

Possibilities that are **YOU!**

Volume 5: Truth in Context

by Alex Bennet



This is Vol 5 in 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 5: Truth in Context

by
Alex Bennet



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*Truth accepted yesterday
May not be truth for today
Learning, oft in constant flux,
Shows truth in a whole new way*

*Think about your solid beliefs
A measly few years ago,
Truths may be quite different
Than the ones you used to know*

*Working together and open
To ideas and points of view,
Collaborate while searching,
Unearthing truths ever new*

-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

The very concept of knowledge is concerned with truth. In fact, Plato defined knowledge as *justified true belief*. If someone *believed* something was true, and could justify their belief by demonstrating it was true, then that person had knowledge. This definition served humanity well in beginning a conversation around the meaning of knowledge, and the definitions we use today build on this early conversation.

However, today we realize that humans act on more than beliefs—that our very thoughts and the focus of those thoughts move us to act. Not only our beliefs, but our values and other mental models emerging from our day-by-day experiential learning promote our actions. So, today we define knowledge as “the capacity (potential or actual) to take effective action.” The word “effective” relates both to the “truth” of knowledge in terms of meeting an anticipated outcome AND our understanding of relativity. We’re going to talk about that in Idea 1. This functional definition also adds the concept of “potential,” acknowledging the value of life learning in preparing us to take effective action in the future. This is, of course, why we invest a great deal of capital and time in learning a trade or sending our children to college to gain knowledge that prepares

them for the *ability to take effective action* in the future.

Truth is not discovered; it is created. There is not a written set of truths that can be consulted for every situation in which we find ourselves. *Who* we consult is ourselves, tapping into our beliefs and values, and drawing from the vast number of experiences and amount of learning that has occurred in our lives. At any point in time, we can take a truth and compare it against a related aspect of our existence and tell whether something will likely pan out or not.¹

In the cycle of the individual change model, our search for truth begins with *awareness*—which we hope this little book provides—expands into *understanding* and *believing*, then *feeling good*, coming with recognition of *personal responsibility*. It is then that the *knowledge of how to act* and the *courage to act* offers us choices.

Let us begin.



Idea 1: Truth is a changing target and relative to our self.

Truth, as knowledge, is context-sensitive and situation-dependent. This means that truth is relative to the situation at hand, and we are in the center of that situation as the person who is perceiving that truth. Yet, what may be true in one situation, may not be true in another situation. Even concepts that provide a higher level of truth than truth related to a single event are continuously shifting and changing.

At least from our human perspective, there are no absolute truths. When a new situation occurs where a concept that was previously considered as truth does not fit, then a larger concept exists that encompasses that concept, and our job is to find that higher level of truth. Since humans operate from a place of yearning to know the truth, when prompted by insecurity, our mind often does embrace what we perceive as “absolute truths” in an attempt to develop internal stability. This may take the form of a set of rules or beliefs, deference to an external authority, or a repeatable pattern of past events.

When we lock onto a truth as absolute, it causes us to separate from a changing world and hinders our ability to judge and make decisions from an objective viewpoint, not allowing ourselves to grow and change. Leonard Cooper, a computer guru,

musician and founder of the *Planetary Heart* foundation, says that “Truth is a living, dynamic awareness that grows in its meaning and value as our consciousness expands.” Further, Len contends that locking into an absolute truth *not only hinders* our expansion of consciousness, but “does not allow the continuous and steady development of unconditional love through the acceptance and understanding of ALL things created in the Universe.”²

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INSIGHT: Locking into an absolute truth “does not allow the continuous and steady development of unconditional love through the acceptance and understanding of ALL things created in the Universe.”

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There are many belief systems available for humans to lock onto, and they can and do help us interpret the many events that occur in our lives. Let’s use science as an example. For many years our understanding of life followed a mechanical model that involved forces acting on matter. This was based on the 17th century laws of motion and gravity generated by Sir Isaac Newton. It wasn’t until the 20th century with Einstein’s theory of relativity and the emergence of Quantum physics that we realized the limits of Newtonian physics! As we continue our consciousness expansion, that which was thought of as “metaphysics” becomes “physics.”

Beyond the security provided by belief in absolute truths, there is also an internal conflict—discomfort and even confusion—when something we have believed was true is threatened. This is where we need to fully engage our minds and hearts to explore possibilities. For example, if we believe and say there is no cure for cancer, we would never try a new treatment or drug, which might prolong life or, one day, provide a cure for the “uncurable.” As you can see, as an experiential learner in the school of life, absolutes do not serve us.

As we now begin to understand, in our everyday life truth is a relative value, subjective and, like knowledge, highly context-sensitive and situation-dependent. While truth, the highest virtue in the mental world, has the ability to reduce forces, since it is a variable changing and growing over time, it can only be *effectively used during a limited period of time*. Over time, dynamic differences cause forces to develop, and old truths become conceptually and logically wrong.

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INSIGHT: Truth, the highest virtue in the mental world, can only be effectively used during a limited period of time. Over time, old truths become conceptually and logically wrong.

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Thus, there is an inverse correlation between the amount of relativity and the amount of truth in a concept. The less relativity, the more truth; the more truth, the less relativity.

