

# Foreword

*Ken Carey*

The simple prose and vivid images evoked in David Ian Cowan's most recent offering do not so much "teach us" as help us remember what we have always known—the spiritual genius behind the structure of our Universe, Life! Beauteous Life, brimming over with the very celestial music that brings us into being, with new sounds on new frequencies that gently blow away the disharmonious lies of separation that obscure our vision of the perfection that exists all around us.

And forgiveness! The sections of this book—thankfully long—that deal with the topic surpass all that I have read before, both in substance, scope, depth, and implication. And surprisingly, they do so in simple, clear, and easy-to-understand language. Of all the material I have encountered on the topic, including my own writing, I would recommend this book to anyone even remotely interested in a permanent elevation of consciousness, the healing of self or a loved one, and oh so many other

breakthroughs in an array of fields. It is not overstatement to say that, when understood and practiced, *forgiveness*, as so thoroughly explored in this book, is our ticket to a New Heaven and a New Earth, and most of all, to the unification of Creator and Creation.

I began reading *Seeing Beyond Illusions* as I would any other book, when gradually a feeling crept over me that brought me up short: *It was as if I were reading my own thoughts as they instantaneously appeared before me.* Or was the smooth flow of meaning in the words causing my thoughts to recede behind a river's shorelines and lazy waters in a hazy but deliciously beckoning direction? Before long, my plans for the evening receded into the background. Hours passed. Awareness of turning pages, the knowledge I was reading, faded into smooth, strong thought-currents that carried me along.

Yes, a river it was. It could have been a preference of my mind, or the manner in which it is being nurtured, but I remember *Seeing Beyond Illusions* more visually than conceptually, more in terms of the river reflections still before me than the poetry that triggered them. Before you flip to chapter 1 and begin reading this extraordinary material for yourself, a few more words on my take.

The river I was riding was relatively straight and calm, about seventy-five yards wide and wholly without rapids. I was traveling through the One Moment, the One Presence, the Alpha and Omega of All That Is. Vegetation along the shoreline was beautiful beyond superlatives, and

even as I looked to left and right I recognized the terrain as painting from my own brush. I was drawing the scenery both in and into my attentive field; indeed, I was creating it. Turning my head upstream, my chest released tensions I had not consciously known I was carrying. Subtle new sounds and songs in soft and ever-changing languages drifted through my mind, new fragrances enticed me from among the trees that lined the shore, yet it was when I turned to observe the shorelines past that I was suddenly engulfed in joy. I'm not even going to try to describe this. Along both banks of the river, as far as I could see, was the same perfect, lush—and oh so beautiful—vegetation that I had been creating in that very present moment along the shores to either side.

Behind me, upstream, were no blank empty stretches of desert to signify my lapses into cultural beliefs. The dark ages while I had dreamed my troubled dreams showed only the same entwined vegetation of perfect love and perfect truth of that which I had created consciously.

So even while I was sleeping the sleep of an individual apart from God and Nature, *I/You/We's* most Primal Creative Power had penetrated the shell of my illusions to create, through the microscopic, myopic me, *everything* My Eternal Spirit had wanted to be.

No, it was all as beautiful and whole as what I had and still am creating consciously. But even during those years when ego had dethroned Spirit from the decision-making citadel of my brain, my Spirit, *our Whole Spirit*, was still

ensuring the perfection of all things. Everything my ego showed me was illusion. This was quite possibly the greatest lasting gift I have taken away from this book.

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# Introduction

When I read a book I am certainly absorbing information, but at the same time, from a different part of my mind, I am absorbing essence. This is the word I use to describe the subtle feeling that a book offers beneath the concepts it describes. Although I most likely won't recall "chapter and verse" what was said, I can still tell you today how a certain book left me feeling. The words roll off, but the essence, the true learning, remains.

I have long recognized that our minds are multifaceted. It is no secret that the "thinking" part of the brain, a tiny region in the left hemisphere known as Broca's Region, is responsible for linking language to experience. This function accounts for only 5 percent of our total brain capacity. Linguistic thinking is obviously functional and necessary, even in its inherent limitations. And what are those limitations?

A primary limitation of the thinking mind is its relentless drive to create continuity, and thus meaning, by linking one thought logically to the next. The result of this process is called "linear logic." This logic attempts to create a mental chain of cause-and-effect relationships, and is often associated with what we would also call left brain

functioning—the greater activity of the left hemisphere of the brain in this particular mode. To see this linking function in action, just listen in on any conversation. Notice how each contribution to the conversation is directly triggered by what was just said by the other person. And the listener's response continues to contribute to this chain of logical references. Of course this is all perfectly logical and natural from the verbal mind's perspective, so what is the big deal in even noticing it?

