

Meditation

Kundalini and the Spiritual Awakening

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Author's Statement

Introduction

People in the fellowship often turn their eyes to the ceiling when they hear that you are going to speak about the "eleventh and twelfth steps." It's a likely sign that you imagine yourself to be a "guru" and you've forgotten the importance of the earlier steps; one, two and three. The other steps, they say, are merely a macrocosm of the more relevant struggles in recovery and, consequently, the eleventh and twelfth often get thrown out in favor of a discussion of the earlier steps. Although this is typically the best policy for beginners, it is not absolute.

In some cases, addicts and alcoholics manage to stay around the rooms for many years and complacency settles in. 'What about the 11th and 12th steps?' we may ask. Many will answer that "nobody really understands the 11th and 12th steps" and then it may seem as if there is nowhere else to go in recovery.

For those cases, it is good to look again at the last three steps in the program of AA and NA. This is to recognize that, in the same way that the first three steps are a microcosm of the entire twelve, the same microcosm may be said to exist in the 10th, 11th and 12th steps. Furthermore, there may be times when meetings may not serve an old timer as well as they have in the past. Those more introverted individuals may not benefit as much from ongoing service work but seek out a deeper understanding from within. In cases like these, a written work may be more appropriate.

This is the spirit of the present work. As the basics are certainly important and not to be disputed in any way, meetings may best be reserved for the more practical topics like steps one, two and three. Esoteric writing may serve as a way to develop ourselves in the higher steps and is therefore presented in this spirit.

Author's Story

In order to make this book more like a meeting and bring the topic into a more practical realm, an initial autobiography may also be helpful for those who would prefer to get an idea on the author. In this spirit, I hope to exhibit the principle first stated by Bill Wilson who once said,

To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.

-Bill W.

To begin, I was far from being a practical individual when I entered the rooms of NA in 1988. I had flunked out of the BA philosophy program at a State College, and entered a small outpatient treatment program for drug addiction. Ironically, it had been a "transformational" experience with LSD which had been a major contributor to my desire to quit drugs.

Addicts who enter the program often enter for reasons which are completely beyond the understanding of normal people. Nonetheless, this was my reasoning for submitting to the program early on as I felt myself to have recognized something extremely profound through my drug experiences. I wanted to pursue

this discovery as a "responsible, productive member of society."

The task proved to be increasingly difficult as I progressed through recovery. Nevertheless, the program has offered many rewards which I never expected and the awakening of the Kundalini energy has been the greatest of these.

Many recovering addicts and alcoholics progress through the program and eventually get married and raise children, pursuing a career in the meantime and enjoying the fruits of a normal life. Although I have remained clean and actively engaged in the fellowship, marriage and children has still not become my reward.

Instead, the progress has been extremely slow and, in my first year, I merely took a job on a landscaping crew after having dropped out of college. I started reading more about spirituality rather than what seemed like the more dry writings of Plato, Aristotle and Kant. I had not been able to imagine becoming a lawyer or a professor at that time and hadn't really known what I would like to do with my life.

A year later, I returned to academia to finish my bachelor's degree and set myself to the simple and practical goal of simply finishing my degree. By that time, I was more firmly rooted in a desire to stay away from drugs and alcohol, and the mainstream philosophies began to seem slightly more interesting.

I also took up an interest in the study of Eastern religions such as Zen and the Sufi teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. Although I began to read about the importance of meditation in spiritual work, I never really found myself capable of practicing during the first several years of recovery. My compulsion for drugs was soon replaced by other compulsions which then needed further examination as I grew older.

I went on to study philosophy at the Master's level and to teach for a short time. Then I took the semblance of career-oriented job as a teacher of Behaviorally Emotionally Handicapped children in the public schools and finally fell into a contracting job building playgrounds and tree houses at those same schools and churches.

Essentially I had evolved into the salt of the Earth after over 15 years sober and didn't foresee any further development of my spiritual condition beyond that. I had entertained delusional fantasies about major transformations and "breakthroughs" but the spiritual fireworks had never taken place in my life. I was a normal, recovering drug addict whose recovery still seemed to have come to a standstill.

Despite the lack of meditation as a strict practice, sitting still for an entire hour in a 12-step meeting was already a difficult thing for me to do. For this reason, it was something which I made a point of each week to remain disciplined and my fellowship with other addicts also made that easier. Introverted and oversensitive, I struggled to speak up in meetings but soon became determined to set this as one of my main challenges in recovery.

To my own satisfaction, I was accomplishing what was required in my first few years of recovery and staying clean. I worked with sponsors, held service positions and trudged my way through an extended education, eventually leaving the schoolteacher role behind.

In terms of my romantic relationships, these never seemed to work out and this seemed common amongst my peers. Some of us even attended psychotherapy sessions in order to try and fix the recurring problems in our relationships but it

seemed a hopeless venture in many ways. We are naturally attracted to the “wrong women,” I thought, and couldn’t seem to change this hardwired programming.

Fifteen years of sobriety had really only made me into a “normal person” along with my peers. Many of us were still single, self-employed and in debt up to our ears in student loans. Despite being “normal”, I was still beginning to feel like my life was passing me by and I wanted to get out.

Complacency

Complacency is a very real problem in recovery and it became a serious threat for me after 15 years in the program. I had, for all intensive purposes, become “normal” and, although addicts and alcoholics often dismiss the mention of “normal people” as a myth, I felt extremely normal at the time.

In fact, being “normal” had become a real burden for me. I had always entertained illusions of being “special” and I was bored with myself having become so “normal.” A study of the Eastern teachings of the Enneagram began to put this issue into perspective as I soon identified myself with the #4 type personality and realized that I had arrived at one of the core issues of my recovery.

Like a textbook case of both an addict and a #4 personality type, I had to have “more than normal.” Another recovering addict and psychiatric professional suggested that I was in trouble because he had relapsed after many years in the program and cited the issue of boredom as the real cause behind the relapse. I threw myself into my spiritual program “tenfold” as a way of counteracting this dangerous crossroads.

Reaching up to that new level was done with some degree of caution and through the help of a sponsor. I needed to do something drastic but not something that would kill me. Leaving behind my life as a contractor, I found myself flying halfway around the world to the Philippine Islands and wondered if I weren’t possibly off my rocker.

This was my desperate move which some may argue was a “geographical cure.” For me, it seemed the only option as I sought out something far from normal, in order to shake off the feeling of complacency. He gave me the support I needed to make this move with my most reasonable faculties at work.

Fortunately, my sponsor had been to the Philippines himself on several occasions. He also understood the pitfalls of complacency and he empathized. We talked about the fact that, as we go through recovery, there are bound to be low periods along the way. Learning to use these periods as motivation for further growth is where our success lies.

My sponsor encouraged me to pursue a seemingly impulsive idea even though it had frightened my family. This was the extraordinary life I had dreamed of and a fellow addict made me feel that it was ok. I will always be grateful to him for that help as I soon purchased a plane ticket and made my first visit to Manila in September 2002.

I returned to the US only two weeks later with the firm intention of changing my life. Probably the biggest change soon came in the form of a more disciplined practice of meditation. I decided to set aside 30 minutes a day, making a point of never missing a session. My reasoning for never missing these sessions

came on the heels of an idea that is often heard in the program. "The times when you least want to do your spiritual practice is the time when you benefit the most."

As I went about flying back and forth to the Philippines, deciding on the final date for my transfer, I actually increased my meditation time each day to almost an hour. When I finally moved to Quezon City, I had become quite devoted to the practice.

The move to the Philippines was stressful but exciting. It was part of a larger challenge that I had set for myself and my daily practice of structured meditation now became an internal sanctuary for me in my daily life. A combination of influences which I will now discuss, soon resulted in something absolutely extraordinary. This event is known as a Kundalini awakening which I hope to now share with other addicts and alcoholics.

Jung and AA

Having only introduced the idea of the Kundalini, there are some responsible warnings which should first be put forth about this topic. There are also some professional references to consider as you begin to take an interest in a practice. The methods and practices are of a highly transformative nature and have been known to cause strong disturbances amongst practitioners who were not adequately prepared for them. Nonetheless, these practices have also been espoused by some of the most influential creators of AA and NA and are therefore of extreme relevance to the recovering addict and alcoholic.

As the following discussion will show, these practices can be viewed as part of a larger vision about recovery and, although we are free to stretch our wings beyond these walls, we must always maintain the awareness that abstinence from drugs is the most fundamental practice. As we stretch our wings, we may also begin to see the relevance of other spiritual experiences in the larger context of AA and NA.

Dr. Carl Jung, who was instrumental in bringing the idea of service to both Roland H. and Bill W. also expressed ideas concerning the manner in which higher level concepts may only be suited for certain people in recovery. His letter to Bill W. represents some of the earliest sparks which led to the creation of AA and NA and points to the exceptional regard for which he held Bill W;

Dear Mr. Wilson,

Your letter has been very welcome indeed. I had no news from Roland H. anymore and often wondered what has been his fate. Our conversation which he has adequately reported to you had an aspect of which he did not know. The reason that I could not tell him everything was that those days I had to be exceedingly careful of what I said. I had found out that I was misunderstood in every possible way. Thus I was very careful when I talked to Roland H. But what I really thought about was the result of many experiences with men of his kind. His craving for alcohol was the equivalent, on a low level, of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness, expressed in medieval language: the union with God. How could one formulate such an

insight in a language that is not misunderstood in our days? The only right and legitimate way to such an experience is that it happens to you in reality and it can only happen to you when you walk on a path which leads you to higher understanding. You might be led to that goal by an act of grace or through a personal and honest contact with friends, or through a higher education of the mind beyond the confines of mere rationalism. I see from your letter that Roland H. has chosen the second way, which was, under the circumstances, obviously the best one. I am strongly convinced that the evil principle prevailing in this world leads the unrecognized spiritual need into perdition, if it is not counteracted either by real religious insight or by the protective wall of human community. An ordinary man, not protected by an action from above and isolated in society, cannot resist the power of evil, which is called very aptly the Devil. But the use of such words arouses so many mistakes that one can only keep aloof from them as much as possible. These are the reasons why I could not give a full and sufficient explanation to Roland H., but I am risking it with you because I conclude from your very decent and honest letter that you have acquired a point of view above the misleading platitudes one usually hears about alcoholism. You see, "alcohol" in Latin is "spiritus" and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. The helpful formula therefore is: *spiritus contra spiritum*.

Thanking you again for your kind letter I remain yours sincerely,

C. G. Jung

Despite the profound influence which Carl Jung had on the creation of AA and NA, many addicts and alcoholics are still unfamiliar with influence of his work. Of considerable importance and relevance is the work that Jung did in relation to Kundalini yoga. The Kundalini awakening is a progressive spiritual phenomenon which also carries with it the contrary tendency toward ego inflation. This is something that has also been discussed by experts in the field such as Jung who said;

Now, if anybody makes the mistake of thinking that he lives at the same time in the basement and on the fourth story, that he is the purusa himself, he is crazy. He is what the German very aptly call *verruckt*, carried off his feet up to somewhere else. He just sits up there and spins....(Jung, *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga*, pg. 40)

Here we are instructed by Jung not to take credit for the Kundalini awakening or to imagine that we are somehow in control of it. Similar warnings are also given to us in the program.

In AA and NA, we learn to be grateful for our recovery and to *not* take undue credit for it. When the Kundalini begins to flow into our brain, causing such amazing

sensations throughout our body, we may also be tempted to look at this phenomenon in many divergent ways. We may suppose we are somehow "special" or "chosen" and fly off our feet as Jung has warned. We may also take a more compromising position and view the experience as if there was a sort of "valve" which we are now capable of opening inside ourselves. We seem to be releasing this amazing energy into our physiology at will and to have complete control over it each day. As time goes on, however, we begin to see that the Kundalini has a life of its own.

Although we take responsibility for opening the valve, practicing certain exercises or being diligent in our recovery, our ability to handle the energy both physically and psychologically may depend on mere Grace. We may also benefit from the help of others around us and from a more subdued lifestyle that adheres to solitude and peace.

As we develop in this new energy, whether we force it or not, it starts to become more clear that we have never been in control of anything in the larger sense. The energy begins to dissipate in its immediate effects and we are faced with the task of raising it again in new, more creative ways.

As the words of Dr. David Hawkins so aptly express, "All is happening of itself." We may think we are planning things and yet we are also being guided by circumstance and consequences. In this sense, Jung also counsels us to proceed in a manner of non-attachment;

You have to do it as if you were a stranger: you will buy as if you did not buy; you will sell as if you did not sell. (Jung, *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga*, pg. 40)

The progression of the Kundalini will indeed have a profound application to recovery from drugs and alcohol as it already has through the work of Carl Jung. When it happens to an individual, the Kundalini experience first seems much like a "spiritual drug." It can easily be sought by an addict or alcoholic in the same manner in which they sought to drink or use. In this way, it is the author's belief that the Kundalini was the very means of a transference method which initially took place between Dr. Jung and his patient Roland H. in the 1930's. This transmission is what essentially sparked the very creation of AA itself.

The zealous and intense pursuit that each addict has hardwired into their brain can be applied to the pursuit of the Kundalini and likely occurred in both Roland and Bill W. early on in the creation of AA. It resulted in an arrival at the 12th step quite assuredly for both of them and led to an enormous cultural transformation many decades later.

History of Drug Treatment

The history of drug treatment can be traced back to the early 1900's when Dr. Sigmund Freud first introduced his theory of the libido and later, when Jung's work inspired the first group of Alcoholics Anonymous. Although he had introduced a revolutionary theory of the libido, Dr. Sigmund Freud also suffered from a terminal case of addiction himself. He was diagnosed with cancer of the jaw in 1923

but was still not able to stop his smoking. On this subject, Freud himself wrote the following;

Soon after giving up smoking there were tolerable days. Then there came suddenly a severe affection of the heart, worse than I ever had when smoking.... And with it an oppression of mood in— which images of dying and farewell scenes replaced the more usual fantasies (Brecher 1).

Unable to face his problem with smoking, in 1939 at the age of 83, Dr. Sigmund Freud died as a result of his terminal addiction. This event seems to have shown quite clearly that Freud's ideas on the treatment of addiction were far from being practical. Regardless of the practical limitations of his approach, there was still hope for his theory concerning the libido.

In fact, Freud's theory had given a useful structure to his wider theory of the Unconscious and it was Dr. Carl Jung who was then able to develop this into what is now known as the Analytic School of psychology. This school now recognizes addiction as a regressive and destructive tendency originating in the instinctive energy or libido.

There have been three major theorists of libido or psychic energy: Freud, Jung and Fairbairn. Instinctual energy, or libido, powers development and is usually healthy....But psychic energy, or libido, may also be diverted into a destructive regression, e.g. addiction (Naifa 1995).

Dr. Jung put Freud's ideas into his practice and, through a very humble approach, may have inadvertently played a foundational role in the creation of Alcoholics Anonymous. This monumental event first took place when Jung had been treating a patient named Rowland Hazard who had been suffering from an extreme case of addiction. After careful consideration, and fresh with the memories of Freud's demise, Jung told Roland of the hopelessness of his condition.

