

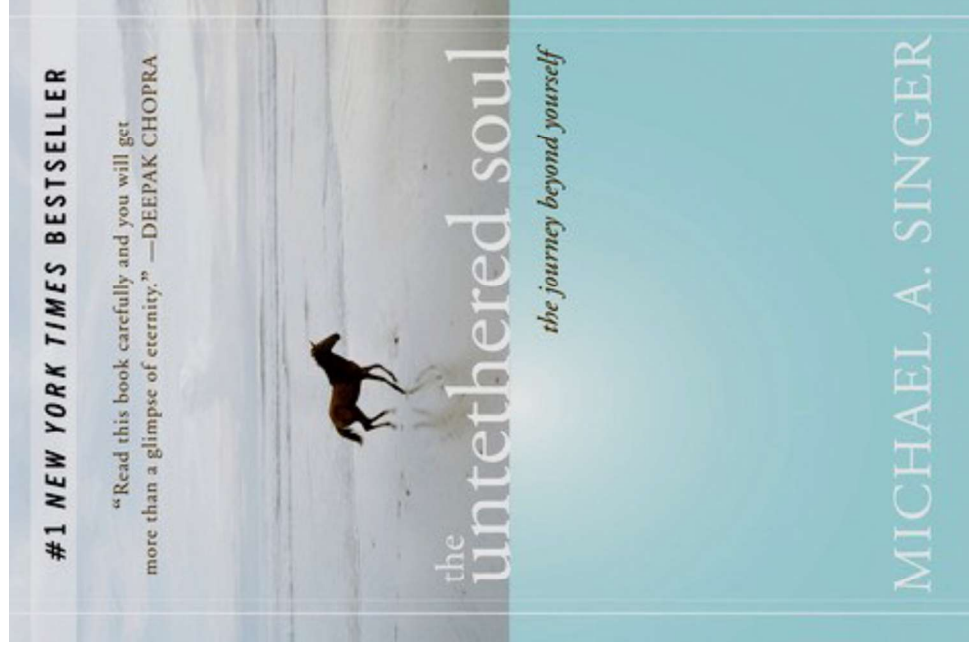


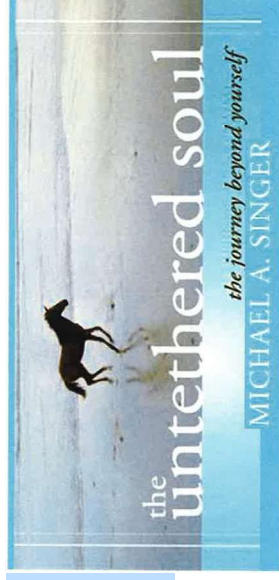
**Adventures In Spirituality 2014**

# Study Guide

**6 Weeks, October 5 – November 9**

**Closing Celebration November 14**





## Welcome to your Adventure in Spirituality



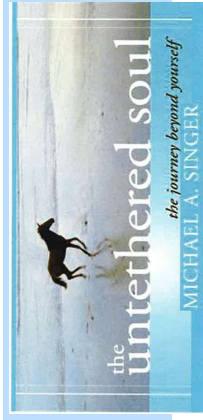
### **Acknowledgements**

Study Guide & Content Development

*Unity of Marin, Rev. Erin McCabe*

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*Frances Huffman, Joan Mellor*



# Prayer for Protection

By James Dillet Freeman

**The light of God surrounds us;  
 The love of God enfolds us;  
 The power of God protects us;  
 The presence of God watches over us;  
 Wherever we are, God is!**

## Sacred Circle Meeting Agenda

- Opening Prayer*
- Check-in Round*
- Review of Commitments & Sacred Agreements*
- Weekly Affirmation*
- Discussion Questions*
- Mindfulness Exercise/Meditation*
- Suggested Practice*
- Closing Round*
- Prayer for Protection*

## Chart of Our Course

WEEK ONE: THE AWAKENING CONSCIOUSNESS  
*Part 1*

WEEK TWO: EXPERIENCING ENERGY  
*Part 2*

WEEK THREE: FREEING YOURSELF  
*Part 3*

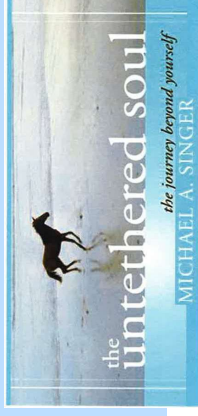
WEEK FOUR: GOING BEYOND  
*Part 4*

WEEK FIVE: LIVING LIFE  
*Part 5*

WEEK SIX: CREATING APPRECIATION BASKETS  
*Closing Celebration & Live Auction: Friday, Nov. 14*

SUMMARIES: *Part 1-Part 5*

PRAYER FOR PROTECTION



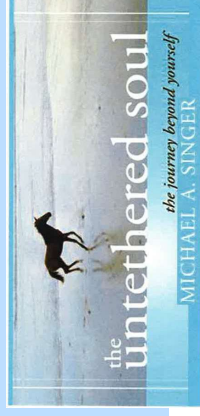
## The Commitment

Commitment transforms promise into reality. It is fueled by words that speak boldly of our intentions, and the actions which speak louder than words. It is making time, where there is none. It is following through. It is the power that transforms our lives and our world. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism.