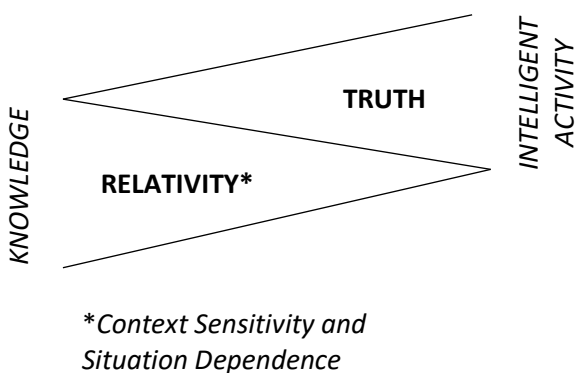


Figure 1. *The inverse correlation between the amount of relativity and the amount of truth in a concept.*

Further, in our shifting reality and because we are both individuated and complex adaptive systems, an apparent truth and an imagined truth may accompany the actual truth (perceived during the moment at hand). These are similar to seeing three levels of reality, with things experienced at the level of distortion (imagined truth), the level of observation (apparent truth) or the level of ultimate truth (actual truth), which, of course, is subject to all of the

discussion in this little book. Note that while there are three levels of truth in this model, these are NOT to be confused with the levels of knowledge and truth discussed in Idea 3.

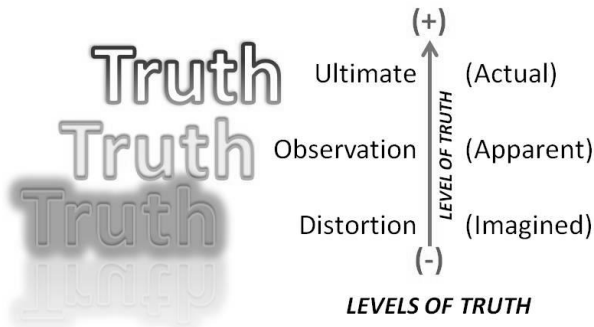


Figure 2. *Three levels of truth.*³

Thus, truth is a changing target and, as a quality of reality, is relative to our self (experiences, beliefs, values, etc.) and the amount of information that has been garnered, which, like knowledge, is at some level context-sensitive and situation-dependent.

Since we are continuous learners and the situation in which we find ourselves is continuously changing, new knowledge is always emerging and we, as co-creators, are continuously changing our way of seeing and interacting with the world. As

truth seekers, being human carries with it a huge responsibility, with the individual ability to discern higher truths impacting all those with whom we interact.

As humans, we are reminded that while things are relative in time in the physical reality in which we live, we are all on the path searching for higher truth. “The more truth you know, the more truth you are, the more of the past you can understand and the more of the future you can comprehend.”⁴ The search for truth is essential to co-creating the future.

We begin our deeper exploration of truth by first expanding our understanding of knowledge.



Idea 2: Like knowledge there are levels of truth.

It is helpful to think about knowledge in terms of levels. And, because I worked with the U.S. Navy for some 20 years, naturally I think of these levels in terms of surface, shallow and deep. The analogy built upon here is that of exploring the ocean. A pontoon or light sail boat catching the wind skims rapidly across the waters without concern for that which lies below in the water. As long as whatever lies below does not come to or affect the surface, it is of little concern to forward movement. Note that there would still be the impact of surface perturbations such as storms, other boats, etc.

For any boat moving in shallow waters, more attention (and some understanding) is required of what is beneath the surface, dependent on the ballast, to ensure forward movement. Not only is an understanding of depth necessary, but also the underwater currents.

In deep waters—engaged over longer periods of time—safety and success require a proven vessel, an experienced captain, a thorough understanding of oceanography, a well-honed navigation system sensitive to current flows and dangers of the ocean, and a well-developed intuition sensitive to deep water terrain, weather patterns, currents and so forth.

Carrying the metaphor a bit farther, whether surfing or moving through shallow or deep waters, a certain amount of skill is involved, although these also require somewhat different skill sets. The metaphor deals with the level of involvement with what is below the surface, that which is hidden from sight. When we talk about knowledge, we often use the word “tacit” to describe knowledge which is in our unconscious and is difficult to pull up and express. Similarly, as a ship moves into deep waters there is increased reliance on experience and intuition as unforeseen perturbations affect the situation.

Because surface knowledge is continuously changing in response to a change, uncertain and complex environment, the element of truth is also changing. For example, direction on how to get to someone’s house are dependent on road repairs, added traffic lights, time of day, changing landmarks, etc.

Because context is so important to understanding shallow knowledge, it may be difficult to discern the level of truth, which is critical to the next actions you take. For example, is the source of your information trustworthy? How will you determine the truth of this information? How was the information shared with you? Did you understand it correctly? When did this event happen? Note that since knowledge is defined as the capacity to take

effective action, personal intent plays a large role in what is determined knowledge from the viewpoint of the user. For example, from their viewpoint, the executors of the 9/11 terrorist attack in the U.S. had “good” knowledge.

In an organizational setting, shallow knowledge emerges (and expands) through interactions as employees move within and through the processes and practices of the organization. For example, organizations that embrace the use of teams and communities facilitate the mobilization of knowledge and the creation of new ideas as individuals interact in those groups. While the level of truth in shallow knowledge may be greater than surface knowledge, nonetheless, shallow knowledge is also highly sensitive to gossip and propaganda since this is the realm of social knowledge. Propaganda is the focus of Ideas 4 and 5.

Because deep knowledge is largely conceptual—based on the patterns emerging from multiple events—its level of truth is generally higher and longer lasting than surface or shallow knowledge. However, the development of deep knowledge is not an easy task. It takes an intense and persistent interest, focus and dedication to a specific area of learning, knowledge and action. A person must “live” with their field of expertise and, at the same time, focus on the details and contexts of specific experiences. Asking questions and analyzing

what went right, what went wrong and why leads to uncovering relationships and patterns that, over time, become the bedrock of expertise, or deep knowledge. Gathering relevant information and chunking it builds up a wide range of higher-order patterns that support conceptual thinking and provide models to draw upon when encountering a new or unusual situation.

