any use if we cannot place it on the ground, minute to minute, in our every day lives. Ruminations can be fascinating, but they carry no practical value if we cannot make them live and breathe and manifest in our reality.

From *ruminatio*n to *manifestation*—that is the journey. From our thought about ourselves to our experience of ourselves—that is the path. It is the path upon which the Soul is embarked eternally. It is the Eternal Joy of God.

Putting esoteric wisdom into practice and making it part of our daily lives is the greatest opportunity we will ever have—and we have it every moment. It is the opportunity to know and experience our divinity.

Practicing Esoterism is a lifelong undertaking. Very, very, *very* few people attempt it. Most do not even know it is there to attempt. They are far too busy simply staying alive. That is why it is the first duty of every society that would call itself enlightened to lighten the load of those who barely

survive. What we will do for the least among us tells us everything about what we will do as a species.

When the least among many can take their minds off of the constant worry and anxiety of day-to-day survival, they can at last turn their attention to achieving a larger understanding of the matters that will make simple survival a given. This is the means by which is accomplished the transformation of an entire society.

Personal and societal transformation is arduous. It is immensely challenging. It is not the work of the feint of heart or the weak-spirited. It is the last step in having the Holy Experience.

The next step is declaring that one is going to do just that.

The words God and life and you are interchangeable.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Eight

The fourth step in creating the Holy Experience is **declaring that you are having it.**

Declaration is the most powerful fuel in the engine of manifestation. It is about "speaking your word." The three Tools of Creation are Thought, Word, and Deed, and declaration is the second and third tool *combined*.

Declaring that you are having the Holy Experience requires, of course, that you are *aware* that you are having it. You must be *aware* that *every moment of your life is Holy*.

The Secret of Awareness

Awareness is one of the most important experiences that I could ever give my Self during the time that I'm here, living upon the Earth.

To be aware, it seems to me, is to be *alive in the extreme*. It is to live in Completion every moment. Or, as wonderful science-fiction writer Robert Heinlein put it, it is to "grok in fullness."

Awareness is a Quality of Being. It arises out of a decision that we, and only we, can make---a very *conscious decision*---to open our Selves to the wonder and the glory and the beauty of Life. Also, to the sadness and the hurt and the darkness.

When one decides to become Aware, one is choosing to be deeply committed to observing, and consciously noticing, the Totality of Every Single Moment.

That's an interesting phrase, isn't it? *Conscious Noticing*.

Awareness is not merely observing, but *noticing* at a very high level of *consciousness* exactly what is happening and exactly what is "so"... Right Here, Right Now.

Recently I was walking down the street with a friend and I looked at one of the trees that we were passing on our city street. "Wow, look at that!" I exclaimed. "Isn't it just beautiful the way that tree just sort of hugs that building over there?" My friend hadn't even noticed, until I mentioned it. "That's what I like about you," she said. "You see everything."

Well, I'm not sure that I see *everything*, but I do try to see as much as I possibly can of what is going on around me. Wouldn't it be great if we all did? Someone once said that "enlightenment" is nothing more than *paying attention*.

One thing I don't see as well as I wished I did is myself. I'm not always aware of the way I'm moving through the world, and how that is impacting and affecting others.

So I think that Awareness is not just noticing what's going on around you, but what's going on within you as well. And, what is going on within others. Of course, we can't always know that, and this is nothing to be playing guessing games with, so one thing we might do if we're unclear about such an important thing...and yes, what is going on within others IS an important thing; perhaps it is the MOST important thing...one thing we might do is to *check in* with them, and simply *ask*.

Becoming spiritually vital

At the very least, this shows that you care and care genuinely about them and about how things are with them and about how you are impacting them. This is another way of saying "I love you," and it feels very good on the other side of the room, I can tell you. I'm not sure that we spend enough time checking in with each other.

So I think that Awareness is a very, very important aspect of Life. I think it's an important quality to nurture and to grow. If we can grow in Awareness, I think that we grow in one of the most vital ways. I think that Awareness is Vitality. I think it is *Spiritual Vitality*. I think that one is "spiritually vital" when one is Aware---and I think that when one is Aware one becomes "spiritually vital." I'm saying that I think the effect is circular.

So look deeply into each moment. Savor each nonnosecond. Don't miss a single cloud formation, if you can help it. Or a single fragrance. Or a single nuance in the energy of your Beloved. Don't miss this, *don't miss this*, DON'T MISS THIS.

When you are aware—deeply aware—of the wonder of Now (Eckhart Tolle has written marvelously on this subject), you find it really very easy to declare that you are now *having* The Holy Experience.

In the last chapter I said, "Personal and societal transformation is arduous. It is immensely challenging. It is not the work of the feint of heart or the weak-spirited. It is the last step in having the Holy Experience.

"The next step is declaring that one is going to do just that."

Now I want to tell you that personal and societal transformation doesn't *have to be* arduous. It can be easy when you step out of Yesterday and into the Now.