- I commit myself to this process of spiritual exploration, of fulfilling my soul's longing to understand and express the divine to the best of my ability, with my thoughts, words and actions.
- I go to my heart, and invite other circle members to do the same, because I believe in the connecting power of God that dwells in the one heart of which we are all a part.
- I celebrate the greatness in myself and in you. Our lives are filled with infinite possibilities woven together in Oneness.
- I love and accept you just the way you are, and I respect your right to be different and to think differently than I do.
- I am open to sharing my thoughts, feelings and beliefs authentically in our exploration of Truth. I love you and myself enough to share my personal experiences openly and to listen lovingly and intently to the truth you choose to share.
- I choose words of kindness, encouragement, appreciation and gratitude to build a strong foundation of mutual support as together we claim the perfect expression of our individual spiritual natures.

## Chapter 19: The Loving Eyes of God

- ◆ Deep within us is a connection to the Divine. We can consciously choose to identify with that connection rather than the psyche of the body.
- ◆ As you release lower vibrations, you stop thinking they are you. As you let go, your Spirit drifts upward.
  - ◇ You have an experience of being drawn further back inside of yourself.
  - ◇ You are being held down to your earthly self, and feel more spacious inside.
  - ◇ You will feel less anger and self-consciousness and have less resentment toward others.
- ◆ The less you associate with physical and psychological parts of your being, you identify more with the pure flow of energy.
- ◆ Merging with the Universal Oneness of God is like a ray of light from the sun. A ray is no different from the sun.
- ◆ As you go deeper within, you notice that you are no longer judging.
- ◆ The human psyche is the only part of God's creation that passes judgment.
  - ◇ Nature just gives and gives to whoever will receive.



## SUMMARY - PART 5: LIVING LIFE

### Chapter 18: The Secret of the Middle Way

- ◆ The “Tao” represents the balance between the yin and the yang, feminine/masculine and light/dark.
- ◆ Everything has two extremes. The Tao operates in the middle, where no energy pushes in either direction.
- ◆ Living efficiently means you center all your energies on the center of the path.
  - ◇ You have far more energy when you stop swinging between the opposites.
- ◆ We waste tremendous energy when we operate at the extremes, yet the extremes offer valuable lessons.
- ◆ When you spend your energy trying to maintain the extremes, you get stuck in a rut.
- ◆ The way to achieve balance is to stop feeding the extremes with your energy.
- ◆ For people who live in the Tao, bad events may take place, but they last only as long as they take place.
- ◆ Sailing is a good example of dynamic balance — operating in the “sweet spot.”
  - ◇ You must find the center point of tautness of the sail against the wind.
  - ◇ You move from balance point to balance point, from center to center.

## Sacred Agreements

Sacred Agreements help create a safe and healthy environment for the group. It is important that the group reviews these agreements and reaches consensus prior to discussions.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Everything shared by group members is confidential. What is shared here, stays here.

### COMPASSION

Group members relate to each other with unconditional, compassionate acceptance. Judgmental comments, even unspoken judgmental thoughts threaten the group process.

### CONFLICT

Whenever people come together and speak truthfully, the potential for hurt feelings, misunderstanding and conflict exists. If such a situation arises, group members agree to address it within the group process, or one-on-one with the facilitator. Unresolved conflict is toxic to the whole group and not just to the parties directly involved.

### TRUTH & INTEGRITY

Group members are encouraged and supported by one another honestly and authentically to be who they are. Speaking the truth involves risk and can only occur safely in a compassionate environment.

### GROUP PROCESS

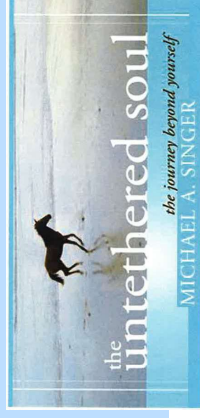
This process is for our own personal and spiritual growth, not group therapy. When sharing, group members are asked to use “I” statements and avoid trying to fix or solve.

### PARTICIPATION

Group members agree to be prepared by reading the required chapters and to participate in discussion and group activities; however, each person has the right to ask to sit out or modify his or her participation.