In order to answer that question, we will need to examine thought itself. A thought arrives wrapped up in a word or phrase. More accurately, the thought first arrives as a mental image or picture to which we automatically ascribe meaning with some past-referenced word, phrase, or image. Psychologists agree that all thoughts arrive first as images. The verbal label we choose usually has an agreed-upon meaning for ourselves and those we interact with. Many of our jokes and humorous moments come when the assumption of shared meaning is derailed momentarily, reminding us how fragile our sense of agreed meaning can be.

A thought, word, or meaning represents the ability of the mind to reduce the totality of experience to a single minute part of the whole with only one ascribed meaning. Thought, then, is a reducing exercise. We are reducing a full and complete moment of pure and unadulterated experience to a pre-conditioned slice of reality that essentially, leaves us existentially impoverished, whether we know it or not. Part of us knows that by focusing our minds on only one pre-conditioned perception to the exclusion of all

other possibilities, we are limiting ourselves to a “thought-made image” of ourselves, which, being partial and conditional on past experience only, cannot be absolutely true. As this chronic mental impoverishment is inherently uncomfortable, unconsciously reminding us of our existential loneliness, we rush to the next word, phrase, or meaning to keep alive the stream of consciousness we like to think is so very real. The compulsion to distract ourselves with thinking is evident in the constant chatter many of us engage in today through our technologies. You could say we are all “thought addicted” and adding just one more thought keeps us from the existential pain lurking in the silence. This is normal to most of us most of the time.

A person who has mastered an expanded state of awareness and transcended the limits of linear time-based thinking would call this “normal” process “blindness.” The thinking mind is like the blind man’s white cane, trying to determine direction and meaning one tap at a time, with no idea where it’s actually headed.

The thinking mind creates a chain of cause-and-effect associations based on the hope that this chain has meaning and leads somewhere. Honestly now, are chains usually associated with liberation or bondage?

But when a chain of thoughts leads to a more sophisticated or global insight, an “a-ha” moment, we typically throw off the prior chain and its contents to embrace the greater truth that has been revealed. We have arrived at a new level of understanding. Once a destination is reached,

the map is redundant. Like I said, you recall the essence of the great books you have read, but not necessarily the chains of reasoning that delivered that essence.

I can't go on here without quoting the modern spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle's take on words and ideas:

The Truth is far more all-encompassing than the mind could ever comprehend. No thought can encapsulate the Truth. At best, it can point to it. For example, it can say: "All things are intrinsically one (The Pearl of Great Price)." That is a pointer, not an explanation. Understanding these words means feeling deep within you the Truth to which they point.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that logical thinking is only a vehicle, not the destination of our full potential. There is a part of the brain/mind that is less attached to linear thinking. Some associate this less constrained function to the right hemisphere of the brain, generally regarded as more *yin* or feminine in its orientation, implying openness and receptivity rather than action and movement. This is the side of the brain where the poet, musician, and artist operate from when in their creative mode.

It is from the "whole brain" state, when both hemispheres are equally active, that we often make novel connections and intuitive creative associations. This is when your mind functions beyond the limits of language,

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1. Eckhart Tolle, *Stillness Speaks* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2003).

conditioned “meaning,” and time-based trajectories of logic. This is where you experience the “essence”; an inner place of just “knowing.” The typical Western-educated mind has become particularly imbalanced in its ability to operate from both hemispheres equally. Having learned to shut down the seemingly illogical messages that leak over from our intuitive mind, we have become biased toward a strictly material and instrumental orientation to life. We have become doubtful and mistrusting of ourselves as we hide in dark closets of limited rationality. It is no wonder that many feel humanity is lost and can’t find the way home.

The good news is that as soon as we recognize trends within ourselves that are not producing desired effects, we can change our minds! In fact, the recognition of our limits alone indicates that an expansion has already begun. The part that sees this and desires to think and be different is beyond the mind as we generally think of it. This part of us is more accurately referred to as the “Will,” and is actually in the driver’s seat of all our mental functions. The Will could be associated with inner purpose or motivation. The Will operates from a higher vantage point than intelligence alone. Today, however, many of our Wills are asleep at the wheel or held hostage to the ego; a temporary identity we made up (more on that soon). I suspect that your Will may be stirring; otherwise you would not have been drawn to this book!

The expectation of a typical reader of books like this one is often to find the “right information” to unlock

deeper understanding and ultimately, hopefully, peace of mind. Let me reassure you here and now that there is nothing of any value you could read here or anywhere else that is not already somewhere in your own mind. I cannot tell you anything you don't already know, at least unconsciously. All I can hope to do is remind you and point you in a direction where you will discover the unlimited well of wisdom within that is yours by virtue of your being alive.

