

CHAPTER ONE

“WHO ARE YOU?”

If you answer the question “Who Are You?” with the obvious answer, and tell me your name, you would be responding as all but a very few people would answer.

Or, you might give me your occupation: “I am a doctor, or lawyer, or teacher, or bricklayer, or salesperson.” That’s really the same type of answer.

Your name was given to you by your parents, and your occupation is what you *do*, not *who you are*. Even if you give identity answers like “I am a loving husband/wife, father/mother,” those only describe *roles* that you play in the story of your life.

Some of you may have taken workshops or meditation retreats so that you know a different answer to this question. I know of a workshop where for seven days, eight hours a day, you and a partner just ask each other alternately, “Who Are You?” After about the first hour of the first day, everyone has run out of answers. What to do for the next 6.9 days?

FYI: To those who have studied Vedantan philosophy, you will know the philosophically correct answer to “Who Are You?”: “*I AM THAT.*” Or, “*I AM the SELF.*” And smile. That would be the correct Vedantan answer. The question is, however, *does that answer come from the mind*—from what you have learned in studying philosophy—or does it come from *the direct experience of who you really are?* *Have you realized yourself to be “That” in your everyday life?*

If you have no idea what the last two paragraphs are about, you’re probably ahead of the game, because the beginner’s mind is much easier to penetrate, because fewer concepts have been generated around this question, “Who Am I?”

So...who are you...really?

Who are you when you’re in a baseball stadium with 40,000 other people? The bases are loaded in the bottom of the 9th, the pitch is on its way, and you watch it (almost in slow motion), you see the batter swing, and hear the crack of the bat above the roar of the fans. All hearts, eyes, minds, are one in that divine moment where nothing exists but the sense of Oneness? In the middle of the roaring there is a stillness, an emptiness, and then the release, right?

Who are you when you experience the thrill of listening to a singer reaching for an impossibly high note, yet landing fully square on it? Are you not right there with everyone else in the audience in the singer’s body having the same experience?

Who are you when you make love with your beloved and there is that hush as you reach the moment of orgasm where everything vanishes except that moment, and two hearts are as One Heart?

Who are you in the moment of joy when your child comes out of your womb (or your partner’s womb)—the first moment of realizing you have co-created new life?

It is very difficult to put that “who” into words, because the real “you” is beyond words.

All of these experiences are glimpses of Enligtenment.

These experiences all have explosions of one sort or another—peak moments of one sort or another—but *I'm speaking of the silent moment of Fulfillment itself—the Silence of Desirelessness—the moment when all desires are fulfilled.*

Does it make sense if I say that *in those moments you are experiencing a glimpse of yourself as Source: Pure Awareness, Total Stillness, and Total Love?*

Unfortunately, we miss the significance of these moments, and store them in memory as wonderful experiences that we hope will come again some day (like the Tooth Fairy). What is really happening in those moments is that (for a moment) *we put our ego—the limited version of who we are—under the pillow and fully wake up to our true nature.*

What is (tragically) overlooked is that these are moments of true Realization and Enligtenment that are continuously present, if only we could wake up and see them.

- *Take a minute and remember one of those kinds of moments, and see if you can discover a moment of Pure Awareness, and/or Total Stillness, and/or Total Love in that experience.*
- *Now, let's look at a map. Remember, a map is not reality, it only represents reality. So, let me present you to your Self, and suggest this triangle represents the totality of the enlightened Essence of who you really are: Joy, Happiness, Peace, Love, etc.*

Who You (Really)Are:

Pure Awareness



Total Stillness Love

Consider for a moment what your life would be like if this described your every waking moment—*fully alert and aware, with a totally quiet mind, and a fully open heart.*

I'm sure you've experienced simple moments like this that you regularly overlook. It might have been in your child's laughter, or in a kiss, or looking at a sunset or a rainbow, or finally buying something wonderful you've longed for, or a romantic or exciting moment in your favorite movie: just pure *Joy and Happiness*, where everything vanishes except the stillness of the moment that is infinitely peaceful, happy, joyful, loving, etc.

This is no new understanding. It is described in the ancient scriptures of India: the definition given to who you are—the *Self (atman)*—is “*Sat Chit Ananda.*” “*Sat*” means *Truth*, or *Beingness*, or *Awareness*; “*Chit*” means *Consciousness* or *Infinite Intelligence*, “*Ananda*” means *Bliss*.

(Please don’t get intimidated or caught up in Sanskrit words. *Pure Awareness, Total Stillness* and *Love* represent this understanding just as well.)

A teacher of mine, Eli Jaxon Bear, calls this triangle the perfect model for a therapist: totally aware and present, with a quiet mind and an open heart. He also says it’s a perfect model for a mother being with her child, and suggests it is also a *model for all of us to be mothers to the world.*

The point is, *if you recognize this kind of Joy and Happiness, you have experienced your Self to be what this triangle represents.* You also have realized that ***in those moments, there are no problems***—no worries to obsess about, no pains to feel in your body, and no emotional upset—just pure *Joy and Happiness.*

So why are these moments so rare? Or are they?