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***INSIGHT:* Because deep knowledge is largely conceptual, its level of truth is generally higher and longer lasting than surface or shallow knowledge.**

Since we are continuous learners (remember, you are a verb, not a noun!), each learning experience can build on its predecessor by broadening the sources of knowledge creation and the capacity to create knowledge in different ways. When a person has deep knowledge, more and more of their learning will build up in the unconscious. In other words, in the area of focus, knowledge begets knowledge. The more that is understood, the more that can be created and understood, and the better qualified we are to judge the level of truth of this knowledge in various situations.

Deep knowledge can also be a limiting frame by choice or by focus, and it potentially carries with

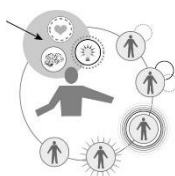
it the perceptual burden of ownership. This is because it becomes our point of reference to the world, complete with its self-constructed set of mental models and beliefs. Since knowledge is a capacity, continuously emerging in individuals and social settings in response to a shifting changing environment, no one can own or control knowledge.

Deep knowledge does NOT represent a perfect state of interaction, which is intelligent activity.⁵ In fact, an inherent difficulty with deep knowledge is communicating it and having others understand it! Because of this difficulty, a separation often occurs between the expert and the user, with the ever-present danger that the expert ceases to interact with others and the environment, limiting the expert to relying on past input that can rapidly become outdated. When this happens, the expert may perceive himself AS the knowledge instead of the creator and user of knowledge, with this behavior reinforced by others' reliance on him.

Becoming the knowledge can lead an expert to push, direct or order—and perhaps even control—others' actions because of a perceived superiority. Further, as noted above, when an expert is cut off from the environment, there is a diminishment of situational and experiential learning related to that environment, which eventually leads to a lack of effectiveness, with a lowering of the level of truth no

matter how good the knowledge was previously perceived to be!

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 3: Seeking truth has a great deal to do with expanding our consciousness.

Truth is highly contingent on a person's level of consciousness and level of perception. Perception, which is impressions, attitudes and understanding about what is observed, is the result of using our senses to acquire information about a situation or the surrounding environment.⁶ Since each person is unique, both in terms of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual makeup, as well as in terms of experiences, individual perceptions also vary. For example, the value of truth—whether subjective, operational, hypothetical or intellectual—is dependent on its means *as translated by individual perception*.

David Hawkins, a medical doctor and a scientist, says that the legitimacy of truth is *highly dependent* on the context of an individual's perceptual level. As David details, "Truth isn't functional unless it's meaningful and meaning, like value, relies on a unique perceptual field. Facts and data may be convincing at one level and irrelevant at another."⁷

My partner David used a particular slide to get this point across. Let me see if I can find that ... it's

pretty old (as we are at this point!) and I have no idea where it came from ... Oh, found it!

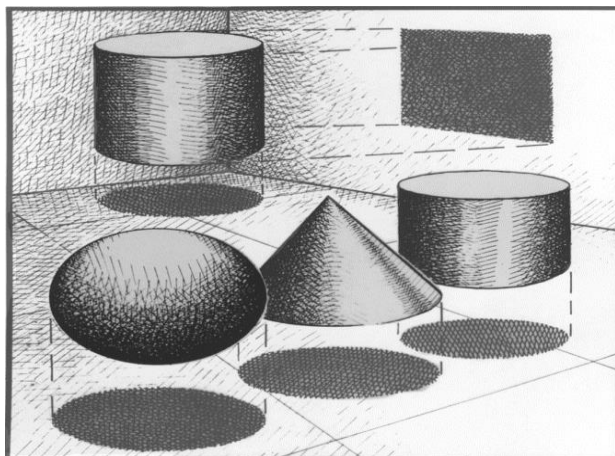


Figure 1. *What you see depends on the direction from which you look.*

A really interesting example of the power of perception in relation to truth is the shadows on the wall of Plato's cave. You may have heard of this allegory before. It relates the story of slaves who live within the confines of a cave, chained such that they are facing a wall and can only see shadows moving on the wall, shadows that become their reality. When one slave escapes and sees the outside world, realizing that their entire view of the world is wrong, he goes to tell the other slaves. They reject the idea and defend their current reality. This is the timeless

struggle with change, when it conflicts with our worldview!

When truth is meaningful, it is functional, which is also dependent on a person's intellectual level and ability for abstraction. Thus, all truth, at least in the physical/emotion/mental planes, which are the focus of this book, is dependent on the individual perceiving that truth.

Levels of consciousness are more complex than levels of knowledge! Actually, different writers use “levels” in different ways when talking about consciousness. We're only going to touch on this, and to do that we use the work of David Hawkins, who provided a pretty good quote a few minutes ago.

David uses the concept of “levels” to represent calibrated levels correlated with a specific process of consciousness—emotions, perceptions, attitudes, worldviews and spiritual beliefs. He took 20 years to develop this, interviewing thousands of people of all ages. Then, he mapped the energy field of consciousness, with the levels ranging from 0 to 1,000. To get an idea of this, the progression is as follows: 20 (Shame); 30 (Guilt); 50 (Apathy); 75 (Grief); 100 (Fear); 125 (Desire); 150 (Anger); 175 (Pride); 200 (Courage); 250 (Neutrality); 310 (Willingness); 350 (Acceptance); 400 (Reason); 500 (Love); 540 (Joy); 600 (Peace); 700-1,000 (Enlightenment).

The 200 level, that associated with integrity and courage, is a critical response point since it is the point between negative and positive influences. Attitudes, thoughts, feelings and associations with levels below 200 make people weaker and are associated with force; those above make people stronger and are associated with power. As people move from the lower negative emotions into courage, increasing the well-being of others becomes more important.

