

The Unbroken Path

by
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A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

For the last few decades, as I have made my way back and forth across the country and throughout the Interwebs, I have heard talk of a coming Renaissance, and despite all setbacks and marketing schemes, I have continued to hope for it, renaissance man that I am, thinking that the unfortunate alternative was a Dark Age. For me, it seemed to reach a fevered pitch in 2005-06, perhaps because of the popularity of *The Secret* at the time and so many minds opening to the Law of Attraction. Unfortunately, we attracted an economic crash and the 2008 Recession so the coming Renaissance lost a little steam, but the COVID 19 pandemic caused many to look at deeper parts of their being, create new habits and traditions, and reconsider their religious and spiritual roots and practices, laying the groundwork for what I still hope will be a Renaissance.

When I think of the first Renaissance, there was a huge portion of artistic expression focused on portraits of Christ and other religious imagery. The prevailing images were of Jesus in the many stages of life - as a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, as a guy teaching on a hill, praying on a rock, and hanging from a cross. But I wonder if the appreciation and adoration of Jesus Christ had something to do with the upheaval in economic life, creativity, and community progress during the Renaissance. Did honoring the "greatest story ever told" raise the level of consciousness of the people?

When I was younger, having been raised in a Lutheran church and attending a private fundamentalist Baptist school since sixth grade, I was a very strong Christian. However, as much as I enjoyed the social connection of my youth group, the easy digestibility of contemporary Christian music, and the identity I'd created through those connections, by the time I was in my early twenties, I began to lose faith in the Church and a lot of the beliefs I had to agree with in order to keep their company. By my mid-twenties, I realized that the Bible was not the perfect, infallible, inerrant book the Church said it was and that the message of Paul that was used for recruitment was quite different than the message Jesus shared in the canonical and gnostic gospels.

However, although there was a lot I couldn't trust about what I had been told about him, I still had an affinity for Jesus Christ. I mean, there was a time that the bumper sticker on my car said "Real Men Love Jesus," and it's not so easy to just walk away from a relationship like that. You just can't break up with Jesus.

Nevertheless, as I waged my internal war over the search for Truth, I often found myself trying very hard to separate myself from the name of Jesus Christ. After all, many of his followers are some of the most closed minded bigots I have ever met, and the religion formed in his name, through six centuries of inquisitions, seven different crusades, and nearly two millennia of claiming a monopoly on God, has arguably murdered, tortured, and raped more people than any other human organization in known history while also becoming the most wealthy organization in the world. However, many others who truly follow Jesus offer some of the most unconditional love that I have ever witnessed or felt, and are living proof as to the legitimacy of his teachings.

After all that I have witnessed of other philosophies and world religions, I cannot deny that I have still always felt a pull toward Christ. And there has always been a part of me that has still been drawn to be a disciple of Jesus. It's been a long time since I've wanted to be part of the Church of Christianity, mind you, but I have still always had an affinity for Jesus as the greatest hero I have ever heard of, and I have seen his selfless example of laying down his life for others echoed through nearly every hero I have ever seen since, from Luke Skywalker and Spider-Man to Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King.

While I no longer resonated with the portrait of God as a short-sighted Creator who was forced to send the vast majority of His most beloved species to be punished in Hell for all of eternity due to their existence as sinners because He somehow didn't see Adam and Eve's dietary choices coming, I have still always felt a connection with the Source of my being that has given me all of the breaths I've ever breathed and cohesively made all of my cells align so that I could experience life through this remarkable body in this incredible world. I could not accept the man-made religion I had been given, but I could not deny the Spirit I connected with at a young age, the one that has brought me through so many trials, taught me so many lessons, woven together so many connections, and given me so many wonderful visions.

Although I was far from perfect in fully giving myself over to the concept, my possibly misguided intention when I set out to travel the country and write *The Rucksack Letters* in my early thirties was to answer the call to become a disciple of Christ while leaving behind the Christianity that the Roman Empire had distorted and mandated into popularity. A big part of my understanding of this was what Jesus is quoted to have said in Luke 14:33, "So then, none of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." Embracing homelessness as Jesus demonstrated was also a huge fear of mine growing up, and I am glad to say that I have since found enough faith to experience it without much anguished suffering... or perhaps I've just grown accustomed to suffering.