It is interesting to consider how most therapists would likely have taken a more positive approach. Jung had already been exposed to the realities of addiction and, as a result of this event, Roland H. left Dr. Jung's office that day feeling distraught. He subsequently found the Oxford Trust Society, a Christian evangelical movement, where he soon had a tremendous spiritual experience. This is the "darkness before the dawn" phenomenon which will be discussed more directly in the later pages of this work.

This amazing story had also reached Bill Wilson in November 1934 who had already been through a prolonged period of despair himself. It was Bill Wilson who eventually became a co-founder of AA after hearing the story from Roland and going through his own transformation. He later wrote to Dr. Jung,

This candid and humble statement of yours was beyond doubt the first foundation stone upon which our Society has since been built (Wilson, Jung, 1961, p. 1).

In reference to Dr. Jung's awareness about the limitations of the scientific approach to the treatment of addiction, researchers into the more modern psychobiology of addiction have also criticized the scientific approach. They suggest that "reward behavior" and "fundamental brain reward mechanisms" are not responsible for this phenomenon. As most addicts already know far too well, addiction continues to operate even when it is predominantly painful. This contradicts the scientific account of chemical dependence based in the reward or pleasure centers (Gold et al 1992).

"Bill W," as he is now commonly known, gave the foundational credit of AA to Dr. Carl Jung for his ability to recognize the limitations that science and psychiatry had in treating addiction. He further clarified that Dr. Jung's emphasis on spiritual principles was the added ingredient that had helped to place AA on a solid foundation;

Coming from you, one he so trusted and admired, the impact upon him was immense. When he then asked you if there was any other hope, you told him that there might be, provided he could become the subject of a spiritual or religious experience (Wilson, Jung, 1961, p. 1).

The final piece of the addiction puzzle was provided by another great psychologist, Dr. Raymond Cattell who worked to isolate 16 source traits in the personality and designed the 16 Personality Factors Test known as 16 PF (Cattell 1957). His ideas have been shown to correlate with Jung's theory of psychological types as well as his theory of instinctive energy. They now serve as an aid to assess people with addiction as well as helping in the eventual treatment process.

Cattell has himself speculated on the relationship between his empirically discovered factors and Jung's concepts. He concluded that the extraverted type corresponded not to factor M alone [but] of six or eight of his factors.....Now libido has both conscious and unconscious components which are measurable by different methods; Jung and Cattell both held this (Marshall 1967).

The diagnosis and treatment of drug addiction has made great strides over the past several decades, thanks to the early findings of Dr. Freud, Dr. Jung and Dr. Cattell. Thanks to these great contributions, the psychological assessment and spiritual treatment of drug addiction may reveal a light at the end of the tunnel for many suffering patients.

Without this knowledge of the Kundalini, however, which Dr. Jung made painstaking efforts to bring to the West, it is no wonder that so many addicts and alcoholics still relapse within the first few years of recovery. That same level of complacency begins to set in and it almost assuredly time to go back to the drugs and alcohol. By the Grace of God, this was not my personal fate. I ended up, instead, in a far away country devoid of the comforts of a "normal" American and searching intensely for that little spark inside myself.

The transference which may have taken place between Dr. Jung and Bill W. most assuredly took place between myself and Dr. David R. Hawkins in 2003. Jung's story is presented only as a context from which to more clearly view my own

experience as it came in relation to Dr. David R. Hawkins. As the history of Dr. Jung is recounted, I will also discuss this transference process of my own in the coming pages. Here, in the words of Dr. David R. Hawkins, will be meant the essence of the statement,

Gloria en Excelsius Dio!

Preface

Becoming "normal" is a process which can take many years and many of us never realize it through an entire lifetime. Struggling with negative emotions like shame, guilt, grief, and fear can often be alleviated through the practice of meditation but normality is a hard thing to achieve. Through the spirit of gratitude, the process is quickened of its own and we learn that we cannot rush the river. Still, we must also avoid sarcasm by suggesting that "There is no normal."

Dr. Jung was instrumental in bringing the idea of the "Kundalini yoga" to the West and his work has begun to make the Eastern ideas more "normal" in Western culture. It is also of the utmost importance to recovering addicts who can study and make use of the techniques he has espoused and strive toward normality. The famous lectures compiled in the book *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga* contain the initial description of the system of chakras which were later developed in the United States alongside the development of the 12-step program. These ideas are still ridiculed by a large segment of Western society but they are accepted in the West as obvious truths.

Although Dr. Jung was not a recovering addict or alcoholic, his work is extremely relevant to all who seek the freedom which is promised in the 12th step and to those who seek normality. Our ability to remain open-minded in the program and not suppose that our way is the "only way" will also help us to expand our program into new horizons. As addicts and alcoholics, we owe it to ourselves to investigate the possibility of awakening the Kundalini energy and passing this knowledge onto others in the program. In fact, the energy of the Kundalini may be more easily aroused in recovering addicts and alcoholics than other patients but it is documented by people from all walks of life and all cultures. There is a world of astounding energy which can be uncovered more easily by those with a more sensitive and intense nature and it is known in the East as the Kundalini and in the more outdated literature of the West as "Holy Spirit." The necessary character qualities for a poise in this direction are very commonly found in addicts and alcoholics and make the study of the Kundalini of even more relevant in this subculture.

The discoveries detailed in this book came to a recovering addict as a result of the strict practice of meditation and it is a gift that I believe can be received by any addict who simply desires it and becomes dedicated to its realization. As it involves a fairly advanced level of recovery, there are several clarifications that need to be made before a description is appropriate. The first of these clarifications is that the experience is shared in the spirit of recovery from addiction but also in the spirit of the spiritual awakening which is quite distinct from the topic of addiction in many respects. Nonetheless, it does remain firmly rooted in the teachings of the twelve steps as stated,

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

-12th Step

Having practiced the eleventh step diligently for about two years, and having increased the time each day to about 45 minutes in the morning and 45 minutes at night, a very strange and extraordinary thing happened to this addict during one of his morning meditation sessions.

Chapter One-Personal Account of Spiritual Awakening

I had been reading and meditating on certain spiritual material concerning the idea of "perfection." A prolonged meditation on this idea seemed to become the source of an eventual spiritual awakening which is described in the subsequent sections of the book.

In the program of NA and AA we often speak about how dangerous it is to seek "perfection" in ourselves. This is because the idea suggests a sense of "control" as if we were somehow in charge of our spiritual destiny. The idea of perfection that led to my spiritual awakening refers to the "perfection of the world." It did not start with the perfection of myself but came as a suggestion that maybe the entire world was absolutely perfect. This was something that intrigued me because, in recovery, we talk about turning things over to God or a Higher Power and we suggest the possibility that things are just fine without our interference.

The world, under the direction of our Higher Power, could possibly be considered as perfect in the same way it is at each moment. The problem I was having with this meditation was that, if "I" was not perfect, how could the "world" which I lived and breathed in, be perfect?

People often laugh about people who think too much and I had laughed at myself as much as anyone. Still, I had spent my life studying philosophy and going to AA and NA meetings so I at least humored myself to believe that I had a right to think too much. Having taken my recovery very serious, I was now going through a renewed effort to attend lectures on spirituality and see if I could improve my position in the world. I had gotten to a point where I was feeling complacent in my recovery and had actually travelled 8 hours by car to attend a lecture in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. David R. Hawkins was speaking on the subject of "The Realization of the Presence of God" and it was bothering me, after reading his books, that the world be thought of as "perfect."

This crisis is classically referred to in mainstream philosophy as the Problem of Evil and expressed in the question "Why do bad things happen to good people." I had always resolved this to myself as a case of an outside force that was inflicting itself on me. There was something wrong with the world; it's evil, and it was having a negative effect on me. Now I was perplexed by the idea that God might be truly taking care of things altogether. The problem might not be "the world" but the way I perceived it.

This idea that Dr. Hawkins proposed, that the world was perfect just the way it was, seemed extraordinary. It was something which was extremely hard to swallow and over the weeks and months, I entertained it again and again. I watched myself closely each time that I became angry or sad or disappointed with some aspect of the world. If the world was "perfect," why was I upset? I studied more and found, not surprisingly, that this suggestion had already been passed down by many great sages through the centuries. Dr. Hawkins wasn't the first teacher to propose it because it had been intended as a way of attaining higher consciousness for centuries. In order to see the world as perfect, I would have to accept myself, my own feelings and thoughts, each and every action and intention in my mind. These would have to be seen as part of a larger plan which was all perfect in a way that I was incapable of seeing.

In reality, Hawkins explains that everything occurs of its own. There are no exterior causes and everything is a manifestation of the totality of All That Is. Once seen in its totality, everything is perfect at all times and nothing needs an external cause to change it. From the viewpoint of the ego, the world seems to be in need of endless fixing and correction. According to Hawkins, "This illusion collapses as a vanity" (Hawkins, *Eye of the Eye*, pg. 107).

Having read his works over and over, and attending several seminars in Columbus, Chicago, and Washington, the idea became more clear to me and it became my meditation during the days that followed. It slowly seemed to take hold of me in almost everything I said and did. I had even felt a special connection to Hawkins because of the fact that he had known Bill W. and had co-authored a book with him, even acting as his advisor and friend. Hawkins had also co-edited with Dr. Linus Pauling, later receiving the Huxley Award in 1979, for "Inestimable Contribution to the Alleviation of Human Suffering."

This past year, he was honored as an American Psychiatric Association's 50-Year Distinguished Life Fellow and, in addition to his work that he did with Bill W. and Dr. Pauling, he made numerous other contributions in the field of alcoholism, addiction and recovery. Hawkins co-founded Schizophrenics Anonymous and was a member on the board of directors as well as serving with them as their medical advisor. He was a member of the National Council on Alcoholism and the Long Island Council as well as a member of Brunswick House. Finally, he was a major consultant on alcoholism with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare as well as numerous other positions which are far to vast to list in this work. (Decker, 2008)

The credentials which Dr. Hawkins held were all part of a contribution which built trust in the importance of meditation. They helped me to take the practice more seriously and, just as Bill W. had said about Dr. Jung, "Coming from you, one he so trusted and admired, the impact... was immense," I respected Hawkins and his work. While others would attack him, I was uninterested with this. I saw a chance to move out of my rut and I took it.

The kinesiologic test is most harshly criticized in relation to Hawkins philosophy and the Sceptic's Dictionary even calls kinesiology it a "pseudo-science." Hawkins uses this method to determine truth from falsehood but he clearly says that you don't need to depend on this to get his message. "Take what you like and leave the rest" is a common statement but many people throw everything away without giving it a very serious look.

For me, the method of the kinesiologic test seemed to produce some positive results. I attended the College of Applied Kinesiology and learned how to use it after several weeks of practice. It was not always accurate because there are many fine tunings that need to be made. Still, I am a believer in the potential of this method and think that people can safely experiment with it as long as they use their common sense and careful reasoning. The method can be cumbersome, especially when the human mind tends to stray off course on lose its focus on the statements which are being tested. A person may suppose themselves, for example, to be calibrating the President of the United States. If they have just finished watching a criticism of the President on Fox News, they may inadvertently be calibrating the opinions of Fox News rather than the President himself. Errors like this are common and make the method itself wrought with difficulty. Dr.

Hawkins mind is especially clear and calm and his calibrations have proven very useful for me in my life.

Having made the seemingly drastic move to a foreign country during the same time that I was experimenting with kinesiology, and living in the midst of the impoverished Filipinos, I struggled to make sense out of what seemed to be utter chaos. I would meditate each day on this idea of "perfection" and I would concentrate my mind in meditation. I used the kinesiologic method only sparingly and I also began to feel a very strange and painful sensation in my chest.

This pain is something that had started about a year earlier when I had begun practicing my meditation more diligently and reading more extensively on both Hawkins and A Course in Miracles. It seemed to grow each week as I continued my spiritual practices and became more malleable in terms of my ability to increase it through certain attention to spiritual ideas and practices. Sitting still, for example, is something that seemed to increase it and a continual focus on the idea that displeasure was always self-created. Rather than diminishing the pain, it seemed to increase it, especially in the throat area.

Another contributing factor would certainly seem to have been the mass poverty of the Philippines and the loneliness that I was beginning to feel. Although I had made friends with some of the Filipinos in Quezon City, I was a foreigner who certainly didn't fit in. The shock of poverty also tends to have a greater affect on someone after they have begun to settle into it for several months. The typical experience is one of shock and amazement in the first few days and then a return to one's home country after one or two weeks. There is a transformation that takes place and people typically feel a renewed appreciation for the government and the "little things" that they never realized were so important. Several weeks after returning to their home country, they don't forget their experience but they do settle back into their old ways and start to take things for granted again.

My case was different because I remained in the Philippines for an extended period and the initial shock that I felt began to be replaced with a sense of normalcy amongst the chaos. I began to take it for granted, instead, that children must work in the Third World and that digging through a trash pile to find food is a reasonable thing to do when you don't have any money. So many things began to become commonplace that I never would have imagined only seven or eight months ago.

The pain I was feeling became a very central issue in my eventual Kundalini awakening because it was a pain which I took great interest in rather than trying to avoid it. It represented a new awareness about myself and I began to view it as a gift rather than a curse. It seemed to be the result of my willingness to look into my own self and I looked at this as progress each day while I continued to go to work and to make friends with the Filipinos. Of course, neediness is a way of life across all aspects of the culture and those who aren't needy tend to leave the country as soon as they are capable. The pain I was feeling was also something which made me want to leave but I viewed this as a resistance which represented my disbelief that the world could be seen as "perfect."

I tried to suppose that maybe everything *was* perfect but I simply wasn't able to accept this fact as of yet. The chaos of Quezon City is hard to describe to an American who has never visited the Third World. I increased my courage to look directly at that pain inside my chest and my meditations even grew to a level of

great expertise. I continued to practice the lessons from A Course in Miracles each day and to meditate with greater focus as the months went on.

Although I was gaining discipline and focus, nothing had happened of real consequence during the first 7 months in Quezon City. I worked as an ESL teacher each day and performed the practices at night. Reading Dr. Hawkins books and meditating each day became a process which, I also later learned, was part of an undoing a symbolic "knot" in my internal chakra system. The pain was emanating from that knot and meditation on spiritual ideas would only increase it and give me the desire to quit.

The word "chakra" deserves a bit of explanation as it is often very misused and misunderstood in the West. The chakra system was first brought to the West by Dr. Carl Jung who was also instrumental in the early creation of AA and NA. Although I knew very little of this chakra system at the time, a teacher in the group known as A Course in Miracles was an advisor to me in these early days. He instructed me to focus my attention on the pain in my throat and my chest and also told me that I should imagine myself to be breathing in a powerful energy of "light" and "healing" into that painful area during my meditation. This was done, he explained, so as to eventually loosen this blockage in my heart and throat chakras.

With some belief in the meridian system of Chinese acupuncture and the use of kinesiology in modern athletics, I heeded my ACIM teacher's advice and practiced his suggestions. This was done despite the well-known criticisms that "New Age" practitioners are to often be mistrusted and serve as worshippers of the "fantastic" and the unreal. None of this had mattered to me until I first began experiencing the blockage and the pain in those chakra locations. The preliminary work which led up to the pain in those areas was brought about by a disciplined removal of my previous attachments to "old behaviors" and many of these included undue criticisms of books like A Course in Miracles or terms like "chakra" and "lightwork." They also included the many comforts of an American lifestyle where magnificent grocery stores, organized traffic systems and clean streets are often taken for granted. Even the US government, the police and hospitals are things that go underappreciated by Americans each day and living in the Third World really wakes you up to the value of these things. Simple communication with others had also become a thing of the past and I often wished I could have an intelligent conversation with someone who spoke native English.

