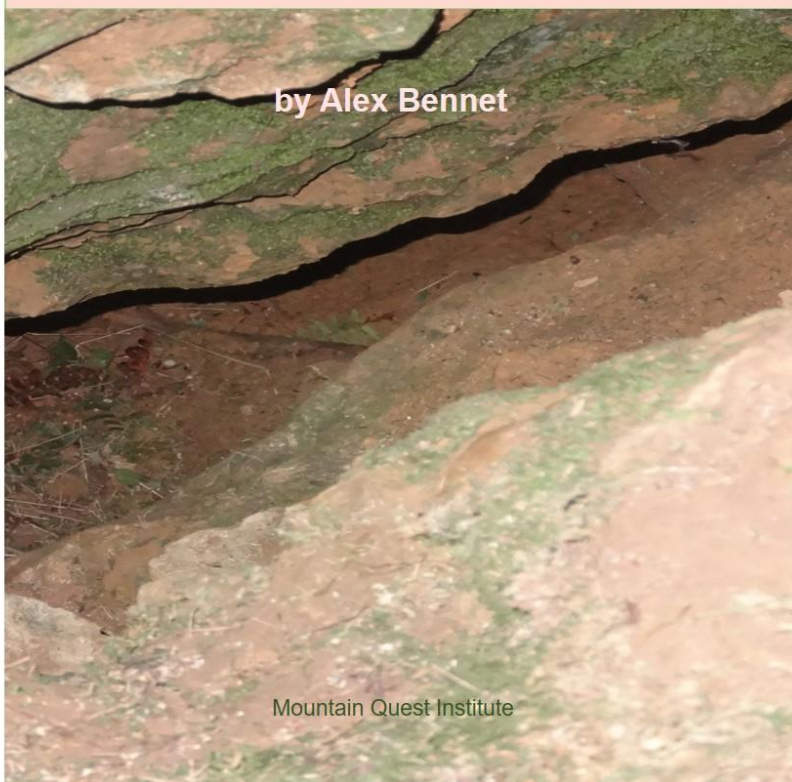


Possibilities that are **YOU!**

Volume 2: Grounding

by Alex Bennet

Mountain Quest Institute



This is a series of 22 short books, what we call Conscious Look Books, that are conversational in nature, taking full advantage of the reader's lived experience to share what can sometimes be difficult concepts. We live in a world that is tearing itself apart, where people are out of control and wanting to control others, rebelling from years of real and perceived abuse and suppression of thought. Yet, this chaos offers us as a humanity the opportunity to make a giant leap forward. By opening ourselves to ourselves, we are able to fully explore who we are and who we can become. With that exploration comes a glimmer of hope as we begin to reclaim the power of each and every mind developed by the lived human experience!

These 22 concepts are part of the learning journey of which we are all a part, the Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ). This is a developmental journey of the body, mind and heart, moving from the heaviness of cause-and-effect linear extrapolations, to the fluidity of co-evolving with our environment, to the lightness of breathing our thought and feelings into reality. Grounded in development of our mental faculties, these are phase changes, each building on and expanding previous learning in our movement toward intelligent activity.

These little books share 22 large concepts from the Profundity and Bifurcation of Change (which is written from an academic viewpoint). Each book is independent and includes seven ideas offered for the student of life to help us become the co-creators that we are. These books, available in soft cover from Amazon, support idea exploration, class discussion, other discussion groups or can be used as special occasion gifts.

Possibilities

that are **YOU!**

Volume 2: Grounding

by
Alex Bennet



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Frost, West Virginia

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MQIPress



Frost, West Virginia
303 Mountain Quest Lane, Marlinton, WV 24954
United States of America
Telephone: 304-799-7267
eMail: alex@mountainquestinstitute.com
www.mountainquestinstitute.com
www.mountainquestinn.com
www.MQIPress.com
www.Myst-Art.com

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*Born into the egocentric predicament
Love's first grounding is intimate
Then, learning from those with whom we identify
Mimicking those we edify*

*Changing sociocentric behaviors now showing
With unified world views growing
Escaping anthropocentric beliefs of ole
For a world-centric Global soul*

-Cindy Lee Scott

Preface

This book is for YOU. Regardless of economic success or educational prowess, beyond cultural influences and habitual routines, YOU have been and continue to be a student of life. And since our time in this learning sphere is precious, the challenges and opportunities are both rapid and continuous, always offering new insights. YOU are a verb, not a noun. Forget what you were taught in grammar school!

Now, we live in a world of demanding challenges, where people and systems are rebounding from control, rebelling from eras of real and perceived suppression of thought. With the acceleration of mental development over the past century has come increased awareness of human capacity, with economic success in small bites for many and large bites for the few, and for some coming with an arrogance that says, “Look at me. I’m right, you’re wrong, and I’m not listening.”

Because of our Economy’s focus on the material, economic success begets economic success and the separation of wealth grows larger, flaming the difficulties of surviving in a CUCA world, that is, a world of accelerating change, rising uncertainty, increasing complexity, and the anxiety that comes with these phenomena.

Yet all of this **offers us, as a humanity the opportunity to make a giant leap forward.** By opening ourselves to ourselves, we are able to fully explore who we are. With that exploration comes glimmers of hope as we contemplate the power of each and every mind developed by the lived human experience!

As YOU move through your life of thoughts, feelings and actions—even when you have to repeat things over and over again as part of the experience—YOU are advancing toward the next level of consciousness.

Here's the bottom line. Everything that has been learned and continues to be learned is out there ... and as a student of life, YOU have access to it all. So often it is expressed in ways that don't make sense because of the language and media being used. It just isn't presented conversationally, and you don't have a chance to ask questions from your unique point of view.

So, these little books—which we refer to as Conscious Look Books—are specifically focused on sharing key concepts from *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change* series and **looking at what those concepts mean to YOU.**

These books are conversational in nature, and further conversations are welcome. We invite your thoughts and questions, not guaranteeing answers because there is still so much to learn, but happy to

join in the conversation. Visit Mountain Quest Inn and Retreat Center www.mountainquestinn.com located in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia or email alex@mountainquestinstitute.com

As my partner David reminds us: *Run with the future!*

Our gratitude to all those who take this journey with us, and a special thanks to the colleagues, partners, friends, family and visitors who touch our hearts and Mountain Quest in so many ways.

With Love and Light, Alex and David

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Introduction

Everything is energy and patterns of energy. You're going to hear that statement quite often in these *Conscious Look Books*. I'm married to a scientist, and it's been pounded into my mind. Of course, that's using the term "energy" from the Newtonian physics perspective.

This means that *we're* energy—or rather, each of us could be considered a pattern of energy. That makes sense. Physicists discovered early in the 20th century that the physical body has an electromagnetic energy field that keeps our neurons firing and our nervous system popping! But electromagnetic energy isn't the only force that's part of our lives. Yep. Some of you have already guessed. We're continuously interacting with gravity, that wonderful force that keeps us tethered to the Earth, at least most of the time. We push against that force every day of our lives!

We're part of the Earth's ecosystem, just like all the other parts of life on this planet. Remember some of that early stuff we learned in science class? I didn't pay a lot of attention back then, but do remember the part about the symbiotic relationship between plants and animals—I think that term works. What I'm really thinking about is the process of photosynthesis. By grabbing hold of the energy of

sunlight, plants can take in the carbon dioxide that is our waste product of breathing, and put out oxygen as their waste product! Okay, they do use a bit of the oxygen they produce to break down carbohydrates, which *they* use as energy. Still, during a good day plants produce more than ten times the amount they use. And we and other animals get the benefit. Now, if *that* isn't a symbiotic relationship, I don't know what is!

Guess we could say that we as humans are pretty well rooted to the surface of the Earth. Could we also say that we are in a *symbiotic relationship* with the Earth? Hmmm. Perhaps not, because these days the Earth seems to be getting the short end of that relationship. We *do* have continuous flows of energy between us and our environment, whether it's through our breathing, our eating, the continuous exchange of fluids, the flaking of our skin, the interaction of sound waves, the movement of light or the exchange of thought.

With all that energy continuously moving in and out of our bodies, its little wonder grounding is important in the course of living! And that's what this Conscious Look Book is about: Exploring the many ways that humans choose to ground themselves as they live out their lives as physical, mental, emotional and spiritual beings on planet Earth.



Idea 1: We are part of a larger energy grid which enlivens us.

Albert Einstein proved that everything in our material world—both animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic—*radiates* energy. The Earth and her people are an enormous energy field full of continuously flowing entangled subfields. Boy, that was a mouthful! One way to think about being “entangled” is to imagine trying to create and tie together lots of tiny braids on Rapunzel’s head. Rapunzel is the star of Disney’s 2010 movie *Tangled* who boasts 70 feet of magical golden hair!

The idea of “flow” is a familiar one. We watch the flow of water as it moves down a riverbed or fills our drinking glass. We feel the flow of air as a breeze plays with our hair and our lungs move rhythmically in and out, in and out. And feelings of joy and sadness, calm and anger flow through us! And, sometimes, since energy follows thought, we can perceive someone else’s thoughts without even hearing the words, especially if we know that someone really well. Close your eyes for a minute and try to recall a time when you knew what someone else was thinking about without hearing the words.

