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THE EGO  
IS NOT THE  
REAL YOU

Wisdom to  
Transcend the Mind  
and Realize the Self

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Note: References to the Map of Consciousness and the concept of calibration are explained in detail in Dr. Hawkins's book *Power vs. Force*.

# INTRODUCTION

*“Spiritual processing is like positioning oneself in the wind.”*

— DAVID R. HAWKINS, M.D., PH.D.

Have you ever seen a tree in autumn with half its leaves gone and then a powerful gust of wind blows through and all the remaining leaves drop instantly to the ground? This book can be that powerful wind for you. Like the tree that’s already dropped many of its leaves, you are ready to let go of a lot of old ways of thinking and limiting patterns of anxiety, grief, guilt, shame, and anger.

Let this book be the force that clears away the rest of the “leaves” that you’re hanging on to without even realizing they’re there—the false promises of the ego, those hard-to-see attachments and false beliefs that prevent you from realizing that you are one with All. As we know by watching the seasons, a tree has to go through the winter’s letting go before it can yield the springtime’s blossoms.

Are you willing to let go of seeing yourself as the ego believes you to be? Are you willing to go further, to know that the ego *itself* is an illusion? Dr. Hawkins tells us that even the idea of the separate self as a seeker of Truth is an illusion: “It is a hindrance to consider that there is a personal self or an ‘I’ or an ego that is doing the striving or seeking, or that will become enlightened. It is much easier to realize there is no such thing as the ego or an ‘I’ identity that is doing any seeking; instead, it is an impersonal aspect of consciousness that is doing the exploring and seeking.”

This process is a shift from “who” we are to “what” we are. I learned this from Dr. Hawkins in a funny way. One day he made up a nickname for me, “Fran-Fran,” and this instigated a series of knock-knock jokes between us:

Doc: Fran-Fran.

Fran: Doc-Doc.

Doc: Knock-knock.

Fran: Who’s there?

Doc: It’s not a “who” but a “what.”

We then broke into laughter. Do you see how brilliant he was at using humor to crack open old habits of perception? Even as he connected to me as a person, a “who,” his humor cut through the illusion of personhood. He said, “You are not a ‘who’ but a ‘what.’” The ego personality is fixated on being a successful “who” in the world, such as “I am this . . . I’ve done that . . . I own this . . . I believe in that . . .” Dr. Hawkins recommends that, instead of focusing on “who” we are, we ask ourselves in continual contemplation, “*What* am I?”

As we surrender “who” we think we are, we come to the “what,” the Source of existence itself. Letting go of identities and personas, beliefs and attachments, and even letting go of ourselves as seekers, what is left?

I remember a moment when I was with him and it dawned on me: “I’m not a professor, though I work as one. I’m not a devotee, though I serve as one. I’m not a woman, though I live as one. I’m not a ‘me,’ though I function as one.” The “what” replaces “who.” Love dissolves every “who” we try to hang on to. The river loses its name when it flows into the sea.

In this book, key teachings from Dr. Hawkins’s body of work have been selected to guide us in this process of Self-realization. Any one of the teachings,

if applied directly, reveals the Truth. “Any leg of the elephant leads to the elephant,” as Dr. Hawkins says.

As we read the book, Dr. Hawkins recommends that we seek to “know” rather than “know about.” “Know” implies subjective experience; “know about” means to accumulate facts.

And he also recommends this inner prayer:

Ask to be the servant of the Lord, a vehicle of Divine Love, a channel of God’s Will. Ask for direction and divine assistance and surrender all personal will through devotion. Dedicate one’s life to the service of God. Choose love and peace above all other options. Commit to the goal of unconditional love and compassion for all life in all its expressions and surrender all judgment to God. — *The Eye of the I: From Which Nothing Is Hidden* (2002), Chapter 13: Explanations, p. 265.

If we can give up the illusion of this little “me,” Dr. Hawkins promises that unsurpassable joy will be ours: “There is absolutely nothing in ordinary human experience to compare with the joy of the Presence of the Love of God. No sacrifice is too great nor effort too much in order to realize that Presence.” He verifies this promise with the certitude that’s possible *only* from having, himself, surrendered everything on the altar of the Ultimate.



