

the *Tao* of pool

AND THE CONTINUUM OF BELIEF AND *BEYOND*

Unabridged Edition

Connor Andrew Tiggerus, MSCMHC, LPC, SAC-IT

“Do not believe in what you have heard; do not believe in the traditions because they have been handed down for generations; do not believe in anything because it is rumored or spoken by many, do not believe merely because a written statement of some old sage is produced; do not believe in conjectures; do not believe in that as truth to which you have become attached by habit; do not believe merely the authority of your teachers and elders. After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and gain of one and all, then accept it, practice it and live up to it.”

~The Buddha

“A true spiritual teacher does not have anything to teach in the conventional sense of the word, does not have anything to give or add to you, such as new information, beliefs, or rules of conduct. The only function of such a teacher is to help you remove that which separates you from the truth ... The words are no more than signposts.” ~Eckhart Tolle

(From his book, Stillness Speaks, as quoted under the “Teachings” heading on the Wikipedia page https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eckhart_Tolle)

“Are you using speech because you’re trying to manipulate the world and other people? Or are you speaking in order to help yourself and others wake up?”

~Steve Hagen, Buddhism Plain and Simple

disclaimer

*"This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day,
thou canst not then be false to any man."*

~ William Shakespeare

Copyright 2020 by Connor Andrew Tiggerus

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced in whole or in part, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any **form** or by any means – electronic, mechanical, or other – without written permission from the author, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

*Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any **form** without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing [us] to continue to publish books for every reader.*

The material in this book is intended for education. It is not meant to take the place of diagnosis and treatment by a qualified medical practitioner or therapist. No expressed or implied guarantee of the effects of the use of the recommendations can be given or liability taken.

The author is not engaged in rendering professional advice or services to the individual reader.

The ideas, [practices], and/or suggestions contained in this book are not intended as a substitute for consulting with your physician. All matters regarding your health require medical

supervision. The author shall not be liable or responsible for any loss or damage allegedly arising from any information or suggestion in this book.

In some cases, names and identifying characteristics of the individuals profiled in this book have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Copyright

dedicated

*"Many people walk in and out of your life,
but TRUE friends leave footprints in your heart."*

~Eleanor Roosevelt

To Steele, who inspired me to become a better, more authentic human being and whose joy-full presence in *my* life is *beyond* words.

To Dick, who allowed me to process *my* thoughts aloud to him till all that was left was silence and stillness.

To Greg, and *my* colleagues, at Therapy Without Walls, who supported, nurtured, and encouraged *my* personal and professional growth, development, and state of awareness.

To all the wonder-full, supportive people, friends, family, instructors, coaches, professors, strangers, pets, animals, and sentient beings, who have nourished *my* spirit, soul, mind, and body and honored the divine within *me*, including *my muse*, who helped *me* to discover the "**us**" inside of *me*.

And to the Universal Life Force that flows, abides, and dwells within us all and is a constant, **compassionate collaborator**, even when we are not aware of *its* presence.

acknow-*ledgements*

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

~Albert Einstein

It is with profound *realization* that the book that is in your hands is the result of an ongoing body of *information* that is constantly evolving and taking on many *forms*, or *formulations*, to increase conscious awareness of the Universal Life Force that is by name unnamable. The paradox in the preceding statement will leave many *bewildered* and cause their minds to experience discomfort, or a disturbance, or a level of dissonance that leaves the individual off kilter and unbalanced. This is good (yet not in the sense of good versus bad). Being, or experiencing being, off kilter and unbalanced is part of the process of becoming aware of the mechanisms, or mental constructs, at work to keep you trapped in an existence of existing rather than living.

And so, it is with great humility and the utmost gratitude that I recognize that the words being presented to you, the reader, are words that have been spoken and written down by many others throughout human existence, such as Gautama Buddha, Lao Tzu, Jesus, Saint Francis of Assisi, Amma, Bruce Lee, Dr. Dan Siegel, Eckhart Tolle, Maya Angelou, Pema Chodrin, Thich Nhat Hanh, and many others, as well as those who have heard the words, or similar words, in their minds, yet refrained from sharing them, for some reason or another, or maybe they did share the words, which were or were not **acknowledged** by others as having value.

Thus, what you are about to experience is a way to bridge the existence of your *humanness* with your *beingness* and re-connect with the light of the Universal Life Force, that goes by many

names, such as the Tao, God, Goddess, Divine Feminine, Presence, Essence, Source, Spirit, or Higher Power, to name a few, each of which are only pointers to a path that must be walked and experienced by each individual separately, which paradoxically can co-create, or *coco*-create, a collective experience that has the power to *transform* the planet and our trajectory on it.

Copyright

contents

“The deepest secret in our heart of hearts is that we are writing because we love the world.”

~Natalie Goldberg

suggestions for fellow travelers	9
prologue	11
foreword, forward, and <i>beyond</i>	13
introduction	14
part one of the <i>Whole</i>	
the <i>Tao</i> of pool	16
part two of the <i>Whole</i>	
the continuum of belief...and <i>beyond</i>	107
part three of the <i>Whole</i>	
pathways	130
supplemental info flowing into the <i>Whole</i>	
a compassionate, love letter to humanity	179
authenticity	187

AUTHENTICITY revisited, re-envisioned & reinvigorated	199
epilogue – contexts	200
glossary of TERMS	203
re-Sources of universal pointers	207
about the artist.....	214
about the author	215
about the co-Author	217

suggestions for fellow travelers

"Follow your bliss."

~Joseph Campbell

Welcome. We are about to embark on a journey together, at least for a little while. As you move forward through this book, I have a few suggestions that may make your journey a bit more enjoyable and *profound*. Each word on the page was selected especially with you in mind, or with the concept of *you* in mind, which we will get to more in the unfolding pages. The words on the page were written down, and the layout of this book was developed, with the intention of cultivating, fostering, and nurturing more conscious awareness in *you*, a fellow traveler on this grand adventure called "life".

As you make your way through the words on the pages, I would encourage you to do as one of my former theatre professors directed a fellow classmate to do as she practiced her lines for a play, and that was to "*taste the words*". Invite the opportunity to slow down as you read each word, and if you speak the words out loud, enjoy every consonant and vowel sound that each word provides as a tasty morsel of pleasure. Then, pause and savor the silence and embrace the space that is inherent in between the sounds and in between the words. Embody the stillness and experience the expansiveness of another dimension that opens up within you as you allow the present moment to come into conscious awareness. Accept what *is* without labels or identifiers. Just observe and notice what shows up without holding or clinging to *it*,

whatever *it is*, just be with *it*, and experience the *isness* that surrounds and holds lightly the *itness*.

As you continue on, experiment with elongating the sounds of each linguistic symbol, feeling the primordial sensations of our ancestors, who first put tongue to teeth and uttered *something* that another understood and the *formation* of a word manifested into existence and took shape that conveyed *something* from one humanoid to another, who received it through the air and took it in through their eyes and ears, which activated the synapses in the brain that connected and began to *form* language. No longer were they one with their surroundings, they were now caught in their minds by their *re-present*-ations of their environment.

Breathe into the space in between the phonetic sounds of the words, and in between the words, paying attention to how the air from the outside world travels through your nose or mouth and enters the internal space of your lungs, expanding your chest or your belly, or both, with life-giving oxygen. To breathe is to be alive, to become aware of life that is *you*. You are a *simplycomplex* organism birthed into this world as a magnificent, marvelous, manifestation of the Maker. Stand in the light and beam bright!

- Connor A. Tiggerus

prologue

*"Rather than inherently good or evil,
people are essentially neutral and have the choice
of either creative or destructive actions."*

~Taro Gold

Words
are but linguistic symbols
for communion
and pointers
to an unnamable path.

Marvel at the melodrama of the mind.

Notice its noise.

Watch it wander and become distracted by objects.

See the psyche

by impartially & non-judgmentally

observing it from behind, or below,

from the Seat of the Soul.

Then, when aligned with the energy within

and centered in Cosmic Consciousness,

freely engage in the unfolding of what is

from a place of poise,

allowing each disturbance to come and go,

thus, remaining on the path

and in the flow.

~ Connor A. Tiggerus

foreword, forward, and *beyond*

“Don’t get attached to any words. They are only stepping stones.”

~Eckhart Tolle

This space is available for the *stepping stones* that manifest through Eckhart Tolle, yet it is also being held for the plethora of other possibilities that are *inherent* within spaciousness.

introduction

"I cannot teach you. Only help you explore yourself. Nothing more."

~Bruce Lee

The process by which the words, ideas, thoughts, and concepts manifested onto the following pages were, and are, an ever-flowing unfolding of experiencing life as it materializes and unmaterializes within myself and the world around me. I have been blessed with so many teachers (sorry, Bruce), guides, and pointerers that have expressed the universal, consilient message of exploring yourself as the path, the way, to a deeper understanding of the Great Mystery that is life and how we are all a part of that Great Mystery that is manifesting in all of us and all around us.

My intention was, and is, to be in the flow and put down the words that manifested themselves, co-creatively, in my mind. Many of the words have been watered, nurtured and cultivated through the literary, auditory, and visual *representations* and manifestations of words, sounds, and images, which acted as pointers to that consilient path, by such luminaries as Eckhart Tolle, the Buddha, Lao Tzu, Bruce Lee, and so many others that I could *name*, as well as a great many others I am not aware of that have uttered, thought, or experienced the words, concepts, and mental constructs that will fill these pages. Yet, at times, it was as if I was merely taking dictation and writing what was manifesting thru *me* by the Great Writer that energized this process into being.

The path to a deeper understanding can be painful and scary depending on your level of conditioning or programming, yet the profound peace and serenity that can come from such a journey of self-exploration to Self-*realization* is the most important journey anyone of us can take. So, it is with this in mind that I offer the following pointers:

*"It's the silence between the notes that makes the music;
it's the space between the bars that holds the tiger."*

~Zen koans

With these koans in mind, I invite you to step on the venerable path of vulnerability laid before you in this book and shake the perfunctory nature from your impermanent mind by curiously pondering the paradoxical limitations of the use of words to name the space and silence in order to discover, or re-discover, the *profound* permanence of presence. (Confused? Curious? Either way, stumble on and step on the path of awakening.)

Warm regards,

Connor

part one of the *Whole*

the *Tao* of pool

“The Tao that can be named is not the Tao”.

~Lao Tzu

Thank you for creating some space in your busy life to engage in the process of stepping on the path to becoming more awakened and conscious. It is no simple act to do so, yet it is an act of honoring, nurturing, and loving yourself into *Whole*-ness.

the Tao of pool not only provides profound, metaphorical and practical pathways for exploring the process of being human and cultivating conscious awareness, but it also offers a fun, collaborative, and enlightening alternative to the game of pool that can be *played* and enjoyed by people with all kinds of different skill levels.

the *Tao*

The *name* that is the basis for this book is in reference to the *Tao Te Ching* (pronounced *Dao De Jing*) that, in the words of William Martin, “*is attributed to the legendary Chinese sage, Lao Tzu*”. There have been many other expressions of the *Tao* in other book forms, such as *The Tao of Pooh* by Benjamin Hoff, *Tao of Jeet Kune Do* by Bruce Lee, *Tao Te Ching* by Ralph Alan Dale, and *The Parent’s Tao Te Ching* by the aforementioned William Martin. The *Tao* is often

referred to as “the Way”, which supports the primary purpose of this book as it will be applied to the game of pool, as in “the Way of pool”. Furthermore, in the foreword of his book, *The Second Book of the Tao*, Stephen Mitchell refers to the “first book of the Tao” as “the classic manual on the art of living”. This definition also supports the purpose of this book. Yet Ralph Alan Dale’s translation of “*the Tao Te Ching as A Guide to the Theory and Practice of the Great Integrity*” will suffice as well.

regular pocket billiards, or regular pool

The popular game of pool, **formally known** as “pocket billiards”, is a competitive contest in which two individuals, or teams, square off against one another, each using a long stick with a white tip, known as a “cue” stick, to strike the “cue” ball (usually the solid-white ball) and push the remaining 15 multi-hued (or multi-colored) object balls into a pocket, in a manner that follows the rules of the game and befits the individual’s attempts to beat one’s opponent(s) to the punch and sink your object balls first. The 15 multi-hued object balls are numbered from one to 15 and are either primarily “solid” in color or primarily white in color with a colored “stripe”. Thus, the object balls are classically split into either “solids” or “stripes”, and which participant gets which is determined by whomever gets one of the object balls in first. This can occur during the start of the game as one of the participants engages in the act of breaking apart all of the balls, simply called the “break”. Yet it may take subsequent shots till one of the participants sinks a “striped” or “solid” ball into a pocket. Before the “break”, the 15 multi-hued object balls are placed in a “rack”, which is in the shape of a triangle. The object balls are

placed in the “rack” in a fashion along the inside of the triangle where the “striped” and “solid” balls are alternated. The “8” ball (a mostly solid, black-hued ball) is the only ball that is placed in the same spot each time it is racked, which is in the center, right behind the ball that sits at the apex of the triangle. Once it is determined who has “solids” and who has “stripes”, then each individual, or team, has the task of putting their object balls into the pockets before the other participant(s), yet the ultimate goal of the game is to be the first one to pocket the “8” ball to win. The “8” ball can be pocketed in one of two ways, either during the opening break, called an “eight-ball break”, or after the individual’s, or team’s, set of object balls (either stripes or solids) have all been pocketed, and this is done, of course, before the opposition accomplishes this task. However, if the “8” ball is accidentally knocked into a pocket during the game, the individual who did so, loses. Plus, if a participant, who has cleared their object balls from the table first, is intentionally attempting to put the “8” ball in a pocket, and while doing so “scratches”, which occurs when the white “cue” ball also goes into a pocket as part of the process of putting the “8” ball in a pocket, that participant loses. Regular pocket billiards, or regular pool, can be played as a friendly game, yet it always has the element of competitiveness as one of its main characteristics, with the goal of beating the other, or others. The game of regular pool has many nuances and rules that go along with the activity, yet this basic understanding of the game will be enough for the purposes of this book.

This book and the concepts within utilize the above basic understanding of the game of regular pool and then flips, or reconfigures, the game in ways that not only cultivates collaboration (rather than competition) and increases conscious awareness among its *players*, but it also

provides a way to understand the mental constructs of our mind and ego and sets up a metaphor for exploring the continuum of belief and *beyond*.

Buddha Billiards, or Buddha Pool

The “pool” in the title of this book, *the Tao of pool*, simply refers to the game of regular pocket pool *and* to this new version of the game, Buddha Billiards (or Buddha Pool), as well. This new version manifested through several versions, or variations of regular pool (pocket billiards) that **played** with the basic concepts of regular pool to create, or co-create, more peaceful, collaborative ways to **play** the game. For example, the process of engaging in two-shot, or even three-shot, pool, where each individual has the option of using up to two-shots, or three-shots, depending on what was agreed upon beforehand, to make, or push, the intended object ball into the intended pocket, works to support each individual by slowing down the game, and their minds. This creates the space in each individual to challenge the idea or concept that you need to make an object ball in one shot. (It is interesting to think how much of our society is geared around the fascination and drive to make a “hole in one” in golfing, or to get “100%” on a test or quiz, or to put each object ball in pool into its intended pocket with only just one shot. It is helpful and beneficial, however, to have goals and something to strive for, yet this can also cause us, and quite frankly, usually causes us, a great deal amount of pain, discomfort, frustration, and suffering as we reach for, and get caught up in achieving that goal and experiencing the rush of emotion and chemicals in the brain and body that usually come with that achievement. The difficulty, though, is that we cannot hold onto that experience. It does

not last, and thus, we go chasing after the next high, and then the next, and so on. (More on this as we proceed along the path laid out before you in this book through the words, and space, on the page.) Another variation of pool, is to **play** the game with your non-dominant hand. Talk about frustrating and uncomfortable. This variation has the potential to cause you to give up **playing** the game entirely. Yet, if you actually slow yourself down by slowing the mind down and engaging in the **play**-full practice of being present with yourself as you use your non-dominant hand, you may actually experience a higher state of consciousness, and a more integrated brain, as well, which has the potential of creating protective factors against the aging process, and more importantly, has the potential of increasing the quality of your life, however long or short it may be.

The new version of the game that I am proposing, which was co-created, or *coco*-created, through the process of engaging in these different variations with my dear friend, Dick (who, as of this writing, is 85 years young), and the manifesting power of the Universal Life Force, is identified as “Pocket Buddha Billiards”, or “Buddha Billiards” (or “Buddha Pool”), for short. Buddha Billiards, or Buddha Pool, utilizes the concepts of regular pool yet distinguishes itself from regular pool by flipping and reconfiguring many elements of the game.

The first **elemental** change is that the white ball goes in the middle of the racked, solid and striped balls, and the mostly, black-hued “8” ball is used as the “cue” ball. Again, the “cue” ball is the ball the **players** strike with their “cue” sticks, sending the “cue” ball on its way to push the other object balls around the table and towards an intended pocket, and then, ultimately, into that pocket. To help with this change, the mostly, black-hued “8” ball can simply be referred to

as the “8” ball. The second **elemental** change is that the object balls can be racked in any way, as long as the white ball is placed in the center, right behind the ball that sits at the apex of the triangle. Through this process, there is no right or wrong way to place the other object balls into the “rack”, which provides some peace of mind and a release from one of the rules that govern regular pool. The third **elemental** change consists of pairing the “solid” and “stripe” balls of the same color together, thus establishing seven pairs of object balls, yet only six of those paired balls will be used for each **player** to choose from to determine what pairs they will be using to begin with. For example, **player** one selects the following three pairs of object balls: green, red, and orange; thus, leaving the following pairs for the other **player**: purple, blue, and yellow. The one remaining pair – the maroon balls – can be used by both players to put their pairs of object balls into a pocket, and then they will be the last pair of object balls that will be collectively and collaboratively put into a pocket, after the other six pairs of object balls have been removed from the table. The fourth **elemental** change, which has some similarity to regular pool, is that each **player** may use any of their pairs of object balls to push any of their other object balls towards or into a pocket. The significant change for Buddha Billiards comes in the use of the maroon balls (as mentioned in the third **elemental** change) or the white ball by either **player** to push any of their pairs of object balls towards or into a pocket. This brings us to the fifth **elemental** change which gives the maroon balls and the white ball the special power of always being available on the pool table to utilize as the **play** of the game unfolds. This happens by pulling those balls out of any pocket if they were inadvertently or intentionally put in a pocket. After being removed from the pocket, they are simply placed in the center of the table, halfway between the side pockets, and **play** resumes. The sixth **elemental** change occurs

during the “break”, or the breaking apart of the racked balls through the use of the “8” ball. During the “break”, there is no “white-ball break”, for as mentioned in the fifth *elemental* change, if the white ball is pocketed at any time during the game, it is simply removed from the pocket and placed in the center of the pool table, and **play** resumes. Furthermore, during the “break” there is no need to determine which **player** gets which pairs of object balls, because that was pre-determined before the game began. Moreover, during the “break”, as long as the **player** who is doing the “break” makes any ball (that’s correct, *any* ball) that originated in the racked balls, that **player** gets to continue till they fail to put one of their pairs of object balls into a pocket. Of course, if they “scratch”, and the “8” ball, which again is being used as the “cue” ball, goes into a pocket, then it is the other **players** turn. The game continues alternating between **players**, much like regular pool, till one of the **players**, or team of **players**, pockets their pre-determined, pairs of object balls. This leads to the next *elemental* change, the seventh (if you are keeping track), which is that once, let’s say, **player** (team) one, has pocketed all of his/her/they/their pairs of object balls, then they pivot to helping **player** (team) two pocket his/her/they/their remaining pairs of object balls. Thus, they are working collectively and collaboratively to **play** along with each other as they work as a team to pocket all the pairs of object balls, which will only leave the maroon balls and the white ball on the table (along with the “8” ball, of course). This collaborative teamwork then continues with pushing the maroon balls (which lose their special power, at this point in the game) into a pocket, which will eventually leave only the white ball remaining on the table (again, along with the “8” ball, of course). This brings us to the most profound change/pivot/shift yet. The eighth *elemental* change happens at this end stage, or state, of the game, which is that the white ball now

becomes the “cue” ball and it is used to push the “8” ball into a pocket. There is no “scratching” that can occur, because the white-hued object ball has the special power of always remaining on the table and being available to **play** with. Once the white “cue” ball has put the “8” ball into a pocket, the white ball is placed in the center of the table, as a mindful invitation to all that approach to engage in the game of Buddha Billiards, or Buddha Pool.

the philosophical and psychological pointers within Buddha Billiards

Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, draws on and layers in the philosophical and psychological pointers of not only the *Tao Te Ching* but also the *buddha-dharma*, or “the teaching of the awakened” (Hagen), that has been handed down, transcribed, and shared for over 2,500 years since the Buddha became enlightened about the mechanisms responsible for the on-going suffering, or dissatisfaction, we humans experience. The Buddha, who lived 500 years before Jesus of Nazareth, was born Siddhartha Gautama and was a prince with all the pleasures anyone could ever imagine and none of the pain, or displeasure, except for maybe a deep emptiness, or void, inside himself that there was more to life than what he was experiencing. Then, upon first observing pain and suffering outside the walls of his father’s palace, where he had been sheltered from the outside world by his father, the king, he began a journey of self-discovery and self-*Realization* that culminated in his “awakening” under a Bodhi tree to the reasons for our suffering and how to alleviate that suffering, often referred to in Buddhist philosophy as “*duhkha*” (pronounced doo-kah). Eventually, after becoming “the one who woke up”, the Buddha began sharing his newly-discovered, deep awareness, at the request of others,

and started teaching the awarenensing process that pointed toward the path of enlightenment. By opening yourself up to his teaching, or guidance, which, again, are only pointers to the path of awakening, you step on the path to learn and discover for yourself what keeps us in an unconscious state of suffering, or dissatisfaction (*duhkha*). Thus, the observations and guidance he imparts has the power to transform your life, the lives of those around you, and the world.

"I reached in experience the nirvana which is unborn, unrivalled, secure from attachment, undecaying, and unstained. This condition is indeed reached by me which is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, tranquil, excellent, beyond the reach of mere logic, subtle, and to be realized only by the wise."

*~The Buddha,
On Attaining Enlightenment*

Gautama Buddha's teachings, or "thought forms", as Eckhart Tolle would refer to them, have manifested in many books, or book forms, such as the following: *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* by Eckhart Tolle, *The Leap: The Psychology of Spiritual Awakening* by Steve Taylor, *Buddhism: Plain and Simple* by Steve Hagen, *the untethered soul* by Michael A. Singer, and *AWARE: The Science and Practice of Presence* by Daniel J. Siegel, MD, just to name a few. It is with great respect, reverence, and gratitude that I stand on the shoulders of those before me that have pointed to the path that has led to the writing, or co-writing, of this book to add to

the lexicon of **information** that is out there for all to consider and utilize in their pursuit to live a life with less suffering and more joy, connectedness, tranquility, and love.

What all of the above books (and lots more) have in common is their use of language, or linguistics, to name the unnamable in an effort to enlighten others and increase their conscious awareness of the forces at **play** in our lives. For example, Eckhart Tolle, in his books and audios/videos, tends to utilize the words “form” and “formless”, or “object consciousness” and “space consciousness”, or “ego identity” and “essence identity” to describe the same separate yet linked phenomena that Dr. Dan Siegel, in his books, audios, and videos, calls “knowns” and “knowing”, as part of his Wheel of Awareness model, with the hub of the wheel representing “knowing” and the rim of the wheel representing “knowns”. Pavel Somov, in his book, *“the lotus effect: shedding suffering and rediscovering your essential self”*, refers to these same phenomena as either the “ego self” and “essential self” or “ego identity” and “lotus identity”, which uses the metaphor of a lotus to illustrate how we can “cultivate a lotus-like capacity for self-cleaning from the informational residue (dirt) that stands in our way of our growth and well-being” (p. 6, parentheses added). Yet, as the **Eckhart Tolle quote in the “foreword, forward, and beyond” points out, “Don’t get attached to any words. They are only stepping stones.”** Words, language, are stepping stones (or bridges, or pathways, or pointers, or signposts) to what lies *beyond* our ego’s fascination and hyper-focus on the power that language gives us, or it. This power, for all its worth, keeps us overly attached to thoughts and beliefs, our mental constructs, and makes it hard for us to move *forward* and go *beyond* what we think and know and re-experience the power inherent in the formlessness, spaciousness, or

lotus-like capacity of pure conscious awareness that resides and abides within all of us, and all around us.

Buddha Billiards, or Buddha Pool, is another example of the use of words/language, and I encourage you to not get attached to any word, or words, because you may notice that you may have an aversion to, or discomfort with, a certain word, such as Buddha, based on your understanding, or misunderstanding, of the word, and what it may or may not be pointing to. If you experience this discomfort, rest assured that it is a natural part of the process to becoming awakened, awakened to the very *thing* that keeps you suffering. As the Zen proverb paradoxically points out, “The obstacle is the path”. The very *thing* that causes suffering, is the very *thing* that can be turned into a stepping stone and alleviate that very suffering. So, you may want to avoid the profound wisdom and insight that reading further may bring you, yet remember and bear in mind, at least for a little while, that words have power, for sure, yet when you understand and embrace them as pointers to the path, or a pathway, they may lead you to becoming more enlightened and experiencing the deep love emanating from the Universal Life Force.

“Name and form are the ladders to God.”

~Amma

Words are, after all, only stepping stones, or ladders, or signposts, or pathways to the Great Mystery, Great Integrity, Divine Presence, Divine Feminine, Goddess, God, Essence, Source,

Spirit, Universal Wisdom, Creative Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, Krishna Consciousness, Buddha Consciousness, and so on, that is at **play** in our lives. (Feel free to insert whatever *word* is your preferred word or phrase, sound or utterance, which names and gives voice to that which cannot be truly named or voiced.)

All words on this page and the entirety of this book are but forms of sounds, phonetics, and space that are being utilized for the purpose of pointing to a path, which must be walked and experienced by each individual traveler. Please be aware that as we walk this path together, the words that you are reading are on a page of white that started as an empty page, and was full of space, before these words filled in the space and are now pulling on your attention to focus on. Yet, the space of the white page is still there, and remains present, always, whether you are focusing on it or not. See the space between the margins, between the sentences and paragraphs, between the words, themselves, and between each letter, which then come together to **form information**, which you take in through your eyes, and ears (if you, or another, is reading this aloud), and it manifests in your mind and, what is commonly known as, the ego. If it were not for the white space, the words on the page would not be seen by you and would not be able to be read and experienced by you. This metaphor of the page as space and the letters, words, sentences, et cetera, as **form (ego)**, will be applied to Buddha Billiards. But let's explore this thing called the ego, for a bit first, and its **counterpart(ner)**, essence.

ego

Ego is the term given to the process in our brains/minds that provides us the power to use linguistic symbols to **form** sounds, words, and language, which in turn creates the basis for thoughts, beliefs, belief systems, and, what is commonly referred to as, the voice in your head. That is, the chatter box that can be incessant with its constant flow, or rush, or stream, of **information** that occupies our mind and governs our life and our interactions with others and the world around us. The “ego” was the brain child of the *founder* of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, and is situated in the middle of the “id” and the “super ego”. For the “id” think “kid” and the spontaneousness and the instinctual nature that comes with being a young child - carefree, in the moment, and connected to the now. For the “super ego” think of a “super hero”, or “super shero”, (or “super s/hego”) that symbolizes the self-righteous, moralizing manner with which we should live and conduct ourselves. The ego has the task of mitigating or mediating the other two internal, abstract, structural mechanisms of the psyche. For the purposes of this book, think of the ego as the filter through which all phenomena are turned into **information** that is then used to govern and navigate the world. As for myself and the understanding that has occurred through the process of writing, or co-writing, this book (with the Universal Life Force and the profound body of work from luminaries throughout human existence), and the processes that continue to **play** out in my life, I propose seeing “ego” as an acronym through which we can see the inner workings of the ego, which is often blurred before our eyes and hid behind a dense fog of disillusionment, disguise, and deception. The acronym I *coco*-creatively coined for “ego” is as follows: **energy-guiding operating** system (EGO). The EGO is tasked with, and conditioned to, guide the energy emanating inside of us, and outside of us, as phenomena.

The EGO is **formed** as we grow and develop and becomes mental constructs (constructions in the mind) that, once programmed into our minds, are hard to extract, or unload. Think of your computer's, or your cell phone's, internal hard-drives, or operating systems. These are systems that were installed, not by you, but by the manufacturers of those products. The **energy-guiding operating** (EGO) system works the same way, which was installed by your parents, caregivers, teachers, coaches, and all the environmental and genetic (including epigenetic) factors that you, your parents, and grandparents experienced. Yet, unlike our electronic devices, we have the ability to re-wire our EGO's hard-drive and turn its operating system around to work *with* us in a collaborative manner rather than dictating the direction of our lives by controlling us and presumptuously assuming power over us and how we operate. We do this by turning to, or *re*-turning to, and tuning into, a system that has been operating long before we even manifested into existence. A system that goes by many names, such as essence, yet ultimately is unnamable.

essence

As a **counterpart(ner)** to EGO, essence works in much the same way as the white page does for the letters, words, etc., that fill up the page with their **forms**. The page is the **formlessness** that the **form** manifests onto and into existence. Essence, therefore, is symbolic (the use of linguistic symbols) or **representative** of the formlessness, spaciousness, expansiveness of the Universal Life Force. As with ego, I propose seeing "essence" as an acronym through which we can name and put words to that which is, for all intents and purposes, unnamable. This process, nonetheless, serves as a function to nurture conscious awareness regarding the

presence of this inherently, innate force that is, often times, but not always, covered over during the conditioning of our EGOs (*energy-guiding operating* systems). Yet, this essence never goes away and is a constant companion in our lives and the ever-unfolding adventures we embark upon as a being *playing* human. The acronym for essence is as follows: *expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely (or naturally) co-creative, energy* (ESSENCE). This ESSENCE is coursing through us, all of us, as well as *beyond* us, in nature (or Nature) and the Universe, and once tapped into, or re-aligned with, it has the power to *transform* your life and transcend the EGO's mechanisms that keep you grounded in non-Reality, non-Truth, non-Tranquility, and non-Being. Again, I encourage you to not be caught up in the use of words, which are used only to point to a pathway that needs to be stepped upon by you and then, once you have your own direct experience of this ESSENCE, you too will choose words to best describe your experience of something that is, in essence, indescribable. So, if you *think* about it, attempting to describe something that is, for all intents and purposes, indescribable, we are, more precisely, attempting to *describble* (the integration of *describe* and *scribble*) the experience, for to "describe" something is assuming the power to name something absolutely and have it then be the only way that others can describe their subjective experience, which is ludicrous. Yet by using the newly coined word of *describble*, instead of describe, we are being more accurate, and the word itself may cause another to be *ludicrous*, or *ludicurious* (the integration of *ludicrous* and *curious*, with the second word said with a bit of a French flare to it). Thus, facilitating a moment in which the person experiences no-mind, or spaciousness, as their EGO pauses to check in with the present moment to see if they heard you correctly. This offers an opportunity to bring awareness to the process of cultivating conscious awareness, which is

what you most likely experienced when you first came upon the new words as you were reading along. The experience of being present when these newly **formed** words manifested into existence through me put a huge smile on my face that emanated from deep within my heart and soul as these words were *coco-created* in the moment with the Universal Life Force, and thus, provide examples of what is possible when you re-align yourself with, or immerse yourself in, the ever-present, expansive, naturely synergistic, creative, energy Source of all life. And when you experience that power source, that ESSENCE, at **play** in your life, you will resonate, radiate, and reverberate *with* abiding joy, tranquility, and love.