Stepping out of Yesterday is as simple as realizing...*that was THEN and this is NOW*.

NOW has nothing to do with THEN. We think that it does, but it does not. Yesterday was Yesterday, and it has nothing to do with Today. You are not who you were Yesterday, and nothing you did Yesterday, and nothing that happened to you or through you Yesterday, has anything to do with Today.

Each moment is the Moment of Creation.

This is the Wonder and the Gory of Life. This is precisely *why* each Moment IN Life is, in fact, a Holy Experience. What makes it *holy* is that it embodies the sacred process of creation itself.

This is not something that most people know, or realize in the specific sense. When they do, they often declare openly that *they are having The Holy Experience*.

Yet we do not have to wait until we are having that experience (or *know* that we are having it) to declare that we are having it. Indeed, the very act of declaring it produces it.

That was a mouthful right there, that was an extraordinary thing that was just said, and so it deserves to be said again. With regard to The Holy Experience, the greatest secret in Life is that *the act of declaring it produces it*.

This is true of ALL of Life. What you declare is what you produce. Speak your Word, and the word is made flesh and dwells among us.

So never look over your shoulder to know Who You Are right now. You are NOT who you WERE. You are who you ARE RIGHT NOW. Let go of Yesterday and of all that has happened to you and through you, then simply declare: I Am That I Am.

I Am What I Am Right Here, Right Now.

And just exactly what is that? *It is whatever you choose for it to be.*

Do not “future-ize”

Declaring that you are having The Holy Experience right now also requires that you refuse to step into Tomorrow before Tomorrow comes. This means that we must give up our habit of “future-izing.”

Future-izing is a common human trait. All people look into the future, their own future in particular, and begin to construct realities around that. They imagine what is going to happen and how it is going to happen—and, amazingly, they very often imagine the worst. Then (and here comes the sneaky, tricky part) that *live their lives in this moment, Right Now, as if that negative outcome is a reality*.

Future-izing is not the same as visualizing. Worrying is not the same as creative visualization. It is all well and good to imagine a positive Tomorrow, but it is even *more* powerful to experience a positive NOW.

Future-izing is the act of living Today as if it were Tomorrow.

The Bible advises us (and I am paraphrasing here)...

So don't go around asking “What are we to eat? What are we to drink? Wherewithal shall we clothe ourselves?” Each day has problems of its own. Keep your

eye where? On God, and the Kingdom of Heaven—and all else will be added unto you. For where your heart is, there will your treasure also be.

I have stopped worrying about Tomorrow. When you worry about Tomorrow you cannot know that you are having The Holy Experience right now. Worry robs the Present Moment of its awesomeness.

Why declaring is so powerful

People tend to have the experience they say they are having. Did you know that? This is an amazing truth, and it works. I mean, as a process, it *works*. Announce the truth you wish to experience and more often than not that is the truth you will encounter. This is because all of Life is creative, and the Tools of Creation, as we have already learned, are Thought, Word, and Deed.

Each day when you awaken, thank God for The Holy Experience. Then declare to your Self, “I am having the Holy Experience, Right Here, Right Now. I AM THE HOLY EXPERIENCE.”

This Act of Declaration has more power in it than you may ever have imagined. Try it. Try it for seven weeks running, without interruption. Make your Declaration every morning, noon, and night.

I mean that literally. Stop what you are doing every morning, every day at 12 Noon, and every night and make this declaration: I AM THE HOLY EXPERIENCE.

Do this for seven weeks running. It will change your life.

The final step

So, having firmly decided to dwell in the Here and Now and having firmly declared yourself to be *having* the experience, right now, that you have so long desired, take that Holy Experience and share it with all the world. Do whatever it takes to *make it known* that not only are you *having* The Holy Experience---you ARE The Holy Experience.

This sharing is your next and final Step in the five step process that will allow you to move into The Holy Experience in all times and places, at will.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Nine

The fifth step in creating the Holy Experience is **sharing it with others, so that they may have it.**

This is a bold step. It takes spiritual courage. You must own a willingness to be seen as someone whose head is above the crowd. For not many people in the crowd called humanity are aware of having the Holy Experience. They are not even aware that it is possible for them *to* have it. They believe that such an experience is for avatars and masters and monks, or “holy ones.” The idea of the Holy Experience being available to anyone, to everyone, is not something that most people can easily accept.

The fastest way to convince them that it *is* available to everyone is to tell others that *you* are having it right now. Of course, if you just do this “out of the blue,” others may look at you as if you are a bit daft. You have to find the time and the place for it. You have to create a context within which your announcement will make sense and be heard, not be ridiculed and ignored.

Why bother? If you are having the Holy Experience, why not just keep it to yourself? Because your experience of *everything in life* is magnified and verified when you share it with another. Held within, kept secret, you may eventually come to think that it is all just a figment of your imagination. Shared with another, it becomes real.