The flow of energy is consistent with the flow of nature. For example, consider the difficulty of

swimming upstream or cutting across the grain of wood. All matter and energy, whether based on physical, emotional or mental structures, is being continuously impacted and changed by outside forces. When we are part of the flow we are co-evolving with our reality, and when we battle against the flow movement becomes more difficult, and we may create blockages.

One simple way to understand the power of energy flows is through our communication with each other. Words and feelings can cause pretty powerful emotions to bloom within both the person who is talking and the one who is listening! Or, both may be talking at once and no one listening, which would cause a blockage. And there are so many little things that come into play such as the *way* we say something or the movement of our face muscles or body posture. All those things sure can make a difference.

Then, there's the energy that exudes from our leaders, powerful people like John McCain, a hero turned statesman. The old Chinese sage named Lao Tzu—who may just have been the teacher of Confucius, although we weren't around then to know that for sure—felt that powerful people radiate knowledge. Lao Tzu felt that this knowledge emerges from experience and a direct understanding of nature. We're going to be talking more about our energy relationship to nature later in this book.

R. L. Wing, a translator of the ancient Chinese books of Lao Tzu, forwards that powerful people influence and change the world while exhibiting compassion and generosity. He says this is because these people “instinctively realize that power continues to flow through them only when they pass it on” and, just like electricity, “the more energy, inspiration, and information they conduct the more they receive.”¹

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INSIGHT: Powerful people influence and change the world exhibiting compassion and generosity, realizing that power continues to flow through them only when they pass it on.

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Now, my first reaction to all that is that powerful people are not always compassionate and generous. Yet, maybe my immediate interpretation of “power” is artificial, more in line with the material world! When I reflect on this a bit, I begin to realize that, just maybe, “power” is a larger word than “control” or “military might.” It seems to represent something even larger, something that is continuous over time rather than provisional and fleeting. Power certainly has a lot to do with energy, no matter how you perceive it!

A really good example of realizing that power continues to flow through only when it is passed on

has surfaced in our work with Knowledge Management. We used to believe that “knowledge is power,” and yes, it is. However, when we realized that knowledge was always incomplete and continuously changing from situation to situation, we began to realize that “knowledge shared is knowledge spared.” By engaging with others we can develop a deeper understanding of the context of a situation while viewing it from different frames of reference, which provides a greater opportunity for effective action. By the way, my partner David was the first one to say and write that neat quote about knowledge shared. Give credit where credit is due.

Have you ever been in a room with a motivational speaker or someone really high up in your organization and *felt* their power, even before they spoke? Or, an even better example, have you ever brushed past a stranger and felt a surge of energy? I had the life gift of having a face-to-face conversation with Mother Teresa, although since her English was limited and she spoke mostly in French, there was an interpreter with us.

Mother Teresa was quite small, yet her energy hit me in waves, flushing over me with a soft, comfortable warmth. I think it was the first time I truly understood how energetically connected we all are! And when you connected through the eyes ...



Figure 1. *In 1984, I was honored with an invitation to personally meet with Mother Teresa, and spend the day with her as she spoke to a thousand people on Atsugi Air Base in Japan who glowed as they joined her energy field. (Photo by Alex Bennet)*

Do you realize that our bodies—matter, or energy that has taken on form—are transformers of energy? The old worldview of the body as a sophisticated machine, based on Newtonian physics, is gradually giving way to a new scientific worldview of the body as a *complex energetic system*. In case you are wondering, “Newtonian physics” is a reference to the scientist Isaac Newton,

who is the guy often pictured watching an apple drop from a tree, the mathematician who developed the laws of motion having to do with the force of gravity. Of course, all that happened before the new perspective of Quantum physics, which says that the molecules of our physical body are vibrating energy.

From this new worldview, we now understand that 80 percent of the etheric/dense physical plane (that includes our bodies!), 66 percent of the astral plane (that includes our emotions and creative imagination), and 50 percent of the mental plane (that includes our thoughts) are made up of energy!² So, whether we look at it from a Newtonian physics or Quantum physics viewpoint, our everyday lives are engaged in manipulating and using energy. *We are energy beings.* Our physical anatomy just serves as the framework for circulating vital energies, the energies that both enliven and animate our lives!

Let's briefly explore some of the **names that describe this life force energy**. First, because I lived in Japan for five years, we introduce the term *Ki*, which describes the *essential life force*, the subtle infrastructure of our physical body, and the energy and warmth radiated by the living body, whether human or animal. I guess that really wasn't necessary to say. I mean, humans ARE animals, only sometimes I forget that!

“Subtle” refers to low intensity vibrations or frequencies, which can come from both the physical

body (the electromagnetic or Quantum energies we've talked about) or from the metaphysical (consciousness, thoughts and spiritual energies). It's really important that we understand these words, because through the years, as different people use them in different ways, they come to represent something, well, *different* than the original intention of the word.

For example, the word “metaphysical.” The front part of the word, “meta,” means what is behind or beyond the word which follows, something that is more comprehensive, even transcending. So, when we say “metaknowledge” we are really referring to deeper knowledge about knowledge, and when we say “metaphysical” we are referring to a deeper knowledge about the physical. Words sure are interesting.

Everything that is alive contains and radiates *Ki*. Without this energetic backbone, we would have no life force and cease to exist as living, breathing, animated beings. While it is subtle (not material like the physical body), most people have the ability to perceive this energy, although we don't always realize it. However, we *do* realize when it isn't there. Think of a time when you were near a deceased animal. You most likely perceived some level of discomfort, sensing a heaviness of the body, a feeling of emptiness, the lack of energy.

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INSIGHT: Everything that is alive contains and radiates *Ki*. Without this energetic backbone, we would have no life force and cease to exist as living, breathing, animated beings.

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We could fill this little book describing the different terms and perceptions of energy around the world and through history! In fact, Mary Coddington, an investigative journalist, essayist and poet, has done just that!³ Here's an idea of what the *Ki* is called in different cultures: *Ankh* in ancient Egypt; *Pneuma* in ancient Greece; *Prana* in the yoga tradition of India and Tibet; *Megbe* by the Ituri Pygmies, *Mana* by the Polynesian Hunas; *Orenda* by the Native American Iroquois; *Ruach* in Hebrew; *Barraka* in Islamic countries; and *Holy Spirit* in the Christian tradition. It is described as vital energy, bioenergy or biomagnetism in the West.

We probably need to spend a paragraph of our time talking about the Chinese viewpoint since they seem to have recognized and played with this energy so early in history. In Chinese medicine and philosophy this energy is called *chi*, *ch'i*, *qi*, *Chi*, *Ch'i*, or *Qi*. The manipulation of this energy is the basis of acupuncture and Chinese martial arts, which a lot of you will understand since I bet a lot of you have participated in! A popular portrayal of this energy in Western popular culture was in the use of

the "Force" in the *Star Wars* films. Growing up, I really enjoyed those movies!

Well, no matter what you call it, *Ki* doesn't have anything to do with a specific religion. It is a really old concept which pre-dates religious philosophy, and is considered the source of life itself.

The human body is set up to work with *Ki*. The endocrine glands, nervous system and biofield of the human body make up a transducer system, which connects us with, and works with, the energies in which we are immersed. And, the human body also *generates* energy! Actually, we've known that for a while. Remember the last time you went out running or mowing the lawn on a hot day? The energy you were creating was manifesting in good, old-fashioned sweat, as well as that invisible stuff which you were sending out into the Universe!

Today, there are people who are developing electromagnetic hypersensitivity because of all the non-organic electromagnetic energy frequencies our electronic devices are sending through the air. These sensitives mostly describe "feeling" the energy rather than "seeing" it, although there are also some people who have the ability to visually see the energy around living forms.

The energy field around a human is often referred to as an aura. It can actually be quite beautiful. Since people are all different, and different energies (thoughts, feelings, movement) produce

different auras, there is the perception of different colors and intensities. The easiest aura to see is the one that directly surrounds the physical body. It can be seen by shifting focus, sort of squeezing your eyes together and looking beyond that which you are trying to see the energy around. This energy can also be captured through Kirlian photography.

So, I guess the main point of all this is to understand that the human body is not a separate part of the environment. Indeed, both organic and non-organic energies are exchanged in every instance of life. And similarly, the Earth herself is a giant, living organism that is part of a larger geomagnetic field. Wow! With all that energy pulsing around us, no wonder grounding is so important!



Idea 2: Grounding provides a foundation for living.

Grounding has to do with receiving and releasing energy. It has to do with feeling connected and secure, providing a baseline or foundation, and keeping us balanced as we move through life. It also has very much to do with our worldview.

Worldviews are multiple constructions of reality, different ways to perceive what is happening in the world. From a Western cultural perspective, there are four systems of belief and behavior (worldviews) that underlie a person's character. These can be described as unitary, sensory, mythic and social.⁴

The *unity* worldview is that we are part of something larger and there is a higher authority which is part of a structured hierarchy that manages life. Later in this little book, we are going to have a conversation about hierarchy as a grounding structure, especially the hierarchy we discover in nature.

The *sensory* worldview is quite the opposite. This view says that we are all separate entities, but that there are basic building blocks of the Universe that are imperatives of nature, and those set the foundation for all change.

The *mythic* reality is a product of creative imagination, symbols and ideas that go beyond—and are not limited to—that which is around us. This view says that people have free will, and can choose where to set their intention and attention. The idea of setting our intention and attention is so important that those two concepts are the subject of a separate *Conscious Look Book*. From the mythic worldview, everything is part of a larger flow; *nothing comes by chance and everything has meaning*.

