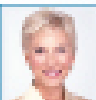
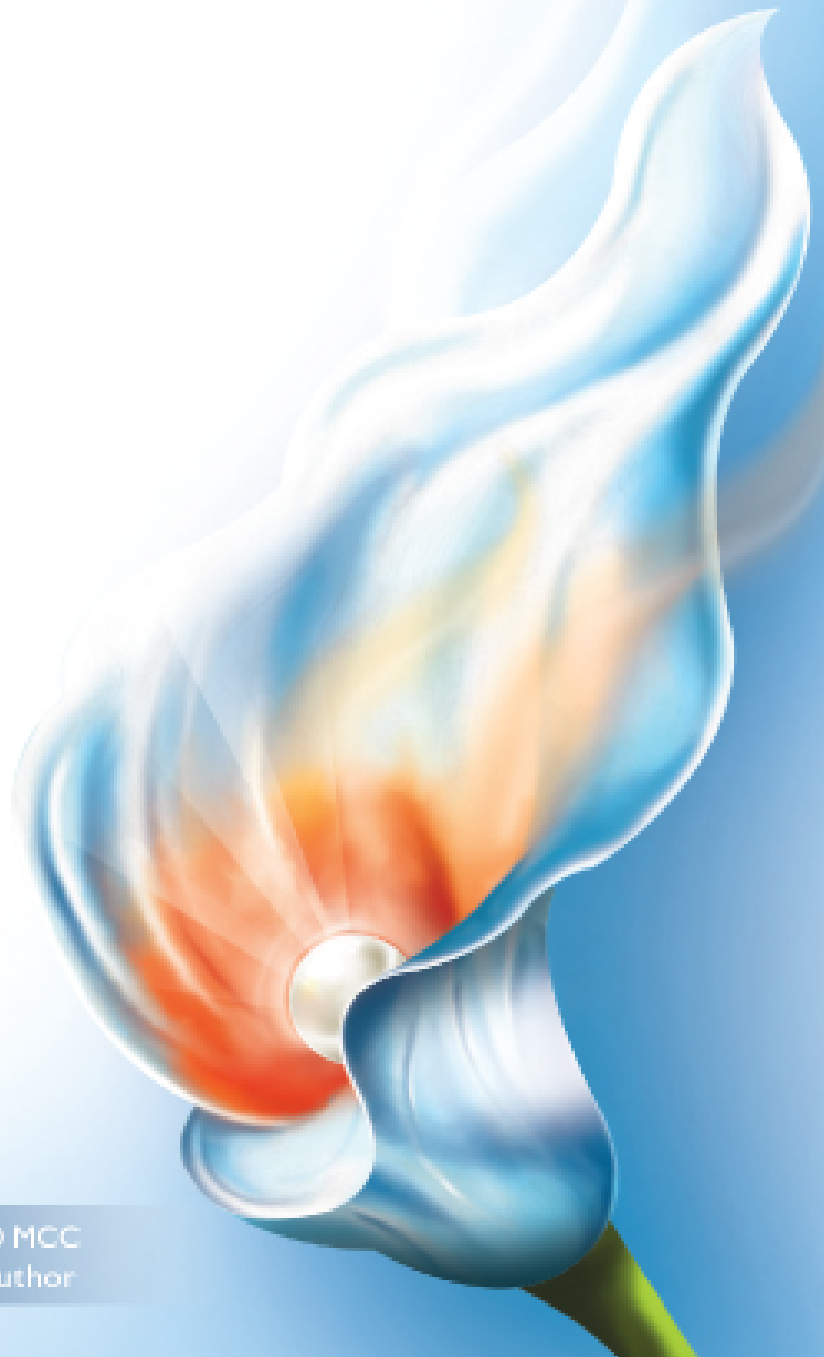


# PASSION FOR AWARENESS

*“Living Open, Living True -  
A New State of Consciousness”*

**Marc Steinberg**



Foreword by Cherie Carter-Scott, Ph.D. MCC  
#1 New York Times bestselling Author

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Editor: Rhonda Winchell Sharp, USA

Cover Design by: Christina Vrahimis, Greece

ISBN: ISBN-13: 978-1515321026 ISBN-10: 1515321029

## Prelude

This book is about the journey.  
A journey of the human race and of each individual.  
A journey from the individual reactive mind to a  
connected creative consciousness.