Now, I'm not known to be a literalist, so I didn't technically give up all of my possessions when I first set out. I unloaded a lot of stuff and attached myself to little, eventually getting down to a sixty pound backpack as I hitchhiked from North Carolina to Colorado, but there were more than just material possessions that I clung to. After all, when I came out to my family as no longer being a Christian when I was 27, I fully embraced my role as the sinner Paul said that I was, and have since squandered a lot of the gifts I have been given in life on alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and other foolish endeavors. I may have lived up to my role as a prodigal son, but at least I'm not a materialist.

Now even the fundamentalists who believe every word of the Bible is 100% accurate find some way to get around Jesus' call to get rid of all your possessions, and most do not wander the world sharing the good news of God's love as he prescribed. And it's quite possible that Jesus was just using the challenge to make a point about being unattached to things after his supposed time in India studying Buddhism. Nevertheless, I still don't have a big desire for possessions beyond my motorcycle, guitar, and typewriter, and even without them, God provides other ways of getting around, playing music, or writing poetry if I need to.

But if, in the beginning there was the Word, then that is what I use to connect with what I know as the Source of All Being, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, and I just keep hoping that my words will point to the Word of Truth, and I certainly do not mean the sixty-six books favored by Protestants. Realizing that the Creator of the Universe connects with people in ways beyond the various versions of the canonical Roman Bible, I began to look for what I knew as Christ as it had been revealed to my heart and mind,

beyond just the pictures I'd seen and stories I'd read and heard. To me, Christ represents the highest pinnacle of humanity, our closest connection to God and our closest connection to one another.

In the literary accounts of the life of Jesus, there is a twenty year gap in the story. From the time he was twelve or so to the time his ministry started in his early thirties, there is no mention of what Jesus was up to (although, like I said, some think he was studying Buddhism in India). But from what I see when I look at the stories and paradigms of other philosophies, finding ways to weave them together in order to find the Truth within, I see the story of Christ. I see the story of humanity as to become like Christ, and since I don't think it was always a necessarily easy path for Jesus, I'm not inclined to think it will always be an easy path for us, but that is The Unbroken Path I think we're all on.

Ultimately, The Unbroken Path is my vision of the burgeoning Renaissance. It is my portrait of Christ because it is a portrait of humanity and the journey we are all on to become the highest versions of ourselves. Basically, I want to look for ways to connect the world to a new understanding of God and one another in hopes that people will see more spiritual activity in their everyday affairs, and that we will all embrace our own personal spiritual responsibilities so we may see the world through new eyes.

I feel as if the greatest gift I can give to the world is to let them know that God is still at work and guiding us toward a greater connection. Even though my understanding is much different than that of traditional religion, and I fully admit that I'm just a screwed up human trying to make sense of things, opening people to the possibility of a better relationship with All That Is is really what I hope my life is about. If not, it's still been an incredible experience so far, and I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to have miraculously survived all that I've put myself through so I could write these words.

Enjoy your journey down The Unbroken Path. I truly hope we're headed in the right direction.

STEPS OF THE UNBROKEN PATH

When I first watched *The Power of Myth* many years ago, I remember Joseph Campbell saying that we needed a new mythology. At the time, I had recently walked away from my religious upbringing and was on what I considered a personal journey of spiritual growth, as I still am, and no longer having the tenets of my religious beliefs to lean on, I have had my share of both floundering and grounding, but I'm still enjoying the journey.

More recently, I have seen interviews with Jordan Peterson and others lamenting the loss of connection with our traditional belief systems that have also altered the spiritual growth of many other people around the world. Even more recently, I have also seen many people revisiting and revising Christianity, breaking through the boundaries of Roman doctrine and returning to the teachings of Jesus rather than the message of Paul that seems to define modern Christianity.

Paul's message was that only by believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus and accepting his blood atonement for our sins can wretched humans like us go to Heaven when we die. It's sweet that he gave Jesus so much credit, but our payoff doesn't come in until after we die. What I mostly learned from Jesus was that the way we show love to God for the ways we get to use our hearts, minds, bodies, and strength is by using those gifts to love and serve the people around us, and if we did that, we'd never have to worry about anything.

Unfortunately, Christianity as we know it is largely based on the message of Paul, whose theology was used by Constantine and about 300 bishops to draft the Nicene Creed in 325 AD (or CE if you prefer). But I believe there's a growing number of people who want to follow Christ again; they just don't necessarily want to accept Paul's interpretation of who Jesus actually was (since he never actually met Jesus or heard him teach) or the Roman Empire's legislation on the limitations of God from 1700 years ago, especially since the Roman Empire fell and hasn't had any authority or even actually existed for the last 1500 years. So I don't give it dominion over my relationship with God. While churches are officially corporations and must follow their programming like every other machine and comply with the Creed they've been given, the human spirit and the spirit of Christ are realizing a bit more autonomy as of late.