The *social* reality has to do with the feelings and values of human beings, which are very much a product of free will. We saw that idea of free will in the mythic worldview as well. The social worldview is humanistic view achieved through a shared consensus, which emerges from the feelings and thoughts of the population. Of course, because people are so different, forces are produced because *there is not a single reality that emerges!* We've seen what happens, for example, in a two-party political system where, with the same incoming information, what emerges and is perceived as reality are very much the opposite of each other!

Related to a person's worldview, **grounding** can—and does—occur physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and comes in all flavors, highly dependent on an individual's needs and life experiences. For example, for those who grew up during a depression, material possessions or

continuously eating large meals may become part of their security structure.

In this conversation, we look at three different interpretations of the concept of grounding. **First**, to ground is to give someone a foundation, to teach someone the basics. **Second**, to ground is to fix something on or in something else for a foundation. **Third**, to ground is to connect to the Earth, the ground on which we live. As you can see, each of these interpretations carries with it the idea of attachment, connecting to someone, or something, other than yourself.

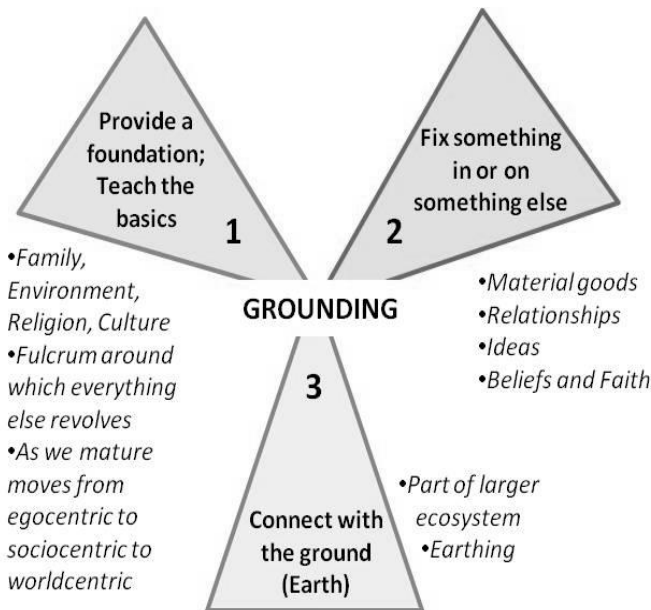


Figure 2. *Three interpretations of the concept of grounding*

Okay. YOU are a unique being with a unique personal identity. That unique identity is what we can call the “essential self,” the set of characteristics recognized as belonging uniquely to YOU. And, in each of the bodies in which we exist (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual), at the core of all that uniqueness is a pivot point, or fulcrum, around which everything else revolves and upon which all the other parts of us depend.

For example, in our physical body that core may be our strength, agility and/or excellent metabolism. Perhaps you never get sick! Mentally, it may be the ability to see connections and patterns among very different things. Emotionally, it may be our compassion. Spiritually, it may be a belief in service to others, which we demonstrate through our actions.

These pivot points serve as our grounding for other activities, which may find expression as, continuing with our analogy, respectively, a major league baseball player, a Nobel laureate in science, or a Mother Teresa, who conveys both compassion and service to others. Once recognized as both choices *and* needs, these pivot points can consciously help guide our future choices.

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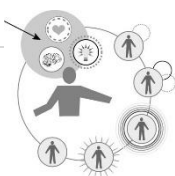
INSIGHT: Pivot points serve as our grounding for other activities.

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Of course, remember, we are verbs, not nouns, continuously learning and expanding through our life experiences. Grounding is what gives us something to hold onto while we're exploring life through those experiences.

But grounding does far more than just tether us to comfortable spaces and habits, it also frees up space, that is, releases potential worries or fears, which provides us a freedom to look at everything. When you have a bank account and a safe apartment with plenty of food in the refrigerator to go home to after work, then you are free to explore new opportunities and make larger choices in your workplace. Being grounded when you address any forces in life enables you to move through those forces and learn easier from them.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 3: Relationships play a significant role in grounding.

Relationships, and in particular the family, have historically provided identity and grounding. However, in our global world, the old social order that was based on kinship and the tribe has broken down. The new order is built on social engagement and ideas. Further, the historical value-setting roles of such institutions as organized religions and hereditary aristocracies are less central, and perhaps even peripheral.

Still, *we are* social creatures. We all understand this now, whether from a personal perspective when engaging with family and friends, or from a business perspective when engaging with colleagues and competitors! And while the nature of these relationships is changing, we are much more grounded when we have consistent relationships with others.

Over the course of evolution, physical mechanisms have developed in our brains to enable us to learn through social interactions. These physical mechanisms are what enable us to get the knowledge we need for survival. People are in continuous, two-way interaction with those around them, and the brain is continuously changing in

response, with a great deal of this communication occurring in the unconscious!

At a high level, let's look briefly at the life cycle of the human. Each individual is born into a family, an environment, a religion, a culture from which emerge their first learnings. As small children, we hold onto our parents. They are our source of grounding, providing the nurturing and security that enables us to fully express our curiosity in the exploration of life.

As we have discovered through experiential learning, and as understood through psychology and sociology, children who do *not* have this early grounding through close relationships with nurturing adults develop difficulties that can re-emerge throughout their lives. These early years are so important!

As you grow, you identify others of the same shape and size as you, and move into social relationships with these friends and playmates. There's a lot of safety in these relationships, which can also provide very real support. Think about going on a vacation with a friend. Well, you're sort of skimming it, and so is he, but together you have greater resources. If you overshoot your VISA card, your friend picks up the slack. If someone gets sick, there is someone there to take care of you. If you get lost while trekking a mountain, there are two of you to help figure it out; you are not lost alone.

Moving into young adulthood, you fall in “love” with someone, which may or may not be “love” but certainly has a bunch of emotions and feelings attached to it! Now, that chosen “other” provides your grounding through physical, mental and emotional attachment. If that relationship falls apart, you flounder.

Finally, as you age and move through a wide variety of life experiences with family, friends, colleagues and strangers, your grounding has more to do with *what’s inside you* rather than what’s outside you. You develop a relationship with your *self*. There are fewer outside “traps” to which you respond and, from a spiritual perspective, you could say that you are building relationship with your soul.

As poet Cindy Lee Scott so eloquently describes:

You become grounded when you are born and cradled against your mother's breast. You become grounded when your caregiver, someone who loves you, reaches down when you fall, and lifts you up. You become grounded when you fall in love, and hold hands through the trials of life. You become grounded when you choose a family, and they choose you and become the center of your world. And you become grounded when you find your inner self, and discover you are part of something larger. Grounded, as time drains the fervor of youth, growing in wisdom

until that last breath, and finally when comes the reveal to the soul, the path waiting after death.

Another way to look at the process of life is the focus shifts from being *egocentric* to *sociocentric* to *worldcentric*. This is all part of the Intelligent Social Change Journey that's the subject of the BIG books: *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change*.

In this journey—and consistent with our conversation above—we first *associate our identity* with the physical body and self as we become aware that we are separate from our parents or other nurturing adults playing that role. This is *egocentric*.

Then, as we move through school and build friendships, we begin to identify our *self* in relationship to others who are our peers. This is *sociocentric*. As we take on the many different roles in life, these roles and the larger world become the focus of our identity. For example, we begin to identify with our jobs and others who have similar skillsets, or as the head of a family, or as part of an organization group to which we belong.

When we increase our connections to people around the world, which literally occurred with the advent of the Internet at the end of the century, we become global in nature, and our identity becomes *worldcentric*. From this point, it is only a short distance to go on to experience the World Soul!

Ken Wilber, an American writer with his own integral theory of the world, says that this next step is to *experience your central identity with all living beings*.⁵ This is where we escape all our anthropocentric prejudice (the belief that we humans are the center of the universe), and can experience the World Soul. During these years as we move toward 2020, we've seen some backward movement, which can be the precursor for a large shift forward. A focus on the material and a separateness based on fear is hampering cooperation and collaboration. However, increasingly people seem to be more aware of these larger issues, taking back control of their lives, and choosing the higher path toward a global humanity.

While the nature of relationships is changing as global connectivity and the Internet bring about new modes of social networking, the factor of trust is still very much a part of the lived learning experience. When a secure, bonding relationship in which trust has been established occurs—a relationship which provides a grounding experience—there is “a cascade of biochemical processes stimulating and enhancing the growth and connectivity of neural networks throughout the brain.”⁶ That's right! There is an actual physical reaction!

What we now understand is that social interaction and *affective attunement* actually contribute to the evolution and sculpting of the brain,

that is, they not only *stimulate* the brain to grow, but *facilitate organization and integration* of the brain! This idea of affective attunement is when a trusted individual provides sympathetic understanding to a learner, eliminating fear and serving as a safety net for, and accelerating, the learning process. From findings in social cognitive neuroscience since the turn of the century, we now know that the brain actually needs—and seeks out—someone who can serve in this role!

The new concept of social networking—one that utilizes the Internet—demands a shift in our perceptions, and a further shift from relationship-based interactions to idea-based interactions, with affective attunement developing through virtual relationships. Virtual networking primarily relies on the resonance of ideas to develop a level of trust. While this is quite different than the personal relationships or connections built up over time through personal and work interactions, those that connect continuously do build up a level of trust based on the responses of those with whom they interact.