The most obvious of these old behaviors had included drugs and alcohol but there was also a long list of others which followed and which I struggled with for many years. For those who are serious about spiritual work, the attention to these preliminaries is recognized as a sobering reality which may take many years to face. Of even more simple examples were the fact that I didn't like the word "Christ" in the Course in Miracles book or many other words that I associated with the decadence of Christianity. In the Philippines, a devout Catholicism mixed with the desperation of poverty brought home the importance of religion, even when it is set in an environment of militancy because it offers the only remaining hope that something may come after death and save us from the endless confusion and pain that life is often made of.

In many ways, the period of complacency which I went through years before seemed as if it was almost a necessary requirement for true progress to take place as a spiritual seeker. The initial years of recovery often seemed hopelessly ridden

with my ego's underlying presumption that "I can achieve this spiritual recovery thing on my own." My ego required a softening which seemed to come only after a prolonged period of complacency and this could not be created by me directly. A softening had to take place through a seeming abandonment of spiritual work, cited by Peter Ouspensky in his book *The Fourth Way*. I also noted this in a famous spiritual treatise *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The authors both cite the paradoxical condition where spiritual seekers seem to require a period of complacency and discouragement of their spiritual ego. This results in a seeming abandonment of the spiritual path for many years until the individuals returns with a new angle as if a second wind has come into play.

I did not remain in Quezon City for more than 7 months. A friend told me about a nice town two hours out in the province that was set high up in the mountains. The town was set at the edge of a cliff, overlooking a tremendous valley with a large lake that stretched through the valley. At the center of this lake is the world's smallest active volcano which springs up out of the water and is extremely beautiful for tourists and locals. This town sounded like something I would like to see and I made a plan to travel there one weekend.

The town of Tagaytay is not a metaphorical fantasy. It is a real town at the edge of a cliff and it is an especially inspiring place where many spiritual retreat houses are set up with views of the volcano and the lake below. It is also known as the Philippines "City of Character" where commonplace activities like prostitution and begging tend to be reduced.

Tagaytay was like an oasis for me during this time. The soot and the grime of Manila had been too much to take and I quickly rented a two bedroom house near the edge of the cliff. I resumed my daily activities while opting to work over the internet rather than the ESL school I had been for the past 6 months.

The kundalini transformation finally took place one day while sitting in a very deep state of meditation. I had moved out of Quezon City to this small town in the mountains and the rent for my brand new two bedroom house was only \$150 a month. I found that I could work online as a freelance writer and have more than enough money to pay my bills. I continued to meditate each day and I even built a chicken coup on the side of my house. I began to breathe the fresh air and to relax in the midst of beautiful mango trees and bright blue skies. Within several weeks I had transformed into the proverbial philosopher who raised chickens and read the works of Dr. David R. Hawkins.

That fateful day, while sitting in meditation, the blockage in my chest had become extremely painful. Although the environment on the outside had changed, the problem on the inside seemed to remain. On this particular day, I tried to remain calm and keep my attention on the blockage. I knew that I was safe now, in a place where I didn't have to worry about the traffic, thieves and overcrowded conditions. I could finally let go and experience whatever it was that I had been avoiding all this time.

It actually seemed as if a knife were being pointed into my chest and into my throat. The pain was intense and I tried to let go of my fear and do as my ACIM teacher had instructed. I tried to "breathe light into that area" but the pain just seemed to grow against my hopes.

Then, suddenly, there was another angle of awareness that became apparent and awareness began slipping away from the pain. It was if personal identity had

been irrevocably tied to that pain but the meditative practice now provided the ability to let go of it briefly and drift back away from it in a new way. What had been necessary was to extinguish all other options first and resign myself to failure before another way could be seen. It almost seemed as if that pain fell further and further away and, at the same time, it felt as though the "old person" were falling into a sort of oblivion.

As it began to disappear, the negative feelings were replaced by an extremely pleasurable sensation similar to the feeling you get right after you sprain your ankle. First there is a sharp pain and then it begins to feel numb and then a feeling of pleasure seems to come over the ankle. This was the experience that began to take place around that growing pain. There was also a rush of fear as I felt this new sensation of pleasure enter my chest and I didn't know what would happen to me. Still, I was welcoming it because all other options had become hopeless and exhausting. I remained calm while keeping my attention focused on my meditation practice. The pleasure then seemed to grow as I focused my attention in that way and it grew to what I can only describe as the level of a sexual orgasm. It was emanating from out of my chest and into my brain and, even though the sense of identity would quickly return, there were waves of pleasure that obliterated any sense of identity and appeared as a white light.

It was absolutely exquisite and I had never experienced anything remotely close to this in my life. Everything on my entire body began to shake as if I were experiencing a sudden series of convulsions. The intense pleasure seemed to be something that my body could not contain. I began to lose my breath and to break out into a sweat as my body continued shaking continuously. The feeling seemed to shoot up out of my heart and into my brain, ejecting all my thoughts out of my mind and replacing them with nothing but happiness and joy. I was literally dripping in sweat after only 30 or 40 seconds but the pleasure was so great that I was compelled to go on.

I could only maintain this state for 30 or 40 seconds at a time because it left me completely out of breath and panting for air. I performed the exercise again and again over the next 30-40 minutes and was literally sweating each time it happened. I later discovered that this is the classical "releasing of the Kundalini" that eventually becomes part of a 10-12 year process which completely transforms the individual's spiritual and physiological condition.

Chapter Two-Aftermath of Spiritual Awakening

Having discovered such a huge thing as this was hard to contain. I would practice it again and again each day but often have to stop the practice in order to catch my breath and regain my composure. Then I would try it again and again, each time seeing if I could maintain it a few more seconds. The energy would rush out of my chest again and an intense flow of pleasure would emanate out of my chest and into my brain. Several days of this practice brought the awareness that this was like an infinite fountain of pleasure coming right out of my chest. I always had the ability to do it and it seemed that I would be able to continue this indefinitely for months and even years. Although it would leave me exhausted, it would also put me in a blissful state, as I simply gathered my breath and got right back to it again practicing a practicing what seemed to be the answer to all my struggles in life.

For one thing, it seems very odd to consider that such a simple thing as a release of a pleasurable sensation into your body and brain could be the answer to all your problems. That did seem to be the case, as strange as it seemed, and I quickly found that I didn't care too much about anything as long as I could sit down somewhere and release the Kundalini at will. There is so much complexity to life and yet everything we do is aimed at feeling good. This complexity is completely resolved by the simple practice of the Kundalini.

I had been practicing daily meditation for almost two years when this energy suddenly welled up inside my chest. The "Kundalini" refers to a spiritual energy or "fire" that literally can transform a person's entire being when it begins to be released. It continued to flow through me each day during my meditation periods which lasted off and on for several hours each day. Sometimes they would only last as little as 30 minutes but I was always dedicated to sit for this amount of time each day just in order to feel good about any problems that might have re-emerged in my feelings.

Unfortunately, it began to become obvious after several months that the blissful feeling was already beginning to diminish after each session. In fact, it took several years to become used to this energy and, as of the time of this recent revision to this book, it has been almost five years since the initial experience. The Kundalini now flows every time I sit down and even while I walk around during the day but it is much different now than it was five years ago.

Initially I could only stand one or two minutes of this energy at each interval. Now, I have learned to open myself up to this flow for as much as 10-12 hours a day on some occasions. I also don't feel especially "good" or "bad" either way. It used to be that the rush of energy invigorated me but now the energy is always there so there is no experience of invigoration anymore when I do it. The process of becoming used to the Kundalini energy actually takes many years and is ongoing for me at this point but many people who experience it are unable to maintain the practice because they encounter difficulties in their lives which need further attention and spiritual work. They may also become distracted from the practice because of other situations.

Generally speaking, Kundalini yoga is a practice which is said to take approximately ten years to complete. It then becomes more probable that the

classical state termed "Enlightenment" or "Samadhi" is reached and many notable sages like Mother Teresa, Muhammad, Gandhi, and Zoroaster have all been testaments to this experience. The manner in which it takes place will vary from person to person and it is actually supposed that only a very few and rare number of people actually continue to engage in the practice and move on to this level. There are endless cases, however, of those who believe the Kundalini awakening is "Enlightenment itself" and this might better be characterized as "ego expansion" rather than enlightenment and is something that Jung has warned us of.

After several years of experiencing the Kundalini energy, it is often said the person no longer feels the original sense of bliss that was initially experienced. Often, this fails to indicate to them that there is much more work to be done. The Kundalini is an indication, in many ways, that spiritual progress has been made but it is not the end.

Spiritual seekers who have Kundalini experiences often become teachers of various groups and methods but this can also be seen as premature if the completion of the process is not made. True enlightenment is the real goal and this is something which stands entirely beyond the process of the Kundalini and even beyond the teaching of NA and AA.

There is very little instruction or literature available about the Kundalini process that can be trusted in the West. Much of what is presented is fraught with confusing descriptions of non-pertinent information and outright lies made to convince others of someone's "supernatural powers" or "status with God." All of this is untrue but individuals sometimes get swept up in an overwhelming tide of interest amongst others and one such case of considerable fame is that of Eckhart Tolle.

Tolle is certainly a great teacher and especially a great writer. His widespread fame, however, is something which tends to overshadow an important distinction which I will discuss in more detail here. After several years of experiencing a Kundalini awakening, Tolle describes how he became used to the energy and then distracted. He does not refer to his new direction in life as a "distraction" per se but we may pose it in this way when we consider the more fundamental importance of the Kundalini against teaching or writing.

Tolle's widespread fame and popular praise has led to what he describes in himself as a "new identity" but such identities are also commonly referred to as a "spiritual ego" by other teachers. The process of developing a spiritual ego is something that takes place innocently and yet it is important to distinguish between a Kundalini awakening and the more advanced state of Samadhi or Enlightenment.

After describing a classical Kundalini awakening, Tolle goes on to explain how he became used to the energy and he wasn't quite sure what was happening to him;

For the next five months I lived in a state of uninterrupted deep peace and bliss. After that, it diminished somewhat in intensity, or perhaps it just seemed to because it became my natural state. (Tolle, pg. 5)

Just as a recovering addict or alcoholic may require various and different amounts of time or energy to recover in the program, different yogic practitioners

also require different amounts of time to get used to the Kundalini energy. Tolle describes a period of one to two years where he did very little but “sit around on park benches” and get used to this new energy. He later became a teacher and began passing this experience onto others.

I spent almost two years sitting on park benches in a state of the most intense joy. But even the most beautiful experiences come and go. More fundamental, perhaps, than any experience is the undercurrent of peace that has never left me since then. Sometimes it is very strong, almost palpable, and others can feel it too. At other times, it is somewhere in the background, like a distant melody. (Tolle, pg. 6)

Tolle’s teachings are not directly given to the recovering addict or alcoholic as these present teachings will be given. In fact, a Kundalini awakening is a very common experience and, except for my experience in AA and NA, there is very little that I can add which would be unique. *It is my personal belief, however, that addicts and alcoholics actually possess a greater potential in this field than the average spiritual practitioner.* What they may not possess is the ability to maintain the flow of the energy for 5, 6 or 10 years uninterrupted. Tolle’s Kundalini awakening seems to have progressed to some degree which deserves recognition and yet the critical error which seems to have developed is that the rising Kundalini has been stifled to some by his requirement to act out his new identity as a teacher.

The confusion between “awakening” as a process, and “being awake” as a final goal, is the thing which becomes the final issue. Most individuals who experience a Kundalini awakening are so swept up by the experience that they are completely satisfied to let it end after three or four years. A teacher of Enlightenment will go much further than this. They will first lose all sense of identity forever before the process of becoming a teacher will catalyze a new identity. This new identity will also be continuously recognized as false.

In the case of Tolle, and many others, the recognition of “teacher” as a false identity is not so clear. Tolle cites a friend who said to him “I want what you have” and this is a common statement which is heard in AA and NA. Even Bill W. was intensely devoted to spreading the message to other alcoholics and yet we must stop short of saying that his entire identity had been annihilated forever or that he had reached the level of Samadhi.

The point may seem insignificant to some and yet it becomes the motivating factor behind further progression of the Kundalini after several years. This will be discussed as part of the aftermath process of a Kundalini awakening in further chapters and is addressed in more detail in the section entitled “Difference between Spiritual Awakening and Enlightenment.”

It is my point to make here that, after reading and studying the ideas of Eckart Tolle, that he has not recognized the critical difference between these two states. He fails to see the importance and supposes a Kundalini awakening to be simply one and the same with enlightenment.

A more personal experience occurred for me after encountering members of a spiritual group known as TAT, in West Virginia. While the founder of the group, Richard Rose had consistently maintained that none of his students had reached

Enlightenment, members began to readily approve the claims that they had become "enlightened" or "self-realized" soon after his debilitating case with Alzheimer's Disease. One video was initially proposed with the title "Five Self-Realized Individuals" and is particularly humorous to consider when taken in this context about the rarity of such a state. The idea that five individuals who were "self-realized" would all get together and make a video shows the profound misunderstanding of the rarity of this level of consciousness. The video is not offered on the website and, as Richard Rose's words will now re-assert themselves from his book *The Direct Mind Experience*,

These guys who walk out of a room and say "I got it" are misunderstanding what this experience is all about. When Enlightenment happens, they will carry you out on a stretcher. It is that intense. (Richard Rose, *The Direct Mind Experience*)

A simple confusion between a Kundalini awakening and Enlightenment itself is usually the reason for individuals desire to express the experience in mixed terminology and less than accurate details. Richard Rose referred to this lesser state as "The observer level" or "The mountain experience" and it was placed in a context below the more absolute experience of Enlightenment. This issue is also pointed out in the more advanced works of Dr. David R. Hawkins where he clearly delineates these states with a mathematical scale of consciousness. Kundalini Yoga is given a calibration level of "510" whereas enlightenment is given a calibration level of 600.

Even in the case of a Kundalini awakening, the individual is not likely to reach the high level of 510 until after the Kundalini has continued to have an effect on them for many years. They will have likely begun at a much lower level of 250-430 calibration and need considerable time to burn off the old karma. Then they will begin to increase their consciousness at a rapid rate for several years but this will also have its limitations. You simply can't rush spiritual growth even in the extreme case of a Kundalini awakening. According to Hawkins, the average rate of increase in consciousness level is only 5 points in one lifetime. An increase from 250 to the much higher level of 450 will already be extremely profound. It will likely leave the person feeling that they have been totally transformed and easily mistake this for enlightenment.

Returning to my personal account, it is hard to describe the changes which took place after this phenomenon began. I decided to remain in the Philippines and am writing this work while still living here in that country. Once an addict awakens the Kundalini energy, they will no longer experience the feelings of being scared, depressed, guilty, or sad and this has made it possible for me to remain here for so many years. In a sense, I am on a path to finally being free in the way I have always hoped and my motivation for writing has merely come from a desire to maintain that direction by writing and thinking about it each day. I wish that there were more individuals of like mind and yet the confusions about spiritual growth are so great that it is unlikely that a person could find even one other individual who they could relate to in terms of these experiences. If I am lucky enough to avoid fame and financial success, then the energy will likely continue to flow in the coming years and dissolve the rest of the ego which still remains. It may be

possible to take up teaching at that time but only with a great deal of conservative care and minimal involvement.