So for me, The Unbroken Path is ultimately a guide back to the teachings of Christ. Basically, it's just the one teaching: Love God and Love One Another. One of the best ways to express love is to seek understanding of both God and each other, and that is my hope for The Unbroken Path.

It's about using our collective understandings to create a map toward the better world our hearts know is possible. I've looked at a number of traditions, philosophies, religions, and popular trends, always looking for the common threads by which I could weave together The Unbroken Path we all share in spite of our differences. Basically, I think we are our new mythology.

I believe that our new mythology will be based on the myths we live more than the myths we repeat. Although our storytelling throughout the ages may have largely been for entertainment purposes, there have always been lessons of morality in each of our stories that have called us to be heroes in our own lives, and in this day and age, through our communicative abilities, we are given more opportunity than ever to fully participate in the life being created around us.

For me, The Unbroken Path is a labor of love and is constantly changing. But the foundation I have crafted is built on twenty-six different ways of understanding the path we are all on. Here they are in alphabetical order, sort of.

1. The Beatitudes of Jesus from The Book of Matthew
2. Buddha's Four Noble Truths
3. Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey
4. The Seven Chakras
5. Stephen Covey's Eight Habits of Highly Effective People
6. DiClemente's and Prochaska's Stages of Change
7. Eric Erikson's Stages of Human Development
8. Rob Hopkins' Five Stages of Transition
9. The Fool's Journey of the Tarot's Major Arcana
10. Sigmund Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development
11. The Seven Days of Creation in Genesis
12. David Hawkins' Stages of Consciousness
13. Carl Jung's Stages of Life
14. The Kabbalah Tree of Life

15. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' Grief Cycle
16. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs
17. Moyer's Stages of a Social Movement
18. The Romans Road of Evangelical Christianity
19. Don Miguel Ruiz's Five Agreements
20. Otto Scharmer's Capacities of Theory U
21. The Eight Masteries of The Sovereign Way
22. Spiral Dynamics
23. Bruce Tuckman's Stages of Group Development
24. The 12 Steps of Anonymous
25. James Redfield's Celestine Insights
26. Ken Wilbur's Altitudes of Development

These are nowhere near the entirety of the steps in The Unbroken Path, but I think it's a good start. I'm sure to get some criticism for including some and leaving others out, but all I can do is share the path I see from my particular perspective. I hope the conversation will continue as others realize their places in The Unbroken Path and help draw this map of understanding for others.

The map for my perspective of The Unbroken Path was initially generated through a spreadsheet where I created a grid of the alphabetized paradigms above as columns with rows filled with the various steps from each paradigm so that I could see the narrative running through them. To find the narrative, I intended to make index cards for each of the steps and spread them out on the large wood floor where I was staying at the time. I happened upon a pack of 240 index cards (which I thought was a strange number) at the store, and it was *exactly* the number of cards I needed for each of the steps. Oddly enough, I'd also grabbed a handful of blank cards from a box of things I stored at my parents' house when I was there for Thanksgiving, and there turned out to be *exactly* twenty-six of them, the exact number of cards I needed to represent each of the aforementioned paradigms.

With more than eight billion people in the world, I do not think that any one religion, philosophy, or worldview will unite us, but I do think that understanding them puts us on the path to unity. Regardless of the language that we use or the perspective from which we view the world, we are all following The Unbroken Path back to our Source, from which we all come and for which we all have different descriptions and stories. As I see it, our new

mythology is the story we live as we realize ourselves as emanations, expressions, and extensions of All That Is, finding our purpose through the Artistry of our lives, the service of our Business, the engagement of our Citizenry, and the development of our Community, what I call ABC Squared Economics.

We are each of us emotional beings with varying mental capacities, individual physical bodies, and unique manifestations of the Spirit of Life, which infuses us all with the ability to feel, think, move, and create. What we do with that is entirely up to us and will absolutely decide the future of our species. I believe that in order to cultivate the evolutionary change we are longing for, we should explore The Unbroken Path we have been traveling together separately.

THE PARADIGMS OF THE UNBROKEN PATH

Before we begin our journey, allow me to better introduce the paradigms that were used in the development of my map.