## Introduction

This book is small in size, but it can have a massive impact on your life. It will take you through the process of a total transformation of consciousness—if you choose to apply its teachings deeply within yourself.

With devotion and gratitude,  
Fran Grace, Ph.D.



**PART I**

**THE NATURE  
OF THE  
SELF  
(EGO/MIND)**



While the mind secretly believes that its survival is due to the ego, on the contrary, the person's survival is due to the spirit that energizes the ego to accomplish important tasks. It is because of the intention of the spirit that the lower self or ego even remembers to take its vitamins. In truth, we exist and survive, not because of the ego, but in spite of it.



The world of the ego is like a house of mirrors through which the ego wanders, lost and confused, as it chases the images in one mirror after another. Human life is characterized by endless trials and errors while attempting to escape the maze. At times, for many people—and possibly for most—the world of mirrors becomes a house of horrors that gets worse and worse. The only way out of the circuitous wanderings is through the pursuit of spiritual truth.



It is important to remember that the world operates within the limited Newtonian paradigm of linear causality which has its prevailing perceptions of what is “real.” Spirituality, on the other hand, is based on the invisible realities and realms of nonduality and therefore may seem unreal or, at best, an oddity to the ordinary world.



Everything is happening of its own; nothing is causing anything else. . . . It is critical to grasp that the illusion of linear causality as an explanation for the observed phenomena of life is the major and most profound limitation of thinkingness. . . . Mentation, reason, logic, and language are all structured dualistically, based on the axiom that there is a subject and an object, that there is a “this” doing or causing a “that.”



That the human mind, without help, is unable to tell truth from falsehood due to its own innate structure and design is so staggering a discovery that it is roughly comparable to the discovery by Copernicus that caused cultural shock in the 16th century. Because this single fact alone is confrontational to the average mind, it will probably not be welcomed or warmly greeted by those who profit from sophistry and its illusions.



Profound silence is more influential and beneficial than an avalanche of redundant words and

actions that emanate from the spiritual ego and its platitudinous rationalizations. Spiritual rhetoric is still just rhetoric and represents spiritual sophistry. Commitment to enlightenment alters and recontextualizes social roles.



The mind acts as a processor of data simultaneously from both within and without. . . . Some of the information is perceived and stored in memory banks, but there is also unconscious processing of all the data that is stored in the unconscious. This processing screening device results in the 1/10,000th of a second's delay and acts as a separation between self and Self/Reality. This processing screen represents "the experiencer" in action.



The experiencer screen is energized by desire and identification with it. This desire is like an appetite of curiosity, wantingness, and craving, and is an addiction to the experience of experiencing itself. In addition, there is identification with experiencing and its content information as "self."



Energy fields are so powerful that they dominate our perception. They are really portals out of which we see the world. We often hear that this is really just a world of mirrors, and that all we experience is our own energy field reflected back upon us as perception and experiencing.



The ego can be thought of as a set of entrenched habits of thought, which are the results of entrainment by invisible energy fields that dominate human consciousness. They become reinforced by repetition and by the consensus of society. Further reinforcement comes from language itself. To think in language is a form of self-programming. The use of the pronoun *I* as the subject—and therefore the implied cause of all actions—is the most serious error, and automatically creates a duality of subject and object.



From a greater context, we can view that the ego is not “evil” but is primarily a self-interested animal. Unless the “animal self” is understood and accepted, its influence cannot be diminished.





It is clear that the instinctual origins of the ego mechanisms are based on satisfaction and gratification of survival needs and desires.



The narcissistic core of the ego is aligned with being “right,” whether being “right” means being in agreement with wisdom or rejecting it as invalid. With humility, the serious searcher discovers that the mind alone, despite its education, is unable to resolve the dilemma of how to ascertain and validate truth—which would require confirmation by subjective experience as well as objective, provable criteria.



It is most important to remember that to violate principle for practical expediency is to relinquish enormous power. The rationalization that the execution of criminals deters crime, for instance, does not hold up under study; and the end does not justify the means. . . . Because we fail to differentiate principle from expediency, the average person lacks the discernment to understand the difference between patriotism and true Patriotism, between americanism and Americanism, between god and God, between freedom and Freedom, between liberty and Liberty.