The "Kundalini awakening" is widely discussed in Hindu and Buddhist traditions as being a very common experience and is also becoming more common among many Westerners in recent years. It is written about in many sacred texts by Indian Masters such as Swami Muktananda and Gopi Krishna in their respective books *The Play of Consciousness* and *Kundalini; The Evolutionary Power in Man*. The remainder of this book will discuss the related literature on the phenomenon as well as placing it into a context with the work of Dr. David R. Hawkins and within the ideas of Enlightenment or Samadhi.

Chapter Three-What is the Kundalini?

In my personal opinion, Kundalini is best described as an energy which has a physiological effect on the body and mind. It can be felt in the nerves and cells of your body just as positively as you feel a sexual orgasm during sex. In fact, the Kundalini is said to be related to the sexual energy and it seems to undergo a transformation during the yogic practice whereby it manifests at other times besides just sexual intercourse. It begins to emanate from a different area of the body, in the heart or throat region for me, and according to others who seem to have experienced the same thing.

During Kundalini awakening, it is said that certain chemicals are released into the body and a pleasurable feeling throughout the entire body is the result. Sensations are experienced in different ways and it is extremely powerful, often overwhelming the individual whose life begins to change drastically. The euphoric nature of the initial phenomenon is astounding and feelings of fear and confusion immediately come up as well as feelings of joy and bliss.

There are many difficulties in adjusting to this powerful energy and the subsequent transformation that happens afterwards. Bonnie Greenwell, Ph.D. did her dissertation study of individuals who had a Kundalini awakening (Lukoff, 2008) and summarized the clinical issues that she observed. Her book, *Energies of Transformation: A Guide to the Kundalini Process*, explains how kundalini awakening often generates unusual physiological activity which can present itself in heart, spinal, gastrointestinal, or neurological problems;

Internal sensations of burning, hypersensitivity to sensory input, hyperactivity or lethargy, great variations in sexual desire, and even spontaneous orgasm have been reported...Emotions can swing from feelings of anxiety, guilt, and depression (with bouts of uncontrollable weeping) to compassion, love, and joy...Some people experience visions of lights, symbols, spiritual entities. Auditory sensations may include hearing voices, music, inner sounds or mantras. There may also be disruption of the proprioceptive system, with loss of a sense of self as a body, or an out of the body experience (Greenwell, 1995).

Aside from the difficulties that many people experience, other individuals may not experience these problems and often report a seeming ease of transition until many years later. This has generally been the case for me except that the increase in pleasure and a general feeling of peace has also resulted in the lower tolerance for negativity. While I used to be capable of fighting with someone close to me, I have found that I am increasingly incapable of tolerating the negative feelings and need to quickly remove myself from any situation that brings up anger or dissatisfaction.

In regard to the individual dangers and difficulties, addicts and alcoholics are a unique case which, I believe, deserve a special attention. One advantage that an addict or alcoholic may have in adapting to the Kundalini is that they have typically experienced the consequences of "risk" and "danger" many times before. They may have a certain ability to throw caution to the wind and let go of their fear

when the Kundalini first manifests. The desire to simply “feel good” or find something in their lives which offers the promise of happiness is often enough for an addict or alcoholic to throw all caution to the wind and this was what happened to me. I simply grew tired of life’s problems and became desperate for a higher answer. Addicts may be more disposed to make the necessary efforts required in the realization of a Kundalini awakening and adjust more quickly afterwards.

Ironically, it is the “fed up with life” attitude which is actually quite important in bringing the experience about. A spiritual devotee needs to let go of all desire and fear if they are going to experience this kind of transformation. If you are a typically frightened person, then you may experience more problems as a result of your own fearful disposition. For this reason, Kundalini awakening has been described by many practitioners as simultaneously dangerous, problematic and wonderful. The general consensus on Kundalini seems to be is that it is of a positive transformation which brings about greater power and ability to endure the problems of life.

Dr. Lee Sannella, who has studied Kundalini for years, has published his findings in a book entitled *Kundalini—Psychosis or Transcendence*. The book is available for free online and Sannella sums up his research as follows:

A new clinical entity, the rebirth process, [has now] been defined and documented. It is a dynamic, self- directed, self-limited process of mental and physiological purification, leading to a healthier and more developed state than what we usually consider normal. It has many characteristic features which may be objectively demonstrated. A cross-cultural survey reveals that this process is essentially similar in a wide variety of spiritual traditions. Although it was rare in the West as recently as a few decades ago, it now appears with increasing frequency (Sannella, abstract).

As it occurs in greater frequency in the West, the phenomenon of Kundalini also becomes more relevant to addicts and alcoholics around the world. For me, the problematic aspects of the Kundalini awakening were very small compared to what are documented in Sannella’s findings. I did find it hard to catch my breath when the energy shot up into my head and out of my heart. I also broke into a great sweat during the initial months when I was getting used to it. Some slight feelings of nausea and a general feeling of disorientation also occurred but none of these conditions were anything worse than what I had experienced in my drug and alcohol using days.

I had managed fairly well for many years in that drug induced condition so the Kundalini seemed to only remind me of those problems while also providing endless benefits far beyond anything that drugs or alcohol had ever brought. After the Kundalini began, I was generally more equipped to face my everyday life than I ever had been before. I was extremely happy and content with everything just the way it was. As time went on, I became more used to the energy and found that I could increase the amount of time I engaged in the yogic exercise. Generally speaking, things which seemed previously difficult became much easier.

The pleasurable feeling of the Kundalini as it first emerges out of an area located somewhere inside the chest and near the heart is absolutely exquisite and it

is hard to suppress the desire to speak about with those who have not yet experienced it. You soon realize that people have no idea what you are talking about and that they won't likely experience this anytime in their life.

To quell these disappointments, experts suggest that we attribute the experience to an indescribable power beyond our own understanding and not something dependent upon and previous "credentials" or "moral superiority." To this point, Gopi Krishna has said the following;

It has always been my endeavor to make it clear that the transcendental state of consciousness, experienced in the form of ecstasy by prophets and mystics throughout the past, does not signify a special favor from the Deity. It is only a more extended dimension of the perceptual faculty towards which mankind is evolving irresistibly through the operation of an evolutionary mechanism in the body, designated as Kundalini by the Indian sages of the past (Krishna, 2004).

At first I felt a great disappointment in the fact that nobody would likely learn anything from me about this amazing energy. What had suddenly appeared as the answer to all my problems was not something that others would likely get from me even if it had started to manifest itself so intensely. Even if the Kundalini energy is part of what is meant by the 12th step "Spiritual Awakening," there is very little likelihood that I could pass this on to someone else without years of intense effort and teaching. Although it is a phenomenon that is completely natural and easy to encounter if one is simply dedicated to their spiritual program, most people are not able to maintain the steady, disciplined attention over months or years that may be required.

Of course, it is the hope implicit in this book that this information will help to change that but I am not holding my breath, to coin a phrase. Struggles will likely be marked by the normal and natural doubts that any practices are worthwhile or will ever lead to success. A more positive attitude is something that eventually becomes more and more important as the practitioner begins to see that this experience is possible for them as well. Once it begins, the energy also sustains your spiritual growth and progress through the same manner as the steps or regular AA meetings once did. When it is pursued consistently over a long period of time, the Kundalini becomes an inevitable progression on the spiritual path and can transform your entire life just as it did mine.

Chapter Four-Professional and Community Support

Introduction

is important to seek support of any kind when moving through the 12 steps of AA and NA. It is even more important to seek professional support when you are dealing with issues that stand outside of the fellowship and are especially transformational to your life. Professional support is especially helpful when working with more specific issues such as those surrounding the awakening of the Kundalini energy and, although an addict or alcoholic can certainly put the Kundalini awakening as a long term goal in their recovery, they must also be prepared for the typical pitfalls and temptations which come as a result of its arrival.

The arrival of the Kundalini presents a whole new set of challenges even as it opens a whole new set of opportunities in recovery. A constant return to the basics is always required and, in this sense, Bill W. has often been sought as a source of personal support amongst addicts and alcoholics;

Please, Lord, teach us to laugh again; but, God, don't ever let us
forget that we cried.

-Bill W.

A spiritual awakening is the ultimate purpose of the 12-step program and yet it brings the addict and alcoholic to a point of freedom beyond the specific practice and fellowship in which it is based. This is because we evolve into a seemingly empty space as if floating alone on a sea of joy. The obvious danger is that we will think we are beyond reproach and relapse. There is also a concern that we will stay clean but fail to find further growth beyond the initial awakening. We can stagnate and fail to get everything that "third phase" recovery may offer to us. This is the reason for stretching our wings further and trying to spread this new message to other addicts and alcoholics.

Gopi Krishna

Once the Kundalini is awakened, we become capable of many new freedoms but these also come with many more responsibilities. This is indeed an occasion which can be celebrated with both laughter and tears because new challenges [post themselves in front of us. The remark about freedom and moving beyond the fellowship is not made hastily. It should be understood that claims of being "above the program" are a very serious and grave error from which most addicts and alcoholics may never return. There are even cases of great sages and enlightened individuals who fell from their very high peak and began spreading a message which was detrimental to millions of followers who came after them. On this point, one of the most sought after experts in the field of Kundalini awakening, Gopi Krishna, has said the following;

It is foolish thing to take credit for a matter over which we have no control. We never created this intelligence. It is given to us. This body is granted to us. So, while we have no control over the body or knowledge of the brain, we are still ready to take credit for any discovery we make. It is for this reason that I say in every book I have written that whatever I say is not from me but from a power above and beyond. I am merely the instrument. In that sense we all are instruments of a higher power. (Krishna, 1997)

Krishna's sentiments mesh extremely well with the sentiments of "old timers" in the program of NA and AA. Despite the risks to our humility, it is still important to be courageous and honest in our efforts to move ahead in our recovery. We come to a point where we must consider outside help with our spirituality if we are to grow beyond the fellowship. Our efforts to reach out to others, not only in recovery, but to anyone with a message of true hope are indispensable to the maintenance of our own recovery. It allows us the opportunity to see things in a new way and to expand our own consciousness. It also represents the very powerful field of unconditional love. The Kundalini awakening is the introduction of the hope that we can function at the higher level of unconditional love and there is one very important teacher who has done this better than anyone I know.

Dr. Hawkins

Dr. David R. Hawkins presents an overwhelming amount of useful information concerning the Kundalini energy and the manner in which it may be awakened within the context of unconditional love. What is required is an open-mindedness to view alternative cultural practices and spiritual methods as both valuable and indispensable to our own growth as addicts and alcoholics.

Although it has not been recognized specifically in the Western world, in older cultures (e.g. Chinese, Hindu), it has been traditionally termed "kundalini" energy. It is this unique energy that brings about the specific changes in the brain physiology and potentiates the emergence and development of the etheric (energy) brain itself. (Hawkins, Truth Vs. Falsehood, pg. 68)

Hawkins discusses the Kundalini energy in terms of scientific evidence and brain physiology, citing the use of kinesiology as a tool with vast potential implications stretching far beyond the state of our present day understanding. He also discusses the idea of energy fields which can be measured in terms of their level of power and the ability to influence our lives.

This field of research is something that has taken off in recent years due to the early discoveries of quantum theory and non-linear dynamics which are now applied to brain imaging models in neurophysiology. (Hawkins, 1995)

Although the field has taken off, it should also be mentioned that it is very far from gaining widespread acceptance. Various fields of energy can be imaged within the brain's physiology suggesting a level of energy which can be measured through the use of the meridian system in our bodies. Hawkins cites the energy field of "love" amongst the most powerful energy fields discussed and this field increases through a progression of the Kundalini flow but his teachings are likely to be overlooked by the majority of professionals in the field. On the subject of Kundalini and its eventual effects on humanity, Hawkins has said the following;

The spiritual energy, or kundalini, as it is often called, eventually is more strongly dominant with the progression of consciousness until, finally, its presence becomes detectable by sensation..... The subjective sensation of this energy field is exquisite and sweetly pleasurable. Characteristically, it is experienced as flowing up the back and the spine into the brain where it can be made to flow into any specific area of the brain by merely focusing attention. At times the energy flows of its own accord out the front of the body from the heart region by virtue of its own intrinsic nature. The energy flow potentiates healings or transformations in self and others. It is the influential energy field that potentiates the 'miraculous'. (Hawkins, *Truth Vs. Falsehood*, pg.69)

Hawkins also cites the use of kinesiology to measure the energy field of various teachings and Helen Shucman's famous book *A Course in Miracles* is cited amongst some of the most powerful. Through the use of autosuggestion, Shucman's lessons help to remove the energy of fear which is inherent in a person's meridian system and replace it with the energy of love.

A Course in Miracles

Although the energy of love is often misrepresented as a physical, romantic energy between two people, Shucman's lessons help to teach an energy which can be sustained by a person regardless of whether they are in a "special relationship" or not.

Every special relationship you have made has, as its fundamental purpose, the aim of occupying your mind so completely that you will not hear the call of truth. (ACIM, 3:3)

ACIM and many psychiatrists and professionals all suggest that much of what we experience in romantic love relationships is part of an attachment of the ego. Although love itself is not an attachment, the manner in which it may take its expression can often be mired in attachment. To this point Dr. David R. Hawkins has also expressed a similar sentiment.

Love as depicted in the mass media is not what this level is about. What the world generally refers to as love is an intense emotional

condition, combining physical attraction, possessiveness, control, addiction, eroticism and novelty (Hawkins, 1995).

ACIM teaches us that we can be in a romantic relationship or not and love can manifest itself through us regardless. Those who teach that a person must be "alone" in order to be "spiritual" are equally mistaken as those who think they must find a partner in order to have love. Both conditions are equally amenable to a spiritual awakening and it is only our beliefs about love which block our progress.

Freedom Through AA and NA 12-Step Programs

Because the field of energy is experienced as an enjoyable sensation through the Kundalini flow, there is a synonymous experience with the release from attachments. One attachment that I felt release from was the fellowship itself and I began to appreciate the fellowship of other spiritual individuals beyond the restrictions of the meetings. You simply don't need the things you thought you needed after the Kundalini begins to manifest and, as one individual, August Turak of www.augustturak.com, once described, "All I needed was a sleeping bag and a library card!" The energy can easily sustain a person to where they can lead a spiritual life largely spent outside the fellowship of NA, AA, or any other group or fellowship. There is a desire to understand what is happening and to find a way to increase the energy. Then we move beyond the old restrictions that we once felt and into a group of new associations. There is very little else that seems necessary in the first few years but there are also some warnings that should be kept.

It should be emphasized that this does not mean that the principles of the program become unnecessary or that the person becomes 100% immune to the effects of the world. While the fellowship may take a back seat, the principles are still a very necessary aspect of every addict and alcoholic's recovery. For this reason, it may also become useful to incorporate additional language and teachings about the term "Spiritual Awakening" as our recovery progresses. In this way we may continue to benefit from the basic principles of the program but only wear them under the guise of a new language or cultural set of practices.