Veils that cover *Joy and Happiness*

What if these moments are continuous, but are being covered by *veils—an overlay of thoughts, feelings, sensations and circumstances that distract us from realizing the continuous presence of Enlightenment?*

What if Joy, Happiness, Peace, Love, etc. really are our Essence—who we really are—all the time?

And, what if there are ways to *cut through the veils to continuously realize ourselves to be Pure Awareness, Total Stillness, and Love?*

The good news is that not only are there ways to come to this realization, there is also a map of how ***to directly discover who you are*** that does not require 30 years of yoga, going to India, or years of therapy, and *is available to you now at any time.* Right now! In other words, ***realize your Enlightenment*** with no help from the Tooth Fairy! Just *wake up* and recognize your true Self.

I’m asking you to act as if what I’m saying is true: ***you are what you want and seek. You are the One, who is totally Aware (Pure Awareness) of omnipresent Peace and Love (Total Stillness and Love).*** Veils may have to be lifted (“put your ego under your pillow”) in order for you to “Wake Up!” and realize that truth directly.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT PREVENTS US FROM DISCOVERING WHO WE REALLY ARE?

3 Archetypal Stories

Discovering what prevents us from realizing ourselves as the *Source* will lead to at least an *intellectual* understanding of who we really are. This knowledge is powerful—but like all knowledge—it is limited. Only *direct experience* of *Enlightenment* as a realization beyond mind, body, and emotions actually lifts the veils.

Another way of saying it is that without the veils, only *Love* remains. People who have fully realized *Enlightenment* don't have anything we don't all have; it's just that they have realized that nothing exists except *Enlightenment*.

In reality, only three archetypal stories veil Awareness of Enlightenment.

These archetypal (ego) stories have been with us in myth, literature, and religion since the beginning of time. As Carl Jung suggested, archetypal stories are part of the collectively inherited unconscious of mankind.

Within each of these three stories (of suffering) is an ego lesson we must become *aware of*, *confront*, *master*, and finally *transcend* for the veils of suffering to be removed. What remains is *Enlightenment*.

Where does the suffering come from?

So how does the suffering begin? I would say it started when, as an infant, you observed that you had a different body than your parents had—i.e. *your senses told you that you were separate from your parents*.

I doubt that any of us have conscious memories of that early moment, but it all began to happen when you had the thought “*I am a body, separate from other bodies.*”

- Your senses recorded the fact that you were given a name that clearly belonged to your body.
- Early on, most infants do not refer to themselves as “I.” Most toddlers, in fact, go through a period of speaking of themselves in the third person—clearly not yet totally identified with their name. “Bobby wants to go outside,” is what I said (although I’m told I didn’t pronounce my name very well).

The story of “I” as separate from other “I’s” is *the first (and primary) story to veil our true Essence*: the birth of the “I”-thought—the birth of the ego (“ego” is the Latin word for “I”).

The identification with the body begins with the thought: “I am some *body*, called X.” Our senses back us up in this identification: everybody does have a different body, and we conclude that the “I” that is “me,” is separate from the “I” that is “you.”

Our senses often deceive us

I would like here to remind you that our senses often do not tell us the full truth.

- The earth clearly does not look round unless you're in a space ship.
- We see color in a universe that has no color.
- Any quantum physicist can prove to you that nothing that *looks* solid is *actually* solid—that the space between the atoms in our bodies is proportionately as empty as intergalactic space (sic!).

(I can't even begin to explain waves and particles—something about how light “decides” whether to show up as a particle or a wave.)

None of this is new; Einstein proved it almost a century ago.

Human senses are limited to our own small sensory band. Animals live on different sensory bands:

- dogs can hear much higher frequencies than human ears can,
- bats have radar,
- whales and dolphins have sonar,
- bloodhounds can track smell over hundreds of miles through swamps,
- the eyes of a hawk can see a rat from hundreds of yards in the air,
- goldfish can see the infrared light emitted by our remote controls.

You are not just a body

You're not just a body.

As Dr. Deepak Chopra points out, anytime we talk about “the body,” it's always a question of *what* body we're talking about.

- Each day millions of cells are dying and millions of cells are being born. Our bodies are never the same from one moment to another.
- Most of our cells have lives of less than six months. For example, we replace every cell in our liver every six weeks, we replace our stomach lining every four days, etc.

Identifying with the body is a big mistake just from a scientific point of view, because the body is always changing—being born and dying while you read these words.

Until recently we didn't have this understanding, just as once we didn't know the earth was round.

Most physicians still treat the body as though it were a machine, and are looking for how the machine has broken down, and what needs to be done to fix it.

- Your heart is not just a pump—it has feelings: chemical messengers that make it physically *experience* emotional pain and pleasure in a palpable way.

- Gut feelings are real and intelligent, not just mechanical impulses.

You're not just a body.

Question: If you're not a body, then what makes all of those (physical) things happen?