### RESPECT

Group members show respect for each other and the group by not interrupting others, arriving on time, and allowing everyone to participate.



## WEEK ONE: PART 1

## Awakening Consciousness

### Opening Prayer

*Together, we breathe into the sacred space we co-create here today. I am here by divine appointment. There is no other place to go or be. This is the body instant. Never again in time or space will this unique and beloved collection of individuals gather together to explore, bond, ideate and inspire. We hold each other in light and bless our community and each sacred circle journeying on this adventure in spirituality. We release this knowing into Law. And so it is. Amen.*

### Check-In Round

Share whatever is most alive in your heart & mind giving reflections from Sunday, insights from the book, and blessings.

### Housekeeping

Review Commitments & Sacred Agreements, Announcements.

### Affirmation

*I believe in the power to grow greatness. My thinking impacts my life and my life impacts our world. Confidently, I release insecurity for inner authority and selfishness for Selfhood. Courageously, I contemplate the nature of my beliefs, implication of my thoughts and impact of my actions. Energized and encouraged, I authorize only ideas and images that co-create a world that works for all.*

### DISCUSSION: Awakening Consciousness

What captured your attention the most in PART 1?

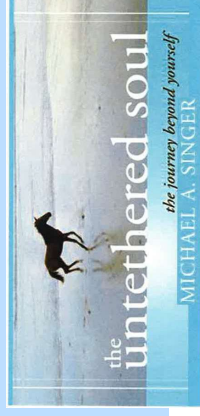
1. How have your definitions of “awareness,” “consciousness,” and the “voice” in your head shifted?
2. In CHAPTER 1, the author introduces you to the voice of your mind and provides an in depth discussion of the separation between you, (the awareness) and the voice you are hearing. In fact, the author states on page 10 that

- ◆ To enjoy your work, you have to let go of yourself and let events flow through you.
- ◆ Inner release is a spiritual path, the path of nonresistance, of acceptance and surrender.

### Chapter 17: Contemplating Death

- ◆ The possibility of death has the power to be a great teacher at any moment.
- ◆ Consider how you would act differently if you knew you were going to die within a short period of time.
  - ◇ How would you live your life in the little time you have left?
  - ◇ People who are truly awakened would not change a thing.
- ◆ You don't have to change your life — just how you live your life.
- ◆ Start using every day to let go of that part of you that is scared and won't let you live completely.
- ◆ If you live like you are facing death all the time, you will be more bold and open.
- ◆ When you challenge yourself to live as though you are facing death, your mind will find many suppressed desires.
- ◆ Life is not something you get — it is something you experience.
- ◆ If you live every life experience fully, then death cannot take anything from you.
- ◆ Let death be a liberating force in your life — don't fear it, let it free you.





## SUMMARY - PART 5: LIVING LIFE

### Chapter 15: The Path of Unconditional Happiness

- ◆ The key question: Do you want to be happy in spite of what may happen in your life?
- ◆ Essentially, the only rational choice is to enjoy life's experiences.
- ◆ Committing yourself to unconditional happiness will teach you everything you need to know about yourself, about others and about life itself.
- ◆ The path to unconditional happiness requires you to stay conscious, centered and committed.
- ◆ Keep your heart open and receptive at all times.
- ◆ Stay disciplined so the mind doesn't trick you into closing down.
- ◆ Meditate to keep your heart open and strengthen your center of consciousness.

### Chapter 16: The Spiritual Path of Nonresistance

- ◆ Spiritual work is about learning to live without stress, problems, fear or melodrama.
- ◆ Stress is a result of carrying around a set of preconceived notions of how things should be.
- ◆ Personal events in our lives leave impressions on our hearts and minds. These are the basis for our decision whether to resist or cling.
- ◆ The alternative is to use life to let go of these impressions and the stress they create.
- ◆ In most situations, there is nothing to deal with except our fears and desires.
- ◆ Relationships provide a great opportunity to learn to work with people rather than satisfy what is blocked internally.

“There is nothing more important to true growth than realizing that you are not the voice of the mind, you are the one who hears it.” While reading this chapter, were you able to see the difference between your awareness and the voice of your mind? Describe your experience when you made the voice say “hello.” Have you noticed that your mind will argue both sides of a decision, and you are listening to it discuss both?

3. If your “inner roommate” was a real person saying everything your mind says, how would you deal with it? Would you consciously give it permission to run your life?
4. The author describes being totally absorbed in a movie with all your senses. Can you relate? When this happens, how does it impact your ability to experience the fullness of life?
5. Singer goes as far as to call the inner roommate introduced in CHAPTER 2 a “maniac.” Can you relate to that? What kinds of things can you hear your inner roommate saying? Does it say things which are helpful, confusing, distracting, hopeless? Is the voice positive or negative, nasty or nice? Try to capture the general attitude, common expressions, typical messages, general reflections and perceptions your inner roommate typically offers.