Let's talk more about this. While focused in the physical, and provided with an often highly-active emotional guidance system, *people are primarily mental beings*. In fact, the last few hundred years we have accelerated our learning!

It's not surprising that ideas excite us, and that with the creative emergence of new ideas, *we identify with those ideas*, and sometimes even become those ideas, which may or may not be a good idea! When you lock into an idea and become it, you cease to learn. As the world continues changing and expanding, it's easy to get left behind!

An emergent quality of the new global world paradigm is relationships built on *idea resonance*. During the rise of bureaucracy in the 1900's, value was primarily built on personal relationships, that is, the valuing of ideas and identity of self was based on attunement with *trusted and respected others* who were *personally known* to the decision-maker. As agreed earlier, most often these were family members or close friends.

As organizations grew more powerful and important in our society, there was an expansion to include value built on *respect and trust of structure*, that is, work associates in "my" organization, and external "experts" (such as those represented in Fortune 500 organizations). These "experts" were people identified as successful by "my work associates" and the world in general, and recognized as experts in "my" domain of knowledge (many belonging to companies which have since failed). While this resonance still often included attunement with specific people, *there was a larger resonance with purpose and ideas beginning to occur*.

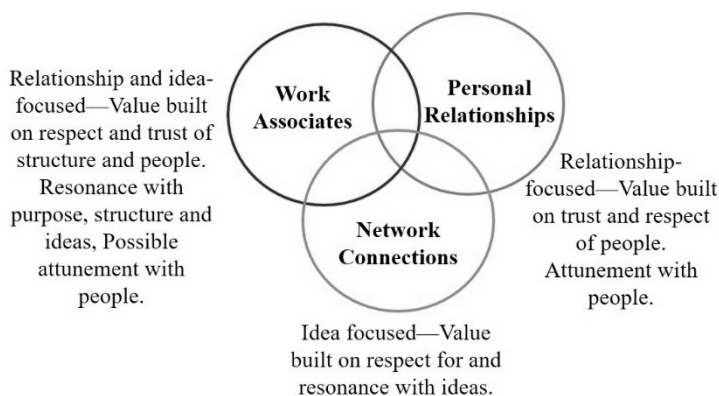


Figure 3: *The movement from a focus on value built on trust and respect of people to value built on the relationships of, respect for and resonance with ideas.*

In the global social networks of the last decade—and consistent with an expanding focus on innovation—we have moved fully into the venue of idea resonance, that is, ***value built on relationship of, respect for and resonance with ideas***. While the best justification for this is “because we can,” there is a mental excitement in grounding with ideas, which adds to our perception of self-worth as well as recognition of the underlying potential value of innovation. There is an increase in the quality of ideas and potential for innovation when we are exposed to greater diversity of thought and perspectives.

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***INSIGHT:* There is a mental excitement through grounding with ideas since they become part of our identity and add to our self-worth.**

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The global shift toward expansion of, and dependency on, social knowledge is clearly demonstrated by the new generation of decision-makers. Through continuous connectivity and engagement in conversations and dialogue (a search for meaning), the tech savvy generations have developed—and continue to develop—a wide array of shallow knowledge, which has greater value than surface knowledge.

In this context, surface knowledge is predominantly, but not exclusively, simple information (used to take effective action), answering the question of what, when, where and who, and generally explicit, that is, it can be easily spoken about or read about and understood. Surface knowledge can change quickly.

Shallow knowledge includes information that has some depth of understanding, meaning and sense-making such that it requires context. This is the realm of social knowledge, with conversations through virtual interactions offering the opportunity for creating a shared understanding of greater context and meaning.

Think about the differences between surface and shallow knowledge in terms of a boat moving through the water. On the surface everything is visible, but in the shallows there are unseen forces below such as currents and rocks. When navigating the shallows, it is wise to have a person on board who has moved through these waters before, or to have a map that has been prepared by such a person.

Until the end of the last century, conversations for most employees were largely limited by organizational relationships and geographic location. Today, the Internet and travel options provide the opportunity for a diversity of conversations which facilitate the criss-crossing of ideas around the globe. Thus, the ideas that ground us and support our identity are often global in nature, and quite consciousness expanding.

What does all this mean? First, we are moving toward a more connected, transparent world, despite the political throwbacks seeking to maintain control of the larger population. You cannot control ideas unless you limit communication and diversity of thought. And with global connectivity, how long can people remain separated? Eventually, the fear of difference gives way to the joy of new ideas. Knowledge as a force is an idea generator. Social knowledge not only provides a strong grounding network of ideas, but is at the core of collaborative

leadership, idea leadership and service to the larger humanity.

Second, there does not appear to be a loss of deep knowledge. This is surprising considering a general characteristic of the new generations to flit rapidly from one idea to another, continuously connecting things together. However, those who *are* able to hold a focus on a specific domain of knowledge are actually moving into the realms of deep knowledge earlier in their careers. This is because they have greater access to the learned patterns of others who have deep knowledge. Further, as minds expand, there is a greater ability to tap into the intuitional and apply what is being learned from that source.

As large numbers of people talk to large numbers of people, sharing a variety of information and ideas, connecting patterns across different knowledge domains and responding to those ideas, it “feels good” to be part of the group. When emerging ideas begin to “feel good” and you can see their relationship to a desired outcome, you have idea resonance. Thus, from this viewpoint, our ideas are grounding us.

A self-empowering tool in social networking is **Relationship Network Management**. Our everyday conversations *lay the groundwork for the decisions we will make in the future*. Therefore, since time is a

scarce resource and we don't know what the future brings, it is critical to choose our interactions wisely.

Whether virtual or face-to-face, relationships are ultimately about people and the way they interact with each other over long periods of time. Strangely, the fundamental principle of success in relationships parallels Sun Tzu's fundamental principle of success in warfare, that is, know thyself, know the other, and know the situation. That certainly makes sense. Let's say you have a disagreement with a friend. First, you have to understand the situation, what the disagreement is all about. Then, if you understand *why you* feel the way you do and understand *why your friend* feels the way she or he does, then it's a lot easier to talk about finding a common solution!

Principles of Relationship Network Management start with the individual, specifically, what the individual brings to a relationship in terms of values, the ability to communicate, expertise and experience, ideas, and a willingness to share and learn. Your personal openness and willingness to share is *really important*, and only you know whether or not that is possible!

Then, we try to understand the situation. How are we interacting? Is their virtual or face-to-face interaction, open or guarded communication? What is the content of the exchange? What is the purpose of this interaction? And what are the expected outcomes?

Then, we try to understand the other person. Do you trust them or are they unknown? What are their values? What are their communication skills? Do you speak the same language? What frame of reference are they coming from? What is their expertise and experience? Are they willing to share and are they open to learning? The better you can understand the other person, the easier it will be to develop a relationship.

Speaking of which, there are several basic concepts that successful Relationship Network Management is built upon. These include interdependency, trust, openness, flow and equitability, all of which overlap. For example, interdependency includes a state of mutual reliance, confidence, and trust. Note that interdependence does not translate into freedom for individuals to do as they choose.

Trust is based on integrity and consistency over time, saying what you mean, and following through on what you say, and openness is directly related to trust and a willingness to share. As can be seen, these qualities facilitate the free flow of data, information and knowledge among individuals, across teams and organizations, and around the world.

Equitability in terms of fairness and reasonableness means that all those involved in the sharing gain something of value out of the

relationship. These qualities are consistent with our definition of intelligent behavior, which is such an important topic that it is the focus of one of these *Conscious Look Books*.

* * * * *

EXERCISE: *Relationship Network Management*

There are five steps to managing your relationship network.

STEP (1): Recognize the value of your network. When we recognize the value of our relationship network, we can learn to consciously manage it, and provide the level of grounding needed to operate in the world of ideas.

STEP (2): Identify the domains of knowledge (areas of passion) that are important to you and what you want to achieve in life.

STEP (3): Identify the people with whom you regularly interact, both in your personal and professional life. Note *how often* you interact with them, the *quality of the interaction*, and *whether they can depend on you* and you on them to respond to questions with honest (and valued) opinions. *Ask:* What is at the root of this relationship? How do we complement each other? What do I learn from them? What do they learn from me? Is this relationship knowledge expanding? Consider the principals of Relationship Network Management discussed above

and assure that each relationship exists within the bounds of those principals.

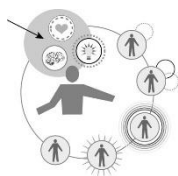
STEP (4): Carefully compare the list developed in Step (2) with the Network and understanding developed in Step (3). Then, **consciously choose to develop, expand, and actively sustain those positive relationships** in terms of thought, feelings and actions. Where gaps are identified, that is, where you have no exposure to the domains of knowledge (passion) which are important to you, prepare a plan that will bring that knowledge into your awareness and experience. For example, taking a community college class related to that knowledge area will open the door to networking with people with similar interests.

STEP (5) By choice, stay open to sharing and learning through your relationship network.

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It is critical to choose your network wisely. At some point in the future, you will make a decision based on a conversation you had today, or last week. Although you may or may not remember that conversation, the resonant content of it is linked into your unconscious to be associated with future thought. Thus, your everyday conversations, and reflections on those conversations, serve as grounding functions for future decisions and actions.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 4: While materialism can take over our lives, all of us are materialists to some extent.