To glean the most from your reading, become aware of your own pre-conditioned reactions to what you read. Watch yourself as you read. Be aware that your conditioned responses are not coming from who you truly are! They are simply the comfortable pathways of perception that so far have brought you to this point in life's journey, but in no way dictate where you can go from here. To enter onto a new path, you may need to abandon the familiar but limited path you have been on. This takes no small degree of courage, and maybe a growing sense of "there *has* to be something better than what I am experiencing of life so far . . ."

This is how I encourage you to read this book: Be an "open book" yourself. I decided to write this book around an outline originally created as a presentation I prepared some time ago for an online class. The class went well, but I realized that the material was only scratching the surface of what may be critical to the full appreciation and practical use of what was being offered.

Because I am convinced that the intuitive part of the mind operates in a much less limited quantum realm,

and is thus not limited by ordinary time and space, I am confident that we are indeed “connecting,” even in *this moment*, through entertaining these non-linear ideas and possibilities. Yes, despite the seeming solidity of bodies and the apparent uniqueness of individuals, on the level of this quantum mind, we are already and always One! Ideas are our common property and are freely available to all who desire them. Ideas of liberation are your birthright. They are a gift from your Creator when you are ready to accept them.

A simple model of the structures of the mind may be helpful here as the mind is the only level where true and lasting change can be made. Consider an iceberg peeking above the ocean surface. The visible top of the iceberg could represent the thinking mind, which is also the domain of the ego—all the accumulated thoughts and images we hold about who we think we are. The surface of the ocean only reflects back to us an image of our limited selves while obscuring the view below, where the greater part of our being rests below our awareness. The first thin layer of ice below the surface could represent the subconscious mind, where we have stuffed our fears, phobias, and inner conflicts out of sight but not very far away. The subconscious mind often dictates our automatic responses according to the conditioning held there.

Below this, and making up 90 percent of our total mind, is the large and complex superconscious mind. This is the part of the mind that not only automatically regulates all of the gazillion physical processes and events in our bodies that go on each second, but is also the rich repository of

the accumulated human wisdom and knowledge handed to us by past generations. Even more expansive, the superconscious mind shares the same ocean of unlimited Universal knowledge and total awareness through its connection with all other minds and the Source of the ocean itself. This is the ocean of “Big Mind” that connects us all and truly makes us one. As each separate iceberg eventually completes its life cycle and melts, the distinction between the individual and the whole is gone. Ice is only water, after all, in a different vibrational state.

My advice, therefore, on how to get the most out of this book is this: Read it like you would any other book, but pay attention when something you read triggers even an ever-so-slight inner recognition, which may show up as the thought “I know that, I’ve always known that, I just never heard it said this way before. And . . . it just *feels* right.” This is your expanded superconscious mind inviting you to come over where the weather is always fine and swim in its limitless ocean of potential and creativity. So relish the feeling. Put the book down and enjoy the feeling the ideas offer. It is a sense of connecting and expanding into a deeper level with a part of yourself that maybe you forgot about or pushed aside. The feeling of peaceful expansion is closer to the real *you* than any thought or concept could ever hope to be.

Some would call this inner place of expanded awareness “Spirit” or “Soul” or “Higher Self.” Again, these are just concepts the logical mind uses for the sake of discussion. Equally, recognize when what you read may bring up

resistance or challenge an assumption you have held dearly. Avoid analyzing; just observe. Ascribing conceptual meaning through compulsive naming may also be a way our ego (false self) defends itself against dissolving. As we will discover, this “voice in your head” that offers an endless stream of thoughts and impressions is in fact only a set of pre-recorded tape loops that you tolerate in the absence of the full knowledge of your True Self. The Soul itself has no need to attach meaning or a concept to itself. Why would what is without limits choose to limit itself?

If you read this book in this manner, you will mine the gold that you were meant to discover. The gold is in you already! Think of any book as a “mind mirror” that will show you only yourself. If you read it for “logic” and linear meaning only, you may get something out of it, but in the end you will put the book down and anticipate the next one, which might, if you’re lucky, have the “right” information for you.

It is, after all, everyone’s destiny to awaken to reality. This book represents a collage of ideas drawn from various notes and references. As I have chosen to write more from a “stream of consciousness” place rather than creating yet another linear road-map to happiness, you will see some repetition of key ideas as you read. I am confident that you will recognize the content herein as a “carrier” for deeper nuances of meaning best described as “feeling.” I offer this repetition as a learning aid, as the rational mind, in its deep conditioning, benefits from frequent reminders of the truth it typically denies simply by thinking.

Thank you for your devotion to truth. I see you as you truly are: an extension of the same Divine Being I am. I celebrate our life as the One True Creation. Not limited by history or hopes of a future time, I join with you in love and Gratitude now . . . which is forever.