*"Do not compete,
do not compare,
there is no right."*

~Lao Tzu

attach to detach

Another way of thinking about words is that they are just labels used to represent, or re-present, something in order to communicate with one another. The basis for Buddha Pool, aka Buddha Billiards, is to mindfully attach labels, in the **form** of concepts (words, thoughts), to this new, re**figured** version of regular pool in order to increase conscious awareness and help individuals detach, or unattach, from EGO (the **energy-guiding operating** system) by becoming

aware of it and, thus, providing a pathway for re-aligning with the ESSENCE [*expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely (or naturally) co-creative energy*] inherent in the Universal Life Force. For example, in Buddha Billiards, the “8” ball and the other multi-hued object balls all *represent*, or symbolize, different levels of EGO attachment, of identifying with the EGO (thoughts, beliefs, etc.). The “8” ball *represents* the most solidified, rigid state of identification, or over-identification, with the EGO’s thoughts and belief systems (or programming), yet there still remains some white light of pure consciousness within and around the “8” of the “8” ball. Symbolically, the “8” ball, just like the other multi-hued object balls, all manifested from that white light of the Universal Life Force and the coloring on the balls *represents* how the EGO is layered over and “colors” over the white light of pure consciousness. This is similar to how Anita Moorjani explains in her book, *“Dying to Be Me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing”*, how white light that is refracted through a prism, *transforms* into multiple colors of the rainbow. As the colors of the rainbow go from lighter (yellow) to darker (purple), they become denser. When applied to the multi-hued object balls, the darker the hue, the denser, or more rigid, the egoic thinking is. In order of denseness, or rigidity, there is the mostly, black-hued “8” ball (most dense/rigid), followed by the striped and mostly-solid object balls of purple, blue, red, green, orange, and yellow (least dense/rigid). For the purposes of Buddha Pool, the maroon balls (which are the only object balls that are not a primary Crayola color) are at the end of the continuum, after yellow, and are even less dense/rigid than yellow. The only ball that is not a part of the continuum of egoic thinking is the white ball, which represents the pure white light of conscious awareness, and the spaciousness and formlessness, of the Universe. All of the multi-hued object balls *represent*

different degrees of egoic thinking, which can be characterized as black-n-white thinking, or all-or-nothing thinking. This illustrates the EGO's primary function, which is to create duality, polarity, or separation, in order to lord over its environment and over "us" and "others".

duality

Duality is the egoic process of dividing, or separating, the *Whole* into parts, or opposites, such as with the polarity of yin/yang, all/nothing, black/white, good/bad, right/wrong, us/them, or I/other. It is a process of creating an "either-or" scenario. Regular pool reinforces the notions/beliefs of duality by dividing the object balls into "solids" and "stripes" for the participants to focus on separately and competitively till the end when someone becomes the "winner" and the "other" becomes the "loser" (more duality). Buddha Billiards, however, flips the notion of duality and creates a **synthesis of opposites**, such as **yinyang**, not yin-yang or yin and yang, by pairing together the "solid" and "stripe" balls of the same color, thus bringing the dualistic notions back to a unified *Whole*. Buddha Pool also fosters cooperation and collaboration rather than competition, because the ultimate goal of the activity is to help each other become more consciously aware of how EGO is at **play** in our lives and keeps us separate from the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, and re-discover that there is no "I" and "other", only the One. Buddha Billiards sets up the mentality of "We either get there together, or we don't get there at all". For example, at the start of the game, we each have our separate set of dualistically-paired object balls to focus on, yet then as the game, or activity, unfolds, we come together to help the other **player(s)** pocket his/her/they/their sets of combined, polarized balls

before we work together to pocket the maroon balls. Once that is accomplished, then the action flips, or pivots, again as the **players** work together by now using the white ball (pure conscious awareness) as the “cue” ball rather than the “8” ball (dense/rigid ego) to push the “8” ball into a pocket. So, in a sense, through the process of the game/activity, we go from a state of independence to inter-dependence to inter-being, with a state of higher, integrated, conscious awareness as a result and also a deeper sense of connection, peace, and equanimity within and between the **players**.

a river of reflective ruminations and restorative ramblings refreshingly revisited & replete with reposeful rewritings

There are multiple ways and a plethora of possibilities for applying different concepts and scenarios to the game of Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool. And in some ways, I would have preferred to publish the unabridged version in its *gloriously messy* **format** to demonstrate how this manifested as a flow of **information** over time and was written down as it flowed to and thru me, which would have supported one of the overall messages of this book, which is that life is **both** messy **and** glorious, and it is through that messiness, that glorious and magnificent moments of Divine Clarity can be experienced. Yet, even though confusion can lead to clarity, it may have been too much to publish the whole book that way for the message and journey to *Wholeness* may have been covered over by the excessiveness of the words on the page. Nonetheless, I will let you, or your EGO be the judge, as I offer part of that process in this section which I metaphorically, alliteratively, **playfully**, and paradoxically refer to as “*a river of*

reflective ruminations and restorative ramblings refreshingly revisited & replete with reposeful rewritings”.

The hope for this section is that the selections of **information** will offer you, the reader and fellow traveler, different variations of the same theme to enhance, or *expand*, your understanding, deepen your conscious awareness, and facilitate the development of an **informed** perspective that is flexible and spacious with which to navigate your mind (EGO) and your life from a place of presence and the essence, spaciousness, and formlessness of the Universal Life Force. I encourage you to use this as an opportunity to experiment with being in the flow and to become aware of when the EGO raises **objections** to the unfolding of the following **information**. (NOTE: *revisions*, additions or corrections, such as spelling errors, were made to the following, yet the manifested musings remain primarily in their manifested **form**.)

Here we go. Let's flow...

Buddha Pool is played with a shift in consciousness from regular pool, as the mostly, black-hued “8” and the solid, white-hued balls’ positions and roles are switched. At the beginning of Buddha Billiards, the “8” ball (*representing* a rigid, inflexible *EGO*) is used as the “cue” ball to break apart the other **object** balls, including the white ball, that are all racked together, and then the “8” ball is used to push the multi-hued *object* balls around the table, toward and into the pockets. At the start of the game, prior to the break, the white *object* ball (*representing ESSENCE*) is placed in the middle of the racked balls, just as the “8” ball would be in regular pool, yet there is no “white-ball break” to win, for the white ball, which *represents* the pure

conscious awareness, spaciousness, and ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, is always returned to the table and put back in **play** when **it is** pocketed. Thus, the white ball becomes an ever-present presence on the table, just as the Divine Presence of the Universal Life Force is always present in our lives and within us. (Again, feel free to use any of the other aforementioned words in place of Presence, ESSENCE, or Universal Life Force, or simply take your pick of a word that you prefer to use to *represent* the white *object* ball, for example, some may call it the Tao, or God, or Spirit, or Divine Feminine – remember, as a *reminder*, we are practicing non-attachment to words). If and when the white *object* ball is pocketed, **it is** automatically taken from the pocket and placed back on the pool table in the middle, or the center, of the table, half way between the side pockets.

The multi-hued, or multi-colored, **object** balls that surround the white *object* ball in the rack at the beginning of the game represent egoic states of consciousness and unconsciousness, *forming* the duality of consciousness that we all experience, for example, right/wrong, good/bad, or us/them. These forces are often in opposition with each other, such as “I” versus “other”. In Buddha Pool, these forces are joined together as they are in the concept of *yinyang*, which is a paradoxical element that both separates these elements and unifies them. Thus, the multi-hued *object* balls of duality are grouped together by their corresponding color, that is, the red-solid and red-striped balls are paired together, just as the solid and striped purple balls are paired together. Prior to the start of the game, the participants chose their respective three, pairs of colored balls that they will focus on to begin with after the brake. The choices that were used during the development of this game were as follows; green, red, orange and purple, blue, yellow. I usually took the green, red, and orange pairs, because I noticed that they spelled

“gro”, as in “grow”, and it was an easy memory device to remind myself what colors were mine, as I engaged in the process of continuing to “grow”, or “gro”, in conscious awareness through this mindful activity. This will leave one remaining pair of *object* balls that are colored maroon, which will be shared by both, or all, participants, after the other multi-hued pairs of *object* balls are put in a pocket. The maroon *object* balls, too, are returned to the table and placed in the middle of the table, if and when they are pocketed, just like the white *object* ball, and this continues till all the other pairs of colored balls are pocketed. The maroon balls represent a state of consciousness that is more cooperative, inclusive, and aware of the EGO states, and that is why they are the closest ones to the white ball of pure consciousness, or ESSENCE, which has no duality associated with it. Furthermore, the white and maroon balls may be used, at any time, as part of combination shots to move/push the other *object* balls toward a pocket. Each player, can also use their three sets of dualistically-paired *object* balls to move any of their *object* balls toward and into a pocket. Each *player*, or team, is not allowed to use the *object* balls (forms of EGO) of the other *player(s)*, unless the *player* uses one of their *object* balls first, or the maroon or white *object* balls. This sets up the opportunity to explore and become aware of how our EGOs (object balls) affect the EGOs (object balls) of others, creating reactions or responses out of our individual or collective mental constructs, conditioned thinking, or programming (our EGO or EGOs).

As part of the cooperative, or collaborative, nature of the game, each participant begins by focusing on their chosen pairs of *object* balls, yet once their three, dualistically-paired *object* balls are all pocketed, then the *player* helps the other *player* to pocket his or her remaining dualistically-paired *object* balls. The focus is to help one another to pocket our *object* balls

(EGO states of consciousness or unconsciousness) and increase our awareness and teamwork in the process, then together the participants will focus on pocketing the maroon balls. The next major shift, or pivot, in consciousness occurs after all of the pairs of object balls have been pocketed, leaving only the white *object* ball (ESSENCE) and the “8” ball (rigid EGO) on the table. Now, instead of the “8” ball being used to push the white ball into a pocket, the white ball is now used to pocket the eight ball. This symbolizes how, through the process of the game, the *players* have gained an increased level of conscious awareness regarding EGO and ESSENCE, and are now ready to engage in life from this higher state of consciousness and live from a place of ESSENCE, or presence, or formlessness, and utilize the EGO to engage in the world rather than being control by the EGO. When the “8” ball is pocketed by either *player* using the white ball, the white ball is then placed back in the center of the table, and both, or all, players are declared the winners. For in the process of working together, helping one another, and having fun, everyone wins, by becoming more connected with themselves and each other, and becoming more aware of their internal states of consciousness and unconsciousness.

In Buddha Billiards, the “8” ball, acts as the “cue” ball and *represents* unconsciousness, the collective unconsciousness, and the solid, rigid, inflexible state of the EGO. The EGO is used to pushing us and others around, such as the “8” ball is used to push the other balls around the table and into their place, that is, into a pocket. It is through the process of switching up the game of regular pool to Buddha Billiards that we are made aware (conscious) of how the EGO works, how it largely remains unknown to us, and how it tends to cover up, or “color” over consciousness, especially pure conscious, which is the gateway, or bridge, or pathway to re-connecting with the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force within. Again, remember, “*the Tao that*

can be named is not the Tao", so words are being used to point to that which cannot be named, yet not necessarily to name it definitively, which is a process by which the EGO tends to assert itself by actively naming things and claiming to have the only way to name *something*. Feel free to substitute a word, any word, or maybe a sound, that makes more sense to you to name or identify that Higher Power as you have come to understand it, yet I encourage you to be aware of how rigid your EGO or belief system is regarding the use of the word of your choosing.

At the beginning of Buddha Pool, when the *object* balls are racked together, the white *object* ball, representing the manifested ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force (again, insert your preferred word, or phrase, here), is, again, in the middle of the rack, surrounded by and covered up by the egoic states of consciousness and unconsciousness **presented** by the multi-hued **object** balls of duality. This illustrates the process by which our EGO works to cover up or hide the ever-present Universal Life Force under layers of dualistic thinking. Just like no matter how much you focus on the letters, words, et cetera, on this page, the white space is always present, as well, which the words have been layered over or onto. Yet without the white page, the words would not be seen; just as without the Universal Life Force, each individually manifested life form would not be seen or manifest into existence.

The pool table's top upon which the game is **played** *represents* the Universal Life Force, itself, in more of its expansive nature, just as the white page before you is now filled with **form** in the **form** of words, et cetera. As Buddha Billiards is *played* and the action unfolds, the EGO, or the voice in your head, will have moments that create barriers for it and it will say things in your mind like, "I can't get to that shot/ball", yet with expanded awareness (that is, the use of the

Whole table's surface), you will begin to see other possibilities. EGO states of duality/polarity will be challenged and it is with the light of awareness that other possibilities emerge. Buddha Pool will create de-stabilization, in the **form** of discomfort, as the EGO's sense of control is challenged and the stability of awareness emerges, creating a level of grounding and space in, and through, the present moment that the EGO is unable to provide.

The EGO will continue to encourage you to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result until you change, or shift your perspective and make a different choice/shot/move and/or come at things from a different angle/perspective. That change, or shift in perspective, is a result of allowing and being open to the light of ESSENCE, presence, or spaciousness to enter your awareness, which provides other ways to view *things*, including how your EGO engages in the labeling of this or that as difficult, challenging, not good enough, unpleasant, insurmountable, doable, not doable, hard, pointless, and so on, including such utterances as "ugh". The words we chose can be a pathway to a deeper understanding of the powers of EGO and ESSENCE that are at work in our lives.

When it comes to the final stage/phase of the game, the **players** shift to engage from a higher state of conscious awareness/ESSENCE (the white *object* ball) to move/utilize the EGO (the "8" ball) to interact/communicate with others, with ourselves, and with the world around us. This higher state of consciousness helps us to recognize that at the level of ESSENCE, or formlessness, there is no "us", because "us" is a mental construct of the EGO.

Other people's EGOs (*represented* by the multi-hued *object* balls) provide obstacles and barriers by creating disturbances/discord/discomfort inside of us, which can lead to increased

awareness of the EGO and a **befriending** of your and an others' EGO, manifesting into increased cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity (*represented by the maroon object balls*) to support each other's journey to enlightenment or a more awakened state of being (*represented by the white object ball*).

The goal is not to get rid of the EGO but to befriend it, *carefront* it, and use it as a *playmate*. *Playfully* engaging with the EGO, which, again, I **conceptualize** as the **energy-guiding operating** system, helps you to be aware and mindful regarding the use of language to exchange and communicate *information*.

A sense of **play**, such as a child-like state of being, is attained by going beyond EGO states of duality (e.g., us/them, good/bad, right/wrong) and embracing the vitality, creativity, and sense of fun and flow that is the Universe Intelligence, and our natural state of being. As **Jesus of Nazareth** is quoted as saying, in Matthew 18:3, "*Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*". Jesus, after all, was a carpenter of consciousness himself, metaphorically speaking, and divinely understood that "heaven" is a state, not a place. Children, by their very nature, are naturally, or naturely, in the present moment due to them being in the pre-thought stage of development and are, thus, more connected to a **playful** and present state of being, a heavenly and joyful state, for sure, which you can experience if you have ever been around a child at **play** and allow yourself to be immersed in their world of wonder, of whimsy, and of *Wholeness*.

"Man is most nearly himself

when he achieves the seriousness

of a child at play.”

~Heraclitus, 535-475 B.C.

The “cue” sticks *represent* the energy/force of the EGO and/or the Universe, which manifests depending on your state of consciousness and/or belief systems. These belief systems can be characterized as being a paranoid state, a pronoid state, or a **coconoid** state. These states, all of which are on a continuum, are, or can be, developed as part of the maturing process, yet we can become stuck in a certain state, which stagnates the maturing process. Again, as we become aware of these different states and understand that the knowing of the different states can lead to the development of a different state of consciousness that governs or supports the unfolding of our lives. As for myself, I will just note that I have moments of being in the paranoid state of consciousness, or unconsciousness to be more accurate, yet my default state has been the pronoid state more recently, which I have worked to develop and strengthen through awareness and the regular practice of applying the pronoid belief state to unfolding situations in my life. That said, I am now personally, professionally, psychologically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually working on developing and enhancing the *coconoid* state of consciousness, since the time that this state of conscious awareness manifested to, for, and through me, and I *coco*-creatively coined the word “*coconoia*” to identify this state of consciousness, which is also *represented* in the symbolism of the maroon *object* balls. (More on these three states of **consciousunconsciousness** or **unconsciousconsciousness** in part two – “the continuum of belief and *beyond*”).

The Universe is **pro-lifechoice**. Life is movement. Life just is. Choice comes from EGO, our mentally constructed sense of “self”, “other” and the “world”, which projects our programmed belief system(s) outward and applies it to how “others” or the “world” *should* be. Our EGO seeks to reinforce these belief states by imposing them on “others” and the outside “world”, and even to the world inside us. Choice is increased through options, which are created or made available/possible with higher states of consciousness and conscious awareness. Life is our natural state of being that all life manifests from, and choice is a natural state of our humanness, and it is in the synthesizing of the two that we honor both natural states inherent with being human or being a human being. This synthesized manner in which to characterize *things* is similar to the common saying “*It is what it is*”. “*It*” is another **form** of linguistic expression that *represents* the EGO, as does the word “choice” imply the machinations of the EGO, and “*is*” is another **form** of linguistic expression that *represents* the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, as does the word “Life” *itself* (in its usage and capitalization), which points to that very ESSENCE that just “*is*”. When we *think*, or more powerfully yet, verbalize either the common saying of “*It is what it is*” or the characterization of the Universe as *pro-lifechoice*, especially with this increased conscious awareness of what is being named, we embrace the inter-*play* of the two and honor not only our evolved egoic nature but also our essential nature, which contribute to not only the trajectory of our lives on this planet, but to all sentient beings and the planet itself.

The pockets on the pool table *represent* our brain’s/mind’s/body’s storage units and, also, the expansive Universal Life Force from which all manifested life **forms** emerge.

Life is often times experienced as more difficult, distressing, or disturbing from a rigid, inflexible, “solid” state of unconscious EGO (mental constructs, thoughts, belief systems), which creates states of rigidity and/or chaos in the world, or more precisely, projects and creates **rigidlychaotic** or **chaoticallyrigid** states. On the other hand, life is quite often experienced as much more enjoyable, energizing (or synergizing), and enlightening from higher, or deeper, states of conscious awareness and being grounded in presence and the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, which can be accessed and directly experienced, any “time”, in the present moment.

During Buddha Billiards, one way to bring more awareness to how EGO (the **energy-guiding operating** system) works, is to incorporate the idea of taking up to two shots/attempts per turn to work on highlighting the difference between **intentions** versus **expectations** and *carefronting* the conditioned belief of needing to make the ball in the pocket, which is similar to the ultimate, and highly celebrated, goal of making a hole-in-one in golf, or even mini-golf. These types of glorified and overly celebrated expectations set us up for disappointment and frustration, that is, suffering, due to the inherent obstacles and unlikeliness of attaining the **objective** of perfection, and tends to reinforce the EGO’s sense of self and attachment to identity. By using the up-to-two-shot guideline, or even up-to-three-shot guideline, this helps to re-establish and re-define success from the perspective of non-judgmental, neutral awareness that simply observes/witnesses the unfolding of life/movement, that is, the rolling of the *object* balls and the interactions that follow the manifested intention and movement of energy through the pool “cue” stick making contact with the “8” ball. Watch the unfolding

movement with no-mindedness and observe the present moment be becoming One with the present moment.

How we affect/impact our environment and the people around us, that is, their EGO states and their neurophysiological states, is determined by the force/energy that is channeled through our bodies and EGO states into intention (the “cue” stick), and this impact can be magnified depending on our expectation, which comes from our EGO, that is, our belief systems and our conditioned/constructed sense of “self”, “other”, and the “world”. The impact can be mitigated by the presence of other states of consciousness, which may absorb some of the energy intended for another. This is represented in Buddha Billiard, for example, when an intended move/shot is deflected from its intended goal/target by other *object* balls that are in close proximity to the targeted *object* ball. These *object* balls interrupt or interfere in the “8” ball’s intended action and, thus, set up multiple possibilities of the unfolding action, or movement, of all of the *object* balls on the pool table. This is symbolic of how our own intended actions manifest themselves in ways that are out of our control, and as the action, or movement, unfolds, the end result may be different than what we expected. By engaging in an action yet detaching from the outcome, or result of that action, we provide ourselves with the opportunity to be present and stay in the flow on the Universal Life Force, the Universal Intelligence that energizes, or synergizes, the ripples of your actions that emanate outward into the world.

“The end is inherent in the means.”

~Mahatma Gandhi

This inspiring quote from Gandhi was a significant pointer to a greater awareness than I had previously, well, been aware of. For most of us, we have heard the common saying, “*The end justifies the means*”, which basically says that whatever tactic, strategy, or manner in which you accomplish a task or attain a goal is justified, even if that means that you step on or over someone, or *something*, such as the planet, or disregard them in the process, because what “you” want is what matters and what holds value. This is a rigid state of EGO, comparable to the mostly, solid state of the “8” ball, or varying degrees of rigidity *represented* by the multi-hued *object* balls. This EGO state of the end-result-justifies-whatever-means-you-use-to-get-there also *represents* the process of regular pool, where the goal is to get the competitive advantage over your “opponent” and beat them to be the so-called “winner”. Unlike regular pool, Buddha Pool embraces Gandhi’s inspirational quote, which points to the awakened understanding that how you get there, every step of the way, and with whom, is intrinsically woven into your very being and that state of ESSENCE, if connected with and brought into the present moment, will prove to be the fundamental means on the proverbial path toward uniting with the Universal Intelligence of the Universal Life Force, and turns the journey into the destination and destines us to *realize* that the divine destination *is* the journey. (Yes, that was quite a mouthful.) And when you experience the *Wholeness* inherent in that process, you will be One with the Universe, which is *represented* by the white *object* ball and the expansive, spacious, inclusive pool table.

Metaphorically speaking, the regular game of pool represents how we as humans are conditioned to act or behave and interact in a certain preprogrammed way/manner based on a set of rules, beliefs, et cetera, which are often grounded in notions of duality, or polarity. Yet by using this basic game of pool and pivoting *it* into what I have coined as Pocket Buddha Billiards, or Buddha Billiards or Buddha Pool, for short, we can illustrate the process of **transforming** ego by embracing duality and then transcending *beyond* ego back into re-alignment with our true ESSENCE, pure awareness, or as Eckhart Tolle refers to it sometimes, “space consciousness”. The solid-white *object* ball on the pool table represents the manifested *form* of the pool table, which represents *formlessness* and space consciousness, or the *Tao* that cannot be named.

When we work together from a higher (or deeper) level of conscious awareness and ESSENCE (white *object* ball), we can collectively put the EGO (the “8” ball) back in its place (a pocket) and then utilize it from a place of presence, conscious awareness, and ESSENCE. This helps us to take communication to a higher level, which includes not getting caught up in the use of language, but seeing language for what it is, a bridge, or pathway, from the inside world attempting to connect with the outside world to find some common ground of understanding, of relating, of coming back to the *Whole* that is the Universe, where nothing is separate, but unified as One. Thus, when the EGO is out of the way, you are left with the field of pure consciousness (the pool table) and all its possibilities.

The beauty of Buddha Billiards is that you can take the concept and be creative with it. Once you have followed the guidelines of the game and understand the game for what *it is* trying to

facilitate, which is, increased conscious awareness, you can then be your own creative, or co-creative force and change up the rules and guidelines to bring more, or continued, conscious awareness to each participant, or *player*. From a place of pure possibilities, all should feel open to express themselves with ideas to change up the game that is then agreed upon by all that are engaging in the activity as a way to foster and nurture the primary purposes of the game/activity, which, again, is to increase conscious awareness, along with the capacity for collaboration, compassion, and a grounding in the present moment of being, of ESSENCE, and the formlessness, spaciousness, expansiveness of the Universal Life Force.

Possible examples of supportive, *playful* comments, if the *players* are open to do it and inclined to do so, would be *something* like “Wise decision” or “Enlightened choice”. Many creative possibilities are available if each *player* engages their imagination and embraces the *playfulness* of this process. Or, another option would be to engage in the game and provide no comments at all. For in doing so, you will be providing the space for the “other” *player* to experience and practice how to ground themselves in the non-evaluative, non-judgmental, neutrality of ESSENCE consciousness, or space consciousness. This then gives the “other” *player* an opportunity to be aware of their own internal, egoic dialogue, or monologue, which can help them to practice non-attachment to what *form* of language shows up in their minds and just be aware of it and allow it to just manifest and then un-manifest as the individual re-focuses on being present in the moment. Thoughts are a narrative of what happened, not what is, for what happened has already passed by and is now replaced with the now, for which is ever being translated into a narrative, or story, by the EGO. Becoming aware of this constant script being written in the mind is a way into changing the script, or the narrative/story, of

one's life. Instead of the EGO being the author, you can become the author from a deep place of presence, ESSENCE, and spaciousness.

In Buddha Pool, each **player** is allowed to use the solid-white *object* ball or the pair of maroon *object* balls at any time, because they *represent* the pathway to enlightenment, a higher state of *awakenment*, of being awake, so if any of these three *object* balls end up in a pocket before the rest of the multi-hued, dualistically-paired *object* balls are eliminated from the table, they are immediately removed from the pocket and placed in the center of the table, half way between the two side pockets. This centering of these three *object* balls symbolizes the purpose of the game and the process of being, or becoming, centered in Cosmic Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, Buddha Consciousness, Krishna Consciousness, Universal Intelligence, Creative Wisdom, *Wholeness*, God, or the Tao, to name a few ways to describe, or *describble*, the indescribable, or *indescribble*.

During the opening break, Buddha Pool, unlike the game of regular pool, allows the person who did the break to continue playing as long as they pocketed at least one ball as a result of the break. It does not matter which *object* ball, or balls, went into a pocket, due to the process that each **players'** pairs of dualistically-aligned *object* balls were determined ahead of time. And in the process of the break, if the solid-white *object* ball or either maroon ball is pocketed, they are placed back on the table in the center, and **play** continues with the **player** who executed the break.

If the "8" ball is pocketed during the game, it is placed back on the table at the end where it was first used to break apart the racked balls, and the other player can then place the "8" ball

wherever to make the next move, as long it is within the section marked by the sides of the table and indicated as the break area.

Regular pool is about competition, division, and duality, which ends with a “winner” and a “loser”, or in other words, a “non-winner”. Buddha Billiards, however, flips that concept and works to establish, create, and foster unity, cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity, where all involved are winners because they are having fun and connecting at a deeper level of existence, a deeper level of consciousness, and co-creating with the Universal Life Force in an experiential, existential experience. For it is only through direct experience do we truly become enlightened and re-awakened to the Source of all life that lives, abides, and dwells within us all.

When considering the word “dwells”, or “dwell”, what is often referenced is how we as humans tend to dwell on the negative or positive thought **forms** (manifested, dualistic, egoic **forms** of thought) that tend to create a pull on us to continue to focus on those thought **forms**, which can be so addictive and seductive. Yet when we recognize that the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force dwells in us, as well, we can then begin the work of re-conditioning ourselves to dwell, or focus, on the that Life Force’s ESSENCE and presence and cultivate the ability and capacity to be presently aware and consciously tuned into that which is permanent rather than chasing the impermanent promise of permanence that the EGO professes. This process helps us to connect, or re-connect, with the Universal Life Force that is bigger than us...and flows through us, all of us, and all the sentient beings on this planet, and the planet itself.

The journey of how the concept of Buddha Billiards was born, birthed, and co-creatively came into being included many complex instances of serendipitous, consilient, and continuous flows

of *information* that came to, thru, and for me to reflect on until the multitude of experiences encouraged me to accept the role of conduit and put the *information* down on the page. Some of that process was going from regular pocket pool of calling your shot to two-shot pool, from using the dominant hand to using the non-dominant hand to move the “cue” stick, which increases integration in the brain and body and helps one to bridge to the Spirit *realm*, and *beyond*, to also integrating being in the now and differentiating between intention (*is*, ESSENCE-directed) versus expectation (*it*, EGO-directed), to shifting perspectives to become open to other possibilities, such as bank shots, combo shots, et cetera, to the *formation* of this new approach to pool, which is a metaphor for approaching life and understanding what it means to be a human being. And then to pivot from being a human being to being human and going about living more in the present moment and from presence, which is connected to the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force. Thus, we go from the disenfranchising EGO being in charge and causing all kinds of chaos, stress, pain, and suffering, depriving us of our birthright of joy, peace, equanimity, and love, to embodying our birthright and befriending the EGO to bring these qualities of Cosmic Consciousness into the world and our interactions with others. In Buddha Billiards, as “you” and the “other”, or “others”, work supportively and collaboratively together to put the multi-colored *object* balls of EGO and duality into the holes/pockets, you are one step closer on the path to *Wholeness* and being One with the Universe.

Upon reading this book, “others”, or “you”, may wonder, “Why didn’t I *think* of this?” regarding Buddha Pool, and that is, most likely, because “you”, or “they” were *thinking* and caught up in EGO (mental constructs, constructed sense of self) and the rigid belief system of how the game

of regular pool (or the game of life) is supposed to, or should be, played (lived). It is the sense of creative **play**, or co-creative **play**, that is often missing in our lives and keeps us stuck in the same, old, habitual, thought patterns. Yet co-creative, or *coco*-creative, **play** opens us up to the infinite possibilities *beyond* thinking, thought patterns, and belief systems.

In regular pool, the RACKing of the *object* balls at the start of the game, can be chaotic, distressing, or even tormenting, with the various ego forms of duality (stripes/solids, right/wrong, good/bad) surrounding/encasing the “8” ball (most dense and rigid *form* of the EGO) in a highly, organized or structured manner. Yet from the Buddha Billiard’s perspective, there is no right way or wrong way to “rack” the balls, other than the solid-white *object* ball of pure consciousness (neutrality) being placed in the middle somehow, at least to begin with. In fact, the process could be considered the **receptacling**, rather than the racking, of the balls.

Receptacling of the *object* balls is the process of placing the *object* balls into the structure shaped as a triangle that openly receives and temporarily holds the object balls into position. The multi-hued *object* balls of solids and stripes can be put in the triangle-shaped **receptacle** with no-mind as to them needing to be positioned in any certain order or organized in any structured manner. This process can be freeing, yet the rigidity by which some may want to create a rule for the way the *object* balls should be “racked” and then stick to that rule, no matter what, is one of the purposes of Buddha Pool, which is about cultivating conscious awareness and flexible thinking in its **players** through choices/options with which to engage in the game of Buddha Pool, and the game of life.

During the **playing** of Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, habitual/conditioned thinking will tend to take over at times, giving “you” and the “other(s)” opportunities to help each other come back to the present moment through awareness. For example, at some point, all participants will discover that they unconsciously lined up a shot using the solid-white *object* ball (which is used as the “cue” ball in regular pool), or have already taken a shot with the white *object* ball rather than the mostly, black-hued “8” ball (which is the “cue” ball in Buddha Billiards). If and when it is discovered that the white *object* ball is about to be used, or has been used, through conscious awareness from the self or an “other”, then a shift, or a re-pivot, occurs back to the “8” ball being, once again, used as the “cue” ball, and the game resumes right from the moment of conscious awareness. There is no need to go and undo, or reset, what has already been done, for, as in life, we cannot go back and change the past. Be in the moment and live in the present. Accept, adjust, and act accordingly. When pure consciousness (the white *object* ball) is used in an unconscious way, out of habit, that is, habitual/conditioned thinking, then awareness within self and the awareness from others will help each **player** become more aware of unconscious choices, thus strengthening conscious awareness.

The process of engaging in Buddha Pool is similar to the use of the **Johari Window**, created by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham, that illustrates the benefit of having others help us and support us with increasing our awareness of ourselves and exploring a deeper relationship with ourselves and other and, ultimately, increasing our conscious awareness of, and relationship with, the Universal Life Force, Universal Wisdom, and Creative Consciousness, et cetera, that is within all of us. This **realm**, or dimension, of the Universal Life Force seems to be located in the “unknown” quadrant (dimension) of the *Johari Window*. The *Johari Window*

consists of four quadrants that reflect different aspects of relational awareness, namely, the open space, the blind spot, the hidden area, and the aforementioned unknown area. The “open space”, or public self, consists of what is known to you *and* to others about you. The “blind spot” consists of what others know about you yet you are “blind” to. The “hidden area”, or private self, consists of what is known to you yet is “hidden” from others, so it is unknown to them, and becomes a part of a person’s façade. Last, but certainly not least, the “unknown area”, or the space of mystery, consists of what is unknown to you *and* unknown to others. I would surmise that the “unknown area”, which is the area the I was most curious about when I first learned of the *Johari Window* in grad school, is only known to a select few individuals who have become re-aligned and re-connected with the Great Mystery that is the unknown, or unexperienced, ESSENCE, spaciousness, formlessness, and expansiveness of the Universal Life Force which dwells within us, yet is covered, or “colored”, over by layers and layers of egoic identification that blocks us from experiencing this *realm*, or dimension, directly. By coming into conscious contact with the Great Mystery, or Cosmic Consciousness, or Universal Intelligence, or Divine, we are experientially making the “unknown” known.

During the later stages of Buddha Billiards, if the mostly, black-hued “8” ball “scratches” as part of the process of putting the last maroon ball in a pocket, then the “8” ball is simply taken out of the pocket and placed in the center of the table, half-way between the side pockets, and the games continues by now switching/pivoting to using the white *object* ball as the “cue” ball, from wherever the white ball is located on the table. Thus, the white *object* ball, *representing* the manifestation of pure awareness, is used to push the “8” ball toward and into a pocket. If the white *object* ball “scratches” during this process or after pocketing the “8” ball, the white

object ball is simply removed from the pocket and placed in the center of the table, as is done throughout the entire game after the initial break, if it is pocketed accidentally or purposely during the action of the game. At the conclusion of the game, the white *object* ball remains in the center of the pool table (which *represents* the spaciousness and expansiveness of the Universe). The white *object* balls rests in the center of the table as a reminder of the ultimate purpose of the game, as *it is* in life, which is to be centered in the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force that abides in us and all around us. The white *object* ball holds that position in the center of the table as an open invitation for all to engage in this process of becoming more awakened, enlightened, and re-connected with that ever-present Cosmic Consciousness despite the unawareness and unconsciousness (EGO) that covers up and hides this dimension of *Reality*.

Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, can be **played** with multiple players beyond two, which exponentially increases the level of awareness participating in the game. For example, with three players, the **players** are given the choice to select from the six pairs of dualistically-aligned *object* balls (red, green, purple, orange, yellow, blue), and the game continues as usual, with everyone working individually, at first, to pocket their two pairs of solid/striped balls, then, after completing that task, each **player** helps the others to pocket their pairs of solid/striped balls until all the **players**' chosen dualistically-paired *object* balls are pocketed. Then all the **players** shift/pivot to pocketing the two maroon balls, and then after that is accomplished, they pivot one last time to using the white *object* ball to pocket the "8" ball. Once that is completed, the white *object* ball is placed in the center of the pool table, poised in its position to invite the next **players** to engage in the process of **playing** the game and becoming more present and consciously aware of the power inherent in the present moment. Whereas, the game of

regular pool with three players eventually leads to one player then another being excluded, or eliminated, from the game till a “winner” is crowned. Yet in Buddha Billiards, the **format** of the game leads to more cooperation, collaboration, connection, and consciousness, and crowns all involved as winners, because there is no separation between **players** anymore but a deeper understanding that at the level of ESSENCE, all are One. Thus, Buddha Billiards co-creates, fosters, and cultivates an atmosphere that celebrates inclusion and inclusivity through a sense of **play**, simplicity, and present-moment mindedness, and helps all to walk away with a renewed sense of belonging, peace, and joy.

“It took me years to learn how to play like myself.”