People often ground themselves with material goods. And, since we all exist in the physical reality—from whichever worldview we choose to see that reality—we are all materialists to some extent! And maybe that's a good thing.

It is quite likely that most of us have special material goods that help ground us, providing feelings of comfort, safety and continuity. For example, an heirloom ring that's been passed down for generations, or a musical instrument that you periodically play, serving to release tension and bring you into a place of peace.

My dad came over to the U.S. when he was 12 years old on the last ship to make it across before World War I. Although owning a vineyard in Southern Greece, his family was quite poor and he had seven sisters to marry off! Back then, in Greece, a dowry had to be provided from the bride's family. So, my dad started working as many hours as he could, saving every penny, and slowly, one by one, marrying off his sisters. He didn't marry my mom until he was well in his 30's ... so it took him 20 years of work before he could focus on himself.

I learned a lot from him. Most of the older people who went through a war, and the ones who lived through the depression, put a high value on economic success and materialism, and we can certainly understand how important this was and is! However, for many it became obsessive. They became controlled by it, and were never free to do or be who they were.

When materialism advances and becomes primary in an individual, there are a number of characteristics that emerge. These include superficiality, exclusion, covetousness, fear, consumption and entitlement. Let's explore these.

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***INSIGHT:* When materialism advances and becomes primary in an individual, the characteristics of superficiality, exclusion, covetousness, fear, consumption and entitlement emerge.**

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First, the property of *superficiality*. This is when items have no stable or settled value. When our physical wants are an idea in our heads, we work to achieve that idea. When they become an object in the physical, *they separate from us*. And, frankly, they really are not very important anymore because we have them ... there is something else on the

horizon that has become more important. Of course, we still want to own them. And, so it goes.

Now, the intent here is not to damper desire! Desire is a *good* thing as long as we also have mental clarity of what we desire and choose it, and as long as we keep balance in our lives.

Okay, so sometimes that's impossible! Last year a friend held a Lularoe party, featuring a somewhat new clothing line at the time, and those clothes were so comfortable I spent the next several months buying them! Similarly, I remember when a new double-fudge peanut parfait came out at the local ice cream store. My friend and I had to stop and get one every time we passed the store. It didn't take long before that behavior really took a toll on the waistline and our personal heath. That's certainly a lesson in choice and balance!

The second property is that of *exclusion*. From the Hindu perspective, materialism is loaded with negativity and it separates individuals and communities. An example of this is the divide between the rich and the poor, which is sort of like the Great Wall of China.⁷

The third property is that of *covetousness*. When money, which is compressed energy, becomes the arbitrator among people, work becomes a means by which people can be bought, owned and controlled. This leads to the degradation of human worth and a perverse logic of corruption. And, along

the way, there is loss of value, meaning and consciousness.

“I want what you have,” thinks your colleague. The worse things get for someone, the more they want what someone else has. And, somewhere along the way, the price a person is willing to pay can move beyond money to include the hijacking of morals, values, and beliefs

The fourth property is that of *fear*. As we continue buying and buying things, expanding our material possessions and grounding ourselves with them, *we become owned by that which we own*. When the perceived value of these things is very high, we become trapped by irrational fears of potential loss and lurking dangers. We live day after day in a condition of compromised freedom. Perhaps we're afraid to go on vacation and leave the house untended, or spending considerable money on security measures and forces, or hiding our things away in vaults for their safety. These material possessions become quite a burden. As these fears accumulate, any joy in the owning of these things turns to heaviness.

The fifth property is that of *consumption*. This is an inward pulling which degrades creativity, which is an outward flow. Consumerism is a ritual of materialism, which has powerful psychosocial and pseudo-religious overtones. For example, buying and controlling that which you buy becomes a way to

placate yourself, overcome adversity, demonstrate your worth, and place yourself above others and beyond the fray of everyday life (or so you think)!

The sixth property is *entitlement*. You are not only consuming, but you are owed what you are consuming. When children are provided all their wants and desires by parents who want a better life for them, then those children, in turn, develop a sense of entitlement. *This is the way life was meant to be, and I have a right to have everything I want.* Once this sense is embedded, it is difficult to move through it.

A combination of these properties related to materialism can lead to narcissism, a word that has been in the public eye with the recent political restlessness around the world. Narcissism is an extreme state of self-love and admiration coupled with extreme selfishness and self-obsession. This is a state that seems to emerge in advanced societies where a focus on wealth and control exists. There was a clear example of this in the 2016 Presidential elections in the United States.

In the context of culture, Mathew Arnold, an English poet, wrote some 50 years ago that materialism leads to Philistinism,⁸ which makes the heart subservient to the stomach, coming with all the incumbent individual and societal problems. Philistinism can also lead to religious fundamentalism, with individuals using religion as a

weapon to defend vested interests. We also see this happening in current events.

In the context of religion, there are various dogma related to materialism that come from Judaism, St. Paul and Thomas Aquinas, and move through Puritanism, Quakerism and into Protestantism. Early concerns were about the concept of wasting time, which was considered the deadliest of sins since “the span of human life is infinitely short and precious.”⁹ Gee, that’s something we can all agree on! It seems the older I get the shorter life seems, and there’s so much more I really want to do!

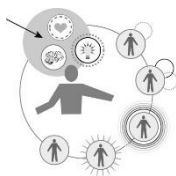
An interesting phenomenon that runs through the relationship of materialism and religion is that wherever riches increase, the essence of religion decreases in equal proportions. That certainly has a message to deliver!

When my newly-found sister and I were talking about being grounded by material things, she mentioned that during the course of life she had strongly attached to various things, including money. But somehow, when life was throwing challenges in the mix of her everyday happenings, she would try to hold onto this or that, and it never worked. She says it was like trying to grab hold of water, which runs right through your fingers!

As we can see from this short discussion, when materialism becomes the major grounding force for

an individual it serves as a separating force, with consumerism (bringing energy in and holding it) the inverse of creativity (an outward expression of energy). Thus, materialism produces stuck energy, and brings with it properties that limit learning, development of self and consciousness expansion. When we have stuck energy, we need to find other ways, better ways, of grounding ourselves.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 5: The hierarchy of nature—our natural grounding system—provides a grounding structure.

Hierarchy—and an understanding of where we are in that hierarchy—provides grounding for living life and expansion. Hierarchy is a reference to structure, which is a level of complexity ordered in terms of importance. For example, think about a business organizational chart. The president of a company would be at the top, with several department heads below her, and three or four branch heads below the department heads.

But there IS some leeway in a hierarchy for individuals to create a structure in which they are most comfortable. For example, in a hierarchy the dominant structural element may be a central point. If that central point is located in the middle, each part is determined by where it is located in relation to that central point. The key concepts here are that (1) there is a central theme to the system with a dominant center point, no matter where that point is located, and (2) the function of any one part can only be understood in its relation to the whole.

For those of you who are familiar with Knowledge Management, our personal ontology and taxonomy provide an example of the use of

Let's take our body as an example. As a person, we are a self-contained whole with a lot of subsystems working to keep us healthy. Yet, without food and water and light that are part of the larger Earth, we could not exist. Even our Earth, which is a self-contained whole with a lot of subsystems (including us) couldn't exist without the sun, and it's elephants all the way up (and turtles all the way down). I always wanted to write those concepts into something!

When we physically walk through the grass, lean against a tree, or splash in a running stream, we are energetically connecting to these natural energy sources, all of which are part of the Earth and our larger ecosystem. Dynamic in nature, an ecosystem represents interactions among living organisms and non-living parts of the environment in a given area, with each part having a role to play in the natural cycles of life.

There is a recent movement called Earthing that is rapidly expanding based on the discovery that grounding to the Earth promotes vibrant health. It's the same idea as having an energetic, electrical connection to the earth and, generally, being comfortable in our physical body.

William Ober, a doctor who writes about anatomy and physiology, and some of his associates suggest that when we directly connect to the earth not only do we get rid of excess energies, but we

receive the gentle energy of Vitamin G. This “G” stands for grounding, a warm tingling that moves through our body, bringing with it balance and well-being.

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***INSIGHT:* When we physically walk through the grass, lean against a tree, or splash in a running stream, we are energetically connecting to these natural energy sources, which promote balance and well-being in our energetic system.**

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Similar to the body's production of Vitamin D when exposed to sunlight, electrons enter the body through exposure to the ground, what can be characterized as an electrical nutrient, which acts much like antioxidants. It works to heal injuries, reduce muscle loss, enhance the immune system, and generally disarm the free radicals, those elements responsible for aging!!!

Regular contact with Earth's natural surface prevents chronic inflammation in the body. As an example of the effectiveness of grounding in healing, one man who genetically inherited "sticky blood," which includes a history of aneurysms and blood clots, purchased and used a grounding sheet. Earthing not only eliminated his leg pain, but his blood pressure became normal without medication. There are literally thousands of similar examples

available on the Internet, and almost as many products to help people ground themselves with the Earth. [No endorsements intended.]

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EXERCISE: *Grounding through Nature*

STEP 1: Find a comfortable place outside to stand quietly in the grass with bare feet. Empty your head (using your creative imagination to do so). Closing your eyes, gently wiggle your toes in the grass. Feel the energy of the Earth rising up through your feet, your legs, your torso, then simultaneously flowing down your arms and up your neck into your head, where it mixes with the white light streaming into your head from above, and then moves back down your body and into the Earth. This cycle repeats. Take deep breaths in rhythm with the energy rising and returning, rising and returning. Continue until you are ready to move.