Life exists as a movement, not as a thing.  
This movement is essentially passionate.  
In the awareness of this movement all questions disappear.  
The smoke disappears, the flame remains.

Can we direct our own development? Can we get on top of  
evolution's waves and surf our lives in alignment with our destiny?

What if we are powerful beyond measure?  
What if all we need to do is to wake up and realize  
who we really are?  
What if nothing is random?  
What if we are the great wizards?  
What if our suffering can come to an end?  
What if we could break free, be free, live free and love freely?  
What if your actions could become an expression of our light?  
What if you are an authentic expression of the Whole?  
What if your life could become again incredibly wonder-full?



My heartfelt gratitude for contributing to making this book possible goes to Natalia, Matheo, Geert, Ali, Rienzo, Violetta, Prince, Remco, Thea, Amor, Lenka, Rocio, Pako, Nathalie, Pascal, Ann, Mieke and many friends, who contributed their time and feedback during the creation process.



## A note by the author

I wrote this book as a contribution to the awakening, rising, and expanding, of consciousness in the human being and our species as a collective.

We are incredible beings with incredible hearts and minds, yet our lives are shaped by fear, security, and survival. Something crucial seems to be missing that would provide for a peaceful world, a world in abundance and in sanity.

For me it appears to be: consciousness. Not the fact that we are conscious, of course we are “conscious,” but what’s missing is a fully-activated awareness that holistically connects us to the greatest and most powerful intelligence in the universe: consciousness. Consciousness is impersonal, omnipotent, and limitless. It is a state of everlasting energy and holistic goodness.

The reason that we are not in that state lies in the way we educate ourselves; the result is us having an ego and not us having a creative consciousness.

The ego ensnares us in its own very small world. It feels safe in the familiarities of its identifications and its knowledge. The ego tries ceaselessly to be affirmed, upheld, admired, and recognized. However, the other egos have exactly the same drive. Therefore, fear, competition, win-lose, elbowing mentality, and ruthlessness, are inevitable.

“The survival of the fittest<sup>1</sup>” was misinterpreted and became in its meaning: “the survival of the strongest”; hence, it became the doctrine of life forms without an awakened consciousness. Humans have only known survival.

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“Fittest” means adjustment, cooperation, and co-creation, with the greater Whole. In combination with the bible verse, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” The misinterpretation was used to justify the ruthless exploitation of the earth for the sake of self-interest.

This book is not about empowering people to better survive, but to awaken a whole new possibility of being and living as a human being.

When consciousness is awakened, the individual belongs to the world of the Whole. In this world, competitiveness, fear, and egocentricity, do not exist. In the world of the Whole, freedom, joy, and love, are the essentials.

Each one of us has the seed of awakening in us, and many have already started to wake up and are looking for advancing and completing their awakening. This book is a passionate contribution to support the individual to fully and irrevocably wake up, connect with consciousness and live a happy life in unison with the Whole.

Speaking about consciousness and speaking from consciousness are two very different things. Consciousness lives in the Here and Now, in “Isness.” Isness is governed by the paradigm; what is is, and what is not, is not. Isness is a flame without the smoke.

My challenge is to communicate, without losing the flame. Because in fact, the most direct way to communicate Isness would be through silence. However, I believe we are not ready yet for listening to silence. So I aim to use my words to remain close to the flame, and to not get lost in the smoke.

It is experience, not knowledge that has the power to transform us. As Dr. Rudolph Tanzi says, “Mutation happens on the DNA level by experiences.”<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of this book speaks to a generation that is seeking transformation in one way or the other. Some of us travel to the gurus of the East, others fancy the “power-wower” programs of the West. Many read transformational literature, and some like to wait for another Big Bang.



## PASSION FOR AWARENESS

I am part of this generation. My heart beats for a revolution in consciousness. I stand for making love a worldwide reality. And I am aware that it needs plenty of us to turn the direction around humankind, at present, is headed towards.

May our passion for awareness pave the way.