~Miles Davis

From a scientific, or neuroscientific, perspective, Buddha Billiards helps with nurturing neural growth and integration by engaging the mechanism of neuroplasticity of the brain and cultivates connectivity with others and their brains and bodies by activating mirror neurons and our neurophysiological systems. Dr. Stephen Porges, developer of the **Polyvagal Theory**, states how “Connectivity is a biological imperative”, which is fostered and encouraged through the engagement in Buddha Pool. Dr. Dan Siegel often speaks of the significance of integration, which he describes as the process of “honoring differences and promoting compassionate linkages” and is one of the conceptual cornerstones of his consistently-informed messages. Buddha Billiards fosters an environment that supports integration collectively within the

players and individually within themselves. The work of both of these men have greatly influenced my understanding of how the mind, body, and spirit work together, and they have significantly supported and validated the work of so many others, who are, and have been, the embodiment of accessing the spiritual dimension that dwells in and energizes the mind and body.

The two, maroon, *object* balls (solid and stripe) and the solid, white *object* ball represent manifestations of formlessness and consciousness, which are always present and available to us, to aid us with becoming more aware and conscious, and ultimately, with moving *beyond* belief (EGO, mental constructs) by transcending that which is impermanent and re-aligning ourselves with the permanence of the Universal Life Force. That is why whenever any of these three *object* balls are “knocked off” the table and put in a pocket, they are immediately placed back onto the pool table, in the *center* of the table. Incidentally, the table is another way to look at what Dr. Dan Siegel describes as the “plane of possibility” (*Aware*, p. 211). He most recently explained and described in session five of his “PEPP MWe Up Talk & Gathering” how the plane of possibility is “the formless source of all form”, which are the words that echo Eckhart Tolle’s characterization of these concepts. Similarly, Angi Sullins, in her “Do It Anyway (The Woosh)” musing in the *Duirwaigh Studios Newsletter*, dated September 26th, 2017, stated how “All the possibilities are inside the not knowing”. She then further emphasized this profound message by writing it this way, “All. The. Possibilities. Are. Inside. The. Not. Knowing.” This supports Dr. Dan Siegel’s concept of the “plane of possibility” and his and Eckhart Tolle’s reference to this dimension as “formlessness”. The formless essence of the plane of possibility is found in the not knowing, or no-mind, space that Dr. Siegel refers to as the “hub” in his

Wheel of Awareness, and the place of “knowing”, which is an active, spacious state of having no mind. It is only when phenomenal energy manifests into mental constructs (egoic forms) that things become, what Dr. Siegel calls, “knowns”. Again, these are but words that point to a process of how the EGO tends to cling, or attach, to identifiers of phenomena, which preoccupy our minds and whisk us away from the Source of ESSENCE or presence that provides the *foundation* for this process of awarenensing into existence the knowns or forms or objects that become the primary focus of the egoic mind. Yet *it is* by going *beyond* the egoic mind, and transcending its thought forms, that brings us back into re-alignment with the knowing ESSENCE and the formless, expansive space of the Universal Life Force.

*“Thou must be emptied of that wherewith thou art full,
that thou mayest be filled with that whereof thou art empty.”*

~Saint Augustine

Regarding the “8” ball – when the “8” is turned on its side, it is the symbol for infinity created by John Wallis and *represents* perpetual motion/movement, or eternity. “The infinity symbol represents a sense of simplicity and balance. It reminds us to be conscious of where we are and the endless possibilities we have before us” (<https://gyllenwatches.com/blogs/journal/infinity-symbol-meaning>). This symbol is similar to the concept of “*yinyang*”, which, again, is written as one word, because duality is unified and inseparable in nature (Nature). The EGO, however, tends to split things into opposites, dualities, or polarities, in order to keep us confused and

chasing after permanence in impermanent things. Through its conditioning and programming, the EGO slowly takes over and usurps the power inherent in infinity and symbolizes it into a mental construct, which keeps us in perpetual movement, forward/backward, upward/downward, in our infinite quest to find balance and harmony in our lives, yet once attained for even a brief moment, we are unable to hold onto that state of balance and make it permanent as promised by the EGO. The EGO, through its mental constructs of duality, separates the *Whole* into parts, and perpetuates this myth of permanent harmony by commanding our attention and distracting us from the only thing that can provide us with the experience of infinite harmony, which is found only in the *present* moment, away from the mental constructs of the EGO, and in the ESSENCE of the infinite now of the Universal Life Force. Interestingly, the infinity symbol is also the pattern of the wings of a hummingbird. The rapid, winged pattern of infinity also helps the hummingbird to move forward, backward, upward, and downward with seemingly effortless grace and harmonious synthesis of these opposite actions. The perpetual motion of the hummingbird's wings, also, help it to hover in the air, with the appearance of complete stillness and a transcendent-like state of being, as if it were floating and one with the air. The humming of its wings contributes to its name yet to marvel at the wonder of the natural world, without naming it and just experiencing it, provides us with a glimpse, however quick, at the possibilities inherent when movement and stillness are in harmonious balance and become our natural state as we move with the infinite ESSENCE and stillness of the Universal Life Force. Serendipitously, humming is one of the sounds created from "om", which is the sound of the Universe (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Om>). Incidentally, "om" is found in the middle of the word "home". Furthermore, the symbol for infinity could be

seen as *representing* duality as the two loops that intersect in the middle, which is the dimension of the now, and the balance point for the flow, or inter~~play~~**play**, between beingness and humanness.

Fun Fact: When you take any of the seven pairs of dualistically-aligned *object* balls or the polar opposites *represented* by the “8” ball and the white *object* ball, and you subtract the larger number from the smaller number, the result is always the number “8”. For example, the striped and solid, yellow-hued, *object* balls are number “9” and “1”, respectively. The difference between the two is “8”. The same is true for all of the rest of the dualistically-paired, *object* balls, including the “8” ball and the white *object* ball, which would be the number “0” (zero). This further illustrates how the symbolism of infinity inherent in the “8”, when *it is* turned on its side, continually manifests in all other object-forms as the EGO perpetually controls our lives by having us chase after permanence in impermanent things (objects, stuff, *its*). Yet, to illustrate the power of ESSENCE, represented by the white *object* ball (with a numerical value of “zero”), if you take “0” (zero) and multiply it with any other number, the result is “zero”, or neutrality. This *represents* the synergistic effect of being aligned with the non-interfering ESSENCE and then walking through life utilizing EGO to express yourself from the deep, ever-present, pure-consciousness of the Universal Life Force.

As a reminder, this is *not* about doing away with, or eliminating, the EGO, which is the mind-made, constructed sense of self, other, and the world, yet it is about putting the EGO in its place by re-connecting and re-aligning with pure consciousness, and then engaging in life from that intentional and mindful place of conscious awareness and utilizing the EGO (with all its

thought forms, concepts, ideas, language, beliefs) to walk the path and bring more conscious awareness and the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force into the world by using words and language, et cetera, to point to the path of awakening and enlightenment that others must walk themselves to experience directly.

The process of Buddha Billiards is to go from an EGO state of consciousness, or unconsciousness, to a more conscious state of awareness, pure awareness, that is neutral and lives outside the realm of opposites. The EGO state of opposites, duality, or polarity can be a bridge, or pathway, to the state of pure awareness by synthesizing the opposites and, thus, creating a bridge, or pathway, for the mind to traverse as it seeks to transcend duality and become One with the Universal Life Force found in formlessness, expansiveness, spaciousness, stillness, or silence.

The ultimate challenge is to **play** the game of Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, in *silence* and *observe* the unfolding of the process, while grounding yourself in *seeing* and *being* present without judgment (that is, without labeling shots as “good” or “bad”, for example). By engaging in the game, setting intentions with the shots you plan to make, executing those shots, and then remaining neutral with whatever happens in the unfolding of the moment as the actions taken energize into movements that end in results, this process becomes a metaphorical and practical example of engaging in the game of life. In other *words*, try not to be tied to the results of your actions. The *object* ball may or may not go into the intended pocket, yet if you expect it to and it does not, the EGO will most likely voice its dissatisfaction through words in your head and/or through verbally expressed comments or utterances. Often

times, in the game, as in life, the EGO seems to be in charge of setting intentions that are tied to, or fused with, expectations, which bring us unnecessary pain and suffering due to the nature of trying to control the desired, or expected, outcome. If, however, we take intentional actions and allow the process to unfold from a non-judgmental, neutral position, we can significantly reduce the pain and suffering we experience by remaining grounded in the present and the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

"Life is under no obligation to give us what we expect."

~Margaret Mitchell

"The unexpected makes you grow."

~Irrfan Khan

The ultimate *REALization* is to *know* that consciousness is available to us every day and in every moment of our lives. In fact, consciousness *is* life, and we are life manifested into human *form*. Life *flows* through you no *matter* whether you are in a state of consciousness or unconsciousness, or more precisely, no *matter* which state dominates your life.

Unconsciousness is related to being caught up in an egoic state (concepts, mental constructs, thoughts, beliefs, etc.), which dominates your life with its focus on duality (right/wrong, good/bad). Yet through activities such as Buddha Billiards, this state of unconsciousness can be

brought into awareness and a transformational state of *consciousunconsciousness* can emerge, which can then transform into a state of unconsciousconsciousness, and to a higher state of consciousness that then dominates and governs your life. A different way of *thinking* about it, or looking at it would be illustrated in the follow continuum:

UNCONSCIOUSNESS ---- consciousUNCONSCIOUSNESS ---- consciousunconsciousness ----
unconsciousconsciousness ---- unconsciousCONSCIOUSNESS ---- CONSCIOUSNESS

Yet, in *REALity*, as long as you are a *human being*, you will always have some *form* of interplay between the *human* EGO and the ESSENCE of *being*, and thus, there is no state of pure UNCONSCIOUSNESS or pure CONSCIOUSNESS that dominates your life totally, or in its totality. There are those among us, and those throughout *human* history, that have attained a higher state of consciousness and could walk in that state of pure consciousness, yet they, too, had the *human* EGO as part of their *being* as they walked, or walk, among us, from that deeper state of ESSENCE. Many of the enlightened beings, who discovered this *REALity*, utilized their “time” on this planet to enlighten us with their example and teachings as pointers to the proverbial path, which we must walk ourselves to discover for ourselves this *REALity*, or other *REALm* of existence.

To name any state as “normal”, is to name the opposite state as “abnormal”, and thus, again, putting us in the realm of duality. Yet if you synthesize the duality, such as *abnormallynormal* or *normallyabnormal*, you are embracing both sides of the polarity and progressing to a state of balance, or harmony, which is symbolized through the notion of *yinyang*. Yet *yinyang* is often referred to as yin *and* yang (pronounced “y-ah-ng”), which separates the two inseparable

elements into two dualistic notions. A more appropriate and *fundamental* way of using these notions is to refer to them as one and to write them as such – *yinyang* – which denotes integration and a flowing nature that more closely represents the unified ebb and flow of life.

The synthesis of opposites can be applied in endless ways. For example, someone may be characterized as *weird* (abnormal, different) by an individual or group (which I have been on several different occasions throughout *my* life), while that same someone (such as myself) may also be characterized as *wonderful* by another (an *other*) individual or group. From this perspective, the individual is able to see how both characterizations are true based on the perception, or misperception, of others, and thereby has the potential of grounding the individual in a deeper understanding (as it did for me). These two characterizations, or mischaracterizations, of *weird* and *wonderful* are alliterative polar opposites, where one often has a negative connotation (*weird*) and the other a positive connotation (*wonderful*). Yet when you synthesis the two into one word – *weirdwonderful* – then you are balancing the duality of those concepts and embracing the understanding that both are true, at least on the level of **form** (EGO), which then provides a bridge, or a pathway, to **formlessness** (ESSENCE) and the deeper conscious awareness that neither are true.

The same process of synthesizing opposites can be used in numerous ways, such as *crazycool*, *quirkyqool*, *oddlyinteresting*, *anxiouslyexcited*, *fearfullycourageous*, or *functionallydysfunctional*. The applications of this process are endless and, in fact, help to bridge the individual to the *REALm* of endless possibilities, or the dimension of ESSENCE, formlessness, spaciousness, silence, and stillness, which is the *REALm* of the Universal Life

Force. Some of the new, synthesized descriptors are best left with the positive word second as the EGO tends to focus more on what is said last, yet some of the descriptors are switchable. For example, taking *functionallydysfunctional* and switching it to *dysfunctionallyfunctional*. Furthermore, the switching from one to the other may characterize an individual's internal emotional state that may be dominated by, let's say, anxiety, and so the emotional energy (emotion = energy in motion) and frequency in their body would be characterized as *excitedlyanxious*. The dominant vibrational energy would be named last because that is what the EGO is focusing on yet when you say out loud "I am *excitedlyanxious*, right now", you honor both sides of the duality and call into consciousness the feeling state that is not being honored and is being overwhelmed, or "colored" over in our mind, by the EGO's focus, or over-focus, on the other, more intense emotion (in this case, anxiety). Then, after naming, honoring, validating, and processing both emotions, you may experience an internal shift from being *excitedlyanxious* to being *anxiouslyexcited*, where the feeling of being excited starts to become slightly more dominant or intense. This whole process helps with cultivating conscious awareness regarding how the *energy-guiding operating* (EGO) system works and encourages the individual to become more awakened to the *expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely* (or *naturally*) *co-creative energy* (ESSENCE) system within in them that can help open them up to the *Whole* of the Universal Life Force.

It is through collaboration *with* another, or others, (and *with* the Universe) that we can truly put the EGO (the "8" ball) in its place (pocket). For without an "other" (EGO), there would be no self (ESSENCE).

Once you understand the basic rules, guidelines, and concepts of Buddha Billiards, you can break, or alter, the rules as you increase your capacity to come from a place of ESSENCE, space consciousness, plane of possibilities, et cetera. By altering the rules, you continue to co-create a process by which the EGO is constantly being challenged and awareness is continually being cultivated.

Buddha Billiards took the **form** of regular pool and re-configured it – transformed it – to another **form** with the intention of using **form** to be a bridge, or pathway, that is, a **transition**, to the **formless** (ESSENCE, conscious awareness, Universal Life Force, etc.). To transform is to **transition** from one **form** to another, hence a new **transformation** manifests and is part of the process and the path toward transcending **form** and experiencing the **formlessness** and ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

Once at the level **formlessness** (ESSENCE), it is up to the individuals to continue with the current **form** (EGO) of the game or use that state of **formlessness** to create, or more aptly, co-create, another **form** (variation) of the game, and in doing so, continue on the path to co-create and cultivate more conscious awareness and expand the comfort zone of **know-ledge** into **knowledge**.

Once the individual re-aligns and re-connects with ESSENCE (**formlessness**), is able to be in the now of the present moment, and remain neutral with whatever **form** manifests in the moment, they will experience True clarity offered by the *Tao*, which cannot truly be named.

The EGO seeks to create chaos in order to keep the individual engaged in trying to square a circle. That is, trying to make impermanence permanent. The EGO seeks to keep us seeking, which prevents us from seeing the seeker from a position of the seer (“one that sees”), which is the path of enlightenment and the attainment of Buddhahood, or “awakening”.

Embracing **uncertainty** and not knowing how life is going to unfold comes from embracing the state of formlessness and allowing life to unfold as *it* will and accepting *it* as what *is*, or from a place of **isness**, a place of non-judgmental neutrality.

This embracing of uncertainty brings into awareness other forms of knowing that would not have manifested if the individual remained/remains at the level of **form** (EGO).

By embracing not-knowing (uncertainty/the unknown) and stepping *beyond* the *ledge* of knowing, we go from **know-ledge** (pronounced “know”-ledge) to **knowledge** (pronounced “now”-ledge), which is achieved through conscious contact with the *now* of the present moment that is then turned into knowing the form that the now takes beyond the ledge of your knowing, or beyond the edge of your comfort zone. Once the *now* is experienced and turned into some **form** by the EGO, the **information** becomes a part of your knowing, i.e., *know-ledge*, and finally, knowledge, which is the integrating of not-knowing, **nowing**, and knowing. The **form** (it) you may experience may be in the **form** of thoughts or feelings, such as anxiety or fear, which is normal as we experience the unknown, yet excitement and courage are also there in that moment. When we step *beyond* the *ledge*, or edge, of what we *know*, we experience being in the now of the present moment. It is an *excitedlyanxious* and *courageouslyfearfull*

moment, for sure, at least from the perspective of the EGO, which likes to **name** things as “this” or “that”, yet by becoming aware of this and *non-judgmentally* noticing this, we also experience the **unnamable** ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force through conscious awareness. This process is about expanding our comfort zones and *transforming* EGO, which is the process of **trans-**itioning from one **form** to another **form** (i.e., **trans-form**). This on-going process provides a way, a path, to eventually **transc-end form** (i.e., **transc**-ition to, and *beyond*, the **end** of **form**) to the state of formlessness (or “no” ledge). Again, this process expands the comfort zone, which has been created by the **form** of an individual’s EGO (mental constructs, beliefs, thoughts, etc.), which establishes arbitrary, yet seemingly concrete limits on our human beingness. To live at the edge, or ledge, of one’s comfort zone, and courageously step off or over that edge/ledge, we find ourselves in the unknown, the not-knowing, and through that bravery, if we touch the present moment, step into the now, and become aware of what *is*, as well as the **form** the now takes, the *it*, then we expand our awareness through experience, **which our brain development, genetic expression, and neurophysiological state depends on for growth.** (Maya Szalavitz; Garner & Saul; Porges) These are all **forms** of humanness that can keep us trapped in a state of EGO, and are therefore a bridge to cross, or a pathway to step on, to re-connect and re-align with our beingness and pure conscious awareness, found in the **formlessness**, spaciousness, and ESSENCE of the present moment *beyond* the edge/ledge of thought/belief.

“We do not learn by experience, but by our capacity for experience.”

~Buddha

Formlessness acts like a **still pond** that openly receives raindrops and allows them to **transform** back into the stillness of the pond, and thus **transcends form** by returning to the **formlessness** of the pond water. During this process, the still pond neither grasps for, nor holds onto, the raindrops, yet allows for the raindrops to return to the Oneness of the pond.

Collecting new experiences expands our comfort zones and provides our brains with opportunities for growth and development, including growth and development of our conscious awareness, and the capacity to see beyond our EGO's evaluation, interpretation, description, and/or labeling of those experiences. By just being with the experience and not labeling or **describbling** (a newly coined word that is the synthesis and integration of the words "describing" and "scribbling", which means "to hastily or carelessly depict or represent a phenomena utilizing *form* – language, words, thoughts") it, which is what the EGO is constantly doing, we can become aware of this process and simply *be* awareness, or engage in awareness, by watching or observing the moment unfold as *is* without any words or descriptors. The more an individual insists on describing, or their EGO insists on *describbling*, the experience, the more rigidity they experience and the more fused they become with EGO. Thus, they become their EGO, which is *represented* in Buddha Pool by the mostly black-hued "8" ball or the multi-hued, dualistically-paired *object* balls, with the striped and solid balls separated into *this* one and *that* one.

Buddha Billiards fosters a power *with* dynamic rather than the power *over* dynamic that is encouraged and perpetuated in regular pool. The power *over* versus power *with* relational dynamics reminds me of the work of Martin Buber, the Austrian-Israeli philosopher, who characterized relationships as being either “*I-Thou*” relationships, where there is mutuality, reciprocity, and Wholistic capacities in the encounters of individuals, who respect and honor themselves and the other as a Divine manifestation of the Universal Life Force, or “*I-it*” relationships, where there is an “*I*” that embraces being the Divine manifestation and sees the other as the “*it*”, or *object*, for the “*I*” to utilize for its own purposes and goals. The “*I-it*” relationship (power *over*) supports separation and duality and is *represented* and nourished through the game of regular pool. Whereas, the “*I-Thou*” relationship (power *with*) supports union and *Wholeness* and is *represented* and nurtured through the game of Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool. The “*I-it*” relationship is driven by the EGO, while the “*I-Thou*” relationship is guided by the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

Buddha Billiards challenges individuals to become aware of differentiation. For example, such as differentiating between the striped (or solid) *object* balls of purple and blue, which are very close in color, and can be hard to tell apart. Similarly, there is the process of differentiating between “*me*” and “*you*”, which is perpetuated by the EGO’s need to separate things into duality, yet when we look closer, and from a deeper level of consciousness, we *realize* we are hard to tell apart, as well. This helps us to then *recognize*, or become aware of, how we are linked together as One at the deeper level of formlessness and the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force. (This draws on **Dr. Dan Siegel’s** concepts of how honoring differentiation and

promoting compassionate linkages creates integration, which is another way of saying what Thich Nhat Hanh, and others, refer to as “*inter-being*”.)

Interestingly, by using the “8” ball as the “cue” ball, you gain the experience of watching it spin, which can provide another opportunity to just *be* as you watch it from awareness as it spins, like our EGO tends to spin in our minds.

As you strike, or make contact, with the “8” ball, just watch its manifesting movements as it rolls along. Be in the moment and observe (watch/witness) the spinning, the flux, the state of uncertainty, the state of change, which is Life itself, as it unfolds before your very eyes. Look, and you will miss it. See, and you will glimpse the *beyond*. Gaze lightly at what happens as the “8” ball rolls toward another ball and you will experience stillness. Be curious and wait in that stillness for whatever shows up next...then next...then next. Do not grasp for something to show up, or happen. Do not hold onto what manifests. Just be aware, accept, and allow. Allow what happens to happen, without judgment. If the *judgmental* EGO shows up, just notice *it* and hold *it* lightly in awareness, like cradling a baby in your arms. Let the EGO “coo” or “cry” all *it* wants. Just console *it* with a “*there, there, it’s okay*” said in soft tones in your mind. Then watch how *it* **transforms** back into the stillness, like raindrops that **transform** into the still pond.

Set the intention, then allow the unfolding of your action and the movements/actions of the *object* balls to take place without judgment, or expectation. Be neutral and still as you see/witness the present moment. Be aware of how your EGO, which is focused on an expectation of a certain result of your action, takes over your perception and leads to either

pleasure (i.e., the expectation was fulfilled and the intended *object* ball went into the intended pocket) or displeasure (i.e., the expectation was not met and frustration, disappointment, or some other so-called negative, or unpleasant, emotional state manifests in your mind, which sends unpleasant, uncomfortable, or distressing surges of chemicals through the brain and body).

"Expectation is premeditated disappointment."

~Angi Sullins

Everything that happens on the pool table leads to the next set of circumstances, then the next, and so on, and within those circumstances there are *both* benefits *and* drawbacks to be aware of, process, and reflect on. Then comes the opportunity to choose your next intentional action. Yet notice how even when you apparently "miss" a shot, that missed shot eventually leads to an opportunity that would most likely not have happened if you made the missed shot. As you move along exchanging turns with the other *player(s)*, take notice of how a unique opportunity presents itself because you, or they, did not make an earlier, intended shot. It is interesting to see how intentional actions lead to results that are neither good nor bad at the level of neutral ESSENCE and how the unfolding of the action over time leads to results never dreamed of, or thought of. Yet, when those same actions are evaluated by the EGO as good or bad, the inherent pleasure or displeasure is experienced with every action, or inaction. From the perspective of the EGO, every shot taken, leads to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction, yet from the perspective of neutral ESSENCE and pure conscious awareness, every shot taken is an

experience to be immersed in and savored for its richness in curiosity, contentment, and calmness as the action unfolds without any preconceived notions as to what is supposed to happen. The wonderment beheld in those precious moments is simply sublime, serene, and sagacious.

The game of Buddha Billiards starts/begins (so to speak) with the mostly-solid, black-hued “8” ball, which represents the solid, or mostly-solid, state of the one end of **the continuum of belief** (thoughts, concepts, ideas, mental constructs, form, EGO) and is symbolic of the rigidity and nearly complete, solid state of these thoughts, beliefs, et cetera, which often leads to a state of paranoia, or fear, where the EGO state easily feels threatened by external events, forces, or challenges to its thought patterns and conditioned way of thinking and believing. (More on this in *part two “the continuum of belief and beyond”*.)

As you engage in the game of Buddha Pool, which is symbolic and a metaphor for Life, you develop a deeper relationship *with* yourself and others and the world as you know it, and this can eventually lead to going *beyond* what you know into the dimension of not-knowing, which is the realm (*REALm*) of the Universal Life Force. During the game, as in life, different options for shots/actions are viewed as different perspectives, which are achieved through being open and flexible in your thinking. The more open you are to different perspectives, the more options you have to select from as you chose your next shot, or intentional action. This is similar to life, the more open and flexible you are to others’ perspectives, the more options you see and the more options you have to choose from. Regularly having few to no options, leads

to a life full of stress, pain, discomfort, and suffering. Thus, limiting your ability to engage in the game, or process, of life, as well as Buddha Billiards. Yet, by looking at things from others' perspectives and then working toward not-knowing and having a no-mind perspective, you will begin to see plenty of possibilities, all of which are viable and provide the opportunity to experience being in the now of the present moment. A mostly solid, rigid EGO will most likely force options or choices upon you and others. Whereas, neutral ESSENCE provides the spaciousness for an awakening to the deeper understanding that options are plentiful from a place of not-knowing.

Back to the **Johari Window**. "Others" help us to **expand (experience and)** our awareness of self into the unknown (not-known) area, which is where the Universe Life Force resides and abides, covered over by our conditioning and mental constructs (EGO), which keeps us from **experiencing and expanding** beyond our comfort (known) zones into the dimension of *REALity beyond* our mental constructs (EGO). To live at the edge, or ledge, of what is known and continually stepping *beyond* that edge, or ledge, is a process of **expand**-ing our awareness of the ever-present formlessness and spaciousness of the Great Beyond, which is *beyond* the continuum of belief. (Again, more on this in *part two*.)

One cannot enter the dimension *beyond* belief, or *beyond* thought, through thought, or the thought/thinking process. That dimension of the ESSENCE, or the *isness*, of Life must be experienced directly and first hand, then words can be used to attempt to describe, or *describble*, the experience to another – that is, "an *other*". (As a **reminder**, remember – the EGO is programmed to divide things into aspects of duality, such as I/other, good/bad,

right/wrong, pleasant/unpleasant, past/future, etc.) Yet no *matter* what words we use in our attempts to describe, or *describble*, this dimension, words cannot truly capture the experience.

As another reminder, remember, “*The Tao that can be named is not the Tao*”.

Established rules for the game of Buddha Billiards are just guidelines and/or obstacles to help cultivate conscious awareness, and are thus able to be transformed, eventually, or transcended, depending on the state of awareness of the other participants, that is, *players*. I prefer **players** because of the importance of and emphasis on being in a state of “**play**” while engaging in the game, as in life. **Play** makes the experience a co-creative, or *coco*-creative, experience, in which the Universe Life Force is a **compassionate collaborator**.

“A lack of play should be treated like malnutrition:

it’s a health risk to your body and mind.”

~Stuart Brown, psychiatrist

In Buddha Billiards, the game ends (so to speak), or comes to a conclusion, with the solid, white-hued *object* ball (which represents pure conscious awareness and the unnamable ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force) being placed in the *center* of the pool table (which represents the expansiveness and spaciousness of the Universal Life Force).

Once you apply these understandings of Buddha Pool to life, the possibilities are endless, for as you abide or dwell in pure conscious awareness and the ESSENCE, stillness, expansiveness, and

spaciousness of the Universal Life Force, you will be One with the co-creative, cosmic energy of the Universe, which will **inform** your EGO and all its manifesting expressions of **form** (words, thoughts, beliefs, etc.).

Others, again, have developed many ways to identify or name this unnamable phenomenon, which all life manifests from, such as **Dr. Dan Siegel's use of the "plane of possibility"**, **Eckhart Tolle's use of the word "formlessness" or "spaciousness"**, or **Pavel Somov's use of "lotus identity"**, to name just a few. Again, all words are but pointers, or signposts, to a path that each of us must experience for ourselves, and once that is achieved, we can then use the words used by others or we can **form** our own word, phrase, or sound to help us point to this path for others to seek and experience for themselves. Ultimately, though, you may discover it is best to *not* name it anything and just *be* it, or *be* in it as it, or embody it and bring it into relationships with others.

"The lotus seed isn't the dirt in which it's buried."

~Pavel Somov

Eckhart Tolle's, Pavel Somov's, Dr. Dan Siegel's, and Bruce Lee's collective body of work is well worth exploring as you continue experientially stepping on the path of awakening to the *Whole* within you and all around you. These are but a few individuals, who have had a *profound* influence on the unfolding and manifesting life of this author.

This **object** in your hands, in the **form** of a book, and the words on the page have manifested through a co-creative, or *coco-creative*, process with the Universal Life Force and other manifested life forms, who have pointed to the same path. These manifested life forms include the following: **Heraclitus, Eckhart Tolle, Michael A. Singer, Steven Taylor, Dr. Dan Siegel, Bruce Lee, Steve Hagen, Gautama Buddha, Lao Tzu, Mahatma Gandhi, Thich Nhat Hanh, Eknath Easwaran, Pavel Somov, Rumi, Yogi Amrit Desai, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Dali Lama, St. Francis of Assisi, Jesus of Nazareth, Paramahansa Yogananda, Dr. Wayne D. Dyer, Oprah Winfrey, Marianne Williamson, Pema Chodrin, Sarah Ban Breathnach, Brene Brown, Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, Dr. Kristin Neff, Betty J. Eadie, SARK, Cheri Huber, Anita Moorjani, Jenifer Madson, Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, and Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Amma), to name just a few.** Some cinema resources that also provide pointers are as follows: *The American President*, starring Michael Douglas and Annette Bening, *Highlander*, starring Christopher Lambert and Sean Connery, *Enter the Dragon*, starring Bruce Lee, *The Guardian*, starring Kevin Costner, *The Peaceful Warrior*, starring Nick Nolte, *Christopher Robin*, starring Ewan McGregor, *Conversations with God*, based on the book by Neale Donald Walsch, *What tHe Bleep Do We (k)now!?*, starring Marlee Matlin and Joe Dispenza, and *Shazam!*, starring Zachary Levi, Marc Strong, and Djimon Hounsou. These manifested life forms and cinematic artistic expressions are resources that have re-sourced material that has manifested from the Universal Life Force into many different **forms**, such as books, audio and video recordings, movies, et cetera. This book (“**the Tao of pool**”) is but a continuation of that process to bring more conscious awareness into the world and awaken us to the Divine dimension, the Source of all Life, that is within us and all around

us, which is our ultimate re-Source. (See “re-Sources of universal pointers” in the “supplemental info” section for a list of more re-Sources.)

The following is an excerpt from an article about the movie *Shazam!* (2019):

“Even Shazam’s nemesis, Mark Strong’s Dr. Sivana, can’t find anything wicked to say about the hero’s positive message. ‘We’re living in an age now where we’re learning about inclusivity, and we’re learning about the fact that there have been many people excluded from the main stream. That can only be a good thing. I want my kids to grow up and realize we’re all multi-hued and multi-colored.’”

This excerpt speaks of diversity and inclusivity, just as the multi-colored/multi-hued *object* balls (EGO forms) represent the diversity of human manifestations of life in all its rainbow of colors. And within all these diverse cultures, consilient **forms** of concepts and ideas (EGO forms) are present, and in every culture, and in every one of us, the Great Collective of beingness/pure consciousness/ESSENCE is present, as well.

Most of us are represented by the multi-colored, or multi-hued, *object* balls rather than the mostly-solid “8” ball. That is, we are in a state of duality with glimpses of awareness, accessed in the present moment, yet our conditioning, our mental constructs, will become activated and the black “8” ball (EGO) of rigidity will rear up on occasions and our core (deeply entrenched) beliefs, such as “I’m unlovable”, “I’m inadequate”, or “I’m not enough”, et cetera, will “color” the phenomena manifesting in the present moment. Thus, taking us out of the present moment of the here and now and rushing us back to egoic states of duality, which causes discomfort and distress and *dis*-ease and leads to suffering. We must work on intensifying our

ability to be in the present moment to withstand the rush of rapturous or rancorous ruminations of the egoic mind that carry us away on raging rivers of these intoxicating thoughts and beliefs that aim to keep us confined to a world of lack or less or illusion. Over time, these thoughts and beliefs poison us through the unrelenting promise of permanent joy, peace, and love, if only the impermanent *objects* of our desires could somehow be turned permanent and held onto forever. That is the *illusion* of the EGO that keeps us *ill* and *dis-eased*. Present moment awareness, however, is our rudder, our oars, our boat with which to navigate the waters of life and the manifestations of the egoic mind. The permanence we seek is in the present moment of the here and now. Through the process of awarenensing, or being aware of and focusing our attention on, the present moment, we can experience timelessness, spaciousness, formlessness, silence, and stillness, wherein dwells abiding joy, peace, and love. And from that place, or state, or space, you will experience yourself *as Joy, as Peace, as Love*, and you will re-engage with the world as the embodiment of, and a conduit for, those synchronous and inexhaustible re-sources of the Universal Life Force. From that state of being in alignment with the Universe, you will be more inclined to offer that depth of limitless Love to others through the expression “You are Loved” or “You are Love”, rather than the still useful yet antiquated and obligatory phrase “I love you”. For in expressing limitless Love through “You are Loved” or “You are Love”, you reside and dwell in that Love, *as Love*, and therefore are that which you share and extend to an “other”, knowing full well that from that dimension where Love *is*, there is no “other”. And from that space, or infinite well, of Love, there is no egoic need for the “other” to reciprocate for you to experience the Love that *is*.

"I do not trust people who don't love themselves

and yet tell me, 'I love you.'

There is an African saying which is:

Be careful when a naked person offers you a shirt."