There is also the larger point that until others are having it, you are not having it. Not completely. Not fully. That is because the You that is having the Holy Experience is larger than the “you” that you may imagine yourself

to be. The You that you are does not stop at the end of your fingers. It extends outward to all the world. The only thing that ends at your fingertips is the particular physical manifestation that you *call* “you.” But the You that you Really Are encompasses every other person with whom you come in contact. Therefore, if they are not having the Holy Experience, then You are not. Not completely, but only in part.

So, if you want to have the Holy Experience completely, cause another to have the Holy Experience completely—and another, and another, and another. Share your experience with others, that they, too, may have it.

It's like money

The Holy Experience is just like any other form of wealth. You cannot fully experience it until you share it with others. What good does it do you to have inherited a million dollars if you never spend so much as a nickel of it? Like the Walt Disney comic book character Uncle Scrooge McDuck, sitting there ogling his pile of gold, you'll find that there's not much joy in holding onto it. Yet if you grab a handful of it and give it to others—go on a “spending spree”—suddenly you know *experientially* what having that money is all about.

Similarly, if you keep the Holy Experience all to yourself, you will find after a very short while that you are experiencing the smallest part of it. Yet if you grab a handful of it and give it to others – go on a “spiritual spending spree”—suddenly you know *experientially* what having the Holy Experience is all about.

There is a wonderful instruction in the *Conversations with God* material that says, “That which you wish to experience within yourself, cause another to experience.” CwG also says, “That which flows *through* you sticks to you.”

The very act of flowing the Holy Experience out to others causes that experience to stick to you, and if you ever doubted that you were having the Holy Experience, sharing it with others removes that doubt absolutely.

The easiest way to share it

As I explained in the second chapter of this book, the Holy Experience is the experience of knowing Who You Really Are. It is the actual *experience*

(as opposed to the intellectual “knowing”) that you *are* every other person and thing. It is the *experience* of nothing being separate from you. Not even God.

Especially not God.

How to share this experience? The easiest way I can think of to cause yourself to know that you are not separate from anyone else is to cause everyone else to know that they are not separate from you. *That is why sharing the Holy Experience with others works.*

And the easiest way to cause others to know that they are not separate from you is to *act that way*.

This means that you may have to change your whole ground of being. You may have to alter the entire way that you relate to other people. You can begin with feelings.

Feelings: the key to closing the gap

The next time you are with someone, try to gauge what they are feeling. Don't just listen to their words, look deep inside to see if you can get a handle on what they are feeling. Read between the lines. Look *past* the words. Practice what I call Active Listening.

This is a form of listening in which you tune into the communication of the Soul rather than of the Mind of the person before you. Feelings are the language of the soul. This is not a language that it is impossible for you to understand. In fact, just the opposite. You can often understand a person's feelings a lot faster than you can understand their words.

Think of how many times you have listened to a person who is distraught or frightened or very sad or deeply disappointed. Often, their words come out in jumbles, and make no sense at all. You may even have caught yourself saying, “You're not even making sense.” You might even have used this as a defense during some verbal exchange. A person who listens to words rather than feelings often will throw another's words back in their face, reciting what they've just said word for word in order to show them that they are making no sense at all. Right about then is when the other person will say, “Can you hear anything at all about how I am *FEELING?*”

Right about then is when you know that you have been listening to that person's Mind, and have made a decision to have nothing at all to do with their Soul. If that other person thinks that he or she is your "soul partner," this can be a devastating experience. They will wonder why you cannot *hear* them at the level of soul, but insist only on taking their *words* apart, one by one, and analyzing them to show them how silly they are being.

A few experiences such as this can change a relationship forever. Someone who was once very close to you can decide that it is not safe to remain that close—that perhaps they were *never* that close—because you have no idea at all of how they are feeling.

The fastest way to let someone know that you and they are One is to feed back to them exactly what they are *feeling*. This means giving up *defense* in all verbal exchanges—even arguments—and realizing that, if the two of you are One, *there is no one to defend against*. There is only to understand what the Totality called the Oneness of You is now experiencing.

This means honestly looking at your own feelings and opening to the feelings of others.

Defenselessness is the Holy Experience

In the Holy Experience one is defenseless. There is no need to defend because the experience of attack is not possible, nor is the experience of damage. There is only what is happening, what is now going on, but it is labeled neither attack nor damage by The One, hence, there is no need for defense, judgment, or forgiveness.

This is exactly what was experienced by Jesus when he was crucified on the cross. He understood that The One was doing this to Oneself, for purposes much higher and grander than that which was seen or understood by the Individuations of The One who stood in the moment, seeing everything but seeing nothing.

When having an exchange with another, be sure that you are not standing in the moment, seeing everything but seeing nothing. Too often among human beings, this is the case. Not only when people are arguing with each other, either. Sometimes this happens even when they are loving each other. *Even when they are making love.*

To have the Holy Experience, share the Holy Experience. Do this by sharing in the feelings of others. As you listen to what they are saying, do not repeat their own words back to them. *Never repeat someone's own words back to them if you want to get closer to them.* Do you think they do not know what they have just said? Or, if they do *not* know, do you think that they want this pointed out to them?