Love, Marc Steinberg



## About the author

Marc Steinberg was born on December 5, 1959, in Germany into a common, middle-class family and environment. At age eleven, he had an unexpected experience of conscious divine bliss, which he likes to refer to as “a postcard from God.” After five years of sorrowful waiting for another postcard, Marc doubted the meaning of life without this “state.” In an existential encounter with death, he emerged with a yes to life, based in a singular purpose: total devotion to finding a way back to “the state” and to discover how to remain united.

His journey, as a seeker, led him to the East and the West, to penthouses and monasteries, to breakdowns and breakthroughs, until an almost lethal car crash put an end to the hamster wheel. Having seen the other side of the curtain and been given another chance to come back and live, Marc advanced his transformation again, by following the renowned philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti.

Marc created and started his teachings in California, and thereafter, in Germany, South Africa, Holland, India, Turkey, and Russia.

His complete biography is available as a fascinating novel written by Marc: *Sinclair*.

Having combined his enlightening teachings with his profound coaching methodology, Consciousness Coaching<sup>®</sup>, his work rapidly spreads around the world, reaching out to everyone who feels the calling for advancing their awakening process and personal transformation.

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

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

*“If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken all of yourself. If you want to eliminate the suffering in the world, then eliminate all that is dark and negative in yourself. Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self-transformation.”*

- Lao Tzu

## Foreword

*Chérie Carter-Scott, Ph.D. MCC*  
*Author of If Life is a Game, These are*  
*the Rules: 10 Rules for Being Human*

Many of us ask fundamental questions about the purpose of life. Those questions range from, “Who am I” to “What am I doing here?” to “What constitutes a fulfilling life?”

Philosophers have mused on the subject throughout history. Plato wrote about enlightenment in his Republic almost 3,000 years ago and although many men and women have speculated about human existence, this phenomena still remains a mystery.

As a modern day philosopher, Marc Steinberg tackles this complex subject.

He does this by questioning our assumptions about life, the ego, the subconscious, mental programming, triggers, authenticity, being your word, dynamic and static consciousness, Greek mythology, flow, NLP, surrender, and he ends up presenting the reader with the concept of “Isness. Marc’s proposed journey for all to find enlightenment.

He asks readers and seekers the following questions:

What if you could break free, be free, live free, and love freely?

What if your actions could become an expression of your light?

What if you could become an authentic expression of the Whole?

What if your life could become again incredibly wonder-full?

These are powerful questions that beg for answers, but answers that are thoughtful, introspective, and deeply reflective. With these questions, Marc is inviting us to envision life in its most positive possibility. Marc is asking us to consider a leap in consciousness...to consider that this reality (of which he writes) is really possible.

Marc states, “You’ll learn the lessons that make you grow when you’re in action.” Marc and I agree on this concept, since I wrote in *If Life Is a Game, These are the Rules*: “There are no mistakes only lessons!” If you are going to learn your lessons, then you want to see the world through Marc’s eyes and consider going beyond the illusion to...” when it comes to happiness it is important to learn to accept what is. Take what you get and don’t take what you don’t get. Enjoy and celebrate what is given and do not seek any more to take. This is a high virtue and a recipe for a blissful life.”

A lesson that recently popped up for me is patience. I knew it was a lesson I needed to learn, because I constantly found myself in situations where I felt rushed, irritated, and annoyed...especially trapped behind slower people, unexpected obstacles, and inconvenient delays. I needed to learn this lesson, however, every time it presented itself, I seemed to automatically have resistance glasses on my eyes. Like a knee-jerk reaction, I was becoming irritated with the person or situation before I was able to see the opportunity to work on the lesson. I was convinced that this particular situation was one in which I really needed to execute tasks my way, efficiently, and that my resulting frustration had absolutely nothing to do with my needing to learn the lesson of patience. The lesson was totally camouflaged by my resistance. Having a coach is my way of looking at my lessons rather than seeing them as a random inconvenience.

How can we move from resistance to openness? The first step is to recognize the feeling of resistance. Resistance usually manifests itself physically in a clenched jaw, a tightness in the chest or stomach, or deep sighs. Mentally, resistance shows up in thoughts like, “Why do I have to deal with this issue? Why me? I don’t need this, I don’t want it, This is so frustrating!” Once you discover where your resistance anchors itself, you can more easily identify it in the future.