~Maya Angelou

This exploration of Love reminds me of the biblical verse most cited during the marriage ceremony, **1 Corinthians 13:4-5**, which points to this depth of understanding, yet it is often hidden before our very eyes due to the trappings of the egoic mind that keep us caught up in the feeling, or romantic notion, of love. If read from the deeper understanding that *Love is*, the verse takes on a *Whole* new, re-freshing meaning, "*Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not boast. Love is not proud. Love does not dishonor others. Love is not self-seeking. Love is not easily angered. Love keeps no record of wrongs.*" In the re-reading of the verse, recognize that "*Love is*" and that the rest of the words that manifest themselves afterward, are egoic thought-forms constructed in the mind and propagated between "others" as a way to keep us stuck in the polarity of mental constructs contrived by the EGO. The simplicity of "*Love is*" can be illustrated from an awakened understanding that, for example, "*Love does not dishonor others*" because when immersed in the unified ESSENCE and expansiveness of the *Love* that *is* the Creator, there is no "other". Just as "*Love is not self-seeking*" because, again, at the deeper, Divine dimension of *Love*, there is no "self". Likewise, "*Love is not easily angered. Love keeps no records of wrongs*" because the formlessness and stillness of *Love* has no concepts, such as the concept of "anger" or "wrongs", which are mental

constructs of the egoic mind that separates the unified *Whole* into duality, into right/wrong, good/bad, you/me. *Love* does not because *Love is*.

*"In real love, there is no self-destructive pain,
because you simply love and don't possess.*

We mistake attachment for love.

Love is the center and attachment is in the periphery.

Be in the center and detach yourself from the periphery."

~Amma

Words, as linguistic symbols, describe, or *describble*, feelings, yet words are not feelings, are not the phenomena we notice and then label as "such and such", such as *Love*. This egoic process habitually takes over to the point that we end up living in the "such and such", or the "suchness" of life, rather than in the "spaciousness" of life, in the *Love* that *is Life*. By becoming aware of the process of the egoic mind and the inter-**play** between the different dimensions of living, namely EGO and ESSENCE, we can better balance these two and live a life connected to the Universal **Love** Force behind our *human beingness* and consciously bring that *beingness*, that **Love**, into the world through our *humanness*.

In Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, each *player* has their EGO states (that is, pairs of dualistically-aligned, multi-hued *object* balls – “solids and stripes”) to go through, and whomever advances through their EGO states (pairs of polarity – “solids and stripes”) ahead of the other(s), then s/he/they helps the other(s) through their respective EGO states on the path to greater individual and collective conscious awareness, which is *represented* by the solid and striped maroon balls, and then, ultimately, to pure conscious awareness, which is *represented* by the white-hued *object* ball, which is itself a manifestation of the unnamable ESSENCE of the Universe Life/Love Force (i.e., the pool table). Once at the conscious level of the white *object* ball, and/or the pool table, the individual then engages in the game of life from a position, a place, a presence of ESSENCE, or *formlessness*, rather than from *form* (i.e., the EGO). Then, instead of being caught up in the *energy-guiding operating* system (EGO), one can be immersed in the *expansive, synergistic, source of energy, naturely* (or *naturally*) *co-creative, & ever-present* (ESSENCE) presence of the Universal Life/Love Force, and, to paraphrase the paraphrase of one of Mahatma Gandhi’s oft quoted sayings, “Be the energy you wish to see in the world”.

“Please be responsible for the energy you bring into this space.”

~Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor

To repeat, instead of being caught up in the *energy-guiding operating* (EGO) system, one can be held by and immersed in the co-creative energy of the Universal Life Force, and *be* the energy.

Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor's quote is a wonderful *reminder* of how the energy we bring into rooms, environments, and spaces has a ripple effect on those spaces and those who inhabit those environments. And to **expand** on her poignant *expression* of her *profound experience* **and** deep understanding, I would encourage you to be responsible and consciously aware of the energy you invite or welcome into your space, including the space within your homes, your bodies, your minds, and your lives, as well as the entire family of sentient beings and the planet itself, which provides the *elemental* ingredients and *resources* that are synergized and manifested into **form** by the co-creative energy of the Universal Life Force, the *Source* of all life. You cannot, however, keep the EGO in its place/pocket. For as long as you are alive (human), the EGO, or in other words, the vociferous voice in our heads, will continually pop back up into existence. Yet the same is true with regard to awareness, which is, often times, noticed less once the EGO has *formed* and taken over control of our lives. Nonetheless, conscious awareness is always available, that is why the solid-white *object* ball is constantly put back on the pool table and back into *play* even if it is somehow knocked, or driven, into a pocket. It is the one thing that remains permanent in our lives, even though we may not be aware of its existence, merely because the EGO is so seductive and seemingly powerful beyond anything else. Especially, when you consider its power to name *objects*, animals, et cetera, like it is lording over the land and all of existence. Its power is impermanent and must be reinforced and rejuvenated by creating the *illusion* of permanence. Its power resides in having us chase after that *illusion* of permanence through impermanent things that never completely satisfy us, because that is the nature of impermanent things. Yet once we become consciously aware of the power in Nature, in the now, and the present moment, we begin to awaken from the

illusion created by the EGO and find the permanence we are all seeking, which has been within us all along but covered up by the EGO. It's like the scene in *The Wizard of Oz*, when Dorothy notices Toto fussing with a curtain and she pulls back the curtain, revealing the man behind the curtain, who has been masquerading as *The Great Oz*, or the **Entertainer**, formerly known as, the **Great Oz** (EGO). Pulling the veil back on the EGO through conscious awareness reveals the same thing, which is that the EGO is constantly entertaining us, or is in need of constant entertainment, in order to be relevant. Yet the EGO does not need to be irrelevant. The ego just *is*, especially when viewed from conscious awareness. EGO *is* (it *is*) a part of human development and human evolution, and thus, by befriending the EGO and working *with* the EGO from a state of conscious awareness, we can do what we were manifested to do, which is to bring the light, the presence, the ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force into this world. (Again, please substitute whatever word or phrase that resonates with *you*, makes more sense to *you*, or rings true for *you* that names the unnamable *Source* of all *things*, such as God, the Tao, Divine Feminine, or Higher Power.)

Buddha Billiards increases flexibility of mind and fosters more open awareness regarding the ramifications of a rigid and overly *solid*-ified EGO (i.e., mental constructs, thoughts, beliefs, et cetera) and its **subordinate** (power *over*) hold on us, which is projected out onto the world.

Buddha Pool cultivates the capacity for experiencing the **superordinate** (power *with*) nature of ESSENCE found in the space, stillness, and silence between thoughts, words, and beliefs, where perhaps before there was none, because that is how the EGO system operates. As the Zen proverb states, "The obstacle is the path", and that is precisely what is being illustrated in this book, which is that the EGO (form, mental constructs, thoughts, beliefs, et cetera) is the path,

for many, if not all, of us, because it is the EGO that is the obstacle to greater conscious awareness. The rigid EGO blocks the True path of peaceful, blissful permanence by constantly throwing obstacles in our way that hinder and distract us from re-aligning with the ESSENCE and presence of the Universal Life/Love Force and walking on the path of enlightenment and the state of awakening *profoundly* found *beyond* belief in the spaciousness, stillness, and silence of the present moment.

It is an on-going process to trans-*form* EGO, whereby EGO *transitions* from one *form* to another *form*. Different *forms* manifest themselves as awareness increases, which is an intentional part of the process in Buddha Pool. From one *form* to another *form*, there is a space, or spaciousness of conscious awareness that this process occurs in, and *it is* in this spaciousness that the *trans*-ition takes place. Thus, *transitions* of *form* can be seen as the process of *transformation*. And as the process of *transformation* unfolds, greater and greater awareness is experienced, which has the potential of resulting in experiences that *transcend*, or *transcend form*, and thus leading one to experience the *transc*-ition to the *end of form* and becoming immersed in the direct experience of the formlessness, spaciousness, and expansiveness of the now of the present moment that lies *beyond form*, *beyond* thought, *beyond* belief.

The only time EGO stays in its proverbial pocket/place, is when the physical *form* dies (unmanifests) and the Life Force within that physically-manifested *form* re-unites with the pure, Cosmic Consciousness of the Universe. Again, just like raindrops re-unite, or re-union, with the still pond, which openly welcomes the raindrops h(*om*)e.

With increased conscious awareness, we embrace the EGO and use its system of operation to engage in the world and bring that state of conscious awareness, or awakenedness, into relationships with others, which increases their awareness, even if *it is* in the slightest way, by bringing them into the now of the present moment. This may be a mindful, or a no-mind, moment for them just before their minds become flooded again with the EGO, which is conditioned towards judgment, evaluation, and separation of us, of you and I, rather than being unconditioned, or unconditionally open to the union of all life and the non-judgmental, non-evaluative, and non-separative, neutrality of the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

During Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, each **player** works to remove their respective obstacles of EGO **form**, which provides space on the pool table for the other **player(s)** to remove their obstacles (i.e., their dualistically-paired **object** balls). So, rather than a **player** blocking a hole/pocket with their **object forms** (i.e., their colored solid-n-striped **object** balls) to block the other **player** from pocketing their **object** balls, which is an egoic move, the **object forms** are viewed as obstacles for both **players** to become aware of and work together to turn these **objects**, or stumbling blocks, into stepping stones to the path of greater awareness and awakening.

At the end of the game of Buddha Billiards, if the mostly, black-hued “8” ball scratches on the last shot, after putting the last remaining maroon ball in a pocket, and all that remains on the pool table is the white **object** ball, and the white **object** ball is in the area where the “8” ball started the game, then the “8” ball is placed in the center of the table and the white ball is used from its current spot to put the “8” ball back into a pocket. Or, one could simply choose to just

leave the “8” ball in the pocket where it scratched, and take the white *object* ball, from wherever it is on the table, and place it in the center of the pool table.

Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, provides other opportunities, as well, to explore the many aspects of being human, such as helping us to differentiate between aggressive, assertive, and passive *forms* of energy expression. For example, when you strike the ball and make a shot, what energy do you use and what is the result to that action? This provides a non-threatening way to reflect on actions taken and results begotten in order to assess the benefits and drawbacks inherent in every action. Again, the duality with which the EGO frames, judges, evaluates, or interprets things, events, or phenomena, is a way to increase awareness and consciousness. Thus, there are endless applications of the game which can facilitate direct (*carefrontive*) and in-direct (non-threatening) explorations of how our EGO states work and govern our lives, which typically occurs below the conscious level of awareness. To bring conscious awareness to this process helps us to be more aware of the mechanisms at *play* in our lives, so that we may become more compassionately collaborative *with* Life as it unfolds and manifests within us, through us, and all around us. We will be exploring and reflecting upon the compassionately-collaborative process in *part two of the Whole* (“the continuum of belief...and *beyond*”). But for now, be in the now, and take a moment to look at the entire page, noticing the white background and the white page that provides the backdrop upon which the letters, words, thoughts, sentences, and paragraphs are placed. The white page serves as a place holder for the manifested *mentally*-constructed *forms* that you are reading in

your mind, or out loud, through the use of your EGO, the **energy-guiding operating** system.

Now, take your eyes and squint at the page so the letters, words, et cetera, on the page become a blur of blackness and blend together as a black mass of phenomenal energy that you are aware of yet have no name for. Just notice this and allow yourself to be aware of the space, silence, and stillness that is there as your breath and become One with consciousness and the unnamable ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

Now, after being in the moment and taking a mindful, or no-mind, break, which is like applying a brake to the EGO, go ahead and remain in that place of stillness, silence or spaciousness, if you would like to experience it some more. Otherwise, when you are ready, please continue to step on the path of further awakening to conscious awareness. Feel free to take a break at any time, though, by applying the brake to your EGO, just as you did above, and engage in the process of enhancing your conscious contact with awareness and the ever-present, unnamable ESSENCE of the Universe and the Cosmos.

The EGO, represented by the **black-hued “8” ball and the multi-hued object balls**, is an **illusion**. The EGO state of conditioned thinking, programmed mental constructs, and identified attachments tries to convince us to follow a certain path that will lead to sustained, or permanent happiness or joy, or peace or tranquility, yet it is all an *illusion*, and one that keeps us “*ill*”. Because, if you turn the “8” on its side, it becomes the symbol for infinity. This symbol sits in the white space, or spaciousness, within the “8” ball, which is itself a distraction from seeing EGO for what *it is*, as it perpetuates a striving for permanence through thought

forms/stuff consciousness/**it**ness. This constant striving for *something* over and over again, especially the same *thing* over and over again, and expecting a different result, is Albert Einstein's definition of insanity. The "stuff" our minds keep chasing after will never provide us with the permanent peace, joy, serenity, or love we keep seeking. The EGO keeps us seeking *objects* and stuff, which can be seen as "*its*" or the **it**ness that preoccupies our minds and has a perpetual allure to them that traps us into continually doing the same thing over and over again despite the results that are not different but the same. Through the EGO, we live in this state of **it**ness, which is a state of *ill*ness, or *dis*-ease, or madness, yet by re-aligning and re-connecting with pure consciousness, we can embrace and live in a state of *well*ness that is found in the **is**ness of Life. The spelling of illness and wellness also give us "an other" path with which to light our way to *well*ness and *Wholeness*, as the word *ill*ness starts with letter "i" and the word **well**ness starts with the word "we". It is no wonder that the pathway to greater **well**ness is about connecting with others and to see others as not "an other", for we all are One at a deeper level of conscious awareness, and it is in that deeper level that **we** discover, or re-discover, the Divine dimension of the Universal Life/Love Force that is in every one of us. The **EGO** divides us into two **forms** of duality. The **ESSENCE** and **formlessness** of the Universal Life Force unites us into the indivisible *Whole One*.

This concept of "*Whole One*" can be seen as a **play** on words, which is exactly what the EGO does to keep us oblivious of the obvious obfuscation that is taking place. For example, the much sought after "hole in one", which very few people will actually ever achieve yet most of us glorify and imagine doing ourselves, keeps us confused and in the dark by keeping us longing for or focusing on *something* that remains just out of our reach, because this goal/desire, even

if achieved, will never satisfy us or provide us with any long-lasting permanent state of joy, peace, or love. Yet, by seeking out and honoring the “*Whole in One*” that we experience by being in the now of the present moment, we can achieve that long-lasting abiding joy, peace, and love, which is within everyone’s reach and attainment.

This can be applied to multiple areas of our lives in which the pursuit of a perceived pleasure and the avoidance of displeasure, keeps us caught up in the EGO’s use of duality to trap our minds in a continuous struggle to find the key to being released from the cage of our pre-programmed and conditioned thinking. In Buddha Billiards, this can be challenged by not seeking to make the intended ball despite having the intended action to do so. It is when the intended action turns into a fixed goal and expectation that the egoic mind takes over and leads to either pleasure or displeasure. Yet, if you take the intended action and allow the movement of the *object* balls to unfold without holding onto a certain result, you are better able to be in the *Whole* of the moment and One with the manifesting action. When you experience this, you will get a glimpse of the abiding joy, peace, and love inherent in the now of the present moment, and with further practice, you will have multiple, reoccurring experiences of what it means to achieve a “*Whole in One*”.

Live a life of Providence by engaging in life from the wise, benevolent ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, by being open to all the possibilities, which are in the not knowing and being in alignment with the Universe, and by being **play**full, which is the natural state of the Universe,

and thus, all of us. Rather than duality, come from neutrality, or ***naturality*** (a new word *coco-* creatively coined in the manifesting and unfolding moment of this writing).

*“He who binds himself to a joy
Doth the winged life destroy.
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in Eternity’s sunrise.”
~William Blake*

Name and honor the paradox inherent in every situation. What does that mean? Well, by embracing the paradox [which <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/paradox?s=t> defines as “a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement that is or may be true” or “an opinion that conflicts with common belief”], we create a bridge, or a pathway, to increasing awareness, conscious awareness, through the cultivation of *dissonance* in the mind, which supports the process of detaching or *disconnecting* from the grip of the EGO. The EGO struggles with *dissonance* (*discord* or *disharmony*) and looks to keep, or regain, control through what is commonly referred to in the mental health profession as black-n-white thinking, or duality. Duality empowers the EGO, whereas the naming of duality and embracing the polar opposites, and synthesizing them, works to tame the EGO and put it in its place as a function of the self-made mind, which was constructed over time by our environments – that is, by our parents, caregivers, teachers, peers, movies, music, societal or cultural expectations, et cetera. To tame

what is named, one must go through the *disharmony*, *discord*, *discomfort* and *disturbance* this process will activate/trigger. The EGO will react to this process to remain in control by creating the delusional thinking that *it* has the only way for us to feel safe and secure, which is through its processes of evaluating, judging, and categorizing our experiences and phenomena as good or bad, right or wrong, pleasant or unpleasant, which is black-n-white or all-or-nothing thinking. [FUN FACT: We all go through black-n-white thinking as a natural part of the developmental stage of concrete thinking as children.] Therefore, as the EGO engages in dictating from its authoritarian position of what is good or bad for us to experience, it keeps control of us and holds power *over* us. For as the EGO keeps us ever engaged in this process, we will always be chasing after *something* that is unattainable and trying to be that which the master voice in our heads tells us to be in order to find peace, happiness, joy, love, et cetera, which is a delusion, or *illusion*, because the EGO, through its mental constructs, keeps us chasing after permanence through impermanent *things*. By embracing the paradox and welcoming the *dissonance* this creates for our EGOs, we become aware of its mechanisms of maintaining control and thus challenge it by embracing the opposites of duality. For example, during the morning before I revisited this paragraph and reflected on the words for possible re-writing or expansion of the ideas that first came to and through me in a *coco*-creative manner, I had the following thought manifest in my mind, “Each and every word has the potential power to inflame or inspire”. Yet as I reflected on that dualistic notion of the power of words, I wrote in my journal how “you could synthesize these two words and reveal the hidden mechanisms of the EGO, which is geared toward separation and duality”. The synthesis of the two words “inflame” and “inspire”, which is the process of writing the two words as one, unified word, would be written

as follows: *inflammelyinspiring*, *inspiringlyinflammatory*, *inspirationallyinflammatory* or *inflammatorilyinspirational*.

If you were present when these words were first typed into the original Microsoft Word document, each newly **formed** word appeared with a red line under it, indicating that the software, or hardware, was not able to *recognize* the word and if I right clicked on the red, underlined word, the software, much like the software or hardware of our EGO, offered the two, dualistic words as a replacement for the “wrong” or unrecognizable word, and it either gave me the choice to write the newly formed word as two, separate words, or it offered nothing, because it could not comprehend the new word. This is very similar to how the EGO pushes back against this process and prefers to have you think dualistically through black-n-white thinking, which means it must be one or the other, it cannot be both at the same time. That is what causes the EGO *dissonance*, as the newly **formed** word, or words, challenges its controlling ways and creates *disharmony* or *discord*, or both, in our minds. Yet if we embrace duality and unify what the EGO separates into opposites, we can engage in the process of right clicking (that is, metaphorically engaging the right hemisphere of our brains) on the red, underlined word and click the “Add to Dictionary” option, thus uploading new **information** to the software of the computer and the EGO. Give it a try. I invite you to engage in an immersive, experiential experiment. Go to your computer, open up a Word document, and type in the synthesized words from above. Watch as the red line appears, then right click on the newly **formed** word, and see what options you are given. Take a moment to reflect on how this is similar to engaging the right hemisphere of our brains, which supports creativity, imagination, awareness, intuition, and insight.

The processes of actively engaging *dissonance* and metaphorically right clicking on the right hemisphere of the brain by embracing the synthesis of opposites, provides a pathway to becoming aware of the EGO's processes, which is to keep us *disconnected* from the harmonious sonance (sound) of silence and stillness deep within. The paradox then is that by *disengaging* and *disconnecting* from the *disharmonizing* EGO (all-or-nothing/black-n-white mental constructs, thinking, thought forms, and beliefs), we are able to re-connect and re-engage with the harmonizing and unifying sounds of the Universe and re-experience the ESSENCE of our true selves/true nature.

So, by using the above synthesized examples, if someone were to use *inflammatory* language towards me, and I name it as *inspirationallyinflammatory*, then I engage in the process of being aware that their *inflamed* EGO is trying to *inflame* or ignite my EGO and cause it to be reactive in *opposition* by taking the **opposite position** as them. Yet, by recognizing what their EGO is doing and naming it in a synthesizing manner, I can embrace the situation as an opportunity to be *inspired* and respond from conscious awareness and the synergizing ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force rather than from an *inflamed* EGO. Nonetheless, even if I were to respond from an *inspired* place of presence, their *inflamed* EGO, which is looking to create opposition, remember, will most likely interpret, evaluate, and/or judge my use of words in response as a challenge to its need to control me. So, if I were to respond from an *inspired* place of neutral ESSENCE, that response may come across as threatening to the EGO of the other, because my response is coming from a centered place within me and not from an EGO that is off-center, or off-kilter.

Give it a try. Don't take my **word** for it. Experiment with taking a seemingly negative word, or highly-charged word, and select a word that fittingly has the energy of its polar opposite, and synthesize the two words (I tend to start with finding a word that is an alliterative opposite, yet any word that is an antonym of the highly-charged word will do.) Then, say the synthesized word out loud, or in your mind, and see what you experience. *It is* only through your own direct experience of these processes will you be able to determine for yourself if what *is* being presented in these pages has any merit or value for you. I honor you and your EGO as I honor me and my EGO, while compassionately understanding that *beyond* the dualities of "you" and "me", we are One. And if I were to apply the synthesis of opposites to the dualities of EGO and ESSENCE, we both have an *egoicessence*, or *egoessence*, which is commonly referred to as "human being". Yet in keeping with the synthesizing process, those two words would be written as "*humanbeing*", as a unified whole. This is just another paradoxical statement because it seems absurd or self-contradictory yet *it is* or may be true, which conflicts with common belief. While being alive and in the **form** of a human, we are both human and being, and there *is* an ongoing inter**play** between the two, between *EGO* and *ESSENCE*, between *humanness* and *beingness*, between *it*ness and *is*ness, between *form* and *formlessness*, between *object/stuff* consciousness and *space* consciousness, between *ego* identity and *lotus* identity, between the *knowns* and the *knowing*, between the *named* and the *unnamable*. Or, for a more illustratively example, between "*a, b, c, doe, re, me, oh, hmm, ah, eee, you, are, not, me, and, therefore, less*" and " ". Get the picture? In other words, coming from the spaciousness or formlessness of awareness and of beingness, represented by the white space of the white page between the quotation marks – " " – you are the seer of the seen, the

noticer of the noticed, the observer of the observed, the witnesser of what is witnessed, and it is the EGO that turns what is seen, noticed, observed, witnessed into letters, words, or sounds for the purposes of naming *something* and turning the phenomena into *information* in order to communicate with another, “an other”. This is true of the purpose of this book, as well, yet the purpose of this book also has an element of paradox to it, for it is using the power of the word to communicate, or *communio*nate, how the word is not the all-powerful, be-all-end-all, way to engage in this world as we think *it is*, for True power lives, dwells, abides *beyond* words in the “ ” of the unnamable, co-creative ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

Here *is* yet another way to *think* about *it* and about the “evolution” this book *is* encouraging through the *playful*, *coco*-creative process. The naming of the process being proposed in this book is hidden in the word “evolution”. See if you can see it. Look at the word and see it for what *it is*, just letters put together to *form* a word that describes *something*. There is space there, too, between the letters, so the letters could take on *something* new. Can you see past the actual word that we are programmed and conditioned to see, and notice *something* else, *something* new, *something* hidden in the word that gives you a clue to the overall message of this book? Here’s a hint: look at the word backwards. Do you see it now? Can you see how, if you take the word “evolution” and spell it backwards, it spells, “no it, U Love”, which illustrates that we are “no it”, meaning, we are not an “*it*”, not the EGO (“no it”), and that “U” are “Love” (“U Love”). The “U” *represents* the Universal “U” inside of “you”. In other *words*, you are the Universal *Love* Force, the unfathomable, bottomless *well* of LOVE that *is* in the *isness* of Life. Once you have the deeper understanding proposed in this book (and many other books) and engage in life from the *coco*-creative ESSENCE of the Universal Life/*Love* Force, you will see

things from a different “perspective” and look at words differently, such as “evolution”, and see “evoLUtion”, and then taking what seems to be akin to a mirror image and *coco*-create “no it, U Love”.

This all goes back to a few paragraphs ago and the exploration of the difference between the common, obligatory phrase, “I love you”, which implies, or is energized with, the need or desire for the phrase to be reciprocated by the recipient. Whereas, the uncommon, omniscient phrases of “You are Loved” or “You are Love” are freely given without the expectation of reciprocity, while simultaneously and miraculously providing the person who is expressing the *sentimental* expression the felt sense of an expansive, eternal *Love* from deep within. By coming from and embracing that eternal, abiding *Love*, you will be able to *Love* wastefully, because you will never run out and you will also be the recipient by giving, expressing, and sharing this Universal *Love*. It is self-*full*filling. By embodying the wisdom inherent in the sayings of “You are Loved” or “You are Love” when you express them, it fills the “self” full of the *Love* that is ever-present and is the very ESSENCE of the Universal *Life* Force, or Universal *Love* Force.

This is similar to what is being proposed for Buddha Pool, aka Buddha Billiards, which, like a mirror image, switches and reconfigures the concepts of regular pool, in order to encourage different-perspective taking which helps to cultivate increased conscious awareness and focuses that awareness on how the EGO works, in order to help us to re-connect and re-align with the synergistic, loving ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

The only True attainment of permanent peace, joy, love, et cetera, is through the stillness (not *illness*) and silence/sonance (not *dissonance*) of the present moment and the pure presence of awareness, away from words, thoughts, descriptions, and definitions of what *is* being observed, witnessed, or noticed. Just noticing without words is enough to catch a glimpse of the ever-present permanence that resides and abides in us all.

Yet, again, this is not about doing away with the EGO; it's about *disconnecting* or detaching from the EGO, and thus bringing more conscious awareness to the process of how the EGO, that is, the *energy-guiding operating system*, operates. Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, is about bringing conscious awareness to the "*modus operandi*" (mode of operating or working) of the EGO and to discover, or re-discover, that there is another system at work and operating in our lives that we may not be aware of. Once you become aware of this "other" system, you will be able to begin the process of developing, or re-developing, that system's function in your life, and unlike the EGO, this system [i.e., the *expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely (or naturally) co-creative energy* (ESSENCE)] does not compete with the EGO. When you learn, or re-learn, to be able to engage in life from this inherent ESSENCE of the Source of all life, life will begin to *transform* before your very eyes.

Buddha Pool aids in this process by providing a fun, *playful*, and collaborative way to engage in becoming more aware of how these systems have an *inter-play* in our lives. The way the game of Buddha Pool is set up serves, in some manner, to reverse the process of how our minds, our EGOs, are *formed* and developed. It is about taking a look at the process of how we earned our EGO, much like the way a new, martial-art's student in karate or Taekwon-do goes from starting

off as a white belt, to advancing through the colored-belts of increasing rank as they demonstrate their improved knowledge and skill, to eventually earning a black belt. Buddha Billiards reverses this process and starts from the point of the **players** already having a metaphorical black belt in EGO development, represented by the mostly, black-hued “8” ball, and then, through the process of the game, each **player** is encouraged to go through the process of working backwards through the multi-colored **object** balls of duality to eventually earning a white belt, which *represents* purity, such as the purity of the solid, white-hued **object** ball, which *represents* the pure conscious awareness that is inherent in all of us and accessible in the now of the present moment when we are free of the vociferous voice in our heads, perpetuated by the EGO. The attainment of this metaphorical white belt represents an advancement *beyond* the coveted black belt, because the individual progresses *beyond* the **forms** that were learned, whether it be the martial-arts **forms** or the **forms** of the EGO, by un-learning what was learned, and thus arriving at the un-conditioned state of pure conscious awareness, where movement is automatic and no thought is needed for its prescient expression.

As John Little explains in *The Warrior Within*, Bruce Lee understood this process and expressed his understanding as “**the three stages of cultivation**”, with the final stage representing “emptiness”, which he characterized as “the formless form” (p. 114). (Sound familiar? Both Eckhart Tolle and Dr. Dan Siegel use these terms, which are based in Taoism and Buddhism, or the “buddha-dharma”.) Incidentally, the first two stages of cultivation, according to Bruce Lee, are “partiality” (stage one), characterized as “the running to extreme”, and “fluidity” (stage two), characterized as “the two halves of the one whole” (p. 111). Buddha Billiards engages in

this same “cultivation” of consciousness by illustrating *partiality*, or the *extreme* duality inherent in a mostly, solidified EGO, represented by the mostly, black-hued “8” ball, and then illustrating the *fluidity* inherent in integrating polar opposites, represented by the pairing of the “solid” and “striped”, dualistically-aligned, multi-hued *object* balls, to finally illustrating the *emptiness* inherent in the spaciousness, stillness, and silence of pure conscious awareness, represented by the solid, white-hued *object* ball, which symbolizes *formless form*.

Through Buddha Billiards, we can use the above understandings to re-process, or re-frame, our experiences as not only happening *to* us but also happening *for* us. This helps us to go deeper within ourselves and supports the process of being open to exploring a deeper relationship *with* ourselves – and *with* the Universal Life Force within us and all life. *It is* through our relationships *with* ourselves, *with* others, and *with* the outside world that we experience and become aware of the manifesting mental constructs that arise to name, identify, and define unfolding phenomena. This naming process (EGO) of the unnamable (ESSENCE) becomes the narrative we share with others in order to communicate with them as we seek union, or *communion*, *with* them, and the Universal Life Force. Yet the narrative will never be the path on which we walk. The words we speak will never completely name that which is unnamable. And the *communion* we seek will never be experienced through communication of thoughts or beliefs. Words still have a *function*, though, as pointers, signposts, ladders, portals, bridges, or pathways to the Divine dimension. And if we keep the *fun* in the *function* of this process of communication, such as *playfully*, and more accurately, referring to it as the process of *communioncation*, we can use language as a way to narrate and bring conscious awareness to the continual inter*play* between human nature (EGO) and being nature (ESSENCE) that are the

integral parts in understanding the *Whole* story, narratively known, or named, as being a human being, or being human.

As Eckhart Tolle so intuitively points to in one of his enlightening videos, “*every word is only relative validity*” (“The Secret of Happiness: Discovering the Source of Contentment, Peace, and Joy”). In other words, the mere process of speaking has an element of distortion to it as we try to explain and define the unexplainable and undefinable, which occurs at the level of **formlessness**, spaciousness, stillness, or neutrality. That **formlessness** is deeper than any thought, word, or language (linguistical utterance) that **forms** as we attempt to communicate, or **communicate**, with one another, and thus, creates, or co-creates, a shared experience, in order to connect with another and ourselves, in order to feel valued or experience a *sense* of worth by having our EGO’s stroked, in a way, that validates our human experience or our human existence. Words are used to represent, or re-present, the REALity of the moment into the reality we **form**, or takes shape, in our minds. Another way of languaging the processes at **play** would be to distinguish that *things* emerge in our minds and take **shape** from the **shapelessness** of the Universal Life Force.

This is not necessarily a good or bad thing, for as the common saying goes “*it is what it is*”. It is the process of being human, yet the human part – EGO – can take over and overshadow our beingness, which is the “*is*” in the common saying “*it is what it is*”. Incidentally, the “*it*” in the saying, represents the EGO as it *forms formlessness*, or *shapes shapelessness*, into objects in the mind by naming them and turning what “*is*” into an “*it*” or “*its*”. By recognizing (re-cognizing) or re-experiencing directly our beingness, or *isness*, we become aware of another

dimension within us that has always been there and always will be, but this dimension was covered up by our mental constructs through the development of the EGO, which empowers us through the *illusion* – or delusion – of having control over our environments and what happens to us.

It is in the reframing of what is happening *to* us as also happening *for* us, that we begin to unmask the EGO for what *it is* and begin the process of re-connecting with our authentic self, or better yet, our authentic *nature* – ESSENCE, presence, pure consciousness, stillness, spaciousness, expansiveness, shapelessness, the Universal Life/Love Force – or as others prefer to refer to this unnamable shapeless phenomena: God, the Tao, the Source, Higher Power, the Force, Universal Intelligence, Divine Feminine, Goddess, et cetera. (Again, feel free to fill in the name or term or phrase or utterance or sound that works for you to define/describe the force of Life, the energy that is observable in the world, yet escapes our ability to truly understand it or contain it out of the mere lack of proper description through the use of words, language, or linguistics.

It is through our direct experience that we come into direct contact with this Universal Life Force that provides us direct knowledge of this Source of all life, yet it as if eating a meal and attempting to truly describe all the nuances of the experience to someone else. For as they have their own direct experience of the same meal, their experience may contain some similarities while also providing the individual with their own subjective, and very personal, private experience of the meal that they may or may not be able to translate, or put, into words to try to explain or describe to another what they are experiencing. Again, as Eckhart Tolle

pointed out, words are “relative validity”, that is, they are valid in so much as they relate to an individual’s subjective experience.

It just *is*. And to try to explain it will undoubtedly fail to adequately or accurately describe what it *is* that *is* experienced. And thus, at times *it is* best to not even try to explain an experience and just savor the unique nuances of phenomena that unfold and manifest themselves in the moment, which adds more to the experience by not talking about it.

The paradox is in attempting to describe the indescribable, we fail to describe anything at all, for description creates indescription, or comes *from* indescription. For to describe is to put into words what is indescribable and thus we end up describing nothing – no-thing – at all. It just *is*.

Similarly, as you *play* Buddha Pool, aka Buddha Billiards, part of the process is to just notice what *is* happening and then to become aware of when the mind, the EGO, gets activated and begins its process of turning what *is* into *it* (i.e., into *form*, in the *form* of thoughts, words, or *mental* constructs). Then, from that point of increased conscious awareness, engage in the process of quieting the mind by allowing the movement of the billiard balls to just unfold as they will. This can be a truly mesmerizing process of watching the movement from pure awareness and having no thoughts get in the way of the event unfolding right before your very eyes. Often times, unfortunately, and too often at that, the EGO gets involved and distracts us from this mesmerizing and almost magical phenomena. The EGO has been conditioned to compete, or, is in competition, with what *is* instead of collaborating *with* what *is*. The EGO is entertaining us with its version of what *is* and casts a spell that is captivating and holds us captive in a cage of our own conditioned mind. Yet from the perspective of pure awareness and

the ESSENCE of the Universe, we can free ourselves from this *mental* prison and turn that insight and conscious awareness around to collaborate *with* the EGO to bring forth this process through words as pointers and language as signposts to a path less traveled. Soaking in the silence and stillness of the spacious moment as you watch the unfolding movements during Buddha Billiards can transport you to this other dimension and capture your heart and soul with the rapture and radiance of the ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force.