Teachings which stand outside the 12-Step terminology but which are qualified in terms of the same spirit of the program are indispensable to our continued spiritual growth. These alternative studies may also point to many of the same pitfalls which "old timers" in the fellowship of AA and NA will also point to when we are attending meetings.

Nutrition experts

If our bodies are weak and unhealthy, we will find it difficult to allow a lot of the Kundalini energy into our system. Many books have been written on strict dieting and even the necessities of "celibacy" or other ascetic practices. The personal experience offered here is that these requirements are oftentimes overstressed just as much as they are neglected. In fact, they are overemphasized by those who may have experienced a Kundalini awakening and merely have a predisposition for certain lifestyles and habits in their personal life. It is up to the

individual person to take their own inventory and to be searching and fearless in this inventory.

The Kundalini is not dependant upon any kind of lifestyle or diet. It is a self-sustaining energy that can be allowed to enter into the body at will and operates according to its own rules and order. Similarly, if our minds are pre-occupied with other affairs and not focused on the practice of mediation and spiritual work, we will not be disposed to handle large amounts of this energy. We will be pre-occupied with all the other subjects and requirements of life that we have unwittingly placed upon ourselves. We change ourselves only in as much as it assists us in raising our daily awareness. If herbal medications or specific foods tend to have this affect on us, this is fine and agreeable to our intention. If we are not necessarily disposed to these dietary aids, then we should recognize that they are not necessary. What is most important is that we do what works for us and follow our intuition in this respect. In this spirit, a quote from St. Paul may explain this sentiment;

Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?.....
Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break,
and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new
wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. (Mat 9: 14 -9:17)

Working our personal program, whatever this may be, leads us to become like new bottles which can hold new wine. This metaphor is the same spirit of what is meant when we discuss the preliminaries for a Kundalini awakening. Although meditation is the primary avenue where we may seek to awaken this energy inside ourselves, there is also considerable preparation which needs to be attended to in our normal, everyday lives. We learn to make ourselves more positive and aware because this positive energy is what eventually flows into our body as a physiological phenomenon. We need to be prepared for it both mentally and physically.

Psychotherapy

The thoughts and emotions which follow us around during the normal, average day, also become present during our mediation time. We may separate or "compartmentalize" our meditation time from our everyday life but this is merely an artificial mental construct. Thoughts and emotions happen of their own and we have little control once they are set into motion. Meditation reveals this very well in the beginning and even into the advanced stages. Through slow, deliberate efforts, the currents of thought and emotion will change but only after they are confronted directly. On this point, Dr. Jung also counsels us in the following way;

The Shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole egopersonality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. Indeed, self-knowledge as a psychotherapeutic measure frequently requires much

painstaking work extending over a long period of time. (Jung, CW9: AION: 14)

Chakra Healers

The symbolic "knots" which are said to exist in the specific chakra sections of our energy flow are plugged by negative emotions. The most pervasive of these negative emotions is fear and most of us are not even aware of our fears. Even when we become aware of them, we find it extremely difficult to make ongoing attempts to face them in our everyday lives. Becoming aware of our own personal fear is an enormous step in the awakening of the Kundalini energy because fear is the primary block to the progressive flow of that energy in our meridian system.

If the chakras suffer imbalance from excess pressure at the physical level for too long, physical symptoms of disease begin to appear....A positive perspective is not just a tool. Joy is a specific vibration that harmonizes the body towards its perfect pitch. Fear and anger are also specific vibrations that dampen your immune system, interfere with proper digestion, and negatively affect your body chemistry. "Don't worry, be happy" is our vibrational prescription for you. Being happy, just laughing over something for a minute, boosts your body chemistry for six hours. Getting angry also affects your body chemistry for six hours, sending it plummeting the other way. So, being aware of your moods is the first step to being in charge of your moods. (Frankel, 2007)

The point which is of greatest importance here is the fact that consciousness functions as a living, growing energy inside our physiology and it is actually this energy which sustains our bodies and governs the functioning of our organs and our health. We are typically unaware of this energy and assume that doctors and other scientific experts understand the functioning of our bodies and consciousness better than anyone else. We forsake an attention to our own consciousness in favor of the scientific explanation in our neuronal activity.

In fact, psychiatry had become overwhelmingly convinced that consciousness itself was a result of neuronal activity and had, itself, turned to pharmacology in the early 80's. Psychiatry also succumbed to the mechanistic reductionism of brain chemistry and, paradoxically, became increasingly dehumanized, with a progressive loss of empathy for the uniquely personal human experience. The everyday practice of psychiatry became dominated by the development of effective psychopharmacology as well as by the business model introduced by the insurance industry. (Hawkins, 2004)

Medications and the Professional Paradox

A fundamental error in the nature of consciousness has existed at the foundation of much of our modern day scientific understanding and the world of modern professionalism. Nonetheless, it is also a grave error to condemn and dismiss the scientific and professional world in favor of one's own individual counsel. Such an attitude results in a self-centered, brash approach to spirituality which fails to take others into account.

As we advance in spiritual consciousness, we must remember that we ourselves are now becoming especially rare individuals who must tread a very thin line in the world. We can neither condemn the discoveries of science nor look upon them as if they were the absolute authority. Dr. Hawkins is a renowned psychiatrist and medical practitioner who is very specific about the value of medications in psychiatry as well as the errors that exist in modern day psychopharmacology. He makes a point to clarify that the introduction of such medicines like Lithium, Zoloft and other anti-depressants have benefitted many addicts and alcoholics and should not be shunned or condemned in the same manner that we typically tend to look at narcotics or alcohol abuse in the program.

Every individual is different and it is an extremely personal issue about whether or not to take anti-depressants or other medication in order to supplement our recovery. Dr. Hawkins notes that there is an upside.

The upside of these developments, however, [in pharmacology] was the benefit and pragmatic value of a widespread reduction in the suffering from painful subjective symptoms, such as psychosis, depression, and anxiety. (Hawkins, 2004)

The issue of psychiatry, psychotherapy, medicine and science is complex simply because of the mass variety of individual cases and people who each require special consideration in their personal needs. There are also the many different psychiatrists to consider, many of which have no experience or belief in anything like the Kundalini or spiritual energies. It is highly recommended that the newcomer proceed with caution and seek advice from many people, both professional and non-professional, as there is still a great deal of information which will eventually be revealed.

A complex array of symptoms and psychiatric disorders that manifest in the newcomer can lead to extreme difficulty in the study of consciousness. As recovering addicts and alcoholics, it is imperative that we first establish a stable foundation in our program before venturing into the practices contained in the 10th, 11th and 12th steps. This caveat is mentioned in the opening sections but also mentioned here as it cannot be overly emphasized. When we fail to establish a solid emotional foundation in our program, we proceed at great risk to our own recovery.

Instead of the clear explanation about consciousness which we hope to gain, we encounter experts who will stress the importance of the "how" and "what" aspects of our bodies functioning. Although they are often limited or unconcerned about the "why" of our spiritual condition, their advice may still provide some valuable assistance to us in terms of the basics of emotional healing. Although the issue of consciousness is still largely misunderstood amongst scientists, it is relevant to the newcomer even in simple things like socializing and holding down a

regular job. It shouldn't be taken too serious as there are also many grave cases where the newcomer may use issues about "higher consciousness" as an excuse to avoid the more pertinent in issues in their life. Chasing after "Crystal healing methods" or taking up an interest in "UFO's" could mean that the addict is missing the forest for the trees.

Basic practical issues like learning how to do our laundry and washing the dishes each day are part of a necessary foundation for what may eventually lead to great leaps of consciousness. Facing a "fear of conflict" or a simple "fear of heights" may provide a much greater degree of healing to the recovering addict than 100 hours with a set of beautiful crystals. If the crystals work, then by all means, use them. Consider the more practical side of life as well as we are all subject to simple things like money and a good household.

Consciousness defies explanation because of the fact that it is primary to the very explanations which portend to describe it. Nonetheless, professionals still hold a great degree of valuable advice to those who suffer from emotional difficulties and practical problems in life. Imagining ourselves to be "ahead of these professionals" is like a young child seeking to place order on his or her parents. Once a child learns to take care of his or herself, they may go on to study esoteric ideas and apply them more responsibly in their life. Only then may they begin to take issue with advanced problems such as the one's Dr. Hawkins discussed in his book *Power Vs. Force*.

Because science is by its very nature concerned only with observable phenomena, it has never been attracted to spiritual concepts as a subject for consideration, despite the fact that many great scientists throughout history have personally testified to subjective experiences of pure consciousness occurring in the course of, and frequently, crucial to their work. (Hawkins, 1995, pg. 256)

Great scientists who experienced moments of "pure consciousness" in the course of their work were not themselves hostile to science. We can also recognize that science has its own limits but that it also has a great deal to offer us. The answer to many of our questions about "Why things happen the way they do" cannot be answered by science but the answers may eventually be found in terms of our own conscious energy. In this sense, much of which remains "unconscious" to us can be investigated through spiritual practices.

One such spiritual practice which is recommended involves the act of "self-remembering" which is described in detail through the works of Peter Ouspensky and George Gurdjieff. The simple practice of self-remembering during various times of the day can build a habit and eventual character of higher consciousness over time. It is imperative that we become more conscious of the inner workings of our own thoughts and emotions and learn to face down the negative blocks which exist in terms of our anger, obsessive desires, fear, grief, apathy, guilt, and shame. This practice can be done while carrying out many of the daily chores of life which our mind tends to have an aversion to. Washing the dishes, cleaning the house, getting our car inspected, paying the bills on time and socializing with friends are all part of a basic foundation for higher consciousness.

An attitude of positive willingness to investigate life and to participate in the

present system is part of what Ouspensky and Gurdjieff refer to as “becoming a good householder.” Dr. Hawkins refers to this as an attitude of willingness and this simple act, carried out in all our affairs, can eventually result in a great leap in consciousness over time.

The most important element in facilitating an upward movement in consciousness is an attitude of willingness, which opens up the mind through new means of appraisal to the possible validity of new hypotheses. Although motives for change are as multitudinous as the innumerable facets of the human condition, they're most often found to arise spontaneously when the mind is challenged in the face of a puzzle or paradox. (Hawkins, 1995)

This emphasis on puzzles and paradox will be examined more closely as we progress. Of considerable notability is the Zen tradition which employs the use of the koan or “puzzle” in order to inspire a spiritual transformation such as the Kundalini awakening. Having begun the initial awareness of how professional support may help us to uncover our own unconscious tendencies, we also recognize the limitations of the professional world. By embracing this ambiguity, we may now move on to more pressing concerns about the practical preparations for the Kundalini awakening and how these can be put into action in our own lives. This will be done by considering the paradox which Dr. Hawkins himself has presented concerning the idea of “perfection” as well as an attention to daily spiritual exercises and the practice of meditation.

Chapter Five-Preparing for an Awakening

Introduction

While the 12 steps are indispensable to the addict or alcoholic in bringing about the eventual spiritual awakening which is indicated in the final steps, each person interprets these steps differently and employs different efforts in various directions. Moving to another culture was something which was very disorienting but it was also a means to catalyzing and inspiring higher consciousness and an expansion of my awareness. Any spiritual work can be furthered by moving out of our comfort zone and placing ourselves in a situation where a heightened awareness is more pressing. M. Scott Peck comments on this phenomenon in his famous book *The Road Less Travelled* saying,

The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.

In addition to the supportive words from Dr. Peck, we can look at the fact that Dr. Carl Jung and Dr. Hawkins also spent many years living in foreign cultures and studying the similarities between their own behavior and that of others.

Culture Shock and NDE's

Culture shock may be related to a sort of ego death and, since many report a Kundalini awakening as a result of a near death experience, the phenomena can be addressed in both contexts with parallel observations. One scientific study by Bruce Greyson of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine mentions the relevance of NDE's in relation to Kundalini awakening and we may infer the same for the effects of culture shock;

Near-death experiences (NDEs), transcendental experiences on the threshold of death with profound implications for both patient care and religious belief, have been hypothesized to be related to the awakening of a biological process known in Eastern traditions as Kundalini. In a test of this proposed association between Kundalini and NDEs, a sample of near-death experiencers acknowledged significantly more symptoms of a physio-Kundalini syndrome than did control subjects. (Greyson, 1992)

According to Grayson, near-death experiences (NDEs) are profound spiritual or mystical experiences that many people report as they approach or start to cross the threshold of death. A loss of the attachments to life suggests that the correlates, contents, and consequences of near-death experiences are similar to the

Kundalini awakening in many ways. A systematic removal of attachments was something which also led to the experience in my personal case.

In the Philippines, there is no basic infrastructure like there is in America. This is not to say that American infrastructure is "bad" or somehow detrimental to the awakening of the Kundalini. It is to say, on the contrary, that a more profound appreciation of the value and benefits of American infrastructure is needed by the general public. Rather than criticizing the US government and the mass consumption of our culture, a realization that these things are actually supporting the survival of a global population is what is needed. What took place for me was a death of the ego in terms of my criticisms. A greater appreciation for what I had grown up with now set in and I made a reversal in my thoughts and feelings about the greatness of America.

In addition to the already mentioned similarities of culture shock with NDE, there are other similarities in that both experiences resist the ability to be explained through science. These descriptions that I am making are not rigorous, testable observations that many people could take part in and make clear conclusions about. They are general brush strokes much like the truths we see in astrology or the stock market. They are not science but they still hold a certain level of truth.

As Greyson notes, the complex phenomenon like the near-death experience does not lend itself to a simplistic mechanistic explanation. As for the Kundalini, subjects often resort to the chakra system of symbols as a way of explaining what has happened and this symbolic language is not amenable with the strict mechanistic explanation provided by mainstream science.

Another indispensable book by renowned author Ernest Becker, is his Pulitzer Prize winning *The Denial of Death*. Becker describes in great detail how the fear of death pervades each and every behavior and his observations can almost be said to reach a scientific level of truth. The practice of uncovering these subconscious fears can become extremely helpful to the recovering addict and alcoholic.

The idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity - designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny of man. (Becker, 1997)

After a sufficient amount of clean time, we learn that our active addiction was part of a concerted effort to run from our own mortality. Seeking to cover up this essential fear, we had developed a calculated agenda of self-reversal where we carried out our own self-destruction in hopes of gaining control over it. By supposedly "taking control" of our own self-destruction, we imagined ourselves to be in charge of it only to discover the hard way that the key to our life was held firmly in the hands of our Higher Power.

Learning to uncover our subconscious fear of death, places that same fear in the hands of our Higher Consciousness. We become aware of it rather than repressing it with drugs and alcohol. Our ego slowly loses its grasp which then brings up more fears that we never knew we had. This is the process of recovery at its deepest level and it eventually requires a greater and greater dependence on a Higher Power.

Combining 12-steps with ACIM

Whether it be through the consequence of meditation, a drastic change of environment or a near death experience, the transition into the Kundalini energy field may be made much easier after the preliminaries of spiritual work have been addressed and adequately mastered through two programs known as the 12-steps and A Course in Miracles. The use of repetitive affirmations or what is known in modern psychiatry as "autosuggestion", was developed by Helen Shucman and William Thetford in the late 60's. These affirmations in ACIM are equivalent to many of the ideas contained in the perennial philosophy of Aldous Huxley and they also coincide with both Eastern philosophies and Christian mysticism. They are highly recommended as a good starting point for addicts and alcoholics who wish to expand their spiritual program to new heights. Supplementing this work alongside the 12- steps is a popular practice in both fellowships today and the two philosophies work well as partners.