The first published book I wrote is called *Navigating the Collapse of Time: A Peaceful Path Through the End of Illusions*.<sup>2</sup> Like this book, that book was first put together as a presentation, in this case on the topic of 2012 and the Great Shift of the Ages. The challenge in writing that book was how to limit such a vast subject to a little over two hundred pages. It was my hope that the brief overview of subjects presented there would whet readers' appetites for further self-study and reflection.

A main theme of that book and this one is the philosophical point of view called *non-duality*. Non-duality represents a return to the perspective of "wholeness" upon the dissolving of false and thus illusory distinctions based on a premise of duality or separation. You could say coming to a non-dual understanding is a critical step in the process of transcending linear thought altogether. By this, I do not mean that we will at some point just stop thinking (although this is possible . . . I think!). I would prefer to say that having a non-dual perspective still leaves us free to think, but with less and less attachment to and investment in our thinking. As we step into the more peaceful

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2. Red Wheel/Weiser & Conari Press, 2011.

states of non-dual perception, thinking remains practical for negotiating the needs of the moment although it no longer dictates our identity, thus limiting us to a little “thought-made” self, or ego.

With this book, I intend to offer some “meat and potatoes” ideas for the serious awakener. I am using this term in place of seeker. To think of oneself as a seeker implies that there is something outside yourself you must find, like a lost object, in order to become whole, complete, or spiritual. Most seekers also feel the “answer” will come from outside themselves at some future time. We live in hope, not realizing that hope eliminates the present moment of any potential for us to realize ultimate truth and awaken now. This is a favorite ego game—a “carrot on a stick” attempt to keep us forever unhappy with who and what we are right now (which, by the way, is already perfect and complete). There you go—your first non-dual thought!

By “perfect and complete” I refer to your true essence, which is Spirit. Spirit was, is, and will always be perfect and complete just as it was created. I do not refer to the thought-made self or ego as perfect or complete. The ego, which is nothing other than a concept of separation, can never be complete. In its self-defeating fear and guilt-ridden belief, the ego is as far from perfection as a lie is from the truth. The good news, as we shall discover, is that the ego is only an illusion.

The paradox is that if we hadn’t started out as seekers, we might not have realized the seeker is not needed. So it’s

all okay . . . another cosmic joke . . . a seemingly purposeless puzzling paradox, perchance?

In the Biblical stories of Jesus, He often lovingly referred to people as sheep. This was an interesting analogy. Sheep are not known for their individual intelligence, as far as I know. They tend to flock together, and they tend to need fences, at least while young. A fence lets the sheep know they are protected. Their limits provide a sense of safety in a threatening and unsure world.

Concepts are like our fences, especially as we dress them up in commonly held beliefs. But fences ultimately keep us from our freedom. Eventually, something within us stirs and we feel a deep unhappiness with the status quo. We begin to question our fences and wonder what lies beyond them. So let the concepts herein create for you a sense of security as far as that is needed. But please do not let them limit you. The destiny of this herd of sheep—humanity—is not to be sheared and barbecued—it is to be liberated. This is the destiny of all humanity, and life on this planet and Universe, for that matter. No matter what happens in the meantime, life must and will find a way to expand. Life is like light—it only knows infinite expansion given the removal of all blockages. I am 110 percent confident that you already know this on some level. Think of these ideas as steps on a ladder that will, with each step, grant you a broader and more expansive view, but will inevitably take you out of the hole of your separate existence altogether. Then you won't need a ladder. You will have become your

Self. Why do you think that all of us, despite appearances, aspire to happiness, to becoming productive and useful, to becoming free of limitations and free to expand creatively without limit? Could it be because in some dark corner of our minds there is a glimmer of memory of all these things and more as being our natural state? If we never knew perfection in the first place, we wouldn't know what to desire or feel we lack. Within every aspect of density and apparent separation, there remains a "spark" of Divine memory. For some this spark acts as an annoying reminder that "something's not right," and so we may unwittingly resent our own Divinity. We choose to call this feeling "Divine discontent." Ultimately, our discontent is what helps propel us over and away from our fences.

For some the spark of Divine memory is like a beacon on a dark and foggy night, providing a sense of direction in what otherwise appears as a meaningless and eternal darkness. You are the determiner of what your "spark" means to you, as you are the determiner of all your experiences. Give your spark the purpose of leading you home, and it will. Resist it, and it will remain, as this spark can not and never will be extinguished. If it could, then there is no Creation, and there is no you. When you are ready, your spark will appear as the inner knowing that you are "safe at home while dreaming of exile" (as stated in *A Course in Miracles*).

As you read this book, I encourage you to consider the hopeful words of T.S. Eliot: "We shall not cease from

exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.” May the perfection of who you already are awaken in you now.