"You cannot step into the same river twice."

~Heraclitus, 535-475 B.C.

The profoundness of this quote from Heraclitus illustrates that even though I may have repeated myself throughout this chapter, the words on the page and the *form* that they took were a part of being in the *flow* with info, or flowing *with* the information, as it manifested through *me* on various separate occasions and resembled the process of stepping into a river twice and seemingly experiencing the river as the same, when in fact it is not possible, because the river is always flowing, and thus is a different river every time one steps into it.

Furthermore, "you" are not the same "you" with every step *you* take, or make, and thus the *form* that is "you" is also flowing. It is only when we stop flowing and become solidified in our way of being, through our conceptualized *sense* of self, other, and the world, do we appear to experience the flow of the river of life as the same. This is not possible at the level of formlessness and only occurs at the level of form. Out of formlessness flows *form* and *it is*

through awareness that we are able to reverse this process and, once again, find the *flow*, and be in *flow*, of the *Wholeness* of Life.

So, feel free, and re-read this chapter and see if you can be in *flow with* the info that streams across the page and allow the letters and words, as expressions of *form*, to *inform* you and transport you to another dimension where the unfolding of the words on the page (and in your mind) become a pathway to noticing how there is an *inter-play* between EGO and ESSENCE (pure awareness). At times, you may discover a sea of awareness as you take in the entire page behind the words and then notice how you can observe the *formation* of words as each letter manifests on the page. Buddha Billiards, or Buddha Pool, is thus another pathway to notice this *inter-play*, which, once experienced is hard to un-experience. As you *refresh* yourself and deepen your awareness with each deliberate yet seemingly random step into the river of words, thoughts, concepts, and ideas that flow on the page, notice your experience as you engage in the reflective process of how the words are bending and cascading around and over objects, and see if you can catch a glimpse of how this is creating, or co-creating, nuances and a *refreshing* newness for you even when the river winds back on itself. Welcome to *the Tao of pool*, or the *Way* of pool, and the profound, *playful* process of awakening to consciousness, to the state of pure awareness, and the ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force.

If, however, you are inclined to continue on the path of awakening by turning the page to begin *part two*, rather than re-reading *part one*, here is a primer for what you are about to experience, or re-experience, by expanding on the title of this book that goes *beyond* the words

on the page. *the Tao of pool* can be profoundly understood as “*the Way of being Playfully Open & One with Life (POOL)*”.

Now, be in the now, and as you are about to turn the page, I invite you to do so with conscious awareness as your guide. Notice your breath, allow a deep breath to fill your lungs and/or stomach, then reach for the page and pause before grabbing the page. In that brief pause, be aware of the hand reaching for the page and notice your breath, again, then decide to keep reaching for the page with that hand or switch to using your other hand to turn the page. Whichever you choose, just observe and bear witness to the unfolding of your experience. Be *present*. Be *Playfull*. And be *Open* to the bountiful possibilities of being *One with Life*.

part two of the *Whole*

the continuum of belief...and *beyond*

"Every step on the path is the path."

~Unknown

"The slower you go, the faster you will be."

~Steele R. Tiggerus (age 8)

Welcome to the continuation of your journey on the path of awakening, which is true whether or not you read the previous pages or are starting with this page. For, this book is about meeting you where you are at on your journey and honors all the paths that have led to you picking up this book and giving it a playful perusal. To have intentionally or serendipitously selected this book indicates that you already have a level of awakening and awareness, which is attributed to your openness, receptivity, and curiosity about what this book may have to offer you. Thank you for taking some of your precious and priceless time and energy to invest in *you* and, thus, contributing to the rippling waves of awakening that are happening on this planet.

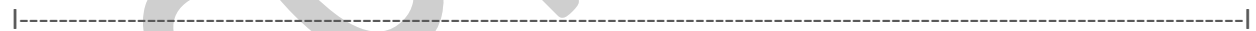
Fun Fact: even though the word "commonly" is used in the next sentence, I first learned about the concept of a continuum in my 40's when I was attending grad school, so *it is* okay if this is a new concept for you, no matter what your biological age.

continuum

The commonly known concept of a continuum is understood to be a line or range between two **things** and used to establish varying degrees between those **things**, such as scaling the percentage of how likely you are to do something from 0% to 100%, or on a scale from one to 10, or for identifying your mood from -10 to +10. The purpose of a continuum, at least for this book, is to offset black-n-white/all-or-nothing thinking as **things** in life tend to have varying degrees to them. A continuum is usually *represented*, or depicted, as **such**:



The actual length of the line is usually arbitrary, yet it could extend to the edges of these paragraphs and limited only by the margins imposed by this document's software, as **such**:



Yet from the perspective of this book, the continuum of belief does not impose an end to the continuum in either direction but goes clear across the page and, as **it** reaches the edges of the page, **it** would become more **spaced** out and would, in fact, go **beyond** the page, like **thus**:

Now, I encourage you to use your imagination to imagine the **spaced** line above going to the edges of the page and extending **beyond** the page (**form**), yet due to the limits of **formatting** imposed by this document's software, I am unable to precisely create that line. This, nonetheless, provides us with an example illustrating the limits of **EGO (form)** and offering an opportunity to **realize** that the **ego** (thoughts, mental constructs, etc.) is insufficient and incapable of creating direct experiences with what is **beyond** EGO, **beyond** thoughts, and, thus, **beyond** belief.

Moreover, the continuum could also be **represent**ed in a manner that the straight line of the continuum takes into consideration the ebbs and flows of life and shows the non-linear process of living in the flux and flow of change. Yet, there is a thru line, though, **representing** the Universal Life Force (ESSENCE, formlessness, presence, spaciousness, shapelessness, etc.) that is always **present** and always available to us. If I were to illustrate this on the page, this thru line would be blue in color to symbolize the water of life.

A continuum could be viewed as a path that one travels, or could travel, in either direction. Yet, again, typically, a continuum is illustrated with the endings of the path (continuum) in place to provide an understanding that the continuum (path) is finite, rather than infinite. The purpose of this book is to increase conscious awareness of this path and the infinite ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force that is **beyond** belief.

belief

A belief is, or beliefs are, mental constructs that are **formed** by thoughts that others have conditioned us to believe in, or to guide our lives by, as we navigate this thing called “life”.

Beliefs are no different than other words or thought **forms** that point to something, and are not necessarily true or right, or false or wrong. They, again, are but pointers, or signposts, as a way to communicate to one another through the use of **information**, in order to **inform** one another. Yet, again, as Eckhart Tolle pointed out in his video/audio program entitled, *The Secret of Happiness: Discovering the Source of Contentment, Peace, and Joy*, words are “relative validity”. And thus, words are valid in so much as they convey **information** that hopes to clearly and accurately describe, or *describble*, a phenomenon to another that they then possibly experience for themselves, or they just go on believing what was conveyed to them due to the inherent nature, environmental factors, and energy by which the belief was shared or expressed. Some of us never question our thoughts/beliefs, and just give over to the EGO system that has been programmed into us.

For the purposes of this book, I am *coco*-creatively proposing the following continuum of belief (which could be adapted or modified to however you see fit and with the words of your choosing, or co-creating). The unfolding of this process has happened over the course of many years, and perhaps decades, centuries, and millennia. The continuum occurred in stages as it manifested to, for, thru, and *with* me.

paranoia

Many, or most, of us have heard of the **word** “paranoia”, which is “*The belief that the Universe is conspiring against you*”. The **word** itself is usually attributed to those marginalized individuals who experience thoughts, delusions, or hallucinations that many tend to characterize as “not normal”. That is not the purpose of this book, for, again, words are mere pointers or stepping stones to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a human being, and how there is an inter**play** between EGO and ESSENCE. The belief associated with the **word** “paranoia” is about being in a fearful state. **It is** a fear-based state of mind, or state of consciousness, or unconsciousness, which is placed on the one end of the continuum.

paranoia

pronoia

A number of years ago, I was fortunate to have someone suggest that I watch the movie, *Conversations with God*, and during the viewing of that movie, I heard the main character, who was playing the author of the book of the same name, say how “*The universe is conspiring in your favor always . . . and in all ways*”. That belief resonated with me and I continued to use it to help me reframe what were often negative situations where I might be falling victim to engaging in a bit of paranoid, fear-based thinking that others are, or were, conspiring against

me. This new belief of “pronoia” helped me to look at the situation in a whole different light and explore the ways in which what was happening was, in fact, *for* my benefit. I would often verbalize this saying/belief to others, as a way to reinforce it for myself, and share it with them as a way to possibly look at *something* differently. One of those individuals was a female colleague of mine, who was also a former classmate of mine in my master’s program. We worked together at a clinic as we provided counseling services and earned our “externship” hours toward licensure. After we had both parted from that clinic, yet still stayed in contact with one another, she sent me a text message with an attached picture of a slide from a power-point presentation that read, “**pronoia**: the opposite of paranoia; the belief that the universe is conspiring in your favor”. It was a wonderful validation from someone I admire greatly for her courage, kindness, knowledge, and wisdom. So, then, with this new word to refer to, I felt empowered, even more, to share with others the belief that I had been using to positively restructure my brain, my EGO, and my experiences. The word is not new, yet as of the writing of this sentence on May 16, 2020, the word “pronoia” was still not recognized through [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com). It can, however, be found through a Google search, and it has a Wikipedia page that describes it as a “neologism coined to describe a state of mind that is the opposite of paranoia” [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronoia_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronoia_(psychology))]. The page goes on to classify “pronoia” as “the delusion” that “the world around them conspires to do them good”. Paranoia and pronoia are delusional, or illusional, states, indeed, especially when applied to the *realm* of psychology or the *realm* of the EGO, yet they also provide an opportunity to look at how our thoughts/beliefs fall on a continuum, which keep us from experiencing the *REALm* of conscious awareness and the formlessness that is *beyond* thoughts/beliefs. Whereas, paranoia

is more of a fear-based state of mind, I would characterize paranoia as a *courageouslyfearfull* or *fearfullycourageous* state of mind (notice the synthesis of opposites; more on this in *part three of the Whole: pathways*), which would be placed on the continuum **beyond** paranoia, as it is moving in the direction of embracing a more open and flexible state of mind and, thus, **transforming** the EGO by allowing in more light and ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force.

paranoia

pronoia

coconoia

As I continued to apply the belief of pronoia to my experiences, it **coco**-creatively occurred to me one day, that there must be some**thing** more to these concepts of paranoia and pronoia. Because if paranoia is “*The belief that the Universe is conspiring against you*”, which contains a double negative (“conspiring” and “against”), and pronoia is “*The belief that the Universe is conspiring in your favor*”, which contains a negative-positive (“conspiring” and “favor”), then there must be something else that contains a positive-positive. Plus, paranoia and pronoia have a foundation in the belief, or notion, that someone or some**thing** (some force) outside of you is controlling, or at least influencing, the direction of your life. That is when, in a co-creative process that involved the Universal Life Force and one of my bestest friends and fellow traveling companion, Dick, I coined the word “***coconoia***”, which manifested itself thru this co-

creative, or *coco*-creative, process, and it is “**The belief that the Universe is compassionately collaborating with you**”. The word “coconoia” is *formed* by taking the first two letters of both “*compassionately*” and “*collaborating*” (the “positive-positive”) and combining them to get the “*coco*” in “coconoia”. **Coconoia** is a phenomenon, a state energized by a belief, just like paranoia and pronoia, yet coconoia also illustrates how the Universal Life Force is working *with* you. Whereas, paranoia is more of a fear-based state of mind and could more accurately be characterized as a *courageouslyFEARFULL* state of mind, where fear is the dominating force, and pronoia is characterized as a *courageouslyfearfull* or *fearfullycourageous* state of mind, where the two forces are somewhat balanced in their dominance, coconoia would be characterized as a predominately courageous state of mind, and could be illustrated by the following: *fearfullyCOURAGEOUS*. This state of mind is a state of consciousness *beyond* pronoia as it is moving further along the continuum in the direction of embracing an even more open and flexible state of mind and, thus, adding to the continued *transformation* of the EGO by allowing in even more light and ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force. It would be placed on the continuum of belief at the other end of the continuum, as *such* -

paranoia

pronoia

coconoia

If one were to then add the different characterizations to the continuum of belief, it would look like this:

paranoia

pronoia

coconoia

courageouslyFEARFULL

courageouslyfearfull

fearfullyCOURAGEOUS

or

fearfullycourageous

*"A teacher is never a giver of truth – he is a guide,
a pointer to the truth that each student must find for himself.*

A good teacher is merely a catalyst."

~Bruce Lee

transmitting, transforming, transcending

Before we get to the ***beyond*** aspect of the subtitle of this book and the title of *part two of the Whole*, it is *instrumental* to further distinguish the different states of belief to help with recognizing where we or "an other" may be on the continuum. All three belief states are altered states of consciousness, or unconsciousness, and when they are placed along a continuum, that continuum acts as a pathway, of sorts, offering opportunities to become aware of these different states of mind with the intention of supporting and validating these states of

mind as “normal” states of the EGO while encouraging movement along the continuum to develop higher, or deeper, states of consciousness, **beyond** the EGO. Individual EGO states, or the collective EGO states of a group of individuals, that could be identified as being paranoid, is a state in which the pain and suffering that is experienced is externalized, and thus, *transmitted* outward onto others or the world as being the source of that pain and suffering. The EGO system, in its alignment with our survival instincts, experiences threat or danger from the outside, and thus become wired, conditioned, or programmed to be externally focused, thereby co-creating a paranoid state of mind and the belief that the Universe or others are conspiring against them. It is a natural state of development that has many complex factors that contribute to that development. So, I am in no way trying to simplify or trivialize the complexity of this state of mind that is experienced by some who live in, and appear trapped in, that fearfully-dominated state of *reality*. Moving on to the next state of mind along the continuum of belief, the pronoid state, which is a state of *consciousunconsciousness* that can be understood as an altered state in which the individual, or collective, experience pain and suffering externally and internally, and thus, are able to *transform* their pain and suffering through the belief that the Universe, or situations, are conspiring in their favor. They take a negatively perceived situation or state of being and find the silver lining or the benefit of the experience and apply it to themselves to learn from and grow. This is made possible with a more open and flexible mind, or EGO, in which ESSENCE plays a part in the individual’s, or the collective’s, way of viewing the world. They may engage in *transmitting* their understanding of the pain and suffering outward, yet it is usually done with increased awareness and assertive advocacy for bringing their increased conscious awareness into relationships with others in

order to grow and evolve. They utilize the relationship they have with themselves, others, and the world to continue their own development to higher states of consciousness, and thereby engage in a continual process of *transforming* their EGO system. Continuing on the continuum of belief, we arrive at the state of coconoia. This state of mind is a state in which there is more *consciousness* present and can be understood as an altered state in which the individual, or collective, experience pain externally and internally yet their suffering is drastically diminished due to their ability to *transcend* the pain and view it from a deeper state of ESSENCE. The coconoid belief that “the Universe is **compassionately collaborating with you**” helps these individuals, or collective body of individuals, to view life as a continual process of *transcending* the EGO from a place, or state, of ESSENCE. They accept life on life’s terms and engage in embracing the *is*ness of life, while being aware of how the EGO translates that *is*ness into *it*ness. “It is what it is”, after all, and those who embrace or embody the coconoid state of mind are well aware of the inter**play** between the “it” (EGO) and the “is” (ESSENCE). In addition to these understandings regarding the states of paranoia, pronoia, and coconoia, it may be helpful to see them as states of perception that frame, or re-frame, situations and circumstances as happening “to” them (paranoia), happening “to and for” them (pronoia) or happening “with” them (coconoia). If, then, you take the above and apply it to our ever-expanding awareness of the continuum of belief, it would look like this:

paranoia

pronoia

coconoia

courageouslyFEARFULL

courageouslyfearfull

fearfullyCOURAGEOUS

or

fearfullycourageous

transmitting
pain/suffering

trans**forming**
pain/suffering

transcending
pain/suffering

happening to

happening to & for

happening *with*

consciousUNCONSCIOUSNESS

consciousunconsciousness unconsciousCONSCIOUSNESS

or

unconsciousconsciousness

The continuum of belief helps to understand the different EGO states and increases conscious awareness regarding how we may move along the continuum, as we would a path. As with each step on the path, we move closer and closer to the very thing that most often eludes us, due to the EGO's fear-based trappings that cage us from experiencing the ESSENCE that is ever-present in the now of the present moment **beyond** belief.

. . . and beyond

Beyond coconoia is the process of transcending EGO (thoughts, beliefs) and re-uniting, or becoming One with the Universe, which, again, is not able to be named, as Lao Tzu pointed out, "The Tao that can be named is not the Tao". The **beyond** was **with** us prior to the development of thought (ego, mental constructs). In childhood, children are inherently connected to the

Universal Life Force and, thus, One **with** the Universe, or One **with** the **is**ness of life, or **with** God, or God Consciousness, or Christ Consciousness, or Buddha Consciousness, or Cosmic Consciousness, or Universal Intelligence, or Spirit, or the Great Creator, or the Tao, or the Source, or the Divine Feminine, or whatever name helps you to *acknowledge* the presence or ESSENCE **beyond** our capacity to comprehend and completely name this unnamable life-giving force that is at **play** in the Universe and **with** all life.

As we grow and develop our language, our environments have a *profound* effect on how our minds are conditioned to think and the words we tend to use. For example, if we were born into a Chinese-speaking family, we would most likely speak Chinese. Likewise, if we were born into a family that speaks with vulgarities, profanities, and verbal expressions of *racism*, *sexism*, et cetera, we would also most likely speak in that manner as a child, an adolescent, and then quite possibly as an adult, as well.

Along with using and sharing their defined belief statements, the **words** paranoia, pronoia, or coconoia can be used in such phrases as, “I am being paranoid”, “I am being pronoid”, or “I am being coconoid”, as a way to help bring more conscious awareness to the state of mind, or belief, you, or an “other”, may be engaging in. This is in no way meant to diminish, demean, or dismiss the significant challenges and suffering that an individual with a clinical diagnosis of paranoia experiences. For these individuals, I would apply the notion of being coconoid to their state of being as the belief that the Universe is compassionately collaborating **with** them, even

if they or we cannot see it nor truly understand it from our level of consciousness (**form**, EGO).

This may be hard for many to follow, or accept, yet the continuum of belief is just a tool to help cultivate more conscious awareness about thoughts and beliefs and the power of the EGO, and then to go **beyond** belief and thought and the EGO to the state of spacious, **formless**, shapeless ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, where there is no judgment and life just *is*.

As Eckhart Tolle so pertinently and poignantly pointed out in many of his audios/videos, one cannot get to **beyond** thought thru thought, or the thinking process. The **beyond** is an unnamable, neutral, empty space that is filled with the energy of the Universe and the pure potentiality of manifestation, yet all of these are just words attempting to name that which is unnamable. Again, words are only pointers, or signposts.

Now, if you embrace the notion and meaning of “coconoia”, and then share the word and the belief with others, and/or use the phrase, “I am being coconoid”, no doubt others may view (judge) you as a coconut, or being *coconutty* (another new word for our ever-expanding dictionary of language to describe, or *describble*, our experiences that are indescribable, or *indescrivable*). In fact, to think or be this way is outside of what many people think of as “normal”. So, yes, to these “others”, you will seem, or appear, *coco-nutty*. That is part of the joy of being aligned, or re-aligned, with the Universal Life Force and becoming aware of how the EGO works, for “others” will be judging “you”, or *describbling* “you”, from their EGO and level of unconsciousness.

*"The thoughts we think and the words we speak
create our experiences."*

~Louise L. Hay

This whole process, though, is not about doing away with the EGO, or shaming the EGO, *it is* about befriending the EGO, yours and theirs, and utilizing its capacities and capabilities to serve the co-creative, or *coco*-creative, Universal Life Force that is always present and available for us, while engaging in this thing called "life", which we can do from a higher (or deeper) state of human consciousness, a consciousness that comes from beingness, which helps to foster the concept of "inter-being" (A word coined by Thich Nhat Hanh, which means "to inter-dependently co-exist"; *it is* "the interconnection" or "the inter-existence of all things".)

In the same video/audio program mentioned in *part one of the Whole*, Eckhart Tolle shares how "we go from no thought, to thought, to *beyond* thought", or at least we have the capacity to go to "*beyond* thought". Yet, it seems that many of us get stuck in the thought stage and are not aware of how it can be a stepping stone, or a pathway, or bridge, for going *beyond* thought. In other words, to go *beyond form*, *beyond* belief, *beyond* EGO, and *beyond* the mental constructs, or constraints, that keep us from experiencing, or re-experiencing, the Great *Beyond* in *formlessness*, spaciousness, shapelessness, ESSENCE, stillness, and silence that is h(om)e to the

Universal Life Force (again, feel free to substitute any other word that you prefer, such as, Spirit, Tao, God, Supreme Essence, Creative Consciousness, et cetera).

If we were to add to the continuum of belief what Eckhart Tolle pointed out, then the empty space on the far left of the continuum of belief would represent “no thought” and the empty space on the far right would represent “*beyond* thought”. Or, to be more illustrative, the continuum goes to the edge of the page and the space beyond the page on the left and right would represent “no thought” and “*beyond* thought”, respectively. And yet, the space in between the dashes, which collectively *represent* the continuum, would also illustrate the concept of “no thought” or “*beyond* thought”.

By applying the concepts of Buddha Billiards to the continuum of belief...and *beyond*, the mostly-solid, black-hued “8” ball (*representing* a mostly-solid, rigid EGO) would be on the left under paranoia, then the multi-hued, dualistically-paired, ***object*** balls (*representing* varying degrees of EGO identity and ESSENCE identity and illustrating the ***transforming*** EGO, leading from the paranoid state to the coconoid state) would be in the middle under pronopia, then the solid & striped maroon *object* balls (*representing* less EGO identity and more ESSENCE identity) would be on the right under coconoia, as ***such***:

- - - - -

paranoia	pronopia	coconoia
----------	----------	----------

<i>courageously</i> FEARFULL	<i>courageously</i> fearfull or <i>fearfully</i> courageous	<i>fearfully</i> COURAGEOUS
transmitting pain/suffering	trans forming pain/suffering	transcending pain/suffering
happening <i>to</i>	happening <i>to & for</i>	happening <i>with</i>
<i>conscious</i> UNCONSCIOUSNESS	<i>conscious</i> unconsciousness or <i>unconscious</i> consciousness	<i>unconscious</i> CONSCIOUSNESS
black-hued “8” ball	multi-hued <i>object</i> balls (purple, blue, green, red, orange, yellow)	maroon balls
mostly solid, rigid EGO identification	varying degrees of EGO identity and ESSENCE identity	less EGO identity, more ESSENCE identity
“I-it”	“I-it”/“I-Thou”	“I-Thou”
power over	power over/with	power <i>with</i>

The solid, white-hued *object* ball (representing pure consciousness) would be on the far right and left of the page, yet this state of being is not completely attainable as long as you are human, because a level of humanness (EGO) will always be **playing** out in our awareness while we walk the earth in human **form**, and thus, grounding us, at least to some degree, in our earthly experiences from a spiritual perspective (ESSENCE).

By applying a developmental perspective to the game of regular pool, the white “cue” ball would **represent** “no thought”, the multi-hued **object** balls would **present** the stages of

thought development, with the “striped”- and “solid”-colored *object* balls representing the **formation** of thought, including the development of black-n-white/all-or-nothing thinking that can become mostly solid in nature and self-focused, and thus, **forming** Martin Buber’s “I-it” relationship with self, others, and the world, where the self is seen as the “I” and others and the world are seen as **objects** (its). The “striped” balls would also represent the development of abstract thought during adolescence, which is less rigid and concrete and typically takes in more perspectives via increased awareness. The mostly, black-hued “8” ball would represent the rigid, dense, thinking styles and belief systems that further solidify into inflexible black-n-white thinking (i.e., dualistic thinking), which typically develops through the survival system’s chronic, *egocentric* response to adverse and/or traumatic/scary/life threatening situations and experiences. Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, however, flips this and hopefully helps to continue our development to go “*beyond* thought” and *beyond* belief to a state that fully transcends thought, which is represented by the white-hued *object* ball.

During Buddha Pool, *player* one *plays* with the polarities of, let’s say, purple, blue, and yellow, and *player* two *plays* with the polarities of green, red, and orange (which, incidentally, their first letters spell “gro”, as in, grow, develop, evolve, and acts as a memory device for not only the game but also for life). Both *players* then join each other to eventually *play* together by focusing their collaborative efforts on putting the maroon *object* balls into a pocket, which then leaves the solid, white-hued, *object* ball for the end, and this is when the second flip, switch, or pivot occurs. When all that is left on the pool table are the “8” ball (EGO) and the white ball

(ESSENCE), the *player* whose turn *it is*, now uses the white ball as the “cue” ball to put the “8” ball in a pocket, thus putting it (EGO) in its place and leaving the white ball (ESSENCE) remaining on the pool table (Universal Life Force). Again, this variation of the game of regular pool is about increasing conscious awareness, inclusivity, and compassionate collaboration rather than perpetuating competitiveness, exclusivity, separation, and unconsciousness. It is about transcending the EGO (the *energy-guiding operating* system) and re-aligning *with* the ESSENCE [*expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely (or naturally) co-creative, energy*] of the Universal Life Force, and thus empowering ourselves through the embodiment of this *coco-creative, synergistic, energy source*.

The “maroon” (dark-brownish red) **object** balls, along with *representing* a more aware and awakened state of consciousness, symbolize the reclaiming of consciousness and a sense of freedom and expansiveness from the EGO. The word “maroon” is defined in the dictionary as “*to abandon or isolate with little hope of ready rescue or escape*”, which is exactly what the EGO does as it creates an almost inescapable situation that traps us into thinking, or believing, we are abandoned and isolated from “others”, and we will not be rescued. Yet, the EGO seduces us into thinking, and believing, that by chasing after the next **object** of our desire or society’s idea of what will make us happy and fulfilled, we will be rescued and find permanent peace, joy, happiness, and tranquility. The *illusion* that the EGO creates for us is that a state of permanence can be found in impermanent **objects/things**. These **things**, once attained, only provide a temporary sense of satisfaction, before the EGO is enticing us to pursue the next **thing**, or more of the same *thing*. Yet, *it is* only through increasing our conscious awareness do we re-discover the permanence inherent in the now of the present moment, which offers us

the opportunities to re-connect, directly, with the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force that is always available to us **beyond** thought (EGO) in the space between thoughts. By utilizing this process, Buddha Billiards, aka Buddha Pool, looks to re-define the definition of “maroon” and re-claim a sense of hope that is grounded in the *REALity* that we are never abandoned by or isolated from the Universal Life Force but deluded into thinking/believing so by the EGO (conditioned mental constructs). Through the philosophy of and engagement in Buddha Billiards, the re-defining of “maroon” would be as follows: *“to reunite or reconnect with abundant hope and joy inherent in ever-present stillness and spaciousness”*.

After *coco*-creatively re-defining “maroon” in the above example, the *coco*-creative process then manifested the following acronym for this new concept of reclaiming and redefining “**maroon**”: “**manifesting awareness & relational openness for observing the now**”. (The use of acronyms as a stepping stone to go *beyond* thought will be explored further in *part three of the Whole – “pathways”*.)

As the above process of co-creating the acronym unfolded, I became increasingly aware that the process felt forced like the EGO had begun to participate in this process and was asserting itself to take over the process. I was aware that there seemed to be this pressure to co-create the acronym for “maroon” and be fulfilled by the result, so I took a break and proceeded to go for a walk. Mind you, it was 9 pm at night in mid-May, the weather had dropped down to about 50 degrees from yesterday’s 70-degree day, it was drizzling rain and the wind was

blowing. Nonetheless, I set out for a little stroll to the post office a few blocks away to drop off some bills in the mailbox. And in the process of disconnecting from EGO and being present with the stillness of observing the weather around me, the following manifested thru me: “**Manifesting Awareness & Reconnecting with Oneness by Observing the Now**” (**MAROON**), which seemed more aligned with the *coco*-creative process because it was not forced at all and seemed to flow into existence and manifest itself with the support of the Universal Life Force. As I arrived at the mailbox and dropped off the bills, I was excited to walk back to the house as quickly as possible to type up what I had experienced (EGO), yet I also felt the gentle pull to continue my walk, which would take me further away from my house, yet I felt at h(om)e in the present moment (ESSENCE), so I continued. With the drizzling rain escalating and being blown in my face by the wind, the following manifested thru me: “**Be marooned in the now**”, which manifested further into “Be **marooned** in the present moment and cultivate consciousness through ‘**Manifesting Awareness & Reconnecting with Oneness by Observing the Now & Expansively Differentiating**’ between form and formlessness, known and knowing, stuff consciousness and space consciousness, time and timelessness, *it*ness and *is*ness”. Once I arrived back at my h(om)e office, I was able to type this directly into the computer, and standing in the now, **recognized** how being *marooned* in the now helps to be consciously aware of the inter**play** between EGO and ESSENCE.

The above sharing of the process of *coco*-creating a new definition and acronym for “maroon”, and “marooned”, is an example of me **role modeling** the *coco*-creative process for you, the

reader and fellow spiritual traveler. Not role “modeling”, because role “modeling” comes with it a sense of needing to be a perfect example for others, which is part of the process of the EGO “meddling” in our minds. So, rather than continuing with the pressure inherent in role “modeling”, the concept of “muddling” through *something* came to, thru, and for me and thus, I *coco-creatively* developed the notion of **role mudeling** (or **role muddling**) to emphasize that we all engage in being examples for others throughout our life and that it is okay to make mistakes and reminds us that we are all fallible human beings. This process of consciously embracing our fallibility helps to reminds us that we are also infallible spiritual beings. Thus, through the use of language, and **playfully** re-configuring language, we can co-create memory devices, or little mindful strategies that help us to stay connected to the Source of all life, the Universal Life Force, and to develop the ability to differentiate between our EGO (**energy-guiding operating** system) and our spiritual ESSENCE [*expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely* (or *naturally*) **co-creative energy**], and thus, actively engaging in being consciously aware of the inter**play** between the EGO and ESSENCE, between the named and the unnamable, between form and formlessness, between knowns and knowing, between object/stuff/such consciousness and space consciousness, between ego identity and lotus identity, between attachment and non-attachment, between “I-it” and “I-Thou”, between time and timelessness, between conditioned and unconditioned, between **it**ness and **is**ness, between the finite and the infinite, between separateness and *Wholeness*, between human and being, between “*the Tao/God/Divine/Spirit/Source/Universal Life Force . . .*” and “ ” (*space between the quotation marks is intentional*), between belief and *beyond*.

We have been exploring ways, or pathways, to apply these concepts and insights to our lives, such as through Buddha Billiards, and the increased conscious awareness that is a result of going *beyond* belief and *beyond* what we thought, or thought we knew. *part three of the Whole* continues this journey and offers even more *pathways* to bridge from the egoic state of mind to the ESSENCE of your true energy source, which is found *beyond* belief, *beyond* thought, *beyond* concepts, *beyond* mental constructs, and *beyond* this page. I invite you to turn the page and continue stepping on the path of awakening.

part three of the *Whole*

pathways

"The obstacle is the path."

~Zen proverb

As has been noted in this book, language, words, and thoughts can be a bridge, or a portal, or a pointer, or a signpost, or a pathway, to go *beyond* belief. Words, thoughts, and beliefs, can also be the obstacle that is, in fact, the pathway. We will now explore some possible pathways that have the potential of helping us move along the continuum of belief, and through the increased awareness of these mechanisms manufactured by our minds (EGO), we will be able to increase our conscious contact with what is *beyond* belief (ESSENCE).

acronyms

One of the pathways that I am very fond of is the use of acronyms, as demonstrated in *parts one and two* of this book. As part of the process of bringing more conscious awareness into my life and other people's lives, I *coco*-creatively take words and turn them into acronyms to cultivate a deeper understanding of the word and to nurture the creative, or *coco*-creative, process that can be used to help others connect with themselves and others in a deeper, more intimate and compassionate way, which helps them to transcend the EGO's use of words

(*named form*) and re-connect with ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force (*unnamable formlessness*). For me it is a *coco*-creative process in which the Universal Life Force supports and nurtures the process in a **compassionately collaborative** manner (*coconoia*). For example, years ago, I *coco*-created an acronym for the word **acronym** to illustrate this process, which is “**A Creative Route & Opportunity for Naming Your Message**”. In the process of *coco*-creatively writing this book, the acronym was then *coco*-creatively modified to “**A Creative Route & Opportunity for Navigating Your Mind**”, which could also be written using the word “co-creative”, or even “*coco*-creative”, such as “**A Coco-creative Route & Opportunity for Navigating Your Mind**”. Yet the point is in the use of the word as a pointer to a pathway to something *beyond* the word. And so, the word that may or may not have been an obstacle, becomes the path, or a pathway, to experiencing the *beyond*.

I know my passion for acronyms is also embraced by others, such as **Dr. Dan Siegel**. His books are filled with acronyms that work as memory devices for some of his most salient *information*, and is geared toward increasing the conscious awareness in his readers and fellow travelers on this beautiful planet, we call Earth. His giddiness about acronyms, and the power of the creative, and co-creative process, is contagious, and is definitely worth catching. He is definitely tapped into the Universal Life Force, whether he is aware of it or not.