When thinking about these levels there are two important points to remember. First, the relationship among the levels is logarithmic. This means that the level 200 is not a doubling of 100, but rather 10^{200} , which means multiplying it by itself 200 times! Second, these are not pure states. A person can have different levels of consciousness in different areas of their lives.

There are patterns that emerge. Such a pattern is that “at the lower levels of consciousness, propositions are accepted as true even when they’re illogical, unfounded, and express tenets neither intellectually provable or practically demonstrable.”⁸ For example, people are convicted of crimes they did not commit because of their cultural heritage and being at the wrong place at the wrong time, and murder can occur based on the belief of the justice of revenge.

There has been a decline of the level of truth in the world's great religions. The split between belief and action in dualism causes a disorientation of levels of truth. For example, some religions preach love but don't practice it. The downfall of lofty spiritual teachings is largely based on their misinterpretation by those with lower consciousness. This phenomenon also occurs among political parties.

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INSIGHT: “At lower levels of consciousness, propositions are accepted as true even when they’re illogical, unfounded, and express tenets neither intellectually provable or practically demonstrable.”

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Because truth is structured, it can be discerned in comparison to another truth and can be given a relative value regarding the level of truth. That relative value is a mathematical representation of how much a conceptual truth is true in a specific example. And, because truth is relative, over time we are able to recognize situational value and determine contradictions.

Through conceptual thinking, our higher mental senses tell us when truth is not truth by recognizing forces moving in a different direction. This can occur by identifying examples that do not

fit into a concept. Conceptual thinking also brings with it an understanding of the relationships among concepts and examples.

Let's say that from personal experience, I believe that all horses eat sugar out of my hand. Then, I find a horse that won't take it out of my hand. I'm shaking my head in surprise as the owner walks up, takes the sugar cube, and the horse eagerly takes it out of her hand! Now, I have to change my concept to all horses who know me eat sugar out of my hand. A little element that involved "trust" came into the concept!

* * * * *

EXERCISE: *Truth Searching*

Since truth deals with what is generally believed or considered "facts" in a particular context or focused on a particular situation, the search for truth is a search for examples of the level of truth currently known.

STEP 1: Clearly define the truth which you are affirming (Truth A).

STEP 2: Understand the context and/or situation clearly from which this truth is emerging (Situation/Event A). In this stage, it is important to engage both logical and conceptual thinking. Logic

is lower mental thinking (cause-and-effect) and concepts (as patterns) are higher mental thinking.

STEP 3: Search for other situations or events that reflect similar patterns (Situations/Events B, C, etc.) For each situation or event, *ask*: Is Truth A also true in this situation or event?

STEP 4: Determine the *level of truth* of Truth A. If Truth A is true in every situation and/or event you have identified, then, for the present, you can be confident of its truth value in Situation A. If Truth A does not work in one or more of the events and/or situations you identified, then reconsider the value of Truth A in Situation A.

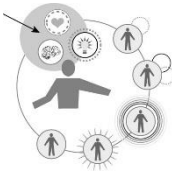
STEP 5: For any event/situation identified where Truth A does not work, first ensure the event/situation has a similar pattern of activity. If so, then reflect on how Truth A might be changed in order to become true in both Situation A and in this new event/situation. Continue with this process until you discover a truth that works in all of the events/situations you have identified or can identify that reflect similar patterns to Situation/Event A.

NOTE: While your personal beliefs may be difficult to circumvent, your body will often indicate that this is the case. A *cognitive dissonance* (which causes discomfort, such as a headache) can occur when considering two beliefs which are in conflict with each other. To help mitigate the possibility of cognitive biases and the injection of hidden

assumptions, *vericate* your findings with others in your network. *Verication* (which is a pretty neat word, sort of rolls off your tongue) is the process of consulting a trusted ally, that is, someone with expertise in the domain of knowledge in which you are truth searching. There is considerable discovery power in engaging groups of minds in truth searching!

Almost always, new ideas emerge from a negative insight, that is, recognition that the knowledge you have now is insufficient to explain a current situation. This requires discarding previous beliefs and theories in preference to a new or expanded conceptual truth. An example is Einstein's early paper on relativity, published at age 26 in 1905. In this paper, Einstein had to break away from the concept of absolute space and time so that he could accept the general principle of Maxwell's equations for electromagnetism, which are the symmetries that correspond to special relativity.⁹

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Idea 4: The information explosion has enabled a misinformation and disinformation explosion.

All knowledge is incomplete or imperfect. This is because (1) no single person or group can know everything there is to know about a certain topic, and (2) because people are verbs and learning all the time they are living, knowledge is continuously shifting and changing in concert with the environment, the demands placed upon us, and our response to that environment. Even knowledge that has been effective in one instant of time serves only as information in another instant of time, *even when applied in the same or a similar situation!* Thus, systems filled with data and information are also filled with misinformation, distorting the search for truth.

Disinformation coming from many different sources also abounds. While the term “disinformation” may appear to include *intent* of deception, people’s motives are impossible to test. So, we’re going to describe disinformation as that which is widely believed, yet *probably false*.¹⁰ This makes sense. The very concept of disinformation gains power if there is an element of uncertainty regarding the level of truth.

Let's explore the potential sources of disinformation. First, there are honest errors upon which myths are built. An example is the concept of "survival of the fittest," which was taken out of context. In a later publication, Darwin corrected it to read: "Those communities which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of offspring."¹¹ However, few people read or remember the correction, and the concept of *survival of the fittest* sure has caused a lot of damage when applied to organizations!