Supplementing Studies in Non-Duality

In addition to the group work which can be easily done through Helen Shucman's book and the 12-step fellowship, the work of Dr. David R. Hawkins is extremely beneficial and has a powerful transformational power. Dr. Hawkins offers many books and DVD seminars which can assist a person to establish a more solid program of recovery and move up to the more disciplined practices in the 11th and 12th steps. Other addicts have found the works of Eckhart Tolle, Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Muktananda and many other popular spiritual teachers as extremely enlightening and are recommended here as well.

A daily regimen of study and practice can be marked on a calendar each day so that any addict's progress can be monitored and observed by his or herself. Then an attitude of fun and enjoyment can also be adopted so that peace and contentedness is not forgotten as the essential point of the endeavor. Strict discipline along with a somewhat aloof attitude can create a seemingly ambiguous arrangement which is actually quite fortuitous in the eventual awakening of the Kundalini. This is because I allows for the regular enigmas of life to work their way into one's spiritual program and these enigmas are often the greatest catalyst for an eventual crack in the ego's proverbial eggshell.

Increasing Ambiguity

We learn to increase our capacity for ambiguity and thereby allow the "melting" of our hardened mind structures which are actually imprisoning our consciousness. The mind works according to a linear thought structure and has difficulty accepting that there are almost always two sides to every coin. Through a welcoming of ambiguity we can increase the potential for light to filter into our minds. These kind of preliminaries, which are best done through the help of a sponsor, should only be done after we approach a degree of stability or "normality" in our basic daily lifestyle.

A natural progression each day will finally become a habit which creates a

more solid character over time. During seemingly slow periods of progress, a hidden acceptance of negative energies may be part of a necessary development which can even take many years before it is completed. Periods of complacency also become necessary and should be accepted as part and parcel to the normal progression of one's development.

Practicing Meditation

Developing preliminary activities alongside the basic work of the 12- steps can eventually result in a circumstance where daily, seated meditation becomes the central focus of the practice. The days when meditation seems the least enjoyable can also be the days when the most benefits are gained. This precept is similar to what is said about addicts and alcoholics who don't "feel" like going to meetings. Those times when meetings seem least desirable can also be the most beneficial times to attend.

The main focus in spiritual work is awareness and not necessarily a certain state of affairs in one's life. We learn to accept whatever emotion or mind state befalls us but to continue acting according to our spiritual program, thereby increasing the awareness of what we are as "perfect."

The 'final moment' opens up in a split instant as an overwhelming illumination, realization, and presentation. The last step can be the consequence of the elimination of all that previously stood in its way by virtue of diligent spiritual practice. There are often preliminary warning flashes of advanced insight, or Satori- sudden unbidden moments of absolute stillness and peace in which time stops and the perfection and beauty of Creation shine forth (Hawkins, 2003, pg. 277).

If we experience negative emotions in our meditation, we can trace these back to the illusion in our mind that something could be perceived as "imperfection." By looking at the activities of our lower mind, we slowly and deliberately move back from it and make room to develop a higher mind. According to the many spiritual sages throughout history, the world is just as it should be. It is part of a large interplay of karmic influences whose reasons and pattern are largely hidden from our view. Our limited bi-cameral mind is incapable of telling truth from falsehood and this humble recognition is something that we must work on repeatedly if we are to make progress in transcending it. Through the practice of meditation, we actually grow a higher mind which eventually acts as a governor of our lower mind.

Moving Away From Comfort

Placing yourself in an environment where you are out of your comfort zone and using the practice of meditation as your source of peace and relaxation can create a situation where your awareness breaks through to a new level. This is because it catalyzes the ego's tendency to project the illusion of "imperfection" onto

the world around it and forces the need to seek peace in a more rigorous manner. In a sense, you pit your ego against your spiritual awareness and, as Sherlock Holmes once said "The game is afoot." This "ego versus awareness" scenario is also sought after in Zen Buddhism where spiritual masters hit the Zen monks with a stick in order to help them to raise their awareness during meditation. Such extreme measures are not necessary but the spirit of the practice is noted as valuable.

In addition to the daily routine of comfort and the conscious choice to move away from this, reading is a practice which is largely similar to seated meditation and can be taken up each day as part of a disciplined move away from the "comfortable." Spiritual experiences are written about in countless books and one of which is highly recommended is entitled *Kundalini; The Evolutionary Energy in Man* by Gopi Krishna. His example of a Kundalini awakening is indispensable for addicts who hope to realize this same condition through their pursuit of the 12 steps and ACIM.

In addition to the works of Gopi Krishna, the works of Dr. David R. Hawkins are also recommended such as *The Eye of the I*, *Devotional Non-Duality* and *Transcending the Levels of Consciousness*. From these works, a deeper understanding of the road ahead can be more easily intuited and can result in profound changes in a person's consciousness.

The Spiritual Ego

The practice of meditation and moving outside of our comfort zones becomes easier over time and so there must be a vigilance to renew our efforts in a new direction. In the beginning, it is an effort that we will surely "take credit" for. Laziness and complacency naturally settle in and we eventually realize that we don't get to enjoy our comfort zone if we want to continue moving forward. Clearly, the only option for the ego is to "take credit" for a job well done and the only other option is to continue shaking things up.

This is the mindset of pride which is actually the last hiding place for the ego and the most formidable of challenges. Since the development of the spiritual ego is essentially impossible to avoid, we should not condemn ourselves for it but merely become aware of its presence. Condemnation only breeds further opposition and an endless Gordian knot. The spiritual ego is universally true for any spiritual aspirant addict and is equated with the "pink cloud" syndrome in the fellowship of AA and NA.

This pink cloud often mutates into the NA or AA "Nazi syndrome" or what is also referred to as the "Book Beater" syndrome of which most addicts and alcoholics are familiar. With so many pitfalls, as well as the tendency to want to take the inventory of everyone we encounter, it may be best for newcomers to simply set the idea of "spiritual awakening" aside for the first few years. Most often it is the wisest policy to get on with more practical matters such as "how to expunge the police record" and "where to find my wife and kids." If there is an inherent intuition, however, that an entirely new level of awareness can be reached, then we can eventually set a course for the 12th step.

For those practitioners who choose the spiritual awakening as their life's goal, it can confidently be said that the practice of meditation will be extremely difficult, especially in the first two years of recovery. Every bit of practice helps and the endeavor does become easier. Eventually, what was very difficult only becomes mildly difficult and the time spent in meditation can be increased to as much as one or two hours a day.

Once the Kundalini is discovered and activated, the practice is no longer difficult but is sought out just as diligently as an addict seeks out his drugs or alcohol in active addiction. "This too shall pass," is a dictum which should never be forgotten because, even the Kundalini energy is something which begins to transform and the initial feelings of bliss and ecstasy are eventually replaced by a numbness and a renewed effort with the basic principles that first initiated our journey. These issues are all part of a larger discussion which is true for everyone at all levels.

When we first enter a twelve step program, we are quickly told to forget about the eleventh and twelfth steps. This is wise advice for the newcomer. We are told this because we are far too "screwed up" to be able to even sit down for a meeting let alone get the benefits of meditation. We need to focus, instead, on building a foundation in recovery before we can hope to get the true benefits that come from the long term work of the eleventh and twelfth steps. "Is that true?" we may ask ourselves, "or is that just another "old timer" honking his proverbial horn? The answer from the old timer is always, "Stick around a few years and find out." We should learn to let others take care of their spiritual maintenance and keep the focus on ourselves.

A word of advice to the old timer may also ensue. When sitting down and attempting to remain still, the mind of an addict or alcoholic tends to do the opposite of what it is asked. Even though the mind wants to race from subject to subject and forget itself, why not allow the newcomer the opportunity to try the eleventh and the twelfth step for themselves? As addicts we know that, whenever someone tells us not to do something, we always do the opposite. For this reason, we might as well let them give this a shot as well. Even knowledge learned in abstract will eventually have a positive effect on the recovering addict and there is very little danger in learning too much too fast as long as we remain clean and sober.

Chapter Six-Meditation for the Newcomer

Stories are often helpful to deliver a point and this point is especially difficult to make. There is a common sentiment that people who experience heightened states of consciousness are somehow "better" or "more holy" than others. As difficult as it is to explain, it is simply not the case that higher consciousness equates with being "better" in any sense of the word. This sentiment is often equated with being more "helpful" or more "giving" than others. This is also not true and yet the misnomer continues. One story about how I attempted to help several people in the Philippines may help to, instead, dispel these falsehoods and thereby do the only real help that is possible from one person to another.

A few years back, I had been driving to work and had witnessed an old, decrepit lady crouched against a brick wall on the side of the road. Car after car was passing her by as she laid there. She was seemingly injured or sick and obviously impoverished. My first idea was to leave this woman alone because she was likely to be very mentally sick. "There is nothing you can do for her," I thought to myself. "You cannot bring her into your home or take her to the doctor as she would likely resist any efforts. You have very little money to contribute to her well-being, regardless of your hopes. There are many people like her all over the Philippines who you see every day and the best thing to do would be to just get to work and begin your daily routine."

I listened to my first intuition and, having worked for several hours and eaten a good breakfast, I drove back out and passed the same woman on the road a second time. I was now ahead of schedule and planned to relax for a few hours so I decided to pull my car beside this woman and get out to help her. I was curious, at least, to see what the problem was and to see if my original intuition had been correct.

As I got out of my car and walked up to her on the sidewalk, she turned her head away from me in fear. Then she crouched down as if to say "leave me alone" but I continued to reach toward her with a handful of coins and to set them on the sidewalk nearby. As I finished this stubborn act, the woman turned her head back at me and screamed out in a foreign language. "Putangina mo! Lumayas ka sa harap ko!" She then picked up some dirt and rocks and started throwing it at me in a horrid fury. I hurried back around my car, hoping that she would not get up and attack the vehicle and I drove away in fear and embarrassment.

Spiritual teachers have often talked about situations like this, counseling us to "help the poor" and "reach out to the less fortunate." They have also expressed that "the world is perfect just the way it is." If both of these ideas are true, then which idea is more true than the other?

Teachers like these explain to us that we must meditate so as to hear the voice of God inside of us. The condition they describe as they approach a deeper relationship with God is that everything is perfect just the way it is but they describe a pathway to this truth which carries the tendency to help others and to reach out. This is the lesson of meditation.

We may have a karmic disposition to help others but this is also part of our spiritual ego at work. We are undoing a lot of spiritual karma and we need to acting in a way which counterbalances our old ways and yet still misses the mark in terms of the ultimate realization of the truth. We are not God and we cannot help people

except through an ability to impart God's truth to others. We don't understand the world around us and yet we are eager to "fix" that world and make it better. This is egotistical. There is nothing "wrong" with our efforts beyond its already perfect state.

Why is a world with a decrepit woman on the side of the road so perfect? Shouldn't she be sitting in a nice house and knitting a nice sweater while her grandchildren play at her feet? This is not true. This is an image we have developed of a decrepit old woman as "correct" and the other image is "wrong." The ego remains alive and well even after the Kundalini has begun to flow and we must refocus our efforts toward higher consciousness if we are to use our time more wisely. This is where the practice of meditation becomes so useful.

Several months later I came across another homeless woman whose granddaughter was sleeping with her each night along the side of a Starbucks coffee shop in Manila. I was amazed that this woman, well into her fifties would be homeless with a 14-year old granddaughter and nowhere to live. To make things worse, the granddaughter was deaf and her grandmother was sending her to a government funded school each day where she could start to learn sign language and make friends with other deaf children.

Each day the two awoke on the side of the building, having slept on the pavement. They began their day selling cigarettes to foreigners and the young girl would put on her school uniform and walk to the nearby school. Despite the obvious problems, I was hesitant to help at first. This was partly due to my previous experiences with the other old woman but also to the fact that I didn't know how to really help. Just handing them \$20 or \$40 would not likely change their situation. Moving them to a home would cost a great deal of money each month and would become a big responsibility.

This time I proceeded more cautiously and was able to convince them to visit another deaf school outside the city. I promised to help the two of them get off the street and into a small apartment outside of the city. I enrolled the young girl in a school for the deaf and began paying for their room and board. The girl informed me that it was her birthday and I told her I would buy her a gift as she began to prepare for her new school. The head teacher at the deaf school informed me that I should not buy her a birthday gift because most of the other students at the school were already worse off than her and she should be grateful for what she was already receiving from me each month. I informed the girl and her grandmother that I could not give her a gift, as I had planned and the two of them decided not to attend the school and to remain on the street.

Later the head teacher at the deaf school expressed regret for having squashed my plan to welcome the girl to her new school. The grandmother expressed that her granddaughter was getting sad when thinking of leaving her old friends on the street and that she didn't really want to move to a new school even if they would be given a free place to stay and their bills would be paid each month. The difficulty of taking care of two people became more apparent to me each week until I finally gave up and the grandmother thanked me for all my efforts. I felt a bit of frustration and yet I knew that there were already tens of thousands of individuals like this all over Manila and none of them were especially interested in leaving that city regardless of how terrible the environment seemed to me.

Several months later I had already moved to a small island in the Philippines which was quite far from the Starbucks where I had first met these two. There was a terrible flood reported in Manila and I tried to contact the girl and her grandmother by cell phone to see if they were all right. There was no reply after many messages sent and I assumed that their cell phone had been lost or they had been displaced by the problems with the flood.

I have not visited this Starbucks since and won't likely see these two again. This story only makes a point about the limits we each have to "save the world" from its natural karmic state. I have helped other people and avoided even more. The real message is that the world is perfect just as it is. We learn to see it as an opportunity for spiritual growth rather than a place to change into our vision of what is perfect or right or wrong. The world is bigger than us and our only real concern should be a higher awareness about that underlying truth.

What We Learn in Meditation

We seek to learn, when we sit still and watch our thoughts and our emotions, that all the pain, suffering, fear, anger, disease, destitution, war and confusion all over the world, are part of a greater plan. We are instructed to sit still and recognize that everything is perfectly in its place even if we don't understand it. How can we achieve this? Obviously it requires much practice. Coming to an awareness of this truth in meditation is something which

Buddhist and Hindu traditions have explained for centuries. It is something that is even said to require many lifetimes to achieve. We spend out entire life seeking out happiness and contentedness. We only find, at the end, that there are still challenges that will arise to disrupt that peace. The more we learn to sit still and simply watch what is before us, the more we can begin to uncover God's plan and to see that it is perfect.

Stop the Escape Plan

It is often said in NA and AA that you can't escape yourself because wherever you go, there you are. Indeed there is no escape but, before we came into the program, we used drugs and alcohol to give us an escape from who we were. After we enter recovery, it is only another set of escape mechanisms that we substitute for the old behaviors. This is progress, of course, because we learn to face our own tendencies rather than substituting them with an altered drug state. Nonetheless, the hard wired programming of our personalities is still fast at work and we need to recognize this as soon as we can. This can be seen quite clearly when we attempt to sit down and meditate.

When we insist on sitting down each day at the same time, we are sending a reminder to ourselves that nothing will ever help us to escape who we are. Immediately, as we sit, our minds are plagued by so many images and ideas of discontentment. One thought leads to another with the anxiousness and desperation that seems to never slow. If we are committed to the practice, however, we see that progress comes slowly and there are eventually great leaps in consciousness for those who continue. We face ourselves and our secret plan to escape and we come to learn acceptance.