Taking a word and turning that word into a message can help to create cognitive *dissonance* around an otherwise negative word, such as **shame** or **stigma**. I recall *being* at a seminar in which the speaker was talking about “stigma” and how to go about reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues. And I remember being co-creatively inspired to answer a

question that *formed* in my head, which was, “How can we use the word as the message in order to bring more awareness to the process that the word is labeling or defining?” Within minutes, I *coco*-creatively developed the following acronym for the word “*stigma*”: “**S**hame-based **T**hinking **I**dentifying **G**roups as **M**arginal & **A**bnormal”. For me, that acronym has always helped me to get to the heart of what is being addressed and how the word, itself, can be stigmatizing and dehumanizing. For me it was a pathway, a bridge, to seeing the humanness within the word and to *trans***form**, and then transcend, the word, for the word is just a *form* we use to describe, or *describble*, *something* in order to communicate with each other. Yet that process of communication often times lacks the capacity of communicating that which is *beyond* the words or language we use to connect with one another.

The reverse is applicable, as well, which is to take certain relevant words and use the first letters of those words to co-create, or *coco*-create, an acronym as a memory device, or mnemonic, to name the unnamed, to give voice to the voiceless, and bring some ESSENCE, awareness, and space to the word and situation. This process sometimes requires the addition of another word to complete the acronym. For example, during the eighth offering of his weekly “PEPP MWe Up talk and gathering” series, Dr. Dan Siegel listed near the end of this very powerful webinar what he described as, “*the three threads of the singular fabric that emerge from that plane of possibility*” (*formlessness*), which were “*inter-connection, presence (or open awareness), and love*”. As I jotted these three words down, I instantly looked at those three words and *coco*-created some space for the possibility of turning those words into an acronym. I took a **mental** note of how the first letters in each of those three words were “i” (inter-connection), “p” (presence), and “l” (love) and noticed how my mind then *coco*-creatively

manifested the word “pill”, as in, something we all need to take, or would benefit from taking as a species. Yet, the word “pill” required another word *beyond* Dr. Siegel’s three words to complete the acronym. In a split second the word “laughter” popped into my mind and I jotted down a *reformulated* version of his three words along with the addition of laughter into the following acronym for **“PILL”**: **“Playful-presence, Inter-connectedness, Love, & Laughter”**. So, then, the metaphorical message that re-manifested itself in my mind was “the PILL we all need contains Playful-presence, Inter-connectedness, Love, & Laughter”. And love, in this context, is understood to be the deep abiding Love of the Universal *Love* Force (as written about in *part one of the Whole*) that comes from the Universal Life Force, which Dr. Siegel refers to as “the plane of possibility”, and which he also noted in his sixth webinar that physicists refer to as “the formlessness of all form” (the words “*form*” and “*formlessness*” are consistently used by Eckhart Tolle and Bruce Lee, as well as several others, or variations of those words, all the way back to the Buddha and Lao Tzu). Minutes later in the “PEPP MWe Up” webinar (after this acronym had already been *coco-creatively* developed and written down), Dr. Siegel *acknowledged* that “*remembering laughter is so important*”, even when serious things are happening. And then he quoted, or paraphrased, the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, who, along with many leaders, have stated, “*we have to hold onto our joy; we have to hold onto our laughter*”, which is necessary to help elevate us out of the individual and collective suffering we experience. His emphasis regarding the imperativeness of “laughter” made me smile and validated the *formation* of the “PILL” acronym and is but one example of the consilient nature of being tapped into the Universal Life Force and how from this deep *formlessness* and spaciousness

emerges a *coco*-creativity and *playfulness* that transcends anything we can ever experience through just existing in the world of the EGO (*form*, conditioned mental constructs).

the REACHING greatness group

I had the wonderful experience for nearly a year and a half of working with two different elementary-school principals and co-facilitating a bi-monthly meeting of a small group of staff with the intentions of increasing their awareness regarding improving their relationships with students, who were struggling with mental health, academic, and social issues. During the initial group, we eventually named the group, the “Greatness Group”, as we were working to cultivate an environment that recognizes, honors, and positively energizes the “greatness” that every student, and person, has within them (which was inspired by Glasser, Bowdidge, and Bravo’s *“Transforming the Difficult Child Workbook: An Interactive Guide to The Nurtured Heart Approach – For Parents, Teachers, Practitioners and All Other Caregivers”*). At the beginning of the next school year, when I had the privilege of working with the new principal (the previous one retired) and continue co-facilitating the bi-monthly gatherings of a different small group of staff, the new principal modified the name of the group to the “Reaching Greatness Group”. This inspired me to *coco*-creatively developed an acronym for the word “**REACHING**” to emphasize the underlying purposes and intentions of the group. The acronym manifested as thus: “**R**elationally **E**nergizing & **A**ffirming the **C**ommon, **H**uman, **I**ntrinsic & **N**atural **G**ifts of” Greatness within all of us. I presented this to the principal before unveiling it to the group, and

she was supportive and welcomed the acronym, which we then shared with the group, who also supported and welcomed the acronym.

pledge of respect & kindness

Another instance of working with another school, provided me with the opportunity to *coco-*creatively develop an acronym for the word “**respect**”, as a way to help illustrate the power of using the word to define the meaning of the word in a way that supported the school’s understanding and use of the word as one of the school’s primary values. The process of developing the acronym unfolded quite quickly and materialized into “**Relational Equality, Safely & Purposefully Energizing & Cultivating Togetherness**”. The special education director and school psychologist I had the pleasure of working with, appreciated the acronym and planned to share it with the leadership team. Further interactions with her and the team, which included *presentations* given to the entire staff of this all-inclusive, K-12 school, led to the sharing of a “**Pledge of Respect & Kindness**” that I *coco-*creatively developed in response to the needs of this school, and schools, in general. The Pledge is as follows:

“I pledge to respect and be kind to myself and others

as we laugh, learn, & grow together.

Making mistakes can help us learn & grow, and sometimes laugh,

yet even though I and others make mistakes as we try to do our best,

we are all worthy and valuable human beings.”

The intention with the pledge was to encourage its use during the mornings, similar to the daily reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, in order to help nurture and cultivate an environment of inclusivity and kindness and to increase conscious awareness regarding how we are all deserving of this **form** of treatment and care, which has the potential of helping to foster relational resilience, responsibility, and connectedness. This process supports movement along *the continuum of belief* toward “*coconoia*”, and an “I-Thou” presence, which would then help to facilitate individual and collective opportunities to go *beyond* belief and thoughts to directly experiencing the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, or Universal Love Force, deep within each and every one of us and all around us.

acronyms to light the path

The *coco*-creative process of developing **acronyms** has led to several instances of having that direct experience of the ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force, so much so that it is one of those processes that keeps me connected to that Source. Here are just a few more examples of the results of that *coco*-creative process of developing acronyms to cultivate increased conscious awareness and compassionate understanding, including some of the acronyms already written about:

ACRONYM – “**A Creative Route & Opportunity for Naming Your Message**”

Or

“**A Creative Route & Opportunity for Navigating Your Mind**”

ADDICTION – “**A Destructive, Dysfunctionallyfunctional Intervention for Coping with Trauma** that Induces **Ongoing Numbness**” (this is just one of a few acronyms that were *coco*-creatively developed for ADDICTION)

ADVOCATES – “**Active, Determined Voices Offering Compassionate Awareness Toward Energizing Supportiveness**”

AUTHENTICITY – “**Awakened Understanding Toward Humbling Energy that Nurtures Togetherness, Integrity, Compassion, Integration, Trustworthiness, & YinYang**” (a *coco*-creatively reinvigorated and re-envisioned variation of AUTHENTICITY can be found in the *supplemental* info section)

CHANGE – “**Choice to Honor & Accept Novelty to Grow & Evolve**”

COLLABORATION – “**Collectively Operating in Listening & Learning Atmospheres Bringing Opportunities for Relational Attunement Toward Inspiring Openness & (k)Now-ledge.**”

CUTIPs (pronounced Q-Tips) – “**Compassionate Understanding & Trauma-Informed Perspectives**” (which can be fostered by asking “What happened to you?” instead of “What’s wrong with you?”)

FITTEST (as in, “survival of the fittest”) – “**Fundamentally Invoking Trials & Tribulations to Evolve thru Strength-based & Tender-hearted approaches**”

GRRRIST for the MILL – “**Grounded, Relational Responsibility & Resilience, Immersed, Spacious, & Tenacious for the Milieu Inspiring Laughter & Learning**” (which was partly inspired by an article regarding “therapeutic presence” by Shari M. Geller and Stephen W. Porges, who provided “grounded, immersed, and spacious”.)

PROBLEM – “**Painful, Relational Object Blocking Love-sight from Energizing the Moment**”

SHAME – “**Self-Hatred Arresting Maturation & Empathy**”

STIGMA - “**Shame-based Thinking Identifying Groups as Marginal & Abnormal**”.

TRUST – “**Tenaciously Truthful, Relationally Reliable, & Unconditionally Undulating Safe Strength & Tender-hearted Tendencies**”

SUICIDE – “Suffering Unduly in Isolation & Contemplating (Committing, Completing) Injury as a Depressive Escape”

RESPECT – “Relational Equality, Safely & Purposefully Energizing & Cultivating Togetherness”.

REACHING Greatness – “Relationally Energizing & Affirming the Common, Human, Intrinsic & Natural Gifts” of Greatness within all of us.

PEACE – “Proactively (or Presently) Expressing Acceptance & Compassionate Energies”

FAITH – “Forging Ahead In Trust & Humility”

HOPE – “Humbly Open, Present & Energized”

The acronym for the word “hope” was *coco*-creatively developed in response to a request from the Therapy Without Walls’ office manager for an art project for the waiting area during the initial Safer-At-Home order for the COVID-19 pandemic. To further illustrate the message inherent in hope and the above acronym, the following was a *coco*-creating process that indirectly included the offerings from Eckhart Tolle (*Staying Conscious in the Face of Adversity*), Oprah Winfrey & Deepak Chopra (*Hope In Uncertain Times*), Dr. Dan Siegel (*PEPP MWe Up Talk & Gathering*), Dr. Bessel van der Kolk (*Steering Ourselves and Our Clients Through New &*

Developing Traumas), Dr. Gabor Mate, Tami Simon (*Sounds True*) with guest Terry Tempest Williams, and Tami Simon with guest Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes:

Humbly hold the moment with curiosity & compassion.

Be ***Open*** to & validate what shows up in your awareness.

Be ***Present*** with & ***Energized*** around/by what is.

HOPE for the future is nurtured in the now.

hidden messages

Another pathway is to take a word and create, or co-create (or *coco-create*), a pathway through discovering a hidden message in the letters of a word or by re-*configuring* the letters (similar to how the concept of Regular Pocket Billiards, aka regular pool, was re-*configured* to *coco-create* Buddha Billiards, or Buddha Pool).

One of my favorite examples of this process is with the word “empathy”. It was prior to one of the co-facilitated sessions of the original “Greatness Group” that I noticed that the meaning of the word could be emphasized with the word itself. As I looked at the word with spacious awareness, I observed how the middle of the word spelled “*path*” and that the letters surrounding “*path*” pointed to how “em*pathy*” is the “*path*” between you and me, if you saw the two, beginning letters, “em”, as a reflection and added “ou” to the final letter, “y”, which is illustrated as follows: em-*path*-y(ou). This illustration can then be used to further illustrate that

to have “em-**path**-y” (which is to have a felt sense of another’s feelings), you first need to have “em-**path**-me” (which is to have a felt sense and direct experience of your own feelings), or self-em**pathy**, which is the “*path*” between “me” and “me”. No “em-**path**-me”, no “em-**path**-y”. When I first *presented* this with the Greatness Group by drawing it on a smart board as I explained it, I noticed how several members of the group acted as if a light bulb had come on in their heads. Many also verbalized their appreciation for this different way of looking at empathy. That moment of seeing the flicker of conscious awareness in their eyes and minds is something that I will never forget. Since then, I have witnessed that same flicker in several others, which has encouraged, inspired, and synergized me to continue utilizing this *coco*-creative process of turning words into a pathway for cultivating consciousness in others. Yet it has also led to increased consciousness in me. During a counseling session with an amazingly insightful and wise client, who did not always see herself in that light, I shared the “em-**path**-y” example with her, and after I explained it, she noted how in her mind she saw the message as the “path” between “you” and “them”, which would be illustrated as such: “(th)em-**path**-y(ou)”. I was blown away by this and energized my appreciation and gratitude for her sharing her insight and wisdom with me and for expanding my awareness. I have been blessed with several experiences such as this one, especially during my work with individuals who are living with mental health and/or addiction issues.

An example of such an experience occurred during the final stages of completing the first draft of this book. I was working with a different, amazing female on developing coping-skills cards for herself to increase her awareness regarding the signs and symptoms associated with a depressive, manic, or mixed episode that she might be experiencing. As part of the process, I

would encourage her to develop a “cue” (key) word or phrase to *represent* the symptom(s) she was writing a coping card for, and for the symptoms of “fatigue or loss of energy”, she came up with the “cue” word of “ugh”, which she indicated she feels a lot. Through the *coco*-creative process, I encouraged her to look at the letters of the word “ugh” and see if she sees another word by rearranging the letters. She eventually saw how you could spell the word “hug” with those letters. This led to a discussion regarding how when she is feeling in an “ugh” mood, what she may be needing is a “hug” from an appropriate, safe person, or for her to give a hug to her pet cat, and thus receiving the benefits of that warm embrace, or, at the very least, give herself a hug by engaging in some **form** of healthy, self-care activity. This memory device of seeing “hug” in the word “ugh” was something simple for her to remember and helped her to create a pathway from “ugh” to “ah”, thus bringing more conscious awareness, spaciousness, and synergy into her life.

Another example involved the word “failure”. I had the privilege of working with yet another amazing individual, who struggled with the belief, “I am a failure”. During one particular session, we co-creatively, or *coco*-creatively, discovered that the letters of the word “failure” could be re-configured to spell out the phrase “u r a life”. The light bulbs that went off in both of our heads were bright, to say the least. This fresh, “quirkyqool” perspective helped her, over time, to diffuse from the negative belief system that kept her stuck in her mind and body, and opened her up to more of the *beyond*. I say “more”, because she already had had some experience with the *beyond* through her co-creative process of writing poems, which helped her to express the pain and hope, despair and delight she had with her mental health needs. Utilizing this “quirkyqool” process of looking at things differently, we also discovered that

through the process of reading her poems backwards, by starting from the last line and climbing like a ladder to the next line and then the line after that till you reached the top of the poem, the poem would take on a different meaning and create a different feeling, often uplifting and empowering. I thank her for allowing me into her life, and wonder-full world, and journeying *with* her for a short time on this path called “life”. These examples are just a few of many that I could provide from my experiences of working with other amazing individuals. These experiences continue to generate ripple effects of *coco*-creative awakening, synergized positivity, and inter-connectivity in my life, and I hope in theirs. I am grateful to them all!

“When we show empathy, we teach empathy.

When we lose empathy, we lose our humanity.”

~Dr. Ross Greene

synthesis of opposites

Another pathway, or bridge, as touched upon in *part one of the Whole* is **the synthesis of opposites**, such as in the following: *abnormallynormal*, *functionallydysfunctional*, and my personal favorites - *weirdwonderful*, *crazycool* (or *quirkyqool*), and *oddlyinteresting*. Oh, and, of course, *yinyang*. Again, this process serves the *function* of helping us to embrace duality/polarity and, thus, **transforming** thought, while moving us toward transcending thought,

or going *beyond* thought, or *beyond* belief, which are generated by our **EGOs** (*energy-guiding operating systems*). For the individual who struggled with the core belief of “I am a failure”, she was able to further challenge her deeply, held belief system by embracing this concept of synthesizing opposites, especially relabeling herself not as a “failure” but someone who is a “*successfulfailure*” or who is “*failingsuccessfully*”. This created a pathway for her to be able to bring more conscious awareness into her life and mind, and helped her to reframe her experiences in a balanced manner, while challenging her EGO’s control over her life.

The process of synthesizing opposites can be a fun, *coco*-creative exercise that puts you in the driver’s seat and puts your hands more firmly on the wheel to *navigate your mind* and become more in control of your *life*, or more accurately, become more aligned *with* the Universal Life Force that is manifesting through you as “you”.

The application of the synthesis of opposites has infinite possibilities. Just take a word, find an opposite word, and synthesis the two into a new word. For example, “perfect” and “imperfect”. The synthesis of the two words would then be written as either one of the following: “*perfectlyimperfect*” or “*imperfectlyperfect*”, or both, because they both accurately describe, or *describble*, our being humanness or our human beingness. The empowering aspect of this process is in the experiencing of it. By naming both sides of duality, and reclaiming the power inherent in both words by saying them out loud and/or in your head/mind, this experiential process helps to cultivate conscious awareness and peace of mind by grounding yourself in the neutral and inclusive ESSENCE [*expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely* (or *naturally*) *co-creative, energy*] of the Universal Life/Love Force. Give it a try. Again,

do not take my **word** for it. **Play** with this approach and see what it has to offer and can do for you...and possibly others in your life.

Here are some more examples: *ruminatinglyreflective* or *reflectivelyruminating*, *ramblinglyrestorative* or *restorativelyrambling*, *rightlywrong* or *wronglyright*, *nonjudgmentallyjudgemental* or *judgmentallynonjudgmental*, *goodlybad* or *badlygood*, and *worryinglywondering* or *wonderinglyworrying*. Boy, that provided lots of opportunities to upgrade the software's programming and "Add to dictionary" within my computer. I wonder if your EGO had an easy time embracing these new **forms** of language or if it challenged these new thought-forms, and thus *judged* them as *wrong*, or *bad*, use of the English language, or just plain *crazy*, *weird*, or *odd*? This provides yet another opportunity to become aware of when your EGO comes into **play** and does what it does best, separates things into duality.

*"The difference between a flower and a weed
is a judgment."*

~Unknown

mantra, or mantram

Another pathway is the use of a **mantra**, or **mantram**, which is the repeating of a word or a phrase in the mind or out loud, and the word or phrase is often times associated with having

some spiritual reference. For example, the mantram “om mani padme hum” (pronounced *ohm maa-nee paad-may hoom*) means “*the jewel in the lotus of the heart*”, (Easwaran) and is associated with Buddhism, or the buddha-dharma, which is the “teaching of the awakened” (Hagen). The mantram provides innumerable opportunities to interrupt the mind’s thought chatter and help ground the individual in the now. The repetitive use of the word or phrase is used as a substitute for the thoughts that clutter up our minds and hijack us from experiencing the present moment. It *interrupts*, or *errupts* – i.e., causes disruption to – the internal mechanisms of the EGO that keep us caught up in thinking about the past or the future, what Eckhart Tolle refers to as “psychological time”, which is different from “clock time”, both of which are mental constructs.

The mantra can be anything that helps the process of becoming disentangled from the chatter of the EGO, or the voice in our head, and thereby aids the process of cultivating conscious awareness. One could use virtually any word or phrase to focus on repetitiously to disrupt the flow of *information* manifesting through the mind, especially if that *information* (thoughts, beliefs, words) causes an individual a level of distress, discomfort or “disturbance” (Lucas; Singer). It is an exploratory process by which each individual engages in as an experiment to disconnect from the EGO in order to re-connect to the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force. A phrase such as “*I don’t have to believe my thoughts*” has the power to create such an experience as the phrase is repeated over and over again in a proactive and planful manner. By perpetuating this phrase, it not only takes up the space in the mind that other thoughts try to occupy, especially negative or intrusive thoughts, but this practice also provides an illuminating

enlightened message regarding the power of thoughts and beliefs, which is that we “*have to*” believe in these systems of ***form***, mental constructs, and conditioned programming. This “*have to*” aspect of the system keeps us in bondage to the powerful EGO, which governs our lives with authority and separates us from the true source of our power, the Universal Life Force. When aligned with the ESSENCE, presence, and energy of the Universal Love Force, one discovers that they are not limited to being trapped in the “*have to*” belief system, but grounded in the many possibilities and choices that are available to them when they disconnect from EGO and reconnect with the ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force.

My first experience with using the phrase, “*I don’t have to believe my thoughts*” came in January 2010 during a WinTerm course in mindfulness as part of my master’s program. The exercise, as part of learning about and applying Buddhist psychology, was to stop and say the phrase to myself “at least 5 times during the next 24 hours” and then to just notice what happens. I remember the profoundness of this exercise as I applied it throughout the day as directed. The calmness and peace that enfolded me when I stopped whatever I was doing and said the phrase in my head was like nothing else I had quite experienced before. For even though I engaged in the process of repeating these words in my head, I was also present and aware of my surroundings at the same time, as well as being aware of what was going on in my head, which I was manifesting. There was an expansiveness and spaciousness that seemed foreign to me yet at the same time it felt friendly to me, like a warm embrace. Interestingly, after most of this book had already been written, including this section, I watched and listened to a free, online video from Eckhart Tolle, in June 2020, regarding “Manifesting Consciousness”, and he also

advocated for the use of this phrase yet stated it in a slightly different manner, thus supporting and validating its usefulness. Yet no one has to look further than the Buddha himself, who guided others some 2,500 years ago to engage in this same process, which can be seen in the quote from him on the first page of this book.

Fun fact: I did not make the connection to the Buddha's saying until after *part three of the Whole* had already been written, and I revisited it to add the part regarding coming across Eckhart Tolle's encouragement to also use the same phrase. The Buddha's quote was selected for the first page of this book many weeks prior to this realization occurred, then as *coco-*creative process was unfolding, my conscious awareness expanded and connected everything together. Fascinating!

Now, please allow me the latitude to take the Buddha's **words** (as pointers, signposts, ladders, stepping stones) from the opening quote on the first page of this book and modify the words just a bit to fit in with what we are exploring:

"I do not have to believe in what I have heard.

I do not have to believe in the traditions

because they have been handed down for generations.

I do not have to believe in anything

because it is rumored or spoken by many.

*I do not have to believe merely because a written statement
of some old sage is produced.*

I do not have to believe in conjectures.

*I do not have to believe in that as truth
to which I have become attached by habit.*

*I do not have to believe
merely the authority of my teachers and elders.*

*Yet after observation and analysis,
when it agrees with reason and is conducive
to the good and gain of one and all,
then I will accept it, practice it,
and commit to living up to it."*

*~modified version of
the Buddha's words*

After first writing this out and reading it aloud to myself, I felt the power in these words, as I believe the Buddha had intended them. Subsequent readings of the above did not diminish the power inherent in the words and opened me up to conscious awareness that is, at first, a byproduct of such a reading. Yet, then, with each new reading and the practice of saying these words aloud or in the mind, that conscious awareness is strengthened and expanded until it embraces you and you no longer are the one saying the words, it is the ESSENCE of the

Universal Life Force that synergizes these words and breathes life into them from a place of presence, spaciousness and Love.

Prior to watching and listening to Eckhart Tolle's free, on-line video about "Manifesting Consciousness", and prior to modifying the Buddha's words above, I coco-creatively wrote about how another variation of the phrase "*I don't have to believe my thoughts*" could be, "*I don't have to believe your thoughts*" or "*I don't have to believe their thoughts*". I encourage you, the reader and fellow traveler, to give any of these phrases a try and discover for yourself the power of repeating a phrase such as these. Give it a go for just a day, or even part of a day, where you schedule a semi-structured routine to practice saying any of the above phrases in your mind/head, or out loud, and just notice what happens. For example, for one day, set a timer to remind you every hour, or every two hours, to stop what you are doing and engage in this practice. One day could change the trajectory of your life from being at the mercy of your EGO to being aligned with the Universal Life Force and thus bringing mercy into the world. It starts with you. By fostering a friendship with yourself and the way the mind/EGO works, you set yourself back on the path to what lies *beyond* thought and belief. The energy and ESSENCE of the Universe is there for the experiencing and for channeling into this world, once one is able to become aware of the energetic pull of the mind-made system known as the EG) (*energy-guiding operating* system) that acts to subvert the Universal Life/Love Force.

This process will most likely give the participant the direct experience of, at least, a glimpse of the present moment, such as in the stillness, space, or silence in between the ending of the phrase and the beginning of the saying the phrase again in the mind, or through the awareness

of noticing the phrase as it travels through the mind. To facilitate another direct experience that may be similar or different, and possibly more profound, you could say in your mind/head this modified version of the phrase, *"You don't have to believe your thoughts"*, and then, again, just notice what happens. Just witness how the changing of just a couple of words changes the experience, which may be a subtle change. Take notice how the phrase is being said. Is there a tone to the voice? If so, how is the tone affecting your experience? And what would happen if you were to vary the tone, such as saying it in your mind in a soft, kind, or comforting tone? Plus, notice what happens if you take the phrase and slow it down as you repeat it in your mind, or modify it further to *"You don't have to believe their thoughts"*. All of these are ways to become aware of awareness and differentiate between awareness, which is always present, from the thoughts or words that come in and out of existence in our minds. This illustrates the different factors constantly **playing** out in our lives, the permanence of awareness (ESSENCE) and the impermanence of the mind (EGO).

embracing the path

I offer the following to help with embracing the path that is laid before us:

Rightly *and* wrongly, you will be judged by how you treat others.

Rightly *and* wrongly, you will be judged by how you express your emotions.

Rightly *and* wrongly, you will be judged by the thoughts you have and share.

Rightly *and* wrongly, you will be judged by the beliefs you hold and subscribe to.

You will be judged, if not by others, by your own *judgmental* mind.

This mind is your EGO. A *mental* construct. A means by which to navigate the world in which you – this concept of “you” – interprets what *is* and turns *is* into *it* (*form*, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, body sensations, et cetera).

Do not stop treating others as you would, or expressing your emotions as you do, or thinking and sharing the thoughts that appear in your mind, or believing in the beliefs that are important to you and *hold* value for “you”.

Yet be aware of these *things*, these *forms* that manifest themselves within you. These *forms* that have been conditioned and programmed into you.

Become consciously aware of these “*its*” that govern and control your life.

And reflect on the benefits and drawbacks of these “*its*” that “you” have become attached to and have become identified with, maybe even forced to become shackled to.

It is through conscious awareness, through a non-judgmental, neutral view that creates (co-creates, or *coco-creates*) all the possibilities and freedom to choose what your mind, your EGO, is going to *hold* onto in the moment of what *is*.

Animals live on instinct, which drives them toward survival. If an animal had thoughts, cognitions, such as us, the animal might think, “*I must eat or I will die*”. We, too, have the same instincts of survival and do have thoughts associated with “*If I don’t eat, I will die*”. Yet often times, too often, in fact, our thoughts are conditioned to think, “*If I don’t get to eat what I want to eat, I will die*”, which generally translates into, “*If I don’t get what I want, I will die*”.

These thoughts (cognitions, mental constructs) are driven by the same survival instincts as with our basic needs (food, water, shelter, safety, connection), yet cognitive distortions occur at the level of *form* where we think or feel that we are going to die if we don’t get what we want, or think we need. Challenge this!

Make no mistake, though, that there will be a degree of death that may, or most likely will, occur, when you challenge these notions of the mind. The death that may be experienced, is the death of your EGO, of your identified self, which will *hold* on for dear life, as if *its* life depends on *it*.

Yet that is a cognitive distortion, or thinking error, which is based on survival thinking, and that is the barrier that all must address and become aware of to trans**form** to the level of non-thinking, or *no-mind*. Think of it as a stumbling block that needs to be turned into a stepping stone. As the Zen proverb profoundly points out, “*The obstacle is the path*”.

And when you step into the *realm* or dimension of non-thinking and experience the pure consciousness from which all life manifests, “you” will be able to use EGO – the conditioned mind, the *energy-guiding operating* system – to better navigate the world of *it* and *is*, for you will *now* come from the *is*ness of life (or the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force) rather than from the *it*ness of EGO.

For as long as “you” are alive in human **form**, your EGO will be a part of “you”, yet *it* will be trans**formed** into someth**ing** that can be used as a tool to co-create, or coco-create, a *phenomenal* life that goes *beyond* description, *beyond* thought, and *beyond* belief.

the guiding light of Eckhart Tolle

As Eckhart Tolle pointed out near the end of his video/audio *presentation*, *The Secret of Happiness*, we all evolve from “pre-thought to thought to beyond thought”. Yet while in human **form**, many get stuck in the “thought” stage and become governed by their thoughts, beliefs, opinions, et cetera, through either a lack of awareness or the rigidity by which these thoughts,

et cetera, have become solidified in the mind, and thus control the way an individual sees the world, interprets the world, and divides **it** into this or that, good or bad, right or wrong.

Just look at the word “individual”, which, as illustrated earlier, can be used as a pathway to go *beyond* thought and discover the Divine in the spaciousness. The word can be separated in a way to show how being labeled as an “individual”, or an “in-divid-u-al” is a part of the egoic process to “divide u all in” to opposing parts, forces, or entities. Thus, the EGO takes the *Whole* and will “**divide into duality**” that which **it** can in order to gain power *over* such entities by separating the *Whole* into “I” and “other”, “me” and “them”, or “us” and “them”.

At the level of conscious awareness *beyond* thought, there is no dividing, there just **is** the **isness** of life, and the Universal Life/Love Force is engaged in the process of power *with*, even power *with* the EGO.

This offers us another opportunity to look at how the mantram can be of use to remind us of the constant tug-of-war that is going on within us between the **isness** of life and the **itness** of EGO. Eckhart Tolle, in the same audio/video presentation mentioned above, provides an in-depth understanding regarding how the word “**is**” is connected to the word “**being**”. For the in-depth understanding, I will defer you to seek out his presentation, and use this opportunity to point out how in his description of the connection, he does not seem to go far enough and point out how the widely-used mantram of “*it is what it is*” is another pathway to cultivating conscious awareness regarding the inter-connectivity and inter**play** of **form** (EGO) and

formlessness (ESSENCE). Whereas “**it**” represents **form** and “**is**” represents **formlessness**, the mantram “*it is what it is*” is a thought form that helps to name what is going on and **remind** us that in all *things*, and at all times, both “**it**” and “**is**” are *present*. For to be a *human being*, both elements are constantly at **play** in “our” lives, constantly. Yet here is the *thing*, we are not always aware of this process, and thus, when we create (co-create, or *coco-create*) ways to **remind** ourselves of this process, we increase our conscious awareness and begin to engage more in *being (is) human (it)* and organically living from the *isness* of life rather than moving about as a *human (it) being (is)* and conditionally existing from the *itness* of life. So, the mantram of “*it is what it is*” can be used as a constant **reminder** that *both form and formlessness* are *present* in the moment *and* at **play** in the now.

*“Man is most nearly himself when he achieves
the seriousness of a child at play.”*

~Heraclitus

more pathways, one path

These are but many pathways that lead to experiencing the one true path of the *beyond*, and the experiencing is best felt at the personal, subjective level. No pointers (words) or descriptions from another, whether it be this author, Eckhart Tolle, Buddha, Lao Tzu, or any

“other”, will truly suffice in being able to replicate that experience through the use of words. Yet once you experience the ESSENCE of the *beyond*, you will be able to recognize the various ways that others use to describe that ESSENCE. Each description has a way of capturing the ESSENCE in some manner yet lacks the ability to contain its *Wholeness* or *expansiveness*, which are, of course, just words trying to describe, or *describble*, the indescribable, or *indescrubbable*. (Isn't language fun? At the level of *formlessness*, at least, that is the *inter-play* one experiences *with* the Universal Life Force and the *coco*-creative process of befriending the EGO to be a conduit for the manifesting of awareness, connectivity, inclusivity, and love.)

As an example of how that *inter-play* can be cultivated through the use of language, and thus be another pathway, I offer the following: A **belief** is a *lie* we tell about *Reality* that we tell ourselves, or was told to us by others, in order to make sense of *Reality*, or our perception of *Reality*. For as you see, the word *lie* rests in the center of the word “belief”, and if you take out the “lie” from “belief”, the remaining letters spell “bef”. These remaining letters give us a clue and point us in the direction of how to directly experience *Reality*, which the “lie” (or partial truth) blocks, or obstructs, us from seeing/experiencing. The pathway is revealed in the space after “bef ”. This space, which is *beyond* the mental constructs of letters, offers a plethora of possibilities of how it can be filled in with other mental constructs (letters) to **form** a word, which can then be added to a sentence that has the potential to guide oneself to *Reality*, to the spaciousness and ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force. Take a moment and look at the letters “bef ” and the space after it and see what word, or words, come to mind for you. See if you can metaphorically just sit in that space and allow whatever shows up in your mind to just show

up, unfiltered and free of any judgment. Now that you experienced that process that possibly provided some options, know that there is no right or wrong *word* that may have manifested for you. It is the experience that is most important to focus on. The experience of being present and in that space and just noticing what shows up in the mind. As for myself, the letters that *coco*-creatively manifested during this process were connected to a word that instantly and automatically popped into my mind, and that was the word “befriend”. And the sentence that then manifested was “*befriend the present moment and experience the Truth about Reality, which is beyond belief or words or thoughts of what **is**, for what **is**, simply **is**, and in the silence, stillness, and spaciousness of the present, Reality is perceived from pure awareness. Pure awareness is just noticing, non-judgmentally, neutrally, and without definition or description, what **is**”.*

Fun fact: if you put in the letters “riend” (the letters used to fill in the space and complete the word “befriend”) into www.dictionary.com, the letters will not be recognized as a word, yet you will be guided to other possibilities, with the top two options being “rend” and “rind”. The definitions of both words serve to illustrate how language separates us from the *Reality* of the experience. The word “rend” is defined as “*to separate into parts; to tear apart, split, or divide*”, and the word “rind” is defined as “*a thick and firm outer coat or covering*”. Both of these words help to further identify how the **formation** of the EGO divides the *Wholeness* of *Reality* into duality and **forms** a thick and firm outer covering over the ESSENCE, spaciousness, and *formlessness* of the unnamable *Wholeness* of *Reality* that is the Universal Life Force. By applying this same process to the letters “bef” (which, again, is what remained after the “lie”

was consciously removed from the center of “belief”), www.dictionary.com does not recognize “bef” on its own and offers the abbreviation “bef.” (with a period after it), and then suggests the word “before”. The word “before” is defined as “previous to; earlier or sooner than” and “in time preceding; previously”. Which illustrates that “before” the conditioning of the EGO, such as in infancy, and in the time preceding the programming of duality into the mind (EGO) that encouraged the separation from ESSENCE that comes with egoic conditioning, we were *One* with the *Wholeness*, ESSENCE, formlessness, expansiveness, and spaciousness of *Reality*. And now, through the re-**f**ormation of the word “befriend” by removing the “lie” from “belief” and adding the awareness regarding how the egoic process works to “rend” us from ESSENCE and develop a “rind” to cover over that ESSENCE, we can re-embrace the word “befriend” as a pathway back to our natural state of being. Thus, as dictionary.com states, we can “be a friend to” the EGO and *recognize* its purpose in our lives and actually see it for what *it is*, an ally that if used well, can be a source of awakening and enlightenment as it provides a necessary *function* in the evolution of our species and the relationships we have with each other, all sentient beings, and the planet, while offering many pathways that help us to reunite and reconnect with the one path that leads to being *One* with the *Wholeness* of the Universal Life Force.