Some errors are simply mistakes, misquotes or misattributions. Some information is partial, confusing or ignores details and context such that what is provided cannot be understood. As seeming facts that become part of conventional wisdom yet are probably false, myths often become or promote memes. Memes are ideas, behavior patterns or pieces of information that are passed on, again and again, through the process of imitation such that they take on a life of their own!¹² For example, the meme "knowledge is power" kept people hoarding their knowledge until the meme "knowledge shared is power squared" took over!

Memes may or may not reflect the original intent of an idea. They act as replicators of information (that may become knowledge) as they spread throughout groups of individuals. The role

that memes play in learning comes from their capability to retain the memory because of their sound and meaning. Of course, learning only occurs if their meaning and relevance is understood by individuals within the group. This means that for memes to spread they need to relate to the culture, attitudes, expectations and interests of the group.

Learning can be greatly enhanced by the effective choice and use of memes throughout the communication process. Because they are symbolic, people using similar memes, together with common syntax and semantics, can understand each other much more effectively and rapidly, thereby more easily creating social networks which facilitate the transmission of information and the creation of knowledge. Think back. Have you ever used secret language, perhaps verbal “signals” with a loved one? Or, in the work environment, terms that represent much more than the words themselves? And do others start using those terms? Those might be considered memes.

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INSIGHT: Learning can be greatly enhanced by the effective choice and use of memes throughout the communication process.

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Memes become stronger (more memorable) when they are delivered in connection with an

emotional event that engages the feelings of the listener/participant. A well-known example of a meme was the U.S. Army's slogan for many years: *Be all you can be!*

A second source of disinformation is official spin, that is, selective partial information released by “those in charge” that favorably situates an event. This can be a destructive and controlling force when used by people in positions of power. A third source of disinformation is that spread by foreign sources. The media may pick up dubious information and run with it, or they may be misled by foreign websites and releases. A fourth source of disinformation is connected to historical amnesia. History easily vanishes from media memory, and dates of events are often confused in the rush to be the first to reveal breaking news. A fifth source of disinformation is leaks, which may or may not contain a level of truth. These are generally on purpose, with a personal agenda behind the leak.

Sensing the truth in others can occur in conjunction with higher-level communication skills such as empathy coupled with reflection. When we sense untruth in ourselves or others, forces are created. For example, consider the force between mental thinking and non-mental thinking when limited funding is being allocated and the choice is between a research study and an emotional plea to act now and take a chance. While we can mentally

sense when things are not heading in the same direction, calling emotions into play adds an element of confusion, creating force.

Physicist Niles MacFlouer¹³ forwards that the total value of truth (T) minus the value of untruth (U) equals force (F). Here's what that looks like in a mathematical equation:

$$T - U = F \text{ or } T - (t_1 + t_2 + t_3, \text{etc.}) = F$$

Truth has value; untruth *reduces the ability of thought to control energy*, so thinking becomes more difficult. Exposure to untruth reduces the structure of our thinking and reduces our senses. *The greater our exposure to untruths, the lower our ability to sense those untruths.* An example is the continuous pattering of a politician. When people become used to untruths they are not in a position to hear truth, that is, they cannot discern it.

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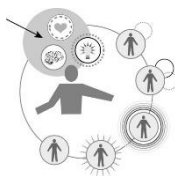
INSIGHT: The greater our exposure to untruths, the lower our ability to sense those untruths.

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One strategy to move toward intelligent communication with such individuals would be to share partial truths, slowly increasing their receptivity to the truth. If you have empathy and the

ability to think ahead, you can consider how another person is going to respond prior to communicating, and determine the level of truth to share that would be acceptable to that individual.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 5: Propaganda has increasingly become the method of choice for controlling the larger population and gaining power.

Recall that perception is our impressions, attitudes and understanding about what we observe. What we observe is what we are aware of, which is a product of the threshold through which we focus, our consciousness.

Since we are the perceiver, we can change internal mechanisms in order to affect external reality. For example, an artist will see things that a lawyer will not, and vice versa. Further, as we learn about our emotions, we can affect our personal feelings—bringing about personal change—by changing our perception. For example, when a person thinks about themselves as fat, they are continuously comparing themselves to others. When a person recognizes their personal beauty, whether outward or inward, individuation and contribution become more significant than comparison.

Perception can also be impacted by external forces. For example, because Fashion magazines use incredibly skinny models week after week, year after year, many individuals with normal body weight perceive themselves as fat. People are susceptible to social trends. Further, repeated bombardment of

ideas also has a heavy impact, such that even initially recognized untruths become partial truths which may, for an individual or society over time, become truths. Further, as introduced above, **the mixture of truth and untruth clogs our filters such that we lose the power of discernment.**

Further, this environment becomes even more confusing when considering the concepts of “right” or “wrong.” “Being right” or “not being wrong” is very much related to the ego and does not denote truth. In many situations, there is no right or wrong, just choice. By asserting that one is right, it assumes that other approaches are wrong, thus setting up forces. There is a Conscious Look Book on engaging forces.

With freedom of thinking and choice comes the need for discernment and discrimination in recognizing truth, and a good understanding of the broader ramifications of a decision. To discern is to have the ability to see the unobvious, to distinguish between two or more things, to have good taste and judgment.¹⁴ In the co-evolving environment of today, we are still heavily linked to a cause-and-effect model based on advance mental understanding of patterns and relationships among things. Yet, this is a space where third-order thinking (an unobvious choice) can arise, and it takes courage to choose whether to be a part of something larger or to assert one’s individuality.

Philosopher and teacher Will McWhinney talked about the courage required to take that third path of change. “The differentiating choice calls for the courage to commit to oneself. It is the belief that allows one to let go of the maintained worldview, that is, one’s story, in search of a new one ... the courage to see and the courage to act (or change).”¹⁵ This is self-empowerment, which requires the courage to act AND the knowledge of how to act.