Answer: That which you *really* are: *Limitless Being*, which is expressing itself through "your" body. (*Limitless Being* is another way of saying *Pure Awareness*.)

I could actually say, "You are *no-body*," which manifests in a human form.

And yet most of us spend a good part of our lives proving we are some body called Rita, the doctor, or John, the lawyer.

And as strange as it may sound, don't you really have a sense about this already? And I don't mean by reading it, or by thinking about it.

Haven't you at least some time in your life looked at yourself in the mirror and thought: "This isn't me—no way"? Behind that thought was a sense of who you really are—the *Seer* that watches the body in the mirror with Its eyes.

Or perhaps you were in great pain and you had the experience of leaving your body for a brief period of time. Or perhaps you just had the thought, "This can't be happening to me," and you clearly felt like it wasn't happening to who you *really* are.

- Even if you haven't had those thoughts, haven't you at least had the thought "I am much more than my body"?
- Haven't you ever *recognized an Awareness that what is happening to you is beyond, or behind, or deeper, than the circumstances that are occurring to your body?*

Haven't you ever known *intuitively* that you're more than your body—that you are someone who is aware that your body is experiencing certain pleasant sensations and certain unpleasant sensations? Yes? No? Sometimes this *Awareness* is called *Witnessing*.

If you're not sure, *STOP reading, be still for a few moments, look inside, and see if you can recognize that Awareness is always present, if you check.*

What is the Ego?

“Ego” is born from the thought, “I am separate-from-you.” Remember, the word “ego” is Latin for “I.”

I use the word “ego” here as though it is a thing that actually exists. In reality, however, what and where is the ego? It certainly can’t be found in the body.

For all intents and purposes, ***ego is mind***. I would say that the *ego is nothing more than a collection of “I”-thoughts that are organized to gain (perceived) power to protect the physical body*, which we have identified as who we are—separate from other bodies. ***“How can I avoid danger and pain?”*** is the primary question the ego/mind asks.

Note: It is important to make a distinction between what has been called the “working mind,” as opposed to the “thinking mind.” The “working” mind does not cause any trouble; it is a servant—it figures out how to get from A to B, does math problems, executes tasks, etc. When I say that ego=mind, I am referring to the “thinking” mind that questions, doubts, worries, speculates, judges, dreams of getting power, and fears losing power, love, security, control, etc. Fear comes from the “thinking mind” worrying that its power will be taken away, and that “other “I’s” will hurt it. After awakening, the “working mind” continues as a servant, but the “thinking mind” dissolves into the realization of Oneness—Limitless Being, Infinite Intelligence, Love.

Ego Power comes from outside

We identify more deeply with the body when we understand that the body will die one day—the ultimate danger to the ego.

The ego’s job is to protect the body (“I’ will protect this body”), and it goes about this formidable task by gathering as much *external* power as it can to control the physical environment, to protect itself against other physical bodies, to gain enough knowledge to dispel fear and doubt, and to form alliances and connections that will help protect it.

The ego knows that it doesn’t have any real power of its own, so it looks to the external world.

I could say that this is the ego’s greatest mistake (looking *outside*, rather than *inside* to our true *Essence*), except that it isn’t really a mistake for an ego that doesn’t know that true power comes from *internal Essence*, not from *external objects*. *Essence* is beyond thought, beyond mind, beyond ego.

The mind can’t really grasp this concept—just as it can’t grasp the concept that our bodies are 99.99999% empty space.

How can your mind grasp the concept that you are a *Limitless Being* with *Infinite Intelligence/Total Stillness* appearing in the form of a human being?

This concept can only be intuited, pointed to, and realized as Truth, much deeper than mind. The ego thinks “internal” means the mind, and *the ego knows that the mind has no true, intrinsic power.* That is why the ego is always searching outside itself for power.

Ego Attachment to objects of power

The ego attaches itself to external objects of power like people or things (money, status, circumstances), and creates an *image of power* through stronger and stronger “I-am” thoughts, often called beliefs about identity:

- I am powerful because I am in charge of X.
- I am noble, because I give money to the poor.
- I am a hard-working provider, responsible for my family’s welfare.
- I am successful because of all my possessions and wealth.
- I am special because of my sensitive nature.
- I am superior because of my expertise in a difficult subject.
- I am a loving spouse, because I sacrifice my own desires for my spouse.
- I am indispensable because I save people’s lives.
- I am the life of the party.
- I am holy, because I go to church every day.
- I am a good father because my children all have prestigious jobs.
- I am invincible because my mind is razor-sharp, etc.

And yet, all of these thoughts can be eradicated by a change of circumstances—getting fired, having a heart attack, being left by a spouse, children on drugs, etc.—anything that attacks the object of power that the ego is identified with.

The ego knows that these thoughts, beliefs about identity, and circumstances can come and go. It is constantly afraid of losing its power.

It is always either running “*toward*” its *attachments* to pleasure and power, or “*away*” or “*against*” its *aversion* to pain and suffering.