What they want is to be *heard* at the level of *feelings*. Therefore, instead of repeating their words back to them, say what you think they are feeling. This is Active Listening. A dialogue with an INactive listener could go something like this:

"You always come home late from work, even when you promise that you'll be on time for dinner."

"I do not *always come home late from work*. I was not late even yesterday. You always do that. You always make it worse than it is in order to make your point."

"I'm *not* making it worse than it is! You may have gotten home on time yesterday, but this is the third time this week you've been late!"

"Third TIME? I didn't even GO to work on Monday. I was sick, remember? You see what I mean? You don't even know what you're talking about."

"Okay! It was twice this week, three times last week! I don't have a calendar on my wrist. All I'm saying is that you're late again, and I'm tired of yelling about it."

"*You're* tired of yelling about it? I'M tired of yelling about it. Now I don't even want to EAT dinner. Forget it. I'll be in the den if you want to talk nice to me for a change..."

Now that exchange *could* have gone a lot differently, if even one of the two people had been an Active Listener...

"You always come home late from work, even when you promise that you'll be on time for dinner."

"I see that you're disappointed that I'm home so late, and I'm really sad that you're disappointed. Is there anything I can do to make you feel any better?"

"This is the third time this week you've been late!"

“Wow, you’re really upset.”

“I *am* upset, and I’m sorry to *be* so upset, but gosh, this keeps happening all the time.”

“I hear that you’re sad, and even a little angry. I want you to know that I hurt inside when you’re sad or angry. I love you.”

“I love you, too. Could you please try to make it home on time a little more often?”

“I’ll try. Sometimes the time gets away from me. I’ll try to watch the time more closely. Thanks for saying you love me. I know that if you didn’t, none of this would matter to you. It feels good to be loved that much.”

“Well, I *do* love you, for heaven sake. So come on over here and sit down. It’ll take me just a minute to warm our dinner.”

This is just a simple example of what it is like to have the Holy Experience in an every day life kind of situation.

The Holy Experience is when you give every person back to themselves. It is when you cause them to know who they really are. Namely, that they are important to you, that they are *part* of you. And that they are part of God. You treat them as if they were Godly, as if they were Divine.

This is the Holy Experience, made real.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Ten

There are many areas of life, many situations, in which you may choose to have the Holy Experience.

Now that may sound like a strange thing to say, so let's take a look at it. At first, it may seem strange to speak of the Holy Experience as something that you "choose to have." Most people think of things that are holy as things that are rare. Or at the very least, not controllable in the first person. That is, they do not seem themselves as being *at cause in the matter*.

In fact, they are. We all are. All of us. We are "choosing to have" all of the experiences that we are having, moment to moment.

Now remember, I said all of the *experiences*, not all of the *conditions, circumstances, or events*. An "experience" is something that you feel inside about something that is happening outside. Your "experience" of something is "how it felt to you." It is nothing more, and nothing less, than that.

In the world of Duality Thinking (which is the world in which most of us live), you could imagine that somebody else is "doing something" to you, or that some seemingly uncontrollable outward condition, such as the weather, has been encountered by you, without you having anything to do with it. (This is impossible, actually, but in the world of our illusion such impossibilities can seem very real.)

The world of Duality Thinking says that there is US and IT or US and THEM. In the world of Non-Duality Thinking there is only US and US. There is nothing else *but* US, in differing form.

If there is only US, then nothing can be happening TO us, and everything must be happening THROUGH us. This is, in fact, the case. Nevertheless, an event could have the *appearance* of happening TO us— and when it does, if it is a negative event, it will be very hard to stop from thinking of ourselves as the victim of that circumstance. We see ourselves as the victim, rather than the creator, of our present situation.

The movement from victim to creator is an astonishment. It is the movement that Masters make. Everyone can be a Master– indeed, everyone already is a Master– and it is true that not everyone knows this. In fact, few people do.

What it takes to experience the fact one is already a Master is to make a commitment to having the Holy Experience every day. Indeed, *all day* every day, if it is possible. And it is.

Let us look now into the various areas or aspects of our lives, to see, one area at a time, how one may move into the Holy Experience, *at will*.

Looking at life, one part at a time

Let's break down the average person's life into five distinct areas, then use the next five chapters to explore each of them as they relate to the Holy Experience.

Loosely, most people's lives might be broken down into these areas or situations:

1. Yourself
2. Your significant other
3. Your family
4. Your work or chief activity
5. Your larger life in the world

Of course, such arbitrary "categories" are always deceiving, always incomplete, always fuzzy as to borders and boundaries. Nevertheless, it could be said that, in the main, one's activities during a typical day will involve interactions with either one's self, one's significant other, one's other family members, one's work or chief activity, or one's "larger world" contacts, acquaintances, and outside-of-the-house connections (the clerk at the post office, the lady at the florist's, the people at the hair styling salon, etc.)