Unfortunately, youth and innocence can be quite susceptible to propaganda and manipulation. This is immortalized in the words of poet Cindy Lee Scott in her verse titled *Innocence*:

Oh, for the innocence of the heart,
 So vulnerable to manipulation,
 Gullible to charismatic intellectuals,
 That fill the lamb with jubilation.

The naive trust the knowledgeable schemer,
 Sitting upon a visionary's imagined throne,
 Giving enlightenment with the jaded word,
 Asking the susceptible to give all they own.

Simple minded, unsuspecting of the teachings,
 Impervious to how vulnerable they may be.
 Unpretentious in receiving information,
 Believing and accepting what they see.

Propaganda is a group of ideas or statements, often false or exaggerated, that are spread with intent, to help or hinder a cause, a political leader, a government, etc.¹⁶ **Propaganda is a mode of power and control through information.** Note that while the information associated with propaganda may or may not be true, it is selectively engaged and spread to accomplish a hidden agenda, highly questionable as to level of truth for the situation at hand. Thus, the knowledge created from propaganda does not lead to intelligent activity.

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***INSIGHT:* Because it is selectively engaged and spread to accomplish a hidden agenda, the knowledge created from propaganda does not lead to intelligent activity.**

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As an element of information warfare, in today's global environment, *propaganda has no visible and definable fronts*; it is not geographically localizable and is ubiquitous, everywhere simultaneously. This is the dark side of globalization. Further, because of fragmentation in small bites and wide-spread dispersal at every level of society, it is intangible and can be difficult to recognize. These small bites are of a nature such that they often morph into memes, catching on and becoming part of a larger myth.

The threat is so real that governments around the world focus resources on mitigating disinformation and propaganda. For example, in December 2016, on his way out of office, U.S. President Barack Obama signed the 2017 National Defense Authorization act into law. Buried within this \$619 billion military budget was the Countering Disinformation and Propaganda Act, a provision that established a national anti-propaganda center in the State Department. This Global Engagement Center was tasked with recognizing, understanding, exposing and countering “foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining United States national security interests.” The law also grants non-governmental agencies the tasking to help “collect and store examples in print, online, and social media, disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda” that is directed toward the U.S. and its allies, as well as to help “counter efforts by foreign entities to use disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda to influence the policies and social and political stability.”

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***INSIGHT:* The threat is so real that governments around the world focus resources on mitigating disinformation and propaganda.**

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While this bipartisan bill received overwhelming support in both Houses, and it may well provide some awareness to citizens in terms of disinformation and propaganda distributed across the Internet, countering disinformation and propaganda can prove quite difficult without leaning too far over the other direction, that is, pushing out disinformation and propaganda that favors the country (party, organization) and those it supports. Today this potential has become a reality in many parts of the world.

This has happened before. As early as 1971, Lewis Powell, a former U.S. Supreme Court Justice, designed a campaign to counter what he called an attack on the American free enterprise system. This report called for generating resources, directing government policy, and molding public opinion. It included specific methods that could be used by corporations to silence those who showed hostility to corporate interests in “the college campus, the pulpit, the media, the intellectual and literary journals.” In other words, curtail dissenters and remove freedom of speech.

This document went so far as to call for pro-corporate judges on the bench, and utilizing think tanks to direct “ideological assaults against government regulation and environmental protection” to a mass audience.¹⁷ What is even more difficult to fathom is that, according to Ellen

Schrecker, an author and historian of McCarthyism, this campaign was implemented and unbelievably successful. This assault on knowledge included campaigns calling for defunding of the humanities in public schools and universities as well as public broadcasting and the arts. Her description is provided in full here to help us safeguard against this ever happening again:

“The humanities were eviscerated. Vocational training, including the expansion of the study of finance and economics in universities, replaced disciplines that provided students with cultural and historical literacy, that allowed them to step outside of themselves to feel and express empathy for the other. Students were no longer taught *how* to think, but *what* to think. Civic education died. A grotesque kind of illiteracy ... was celebrated. Success becomes solely about amassing wealth. The cult of the self, the essence of corporatism, became paramount.”¹⁸

Sound familiar? This attack on the American mind—and on the minds of those around the world—continues today as people, both knowingly and unknowingly, allow their leaders to make decisions without accountability. Whether the Global Engagement Center in the U.S., and other organizations charged with similar missions, are beneficial or harmful to the citizens of their countries and people of the world is up to those citizens.

Ultimately, the only way to cease being a pawn in another person's game is to expand our own awareness, learning and consciousness, connecting with others of like mind and heart, sharing our thoughts, and collectively and collaboratively acting on those thoughts.

Forms of Propaganda

Because this is such an important topic to survive in today's world, we're going to take the time to have a conversation around different forms of propaganda.

While physical force still has pockets of activity in our world, as technologies have opened larger avenues of communication, propaganda has increasingly become the method of choice for controlling the larger population and gaining power. Taking power by force wastes energy, with forces concurrently having the ability to diminish power. This old way of using force certainly works up to a point, and then has consistently throughout history been recognized and defeated.

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***INSIGHT:* As technologies have opened larger avenues of communication, propaganda has increasingly become the method of choice for controlling the larger population and gaining power.**

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In today's information environment, there are two primary forms of propaganda: (1) the shifting of cause and effect, and (2) the strategic weaving of untruth and truth, creating layers of lies.

The **shifting of cause and effect** is the most common form of propaganda. Power—at least for a time (*you can fool some of the people all the time, all the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time*)—has been achieved through making effects look like they are causes. This provides the ability to distort reality and create false beliefs.