The ego believes that circumstances are the driving force of life and are the cause of our internal states; the ego perceives that both its attachments and aversions force it to react to external circumstances over which it has no control. That usually makes it either fearful, powerless, or angry.

It also links *internal* states (emotions) to *outside* circumstances: “I had so much anger, I had to leave the room,” or “My fear got in the way during my job interview.” These mental body cause/effect beliefs are major distortions of the ego, and are themselves the real cause of most of our suffering.

Ego creates fear; ego is fear

It is a paradox that the ego’s function is to eliminate fear, and yet its very essence is mental fear:

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- *fear of the future—fear of all the things that could happen in the future, based on what has happened in the past—either experienced or learned about from others—“Someday I’ll get fired, because I was fired before—it’s just a matter of time.”*

In reality all ego stories are the same story of overcoming fear: the story of trying to protect this body from the danger of that which is separate and outside of this body—the “other(s).”

Fear is always a reactive ego response that presupposes that circumstances are more powerful than you are. (I’m not speaking here of *instinctual* survival reactions like the moment of confronting a tiger in the jungle—I’m speaking of *perceived, mental* fear.)

And yet, you are *Limitless Being, Infinite Intelligence, and Love*. How could circumstances be more powerful than who you *really are*?

Personal Power or *Limitless Being*

Personal power and responsibility seminars of the 1980s and 1990s provide powerful models for ego-strengthening, because they preach taking responsibility for your perception of reality, and cry out:

- “I create my own reality through my perceptions and my behavior, and no matter what happens, it’s up to me to change my perceptions and/or change my behavior.”
- “I’ve learned the technology to make those (“internal”) changes, so that I’m not at the effect of the outside world.”

Here, the ego is strong, but it is still made up of “I”- thoughts attached to external objects—“right” perceptions and behaviors about the world.

- In the Personal Power game, the ego still has *aversion* to pain, and *attachment* to pleasure. There is also usually teachings that manipulates reality: intensifying pain in order to motivate action (making reality seem much worse than it is), and/or by intensifying the pleasure by having you see it much better than it is, if you change—the carrot approach.
- It is a more subtle attachment, but “I” is still dealing with life circumstances using body, mind, and emotions, instead of realizing that who you really are is the ocean of *Limitless Being* that contains certain waves that are either pleasurable or painful.
- As long as “I” thinks it’s in control, there is ego identification, and life will eventually give you something you can’t handle with the limited ego, and fear will be unmasked.

It is only when you *put your ego under your pillow*—surrender the ego, surrender your will—and realize that “Thy will” is always being done as *Limitless Being, Total Stillness, and Love*, that is your true Self.

***Limitless Being* contains mind, body, emotions**

When *A Course in Miracles* proclaims that everything is either a “loving response, or a cry for help,” or I hear the philosophical statement that there are only two emotions: love or fear, I want to simplify even further:

- There is only *Limitless Being*, which includes the emotions of love and fear.
- Mind, body and emotions are all servants to *Limitless Being* until the mind begins to think it is separate by having the thought: “I (ego) am a separate body and have to take care of

myself all by myself, and that is frightening.” It would be like a wave thinking it is separate from the ocean, while in reality, it is always part of the ocean.

Waking up just means realizing that the *Ocean of Limitless Being* is *Power Itself–Divine Power*—and is your true nature. The ego is just waves: thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations contained within that *Ocean*.

“Put your ego under your pillow and WAKE UP!”

Let the waves of body, mind, emotions, and circumstances of your life rise and subside, and be ***awake and steady in knowing yourself as Ocean***.

3 Bodies, 3 Stories of Suffering

The thought “I am my body” actually produces three bodies with three different stories:

- 1) a *physical* (instinctual) body we can identify with, which gives us *angry* stories of obsessively needing to control,
- 2) a *mental* body that we identify with as the mind that creates *fearful* stories out of the need to compulsively *avoid fear and doubt*, and
- 3) an *emotional* body, which gives rise to identifying with our emotions that makes us tell hysterically *needy* stories out of the need to experience love and/or respect.

Physical, mental, and emotional stories become our reality, and the perception of our circumstances in life is filtered through these limited stories that veil who we *really* are: *Limitless Being, Infinite Intelligence, and Love.*

The “I”-thought expands and the ego begins producing endless variations of these three stories about protecting the body so that it can survive in a world it perceives as separate and hostile, instead of knowing itself to be full of the Divine spark of creation.

Story #1: “*I am my body*”

Ego identification with the physical/instinctual body: The Warrior-ego Archetype

In the archetypal ego Story #1, “I AM *Limitless Being*” or “I AM *Pure Awareness*” contracts to the thought, “I am my body.” As a result, we:

- *identify with physical aches, pains, and diseases* (*my* arthritis, *my* cancer, etc.),
- create stories about *who’s* trying to *control* this body,
- make sure we *protect* this body,
- do everything to make this body *comfortable*,
- *conserve the energy* of this body,
- use this body to *take control of other* bodies,
- use this body to *enter other bodies* for pleasure,
- *feed* this body,
- are *responsible* for what this body creates through its will, its actions, and its behaviors.