As already noted, there are overlaps, certainly. But let's focus in, for the purposes of this exploration, on those five areas of human interaction.

The Holy Experience and Yourself

This is where it all starts. This is where everything begins, if it is to begin at all. All experience commences with the Self. All experience *resides* within the Self. All experience is created *by* the Self. Absent the Self, there is no experience at all. That is the answer to the classic question, "If a tree falls in the forest, and there is no one— no animal, no bird, no human, no living thing at all, to hear it— is there any noise?"

The answer is, no. The tree *making* noise is an *occurrence*. The act of someone *hearing* the noise is an *experience*. If a thing has occurred, but it has not been experienced, then its occurrence means nothing at all.

Nothing has any meaning, save the meaning we give it.

This is the Holy Experience, right here. The Holy Experience is the *giving of meaning* to something by us. It is in the moment that we give something meaning that the most sacred experience takes place. The experience is pure creation— and that is sacred, indeed. It is the most extraordinary thing that a sentient being can do.

There are two ways to give something meaning: (1) we can pull the meaning from our Past (as lower animals do), or (2) we can choose the meaning in our Present, as only Highly Evolved Beings can do.

Lower animals do not *create* meaning, they simply remember it. A deer hears a twig snap in the forest and "decides" that it means danger. The deer doesn't wait around to see if he's right or not. The deer scampers. Because the deer remembers.

The *first* time that deer heard a twig snap, he may have been very young, and he watched his parents scamper. So he scampered, too. Now he scampers even though his parents are not there. What made his parents scamper? *Their* parents scampered. What made their parents scamper? *Their* parents scampered. Deer-scampering has been going on for generations.

Higher animals do not scamper if they hear a twig snap in the forest— unless they choose to. Higher animals hear the same sound, but go through an entirely different process. They *think about* the snap. They think about who or what might have made the noise, how close the noise is, what it means, and what level of danger they are in, if any.

As soon as you think about something you are *acting*, as opposed to *reacting* (which means to “act as you did before”)– which is what deer do. You give the snap meaning. Just as you give everything in your life meaning. What meaning you give the events of your life depends on whether you are coming from your Past, or your Present.

Most people come from their Past. In fact, most people find it impossible *not to*. They make their decisions based on their prior thought about a thing. Masters, on the other hand, make their decisions based on their future intention.

Memory, or intention.

That is the choice.

Always.

When you come from your memory, you create one kind of experience. When you come from your intention, you create another kind of experience altogether.

Always, with your choices, you are answering a single question: *Who am I?*

Every act is an act of self-definition.

I said, *every act is an act of self-definition.*

Study that sentence carefully. When you embrace its implications utterly, you begin the process of the Holy Experience with your Self.

Who are you when you are alone?

Self creation is a Holy Experience. It is sacred. It is you, deciding *Who You Are*.

What do you think of yourself in the morning? First thing in the morning, what is your idea about yourself? How about last thing at night? What is your final assessment of Self just before falling asleep?

This is you, deciding about you. Some people call it “wrestling with your conscience.”

In the quiet moments of your day, what do you think and do? When you are with your Self and no one else, how does life proceed for you? Do

you eat well, or do you “sneak” a treat that you would not have if someone were watching? Do you meditate every morning, or only the mornings that another is there? Do you exercise each day, or only on the days that another reminds you, cajoles you, shames you into it? *Who are you when you are alone?*

You and you

Are you reconciled with your Self? When you talk to your Self, in your mind or even out loud, is your Self happy with you? How do you make the Self happy? How do you bring the Self joy? The answer to these questions says a great deal about you.

From where does your joy originate? Is it from something exterior to you, or from something interior? Is it from something you are doing, or something you are being?

And how do you bring your Self peace?

Finally: who do you think you are, anyway... ?

The Holy Experience with the Self is the *living of the highest decision you have made about yourself*. The beginning of that experience is the making of that decision.

Who do you think you are, anyway? Do you think you are a scoundrel? Do you think you are a trustworthy person? Do you think you are a teller of truth, always? Do you think you are a less than consistently truthful person, who slips and slides around the truth just a little in order to get through the moment? Do you think you are a person of integrity, who never cheats? Do you think you are a person who will cheat a little on others if it gets you something you want?

Who do you think you are, anyway?

Do you think you are a person of patience? Do you think you are a person of compassion? Do you think you are a person who easily becomes impatient, and then snaps at others? Do you think you are a warm and humorous and loving person? Do you think you are a person who instantly brightens up whatever room you enter?

Do you think you are who you were yesterday, or who you choose to be right now? Do you think you are a product of your ideas, or of the ideas of

others? Do you think you are doomed to repeat old behaviors, or designed to create new ones?

Who do you think you are?