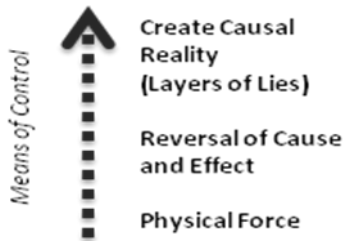


Figure 3. *Movement from physical control to propaganda.*

Take, for example, the promise of communism. The effect is some limited giving (example, food on the table and the promise of better times) leading to power transfer from the people to the government. The effect becomes the cause and people believe that communism is the reason they have food. Another example of reversal is when people try to take

something for nothing by getting people to relinquish their power. An example is a telephone scam that tries to get you to pay up front for wonderful future profits.

When truth is compromised, the mental capability shrinks. It is easier to convince people of untrue things, thus becoming easier to manipulate and control them. The more this occurs, the less ability the victims have to discern the truth. Concomitantly, as people relinquish power, the understanding of what they are doing is lost and their lives become less meaningful.

Let's take a business example, where the owners of a business have been used to a high profit margin and, reluctant to reduce that margin, choose to cut salaries, informing employees that, in a downturned economy, salaries must be reduced to keep the business alive and enable employees to keep their jobs. Where the truth lies becomes quite fuzzy, with an underlying reversal of cause and effect. Further, note that in this case employees are being given a chance to help keep the business functioning to ensure an income, albeit a reduced income. There is the allure of a partnering that is occurring, that management is doing everything they can to work through a difficult situation that directly impacts employees.

Layering can infer a continuous building of untruths, or the strategic weaving of untruth and

recognizable truth, they can easily connect other things told to them as true, not recognizing the lack of consistency or the contradictions that are present. Their response may follow the path of false perceptions and logic such as: “If he told the truth in the past, then this must be true.” Or, “If this was successful in the past, then it will be successful now.” Or, “If he is wealthy and in a position of power, then it must be right.”

A key factor in the weaving of truths and untruths is rhythm, which can lead to destruction of the mental faculties. If you can recognize the rhythm and disrupt it, the truth is easier to discern.

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EXERCISE: *Rhythm Disruptor*¹⁸

STEP 1: Identify any desire (feeling) you have that is related to what is being promised/said. These are not just mental ideas, but are also connected to emotions. Regardless of the level of truth, you are being offered something that you are told will be forthcoming in the future. *Tapping desire is the first beat to developing a rhythm and bringing others into that rhythm.*

NOTE: It is a good idea to understand your fixed desires, that is, those desires that come up over and over again in life. Do a periodic review of your desires. *Ask:* Do I really want this now, or is this a

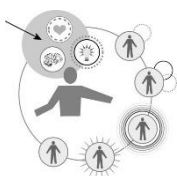
hangover from some emotionally-charged event from the past? Is this desire beneficial to me and/or others? Is this desire selfish? Is this desire worth spending my energy/thought/feelings pursuing?

STEP 2: Think about what has been promised/said in the past from this same source. Try to put this in a time sequence, that is, when was this promised/said? Create a timeline by drawing a straight line on a piece of paper, putting tick marks to indicate promises/statements with the date above the tick mark and a short description of the promise/statement below the tick mark.

STEP 3: Look for a rhythm in what is being said. “Don’t fall into the rhythm of the lie!” The goal of propaganda is not necessarily to *convince* you of truthfulness, but to *confuse* you, **drawing you into the rhythm of the lie so you cannot perceive the truth.**

STEP 4: Disrupt the rhythm by creating a discord. This can be done by engaging in a contemplative or reflective session where lies can be felt and recognized. Interacting and reflecting with trusted others who are open communicators can provide valuable input to this process.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 6: In brainwashing, senses diminish such that the structure of thinking becomes discontinuous.

Yep. If you thought brainwashing was just something that happened during war, think again! It is part of our everyday lives. We saw this in the U.S. 2016 Presidential elections.

Brainwashing refers to mind control. It is the use of various techniques engaging the senses in an attempt to change the thoughts and beliefs of others against their will. In brainwashing, senses diminish such that the structure of thinking becomes discontinuous and there is a loss of sense-making ability. When the senses are not unified or balanced, there is a reduction in the ability to discern truth and untruth. Thus, brainwashing most often includes some nature of sensory deprivation or overload.

While the virtual connectivity of today serves as an enabler for wider impact on the citizens of the world while simultaneously offering opportunities for growth and creativity, it also makes people vulnerable to direction and control. For example, brainwashing occurs through the media. The young are programmed by specialized computer games that glorify violence, potentially leading to acceptance of the use of violence and a belief that the end justifies the means.

Further, media such as movies have the power to brainwash all ages, negatively and positively. Continuing with our example, the negative weakening effects of media violence alone can lead to subtle grades of depression, which has a higher death toll around the world than all other diseases combined!

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INSIGHT: Media such as movies have the power to brainwash all ages, negatively and positively.

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Let's lean on our medical doctor and scientist, David Hawkins, to understand the full impact of media violence on the physical body. Using Kinesiology testing, David was able to show that a typical television show produced weakening about 113 times in a single episode. As he explains:

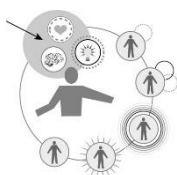
“Each of these weakening events suppressed the observer's immune system and reflected an insult to the viewer's central as well as autonomic nervous system. Invariably accompanying each of these 113 disruptions of the acupuncture system were suppressions of the thymus gland; each insult also resulted in damage to the brain's delicate neurohormonal and neurotransmitter systems. Each negative input brought the watcher closer to eventual sickness and to imminent depression—which is now the world's most prevalent illness.”¹⁹

Using the levels of consciousness introduced in Idea 3, any media event producing a state of consciousness that calibrates below 200 (the level of Courage) are destructive and unsupportive of life. The levels below 200 represent such states as Shame, Guilt, Apathy, Grief, Fear, Desire, Anger and Pride. Focused on these responses, we can certainly understand why the body responded the way it did!