The next step is to remind yourself that you have a choice. You can either continue with your resistance and feel irritated, or you can

learn whatever the lesson is that has shown up in order to teach you something important. Presenting yourself with the option of choice allows you to see that you have control over your resistance; then, you can also choose how to deal with life's challenges.

The next step is to ask yourself, “Am I willing to give up my resistance, and learn whatever lesson is presenting itself?” Remember, if you want to truly live from your authentic self, you must be open and willing to learn all the lessons you are given so that you may grow into the person you truly want to become.

What lessons might you be resisting at this time in your life?

Marc's book explores his lifelong understanding of the science of Ontology, various facets of consciousness, and throughout the book he quotes many men, who have influenced the world of consciousness, new thought, and philosophy.

The book is written with the intention to help your soul grow into full consciousness. This journey through the wealth of Marc's experiences, beliefs, and discoveries will be enlightening to those on the path, who want to capitalize on his insights, revelations, and illuminations.

Another lesson I have battled with is being judgmental. At some point in my life I thought my judgments were an asset, showing my discernment, an actual part of my personality and I believed it was not possible to do anything about them. Then one day, I listened to the judgments in my mind and discovered that I must be the only perfect person on Earth...then I thought, “That cannot be right!”

I started examining my judgments. My judgments were limiting me from being compassionate when that was required. My judgments were running my life and I wanted to put a STOP to them...which started my search for answers to these questions: Why do I judge? When do I judge? What do I get out of judging? What is the benefit I receive from judging? When my judgments became more overpowering than my ability to demonstrate empathy, I discovered that I separated myself from my own essence.

I noticed a profound discovery. Under every negative judgment was a feeling that I didn't want to feel. I wrapped the unpleasant feeling in the armor of judgment and cast it onto another, separating myself from any discomfort. I put myself into a box of self-righteousness and sealed myself off from my innate need to connect with others. I felt superior to those I was judging, and I also felt the chill of loneliness imposed by my own superiority.

When I started asking myself the question, "What is the feeling underneath the judgment?" I started to transform. This was the key to open the door from being judgmental to going to the deeper level of my reality. The secret to learning to open your heart is the willingness to connect to your essence and stop judging yourself. Then connect to the essence of the person you are judging. From there, the magic of compassion opens limitless doors to human connection. The only antidote to rigid negative judgments is compassion...for myself as well as for others.

In order to learn the lesson of compassion, you will first need to recognize when you have become trapped by your judgments. The best way to do this is to pay attention to your level of irritation, frustration, and tolerance. Then notice your breathing. If your breathing feels shallow or tight, you are most likely trapped in a judgment that needs to be released. Your conscious mind can also help identify when compassion is called for. Chances are, if you are able to pause in the middle of making a judgment long enough to consider compassion, then compassion is required. You would not have entertained the thought otherwise.

The key to learning the lesson of compassion is realizing that you are in control of the creation or destruction of those barriers that create distance between you and others. You can choose to dissolve those barriers when you want to connect with the heart of another human being.

If you want to open the door to new ways of perceiving reality, join Marc on this expedition to the realms of inner consciousness.



Let Marc guide you through the realms of consciousness to connecting with the deeper part of you...watch your perceptions transform!



## Content

Prelude .....	3
A note by the author .....	7
About the author .....	11
Foreword .....	13
Content .....	19
 <b>Part 1.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Passion for Awareness.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>The ego (Part 1) .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>The ego (Part 2) .....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>History of the ego .....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Superstitions.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Our BIOS.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Who are you? .....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Ontological domains of being.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Isness is business .....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Story .....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Insight vs Understanding.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Suffering .....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Existential fear.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Sorrow .....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Letting go.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Is it possible to live without attachment?.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Safety and Survival .....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Our shadows .....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>YOU are the wizard.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>How do you change the movie?.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Creation.....</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>The power of the word.....</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Surrender to your own creations .....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>The Whole applauds action.....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>The comfort zone .....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>The power of creation.....</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Good company .....</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>The power of Conditioning .....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Inauthenticity .....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Spiritual egos.....</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>A new Self .....</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>"I am my Word".....</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>The power of the collective.....</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Being your Word and Integrity.....</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Being your Word and Core Energy Power .....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Being your Word and Consciousness .....</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>The powers of consciousness.....</i>	<i>79</i>
<i>Creative Consciousness.....</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>Consciousness and Being.....</i>	<i>83</i>
<i>Changing the World.....</i>	<i>86</i>
 <b>Part 2.....</b>	<b>89</b>