Anticipating the Great Leap

Spiritual progress tends to happen in sudden leaps and then include long periods of seeming stagnation. The important qualification about seeming stagnation is that it is merely a "seeming" and not a reality. Actual progress takes place at each and every second of our recovery no matter how we may feel about it. Our minds and emotions are going through a transition and oftentimes the darkest period will be the most progressive of these transitions. This is true even in the case of relapse as many addicts and alcoholics have reported that their relapse seems to have been a necessary part of what brought them to a more serious application of the 12 steps.

These great leaps of consciousness are a motivating factor in our recovery but they should not be seen as the most important part of the journey. We know, for instance, when we first come into the program, we can give up many of our old behaviors and begin to feel a sense of freedom in recovery. Still, it is the same pattern underneath our old behaviors which still runs our thoughts and emotions as we continue. What seems like a highpoint may actually be fraught with problems and, what seems a low point may actually be the most beneficial work we have ever done. There is often a discontentment with what we still see and feel and this is hardwired into our minds. Our addictive personality, with all its grief, fear, anger and shame, is hardwired into our physiology as well. The spiritual program is the only real means of healing this malfunctioning hardware and we must learn consistency and discipline if we are to make a speedier progress.

Include the 11th and 12th Steps

In order to bring a complete healing to our addictive personality, we require a follow through onto the eleventh and twelfth steps in our spiritual program. Such follow through is rare in recovery and this is the reason for the low rate of permanent recovery in addicts and alcoholics. We must develop a daily routine where we are committed to prayer and meditation so as to eventually arouse a new energy inside us. This energy has been referred, in traditional spiritual practices, as the Kundalini energy in Hindu and Buddhist thought. In Christian terminology, this is synonymous with the Holy Spirit and it is actually a physiological energy.

By whatever name we give it, this energy can be tracked and measured through methods related to acupuncture and kinesiology which are only recently being made more accessible in the United States and Europe. These claims will be discussed in more detail as we progress but the main focus of this book will be to provide information about how this energy can be aroused in the addict and alcoholic so that there is no longer any desire for drugs and alcohol.

In the beginning of recovery, ideas such as these may seem far-fetched and out of reach. Even the idea of staying clean for more than two or three years may seem impossible to the newcomer when they first enter the program. Eventually we find ourselves with many years of recovery and these early doubts become a thing of the past. In fact, the Kundalini energy is so pleasurable and exquisite as it passes out of the heart region into the head that there seems very little desire for anything besides the energy itself once it begins to flow through the meridian system. Whether this is hard to believe is irrelevant to the fact that it is a reality for

the recovering addict. This same kind of progress can develop for an addict who takes an interest in the eleventh and twelfth steps. There is actually a wellspring of potential located in these two steps which is far from being intuited in the early recovery phases of our lives. Later, however, the reality of the Kundalini energy is something which can almost be dismissed as passé', albeit an enormously significant development in our recovery. Spiritual recovery is an infinite process with gifts far too great to even imagine for the newcomer. To this we often say, don't give up until you see the miracle.

Start to Practice Early

Oftentimes, a recovering person will not become serious about meditation until they have spent many years in the program. Learning to see our powerlessness, adopting a Higher Power, and making amends for our past can be a long process. It can even go on for decades before we finally acquire the ability to come to a more serious application of the final steps. Nonetheless, occasional practice of the eleventh and twelfth steps does not have to be considered a "taboo" just because we are newcomers. We can begin work on any of the steps any time we feel ready.

As addicts and alcoholics, our thoughts and emotions tend to be impulsive and they can carry us off quite easily from one place to another. We know this from our past when we used to engage in self-destructive behaviors. We also know it in recovery, as many of our character defects are still quite apparent. This is to be expected and an attitude of patience is always helpful in the first few years. After slow progress, we begin to settle down and find it possible to sit still each day and do absolutely nothing. As more time goes on, the "doing of nothing" becomes our central focus and the rest of the day is spent making this stillness more possible.

Return to the First Step

The first part of learning how to meditate has to do with learning why it is important. In the first step we learn that we are powerless. Although we have looked at this step and contemplated the truth of it, we also have certain reservations about powerlessness. After all, we do things each day and we accomplish things that we seem to be able to take credit for. Don't we deserve some credit?

Certainly we have some power in certain things, so what is meant by "powerlessness" in the first step? The fact is, every power that we have is something that has been given to us. As we recognize that everything, right down to the air we breathe, is a gift, the process of learning and recognizing this takes its course. We begin to learn and recognize that we are indeed powerless over everything even though we are driven to perform many actions in our lives. We set our marker at the abstract idea that everything is perfect just the way it is. Then we set other markers in place so that we can increase the likelihood that we will remember this each day. We have a mountain of reservations to climb over in terms of the practical applications of this idea. In fact, without the help of the other eleven steps, we may never come to understand this first step except in certain small ways each day.

First Time Always the Hardest

Many things are more difficult when doing them for the first time. Raising the Kundalini energy is similar to the process of learning to swim for the first time. The first swim is the most difficult to achieve. As most people know, once you get up the courage to go into the deep end to swim, it is much easier after that. In fact, it may only take a few weeks and the process becomes extremely easy. After the first swim, you may go on to become an intermediate swimmer, advanced swimmer or even a professional swimmer but nothing will ever seem as difficult as that first dive into the deep water.

This analogy can be taken further to consider the point of view of a person who has already learned to swim and become quite good at it. To them, it will seem ridiculous that so many people find swimming to be so difficult in the beginning. Beginning swimmers bring so many irrational fears to the practice that they seem to make an incredibly easy task look like it's a lifetime achievement. In fact, many people won't even pursue the practice at all because of its seeming difficulty and the fear they have of drowning.

Because the fear of drowning is so fundamental, it can sometimes help to face other less terrifying fears first. This is what is meant by the importance of preliminaries in the 12 steps. We take on our other less horrifying fears in early recovery so as to prepare to meditate later on and really look deeper into the darkest recesses of our consciousness.

When we used to think of quitting drugs, many of us may have quit for a short time and then gone back again and again. Once we hit bottom we became ready to take the program serious. In the same spirit of "hitting bottom" we can also put off a serious practice of meditation until we have really exhausted all other means of happiness in recovery. Fifteen years of sobriety and a relatively "normal" life felt, in many ways, like this addict was hitting bottom. Having come so far in recovery, I still felt like I was nowhere.

In a sense, I had hit a new bottom and this became the inspiration to take meditation more serious. This strategy worked and is recommended to other addicts who will ultimately reach the same ends. Meditation can serve as a new prospect for inner happiness that will deliver tenfold if you are committed to the practice.

Chapter Seven-After the Kundalini

Introduction

In the 12th step we read the words, "Having had a spiritual awakening..." and the suggestion arrives that we have finally come to the end of a long hard journey. The issue of what constitutes a spiritual awakening and the very different experience of being "Spiritually Awake" was first introduced in the Preface of this book concerning the experience and work of Eckhart Tolle.

What comes after the 12th step? Of course, many people have joked about this question with the popular response known as the "13th Step" but a completion of the awakening process which is known as Enlightenment or Samadhi in Eastern terminology is actually the more appropriate answer to a question which isn't as foolish as some may think.

In fact, if there were to be another step which could be added to these steps, it would include the idea of spiritual enlightenment rather than mere awakening. Spiritual enlightenment is actually quite different from the topic which we have been discussing as spiritual "awakening" and can be described as a higher state of consciousness which goes beyond the limits of the 12-step program. It includes issues surrounding our own mortality and what may come after our own death.

In his books *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle hints at this state of consciousness again and again but a critical error seems to have arisen in these works. Although there is little else that is important when it comes to the practical necessities of the program of Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholic Anonymous, the question may become important in phase 2 recovery and beyond.

Simply learning how to live free of drugs and alcohol is a monumental task in itself which most will never achieve. To consider the possibility of further spiritual growth beyond the spiritual awakening is almost surely reserved for a period which stretches far into the future and remains out of reach for many of us. Nonetheless, information heard very early may still have some pragmatic benefit in the future and may also act as a catalyst for the journey which is taking place in the present. For this reason, the next two chapters will be devoted to the topic of spiritual development which goes beyond the 12th step and can be more easily understood through a study of ACIM, the works of Dr. David R. Hawkins and many of the Eastern traditions.

Kundalini Rising

Once the Kundalini is awakened, the recovering addict continues to engage in the yogic practice each day and finds that they can handle more and more of the energy. There are conditions to this, of course, but generally there is a rising increase in the energy which seems to fluctuate much like a line on a stock chart.

As already noted in the Preface, Eckhart Tolle experienced an amazing increase in joy and bliss during the first few months of his Kundalini awakening. Over time, however, he became used to this energy and he experienced what could be described as a diminishing indication on his "spiritual stock chart". Experienced stock analysts are familiar with this tendency when the price of a stock suddenly

shoots up out of nowhere. Information that was not evident to the wider field of investors suddenly is made more public or "conscious" and the price skyrockets through previous highs.

After the initial upswing, the price drops back down slightly and then begins to establish an up and down motion where it finally rests at a general level which Dr. David R. Hawkins refers to as a "calibration level." This term is meant to indicate a general average and not an actual "price level" as so many people commonly misunderstand. Asking someone to "calibrate" your level of consciousness will not result in a feeling of being "better" or "worse" than someone else if you really understand the meaning of the term. You may calibrate much lower than your friend and yet they are having a terrible day. You encounter them and they may say all kinds of terrible things. While you are spreading love to everyone you meet, they are criticizing the weather and terribly upset about the outcome of the football game. How could it be that they actually calibrate higher than you?

The real meaning of a calibration is a measure of the wider field of consciousness that a person operates under. You cannot make an accurate guess about this just by meeting someone a few times and then creating a haphazard guess about them. In this respect, we have all heard the wise counsel "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Calibration is a method of determining the level of consciousness but it is subject to errors and widespread misuse just like every other human practice. These errors shouldn't concern us too much as the real work in life comes from spiritual efforts and not a calculation of who is "better or worse."

Once the Kundalini is awakened and the individual becomes used to the initial shock of positive blissful energy, an entirely new set of problems present themselves to the spiritual seeker and the level of consciousness is really not especially important. Great CEO's also know that the market price of their companies stock is not usually indicative of the real value of their company nor does it reflect an average that would be taken over a long period of price fluctuations. The danger of "overdoing" the Kundalini energy and experiencing such things as bouts of psychosis or delusional thinking are actually quite common for those who first experience it. There is also the danger of getting distracted from the process of continual "rising" of the energy and getting pulled back into the world of external identity.

In the first case of overdoing the energy, we learn to avoid "breaking the bottle." We learn to gage the amount of "spiritus" we can allow into our system and we slowly adjust to it over a series of weeks, months and years. Although the process of life becomes infinitely more easy and enjoyable, it is still just a process and we have not reached the "end" as we may too quickly suppose. Our stock price will go back down at times and then there will be other quick jumps. Although the more experienced sponsors and old timers in the program will tell us that the 12-steps function more like an interconnected whole from which there is no additional steps to be added, this is also not entirely true. Further study into the nature of spiritual progress does indicate that there is more after what is termed a "spiritual awakening" and this has hopefully been explained in full already.

Further movement comes in terms of the manner in which we are awakening and it has an entirely new goal. Spiritual enlightenment is a completely different category and level of consciousness than what is termed "spiritual awakening." It is

both categorically different and qualitatively different in terms of how it is experienced. In fact, recognizing the difference can be part and parcel to avoiding the re-emergence of the spiritual ego after a spiritual awakening has begun. This seems to have been a critical error which Eckhart Tolle has made likely because he did not have the more advanced teachings at his direct disposal.

Difference Between Awakening and Enlightenment

In the 12th step of AA and NA, we learn about a “spiritual awakening” and the manner in which we begin to carry the message to others. Since the 12th step instructs us to carry the message, we may find that we can busy ourselves with this activity for many years before we ever find it necessary to ask such esoteric questions as these.

For those who require a greater degree of certainty in their program, another answer is provided in these pages. The question of practicing these principles in all our affairs eventually becomes one with a vague and seemingly discouraging answer. Where are we headed? Are we making progress? If we can't succeed in practicing these principles in all our affairs, then we must also ask ourselves 'What are we really accomplishing?'

As in most questions about the steps, the confusion about any answer in the 12th step actually concerns a similar confusion and answer in the first step. Going back to the first step, we learn that we are powerless over everything. We are encouraged to find a Higher Power and develop a new perspective on our lives. We must turn everything over to our Higher Power and this means the recognition that everything is perfect just the way it is. We don't have to do anything or be anyone in order to realize the truth of the 1st step or the 12th step.

As easy as this may sound, it is actually something that is oddly missed by all of us. The world and everything that happens to us is part of a perfect plan by our Higher Power. If we are upset, angry, depressed, or obsessively desiring something more than what we have, it is because we are failing to recognize the perfection of what is.

The difference between a spiritual awakening, which is arrived at in the 12th Step, and the term spiritual “enlightenment” which comes afterwards, is that the first experience is one of trying to practice certain principles in all our affairs. The second experience is one of realizing that everything is perfect just as it is and it means that we *succeeded* in this attempt to see the world as perfect in every detail.

There can be no wrong in something that was made perfect by our Higher Power and spiritual enlightenment is the final recognition of this which is complete and without a doubt. It is no wonder that this state is considered rare and almost non-existent for those who still walk on two feet and see the world through two separate eyes. It clarifies the difference between an “awakening” and “enlightenment” because spiritual enlightenment means that we recognize that our Higher Power has made everything perfect just the way it is. It includes ourselves as addicts and alcoholics who are not separate from the world or the universe as a whole.

The Process of Waking Up

The understanding of the critical difference between awakening and enlightenment is actually an extremely pressing issue once the Kundalini has been awakened. To make it even more apparent, it may help to use a metaphor which was first popularized in ancient philosophy under Plato's famous "Allegory of the Cave."

How many times in your life have you been dreaming and mistakenly imagined yourself to be awake? Lucid dreaming is a common experience and we can easily consider the possibility that spiritual recovery is much like this. We enter the program and immediately believe ourselves to have "awoken" from a great slumber. We ride the "pink cloud" of recovery for several months while the old timers all sit around and just wait for the inevitable "rude awakening" to occur.

What we eventually learn is that we are still quite asleep but we don't yet know it. Old timers laugh at us and tell us to "stick around a while longer." Then, as we work the 12 steps, we begin to "wake up" but the whole thing is merely a process of awakening and not an achievement. A third phase must eventually ensue where we begin to tire of the strange dream but still haven't given up our illusory ego mentality.

Old timers with many years of recovery seem to be more "awake" than the rest of us but they also seem to be "asleep" in many ways. The fact is, there is a critical difference between a spiritual awakening and spiritual enlightenment and the latter is almost never found in the rooms of the fellowship or beyond. When the Kundalini energy enters our system, we can say that the first experience of sensing another world outside of this "dream world" has begun. It is often explained in literature and how most people are not able to feel this energy flowing through them until after they have practiced meditation for many years. Even more confusing, in terms of the calculation of how "spiritual" one person may be in relation to another comes from the fact that some are "born sicker than others."