Knowledge can be engaged as a force against propaganda when it is used to raise awareness, helping people discern a higher level of truth and become increasingly interactive with others, more conscious and, therefore, having greater freedom of thought. This facilitates movement toward intelligent activity.

One take-away from this, is that the “freedom” that is being threatened today world-wide is our “freedom of thought!” What are we going to do about it?

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 7: Science provides the backbone for the discovery of truth.

As the source of facts, science provides the backbone for the discovery of truth. By definition, science is focused systematically searching for facts and truths through observation and experimentation.

The human mind cannot operate without facts, which are the building blocks in the construction of wisdom cemented together by life experience. Nowhere is this clearer than when we act on our knowledge. In the book of wisdom teachings known as *Urantia*, it is written:

“The expansion of material knowledge permits a greater intellectual appreciation of the meanings of ideas and the values of ideas. A human being can find truth in his inner experience, but he needs a clear knowledge of facts to apply his personal discovery of truth to the ruthlessly practical demands of everyday life”²⁰




Recall the words of a television private investigator: “The facts and nothing but the facts.” As we contend, the mental is in service to the intuitive. Through science, we develop a more thorough understanding of the physical Universe and are provided the tools to act on the world.

[Your Thoughts]

What does this mean to me?

Deepening our understanding of truth is incredibly pertinent in today's environment, where misinformation, disinformation, untruths and propaganda is continuously discovered in the words of our leaders and the headlines of our news sources. This is one of those little books that you need to share freely—and have a conversation about—with your family and friends.

Let's bullet a few highlights, perhaps reflecting on any new understanding that might affect your thoughts and behaviors.

-  Truth is created, not discovered, and it is relative to self. This means that your truth may not be someone else's truth.
-  Truth has a finite life span. Over time, old truths become conceptually and logically wrong.
-  There are no absolutes. Locking into an absolute truth “does not allow the continuous and steady development of unconditional love through the acceptance and understanding of ALL things created in the Universe.”



“At lower levels of consciousness, propositions are accepted as true even when they’re illogical, unfounded, and express tenets neither intellectually provable or practically demonstrable.”



As lies continue to build, people actually forget prior lies and become comfortable with not hearing the truth.



Media such as movies have the power to brainwash all ages, negatively and positively.



The pursuit of science provides the foundation for discovery of ever-larger truths.

You are a part of this environment, hopefully with heightened awareness of the very real threat of misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and brainwashing.

You’ve got the facts!

What are you going to do about it?

This volume of **Conscious Look Books** builds conversationally on the ideas presented in *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part IV: Co-Creating the Future*, largely presented in Chapter 24: “Knowledge and the Search for Truth.” 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 Niles MacFlouer has done a radio show every week since 2004. Current title is Why Life Is ... all shows (BBSRadio.com (1-480) and KXAM (1-143) are available in archives at

www.agelesswisdom.com/archives_of_radio_shows.htm

² Quoted from Cooper, L.R. (2005). *The Grand Vision: The Design and Purpose of a Human Being*. Ft. Collins, CO: Planetary Heart, 42.

³ These three levels of knowledge (Imagined, Apparent, Actual) are forwarded by Walsch, N.E. (2009). *When Everything Changes, Change Everything: In a Time of Turmoil, A Pathway to Peace*. Ashland, OR: EmNinBooks.

⁴ Quoted from *The Urantia Book* (1955). Chicago: URANTIA Foundation, 1297.

⁵ Intelligent activity is a state of interaction where intent, purpose, direction, values and expected outcomes are clearly understood and communicated among all parties, reflecting wisdom and achieving a higher truth.

⁶ Taken from *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999). New York: St. Martin's Press.

⁷ Quoted from Hawkins, D.R. (2002). *Power VS Force: the Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 283.

⁸ Ibid., 271.

⁹ See Gell-Mann, M. (1994). *The Quark and the Jaguar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex*. NY, NY: W. H. Freeman and Company.

¹⁰ See Minitier, R. (2005). *Disinformation: 22 Media Myths that Undermine the War on Terror*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing.

¹¹ Quoted from Darwin, C. (1998). *The Descent of Man*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 110.

¹² See Blackmore, S. (2000). *The Meme Machine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹³ See Footnote 1.

¹⁴ Taken from *Encarta* (1999).

¹⁵ Quoted from McWhinney, W. (1997). *Paths of Change: Strategic Choices for Organizations and Society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 225-6.

¹⁶ Merriam-Webster (2016). Retrieved from www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary

¹⁷ See Hedges, C. (2016). “In the Time of Trump, All We Have Is Each Other” in *Common Dreams: Breaking News & Views for the Progressive Community* (December 26). Truthdig.

¹⁸ This tool is based on concepts presented by Niles MacFlouer (see Footnote 1).

¹⁹ Quoted from Hawkins, D.R. (2002), 278.

²⁰ Quoted from *Urantia* (1954), 1222.

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

In the human search for higher truths, truth is not discovered; it is created. There is not a written set of truths that can be consulted for every situation in which we find ourselves. Who we consult is ourselves, tapping into our beliefs and values, and drawing from the vast amount of experiences and learning within each of us. This little book first addresses truth, then delves into the very real threats of misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and brainwashing that are a part of our everyday lives.