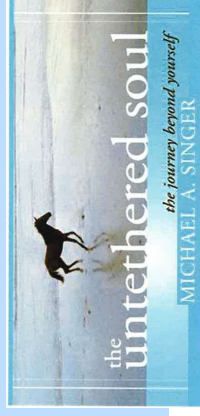
### Mindfulness Exercise

Give your inner roommate a name and describe both the roommate's traits as well as the relationship you have with this roommate. Discuss this experience. How does it feel to personalize your inner thought process?

### Suggested Practice for the Week

Notice what you recognize most in your experience of expanded awareness and in identifying the “inner roommate.”

### Closing Prayer



## WEEK TWO: PART 2

## Experiencing Energy

### Opening Prayer

*There is one Life and I am one with this Life. This Life is has guided me to this very moment. We allow gratitude to infuse our time together as we generate loving, sacred space for authenticity, courageous sharing, insights and awakening. We are elements of a magnificent whole. We release this knowing into Law. And so it is. Amen.*

### Check-In Round

Share whatever is most alive in your heart & mind giving reflections from Sunday, insights from the book, and blessings.

### Housekeeping

Announcements.

### Affirmation

*I believe in the power to grow greatness. My thinking impacts my life and my life impacts our world. Confidently, I release insecurity for inner authority and selfishness for Selfhood. Courageously, I contemplate the nature of my beliefs, implication of my thoughts and impact of my actions. Energized and encouraged, I authorize only ideas and images that co-create a world that works for all.*

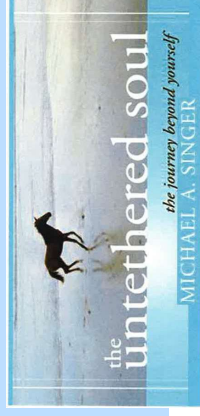
### DISCUSSION: Experiencing Energy

What captured your attention the most in PART 2?

1. Think of a time when you felt energetic and happy. What might have caused the energy to rise? What caused it to go away?
2. Have you ever noticed sudden changes in your emotions and thoughts? Can you pay attention to these changes, and watch them gain strength?
3. What are some examples of Samskaras and blockages that operate in your life? Which ones are negative? Which ones are positive? Can you see how even positive Samskaras can

- ◆ through as we learn to relax through our edges.
- ◆ The only things in your psyche are thoughts, emotions and energy passing through, but we often make these things solid.
- ◆ The psyche is all about “clinging.”
- ◆ The root of “self” is our awareness. We are not our thoughts, we are aware of our thoughts.
- ◆ If consciousness focuses too narrowly and relates more to the object of its focus, we lose the broader sense of self.
- ◆ Like a fish, which cannot swim through ice (frozen water), our energy patterns are fixed when they encounter concentrated consciousness and this is the essence of clinging.
- ◆ The more we narrow our focus, the greater the tendency to narrowly define the concept of self.
- ◆ Clinging creates the building materials that define a conceptual self. Many societies reward people for how good they are at clinging and building facades. It’s not that this is wrong, but the problem comes when we use it to define ourselves. To stop clinging can be very scary. It leaves our thoughts and emotions in an unanchored state. This can induce fear and panic and we tend to lose our bearings. We can get through the panic by going back into the consciousness that experiences it.
- ◆ We will learn that this need to protect ourselves is where the entire personality comes from.
- ◆ We come to see that we’re still holding on to events from early childhood, but we are not the events.
- ◆ To live spiritually, we opt out of this struggle. Events that happen in the moment, belong to the moment.
- ◆ They have nothing to do with you. Just let them come and go.
- ◆ The only path to inner freedom is through the witness.





## SUMMARY - PART 4: GOING BEYOND

### Chapter 12: *Taking Down the Walls*

- ◆ Things get quieter inside the more you sit in witness consciousness which leads to enlightenment.
- ◆ The analogy used is that of building a house with solid walls that don't allow light to enter yet in an open field surrounded by brilliant light. The house is made of thought and emotion. The walls are made of the psyche.
- ◆ We come to realize that darkness is not the reality, it is simply the wall blocking the infinite light. When we defend ourselves, we are really defending our walls.
- ◆ In life, we build a self-concept, move inside it, and defend the walls of that concept. We cling to aspects of ourselves that may have defined us earlier in life.
- ◆ Freedom is very close. It is just on the other side of the walls.