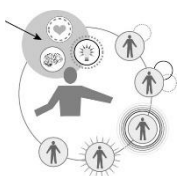
STEP 2: Open your eyes and walk to a nearby tree, feeling a surge of Earth energy into your being with every footstep. When you reach the tree, spread your palms against the outer bark, close your eyes, and ever so slowly use your creative imagination to move your consciousness into the middle of the tree. There is a pinkness there, and a pulsing. Feel this life pulse of the tree and let your heart beat at the same rhythm. Become one with the tree. When you are

ready to move on, thank the tree, slowly bringing your awareness back into your body and opening your eyes.

STEP 3: Walk to some nearby bushes. Sit on the ground or in a chair in front of them, facing them. Feel the solidity of the ground beneath your feet. You are connected. Pick a specific leaf or small clump of leaves on the bush and focus on those. Note that they are alive. Reflect on their size, color, how they are attached to the stem and one another, their beauty. If there is a breeze, watch their movement. Reach out your hand and gently touch the leaves, closing your eyes and pulling their energy into your hand. There is a warmth in their feel, almost a kiss. When you are ready, send loving thoughts to this plant, open your eyes, and gently bring yourself back into a standing position.

STEP 4: Turning your face upwards, feel the light of the sun (day) or the gentle echo of the moon (night) against your face. Invite the light to enter through the pores of your skin. Feel it caressing you, filling you and gently rolling over your skin, and, like the gentle dripping of a soft shower, moving into the earth below you. When you are complete, thank the light and slowly bring yourself back into your reality.

REFLECT: Which energy of nature did you identify with closely? Why?



Idea 6: Our thoughts, supported by our emotions, are key to moving stuck energy.

If we didn't already believe it from the behavioral viewpoint, it is clear from what we've learned from neuroscience since the turn of the century that the human mind/brain/body has amazing capacity and capabilities in terms of influencing the reality in which we co-evolve. Whether referring to the concept of *Ki*, introduced in Idea 1 above, the scientifically measurable energetic fields of which we are a part, or the energetic information fields with which we interact every instant of our lives—including both thoughts and emotions—energy can be captured, slowed or stopped both intentionally and unintentionally, consciously and unconsciously.

Energy that is retained in our system, whether physical, mental or emotional, becomes stagnant, what we can describe as stuck, clogged, bounded, or gapped. When this occurs, it affects the energy flow within ourselves, as well as our interaction with the larger ecosystem of which we are a part. *And it can have severe consequences health-wise.*

What does it mean to have blocked or stuck energy? Blocked or stuck energy is *in stasis*, which is a state of no change or motionlessness, often resulting from opposing forces that are balancing

each other. As we have learned from force-field models used for many years in our organizations, a situation will stay stuck as long as there is a balance of opposing forces. *Changes can only come by upsetting this balance.*

In the body, stuck energy might mean preventing energies from flowing normally through their regular channels. Let's look at several obvious examples related to our physical bodies: breath, sustenance and blood. A blockage to the circulation of air throughout our system might be caused, for example, by asthma, bronchitis or emphysema, or food lodged in our airway, and lead to death. A blockage to food and water intake or output can cause system collapse. And we all know the potential consequences of a blood clot. Similarly, while we don't generally think of our thoughts and emotions in terms of energy, they are part of a powerful energy force that has very much to do with both living and dying, and the quality of those experiences.

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INSIGHT: Our thoughts and emotions are part of a powerful energy force that has very much to do with both living and dying, and the quality of those experiences.

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Our new worldview has ushered in the emerging field of vibrational medicine, a science that

draws on both the latest scientific discoveries and ancient arts of healing. Vibrational medicine theory views illness as caused not only by toxins, germs and trauma, but by chronic dysfunctional emotional-energy patterns and the unhealthy ways that people relate to each other and themselves. *In this new worldview, consciousness and emotions play key roles in determining who becomes sick and who stays well.*

Looking through this lens, negative thoughts disrupt the flow of *Ki* and bring about "feeling poorly." A blockage of *Ki* diminishes the vital function of organs and cells of the physical body, which brings about illness.

Fortunately, various healing modalities that can assist in moving through blockages have been recorded for thousands of years. Energy healing concepts emerged in India and, later, appeared in Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Tibetan cultures.

A recent and well-known form of holistic energy healing is Reiki, taken from the Japanese word *Ki* and involving the laying on of hands. It is very similar to the Christian concept of "laying on of hands." Through Reiki, it is possible to clear our internal channels and open up the body to increased amounts of life energy for use in our own bodies, as well as to pass *Ki* on to others. This can happen in several ways.

First, the Reiki practitioner sets the intent, then opens to the free flow of *Ki* coming in through the crown, circulating through the body and exiting the hands. Note that the practitioner is not creating the energy, but increasing the flow of life force energy through the body and directing it toward areas in need of healing. As this energy moves through the affected part of the human energy field, the affected part is charged with positive energy, causing negative energy that is stuck to break apart. This negative energy can then be released; for example, directed into the ground. Once this negative energy has been released, the *Ki* can flow naturally through the body and healing can occur.

While this is only one possible scenario for the use of Reiki, it seemed a good example for our focus on grounding since it represents another way to perceive grounding. Interestingly enough, this approach is similar to a grounding rod, where unwanted or excess energies are directed into the Earth.

Here at Mountain Quest, which is an Inn situated in the middle of the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia, we attract many visitors who have electromagnetic sensitivity. This is because there are no cell phone towers in the area, so for these sensitive individuals there are fewer electromagnetic fields bombarding their bodies. These people come from all over the world, and people's sensitivities to

these new frequencies of electromagnetic energy seems to be increasing.

The other night we had a pretty scary episode occur. Now, remember, most of the people who show up in this cellphone tower-free area have been having increasing problems for months, maybe even years. So, when they are able to get a good night's sleep it is really special. Also, note that when a person has been in considerable pain for some period of time, it is difficult to be unaffected by mental and emotional disturbances as well. When in pain, we generally focus on ourselves, with our thoughts and feelings absorbed by the pain.

Anyway, whatever the source, she was blasted by a field of electromagnetic energy and her whole body began shaking uncontrollably. She was so weak she couldn't get down the few stairs to the ground, so another guest helped her down. There, she sat on a brick bench with her feet solidly planted in the grass. At one point, helping her with a bottle of water she was trying to bring to her mouth, I touched her. What an unbelievable tingling shot through my arm, down the length of my body and into the ground! I guess I'm lucky it didn't get stuck within me! Evidently that was what was happening to her.

Over the course of an hour and a half, eventually she was able to ground, with the shaking

and the various other symptoms connected with the event slowly subsiding.

Reiki energy heals the whole person—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. The physical part of a person is a dense body that can be perceived by sight and touch. The emotional, mental and spiritual parts of a person are nonphysical energy bodies comprised of *Ki*. Yet, since the source of dis-ease resides in these nonphysical bodies, they are closely intertwined with the health of the physical body.

While Reiki offers us an example of moving stuck energy through the body and using the Earth to ground this energy, it is not necessary to be a Reiki practitioner to move stuck energy or to move unwanted or excess energy out of your body. Remember, the physical body has its own integrated electromagnetic field, which keeps our mind firing and our body feeling and moving. And fortunately, should we choose, we can learn how to participate more fully in directing and managing that field as well as its effect on the larger field of which we are a part.

The mind is a powerful co-creator. Have you ever been pulled into a scary movie so far that when you leave the theater and something dark moves beside your car you are instantly filled with fear? Yes? No? Okay, let's come at this another way.

Let's focus on our emotions again. Imagine you are a young woman who has just completed a

marketing degree. You've always dreamed of working in New York, and then you get the opportunity of a lifetime: an interview with the largest PR firm in the city! Then, seven grueling hours of interviews which include sample photographs, writing, and layouts. They *do* give you lunch, so your energy is still high. You wait in the lobby for a while; then, when you are called back in, OMYGOSH! You are offered twice the salary you ever dreamed of making!

Floating out the front door and down the steps, you note that it is dark and realize that you are parked 20 blocks away, which is really close for parking in New York. As you start walking toward your car, you realize there are two very large men walking behind you. You speed up, and they speed up. You turn the corner, and they turn the corner behind you. Now, your heart is pumping. You start running, and they start running ... and they catch up to you. One of the men reaches forward and grabs your elbow. Your chest is pounding now and your breathing difficult as you whip around and face your pursuer. The man's other hand is reaching your direction. "Excuse me, miss. You dropped your wallet." And, sure enough, your wallet is there in the open hand being offered to you.

As you can see (or feel), our thoughts and feelings very much drive our actions and the

physical state of our body. This is why, of course, stress is cited as a number one killer.

Okay. You get the point. Anything you can imagine can affect your body and move into your reality. So, why not use your thoughts and feelings to direct your energy to flow freely through your body, much like happens when you focus on your breathing? Use your imagination.

So, here's a quick thought process to use next time you feel stuck energy. Maybe that stuck energy takes the form of a headache or stomachache, or maybe it is a pulled muscle or a pinched nerve. Sure, the physical can be treated by physical things, so if you need to take an aspirin or rub something on your body, or whatever process you follow, go ahead. Or ... engage your creative imagination, and maybe try this first.

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EXERCISE: *Moving Stuck Energy*

STEP 1: Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit or lie down. Close your eyes.