We do all of this in the name of trying to experience as much pleasure and avoid as much pain as we can in the short lifetime this body is giving us.

I AM
Limitless Being/Pure Awareness

↓
contracts to
I am my body



I AM
*Total Stillness/
Infinite Intelligence*

I AM
Love

The ego identified with the physical/instinctual body (“I” identified as a physical body) appears to be the ego most directly focused on *external power*. Typical of this ego identification would be:

- stories of an instinctual *aversion to fear*: the waging of an aggressive campaign to control its living condition by attacking and eliminating fear, and objects of fear,
- *using fear as a catalyst to take action*: overcome fear and turn it into power—a victory medallion,
- *keeping others at a safe distance* by clearly defining its boundaries,
- *overtly threatening any violation of its boundaries* with clear consequences,
- letting others know *it will do “whatever it takes” to win* any competitions or battles,
- *power and control over a very small sphere of influence* like the immediate family, or
- *control or domination over a very large sphere*—corporate, union, religion, political.

Physical Body/Instinctual Power
Using anger to control:
moving “against” others

Anger is the emotion that drives this ego story. Anger is first experienced as a physical impulse—an instinctual, gut reaction to the possibility of attack.

- The emotion of anger contains the *energy* to take the actions necessary to rise up against any possibility of attack, or attempts from “others” to control.
- The physical body *relies primarily on automatic, instinctual reactions*.
- In this story, we are *slaves to our instinct to protect ourselves* by angrily moving “against” others.

Ego strength and power in Story #1

Indications of a strengthened ego, identified with the physical/instinctual body, would include stories of:

- certainty about the ability to *consistently demonstrate the gaining and maintaining of control* over its sphere of influence—i.e. enforcing its boundaries,
- certainty about the *moral force of the rules it has set up* and expects others to respect,
- *crusades (even vendettas) against oppressors*, or against anyone who appears to threaten this ego’s freedom or sphere of influence in any way,
- *knowing in your gut that you are “right,”* and others (that oppose you) are “wrong,”
- the ego instinctively and automatically *setting itself “against” others egos or situations of possible threat* to prevent them from winning any kind of advantage or control,
- *righteous anger*, which this ego uses to control the outside world,
- *moralizing or sermonizing*,
- *personal responsibility* about the world this ego creates by its actions,
- setting itself in front of the tiger, *looking the tiger in the eye, showing no fear, and driving all tigers (objects of fear) away.*

When the ego wakes up from Story #1

When a person with the ego identified in the physical/instinctual body wakes up,

- *the true power of Limitless Being is realized,*
- *the instinctual body becomes a pure servant to Awareness Itself,*
- *there is no more struggle, because there is no more doubt about the outcome: a continuous heaven on earth,*
- *the concept of personal doership, which carries the burden of responsibility for failure—and the glory of success—is surrendered to the realization of Limitless Being,*
- *the individual personality remains, without the attachments and aversions of the ego—a heroic and powerful Servant to the Universe that sees Divine Presence in every Being. “Honor each other” is its only command.*

Story #2: “I am my mind”

Ego identification with the mental body: The Seeker-ego Archetype

After we have the thought “I am my body,” instead of realizing “I AM *Limitless Being*,” we begin to have other thoughts and stories:

- *fear* about the survival of this body or other bodies dear to us,
- *fears and doubts* about the intentions of others toward my (body’s) survival,
- thoughts that constantly invoke *images or pictures of possible threats*, or *self-talk* about the possibility of threat (“What if a tiger were to suddenly appear?”)—no longer the immediate physical, gut response to an object of threat (like the tiger), but just *mental worry*.

The mind begins to think up ways to survive and get secure from these mentally perceived threats.

Thus, *Total Stillness* contracts to become a chattering mind, constantly thinking and talking to itself, rather than resting in that quiet place of *Knowingness*, where the mind is just a valuable tool and servant.

Identification with *Infinite Intelligence* contracts to become identification with the limited intelligence of the mind. “I AM *Stillness* and *Infinite Intelligence*” becomes “I am my mind.”

I AM
Limitless Being, Pure Awareness
contracts to

↓
“I am my body”



I AM
Total Stillness,
Infinite Intelligence

I AM
Love

contracts to



“I am my mind”

Many of us have the experience that our minds have taken over, because we can't stop the thoughts.

So then, naturally, we have the thought: “I am my mind,” which is *the thought that produces the fear that we will never know enough to be able to protect ourselves.*

Thoughts and worries:

- Thoughts and worries about *not knowing enough* (to avoid danger): “Am I good enough, smart enough, will I attract the right relationship, are they on my side or against me, is life against me, will I ever be safe?”
- “*Should*” thoughts: “I *should* do this, I *shouldn't* do that”
- Thoughts about *duty and obligation* to this or to that
- Detached, separating thoughts like “I know what they're thinking,” or “I think I'll just sit back and *observe*,” etc.
- Thoughts in the form of *questions* like, “How do I avoid pain?” “How do I stay free?”
- In Story #2, we become *slaves to our thoughts* even though our nature is *Infinite Intelligence*.
- **FYI:** Did you know that every cell in your body carries the genetic information of the entire human race since the beginning of time. We are tied into a cosmic biocomputer at the cellular level.