Thus, “americanism” is used as a justification by white supremacy groups (calibrated at 150) and lynch mobs, just as warmongering throughout history has been conducted in the name of “God.” . . . Learning the difference between principles and their imitators requires experience and educated judgment. The exercise of such discretion is necessary for moral survival in the modern world in general but is imperative in those gray areas where ethical ambiguity has been elevated from convention to an art form: the political arena and the marketplace of daily commerce.



Radical truth means what is being experienced, not what one is actually thinking about it or the concepts that one is projecting onto the experience; it is not the labeling of it but what one is literally experiencing within oneself.



The brain is the sense organ of the experiencer, and one realizes that it is destined for physical death. Therefore, the importance of the Self rather than the self is realized by accepting the inevitability of mortality.



Concepts have levels of power that can be calibrated. The higher the level of truth, the greater its power. The energy of the concept results from the truth of the statement plus the level of consciousness of the speaker. Unaided by a higher energy (as from a great teacher), the ego/mind cannot transcend itself.



Opposites do not exist in Reality. They are only concepts of speech and mentation. Let us take the seeming opposites of light and dark. Actually, there is no such thing as darkness; there is only light. The conditions then can be accurately described as light is either present or not, or light is present at various degrees; therefore, all light or the lack of it can be defined only in terms of light by its presence or degree, or not. Thus, there is only *one variable*: the presence or absence of light.



A verbalization helps to set a context that then progressively becomes nonverbal and more inclusive. Accurate information saves time and speeds fruitful inquiry by indicating which routes would be fruitlessly time-consuming and diversionary.



If time is nonexistent, then so is the notion of “place.” . . . “Space” is a concept. The mind imagines that if something exists in a place, then that place must be a space. Like time, “space” is an imagination. . . . In the nonlinear Reality, there is no time track upon which to position a moment or an instant denotable as “now.”



The study of form is fascinating to the intellect in its expressions of physics, chemistry, astronomy, cosmology, etc. Man then begins to ask where the universe came from and where is it going. Actually, this demonstrates another animal instinct that is very important, that of curiosity. In order to find food, a mate, or shelter, the animal is always instinctively searching and seems to have an insatiable curiosity. Exploration is innate to mankind, and its highest levels lead to spiritual inquiry. This brings up the questions of who am I, what am I, where did I come from, what is the origin and destiny of the self, and who and where is God.



All aspects of human life are transient; therefore, to cling to any aspect eventually brings grief and loss.

Each incident, however, is an opportunity to search within for the source of life, which is ever present, unchanging, and not subject to loss or the ravages of time.



The body itself is actually not experienced; instead, only the *sensations* of the body are experienced. Therefore, awareness of the body is merely a composite sensation by which the somatic area of the brain records input, and, by neuronal function, replicates the body image.



Ultimately, everything is knowable only by virtue of the identity of “being it.” The conundrums of epistemology can be solved only by the elimination of thought because all languaging is a paradox. One can take any word and trace it to its roots. How does the word originate? From where? Is the word the same thing as its meaning? By asking such questions, one is eventually confronted with the ultimate paradox of duality. The radical Reality is that to understand the essence of anything is to know God. One might say that all languaging is a substitute for God.



There is no timetable or prescribed route to God. Although each person's path is unique, the terrain to be covered is relatively common to all. The work is to surmount and transcend the common human failings that are inherent in the structure of the human ego. One would like to think that these failings are personal; however, the ego itself is not personal. It was inherited along with becoming a human being. Details differ based on past karma.



That "it" of the ego structure is not unique or individual, and it is relatively similar, with karmic variations, in everyone. What really varies from individual to individual is the degree to which one is enslaved by its programs. The degree of dominance is therefore determined by the extent to which one identifies with it. Inherently, it has no power, and the power to decline the ego's programs increases exponentially as one progresses spiritually.