STEP 2: Focusing on your breath, breathe slowly and deeply, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Follow the breath with your thought, visualizing it moving into your lungs, entering your blood stream and circulating around your body as you continue slowly breathing in and out, in and out.

STEP 3: Shift your focus to discover the stream of light that is coming through the crown of your head into your body. Follow the light with your inner focus as it moves down through your neck and chest and then, simultaneously, down your arms to your hands and down your torso and legs to connect with the Earth below you.

STEP 4: Imagine the stream moving through you expanding beyond the limits of your body, swirling around you. This shower of light cleanses you inside and out, with any darkness running into the Earth just as dirty water exits a shower drain.

STEP 5: Continue this process until you feel light, almost floating, with all dark spots gone and your body in a state of peace and calm. Then, give thanks according to your personal beliefs, take a deep breath, and open your eyes.

REFLECT: How did you feel before you started this exercise? How do you feel now? Do you think this exercise would be worthwhile to repeat?

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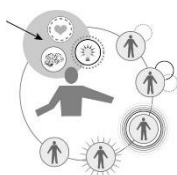
From poet Cindy Lee Scott's viewpoint, stuck energy doesn't just sit in the body waiting to be cleared, but builds upon itself. Here is her perspective:

Stuck energy is threatening to implode
Opposing powers building up, as foretold
Fighting against the flow of reality
Leading us to an energy fatality

Receiving, then releasing stuck energy
Creating vibrating grounded synergy
Forces tethered to the earth by gravity
Awakening a world filled to capacity

- Cindy Lee Scott

From a knowledge perspective, stuck energy means we cease to learn, and, over time, we lose the capability to interact and deal with changes in our environment. *When we cease to learn, we bound our knowledge to a model of the past while the future continuously presents differently.* Examples are politicians who think they know what is best for their constituents without listening to them, or a professor who does a Ph.D. on a theory and keeps teaching that theory for 30 years, despite the fact that new research has emerged. Any theory can only be considered a short stopping point in a much larger journey, that is, the search for a higher level of truth and the actions that support this journey.



Idea 7: Faith development, moral development and consciousness are a related journey

Belief and faith provide inner strength. At some level, every person grounds through belief and faith. We have a belief—about ourselves and our place in the world—and have faith that our belief is true. This is similar to how our ancient philosophers defined knowledge as “justified true belief,” a belief that has been proved true by acting on it and seeing the results.

A belief is a *feeling* that something is good, right or valuable. It is a feeling of trust in the worth or ability of someone or something, and might even be considered a *state or habit of mind* in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing. Belief is also related to a conviction of the truth. Note that a conviction is both a feeling and a state or habit of mind.

Think about the beliefs you have. Beliefs change how we perceive the world, and then our biology—the way we think and act—adapts to those beliefs. We each have a unique autobiography that includes different beliefs and personal goals. As my partner David always says: *What we believe leads to what we think leads to our knowledge base, which*

leads to our actions. For example, if we believe that we cannot do something, our thoughts, feelings, and actions will be such that, at best, that objective will be much more difficult to accomplish! If we believe we *can* accomplish something, we are much more likely to do so ... and this results from choice, not genes.

This description presents a chain of logic that ties our beliefs to our actions and our successes—or failures. Our beliefs heavily influence our mindset or frame of reference, the direction from which we perceive, reflect, and comprehend an external experience or situation. Thus, beliefs influence how we interpret and feel about the information that comes into our senses, what insights we develop, what ideas we create and what parts of the incoming information are most important to us.

Through observation, reflection and conceptualization we create our understanding and meaning of the external world. How we see the external world and how we emotionally feel about external events drives our actions and reactions. And how we act and react to our external environment influences whether we are successful or not, that is, whether we achieve our goals or not.

To understand the connection between beliefs, which are patterns in the mind, and the physiology of the brain, consider the following story. You have just received a phone call from the local police telling

you that your son has been killed in an automobile accident. Now, envision your feelings, emotions, and behavior, the changes in your body, your actions, and so on. These are all real physical responses which can be observed and measured. Two minutes later you receive a second call from the same policeman who tells you that there was a mistake and it was not your son who was killed. Now, imagine the changes in your body responses, thoughts and feelings. All that happened during those two minutes was created by you, caused by your perception of an event that had occurred. Only nothing really happened. Your son was perfectly healthy the entire time. All of the changes were created by the beliefs, thoughts and feelings within your own mind.

As you can see, beliefs and biology are not independent; they are intimately connected through the relationship of patterns of the mind (in the brain) and the physiology of the brain. And patterns of neuronal firings and changing synaptic strengths can, and do, create and release hormones that change the body ... very much based on thoughts and feelings.

Thus, *positive and negative beliefs affect every aspect of life*. This is a finding that has widespread application. When we recognize how powerful our beliefs are—recognizing that they are core pivot points in the hierarchy of life—we hold the key to freedom and **we can change our minds**. We can experience, interpret, and anticipate our responses to

external events, and *decide* on our response *as we choose*. Our thoughts can change our brains; our brains can change our body.

You know, today we have the benefit of neuroscience research to figure all this out. But, way back early last century, Henry Ford, the car giant, had it right, and he didn't know what we know! While Henry is remembered for introducing the efficiency of the assembly line, he also said that if you think you're right or you think you're wrong, you're right. He was right.

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***INSIGHT:* Positive and negative beliefs affect every aspect of our lives. As Henry Ford said, if you think you're right or if you think you're wrong, you're right!**

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Many of the same words used to define *beliefs* are used to define *faith*, that is, faith can be considered *a strong belief or trust* in someone or something, or *accepting something without question*. Of course, faith can also be a specific reference to belief in the existence of God or refer to other strong religious feelings or beliefs. In this context, faith is a *living attribute* which reflects a religious experience that is both genuine and personal.

The term faith may also carry with it the idea of obligation from loyalty, and thus is connected to

trust. From those who dig deeply into meanings of words, faith is considered independent of reason, with reason and faith two separate approaches, and faith having a higher truth value. In other words, there are some questions that reason cannot address, some larger truths that can only be achieved through faith.

As a grounding function, faith is a way of finding coherence and meaning in life. This idea of faith is in service to the discovery that poet Cindy Lee Scott described in her words: *And you become grounded when you find your inner self, and discover you are part of something larger.*

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INSIGHT: As a grounding function, faith is a way of finding coherence and meaning in life.

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As we reflect on this journey of life and the changes that come with experience and maturity, it is amazing to realize that the journey of faith, the journey of moral development and the journey of expanded consciousness are part of the same journey!

Let's explore this relationship through the eyes of three well-known and highly respected researchers: the theologian James W. Fowler,¹² the psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg,¹³ and the psychiatrist David R. Hawkins.¹⁴ I think this

exploration is important, because whatever age you happen to be right now, as long as you continue living, you will grow older every day and eventually be my age ... and, frankly, these things become VERY important as you move closer to the end of this life. I'm always asking myself: Have I learned enough? Have I done enough? How can I make a bigger difference? And, since life is finite, whatever I decide still needs doing, I'd better do now!

As a baseline, the **Intelligent Social Change Journey** (ISCJ) that is detailed in the BIG books *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change* focuses on three phase changes, with each phase building on/expanding from the previous phase. The first phase of our learning journey is based on understanding past cause-and-effect relationships based on the lower mental thinking of logic.

When we begin to recognize patterns, we move into higher mental conceptual thinking, and begin to co-evolve with our environment, taking patterns from the past and, in the “now,” using those patterns to make decisions about the future. This co-evolving requires a deeper understanding of your self (thoughts and emotions) and developing an empathy for the others with whom you are co-evolving.

As we develop a higher understanding of patterns and connections, we begin to recognize that everything is connected and we are all part of a larger ecosystem, whether we call that the

consciousness field, the Quantum field or the God field. With this understanding, compassion for others blooms. This phase of our developmental journey introduces the creative leap, as we now recognize the power of our thoughts and feelings, and fully take on our role as co-creators of our reality.

Now, back to our three researchers.

First, delving into the psychology of human development and the search for meaning, the theologian James (I don't know whether he goes by Jim, so we're going to use his more formal name) proposed *six stages of faith-development* which correlate to development of the self across the lifespan. Note that this does not mean that every individual makes it through all these stages during a single lifetime!

Second, looking through the lens of moral development, the psychologist Lawrence identified *a hierarchical relationship among six stages*, with each subsequent stage reorganizing and integrating the preceding one, providing the basis for moral decisions. Thus, this sequence is fixed, although timing is different for different people.

Third, the psychiatrist David uses the concept of levels of consciousness to represent *calibrated levels correlated with a specific process of consciousness*, which includes emotions, perceptions, attitudes, worldviews and spiritual beliefs. He mapped the

energy field of consciousness, with the levels ranging from 0 to 1,000.

What fun! Now, what are these stages all about and how do they link together? Ready?

The first faith stage is *intuitive-projective*, when a young child uses speech and symbols to organize experiences into meaning units. This is a fantasy-filled, imitative phase, prior to development of mental capabilities.

It is in the second faith stage of *mythic-literal* where the ten-year-old, capable of both inductive and deductive reasoning, constructs an orderly, linear and dependable world, primarily using story. In terms of moral development, we are now in the first stage, where there are consequences to actions, with power of authority and punishment. This is part of **Phase 1** of the ISCJ, and, in consciousness development, we are moving through the first 150 levels which include shame, guilt, apathy, grief, fear, desire and anger. It's a really good thing when we move through all of these! Still, good learning.