But we settle by trying to figure things out with a mind that spends most of its energy worrying about how we can get *certainty* in an obviously *uncertain* world of circumstances we know we will never be able to control.

We identify with these thoughts and start saying things like: “I am confused, I am OK, I am not OK, I am afraid, I am shy, I am pushy, I am strong, I am weak, I am beautiful, I am ugly,” etc.

Does anything here sound familiar? It's all a mistake—the good and the bad—because you are *Infinite Intelligence* and *Total Stillness* that has made the mistake of thinking you are your mind.

**Mental Power: The Power of Thinking:
Using the mind to avoid fear and doubt—
moving “away” from others**

The mental body goes about its acquisition of power by:

- *gathering and hoarding enough information* about what and who could be threatening so that fear is diminished and can be avoided,
- *devising elaborate strategies for possible escape*,
- creating *clear and powerful identities* so that we won't have doubts and fear about ourselves,
- *hiding in roles* that are so clearly pre-defined that we never have to worry about the question, “What should I do?”

The mind *worries* about *possible future danger*: for example, the possibility of future tiger attacks. The mind is responsible for the *creation of all fear that is not an instinctive present reaction to immediate physical danger*—like actually meeting a tiger.

The mind primarily uses past stories as references for both fear and the possible elimination of the fear in the future—asking the dual questions, “***What threatening thing could happen in this situation, and how can I avoid it?***”

Note that the ego identified with the mental body is not trying to move “against” the potential threat (like Story #1), but rather moves “away”—trying to escape or avoid the perceived physical and/or psychological danger—the opposite of action heroes' stories.

The mind wants to know everything about anything that could possibly be threatening—from every possible angle—so that the danger can be avoided. For example:

- What direction is the tiger coming from?
- When is a attack most likely to come?
- Are tigers in this region aggressive man-eaters?
- Can they climb trees, how can you tell if they're hungry?
- What are the statistics on tiger attacks and survival of tiger attacks? etc.

The idea is to “run *away*” from the tiger (danger) until you have gathered enough information to take an action that you have finally (mentally) evaluated as safe.

Ego strength and power in Story #2

Indications of a strengthened ego identified with the mental body would include:

- *expertise* in an area of specialization that you can retreat into,
- *loyalty* to a group, person, or organization, whom you can count on (at least partially) to help you and protect you,

- knowing that you have *the wits to verbally talk your way out of danger* with humor and/or bravado,
- a *clear identity with strong beliefs* and values that give the ego as much clarity and certainty as possible,
- a *clear role that has precise rules* and guidelines that can be followed with competence,
- living a *lighthearted Peter Pan life of fun* and no commitments.

When the ego wakes up from Story #2

When a person wakes up from the ego identified with the mental body,

- *the mind quiets,*
- *intuitive wisdom flows directly into consciousness from the Source of Infinite Intelligence,*
- *faith in Infinite Intelligence replaces belief in the abilities of the rational, cause/effect-oriented mind,*
- *the once-questioning mind now serves by “honoring the Self” with full realization that it is part of Limitless Being, aware of Total Stillness and Infinite Intelligence.*

Story #3: “I am my emotional experiences”

Ego identification with the emotional body: The Orphan-ego Archetype

The final piece of this tragic mistake in identification is that after we begin to believe “I am my body,” we look to others for connection to fill our need for love/respect.

- We try to protect this body by acquiring *external* power from others through the experience of *connection*, instead of realizing ourselves to be connected to everything in the universe as *Love*.
- We have the experience of *connection* by feeling the *emotion* of love/respect from others. (I use both “love” and “respect,” because some egos fixated in the emotional body do not label their need as “love,” but rather call it “respect” (respect=love). Other egos want both love and respect, or equate the two: love=respect.)
- We become *needy for the feeling* of love/respect, and we worship experiences of that feeling.
- We constantly work on *creating an image* that we hope others will love, in order to overcome doubt about our worthiness to get love/respect.

I AM
Limitless Being/Pure Awareness
contracts to

⇓
“*I am my body*”



I AM
**Total Stillness/
Infinite Intelligence**

I AM
Love

contracts to

⇓
“*I am my mind*”

⇓
*I am my emotional
experiences*

In the need to find the experience of love, we begin to recognize and identify, label and *experience* all sorts of other feelings that we know are *not* love.