## PASSION FOR AWARENESS

<b>Conversations with Marc Steinberg.....</b>	<b>89</b>
On Awareness.....	91
On Relationship.....	97
On Making the unconscious conscious.....	105
On Life as an illusion.....	111
On An awakened Consciousness 24/7.....	119
On Commitment.....	127
On Commitment and Authenticity.....	143
On Sexuality and Attraction.....	151
On Spirit over Matter.....	163
On Flow and Polarity.....	169
On Meditation.....	175
On Meditation II.....	187
On Self-Love.....	191
On the Purpose of Life.....	201
Recommended book list.....	211
<i>Mind, brain and Evolution.....</i>	<i>211</i>
<i>Consciousness.....</i>	<i>211</i>
<i>Ontology.....</i>	<i>211</i>
<i>Jiddu Krishnamurti.....</i>	<i>212</i>
The 7 golden CREATION RULES.....	213
These 4 processes of the Creative Consciousness teachings.....	214
Creative Consciousness International <i>Courses and Retreats</i> .....	215

# Part 1

## Passion for Awareness

*“The important thing is this: To be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.”*

*~~Charles Dubois~~*

Humans have achieved enormous technological progress in the recent millennia. We put into motion spectacular developments, the speed of which continuously increases exponentially. But have humans developed equally on the psychological level?

Have we changed? We have different toys, weapons, strategies, and behavioral patterns, but are we less greedy, less frightened, less jealous, less superficial, less stressed, less brutal, less heartless, less selfish?

Are we not better off now, having all the knowledge and all the answers available? Have there not been written enough books by now on how to love, how to act with social intelligence, how to survive as a species, how to become successful on a win-win basis, how to lead successful relationships, how to develop holistic intelligence, how to raise our children, and so on and so forth?

Aren't the religious leaders, TV preachers, talk show masters, and Hollywood movies, telling us consistently how to live a happy and successful life, full of abundance, bliss, and health?

Why in God's name, then, do we still have massive problems in succeeding as individuals, as a society, as a species? Why are the divorce rates above 50 percent, and rising in most civilized countries? Why has the average duration of a relationship sunk below two years and cocooning<sup>3</sup> become an emerging trend?

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“Cocooning” is the name given to the trend that sees individuals socializing less and retreating into their home more. Internet, stay-at-home electronic shopping, home entertainment technology, advances in communication technology (cell phones, PDAs, and smart phones), which allow “work-at-home” options, and demographic changes, have made cocooning an increasingly attractive option.

Why do the few rich grow richer and the many poor poorer? Why do more and more people retreat to drugs? Why are more and more people frequently taking anti-depressants, mood enhancers, tablets of all kinds?

Why does nobody seem to manage to be really and consistently happy?

What's wrong with us?

Nothing's wrong. We just have been conditioned to be "incomplete" by our own created world, our social system, educational system, economical system, etc.

The world we were born into has been created by all the other human beings before us...driven by the ego. We live in a world built by egos. Being born into the world of the ego, we too became an ego. Just as a dog only reproduces dogs, egos reproduce inevitably egos. The problem with the ego is that it lives in its own world: thus, blind to the greater, immense, and utterly magnificent Whole.

No one is born with an ego. The ego is a superstition. And when seven billion people around the world share one and the same superstition, then this very superstition isn't perceived as such. Instead, it lives as the status quo and, therefore, rarely is questioned.

The ego—being conditioned to be incomplete—seeks completion by acquisition of external things and internal conditions. However, if it's true that the ego is a superstition, how can something that isn't real ever find happiness?

To perceive the ego as a possible superstition is the first brick in building the tower of awareness. As we will build and grow this tower, we will develop better and more holistic perspectives of the Whole. Once the individual starts seeing the Whole, a new state of consciousness awakens. The smoke disappears and the flame remains. This is the light every one of us is longing for.