In the third faith stage, there is both a reflection on self and movement into a social, conformist stage. Similarly, the second stage of moral development moves through conventional reasoning to the beginnings of balancing self-interests with the interests of others, which, in stage three has an interpersonal relationship focus, seeking approval of significant others. Boy, do I remember that stage! In

the conscious expansion journey, at this level pride and courage are important.

Phase 2 of the IS CJ focuses on co-evolving, with social interaction and the individuated human working together. In faith development, we are in the fourth stage, what is called *individuating-reflective*, where the individual develops a system of meaning while incorporating others perspectives. In the moral development journey, we are in stage four, where rules have been internalized and are *obeyed for their own sake* rather than for the sake of others. At this stage, consciousness levels move through willingness and acceptance toward reason.

We are still in **Phase 2** but **moving toward Phase 3** of the IS CJ as we enter the fifth stage of faith development, a way of seeing, knowing and committing beyond logic, which includes seeing both sides of an issue simultaneously and recognizing the interrelatedness of things. We have also entered stage five of moral development, considering each situation differently, developing rules and principles for good decision-making and behavior, and *recognizing the need for flexibility and relativism* in rules of behavior and protection of all individuals. In other words, there is not one answer, but many, such that we must use our learned discernment to choose the best course of action! On our consciousness journey we have moved further

into love, and an interest in spiritual awareness is emerging.

As we are firmly in **Phase 3** of the ISCJ, the creative leap, with recognition of global Oneness and the development of compassion, we have entered the sixth stage of faith development. This is a *transcendent actuality of unconditional love and universal compassion*. There is a selfless passion to serve others and a desire to transform the world. This is also the sixth stage of moral development, where the person has individuated while simultaneously taking actions based on *universal moral principles*. This individual is able to accurately take the perspective of each person and group affected. In our consciousness expansion journey, we now move into joy and peace, and *the good of mankind becomes a primary goal*.

Wow! What a journey! Were you able to tap into where you are on your own personal journey? I left out most of the “formal” names and put in some descriptions instead. And while I was keyboarding this stuff, I was trying to figure out where I am on this journey.

Upon reflecting, I think the close relationship of growth and expansion among moral development, faith development, consciousness expansion and the ISCJ is *not* a coincidence. The ISCJ is a journey that encompasses all aspects of what it is to be human,

and there is growth and expansion from *all* of those aspects.

As we have come to recognize over the past century, the human is holistic, that is, our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual natures work together to create a whole human. One cannot be separated out from the others. Thus, faith development and moral development, along with consciousness expansion, are all interconnected with the Intelligent Social Change Journey.

Hmmm. A few final thoughts?

When we consider that everything is composed of energy and patterns of energy, the energetic connections among all things are not surprising, nor should the human connections to each other and the Earth come as a surprise. We are continuously exchanging energy with others and our environment. Nor is it a surprise that material goods help ground us, especially if they have emotional connections to our foundations of family.

We as humans often tend to take something good to the extreme, throwing us out of balance as we act and interact in a changing, uncertain and complex environment. Understanding those things that ground us, that keep us balanced in life, is important both for our comfort, and for our sustainability as a living system.

[Your Thoughts]

What does this mean to me?

All right, let's get down to the bottom line here. This stuff is pretty good, and yes, some of it makes good sense. But what is my take-away? How can all this make a difference in my experience of life, in my job, in my relationships?

Let's bullet a few highlights, and you might reflect on how you might change your behaviors in response to each of these learnings.



You are an energy being that both generates and receives energy from the environment. Everything you think, feel and do has some level of impact on the larger world!



Understanding our pivot points, which serve as grounding for other activities, helps us consciously make future choices.



In the global world of technology, the new order is built on social engagement and ideas. Your ideas, and sharing your ideas, is critical to the advancement of humanity.



Because of our focus in the physical, material things can be important to us. When materialism advances and becomes primary in an individual, the characteristics of superficiality, exclusion, covetousness, fear,

consumption and entitlement emerge, which lead to Narcissism.



When we physically walk through the grass, lean against a tree, or splash in a running stream, we are energetically connecting to these natural energy sources, replenishing our own system and promoting balance and well-being.



Energy that is retained in our system, whether physical, mental or emotional, becomes stagnant. Choosing our thoughts and feelings, and using our creative imagination, we can learn how to direct and manage that field as well as its effect on the larger field of which we are a part.



Reflecting on your own developmental journey in terms of faith, morality and consciousness, how do you feel about it? Are you comfortable with the rate of your development? What are the best steps for you to take next? There is so much you can contribute!

Get it?

YOU make a difference in this world!

Stay grounded.

This volume of **Conscious Look Books** builds conversationally on the ideas presented in *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part II: Learning from the Past*, largely presented in Chapter 10: “Grounding Change” and *Part III: Learning in the Present*, Chapter 13, “The New Reality,” Chapter 18, “Easing into the Flow,” and Chapter 20, “Stuck Energy: Limiting and Accelerating.” Co-authors of the original text include David Bennet, Arthur Shelley, Theresa Bullard, John Lewis and Donna Panucci. Full references are available in the original text, which is published by MQIPress, Frost, WV (2017), and available as an eBook on www.amazon.com

Endnotes

¹ Quoted from Wing, R.L. (Trans) (1986). *The Tao of Power: Lao Tzu's Classic Guide to Leadership, Influence, and Excellence*. New York: Doubleday, 13.

² Physicist Niles MacFlouer has hosted weekly radio shows from 2004 to the present titled Why Life Is. See www.agelesswisdom.com/archives_of_radio_shows.htm See also, N. MacFlouer (1999). *Life's Hidden Meaning*. Tempe, AZ: Ageless Wisdom Publishers.

³ Mary Coddington has written several books on healing energies. The book referenced here is Coddington, M. (1978). *In Search of the Healing Energy*. New York, NY: Destiny Books.

⁴ These four worldviews represent the leaders, scientists, artists and entrepreneurs described in the work of Lawrence LeShan (*Alternative Realities*. New York: Ballantine, 1976). These archetypes are also consistent with Thomas Kuhn's paradigms (*The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, 2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972); Stephen C. Pepper's four worldviews (*World Hypothesis: A Study of Evidence*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942); G. Burrell and G. Morgan's sociological approach (*Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, London: Heinemann, 1979); and Jean Gebser's work on consciousness development (*The Ever-Present Origin*, Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas, Trans., Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985) work on consciousness development. See also Will McWhinney work on change (*Paths of Change: Strategic Choices for Organizations and Society*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1997). In other words, some of our greatest minds have identified similar concepts.

⁵ See Wilber, K. (1996). *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala. Wilber contends “It’s only a small step further to actually experience your central identity, not just with all human beings, but all living beings. The global or worldcentric awareness simply steps up another notch, escapes its anthropocentric prejudice, and announces itself as all sentient beings. You experience the World Soul,” 203.

⁶ Schore, A.N. (1994). *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self: The Neurobiology of Emotional Development*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, as cited in Cozolino, L.J. (2002). *The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy: Building and Rebuilding the Human Brain*. New York: Norton, 191.

⁷ *The Hindu* (2001) uses the example of the mental revolution that preceded the circumnavigation of the globe. In this example, Ferdinand Magellan was daring enough to embark on this adventure because he saw the sea as a body of water that connected continents, not separated them! His contemporaries took the opposite viewpoint. The Hindu forwards that materialism, then, “is a throw-back to the pre-Magellan era in the geography of the soul.”

⁸ See Arnold, M. (1869 in 1960-1977). “Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism” in Super, R.H. (ed.), *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, Vol. V: Culture and Anarchy with Friendship’s Garland and Some Literary Essays* (1965): 28-29. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

⁹ Quoted from Weber, M. (1905). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Retrieved 06/22/2016 from www.marxists.org/reference/archive/weber/protestant-ethic/ch05.htm

¹⁰ See Malafsky, G.P. and Newman, B.D. (2008). “Organizing Knowledge with Ontologies and Taxonomies” in *U.S. Forest*

Service Knowledge Sharing & Conservation Toolkit. Frost, WV: Mountain Quest Institute.

¹¹ See Koestler, A. (1967). *The Ghost in the Machine* (1990 reprint). London: Hutchinson (Penguin Group).

¹² See Fowler, J.W. (1995). *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. New York: HarperCollins.

¹³ See Kohlberg, L. (1981). *Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice*, Harper, San Francisco, CA.

¹⁴ See Hawkins, D.R. (2002). *Power VS Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House.

The Volumes in
Possibilities that are YOU!

All Things in Balance

The Art of Thought Adjusting

Associative Patterning and Attracting

Beyond Action

The Bifurcation

Connections as Patterns

Conscious Compassion

The Creative Leap

The Emerging Self

The Emoting Guidance System

Engaging Forces

The ERC's of Intuition

Grounding

The Humanness of Humility

Intention and Attention

Knowing

Living Virtues for Today

ME as Co-Creator

Seeking Wisdom

Staying on the Path

Transcendent Beauty

Truth in Context

Grounding has to do with receiving and releasing energy. It has to do with feeling connected and secure, providing a baseline or foundation, and keeping us balanced.

This *Conscious Look Book* is about exploring the many ways that humans choose to ground themselves as they live out their lives as physical, mental, emotional and spiritual beings on planet Earth.