This labeling of sensations—which we talk about and analyze as emotions—create a story in which we begin to believe that “*I am my emotional experiences.*”

- We believe that *feelings are most important* (“deeper than mere thoughts”).
- We believe feelings must be *expressed, acted out, or rejected*.
- We believe that outside *circumstances have the power to make us feel a certain way*, and that the only way to feel better is to change those circumstances (win the lottery, e.g., and all will be well).
- We perceive ourselves as *victims of our feelings*, and start saying things like, “Well, that’s just the way I am—I’m just feeling hurt, and that’s my truth, etc.”
- We feel unloved or loved—worthy or unworthy of love—depending on our story of what *experiences we perceive the outside world is giving us or not giving us*.
- Our perception is totally dependent on what we’re feeling in the moment when we make the perception. *We become slaves to our emotions* instead of **realizing we are Love, and don’t need to look anywhere but inside**.

Emotional Power: The Power of Connection
Using the talent for connection to get love/respect:
moving “toward” others

The emotional body gets its power by connecting with others—alliances, partnerships, tribes, countries, races, traditions.

The attachment to external sources of power is paramount—feelings/experiences of respect and love are sought after for emotional power. But the fear of *not* belonging, being abandoned, or fired (dis-connected) is always lurking close by.

Ego strength and power in Story #3

Indication of a strengthened ego identified with the emotional body would include:

- having people in your life that clearly *need* you,
- knowing you are *needed* in a business, artistic, or creative venture,
- *pride* about your contributions to the world or to individuals,
- *financial success that is recognized*, and/or symbols of wealth—houses, cars, yachts, life style, etc.,
- *prestige, achievement, status, adulation, or being secure as the center of attention*,
- *stories of the ego that move “toward” others* out of the need for connection—making friends with the tiger and proving you are worthy of its love.

When the ego wakes up from Story #3

When a person wakes up from the ego identified with the emotional body:

- *Love is a continuously realized as Essence, no matter what circumstances in life appear.*
- *“All is One” is expressed by knowing you are connected to everything and everyone—a universal family of Love.*
- *Kindness, Compassion, Love, Joy, and Devotion to the Beloved flow effortlessly as natural expressions of Love in human form.*

Life as a movie

Our identification with body, mind, and emotions is tantamount to believing that a movie is reality.

It’s true, when we go to the movies, sometimes we get caught up in the movie, and identify with the characters on screen, but when the movie is over, we know it was just a movie, even though the images may stay with us as reality for quite a while—or show up in our dreams.

At any time during the movie, we know we can turn toward the projector and realize that everything on the screen is just a result of the light projected from the back of the auditorium.

In fact, when we go to the movies, we *do* realize what is real, and what is illusion,. But we (deliberately) forget that reality so that we can identify with the story on the screen.

The problem with identifying with the movies of our lives—with body, mind, emotions and circumstances—is that our senses are so convincing in telling us our movie is reality, only a few of us ever turn toward the Light of who we really are, and realize “This movie is not real; it is a dream. I must wake up from this dream and see I’m just watching a movie that is projected by my mind (ego).” **“Put your ego (stories) under your pillow and Wake Up!”**

As long as we don’t see that this limited perception of life as movie-stories of moving “against,” “away” from, and “toward” others can ultimately only bring emotional suffering and lack of fulfillment, we will continue to write and project movies of pain and suffering that contain only occasional interludes of loving, joyful, and happy emotional states.

Fully realize these movie stories are just illusions—pale shadows of the true magnificence of who we really are. Then *Enlightenment* is the “natural” result of that realization. The movies of our lives are contained *within* who we really are—they are just projections on the screen of the dazzling Light of *Limitless Being*.

If this is old news to some of you, the question is: have you realized that *all* pain and suffering comes from this mistaken reality?

You can spend a lot of time in therapy or in self-help seminars learning how to make a better movie of your life—a romantic comedy, a thriller with you as hero, or a frothy, escapist piece. You can even try valiantly to be the *director of the movie*, but ultimately, we all know *we’re not in control of the script of what life deals us*—we can’t stop earthquakes or predict the stockmarket any more than we can stop the earthquakes and market crashes of our lives.

In fact, any movie we think is real has the same ending: our bodies die in the last reel, and that is terrifying and unacceptable to an ego that is trying desperately to be in control.

What if you could *fully realize* the *real* you can never die, nor will your true *Essence* ever change? What if you experienced everyone around you that you either like or dislike as having the same *Essence*? What if this game called life can be played on a completely different playing field—one of *Essence*, awake to our own true nature?

The rest of this book will take a close look at each of the stories of these three movies we project, and will show you the way to *lift the veils by turning toward the Light within each of the stories*, find the lessons of the story, and return home, enlightened by the Light of who you really are.

The importance of a strong ego

While it is possible at any point in time to transcend the ego and simply WAKE UP, most of us don’t develop enough awareness of ourselves as *Limitless Being* without first experiencing severe egoic fear, and learning to deal with it.

Each one of the three sides of the triangle represents a part of a journey that ***the ego needs to take to have a relative sense of safety in a world it sees as dangerous and hostile***. A healthy

ego acquires enough power from learning the lessons from the three stories in order to feel adequate to the challenges of these circumstances of life.