Are you a person who becomes annoyed easily, or are you easy-going? Are you a person who laughs easily and lustily, or who grins quietly and holds most of the joy in? Are you a person of quick generosity, who does not think twice about giving away money, allowing the use of your possessions, and extending your home and your time and your love to others, or are you a person who is a bit more circumspect, a bit more cautious, in these matters?

Are you the person you wish you were?

Most people cannot see themselves. They are one thing, and they see themselves as another. They act one way, and they swear that they don't act that way at all. Their behavior has to be pointed out to them over and over again before they will even look at it, much less accept it. Some people wouldn't believe it if you showed them a video tape of themselves. They would say you edited it, or doctored it, or that, well, you may have caught them at a bad moment, but that is unfair and that is not how they really are.

It is an irony of the human condition that most people deny the worst of themselves— *and that most people deny the best of themselves.*

Yet if they would embrace the best of themselves, claim it and call it real, the "worst" of themselves would fall away and disappear. This is the Holy Experience: embracing and claiming the best of yourself.

Of course, there really is no "best" and "worst". Those are judgments that humans make, having nothing to do with Ultimate Reality. But there ARE many ways of showing up in the physical world, and you get to choose which way speaks most clearly of Who You Choose to Be, and of Who You Really Are.

Do you think you are a messenger?

You are. You are bringing a message TO life, ABOUT life, through the process of Life Itself. You are doing this in every moment. You are a messenger and a creator.

The Holy Moment is when you understand this.

The Holy Experience is when you become it.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Eleven

I said in Chapter 10 that we were going to break down the average person's life into five distinct areas, then use these chapters to explore each of them as they relate to the Holy Experience.

Loosely, most people's lives might be broken down into these areas or situations:

1. Yourself
2. Your significant other
3. Your family
4. Your work or chief activity
5. Your larger life in the world

In Chapter 10 we looked at the Holy Experience and yourself. Now let's look at the Holy Experience and your significant other.

Everyone has a significant other— whether they are in an intimate, romantic relationship or not. A “significant other” does not refer only to a person who you sleep with. It refers to any being with whom you share the largest portion of your life. That could be a sister or brother, a parent, a child, a close friend.

When discussing the Holy Experience and yourself, I said: “Always, with your choices, you are answering a single question: *Who am I?* Every act is an act of self-definition. When you embrace the implications of that sentence utterly, you begin the process of the Holy Experience with your Self.”

Now I am going to say the same thing, only as it pertains to your significant other. Always, with your choices, you are answering a single question: *Who is this other?* Every act involving another is an act of definition of the other. When you embrace the implications of that sentence utterly, you begin the process of the Holy Experience with your significant other.

Everyone is who you say they are. If you say they are your best friend, they are. If you say they are your enemy, they are. If you say they are your most trusted companion, they are. That is because *you are the one doing the deciding*.

Other people tend to show up in our lives exactly as we think that they will. Even if they don't, in their world, in *our world* they do. This is another way of saying that if you have a definite thought about someone, it almost does not matter what they do. You will still think of them in the way that you do.

Have you ever noticed how two people can have nearly polar-opposite experiences of the same third party? One person says that the third one is wonderful, while the other says that the third person is horrible. Both are right, for both have created *their experience* of that third person in their reality.

It doesn't matter *what* that third person does. In fact, that third person can do the *exact same thing* to both of the others, and one of the others will think it's wonderful while the second will think it's horrible. I've actually seen this happen! I saw a person bid \$10,000 once at a local charity auction, and two people with whom I am acquainted saw it in entirely different ways. The first thought it was wonderful and incredibly generous; a typical gesture of a very kind and open-hearted man. The second thought it was show-offy and incredibly gauche; a typical "over the top" gesture by an ego maniacal power grabber and attention getter.

Osama bin Laden was thought of in one way by millions, and in the exact opposite way by millions of others. Our experience of our significant others depends more than we will ever know on our own thought about them.

The Holy Experience is an act of creation.

That sentence is important enough to repeat.

The Holy Experience is an act of creation.

It is not something you step *into*. It is something you step *out of*. It is where you *come from* as you encounter any other person.

Love is not a reaction, it is a decision.

I'll never forget the first time I heard that wisdom. I think it was in *The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck. It hit me like a ton of bricks. I was knocked out by it. Wow, I thought, *what a revelation*.

Your relationship with your significant other will be exactly what you make of it. When you understand this, you will understand the Holy Experience of love. Love means seeing another as Who They Are even when they are not acting like it.

This is what God does with us. This is what we very often fail to do with each other.

A childhood barb; an adult magic

When I was a boy I remember a schoolhouse bully who used to bump into me whenever we passed in the hall. If I had any kind of reaction at all he would turn around and come at me, taunting, "You wanna make something of it?"

As I grew older I realized that there was a great deal to learn from this childhood interaction. It was *I* who was making something of it; of *everything*, really.