### Chapter 13: *Far, Far Beyond*

- ◆ Limitations and boundaries only exist at the points where you choose not to go further. Going beyond means going past the self-imposed limits we've placed on ourselves.
- ◆ If we go beyond our current belief systems and the models we created, we have to risk not believing in them.
- ◆ One good test is to do things that might make us uncomfortable, like not grooming before we go out.
- ◆ We have a choice to remain in our comfort zone or to work on achieving freedom.
- ◆ Many times we will trade our freedom for a cage that offers us the promise of protection.
- ◆ All cages aren't the same, yet they serve the same purpose. When we approach our limits, we feel insecure. Those feelings serve the same purpose as a cage. Like the invisible fence, a dog can learn to withstand the temporary discomfort while escaping. This is the same process we go

restrict your ability to be free and grow?

4. What are some trigger points in your life that signal when you are bumping up against a Samskara? Are you aware of what might have caused that energy to be blocked in the first place?
5. What do you find yourself resisting regularly in your life?
6. What weak points within yourself do you feel you constantly protect? What might happen if you did not protect them?

### Mindfulness Exercise

Close your eyes and picture yourself in a situation where you typically get upset when one of your Samskaras is triggered. Get in touch with the feelings and the internal energy that is aroused when this happens. Relax your shoulders and the area around the heart as the feelings come up. Breathe as if you are breathing through the heart itself. Notice how the breathing and conscious relaxation changes the experience.

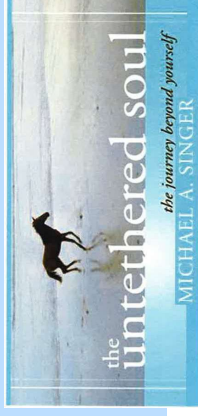
### Suggested Practice for the Week

When one of your Samskaras is triggered this week, get in touch with the feelings and the internal energy that is aroused. Consciously direct your shoulders and the area around the heart to relax as the feelings come up. Breathe as if you are breathing through the heart itself. Notice how breathing and conscious relaxation changes the experience.

\*Optional: Look up Heart Math [www.heartmath.com](http://www.heartmath.com)

<http://www.heartmath.org/free-services/downloads/free-download-library.html>

### Closing Prayer



### WEEK THREE: PART 3

## Freeing Yourself

### Opening Prayer

*We take a deep breath to center together and quicken our awareness to the divine energy growing within this sacred circle. We are a mighty magnet for powerful insights, expansive relationships and heart centered connections. This is our moment to thrive. We are supported by a loving Universal Good and we safely explore dissolving any illusions in the way of experiencing this truth. We release this knowing into Lam. And so it is. Amen.*

### Check-In Round

Share whatever is most alive in your heart & mind giving reflections from Sunday, insights from the book, and blessings.

### Housekeeping

Announcements.

### Affirmation

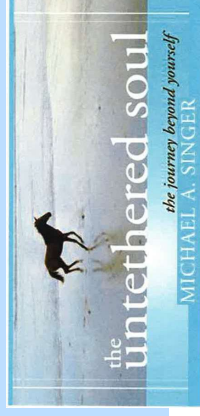
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### DISCUSSION: Freeing Yourself

What captured your attention the most in PART 3?

1. What do you fear the most (i.e. being an imposter, rejection, being judged, unworthiness, etc.)? What are

- ◆ Avoiding pain creates multiple layers on top of each other and the original root cause gets buried deeper. Each layer remains attached to the original pain.
- ◆ To achieve freedom, you must be fearless about inner pain and disturbance viewing it as a temporary shift in your energy flow. It's something in the universe that is just passing through your system.
- ◆ It helps to laugh at the experience rather than dreading or remaining fearful of it. Nothing can touch you, unless you approach it.
- ◆ When you feel pain, view it as energy. Relax instead of contracting and closing then gently release.
- ◆ Every time you relax and release, a piece of the original pain as well as the built up layers leaves forever.
- ◆ You may feel hot inside as pain passes which is just pain being purified from your heart (called the “fire of yoga” or chemicalization in the language of the Fillmore’s).
- ◆ When you are comfortable letting pain pass through you, you will be free.



MICHAEL A. SINGER

## SUMMARY - PART 3: FEELING YOURSELF

### Chapter 10: Stealing Freedom for Your Soul

- ◆ To achieve true freedom, begin by deciding that you do not want to suffer any further.
- ◆ You either control your environment to avoid suffering or worry about suffering in the future.
- ◆ You start by recognizing that your psyche feels “not OK” and acknowledge that your experience does not have to be this way.
- ◆ Pain is not bad, it’s the body’s way of communicating. Your psyche communicates through fear.
- ◆ We have given our psyche a job that is impossible...to make sure everything we say is said the right way, taken the right way and has the right effect.
- ◆ The mind is telling you to change the external to solve inner problems. External changes will not solve the root of the problem.
- ◆ The current relationship with your psyche is like an addiction. With mindfulness, we are able to cease to reacting to the craziness. The key word is “stop.”
- ◆ Remember you have given your mind an impossible task...control the world in order to fix inner problems.
- ◆ Begin with the little things and regularly remind yourself to watch the psyche.