The journey starts with the ego craving completion and happiness and summits in the awakening of a new state of consciousness. Once the hoax of the ego is disclosed, freedom and bliss are the natural states of being a human being.

So, what actually is the ego?

### **The ego (Part 1)**

From an experiential perspective, the ego is what most people would refer to as the personality, the “me,” the “I.” This “I” we experience as a voice in our head consistently busy interpreting reality, making comments, offering opinions, thinking about itself, expressing wants and needs, feeling strong, feeling weak, etc. It speaks to us as *us*, e.g., in the phrase “I think...” or “I feel...” It also speaks to us in the second tense, e.g., “You should...” or “You shouldn’t,” etc. It fancies judging and criticizing others as well as ourselves. In fact, one of its favorite subjects is to find flaws about us and make us wrong, which is called negative self-talk.

The more one’s awareness unfolds, the more one starts to hear the ego’s everlasting chatter. The ego finds enormous difficulty in shutting up. It hardly ever does. Many renowned meditation techniques are targeting the quieting of the ego, also often referred to as *the mind*.

Until one has gained full awareness over the activities of one’s ego, one has little chance to act from a stance outside of the ego, e.g., consciousness.

Have you ever tried to not think for a minute, not even thinking the thought, “Uh, I don’t think!”? Have a try. Try it while having your awareness fully switched on. See, if you can stop the ego from thinking and chattering. When the monks sit for eight hours a day in front of a white wall, motionless, it’s because of the motivation to move themselves beyond the ego, beyond the mind. Awareness needs to be very still to see the ego without becoming distracted by the ego. When awareness is still like the surface of a quiet pond, then one can see into it and observe every detail of it.

If you like, you can watch your ego’s activities right now while reading these lines. Just notice what your ego is thinking while



you're reading. To just notice and not starting thinking about the ego's thinking is quite an art; noticing what happens without resistance or involvement.

Until consciousness has awakened, there is nothing but the ego, including the ego's thoughts about a Self, a Higher Self, a spirit, etc. The ego has invented many ideas about something greater than itself. It projects its ideas to the "outside" and in such a way objectified ideas become an ideal. Then the ego strives to realize these ideals, having completely forgotten, that it projected these ideals in the first place. That's like a cat chasing its own tail.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, one of the world's great philosophers I had the privilege to study with during the last three years of his life, said in 1975, "*There is no self to understand but only the thought that creates the self.*"

The idea about the Self is *the idea* about the Self, nothing else. It's not the actual Self, it's just the idea *about* the Self. Nobody would accept eating a menu, just because it has a picture of the meal printed on it. Nevertheless most people are identified with a Self or something greater than themselves. Without this identification, the naked truth about the ego's rather poor substance could become quite unbearable. Everyone's ego feels much better when it can imagine itself to be connected to a Higher Self. It greatly satisfies the ego's craving for importance and significance.

That craving only exists because deep inside the ego knows that it is nothing but a superstition, a fake reality. Being hollow in substance the ego decorates itself with titles, possessions, and knowledge. And its never stopping noise serves as a powerful distraction to ensure that we never discover that the house, in fact, is empty.

## **The ego (Part 2)**

It's one thing to start observing the ego's movements in the thoughts it has and the emotions it has; it's quite another thing to uphold this awareness when our ego is challenged.

The ego is happy as long as it isn't challenged. In other words, as long as it has its way. The moment the environment no longer serves the ego's dictate it becomes irritated and frightened and alarms the brain. The brain instantly activates its oldest part, the "R-system" or reptilian brain, which makes its host shift into fight, flight, or freeze.

It happens more often than not. Anything could be the trigger: another doesn't agree with our opinions, doesn't see the world as we do, doesn't do what was agreed upon, does something that our ego doesn't like, doesn't give us what we expect or demand, and so on and so forth.

Any time the environment is not in perfect sync with the way of our egos, these fragile constructs get hectic. This condition we call "getting on it."

Because of the lack of awareness in these situations when an ego gets "on it," it takes complete control over us. Then *we* don't have the ego any longer, but the ego has *us*. And because we were made to believe that we are the ego, we remain ignorant and unaware with regard to this happening. We completely believe and experience that it is *us* who is being attacked, when in fact it is our ego that has the problem, not *us*.