Some individuals are simply pre-disposed to this energy and it has already begun flowing through them without their ever recognizing anything different. They do not fall into the same pitfalls that addicts and alcoholics encounter and they do not require a "Kundalini awakening" in order to be spiritual. They simply march through life with one success after another and the phenomenon is completely mysterious to them as well as to the others who watch them.

If you are an addict and alcoholic, it is highly unlikely that you were born with this energy although you may be more predisposed to acquire it after getting into recovery and practicing spiritual principles. Can some people be born with the Kundalini and others not? The answer is a resounding YES!

Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too,

who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest. (AA, Page 58)

The chances of functioning under a higher energy field become much greater after we enter recovery and our sensitive nature actually becomes an asset rather than a deficit. Still, solid answers will never come until after we “wake up” and this may be a process which takes a considerable amount of time.

Many of the pitfalls we experience in recovery will also be part of a karmic consequence as a result of years of destructive behavior which we now experience through the “less fortunates” we meet. We are paying back for behavior that we inflicted on others and this simply takes time. Nonetheless, these issues are clearly addressed in the works of Dr. David R. Hawkins as he clarifies the nature of higher mind versus lower mind and the issues of karma. The results of his research signal an enormous change in terms of the potential that is now available to the recovering addict. They can be extremely beneficial in determining where you are as an individual and where you need to go in order to increase your spiritual consciousness.

If we consider how slowly some of us wake up in our beds each morning, it is clear that this process of spiritual awakening may also be fraught with difficulties and could use as much help as is available. In taking our dream metaphor a bit further, as Plato did in his early work *The Republic*, we can now help to express the extreme rarity of spiritual enlightenment in our world today.

When it comes to waking up in our beds, most addicts and alcoholics will describe a process where they first open their eyes and then fall back asleep almost immediately. We are hypnotized by our dreams and they seem much more comfortable to us than the troubling world of waking life. Even those of us who have alarm clocks often hit the “Snooze Button” over and over again before we finally decide to pull ourselves out of bed and stumble into the kitchen to make some coffee.

Addicts and alcoholics seem to have a predisposition for living in those “inbetween” states of life and may not be likely to opt for a more stable and secure life of achievement and success until after many years after recovery. This does not mean that the prospects are hopeless. Great leaps in consciousness are afforded to those who put the practice of spiritual recovery at the forefront of their lives.

Regardless of our past, we can say that there is a point each day where we would categorize ourselves as “awake.” This is something that is available to each and every person at any moment and they only have to decide to seek after it. Once a person has committed to spiritual enlightenment in their heart, there is no longer any threat that they will lay back down and fall into a subconscious state. The images of the dream world will eventually leave their mind and their eyes will become wide open while they remain eternally focused on the present moment.

Enlightened and Awake

It is estimated by Eastern sages who have reached this state of consciousness known as Enlightenment, that only one in ten thousand people actually arrives at the specific state in their lifetime. Such numbers sound discouraging and yet, recent discoveries into the nature of consciousness and the

use of the kinesiologic test now suggest those numbers to be improving drastically. While others have claimed even rarer numbers, such as in the case of Dr. Richard Bucke and his famous work *Cosmic Consciousness*, it is no longer estimated that only one in ten million people every become truly enlightened.

Those same estimations are something which have been researched by Dr. David R. Hawkins in his consciousness calibration studies and which may be of special interest to those who are serious about the pursuit. Dr. Hawkins numbers are documented in one of his most important works *Truth vs. Falsehood; How to Tell the Difference* and are of great value to anyone interested in the subject. Enlightenment is said to be an extremely rare condition from which those who reach it, actually lose the ability for regular functioning.

In many cases, enlightened individuals have been said to lose the functioning of their body and even experience an immediate physical death. It has been said that "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" and, while all major religions agree that the spirit survives physical death, the body is often said to be too weak to survive the onset of spiritual enlightenment.

When Ramana Maharshi went into that bliss state spontaneously, he was not discovered for some lengthy period by which time he had been severely bitten by many insects and had been without sustenance for an unknown number of days. He was entreated to drink and eat. He responded slowly and eventually resumed movement and function; however, he did not speak in language for another two years. (Hawkins, 2001, pg. 199)

When enlightenment sets in, the mind is silenced and the perfection of All that Is becomes overwhelmingly apparent. The need for functioning is alleviated because of the ever-present fact that All is perfect just as it is. In cases such as this, the sage is said to leave the dream world behind and even the physical body in many cases. They enter into an entirely different world which is largely missed by the normal functioning human ego (Hawkins, 2002).

Spiritual enlightenment involves an entirely different world that is so drastic in its alteration of our consciousness that we are said to most likely leave the old world behind and move on to another realm. In extremely rare cases, there have been those who have made the special decision to remain in the metaphorical "dream world" and are termed Bodhisattva's in classical Buddhist literature. These rare individuals who remain for an extended period of time and hover between "awakening" and the enlightened state of being "awake." Their life becomes much like a silly game of lucid dreaming and, on extremely rare occasions, they even go about acting as a teacher to the others who they encounter.

In his famous treatise, *The Republic*, Plato recounts Socrates allegory of the awakening process, similar to our awakening from a dream. In the allegory, a prisoner is chained to the wall of a cave and breaks his chains to leave behind the world of shadows. When he attempts to describe the real world that he has now seen outside the cave, he is thought to be insane by the "normal" people and all others are warned never to pursue such interests as a crazy man might pursue; When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities;

.....And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the cave and his fellow prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?....And if they were in the habit of conferring honors among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows.. do you think that he would care for such honors and glories, or envy the possessors of them?....Men would say of him that 'up he went and down he came' without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; (Plato, 1991 Repr)

When we think about the extreme unlikely case of a person who would choose to remain in their bed after they have already "woken up" and then imagine them engaging in a lucid dream as a "teacher of others", we can see how extremely rare such a condition must be. It is not a condition which Eckhart Tolle or Oprah Winfrey is yet to be an example of albeit they are certainly very stellar examples of two people who are in the process of awakening. It is largely agreed by most people that these enlightened teachers have been limited to extraordinary individuals such as Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, and a few others listed in the works of Dr. David Hawkins books, *Truth Versus Falsehood* and *Devotional Nonduality*;

This is the level of the Great Ones of history who originated the spiritual patterns that countless people have followed throughout the ages. All are associated with divinity, with which their often identified. This is the level of powerful inspiration; these beings set in place the attractor fields that influence all of mankind. (Hawkins, 1995, pg. 93)

In order to gain an even greater perspective on the difference between those who experience a spiritual awakening and those who experience spiritual enlightenment, it will now serve to address the topic of Enlightenment more completely and to conclude our discussion on the 12th step and Kundalini yoga.

Chapter Eight-Enlightenment

Introduction

Concerning the topic of spiritual enlightenment, these last sections have not been written from personal experience. This chapter, is merely part of an objective report on the research and literature available from other sources.

Dr. Hawkins Scale of Consciousness is based upon the findings of kinesiologic research and can be verified through the method of muscle testing which has become quite popular in recent years. Of particular benefit is the use of this test procedure to discover one's own level of consciousness as well as the significant people with whom one associates with in their daily life. Such information has proved invaluable in creating a new program of recovery for many people and has ultimately led to the Kundalini awakening which has been described in this book.

Although the muscle testing method is especially cumbersome and difficult in the beginning, it can be used with the help of a professional kinesiologist who is knowledgeable of the method and the scale of consciousness application. If careful measures are employed, the method can provide very useful information of a very personal nature which can also be extremely useful and life-altering.

The Big Blue

On the subject of Enlightenment, an ongoing habit of devotional practice in the Kundalini yoga can become part of what leads to the onset of spiritual enlightenment but the issue is not under our control. We merely do as we are capable of doing and the rest is left up to the grace bestowed on us by our Higher Power.

Of considerable interest in understanding how to put ourselves in alignment with the Kundalini energy and to set the stage for enlightenment, is the depiction in the French film entitled *The Big Blue*. This film presents a character who is experiencing this spiritual transformation and who eventually reaches the state of enlightenment through the assistance of the rising Kundalini.

The Big Blue is a 1988 French film by director Luc Besson and is widely available in the original director's cut. Unbeknownst to wider public, this film is profoundly expressive of the experience of spiritual enlightenment and stands alone as the only true film representation of that very profound state of consciousness.

The main character and hero of the film is Jacques Mayol, a true-to-life competitive free diver who, in the fictionalized story, eventually reaches enlightenment after the tragic death of his best friend "Enzo." The story depicts a fictionalized account of the sporting rivalry which existed between the two famed free divers "Enzo" Maiorca and Jaques Mayol and superimposes a parallel theme of spiritual awakening and spiritual enlightenment.

The opening scenes of the film begin with the childhood of Jacques Mayol and show the manner in which he has developed a special relationship with the ominous depths of the ocean. Jacques is comfortable around the dangerous creatures such as the moray eel and especially the dolphins, which many people fail to recognize as commonly dangerous. Dolphins have been mythologized in modern society as

“genius” and fundamentally “benevolent” but there are many cases where people have been hurt by these creatures and solid evidence of their “genius” status is far from conclusive.

In the movie, Jacques experiences a tragedy when his father is killed in a diving accident. As the movie progresses we see how Jacques develops his relationships with others and with the ocean. He makes friends with the dolphins who he playfully refers to as “rascals.” In fact, there are several underlying themes to this movie which are extremely relevant to the eventual psychological transition into enlightenment.

The loss of his parental figures, puts Jacques in a unique position where he must learn to develop his own sense of morality and happiness in life. His relationship with the ocean is rich with allegory as it represents a parallel to a relationship with the rising Kundalini energy, often described as a “flow” and as exhibiting certain depths of tolerance for yogic practitioners.

In the final scenes of *The Big Blue*, the story becomes symbolic of the experience of spiritual enlightenment and Jacques experiences this transformation in a scene depicting him as “awakening” out of a deep sleep in his bed. The symbolism of the subconscious becoming conscious is represented as Jacques waking up out of a dream and moving into a state of enlightenment. His brain has experienced a strange pressure and he is shown to be bleeding from his nose and ears. This is also consistent with the previous statements of Richard Rose and others who have said “They will carry you out on a stretcher. It is that intense.”

Jacques bedroom has seemingly filled up with the Kundalini overflow, represented by the water, and he is pushed over the line beyond both life and death. Throughout the movie, we now recognize that the extensive underwater scenes were actually being presented as an allegory for the rising Kundalini energy which has now come to its fullest potential in spiritual enlightenment. To make the parallel theme of *The Big Blue* more clear, we must recognize that this movie presents a fictionalized Jacques Mayol who lives a life wherein he slowly becomes accustomed to the Kundalini energy. Although the character was modeled after the true-to-life free diver, there is much more to this story than meets the eye.

The real Jacques Mayol actually committed suicide many years after the filming was complete. In the film, Jacques desire to dive deeper as a competitive diver runs parallel to his spiritual will for experiencing a greater amount of Kundalini energy. The model of the real person actually serves the character well in the sense that enlightenment is similar to a suicide of sorts. It is a death of the ego rather than a death of the body but physical death often happens as a result of the realization.

As he learns to dive to deeper depths, Jacques also becomes a more loving person and a model of spiritual progress. The film has been praised as both beautiful and serene, and in equal measure criticized as being dull and uneventful. This is because the point has been largely missed by critics and because the true life character did not meet such a heroic fate as in the film version of his life.

The film version presents a character largely different from the real-life Jacques Mayol but gives a more accurate portrayal of a true spiritual seeker who would be successful in his achievement toward higher consciousness if he were to continue on this path. Despite its esoteric subject matter, the film did become popular in Europe although it was a commercial failure in North America. This was

due in part due to a re-cutting of the movie to include a simplified "happy" ending. The director later released a longer Director's Cut on DVD, featuring the original ending which depicts Jacques in the final state of spiritual enlightenment and is true to the main theme of the film.

In the final scene, Jacques floats in a state of perfection far beneath the surface of the ocean and he is shown as one with the creatures of the Big Blue. The movie was nominated for several César Awards and won France's National Academy of Cinema's Award in 1989. It was also given highest grade by Dr. David R. Hawkins who notes the hidden meaning behind the movie.

Of particular interest in *The Big Blue* is the relationship between Jacques Mayol and his romantic partner Joanna, played by Rosanna Arquette. Love is depicted between the two as full of ambiguity, both joyful and challenging. Death is also depicted as a progression toward higher consciousness. When Jacques best friend "Enzo" cannot withstand the pressure of extreme depths of the Kundalini. He loses his physical body and moves on to the next life telling his friend "You were right Jacques, it's better down there. It's a better place."

For anyone interested in these higher states of consciousness, they are allegorically represented in this film with stunning accuracy and *The Big Blue* is highly recommended as a great addition to anyone's program of recovery.

Scale of Consciousness

To make the final clarification about the difference between spiritual awakening through the Kundalini and final enlightenment, a reference to Dr. David R. Hawkins scale of consciousness can be extremely useful. Just as the 12 steps represent stages along a path of spiritual growth, Dr. Hawkins has developed a scale of consciousness which stretches beyond the 12 steps and gives greater clarification to the levels of negative behavior and the levels of higher consciousness along the stairway to enlightenment.

The Scale of Consciousness can be superimposed upon the 12 steps so that we see the levels of energy depicted on this scale as representative of spiritual growth in the 12 steps. Dr. Hawkins scale is more expansive and stretches from energy levels of 1-1000 which are measured through kinesiologic testing. All energy levels below the mark of 200 could be said to represent "old behaviors" and, in a sense, the first step of AA or NA could be said to begin at the level of 200 on Dr. Hawkins scale. If we continue, the steps would then extend upward until we reached the 12th step at the energy level of 600. This level is described in much greater detail and through first hand experience in the opening of many of Dr. Hawkins books. The scale would then extend far beyond this point so as to include energy levels ascribed to spiritual enlightenment and those which are depicted from the energy fields of 600-1000. (Hawkins, 1995)

When we superimpose the 12 steps onto this scale of consciousness, we can see that there would certainly be many more steps which come before we entered the program and after we completed our spiritual awakening. The lower levels which we might call "old behaviors" could be given varying levels of negative power so that, even though they were negative, some would actually possess less negativity than others. "Pride" is depicted on Dr. Hawkins scale as possessing the least negative energy of these and "Shame" and "Guilt" are also described as being

the most destructive of these "old behaviors." A careful study of the scale of consciousness which places all the emotions and teachings at various levels all over the chart is extremely transformational to the recovering addicts or alcoholic and is highly recommended for further study.

Conclusion

It is my greatest hope of this presentation that it would lead to readers seeking out the teachings of Dr. Hawkins work in earnest. Although the study of these books and tapes can be extremely difficult to absorb, it is an effort which can move the recovery of any addict or alcoholic to extreme heights and bypass many years of struggle and difficulty that would not otherwise be necessary if they had not discovered these teachings. As recovering addicts and alcoholics, we are extremely lucky to be living in a modern era where there are so many options and various teachings that we can benefit from. Now it is up to us to focus in on our recovery and to make the best use of what little time we have left. To this endeavor and the spirit of putting our recovery first and foremost in our lives, it can be said that the profound dictum "Straight and narrow is the path, waste no time" applies to all of us in great earnest.

Gloria in Excelsus Deo!

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