I am now very clear that this is what we do with our significant other. We "make something of" that person, and what we make of them is how we experience them. To a large degree, this is true. Certainly, there are some things that the other person is doing, too, to create themselves, and we are co-creating our relationship together. That is what is "so." But it is undeniable that my own idea about my significant other is, well... *significant*.

I have turned a childhood barb into adult magic. In my significant relationship, it is what I "make of it" that it is most likely to become.

Now what we have to guard against is making that other person more perfect and more idealized than they could ever hope to be. This kind of "projection" can create a image that is very difficult for our significant other to live up to. So we have to be balanced in our view of the other. We have to create the space for them to be human. It will do no good at all for us to put them up on a pedestal.

Yet we can put them in a place of high regard. And we can choose to see them as blessed beings, who bless us by being in our life.

The Self and the Other become one

The most powerful thing we can do when we form a relationship with a significant other is to see them as ourselves. "And the two shall become one." This is the essence of the Holy Experience. The Holy Experience as it relates to your significant other is the forgetting of the Single Self through the enfolding of that Other into the Self as a part of the Self, as one with the Self, and identical to the Self. It is when there is no place where the Self ends and the Other begins. When there is absolutely no experience of separation, real or imagined.

In day to day relationship with your significant other, when something— anything— happens, you give that happening meaning. Just as you give everything in your life meaning. What meaning you give the events in your relationship depends on whether you are coming from your Past or your Present.

Most people come from their Past. In fact, most people find it impossible *not to*. They make their decisions about what is going on in this moment in their relationship based on their prior thought. Masters, on the other hand, make their decisions based on their future intention.

Memory or intention.

That is the choice.

Always.

When you come from your memory, you create one kind of experience of relationship with your significant other. When you come from your intention, you create another kind of experience altogether.

This coming from intention rather than from memory is the adult magic that can make all your relationship dreams come true. It is the shift from *reaction* to *creation* that makes all relationships feel brand new. Just as you can recreate your self anew in every golden moment of now in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever you held about Who You Are, so, too, can you recreate your relationship anew. And if the person with whom you are *in* relationship truly *is* your *significant* other, this is what you will want to do in every golden moment of now.

As it relates to your significant other, this is the Holy Experience.

The Holy Experience

Chapter Twelve

I said in Chapter 10 that we were going to break down the average person's life into five distinct areas, then use these chapters to explore each of them as they relate to the Holy Experience.

Loosely, most people's lives might be broken down into these areas or situations:

1. Yourself
2. Your significant other
3. Your family
4. Your work or chief activity
5. Your larger life in the world

In Chapter 10 we looked at the Holy Experience and yourself. In Chapter 11 we looked at the Holy Experience and your significant other. Now let's look at the Holy Experience and your family.

"Family" is the closest we will ever come to creating, embracing, expressing, and experiencing the true nature of our ultimate reality. The feeling that most people have inside of the family environment is the feeling that the soul has when it returns to God.

It is a feeling of oneness, of what might best be described as "singularity in multiplicity." Within a family we feel as if we are experiencing a "singularity," and within this singularity family members experience themselves as a "multiplicity." We are multiple members of a single unit. We have individuated experiences of a single, *combined* experience.

This is precisely the experience that the individuated essence that we call the human soul moves through when encountering The Single Essence that some of us call God.

When the experience of "family" is a good one, it is the experience of being loved without condition, protected in every situation, encouraged and supported in each endeavor, and never really feeling alone.

This is precisely the experience we have when we observe that we are part of the eternal and endless Family of God. What life invites us to experience is an even grander version of that. We are invited by life to, first, notice the wonder of the experience called family, and then, to extend it. To extend that wonder to All those whose lives we touch.

We are invited to experience ourselves as members of the *human* family, and to imagine how we would treat others if we really thought that we were exactly that: members of the same family. This is the Holy Experience as it relates to our family.

You can know that you are having the Holy Experience when you consider every other member of the human race to be a member of your own family. When you *experience* them in that way.

For many people this is extremely difficult because it goes against the grain of everything they've ever learned or been taught or understood. Many cultures actually teach their children not to think of people outside of their immediate cultural group as members of their own family. In fact, it goes further than that. Many cultures actively instruct their children to oppose, even to be *at war*, with other cultures because of cultural differences which they believe to be antithetical to their own survival.

For centuries and millennia the human race has lived within a social construct of separation and division. This has been created out of our earliest thoughts that we are separate from everything we see and separate from that Source of All Creation which we have imagined to be responsible for the universe around us.

From the beginning of time, human beings have understood that something Larger Than Us was responsible for the outer world of our observation. We looked up at the night sky and saw something more expansive and a magnificent than anything we knew humanity was capable of creating. We watched the elements play their effect on our daily lives -- the wind, the rain, the fires, and all the elements of life -- and we knew that something greater than us had to be responsible for these as well. We watched the changing of the seasons and we observed the phenomenon of weather -- the ravages of hurricanes and tornadoes and earthquakes and floods and other natural disasters -- and once again we came to the conclusion that something *outside* of us, or *larger* than us, or *other* than us, had

to do with all this. Surely we had nothing to do with it, so Someone Else must.