See, if someone calls you a name and you are offended, then what is actually offended is your ego, not you. If you were to have your awareness switched on to such a high level that you would be aware in this very moment, you would have a good laugh at your ego's obsession with status and its readiness to take offense. The whole world is on fire because everyone's ego is constantly taking offense about the smallest things. Taking offense is the ego's vanity of always taking everything personal. Have you ever tried to spend a day not taking anything personally? Try it. It's as much fun as it is transformational.

The ego's greatest disguise comes from the fact that it has convinced you to be *you*. That happened so fast and such a long time ago that you can't remember that it ever happened.

If your ego hasn't already disagreed with me, it should do so now. Except you have a spiritually sophisticated ego. Remember, the ego is all about maintaining its status. The greatest threat to your ego would be that you discover what it actually is. In that moment, when the cover up is disclosed, you begin to awaken. You will look around, and to your greatest amazement you don't see yourself being an ego any longer.

### **History of the ego**

Have you ever looked into the eyes of a baby and recognized that there is no ego glaring back at you and checking you out?

Looking at a baby we feel so greatly comfortable, safe, and relaxed, and we have no problem maintaining eye contact forever.

In contrast, try having lengthy eye contact with an adult and observe your ego's reactions. Easy to see what we mean here isn't it?

So, if we are not born with an ego, how come everyone is walking around with one? Well, as I said, the inception of the ego happens in an instant at a very early stage in our development. In a baby all the brain parts are not fully activated yet. The R-System is active, and it is in charge to secure the baby's survival. It alarms the environment if anything is wrong or needed, for example, food, dry diapers, warmth, etc.

The brain consists of three main parts: the R-system, the limbic system, and the neocortex, also referred to as the "new brain." The limbic system becomes active between nine and fifteen months of age. This part of the brain comes with an amazing set of abilities, one of them being the ability to receive and store *language*. However, the ability to process language only comes with the activation of the neocortex, and that only happens around age four to five years of age. That's the time when we grow fit to go to school.

We'll come back to the limbic system in a moment, after we have created the awareness over another key element when it comes

to realizing who we are. We know that our planet has an invisible shell, known as the atmosphere. The atmosphere is a context surrounding our planet and providing specific conditions that allow for life on planet earth. Therefore, a human being is able to exist in a “space suit,” referred to as “our body.”

Now imagine a second invisible shell consisting of language, an atmosphere or cloud of language encompassing the whole planet. Imagine that every thought and every feeling a human being ever experienced has been automatically uploaded into that cloud. Carl Gustav Jung defined this cloud as the “collective unconscious,” defined by him as *“Thoughts and feelings shared by a society, people, or all humanity. It is the product of ancestral experience and contains all kinds of concepts, beliefs, moralities, traditions, religious concepts, etc.”*

C.G. Jung distinguished the collective unconscious as different from the personal subconscious peculiar to each human being. The collective unconscious is also known as “a reservoir of the total experiences of our species.” Therefore, what we find in this cloud is not only single thoughts, but thought compilations that form beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and paradigms. For us of interest at the moment are these particular beliefs, that we know as “superstitions.”

## **Superstitions**

Superstitions are a very interesting phenomenon. What was once a common reality is, one-hundred years later, perceived as a superstition. Just as in the middle ages, it was “real” that there were witches. It wasn’t a superstition back then. For the majority of people, it was real. And the reaction to that “reality” bred horrific consequences. More than a million women were burned at the stake. Today, we see witches as a superstition and, therefore, we are not used by that “truth.” Other beliefs today known as superstitions were, for example, that the universe circles around the earth, that the earth is flat, etc.

Now, imagine it is the year 2311, and you witness a classroom session of history in a common school. The teacher opens the subject of human history and superstitions, and as he walks the class through the particular superstitions of each age he eventually arrives at the twenty-first century, and says, “Can you believe it? They believed that they are what they called an ‘ego’! It was their belief that they exist as an internal entity with its residence three centimeters behind the root of the nose. They believed in this so much, that they regarded thoughts and emotions as their own and thus acted on them.”