Because of its inherent limitations, the ego itself cannot know God experientially. God is the absolute subjectivity that underlies existence and the capacity for awareness. God is beyond all time, place, or human

characteristics. All the descriptions of the Ultimate Reality by enlightened beings throughout history have been identical. There is only one Supreme Reality. . . . Inasmuch as the Godhead, or God Unmanifest, is beyond all depiction, the Ultimate Realization is radically and purely subjective and absent of all content. To acknowledge the absolute divinity of the Infinite Supreme would be unacceptable to entities that are deluded into claiming godship. We can then say that a false deity is an entity that has declined truth for power, pride, and control over others, and has succumbed to the Luciferic error which proclaims that the ego is God (i.e., megalomania). The basis for the error is the unwillingness to surrender sovereignty from the “I” of the ego to the Allness of God.



Pride in the form of the vanity of thought, mentation, concepts, and opinions is the basis of ignorance. The antidote is radical humility, which undoes the domination of perception. . . . To enter the domain of reality is like going through a fine screen—only clear water can traverse through it, and all the fish, bugs, and debris are left outside. Only pure consciousness devoid of content can pass through the barriers of perception and become the clear water beyond the screen. . . . The finite is born of the infinite and is never actually

separated from it except by perception; the infinite potentiality of the unmanifest becomes the actuality of the manifest by the will of God as Creation.



Traditionally, the readiness for spiritual learning has been termed “ripeness,” indicating a fortuitous combination of sincere intention plus maturity, progressive evolution of consciousness, and activation of the desire for experiential learning. . . . There develops an enthusiasm and eventually a dedication, and spiritual goals and values progressively replace the lesser ones of the worldly ego. . . . Progress is best described as the unfolding of realizations and spontaneous revelation that are often ascribed to intuition and inner guidance. . . . As spiritual work advances, the self progressively dissolves and merges into the Self, which has its own learning capacities that differ from those of the ego/mind.



The more advanced seeker has heard that there is no “out there” or “in here” and thus takes responsibility for all that happens. There is the dawning awareness that all which seems to occur really represents what is being held in what was previously considered



as “within.” Thus, the proclivity to project is undone. The “innocent victim” positionality, with all its spurious “innocence,” is unmasked. . . . Beliefs are the determinant of what one experiences. There are no external “causes.” One discovers the secret payoffs that are obtained from unconscious secret projections. One’s underlying programs can be discovered by simply writing down one’s litany of grievances and woes and then merely turning them around into their opposites.



The mind’s reality is a fiction. With that realization, it loses its reign as the arbiter of reality. Through the eye of the ego, life is a kaleidoscope of constantly changing attractions and repulsions, fears and transient pleasures. It bases its security on overvalued positionalities, but, with maturity, it progressively looks within for enduring qualities that can be relied upon. Without spiritual direction or information, it does not know which way to look and may merely settle back into basic survival techniques that have had pragmatic value.



It is well to keep in mind at all times that the ego/mind does not experience the world but only its own perception of it.



The ego is the imaginary doer behind thought and action. Its presence is firmly believed to be necessary and essential for survival. The reason is that the ego's primary quality is perception, and as such, it is limited by the paradigm of supposed causality.



Whereas the goal of the ego/mind is primarily to do, act, acquire, or perform, the intention of contemplation is to "become." While the intellect wants to know "about," contemplation seeks Knowingness itself and autonomous wisdom. Rational thinking is time related, sequential, and linear, whereas contemplation occurs outside of sequential time. It is nonlinear and related to comprehension of essence. Devotional contemplation is a way or style of being in the world whereby one's life becomes a prayer.



The ego's addiction and survival are based on the secret pleasure of negativity, which cannot be

abandoned until it is first recognized, identified, and owned without shame or guilt. One has to see that this is just how the ego—which everyone inherits—operates, and recognize that it is not really personal at all.



The ego secretly “loves” and clings to the position of victimhood and extracts a distorted pleasure and grim justification from pain and suffering.



The ego defends its own limitations with prideful denial, thus becoming its own victim.



Intrinsic to the very basic construction of the human ego is an innate innocence in that it believes in the reality or truth of its own programs and is unaware that it lacks an intrinsic capacity for self-correction. The reason for the ego’s inherent lack of capacity for verification is that its data is limited to only internal processing systems. The internal mechanisms of the ego lack any external, independent source of reference for verification.



As we get closer to the discovery of the source of the ego's tenacity, we make the amazing critical discovery that *we are enamored with our self*.



Realization is a progressive process. Spiritual progress is hastened by understanding the true nature of the ego. It is not an enemy to be attacked or defeated, nor is it an evil to be vanquished. It is dissolved by compassionate understanding.