### Chapter 11: Pain, the Price of Freedom

- ◆ Real growth begins when we finally decide to deal with our pain. Trying to avoid pain leads to more pain.
- ◆ If you fear rejection, you approach others with that mindset which sets you up for more rejection.

your inner thorns? What runs you? What do you typically do to protect your inner thorns?

2. To what extent are you able to get in touch with the original pain is the basis for your inner thorns?
3. Consider a time in your life when you were willing to remove the protective shield from a thorn, and face the problem itself. How did that feel? How did that make a difference in your life?
4. What makes it possible for you to lower your shields?
5. What absolutes or irrational beliefs run your life (i.e., I should, I must, I ought to, I have to, I need to, etc.)?
6. What are you prepared to risk to achieve true spiritual freedom?
7. Have you tried to “relax and release” when you feel pain instead of contracting and closing? Can you see how this might work in your life?

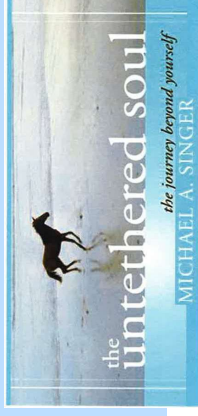
### Mindfulness Exercise

Close your eyes and imagine what type of shield you use when you protect your inner thorn. Create a picture in your mind of this shield. How much protection does it really provide? Sense the ways it makes you feel better or worse.

### Suggested Practice for the Week

This week notice when the shield goes up. Practice facing issues directly and lowering the shield. Consider how committed you are to removing the shield and facing the issue directly.

### Closing Prayer



## WEEK FOUR: PART 4

# Going Beyond Opening Prayer

*There is one Power and one Presence, in our lives and in this sacred circle, God the Good, Omnipotence! We take a deep breath together as we consciously release all that came before this moment. We draw all of our attention and energy to this now moment that we may be fully present to the Divine unfolding right here and right now. We release this knowing into Law. And so it is. Amen.*

## Check-In Round

Share whatever is most alive in your heart & mind giving reflections from Sunday, insights from the book, and blessings.

## Housekeeping Announcements.

## Affirmation

*I believe in the power to grow greatness. My thinking impacts my life and my life impacts our world. Confidently, I release insecurity for inner authority and selfishness for Selfhood. Courageously, I contemplate the nature of my beliefs, implication of my thoughts and impact of my actions. Energized and encouraged, I authorize only ideas and images that co-create a world that works for all.*

## DISCUSSION: Going Beyond

What captured your attention the most in PART 4?

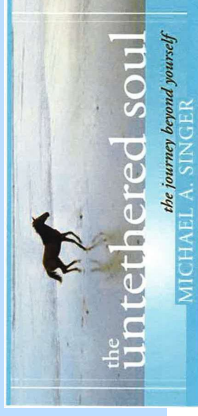
1. The author suggests that we have spent our lives building and struggling to maintain a very specific concept of who we are and how others should view us. Imagine you are able to break free of this “constructed” self-concept and explore the natural expansiveness of your true being. What is it like?

- ◆ When a blockage is triggered, pause to open up internally and consciously release the blocked energy.

## Chapter 9: Removing Your Inner Thorn

- ◆ Real transformation starts when you accept and embrace your problems as opportunities for growth.
- ◆ The analogy of the thorn in your arm offers two choices: protect the area where the thorn is so nothing touches it or remove the thorn.
- ◆ These “thorns” can completely run our lives especially if you don’t address the root cause of the problem.
- ◆ When you allow the core problem to stay, it explodes into many problems, then the weakest part of you is running your life.
- ◆ To remove yourself from an inner thorn, just let it go and cease to be involved with it.
- ◆ Sit with a thorn without trying to protect or defend yourself.