- The lessons of all three of these stories must be learned to the degree that the ego can stabilize—all egos need to learn to **get love**, need to learn to **feel secure** in their identities, and need to learn to know they **have some control**.
- Sometimes the lessons are learned because the suffering gets so intense that there is total disillusionment, despair, or emptiness, and a sense that there is no way out. This can lead to ego surrender—rock bottom. If the person does not self-destruct, *Awareness* that the *Self* is much stronger than the fragile ego can be (instantly) learned. For example, this can happen to “victims” of extraordinary tragedies, who sometimes rise like the phoenix from the ashes of a tragedy, and directly experience that the *tragedy set them free from the fear of death* that identification with the body always brings. “Near death” experiences sometimes yield this same learning.

For other people, the ego is strengthened *gradually* to the point where the next natural place of growth and learning is *transcendence of the ego*.

There is a *readiness—a ripeness—for Enlightenment* to “happen.” *There is nothing you can do to “make it happen.” Enlightenment just happens; It chooses you.* The individual makes *self-effort* by seeking and understanding *Truth*, but **Enlightenment is a matter of Grace.**

Concentration of ego power in one story

Generally, we feel more comfortable with one of these three stories: we concentrate our power in one story. Our ego develops a strong talent from a very young age for using either the physical body story (control), the mental body story (avoiding fear/doubt), or the emotional body story (connection), in order to protect our bodies.

In addition to the identification with a primary story, we (partially) identify *with one of the other two stories*, while most of us are often quite *asleep to the third story*.

We have a million scripts that play out the archetypal stories of these three needs of control, security, and love:

- endless romances about finding fulfilling love relationships, achieving success and status (emotional),
- stories about power, control, and conquest (physical),
- stories about overcoming fear and doubt and acting with courage and resolve (mental).

We develop strategies for filling these ego needs that we repeat over and over until we become expert at being the hero of our movies.

Eventually, however, we tire of these stories, because we finally recognize they are not fulfilling us in the deepest way.

It is possible to wake up to the understanding of who you really are beyond these three stories. That is the subject of the last two chapters of this book.

Power symbols

In each of these stories, our ego is strengthened by developing power symbols. We assign value to—invest symbolic power in—an *external* object. As long as we possess these power symbols, the ego will be satisfied, and we will be relatively happy. But since we have assigned symbolic power to this external object, if we lose it, the ego will lose power (self-worth).

Some common power symbols are:

- *money* for ego stories of self-worth, or power, or freedom,
- a successful *relationship* for ego stories of family loyalty, or romance, or status, or security,
- *leadership* for ego stories of heroism, or acknowledgment, or pride,
- a *special job* for ego stories of competence, or responsibility, or stamina,
- difficult *tasks* that require brilliant intelligence,
- *creativity* in the arts or in writing for ego stories of fame, or uniqueness, or attention

In our movies, *these symbols are perceived as real*, and *attachment* to them leads us to ego heights (pleasure) and ego depths (pain).

People sometimes kill themselves because they don't get the promotion they had invested all their power in—even though a promotion has no true intrinsic value.

Attaining power symbols may deepen the illusion of the ego story

The power symbols we create and attain assist us in gaining ego strength. Those same power symbols usually *become the primary obstacles to transcending the ego* at a later stage of development. We can become so attached to the power symbols that it can become extremely difficult to surrender the *external* power symbols for the true *internal* power of a transcended ego.

For example, you may have developed a great *talent for connection*, and gained ego strength by finding a deep love in your early life. Later in life you might begin to discover that the person you love (object) is not really giving you the happiness you initially found so fulfilling. Your ego might then despair, because the only thing you really thought was important (the power symbol of a loving relationship) turned out to be lacking. You invested all your power in that symbol—your pursuit of happiness was completely dependent on a successful, romantic relationship.

Your ego strategy might be to blame the former object of love for not being the “right” person, and so your ego might initiate a passionate search for another relationship (the same power symbol).

You would be missing the point that could be liberating and ego-need transcending: *the emotion of love attached to a person is only an external power symbol*, and cannot be relied on

to provide fulfillment; ***only knowing yourself to be Love will fulfill you.*** As Love, “fulfilling” relationships come naturally.

We need to discover what external symbols we have given power to in our lives, in order to disconnect the power from the symbol. *No matter what the symbol is, its power is limited and illusory, and comes from the ego story.*

In fact, the more sublime the symbol, the more difficult it is to disconnect from. For example, if your ego’s power symbol is helping people, and you help many people, your ego will develop the power of *pride* (high self-esteem), and everyone will tell you what a good person you are. You will feel wonderful, and it will be very difficult for you to see that you did all the helping out of the (ego) need for acknowledgment (love/respect).

Although you may recognize the strategy you use, it is not necessary to identify your primary ego story when you remember that *all of these ego lessons need to be learned to be able to function well in the world.*

- *fear of the past* (fear that the terrible thing that *has* happened might happen again in the *present* or *future*—“I got fired *in the past* and it could therefore happen again—either *now* or in the *future*”),
- *fear of the present* (fear of what is happening right *now*—“I could get fired at any moment”)