*“Travelers, there is no path,
paths are made by walking.”*

~Antonio Machado

“it’s okay...”

To help foster the practice of befriending the present moment by befriending the EGO (thought *forms*, mental constructs, et cetera), a simple phrase repeated over and over again, similar to a mantra, could be utilized to name the manifestations that unfold in the present moment and typically have the power to take us out of the present moment and into either the past or the future, or to another dimension where we wish, or direct, or demand, the present moment to be something else. This wishful directedness and demand for something else *reminds* me of the following quote from Dr. Wayne Dyer that I have hanging up in my h(om)e office, *“Peace is the result of retraining your mind to process life as it is rather than as you think it should be.”* And one way to go about doing that is by using the simple phrase of *“it’s okay...”*, then filling in the rest of the sentence with whatever manifests or unfolds in the present moment. The EGO will continually try to name or identify something in the moment and judge it as either good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, and *it is* usually the bad, or uncomfortable/unpleasant, experience that we are wanting to “should” out of existence. This has the potential of keeping us trapped in, or whisked away by, the EGO. Contact with the present moment can be conditioned and maintained by using *“It’s okay...”* and naming whatever shows up. For example, I will provide a real time example as I write the following sentence and identify the thoughts, feelings, sensations, or any mental constructs that show up and have the potential power of taking me out of the present. Here we go! *“It’s okay to not be sure what to say or write”. “It’s okay to be blank in my mind as I may be afraid to be exposed as a fraud”. “It’s okay for my mind to judge*

*me and thus attempt to make me feel a certain way". "It's okay for me to feel a sensation that runs through my body that makes me want to run from this moment out of fear". "It's okay for me to want to stop this process". "It's okay for my mind to try to distract me from this process and think about going to get something to eat". "It's okay for me to fail". "It's okay for me to procrastinate with writing this book out of that fear of failure". "It's okay to notice these things materialize in my mind and body and to honor them for what they are, just mental constructs that are causing me to be taken away from the only thing that truly matters, this moment". "It's okay that my mind is now saying 'you got this, you are doing so well'". "It's okay to recognize that my mind is trying to flatter me and that I would prefer to hear the flattering thoughts that give me more pleasant feelings than to hear the fearful thoughts that stir up unpleasant feelings and body sensations". "It's okay to wonder if I am going on too long with this example". "It's okay to want to end this to move on to something different". "It's okay to move on to something different". "It's okay to not want to move on to something different". "It's okay to be here, now, and just notice each letter as it is typed onto the page, and to recognize that as the letters manifest themselves in my mind, through my fingers, and onto the white page, it is as if the process of the EGO is unfolding before my very eyes and when I experience this, a small smile appears on my face, and I see how the EGO works to cover the white-page of presence with the black-letters of words that cover over the presence and ESSENCE that is always there yet tends to go unnoticed". Whew, that was trippy. As I wrote the above and experienced it in Real time, I felt and sensed the *inter-play* that was happening between my EGO and the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force. Even now, as I write that sentence, and this one, I am aware of how this process continues to be taking place and the*

words on the page are manifesting themselves in the present moment and I am being a conduit for what is materializing in the moment and putting the words down on the page as if I were taking dictation. So, now, *"it's okay"* for me to take a break from this process and, in fact, go and get something to eat. Thank you for being a part of this process as I imagine you will quite possibly have a similar experience as myself as you read the above example and then experiment with it yourself. For it is in directly experiencing it for yourself that will **inform** your deeper understanding and facilitate a deeper connection with yourself, your Self, and the Source of life that is ever-present, like the white page behind these words/letters.

*"The most important ingredient we put into any relationship
is not what we say or what we do, but what we are."*

~Stephen R. Covey

Okay, I'm back. This process of using *"It's okay..."* is about validating what shows up in your awareness in the moment yet it is not necessarily a process by which you may be agreeing with what shows up. Accepting the thoughts, words, body sensations, et cetera, is a powerful way to help keep you from being swept away by them and instead be mindfully aware of them for the time that they come into awareness, which helps them to then metaphorically float down the river, only to be replaced by another mental construct (sense perception, thoughts, body sensations, et cetera) and then another. You may or may not agree with what shows up, yet

“it’s okay...”, to agree with them if you so choose, and *“it’s okay...”*, to not agree with them if you so choose. The process of starting off with *“it’s okay...”* then naming whatever shows up, either by verbalizing it out loud (be aware of who is around you, though, when you do this) or by just saying and naming it in your head/mind, helps to honor both the **it**ness (EGO) and **is**ness (ESSENCE) in the moment, which is captured in the contraction *“it’s”* of *“it’s okay...”*, which stands for **“it is”**. This has the potential benefit of keeping you grounded in the present, through awareness, rather than being torn from the present moment and taken on a metaphorical ride on the runaway train, or swept away by the raging river, of the mind. This runaway train, or raging river, will likely stir up feelings or sensations within the body, and if so, just stay with whatever shows up and keeping naming it and validating it by using *“it’s okay...”* to start the process, which can be integrated with other pathways, such as the synthesis of opposites. For example, *“it’s okay to be aware that I am having a **pleasantlyunpleasant** experience”*, or *“it’s okay to notice that I am having an **unpleasantlypleasant** experience”*. *“It’s okay for me to want to avoid the unpleasantness that I feel, and it’s okay for me to prefer to experience the pleasantness, and only the pleasantness”*. *“It’s okay for me to realize that by always chasing pleasure, and what pleases me, I am keeping myself trapped in the energy-guiding operating system of the EGO, which is constantly promising me that happiness is just around the next corner, and then the next, and so on”*. *“It’s okay for me to call the EGO a ‘sneaky, little devil’ that shows up in my mind and tries to get me to do things that continue to lead to me experiencing discomfort and unpleasantness”*. *“It’s okay to recognize the paradox inherent in embracing and accepting that which I tend to avoid, mainly unpleasantness, and that by consciously naming how both unpleasantness and pleasantness, through the use*

pleasantlyunpleasant or ***unpleasantlypleasant***, I am revealing the EGO for what ***it is***, a master mischief maker that keeps me chasing after rainbows with the playful purpose of preventing me from seeing how the rainbows I seek are within me...and always have been". What an ***unpleasantlyPLEASANT*** experience!

I encourage you to schedule a time during the day, even a couple of minutes, when you can take a break from all the hustle and bustle and frenzy that fills your days and check in with the present moment by cultivating awareness and differentiating your true ESSENCE from the EGO that tends to occupy your mind and govern your life. Befriend the EGO and see ***it*** for what ***it is***, a ***playmate*** of the Universal Life Force. Start from wherever you are, there is no wrong way or right way to do this (that would be the EGO talking).

"Wherever you are is the entry point."

~Kabir

problem(s)

All problems are resolved in the present. Problems are created in the mind, as part of the EGO's judgment of what ***is***. If you use your mind and re-frame the situation as not only happening *to* you but also *for* you, you become part of the co-creative process that is unfolding before and *within* you. You are using the "*wherever you are*" as that entry point, as Kabir

names, to point to the path of becoming more aware of how the mind (EGO) is working and how bringing more conscious awareness to that process will bring to you a higher state of joy, peace, tranquility, compassion, and love. This will then nurture *within* you the notion of *coconoia* and further reframe situations as providing evidence that “*the Universe is compassionately collaborating with you*”. The Universe will not force this upon you; the EGO is the one that works by force. The Universal Life Force just *is*, and is a powerful energy source that synergizes, sustains, nourishes, and replenishes all life. And when you can tap into or immerse yourself in the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, or Universal Love Force, you will be able to *be* joy, *be* peace, *be* tranquility, *be* compassion, and *be* love for everyone and everything you come into contact with.

“Help yourself to any problems you have.”

~ Steele R. Tiggerus (age 8)

As noted earlier in this chapter, another way to help this process, is again through the use of acronyms, such as the *coco*-creatively manifested acronym for PROBLEM(s), which is **Painful, Relational Object(s) Blocking Love-sight from Energizing the Moment**. Let’s unpack this acronym:

Painful

Pain is an inevitable part of life. There is physical pain, emotional pain, psychological pain, spiritual pain, existential pain, metaphysical pain, and other painful experiences that serve a

purpose, at least on some level. For example, if we did not have pain receptors in the hand when we touched a hot stove, we would not pull our hand away. Suffering, on the other hand, is not inevitable. Yet, when our mental constructs and conditioned mind-sets within our EGO hold onto *beliefs* about the way things in life *should* be, we argue with what *is* by imposing our *beliefs* (our *its*) on what *is*, and thus experience pain *and* suffering. For instance, the weather is as the weather is, and yet for many of us, the weather is very seldom acceptable for our EGOs and we tend to constantly complain that the weather is not sunny enough, warm enough, rainy enough (especially for farmers), or windy enough (especially for sailors). Instead of accepting the weather and adjusting to how *it is*, we would prefer it be something that *it is* not, and so, we suffer.

Relational

Everything is relational. For example, what is your relationship with the weather? What is your relationship with your body? What is your relationship with your family, your friends, your coworkers, your neighbors, your community, your money (or money, in general), your house, your vehicle, and your pets? What is your relationship with letters, or words, or language? For example, do you see “funner” as *not* a word, even though you most likely know exactly what I mean if I were to use that word? This list could go on and on, yet I have faith (*forging ahead in trust & humility*) that you get the point. *Beyond* those, what is your relationship with your purpose on this planet, with the present moment, or with the dimension *beyond* all of these words where an abiding presence and ESSENCE awaits for you to re-align yourself with this

spacious expansiveness and energy field of unfathomable formlessness that cannot be named, only experienced?

Object(s)

Objects are solidified versions of the *formlessness* that are co-created by the mental constructs of the EGO in order to name, identify, or describe what *is* and turns “*is*” into “*it*” (an *object*). Once solidified, these *objects* of *form* are difficult to see *beyond* and thus draw our focus away for the *formlessness* that the *forms* came from. We get caught up in our EGOs and our belief systems, and these *energy-guiding operating systems* (EGOs) guide our attention to *believe* that the *object* is real and is in our best interest to either fight for, be avoided, or have removed in order to experience peace, joy, tranquility, and love. These *objects* are but *illusions* that keep us mesmerized with dazzling displays of delight and entertainment that spark our mind and activate a drive to dominate our environments and those within our reach and power to do so. Yet similar to the *object* balls in Buddha Billiards, these *forms* of duality provide pathways to realigning and reconnecting with the ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force.

Blocking

Blocking is the artistry of the EGO as it engages in the process of diverting or distracting our attention from the only thing that can truly bring us abiding peace, joy, and serenity, which is *profoundly found* in the present moment and being in the now, without judgment, labeling, describing, or naming. For *beyond* these blockages is the concept of seeing all with abiding love, or *Love-sight*.

Love-sight

Love-sight is a thought-**form** similar to insight, mindsight, foresight, and hindsight, which are all basically about having or developing or *seeing* an understanding about the relationships within and between *things*. Love-sight, which is synonymous with heart-sight, heartfulness, or mindfulness, is to see things from a deep sense of awareness, which embodies the expansiveness of love (agape love) that comes from the compassionate spaciousness and ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, or Universal Love Force. Love-sight is about seeing with an inter-connected and integrated mind, heart, soul, and spirit. It provides the foundation for bringing the light of this inter-connected system into the situation, and can be summed up in the meaning behind, or *beyond*, the word, “Namaste”, which translates to “*I honor the place in you in which the entire universes dwells. I honor the place in you which is of love, of truth, of light, and of peace. When you are in that place in you, and I am in that place in me, we are one.*”

Energizing

The energy in any situation is derived from a source, or a Source. *Fundamentally* we have two energy sources, yet we are usually primarily drawing on, or feeding off of, the EGO (that is, the **energy-guiding operating system**). The EGO guides, or channels, the energy it receives from within the body and mind to navigate the energy being received, or inputted, from our environments. This guiding system is built on survival mechanisms that have evolutionary implications. The EGO interprets, or mis-interprets, data being received by the senses,

including senses that occur below conscious level, such as *neuroception*, which is word coined by Dr. Stephen Porges, as part of his Polyvagal Theory, and describes the process by which our nervous system is always scanning our environments and evaluating for life threat, danger, and safety. *Beyond* the energy system of the EGO, is the energy system inherent in the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, the *expansive, synergistic, source of ever-present, naturely (or naturally) co-creative energy*. This life force is experienced through direct contact with it through the present moment of the now and can be plugged into for an enormous, expansive power grid of energy that is always available, without exception, is never wasted, is unlimited, and works synergistically. Paradoxically, the energy Source of the Universe is found *beyond* the limited, not-always-available, often-times-wasted, energy source of the EGO, which is regularly depleted and must be recharged through the conflict, defensiveness, judgmental attitudes, and antagonistic methods that arise from the pursuit of *objects* of happiness and pleasure. However, to energize the moment with *Love-sight* is to bring the ESSENCE of the Universal *Love* Force into that moment and thus providing the spaciousness for the moment to be as *it is* and allow it to unfold and manifest as it will, while being grounded in abiding *Love* and seeing it for what *it is*.

Moment

As Eckhart Tolle pointed out in one of his “eckhart teachings – This Week’s Present Moment Reminder”, which was received through an email communication, “*Realize deeply that the present moment is all that you ever have*”. We do not have moments in life, there is only the moment that manifests multiple experiences and memories in the mind that is then seen by the

egoic mind as many moments throughout our life. Yet the present moment is experienced fully and found only in one place, which is in the now. **As the character Socrates**, in the movie *Peaceful Warrior*, played brilliantly by Nick Nolte, **says to the lead character**, Dan, who represents the author of the book, which the movie is based on, and played bravely by Scott Mechlowicz, **after jolting him into conscious awareness, “Take out the trash, Dan. The trash is anything that is keeping you from the only thing that matters – this moment. Here. Now. And when you are in the here and now, you’ll be amazed at what you can do, and how well you can do it”**. The moment of the now is deeply realized when “you” go beyond belief, concepts, mental constructs, and the conditioned mind to a state of having an empty mind, where there is no-mind, no-thoughts, no-labels, no-preconceived notions or concepts, no constructed mental images or dreams or memories, and no-descriptions. In this state of no-mind, a “squirrel”, for example, is not a squirrel, but a manifestation of life, moving about being energized by the same Source of life, the Universal Life Force, that energizes all life in the Universe.

“There is a hidden strength within you to overcome all obstacles....

Bring forth that indomitable power and energy.”

~Paramahansa Yogananda

problem(s) re-imagined

When you come to the *realization* that all so-called problems are relational in nature, especially our relationship with what *is*, which is evaluated by the mind and EGO and transformed into *something*, some-**thing**, an **object**, an **it** that blocks us and takes us away from the energy inherent in the present moment, then “you” cease to exist and a broader perspective can manifest itself and deepen your experience of the ESSENCE of all life that sees no problems but opportunities to step on the path of presence, which will energize the moment with love, spaciousness, and compassionately-collaborative *Wholeness*.

Furthermore, by being in the now of the moment, the silence and spaciousness has the capacity to give the experiencer(s) what a friend and I *coco*-creatively coined as an “*orcosmic* release”, where a disconnecting – a release – from the separate egoic-self takes place and a reconnecting – an orgasmic-like, organic, conscious contact – is made with the cosmos, *coco*-creating an expansive union with the One Source of all life, which goes by many names yet is Truly unnamable.

Sunshine song

The use of music provides a powerful pathway for transforming and transcending the EGO and embracing the effervescent ESSENCE of the Universal *Love* Force. Music has been a constant companion in the manifesting of this book as it has helped to transport this author into the deeper dimension of the Divine from which *coco*-creativity is nourished and nurtured. This

process can also be applied to writing or re-writing music and the powerful, synergistic experience inherent in that process. For example, while working with the female who struggled with the core belief of “I’m a failure” and helping her to embrace how she is a life that has worth and value and humanizing how she, like us all, engage in the process of *failingsuccessfully*, we would, at times, use song, or the singing of songs, to lift her spirits, or her mood, which would lift my spirits and mood as well, even though mine were not in need of lifting. Nonetheless, after engaging in the uplifting process on several occasions of singing along with songs, usually to songs on the radio or her own favorite songs that were played on a CD player, or engaging in an a cappella rendition of some song, there was one morning when she sang the following to me as I answered her call to confirm our appointment for the day, “*Good morning, sunshine, hello, how are you?*” This was a major step for her on her path toward greater well-being, as she allowed herself to be vulnerable by singing this out loud to me as she greeted me, when I answered the phone. Interestingly, she sang those words in a way that *reminded* me of the widely-recognizable song, “You Are My Sunshine”, by Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell, who co-created the song way back in 1939. This inspired me to engage in the experiential process of trying to *coco-creatively* rephrase the original song to embody the message of sending love and validating love in an “other”. Whereas, the original song conjures up the notion of romantic love or dependent, or co-dependent, love, this new version, entitled “Sunshine song”, or just “Sunshine”, is about being *Love*, honoring and validating *Love*, and loving an “other” into connection with the manifesting *Love* inside of them. So, without further delay, here are the *coco-created* words of “Sunshine”:

"Good morning, Sunshine,

Hello, how are you?

You make me happy

When you are you.

You'll never know, dear,

How much you are loved.

Would you please spread

Your sunshine around?"

Other words could be substituted, such as using "us" instead of "me", depending on the context of the situation. For example, the parents of a child could both sing this to their child, or a group of people, like a staff of teachers, could sing this to a student, or students.

Furthermore, the opening lines could be rephrased in numerous ways, such as *"Hello there, Sunshine, it's nice to see you"* or *"...it's good to see you"*. Imagine hearing this song sung to you as a child by your parents, or a teacher, and how that would have affected you. You could, in fact, sing this to yourself in the morning as you look at yourself in the bathroom mirror and see what effect that has on you. Experiment with doing this for just six weeks and experiencing for

yourself the *transformative* power in the singing of a song. This song has the powerful potential of positively impacting and helping each and every one of us to **recognize** that we are loved just the way we are and that we have worth and value no matter what we may be struggling with or what challenging behaviors we might have, because the singing tone of the voice that energizes the song may be enough to bring the child, or person, into conscious contact with the present moment and the ESSENCE of the Universal Love Force deep within them.

heavenly glory

As this book, *the Tao of pool*, utilized the notion of The *Tao*, or “The Way”, as a basis for the philosophical and psychological exploration of pool, the title, of course, then refers to “The Way of Pool”, and like the other pathways illustrated in this chapter, it is a pointer to a path to greater conscious awareness. Just as focusing on the proverbial finger pointing to the moon makes one miss all the “*heavenly glory*” of the moon and *beyond*, as Bruce Lee’s character pointed out in his last full-movie *Enter the Dragon* (Little, p. 167), by focusing too much on the game of pool in its traditional sense, makes one miss the heavenly and glorious path it provides to become aware of the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force underlying the layers, or hardened rind, of our egoic states of mind and thus, becoming awakened to the *interplay* between these two forces in our lives.

This is a journey. A journey of self-discovery and then going *beyond* the sense of “self” to the Great Mystery, Great Integrity, or the Great *Wholeness/Humility* that just *is* and cannot be contained or captured by *words*, or a *word*.

For, again, in the *words* of the great Lao Tzu, “*The Tao that can be named is not the Tao*”.

Words are mere pointers to a path that can only be understood by walking the path and by experiencing the Great Mystery and the *Wholeness* of the Universal Life Force directly and in the moment.

“Every step on the path

is the path.”

~Unknown

The above saying is highlighting that each conscious step in the now *is* the path, and once you have stepped on that path and experienced the ESSENCE or presence of the Universal Life Force in a conscious and direct way, “you” will then become aware of the path as the “way” to re-connect with that ESSENCE and presence. Then, through integrating the path as the way into your daily life, “you” will be cultivating pathways to help “you” become aware of when “you” are not on the path, and these pathways will bring “you” back to focusing on all that heavenly glory of the path and thus become a conduit for all that ESSENCE and presence to be brought into this *mentally*-constructed world, the world of the egoic mind.

Every step on the path of this book was *coco*-creatively designed to bring greater conscious awareness to the reader, to bring “you”, the reader, and fellow traveler, into conscious contact with the experiencer, the observer, the noticer, the seer inside, which is ever-present, and thus,

is a portal, bridge, ladder, or pathway to the present where all the heavenly glory of the Universal Life/Love Force can be experienced *now*, in the *now*, and brought forth into this world as “you” walk the path of life.

Once you have attained that higher level of conscious awareness, then *it is* up to “you” to decide (*hopefully with* the Universe) what you are going to do with *it* and use *it* for. As a guide for you, I offer what Eckhart Tolle so poignantly stated in one of his teachings, “*You are not responsible for another person’s level of consciousness*”, which has helped me tremendously on my path to becoming more awakened. Yet, I *believe* (yes, I realize that part of what I am about to say has a *lie* within it, yet I am befriending my ego and *coco-creatively* using it to manifest a message) – I *believe* we have a relational responsibility to bring our level of consciousness into the world and into relationships with others. The world and the relationships with it and others provide us with a plethora of opportunities each day of our lives to hone our skill of living from ESSENCE, presence and conscious awareness. And it is through our walking the awakened path that we are able to illuminate the path for others, even if they are not yet aware of the path they themselves are walking on. This *reminds* me of the saying from a calendar from several years ago which stated, “*Live your life in such a way that those who don’t know God, will come to know God because they know you*”.

The journey to the present, and the *ESSENCE* and *presence* that holds the permanence we all seek, can take many pathways, and so, in the next few pages, I offer a couple of pieces of *supplemental material* to go along with the pathways presented in this book. This

supplemental information, or “supplemental info flowing into the **Whole**”, showcases a couple of profound, coco-creative, organic processes that helped this author to re-align and re-connect with the Universe, and then that conscious awareness was shared with others as part of an immersive experience. These two, organic processes, which manifested into the presentations of “a compassionate, love letter to humanity” & “authenticity”, were vulnerable yet courageous steps on the path of awakening that led to this author becoming “coconoid”, going beyond belief, and having the **play**full experience of coco-creating Buddha Billiards and this book.

May your journey forward, and your steps on the venerable pathways of vulnerability laid before you in this book, bring “you” pro-found experiences that shake the perfunctory nature from your impermanent mind by curiously pondering the paradoxical limitations of the use of words to name the space and silence in order to discover, or re-discover, the perpetual permanence of presence. (Less confused? More curious? Awesome. Walk on.)

Courageously and consciously stepping on the path will help “you” to center, or re-center, yourself in the inter-play between EGO (**form**, stuff, knowns) and ESSENCE (**formlessness**, space, knowing), and put you in a place, just like the white *object* ball in the center of the pool table at the end of Buddha Pool, where you will experience the absolute freedom to coco-creatively make “your” life a work of awakened art and a proverbial presence pointing to heavenly and glorious pathways for “others” to go beyond belief to experience communion with the One and reunion with the Whole.

"Make your life a work of art."

~Eknath Easwaran

*"Art lives where absolute freedom is,
because where it is not, there can be no creativity."*

~Bruce Lee

*"All true artists, whether they know it or not,
create from a place of no-mind, from inner stillness."*

~Eckhart Tolle

supplemental info flowing into the *Whole*

a compassionate, love letter to humanity

*"If the doors to perception were opened,
everything would appear to man as it is: infinite."*

~William Blake

The following was shared as part of a fellowship service on January 11, 2015. I offer it to you as an invitation to explore a deeper relationship *with yourself* and *with the Universe*:

Dear Humanity,

It is with great compassion and love that I am writing to you.

The words I am about to share with you are truly not my own for they have manifested themselves in many ways throughout human history...and have manifested themselves in many forms throughout the planet's history.

I am not a prophet, a sage, or a saint, yet the same spiritual energy or pure essence that has flowed through all of them, and flows through all of you, flows through me as well.

My personal journey and transformative experiences have brought me to this point of compassionate understanding and awareness. It is my hope that I can shed some light on what ails us as a species and what may lift us up and out of our individual and collective suffering so that we may experience a higher level of consciousness and presence.

To begin with, to love one another and ourselves is not enough. To love unconditionally is not enough. For love alone is not enough. The key to love...is compassion. To be compassionate is to have a deep desire to alleviate another's suffering...or our own suffering.

Linda Kavelin Popov, Dan Popov, and John Kavelin, who created *The Virtues Project*, define compassion as the following:

*"Compassion is deep empathy for another who is suffering or living with misfortune. It is understanding and caring, and a strong desire to ease their distress. Compassion flows freely from our hearts when we let go of judgments and seek to understand. Our compassionate presence helps people to know they are not alone. Sometimes they don't need us to fix anything. They only need to be heard with compassion, so that they can connect to their own inner wisdom. **We need our own compassion as much as others do.** Whether a silent prayer or a gentle touch, compassion is a priceless gift."*

The Dalai Lama says this about compassion, *“If you want **others** to be happy, practice compassion. If **you** want to be happy, practice compassion.”*

We may think of compassion as soft and yielding, or even passive, yet compassion is active and takes courage and strength, spiritual strength. Just look at the lives of some of our most notable historical manifestations of compassion, i.e., Jesus, Moses, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, the Buddha, Mother Theresa, Rosa Parks, Anne Frank, and Eric & Patty Lomax. Many of you may wonder who are Eric and Patty Lomax. To that end, I would encourage you to search out the book *“The Railway Man”* or view the movie with the same name.

To continue, in order to help alleviate and ameliorate humanity’s distress and suffering, I offer the following insight:

The Golden Rule is a fallacy.

The Golden Rule states that we are to treat others as we wish to be treated. Now, treating others as we wish to be treated *is* an honorable dictum, however, we do not treat others as we wish to be treated; ***we treat others as we treat ourselves***. Stated a bit differently, how we treat others is a direct reflection of how we treat ourselves. Compassion for others comes from compassion for self. Love of others comes from love of self. Acceptance of others comes from acceptance of self.

We delude ourselves into thinking that when we look out and observe others, we believe, metaphorically speaking, that we are looking out a window, when in fact we are looking in a mirror.

To paraphrase Anais Nin, *"We do not see others as they are. We see others as we are."* We would do well to look within. For as Eckhart Tolle points out, *"If you get the inside right, the outside will fall into place."* Ralph Waldo Emerson stated that *"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters...compared to what lies within us."*

Again, the compassionate historical figures that we often refer to as the embodiment of the Golden Rule – Gandhi, Jesus, Mother Theresa, the Buddha, just to name a few – are in fact those who have looked inside and cultivated within themselves self-respect, self-love, self-acceptance, self-compassion, and thus have treated others as they treated themselves. They did as Shakespeare wrote in Act I, Scene 3 of *Hamlet*, *"This above all: to thine ownself be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man"*.

Carl Jung insightfully stated, *"Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens."* Lao Tzu intuitively observed, *"He who conquers others is strong. He who conquers himself is mighty."*

A good friend of mine, Richard Hadfield, recently shared the following, which I am paraphrasing, *"change yourself and the world changes"*. Tis Gandhi himself that proclaimed,

*"We must be the change we wish to see in the world". Yet recently it has been brought to my attention by Jim Coakley that that is the bumper-sticker version of what Gandhi actually said. What he actually said was, "If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own **nature**, so does the attitude of the world change towards him....We need not wait to see what others do."*

Yet how does one come to know "thine ownself" in order to change thyself and thus change the world? We do so by becoming compassionately aware and mindful of what we are experiencing in any given moment and to know that what we are experiencing, noticing, and observing, is not us, but only a part of us. It is in the noticing, in the observing where we can come to know "thine ownself" and come to understand that to know "thine ownself" at our deepest level, is to know everyone at their deepest level. And at our deepest level, we are all one.

There is word that embodies this notion, and that word is "*Namaste*", which means "I honor the place in you in which the entire universe dwells. I honor the place in you which is of love, of truth, of light, and of peace. When you are in that place *in you*, and I am in that place *in me*, **we are one.**"

Albert Einstein, as quoted from Marc Bekoff's book "Rewilding Our Hearts", stated:

*“A human being is a part of the whole, called by us ‘Universe,’ a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of **compassion** to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.” (p.12)*

We are all fallible human beings, yet infallible spiritual beings. And thus, we are imperfectlyperfect. Our imperfectness covers over our perfectness and keeps us separated from ourselves...from others, and from all of humanity.

Randy Pausch, who died of pancreatic cancer, gave an inspirational *Last Lecture* as a university professor prior to his death, and in it he stated that *“Experience is what you get when you didn’t get what you wanted”*. Yet, can it not also be said that *“Experience is what you get when you did get what you wanted”*? I say *“Go for the experience.”* Go for each and every imperfectlyperfect, unpleasantlypleasant experience.

Do not be attached to the outcome of your choices and actions, yet be mindful of the results and adjust accordingly. Be as you will, step as you are, act according to your values and beliefs, and yet compassionately reflect on what life gives back to you in the form of those imperfectlyperfect, unpleasantlypleasant experiences. That will help us to become more connected with ourselves and with others.

If “*The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*”, according to Lao Tzu, then we are the means by which we travel the journey of a thousand miles, yet the thousand miles requires that we make the trip one step at a time. A former colleague of mine shared the following saying with me, which she learned as she was preparing to go study abroad in India, the saying goes, and I quote “*Every step on the path is the path*”, unquote.

When we get a clearer reflection of who we are, we are more able to see that the goal is not the goal, that the destination is not the destination, rather the journey is the goal, the journey is the destination. Lao Tzu wrote in the Tao te Ching, “*The journey is the reward*”. The reverse is true as well, “the *reward* is the journey”. In other words, “the *goal* is the journey” or “the *destination* is the journey” or the *destination* is the *experience* of each single step. By seizing the moment and bringing compassionate awareness to each, single, experiential step, we will begin to see each moment, each step on the path, as an opportunity to have an experience of ourselves, which will enable us to connect with ourselves and others more clearly. Do not avoid the experience you are having, whatever the experience may be, approach it and connect with it, it is the pathway to connecting with your *self*, i.e., reconnecting with your *self*, or rewilding your *self*.

“*Rewilding*”, according to Marc Bekoff, in his book, *Rewilding Our Hearts*, “*means appreciating, respecting, and accepting other beings and landscapes for who or what they are, not for who or what we want them to be*” (p.13). “*Rewilding is about being nice, kind, compassionate,*

empathic, and harnessing our inborn goodness and optimism” (p. 5). That inborn goodness is not only in some of us, it is in all of us. Some of us, many of us, have been disconnected from that goodness yet it is still there. And *“When the rain of compassion falls”* as Thich Nhat Hanh proclaims, *“even a desert becomes an immense, green ocean”*.

By compassionately connecting and reconnecting with ourselves, our true selves, our essence, we will come to know ourselves *as* compassion, *as* peace, *as* love, and we will be at one with ourselves and with all living things. May it be so.

In light and compassionate love,

Connor A. Tiggerus

supplemental info flowing into the Whole

authenticity

*“He who controls others may be powerful,
But he who has mastered himself is mightier still.”*

~Lao Tzu

The following was shared as part of a fellowship service on May 14, 2017. Some of the information has been changed and updated from the original presentation out of respect for the privacy and preferences of others. As with “a compassionate, love letter to humanity”, I offer the following to you as an invitation to explore a deeper relationship *with yourself* and *with* the Universe:

AUTHENTICITY

by Connor A. Tiggerus

May 14, 2017

There have been many examples of authenticity throughout the past year here at the Fellowship. Here are just a few: [Jenny Burton](#) spoke about “**How Music Affects Your Mind, Body and Spirit**”, and because her message resonated with me in more ways than

she will ever truly know, I have mindfully chosen to integrate music into today's immersive experience, like I did with the service two years ago, and allow you to experience for yourself how music affects your mind, body, and spirit. JFB shared his insights into "Seeking Truth in Experience" through his analysis of the relationship of Emerson and Thoreau, and offered this golden nugget, among many, "*Follow the promptings of the soul*". Reverend Chris Rothbauer presented a message about "Liberation Theology for Unitarian Universalists", and in the process they shared how they honored their authentic self and is now sharing their story and their authenticity, that is, their light and their truth, with others. [Note: Chris identifies as agender and prefers the they/them/their pronouns.] Richard Hadfield eloquently offered a message on how "Humility" is "The Path to Ultimate Freedom". In his message, he spoke of "spiritual self-cultivation" and the manifestation of our authentic energy, and encouraged us to "*Journey into the heart of who [you] are*". His humbling energy flamed in me a creative spark that culminated in the A.U.T.H.E.N.T.I.C.I.T.Y. acronym that I will share with you shortly. A couple of weeks ago, David Barry served up a savory sermon regarding "The Sacred Transforming the World". During the Congregational Response afterward, I shared how another word for fear, or being afraid, is scared, and if you re-align the letters of the word "scared", it spells "sacred", and these two words can then be put on a continuum, which illustrates their inter-relatedness. In October last year, our very own Reverend Jim Coakley, in his poignant sermon about "The Healing Power of a Healthy Congregation", asked the following question, "*Can we really be ourselves here?*" I believe Jim was referring to our authentic selves. And the final example, is that almost one year ago, on May 15, 2016, Lois Lawler, offered us the "Gifts" of "Creating a Community of

Hope". At one point, Lois mentioned something about "like-minded people", and I am sorry Lois I don't remember the context, yet what I do remember is that you either said what I am about to share, or I picked up on your heart-felt energy, and wrote down "like-hearted people".