## SUMMARY - PART 3: FEELING YOURSELF

### Chapter 8: Let Go Now or Fall

- ◆ The natural ups and downs of life can either generate growth or increase our levels of fear. Which way it goes is based on how we view change.
- ◆ We define experiences as good or bad based on beliefs we hold about how things have to be in order to be OK. Fear helps shape many of these beliefs.
- ◆ As we grow spiritually, we find that our efforts to protect ourselves can lead to even more problems.
- ◆ There is constant battle inside our mind — how to keep things from happening or what to do because they happened. Decide not to fight with life. If we try to control it, we never get to live it.
- ◆ Blocked and buried Samskaras form the root of fear.
- ◆ Blocked energy doesn't feed our heart.
- ◆ Fear is the cause of every problem. It is the lowest of all vibrations.
- ◆ Keeping our “stuff” keeps us feeling trapped. Life provides many opportunities for growth. We don't need to judge what is right or what is wrong.
- ◆ Key Law: When our “stuff gets hit,” let go at that moment since it will only get harder later on.
- ◆ When we don't let go of blocked energy, the heart acts like a magnet as we attract more of the same.
- ◆ When we are disturbed, we have a tendency to just want a quick fix to make the disturbance stop and we activate our survival instincts. This impulse can often lead to drastic decisions that we later regret.
- ◆ When we externalize and project these energies, we tend to defend our actions to make them look OK.

How would you live your life differently?

2. What comfort zones do you cling to? How has the process of clinging impacted the development of your self-concept? What would you have to give up in order to break that pattern? What might that experience be like?
3. We have a carefully crafted self that anchors us. How does it feel to think of letting go of your carefully crafted self? What would it be like if you didn't have it? Are you willing to go there?

### Mindfulness Exercise

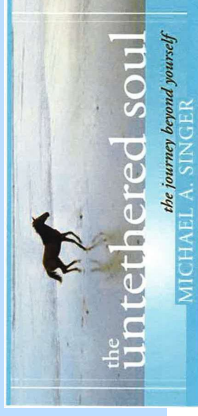
Close your eyes and create an image of a cage that defines your comfort zone. Notice how it is constructed. Is it visible or invisible? Notice how it is decorated. Look at the main forces keeping you locked in this cage. What are the forces within you that yearn for freedom from this self-imposed structure? What does life outside of this cage look like? Create that picture. Experience what it feels like to be outside of this cage.

### Suggested Practice for the Week

The author challenges you to completely go against your normal routine, your comfort zone and see how that makes you feel. Notice some comfort zones that you could move beyond. Try going out without grooming this week or create your own “out of my comfort zone” experience and note what your reaction.

### Closing Prayer





## WEEK FIVE: PART 5

### Living Life Opening Prayer

*Together we draw our attention to the heart center. We allow the breath to move as if the heart itself were inhaling and exhaling in this moment. With each inhale, the heart softens. With each exhale, the heart expands. We are present to the gift of this moment. Pure presence is my consciousness and a mighty quickening is happening right here, right now. We release this knowing into Love. And so it is. Amen.*

### Check-In Round

Share whatever is most alive in your heart & mind giving reflections from Sunday, insights from the book, and blessings.

### Housekeeping Announcements.

### Affirmation

*I believe in the power to grow greatness. My thinking impacts my life and my life impacts our world. Confidently, I release insecurity for inner authority and selfishness for Selfhood. Courageously, I contemplate the nature of my beliefs, implication of my thoughts and impact of my actions. Energized and encouraged, I authorize only ideas and images that co-create a world that works for all.*

### Discussion: Living Life

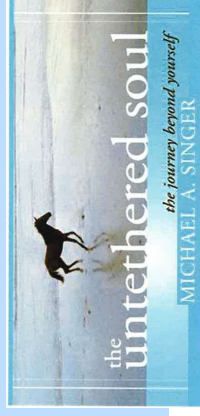
What captured your attention the most in PART 4?

1. What hurtful past events are you still holding on to? What would it be like to live a life free of resistance?
2. How would your life be different if you lived fully from the depths of your being?
3. What are some examples of how you live life at the extremes?

- ◇ The impressions lead to “clinging” behaviors.
- ◇ Whether positive or negative, both restrict the flow of energy within us.
- ◇ We may choose to let the experiences of life come in and pass through our being.

### Chapter 7: Transcending the Tendency to Close

- ◆ When we close down, we put a protective shell around ourselves to cover our weakness.
- ◆ The part of us that gets disturbed is a part that is out of balance. We recognize it when the smallest thing can set it off.
- ◆ As long as we need to protect ourselves, we will never be free. If we protect too well, we will never grow.
- ◆ Real spiritual growth happens when there is only one of you inside, when all parts are unified rather than experiencing both a part that is scared and a part that protects the part that is scared.
- ◆ Notice tendency to protect and defend. Notice the energy, time and work this demands.
- ◆ When something triggers us, we feel our internal energy become tight and our physical energy become tense. This is a key opportunity to grow.
- ◆ When we feel that energy response, we simply pause and become present. If we want to be free, then every time we feel the energy shift, we don’t fight it and we don’t judge it.
- ◆ When triggered, relax your shoulders and the area around your heart then exhale a deep sigh of release.
- ◆ Opportunities to grow are endless when we make a commitment to claim our center rather than let energy draw us in.