Realistic self-esteem arises from fulfilling integrous principles so that intention becomes an important factor, which in itself is less vulnerable than idealized results. . . . It takes courage to jettison the props of pride and, with humility, accept one's inner reality, which is of an invulnerable source. To accept the inner core of one's existence as a self-existent reality requires letting go of any definitions of self as a "who" and, instead, seeing oneself as a "what." . . . All credit for accomplishments is given to God as the Presence of the Divinity within instead of to the ego,

and therefore accomplishment results in gratitude and joy rather than vulnerable pridefulness.



The universe is very cooperative. Inasmuch as the universe is not different from consciousness itself, it is happy to create whatever we wish to find “out there.” The problem is with the concept of cause itself, which begs the question by presuming a time warp, a sequence, or a string of events that would make sense. If we step outside of time, there are no causes at all. We could say that the manifest world originates out of the unmanifest, but that again would be inferring a sequential causal series in time—that is, unmanifest becoming manifest. Once beyond the warp of time, with its implicit restrictions of comprehension to terms of mere sequence, there is no backwards or forwards.



Because the ego is constructed of positionalities, it has no option to be anything else except what it is. It therefore becomes an inescapable source of endless suffering and loss. Above all else, it fears the future and the specter of death itself, which is intrinsic to the ego’s structure.



The ego has habitual modes of determining perception. They have to be identified first before they can be disassembled. One has to give up guilt about having an ego.



In contrast to the innate arrogance of the ego, true intelligence is a quality of consciousness/awareness and is not subject to attack because its essence is nonlinear. It is, however, utilized by the ego in its expression as mind, which then becomes and subserves the ego's drive for survival. Thus, the ego really uses the mind as camouflage and becomes hidden in its clever constructions.



The ego is not an enemy to be subdued but merely a compilation of unexamined habits of perception.



A human being is both spirit and body; therefore, it is at all times actually existing in both the linear and the nonlinear domains.



Curiously, the ego's hold is weakened by acceptance, familiarity, and compassionate understanding; in contrast, it is reinforced by self-criticism, condemnation, fear, and shame.



The ego conceals, whereas awareness reveals. The answer to many defective ego positions could be subsumed in the commonly overlooked sanity of "common sense."



One mechanism the ego uses to protect itself is to disown the painful data and project it onto the world and others.



The ego is neither bad nor an enemy, but merely an illusion to release so that something far better can replace it.



There is no such thing in reality as an ego; it is merely illusory. It is made up of a compilation of arbitrary points of view supplied by mental processing and powered by feelings and emotions. These desires

The ego/mind presumes and is convinced that its perceptions and interpretations of life experiences are the “real” thing and therefore “true.” It also believes by projection that other people see, think, and feel the same way—if they do not, they are mistaken and therefore wrong. Thus, perception reinforces its hold by reification and presumptions.



The ego clings to emotionality, which is intimately connected with its positionalities; it pretends to think that it has no other choices. To “surrender to God” means to stop looking to the ego for solace and thrills and to discover the endless, serene joy of peace. To look within is to find the underlying, ever-present source of the illumination of the mind itself.



The inflated ego is devoid of reality testing as well as amelioration by reason, logic, or rationality.



Although the critical level of integrity (level 200 on the Map of Consciousness) is the very threshold of spiritual progress, one can see that due to the structure of the ego, it can be difficult to achieve. The



strength of the ego is such that it can be overcome only by spiritual power.



Temptation stems from within; it is merely the desire to experience the ego's payoff and satisfactions of an impulse, even if it is only a curiosity or a wanting.



The satisfactions of the ego are more pleasurable and addictive than the preservation of human life, much less dignity.



The ego gets a grim pleasure and satisfaction from suffering and all the levels lacking integrity: pride, anger, desire, guilt, shame, and grief. The secret pleasure of suffering is addictive. Many people devote their entire lives to it and encourage others to follow suit. To stop this mechanism, the pleasure of the payoff has to be identified and willingly surrendered to God. Out of shame, the ego blocks out conscious awareness of its machinations, especially the secretiveness of the game of "victim."



*image*

*not*

*available*