An eager student raises her hand, and called on, she throws in: “No wonder they almost extinguished themselves as a species! Not to speak of almost having destroyed our beautiful planet!”

“Quite right!” the teacher confirms and continues, “And, consequently this superstition led to yet another superstition, namely that they believed they were in charge of their lives. They believed that it was they who ran their lives!” Amazement and laughter filled the classroom. On many students’ faces it was evident that they are having a hard time believing that the whole global society lived in such a ridiculous and dangerous belief system.

When we arrive in this world, we come with a rather empty brain or hard disk. With the limbic system becoming active in a baby—by its ability to receive and store language—the download from the cloud starts. And what is downloaded is the current model of reality as mankind perceives it. We were all born into a world that sees the superstition of an ego three centimeters behind the nose as an unquestioned reality.

What is an unquestionable reality for us today may very well turn out to be a superstition in a few centuries ahead.

## **Our BIOS**

Just as a computer needs a bios (basic input/output system) to define its basic functionality, we human beings need a bios as well. The foundations for this bios are the above-mentioned superstitions

of having an ego and being in charge of living our lives. The ego alone wouldn't make sense without bios.

Part of the downloaded bios is the way the ego defines itself. It defines itself as to be its thoughts and emotions: "I am my thoughts and my emotions."

If you think this is not so, then please note that you regard *the thought* that you are not your thoughts and emotions as real. Therefore, you just have proven to yourself that you indeed are your thoughts. Make sense?

Let us quickly verify what we are saying here. Take a look at your life, as it is today. Everything your life is today, all your possessions, your social structure, your family, your friends, all your abilities and all your knowledge, your memory, your titles, and achievements. All of that came about by the actions and non-actions you committed, didn't it? And what determined your actions? Your decisions, right? And what determined your decisions? The thoughts or the emotions you had or a combination of the two? You processed this cognitive material and either made a decision to act on it or not. And by the success of your actions, you produced results. So, at the very beginning of everything you have today were thoughts and emotions, weren't they? If you wouldn't have regarded your thoughts and emotions as yours, you would not have acted on them, would you?

The problem with us living as "we are our thoughts and emotions" is that today we think and feel this way, and we may make decisions and enter commitments based on the way we think and feel, and tomorrow we may find ourselves having very different thoughts and emotions. Then some of us go into denial and try to bypass the internal contradictions between the commitments from yesterday and the thoughts and emotions of today; some of us try to change these opposing thoughts and emotions, and some of us smoke a little bit of "*hopium*," hoping tomorrow's thoughts and emotions would be back to where they were yesterday. A whole industry emerged with tools to help changing our thoughts and

emotions, from mind control to all kinds of mental and emotional programming techniques.

And does it work?

See, the ego is an expert in resisting change. It is absolutely committed to maintaining its status quo and to secure its own survival. And because the ego thinks it is its thoughts and emotions, it perceives any attempt of impact on thoughts and emotions as a threat. Just as the body rejects a splinter of wood and does everything to get rid of it, so treats the ego second-hand knowledge. The ego sees it as a foreign intrusion, no matter how valuable the knowledge may be.

All the “post-its” on your dashboard, on the bathroom mirror, in the hallway, won’t prevent the ego of eventually turning against the second-hand acquisition, may it be affirmations, mantras, indoctrinations, new belief sets, etc. To anchor these with strong emotional impact has been a great invention. However, in the long run, the ego wins time and again. Within the self-definition of “I am my thoughts and emotions,”<sup>4</sup> including the thoughts and emotions that tell you otherwise, there is no way out. You will remain being your thoughts and emotions, no matter how successful you may be in changing these.

That’s known as a vicious circle. And the Greeks call it a “tragodia,” a tragedy, which means that no matter what decisions the hero takes, it inevitably ends up tragically. There is no winning against the ego.

## Who are you?

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“If we have learned anything since Copernicus, it is that bare experience is an unreliable guide. As it turns out, it is not a sunrise I’m looking at; it’s earth rotation. Taking any experience, including the most profoundly self-validating spiritual experience, at face value is essentially superstitious: just because it feels true, doesn’t mean it is, and it certainly doesn’t mean that it is what it purports to be.” - John Hidley, MD