## SUMMARY - PART 2: EXPERIENCING ENERGY

### Chapter 5: *Infinite Energy*

- ◆ Centers throughout our bodies (chakras) help channel the internal flow of energy.
- ◆ The flow of energy comes from the depth of our being and is known as shakti, chi, or spirit.
- ◆ Energy does not get old or tired, it simply flourishes with openness and receptivity.
- ◆ Our senses and recalling past events may often trigger the impulse to close.
- ◆ When you find your heart wanting to close, relax and consciously presence the situation at hand.
- ◆ When we define what we like and don't like, we are actually defining our limits.

### Chapter 6: *The Secrets of the Spiritual Heart*

- ◆ You are not your heart, you are consciousness.
- ◆ Our hearts close because they become blocked by stored, unfinished energy patterns from the past.
- ◆ All of the inner noise and mind chatter is due to our attempts to process blocked energy and old patterns.
- ◆ Yogis refer to the unfinished energy patterns stored within as Samskaras.
  - ◇ A Samskara is a blockage, a past impression, old energy pattern, cycle of stored past energy that is in a state of equilibrium.
- ◆ Samskaras encrust the valve of the spiritual heart crystalizing to hinder the natural flow of energy.
- ◆ Positive impressions can lead to positive Samskaras. We store these because we crave sustaining and reliving that imprint.

4. What is it like to experience the “sweet spot” – the point of perfect balance where you feel you are in the flow or in the zone?
5. Imagine what would happen if you started feeling tremendous love for all creatures, for every plant, for every animal, for the beauties of nature?
6. How have you experienced the power of “surrender” in your life? What feelings do you experience when you practice nonresistance.

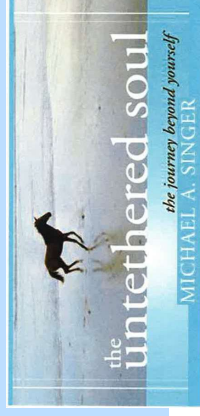
### Mindfulness Exercise

Relax, close your eyes and let's take a journey. Imagine you had one month to live. See what begins to emerge. What would you do differently? Look at your interactions with other people; what do they look like and feel like? How are you spending your days?

### Suggested Practice for the Week

Consider the mindfulness journey this week and ask yourself what is preventing you from living your life like you described above RIGHT NOW. What could you do to change the way you live right now? Consider the possibilities.

### Closing Prayer



## Summaries—PART 1—5

### SUMMARY - PART 1: AWAKENING CONSCIOUSNESS

#### Chapter 1: The Voice Inside Your Head

- ◆ You are not the voice in your mind, you are just the one who hears it.
- ◆ Your inner world is an alternate environment which you control when you apply centering techniques.
- ◆ Personal growth is about transcending the part of you that feels “not OK” and needs protection.
- ◆ Be aware that you are the one hearing the voice speaking and come to know the one who watches the voice.

#### Chapter 2: Your Inner Roommate

- ◆ “The only way to find peace and contentment is to stop thinking about yourself.” (p.15)
- ◆ Subject-Object relationship: You are the subject (the witness); the object is what you are seeing.
- ◆ Mindfully take the seat of “witness consciousness” changing your frame of reference rather than attempting to change the outer world.
- ◆ You gain freedom by objectively watching your problems instead of being lost in them.
- ◆ Your Inner Roommate: You come to realize you have been locked in there with a “maniac.”
  - ◇ The inner roommate is cause of problems.
  - ◇ First, be aware there is a voice.
  - ◇ Name this voice.
  - ◇ Then, distance yourself simply by observing.

#### Chapter 3: Who Are You?

- ◆ Who sees when you see? Who hears when you hear? Who is having all these experiences?
- ◆ You are the subject and your thoughts are just another object of which you are aware.
- ◆ Consciousness is pure awareness. There is nothing higher or deeper.
- ◆ WHO ARE YOU? (p.28) “I am the one who sees. From back here somewhere, I look out, and I am aware of the events, thoughts and the emotions that pass before me.”
- ◆ You live in the seat of consciousness.

#### Chapter 4: The Lucid Self

- ◆ We learn about consciousness through direct experience. We can concentrate on many different things or selectively focus on different objects.
- ◆ When we concentrate on the world of our five senses, we are drawn in and it become our reality.
  - ◇ When all five senses are activated, we become absorbed in the object.
- ◆ The “lost soul” is when our thoughts, emotions and sensory perceptions are all synchronized.
  - ◇ When our awareness is sucked in, it no longer knows itself or accesses higher consciousness.
  - ◇ It knows itself as the objects it is experiencing.
- ◆ The focus of our awareness differentiates a consciously centered person from one who is not.
- ◆ For deep meditation, focus on only one object. Awareness itself needs to be that object.