I am hoping to use our "like-mindedness" to nudge us down the path toward "like-heartedness". That is, toward our genuine-authentic-Sacred selves.

Bruce Lee stated that, "*All knowledge ultimately means self-knowledge*". He also lived by the following tenets:

- "1. Research your own experience.*
- 2. Absorb what is useful (helpful).*
- 3. Reject (set aside) what is useless (unhelpful).*
- 4. Add what is specifically your own (authentic expression)" (parentheses added).*

I believe we all are on an individual and a collective path, and that path begins and ends with us. I invite you to research your own experience as a way to start you on that path, or as a way to encourage you to continue on that path. I encourage you to explore a deeper relationship with yourself, in order to experience for yourself your authenticity.

In the description for today, I stated that "*Authenticity*" is defined as "*the quality of being authentic*" (The American Heritage College Dictionary).

What does it mean to be authentic? How do we align, or re-align, ourselves with our authentic selves? And what are the obstacles, barriers, and stumbling blocks we must face in the process?

What other words or synonyms do any of you have for the word “authentic”? [Write words on the white board.]

The major obstacle, as I see it, and others, such as Dr. Brené Brown, is vulnerability. A barrier is fear. And a stumbling block is the notion that it is “weak to be vulnerable”. So, where do we begin, well, according to Stephen Covey, we “*begin with the end in mind*”. The end is **AUTHENTICITY**. [Write it on the RIGHT side of the white board.]

“*Authenticity*”, according to Dr. Brené Brown, “*is not something we have or don’t have. It’s a practice – a conscious choice of how we want to live. Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It’s about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen.*” Authenticity is a practice, a collection of choices. So then, inauthenticity, is a practice and a collection of choices, as well. [Write **INAUTHENTICITY** on the LEFT side of the white board.]

The obstacle between the two is **vulnerability**, which I have characterized as the **Valley of Vulnerability**. [Draw the Valley on the white board.]

The barrier is **fear**, which, again, can be turned into the word “scared”, which in turn can be re-aligned to form the word “sacred”. Putting them on a **continuum** [draw this on the white board] shows their inter-relatedness, and illustrates that they are not mutually exclusive. Yet a line between the two does not show that inter-relatedness, so to illustrate their inter-connectedness, I **shall draw a crescendo and a diminuendo**. [Draw this on the white board.] The barrier of fear, of being “**scared**” is all along the journey, yet it will lose its hold on you as you face it, and walk through it, to experience what is on the other side, the “**Sacred**”.

The stumbling block is being “**wak**”. Re-align those letters and you can form the word...? Anyone? That’s right, “**wake**”. Add another **crescendo-diminuendo continuum**, and *viola*! [Draw on white board.]

A Zen proverb professes “*The obstacle is the path*”.

So, in order to align, or re-align yourself, with your genuine-authentic-Sacred Self, you must traverse the terrain of the Valley of Vulnerability, while facing your fears, and turning the stumbling blocks of being “wak” into stepping stones of being “wake”, or “awake”.

As you traverse that terrain, if you embrace the mindset, and the heartset, of being open to exploring a deeper relationship with yourself through the relationships you have with others, you have with the present moment, and the experiences of that moment, then you

are well on your way to lessening the fear you will experience as you navigate the Valley of Vulnerability and move toward your genuine, authentic, Sacred Self. So, too, will this mindset, and heartset, help you to strengthen your authentic self as you turn the stumbling blocks of being “weak” into the stepping stones that will lead you, stone by stone, step by step, to being “awake”.

It is often said that it is “weak to be vulnerable”. I recently heard that line in the movie *20th Century Women*, which got me to thinking. Is there a weakness associated with being vulnerable? Sure there is. You are in a position to be taken advantage of by someone stronger than you, whether it is physically stronger, emotionally, psychologically, or spiritually. Yet, there is strength in being vulnerable, as well. The “weak” part is that you are “weak” in your skill of self-expression, of expressing your authentic self. We had this when we were children, yet often times our authentic self is not nurtured. As we were raised by our caregivers, we were conditioned away from our authentic selves. In other words, we became disconnected from our true selves. A classic example of this is when a child is told, “Stop your crying or I will give you something to cry about.” Through these experiences, we learn, out of fear, to hide our authentic nature.

Yet there is a way to bring our authentic nature out of hiding. We have all heard of the oft-quoted proverb, “*The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*”, by Lao Tzu. Imagine each step as an attempt to practice being vulnerable. Then imagine where you will be in your skill development of authentic-self-expression after a thousand steps, much less than the tens of thousands of steps in that “journey of a thousand miles”.

In my previous message, “A Compassionate, Love Letter to Humanity”, I mentioned the saying, “*Every step on the path is the path.*” So rather than focusing on the entire journey of a thousand miles or tens of thousands of steps, focus on that one step, and then the next one, and so on, and before you know it, you will have traversed the Valley of Vulnerability and re-aligned yourself with your authentic, Sacred self.

This can be applied to the well-known scripture passage, Psalm 23:4, “*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*” Let’s dissect that for a minute.

“*Yea*”, which means “yes”. Next, as we, “*walk through the valley of the shadow of death*”, that is, journey through the Valley of Vulnerability, we will be in the shadow of death, yet it’s the *shadow* of death and not death itself, although it may feel like death, because there will be a death of sorts that occurs during the journey, or several deaths, in fact, because our old, *inauthentic, false* self, which has become our sense of identity, or self-concept, will be replaced with our authentic, Sacred Self, which is revealed with each step we take. So, there is a grieving process that occurs and losses that need to be processed along the way. It is a peeling back of the layers of defense mechanisms that were put in place to protect us, so it is a heroic, or sheroic, process to partake in.

As for “*I will fear no evil*”, again, turn the word “fear” into the word “scared”, then realign the letters to form the word “sacred”. If you walk with the Sacred, there is nothing to fear,

and if you make this journey, you will also discover that there is no evil to fear, because at the center of so-called “evil” is just another inauthentic individual, who has been disconnected from their true self.

The next phrase in the Psalms passage says, “*for thou art with me*”. “Thou”, that is, the Sacred, is, always has been, and always will be with you. The Sacred part of our authentic, Sacred Self, never leaves us, yet we may distance ourselves from that essence, again, as a coping, survival mechanism, for our human existence. This phrase gives us a sense of comfort of not being alone on this journey, which is also a part of the final phrase, “*thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*”. (Along with providing a sense of comfort, this phrase also provides an image, a metaphor, of support as you venture through the Valley of Vulnerability toward your genuine-authentic-Sacred Self. [Write genuine-authentic-Sacred Self on white board.]

If you notice, the first letters of genuine-authentic-Sacred, spell “gas”. In other words, the fuel for living with authenticity is re-aligning yourself with your genuine-authentic-Sacred Self. And once you are in that place of being and drawing from that Sacred fuel, or energy source, you will be able to do what Jim first brought to my attention years ago in one of his sermons here, and that is to “*love wastefully*”, which is the subject for another time.

Every relationship provides you with means to go deeper within yourself. Again, if you are open to exploring a deeper relationship with yourself through a relationship with

yourself and with others, you will be well on your way down the path toward your authentic self. Now, going deeper does not lead to selfishness, which is usually framed as just thinking about ONLY yourself. Yet, true selfishness (self*ish*ness) leads to a deeper sense of the Self (capital “S”, for Sacred Self), which leads to a connection with the One, and the One in every One. Again, the obstacle is vulnerability, the fear of being vulnerable, and the weakness associated with being vulnerable.

There will be people out there that will use, or take advantage of, your vulnerability for ill purposes. Be vulnerable anyway, yet learn to discern with whom to be vulnerable.

During **Richard’s** enlightened presentation about “**Humility**”, he noted that, “*An authentic leader leaves you with a feeling of your greatness*”, and he juxtaposed that with, “*An arrogant leader leaves you with a feeling of their greatness*”.

Now, I would characterize an “arrogant leader” as an inauthentic individual masquerading themselves as a leader. Yet, semantics aside, Richard’s characterizations still serve to help us to discern with whom to be vulnerable with. You will not see an authentic leader threaten, abuse, or otherwise force someone into a submissive state of being. Inauthentic individuals, or arrogant leaders, if you will, do just that in order to control others and their environments out of survival and act that way because they are disconnected from their true, authentic selves.

Being around others, who support and honor you and your path, such as members and friends of this Fellowship, helps to keep you on that path, even when it gets hard or challenging. Stick to your path. It will help to remember what Eckhart Tolle said in one of his talks, “*You are not responsible for another person’s level of consciousness*”.

Develop discernment with recognizing or differentiating between those who would support and honor your journey from those who would throw rocks into the valley or would seize the opportunity to use your vulnerability to harm you with the false (inauthentic) intention of wanting to help you. Basically, learn to discern between those that talk their talk yet walk a different walk from those that talk their walk and walk their talk. The acronym that I created will help you to differentiate an authentic individual for an inauthentic one.

But before I get to the acronym, I want to touch on transitions. Transitions, such as beginning the journey, or even just the thought of beginning the journey, activates anxiety – the fear of the unknown (or the fear of the known past experiences) and uncertainty – yet it also activates or invokes excitement – of a new adventure filled with opportunities and experiences – some unpleasant yet some pleasant, or both together, such as unpleasantlypleasant or pleasantlyunpleasant, because for every pleasant experience of moving toward your authentic self, there may also be, will likely be, the unpleasant experience of loss of your former self and your changing self-concept.

When you cultivate the courage to traverse the terrain of the Valley of Vulnerability, you will become more and more aligned, or re-aligned, with your genuine-authentic-Sacred Self, that is, the “gas”, the Sacred energy/fuel source of all living things. And as this process unfolds and the embodiment of your authentic self unfolds, you will notice (as the closing song points out) a brighter sun, you will see with wider eyes, you will discover clearer skies, you will spread your wings, you will let your true self be seen, heard, and felt, and you will live your life with authenticity. And in so doing, you will make a path for others to follow, and your presence in the world will raise the level of consciousness wherever you go and in whatever you do.

May it be so.

In addition to the above, I offered those in attendance the following:

I love acronyms, so I have taken the word itself and creatively turned it into an acronym to illustrate what an acronym is.

A

Creative

Route &

Opportunity for

Naming

Your

Message

Awakened

Understanding

Toward

Humbling

Energy that

Nurtures

Togetherness

Integration (*"Honoring differences and promoting compassionate linkages."* ~Dr. Dan Siegel)

Compassion

Integrity

Trustworthiness &

YinYang (i.e., balance, interconnectedness)

supplemental info flowing into the *Whole*

AUTHENTICITY revisited, re-envisioned & reinvigorated

“Our own life is the instrument with which we experiment with Truth.”

~Thich Nhat Hanh

On July 3, 2020, after several months of transferring my journal writings that **formed** the *foundation* for this book into a computer document, I went for a walk and the following acronym *coco*-creatively manifested to, for, *with*, and thru me:

Actualizing Awareness (or Awarenessing Actualization)

Unconditioning into the Universe

Transcending into Tranquility

Honoring Humility

Embracing Essence

Nurturing kNowledge

Transforming Thought

Invoking Infinite Intelligence

Compassionately Collaborating with Cosmic Consciousness

Inspiring Inter-being, Inter-playing, & Inclusivity

Transmitting Timelessness

YinYanging into Yonder

supplemental info flowing into the *Whole*

epilogue – contexts

“This is precisely the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do languages. That is how civilizations heal.”

~Toni Morrison

- Black Lives Matter movement
- Climate Crisis
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Me-too movement
- Donald J. Trump presidency
- Systemic, institutionalized & historical *isms* – e.g., *ableism*, *ageism*, *racism*, *sexism*, *popularism*, *injusticism*, *white supremacism*, *white privilegism*, *white paternalism*, *degradationism*, *homophobism*, *hypocriticalism*, *cronyism*, *corporatism*, *egotism*, *placateism*, *inequalitism*, *dehumanizeism*, *traumaticism*, *complicitism*, *shameism*, *paranoidism*, *separatism*, *unconsciousism*

The above-mentioned contexts were just some of the societal and *environmental* contexts during which this book manifested within and thru this author. The context of any content is important to be aware of in order to deeply understand both. Thus, it may be helpful to synthesis the two concepts into *contextualcontent*, because there is an *inter-play* and exchange

between the two that is always taking place. They both *inform* each other and govern each other to some degree creating, co-creating, or *coco*-creating, movement and actions that seek that which is always being sought – balance, equilibrium, and tranquility – which are found *beyond* the egoically-constructed content and contexts in the *Cosmic Context* of the spaciousness, silence, and stillness of the Universal Life Force.

To paraphrase a common saying, “*nothing is created in a vacuum*”, for *no-thing* exists in the emptiness of space, yet *every-thing* emerges from this reverberating space and manifests into *form*. Similarly, society is an external manifestation of the internal worlds of individuals and the collective. The oppression and suppression that is conditioned in us by the authorities in our lives, which *form* the basis for the development, or *formation*, of our individual EGOs, is the breath of life for the collective EGO. Likewise, the kindness, empathy, compassion, encouragement, empowerment, vulnerability, and sense of freedom that is also cultivated in us by the authorities in our lives and our deep connection with the ESSENCE of the Universal Life Force, the Cosmic Consciousness, have the power to *form*, or *re-form*, our individual and collective minds and EGOs to co-create, or *coco*-create, a more perfect union for all sentient beings and our relationship with the planet, which does not need us to survive.

By offering and advocating for the pathways within these pages, which illuminate a path forward through increasing conscious awareness, this book is an extension and expansion of several *literary formulations*, upon whose shoulders I stand and by whose sides I walk, for the purpose of *transforming* the trajectory of life on this planet toward *inter-playing*, *inter-connecting*, and *compassionately collaborating with* each other, all sentient beings, the planet,

and the Universal Life Force, one awakened step at a time in the here and now of the present moment.

Thank you for the opportunity to walk *with* you for a little while.

You are *Loved*!

Copyright

supplemental info flowing into the *Whole*

glossary of TERMS

(**T**hought-forms **E**merging, **R**everberating, & **M**anifesting from the **S**ource)

*"I accept the Divine Presence as now bountifully expressing
peace and harmony in my life."*

~Ernest Holmes

awarenessing – is a word heard from an unknown source (possibly Dr. Dan Siegel) that this author describes as a process of consciously exercising your awareness muscles by repeatedly bringing your attention back to the ESSENCE inherent in the present moment. The repetition of this practice can be integrated throughout the day and helps to strengthen the ability and capacity to be grounded in the here and now, where limitless possibilities are available for responding to the unfolding *is*ness of the moment, which manifests into *it*ness (objects, form) via the EGO.

coco-create (coco-creative, coco-creativity, etc.) – new words (thought-forms) coined by this author in a coco-creative process with the Universal Life Force that point to the process of creating, or being creative, in **compassionate collaboration** with the Universal Life Force. From this perspective and belief system, there is no act of creation, nor creativity, without the ESSENCE and presence of the Source of all life.

coconoia – a new thought-form coined by this author in a coco-creative process with a friend and the Universal Life Force and is defined as, *"The belief that the Universe is compassionately*

collaborating with you.” It is a part of the continuum of belief, proposed in this book, which also includes the terms *paranoia* and *pronoia*.

coconutty – a new word (thought form) coined by this author in a *coco*-creative process with the Universal Life Force that may be used by self or others to describe someone who embraces the belief of “coconoia” as being “zestfull, lively, playful, silly and/or ridiculous”. The word may be used as a term of endearment or as a *form* of criticism, which can *coconuttily* be reframed as a compliment and into the word “*careticism*”.

communioaction – a new thought-form coined by this author in a *coco*-creative process with the Universal Life Force and is defined as, “an intimate exchange of information fostering, facilitating, and awarenensing the *common union* and interconnectivity with the One Source of all life”. It is the synthesis of *communion* and *communication*.

consciousunconsciousness or **unconsciousconsciousness** – new thought-forms coined by this author representing the synthesized states of consciousness and unconsciousness on the continuum of belief, *namely* paranoia, pronoia, and coconoia.

consilience (consilient) – a thought-form first heard about from Dr. Dan Siegel during one of his presentations in which he attributed the word to E. O. Wilson and defined as asking the question, “*What are the universal findings across independent pursuits of knowledge?*”

Additionally, in The Norton Series of Interpersonal Neurobiology, he defines consilience as “*the unity of knowledge...that emerges with the translation of findings from numerous domains of study into a common language and conceptual framework*”. Consilient messages are *forms* of

universal wisdom that are hidden amongst various *forms* of language and linguistics.

Remember, “...*words are no more than signposts*” (Eckhart Tolle).

describbling, or ***describble*** – new words (thought-forms) coined by this author in a *coco*-creative process with the Universal Life Force, defined as the following: “to hastily or carelessly depict or represent a phenomena utilizing *form* – language, words, thoughts” and this is supported by the notion that all words have relative validity (Tolle) and not absolute validity in describing the phenomena that is subjectively experienced. *Formed* through the synthesis, or integration, of “describing” and “scribbling”, or “describe” and “scribble”.

ludicrous, or ***ludicrous*** – new thought forms coined by this author in a *coco*-creative process with the Universal Life Force and are defined as, “playful curiosity causing laughter or humorousness” or “playfulness that humorously sparks curiosity” and facilitates a moment of no-mind. *It is* the synthesis, or integration, of “*ludicrous*” and “*curious*”, with the second new word being expressed with a bit of a French flare to it.

paranoia – a thought-form that means, “*The belief that the Universe is conspiring against you.*” *It is* a part of the continuum of belief, proposed in this book, which also includes the terms *pronoia* and *coconoia*.

pronoia – a thought-form that means, “*The belief that the Universe is conspiring in your favor.*”

The phrase regarding how “*the Universe is conspiring in your favor*” was first heard in the movie, *Conversations with God*, and was later supported through the sharing of a slide from a professional training that associated the phrase with the word *pronoia*. *It is* a part of the continuum of belief, proposed in this book, which also includes the terms *paranoia* and

coconoia. (see the following Wikipedia page for more information regarding this neologism:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronoia_\(psychology\)#:~:text=Pronoia%20is%20a%20neologism%20coined,conspires%20to%20do%20them%20good\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronoia_(psychology)#:~:text=Pronoia%20is%20a%20neologism%20coined,conspires%20to%20do%20them%20good)

receptacling – a new word (thought-form) coined by this author in a *coco*-creative process with the Universal Life Force and is defined as “the process, in Buddha Pool, of randomly placing the multi-hued object balls around the white ball and into the structure shaped as a triangle that openly receives and temporarily holds the object balls and white ball into position, awaiting the start of the game when the triangled-structure will be gently removed, thus exposing the object balls and the white ball to the action and the unfolding process of the game that is designed to cultivate increased conscious awareness in its **players**”.

role mudeling - a new thought-form/phrase coined by this author in a *coco*-creative process with the Universal Life Force and is characterized with the understanding that we all are doing the best we can, yet the notion of role “modeling” comes with it a sense of needing to be a perfect example for others, which is part of the process of the EGO “meddling” in our minds. So, rather than continuing with the pressure inherent in role “modeling”, the concept of “muddling” through *something* came to, thru, and for me and was *coco*-creatively developed into the notion of **role mudeling** (or **role muddling**) to emphasize that we all engage in being examples for others throughout our life and that it is okay to make mistakes, reminding us that we are all fallible human beings yet infallible spiritual beings.

supplemental info flowing into the Whole

re-Sources of universal pointers

“At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

~Albert Schweitzer

- *American President, The* (motion picture)
- Archer, Dr. Dale, *Better Than Normal: How What Makes You Different Can Make You Exceptional*
- Berkoff, Marc, *Rewilding Our Hearts*
- *Bible, The* (New International Version)
- Cameron, Julia, *The Vein of Gold: A Journey to Your Creative Heart*
- Campbell, Joseph, *The Joseph Campbell Companion*
- Chodron, Pema, *Taking the Leap: Freeing Ourselves from Old Habits and Fears*
- *Christopher Robin* (motion picture)
- *Cloud Atlas* (motion picture)
- Collopy, Michael, *Architects of Peace: Visions of Hope in Words and Images*
- *Conversations with God* (motion picture)
- *Curious Case of Benjamin Button, The* (motion picture)
- Dale, Ralph Alan, *Tao Te Ching*
- *Dances With Wolves* (motion picture)

- Desai, Yogi Amrit, *The Yoga of Relationships: A Practical Guide for Loving Yourself and Others*
- Devi, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma), *Embracing the World: Images and Sayings of Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi*
- Dreamer, Oriah Mountain, *The Invitation*
- Dyer, Dr. Wayne W., *Being in Balance: 9 Principles for Creating Habits to Match Your Desires*
- Dyer, Dr. W., *10 Secrets for Success and Inner Peace*
- Easwaran, Eknath, *Blue Mountain Center for Meditation*, <https://www.bmcm.org/>
- Easwaran, E., *The Compassionate Universe: The Power of the Individual to Heal the Environment*
- Easwaran, E., *Words to Live By: A Daily Guide to Leading an Exceptional Life*
- *Enter the Dragon* (motion picture)
- Feldenkrais, Moshe, *Awareness Through Movement: Easy-to-Do Health Exercises to Improve Your Posture, Vision, Imagination, and Personal Awareness*
- Feldenkrais, M., *The Elusive Obvious*
- Garner, Andrew S. MD, PhD, FAAP, and Robert A. Saul, MD, FAAP, FACMG, *Thinking Developmentally: Nurturing Wellness in Childhood to Promote Lifelong Health*
- Geller, S. M., & Porges, S. W., *Therapeutic Presence: Neurophysiological Mechanisms Mediating Feeling Safe in Therapeutic Relationships*

- Glasser, H., Bowdidge, J., & Bravo, L., *Transforming the Difficult Child Workbook: An Interactive Guide to The Nurtured Heart Approach – For Parents, Teachers, Practitioners and All Other Caregivers*
- Gold, Taro, *OPEN YOUR MIND, OPEN YOUR LIFE: A Book of Eastern Wisdom*
- Grey, *The* (motion picture)
- Hagen, Steve, *Buddhism: Plain and Simple*
- Hanh, Thich Nhat, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*
- hanh, t. n., *your true home: the everyday wisdom of thich nhat hanh*
- Hay, Louise L., *You Can Heal Your Life*
- *Hector and the Search for Happiness* (motion picture)
- Herrigel, Eugen, *Zen in the Art of Archery*
- Hesse, Herman, *Siddhartha*
- *Highlander* (motion picture)
- Hoff, Benjamin, *The Tao of Pooh*
- Huber, Cheri, *Making a Change for Good: A Guide to Compassionate Self-Discipline*
- Huber, C., *When You're Falling, Dive: Acceptance, Freedom and Possibility*
- *Inside Out* (motion picture)
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon, *Arriving at your own Door: 108 Lessons in Mindfulness: Excerpts from COMING TO OUR SENSES*
- Kabat-Zinn, J., *Letting Everything Become Your Teacher: 100 LESSONS IN MINDFULNESS: Excerpts from Full Catastrophe Living*
- Katie, Byron, *Loving What Is*

- Kubose, Venerable Gyomay M., *Zen Koans*
- *Last Samurai, The* (motion picture)
- *Lee, Bruce, The Lost Interview* (DVD)
- Lee, Bruce, *Striking Thoughts: Bruce Lee's Wisdom for Daily Living*
- Lee, Bruce, *Tao of Jeet Kune Do*
- Little, John, *The Warrior Within: The philosophies of Bruce Lee to better understand the world around you and achieve a rewarding life*
- Lucado, Max, *You Are Special*
- Lucas, George, *Star Wars* movies (motion pictures)
- Madson, Jenifer, *head to heart: Mindfulness Moments for Every Day – Meditations on Purpose, Compassion, and Being Fully Present*
- Martin, William, *The Parent's Tao Te Ching: Ancient Advice for Modern Parents*
- *Matrix, The* (motion picture)
- Mitchell, Stephen, *The Second Book of the Tao*
- Moorjani, Anita, *Dying to Be Me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing*
- Muth, Jon J., *The Three Questions: Based on a story by Leo Tolstoy*
- *Mystic India: A Child's Incredible Journey of Inspiration* (DVD)
- *Old Guard, The* (Netflix original movie)
- *Peaceful Warrior* (motion picture)
- Popov, Linda Kavelin, with Dan Popov, Ph.D., and John Kavelin, *The Family Virtues Guide: Simple Ways to Bring Out the Best in Our Children and Ourselves*

- Porges, Stephen W., *The Pocket Guide to The Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe*
- *Railway Man, The* (motion picture)
- Reynolds, Peter H., *ish*
- SARK, A Creative Companion: How to Free Your Creative Spirit
- *Shazam!* (motion picture-2019 version)
- Siegel, Daniel J., M.D., *Attachment, Trauma, & Psychotherapy* (PESI CD)
- Siegel, Daniel J., M.D., *AWARE: The Science and Practice of Presence: The Groundbreaking Meditation Practice*
- Siegel, D. J., M.D., *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain: An Inside-Out Guide to the Emerging Adolescent Mind, Ages 12-24*
- Siegel, D. J., *Pocket Guide to INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY: An Integrative Handbook of the Mind*
- Singer, Michael A., *the untethered soul: the journey beyond yourself*
- Somov, Pavel, Ph.D., *present perfect: a mindfulness approach to letting go of perfectionism & the need for control*
- Somov, Pavel G., Ph.D., *the lotus effect: shedding suffering and rediscovering your essential self*
- *Spiritual Marriage: A talk on the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda by Brother Anandamoy* (CD)
- *Star Wars* movies (motion pictures)

- Sullins, Angi, *“Do It Anyway” (The Woosh)*, *Duirwaigh Studios Newsletter* (Sept. 26, 2017)
- *Swiss Army Man* (motion picture)
- Szalavitz, Maia, *Unbroken Brain: A Revolutionary New Way of Understanding Addiction*
- Taylor, Steve, *The Leap: The Psychology of Spiritual Awakening*
- Tolle, Eckhart, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose*
- Tolle, E., *The Secret of Happiness; Discovering the Source of Contentment, Peace, and Joy* (CD & DVD)
- Tutu, Archbishop Desmond, and Abrams, Douglas Carlton, *God’s Dream*
- *20th Century Women* (motion picture)
- Wade, Cleo, *Heart Talk: Poetic Wisdom for a Better Life*
- Walsch, Neale Donald, *More Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue*
- *What tHe Bleep Do wE (k)now!?* (DVD)
- Winfrey, Oprah, *The Oprah Winfrey Show, O Magazine, & The Oprah Winfrey Network*
- Winfrey, O., *The WISDOM of SUNDAYS: Life-Changing Insights from Super Soul Conversations*
- Williamson, Marianne, *A Return to Love*
- Williamson, M., *Everyday Grace* (DVD)
- Wood, Douglas, *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth*
- Yogananda, Paramahansa, *Inner Reflections: 1998 Engagement Calendar: Selections from the writings of Paramahansa Yogananda*

- (purposefully left blank to *represent* the space reserved for other re-Sources)

I have made a concerted and conscientious effort to compile a complete list of resources that have pointed to the diverse yet universal pathways that have guided *me* as I journeyed to re-connect with the Universal Life Force, the Source of, and the re-Source for, all life. I have assembled this plethora of profound purveyors of wisdom, as they have linguistically, artistically, and consiliently lighted the path for, and within, *me*; a path I needed to walk myself and experience for myself the universal wisdom that is found in the stillness, the spaciousness, and the *isness* of the present moment. Yet, I realize this is not an exhaustive list, and I apologize for any error in not cataloguing any published material that may have contributed to *my* journey thus far and to the writing and manifesting of this book. Likewise, my apologies for not included any published material that has contributed to the lexicon of *information* illuminating the pathways that are similar in nature to the thematic elements in this book. Any necessary corrections and/or additions will be made in subsequent editions, as I would like to honor all those who have experienced this *coco*-creative connection, or re-connection, with the divine dimension that is *beyond* belief, *beyond* thought, and *beyond* the words on the page.

Warm regards,

Connor

supplemental info flowing into the Whole

about the artist

"Our present crisis is the result of humanity's level of consciousness.

Thus, a radical and permanent solution is inconceivable without an inner change and a

transformation towards global consciousness."

~ Stanislav Grof

This space is being held for the artist to fill with words and pointers to their process of being and becoming an artist and providing the artistic images that will provide sustenance and nourishment to the messages within this book.

supplemental info flowing into the Whole

about the author

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

~ Henry David Thoreau, Walden

Connor Andrew Tiggerus (pronounced *ti-GAIR-us*) is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Substance Abuse Counselor-In Training (SAC-IT), who is, and has been, blessed with the privilege of working with several children, adolescents, adults, and families. He has a Master of Science (MS) degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree in theatre from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and is a nationally-certified Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapist. He is a member of the American Counseling Association and NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals. He works with Therapy Without Walls.

Connor has over 30-years' experience in various martial arts, which includes being a martial-arts instructor & guide. He is a survivor of childhood and adolescent trauma, including many forms of abuse and bullying, and he has experienced sexual harassment as an adolescent and adult. He works to help others heal from these adverse experiences, as others have helped him to heal. He has given many, *impassioned presentations* with the intent of increasing conscious awareness around the devastating, destructive, and debilitating effects of these systemic, relational, and intergenerational issues that underlie many of society's problems with the hope

of *coco*-creating a ripple effect to improve our state of relational responsibility, reciprocity, and resilience *with* ourselves, each other, all sentient beings, and the planet.

He had the *profound* and priceless experience of being a stay-at-home dad for the first five years of his son's life. This was a blessing and a privilege that provided him with several direct experiences of the essence of the Universal *Life Force found* in the present moment and the *playful* nature inherent in children.

Growing up in his home town of Vesper, Wisconsin, Connor spent a significant amount of time alone in the woods, which brought him into conscious contact with the Universal *Love Force* through the natural world and the nurturing presence of Mother Nature.

A few decades ago, he felt a divine drumming to change his birth name, and thus engaged in the process of *coco*-creating his name that, for all intents and purposes, *symbolically represents* the *tiger* and *Tigger* in all of *us*, which are both manifestations of the One true Source of Life we are all birthed from. As with the purpose of this book, his name, which is just a label and a *mentally-constructed form*, is but another pathway to the *beyond*.

Connor lives in Port Edwards, Wisconsin, with his son, Steele, and their cat, Tin Tin, whom Steele recently renamed, Ash, which seems to resonate with her and has organically created (or *coco*-created) an experiential process to strengthen our conscious awareness.

supplemental info flowing into the *Whole*

about the co-Author

*“Universal perceptions arise when man strives to understand
the powers that work in the silent humility of all Nature.”*

~ Paramahansa Yogananda

The co-Author of this book is the Great Author, Great Creator, Great Writer, Great Mystery (how about Great Mystery Writer), Universal Intelligence, Creative Consciousness, Universal Life Force that is always with us and always **compassionately collaborating** *with* us, even if we are not aware of it. Thus, when it comes to the idea of creating *something*, there is never a lone individual (or entity) creating on their (or its) own. The Universal Life Force is always there, ever-present, even when we are not conscious of it. Hence, from this perspective, any creative endeavor is always a co-creative one. And for those that may not believe in *mental* concepts of the Divine, or a Higher Power, or God, or the Tao, or some other *term* that has a similar intention of naming that which is unnamable, well, you are still engaging in co-creativity because, at the very least, we all have our EGOs, which have been conditioned by others, in some way, shape, or **form**, whether it be by our parents or primary caregivers, teachers, coaches, friends, music lyrics, movies, et cetera, or through the programming we received through epigenetics and the experiences of the collective consciousness throughout the millennia of human existence, and perhaps even prior to that. Thus, the EGO, which has been **formed** by infinite influences, *plays* a part in all those creative endeavors. Therefore, there is never just a creative process. Even the Universal Life Force needs other elements to create, so

the creative process is *really* a co-creative process for all and *everything*. Moreover, if you embrace **coconoia** and the belief that the Universe is **compassionately collaborating with** you, then the creative process would be more appropriately defined as *coco-creative*.

That being said, it is with great humility and gratitude that I name the unnamable co-Author, whose ESSENCE was present throughout this *coco-creative* process, including the *coco-creative* processes of contributing to all the other authors and artists named – and unnamed – who directly and indirectly inspired and influenced the manifesting of the **information** being presented in this book.

With all this in **mind**, go ahead, take another step into the river of Life, and notice, with no-mind, how it is not the same river, and you are not the same you. For at the level of the unnamable ESSENCE of the Universal Life/Love Force, there is no “you”, just Life flowing along and experiencing the **Wholeness** inherent in the present moment. Yet go ahead, use language to **describble** your experience, for using language to name this process is part of the inter-**play** between beingness (ESSENCE) and humanness (EGO) and illustrates how we are all manifested beings **playing** human. I am being **coconoid**, after all, and it is my hope that you will come to embody this belief, as well, and then go **beyond** belief to experience, or re-experience, “the Way of being Playfully Open and One with Life”.

~Namaste

*"Solitude can be
a much-to-be-desired condition.*

*Not only is it acceptable
to be alone,
at times
it is positively to be wished for.*

*In silence,
we listen to ourselves,
and in the quietude,
we may even hear
the voice of God."*

~ Maya Angelou