From these and other observations we came to the natural conclusion that something that we today call "God" or "Allah" or "Jehovah" or "Brahman" or any one of a hundred other names *must exist*. We were correct in our conclusion, even if we were incorrect in our means of reaching it.

The First Mistake

God does exist, but the incorrect part of the conclusion that we reached is that God exists outside of us, as an aspect of life that is *separate* from us. This idea of separation is what might be called, in the New Spirituality, "Original Sin." Of course in the New Spirituality there is no such thing as "sin," and so perhaps this idea of separation might better be described as "Original Error."

Our early ideas of separation produced a separation cosmology -- that is, a way of holding life itself. This separation cosmology produced a scratch that eventually produced a separation theology, which eventually produced a separation sociology, which has now produced a separation pathology.

It is this separation pathology that we see in evidence wherever we look, that is expressed in virtually every one of the choices, actions, and decisions of all of our human institutions -- including government, education, commerce, our collective economies, and our social constructions of every kind...not the least of which we call our religions.

Under such conditions it is no wonder that we find it so difficult to think of people outside of our immediate environment -- to say nothing of people of other cultures -- as members of our own family. Yet the failure to think of people in this way is what has produced the vast majority of the suffering and the pain and the anguish and the difficulties and the challenges and the human disasters that we witness on our planet every day.

It is both the great sadness and the great irony of the human condition that 90% of all human suffering could be disappeared from the face of the earth if we simply embraced every human being as our own, as members of our own family.

What it would take to do this is a shifting away from our lifelong human experience and a movement into the Holy Experience of which we have been speaking here.

Movement into the Holy Experience is a matter of will, not a matter of luck. It is something that can occur spontaneously, but that can also occur intentionally. We do not have to wait for the Holy Experience to fall upon us like some magic rain from a mystical heaven. We can *cause* the Holy Experience to be a part of our own daily encounter with life, part of our own daily experience of our Most Holy Selves, part of our daily expression of Divinity Itself.

What I'm saying here is that the Holy Experience can be created as well as awaited. That little bit of poetry is something that we might be beneficially put to memory, so let me repeat it:

The Holy Experience can be *created* as well as *awaited*.

When we choose to create it as an active demonstration of our will as we look into the face of humanity every day, we understand how the Holy Experience relates to the human experience called "family."

Forgiveness as part of the Holy Experience

Of course, we could not begin to see all the human beings as members of our own family unless we could begin to forgive all other human beings for what we imagined them to have done to *our* family. Forgiveness is essential to the experience of family.

Now the New Spirituality teaches that forgiveness is never necessary. It tells us that God never forgives us for anything, because God finds nothing in our behavior for which we have to be forgiven. This is because God can neither be damaged nor destroyed, nor hurt in any way whatsoever. Since God is incapable of being hurt, God is incapable of being vengeful. For what would God seek vengeance?

When all human beings see themselves as expressions of the Divine, all human beings will also understand themselves to be impervious to hurt or damage. They then, too, will find themselves incapable of being vengeful. For what would they seek vengeance? What reason would they have to yearn for revenge when they have never been in any way injured?

The idea of revenge disappears when the idea of our injury is dissolved. And the idea of our injury is dissolved when the idea of our own divinity is embraced. This is the threshold of a new way of being human. This is the borderline between the New Spirituality and the old way of experiencing ourselves and God.

With the disappearance of the need to forgive comes the disappearance of the need to remain separate from anyone. Ultimately, all we have to do is remember *Who We Really Are*. When that occurs, forgiveness is rendered obsolete, and separation become impossible to experience except in our own imagination.

We may indeed wish to *imagine* that we are separate in order to serve a particular moment's agenda, but for that purpose and that moment only, not across a lifetime. Indeed, even the imagining of separation is not necessary. We needed merely to experience our *individuation*.

When we see ourselves as individuated, but not separated, we begin to at last understand the true nature of our Real Self. This is the breakthrough for which we have been waiting. This is the revelation which we have been promised from the beginning of time. It is a revelation that has been made before, yet we have not heard it, or if we have heard it, we have not embraced it, or if we have embraced it, we have not put it to use as a practical matter in our day-to-day lives.

The difference between *individuation* and *separation* is the Divine Remembrance. It is the Grand Secret. It is the Holy Grail. It is the Ultimate Truth.

And so we should say that it is *remembrance* that is essential to the experience of family. Indeed, all of the Holy Experience is instigated by *remembrance*. Remembrance this is the key that opens the lock to the golden door of eternal wisdom.

You have been brought here for the purpose of remembering. That is why you are holding this book in your hands. That is why you have caused these words to come to you. The question now is not whether you know what it is you are invited to remember. The question is, will you accept the invitation?