Starting as a tradition of Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah has been largely reinterpreted through various traditions of esoterica, often with variations of the spelling and interpretations. However, the **Tree of Life** offered through the traditions provides insight into the evolution of ideas from thought to manifestation through the ten sephiroth. Sephiroth is translated mostly closely as "luminaries", and the idea is that just as these ten notions create the macrocosm of the universe, they also create the microcosms of each of us as fractals of the greater whole.

Some traditions consider the first sephiroth to be *Kether*, while others consider it to be beyond any existence we can imagine. It is pure Divinity before any thought of Creation even occurred, the pure potentiality of primal reality and unknowable source. While it is referred to as "crown", the beginning of all things transcends any sort of physical wardrobe trinket or any sense of man-made kingdoms. But it's still a great place to start our journey back to who we really are.

Like many who were brought up in Western civilization, the first spiritual hero I was ever introduced to was Jesus Christ. Although the religion created in his name and mandated under the Roman Empire has often diverged from the

path he set forth, there is no doubt that his contribution to our evolution as a species was significant. Some would say that his existence split what we know as time in half, with BC and AD standing for "Before Christ" and "After Death" (actually it's "Anno Domini", which means "in the year of our Lord" for the Latin lovers), although it's more common today to use BCE and CE for "Before the Common Era" and "Common Era".

In the canonical gospel named for the disciple called Matthew, Jesus delivered what has since become known as the Sermon on the Mount. In this speech, he delivered what would come to be called the **Beatitudes**, eight blessings for people who have a heart for God. Although the canonical Gospel of Mark has a few deviations and a couple other Beatitudes, the eight mentioned in the book of Matthew are the most well-known and give great insight into the teachings of Jesus as a whole.

Looking to Eastern thought, I also included what the Buddha referred to as the **Four Noble Truths** leading to the **Eightfold Path of Righteousness** (yup, the same number of traits mentioned by Jesus). Just as the Beatitudes are merely an introduction to the teachings of Jesus, the Four Noble Truths are a small portion of what the Buddha had to teach as well.

As the best selling book in America in 1995 and 1996, *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield was a fictional story that tapped a nerve throughout the spiritual community and helped bring spiritual seeking to the mainstream. He soon followed it up with a sequel, and the ten **Celestine Insights** are still cited as a great source of guidance and inspiration for spiritual seekers.

In the tradition of Hinduism, we are introduced to the idea of the **Seven Chakras**. These vortices are seen as spirals of energy that help us balance who we are. While there are various views including many other chakras within the body, these seven are the most prominent.

Revered by devotees of Judaism and Christianity, I also included the **Seven Days of Creation** in the biblical book of Genesis. While some do believe that this process was a literal seven (technically six) day period, I believe that they metaphorically discuss the growth of human potential.

Because Christianity is the most popular religion of all time, I also felt it necessary to look at **The Romans Road** of Evangelical Christianity often used

to convert new members. While largely deviating from the message of Jesus Christ, this collection of cherry picked verses from The Book of Romans, presumed to be written by Paul, does offer insight into the mindset of this religion and how it became so popular.

After a background in various religious traditions, my friend Elizabeth published her book *The Sovereign Way* as a means of embracing the teachings of Jesus Christ while not necessarily supporting the entirety of traditional Roman Christianity. In the book, she highlights **Eight Masteries of the Sovereign Way** as a method of healing, devotion, and spiritual sovereignty.

In his studies of mythology, Joseph Campbell established what he called a monomyth. In his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell introduced what he called the **Hero's Journey**, a set of steps the majority of heroes face as they take their journeys through their respective mythological stories.

Delving a bit more into esoterica, the major arcana of the Tarot cards are often called **The Fool's Journey**. These twenty-two cards highlight various archetypes people face on the journey of Life and are also used to denote the twenty-two paths between sephiroth in some Hermetic traditions of Qabalah. Often used for fortune telling, these cards also offer much insight into how we progress as people.

Of course, one of the most popular ways of change in our popular culture is through the **12 Steps** first introduced through Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. Since then, these steps have been used to assist a number of alcoholics and other addicts of various substances and activities. While often criticized for perpetuating victimhood, the steps are continued to be used by millions of people trying to gain better control of their lives and change for the better.

I also looked at the Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change, or the **Stages of Change** posited by Carlo DiClemente and James Prochaska in 1983. Based on their years of research as clinical psychologists, these stages represent the process a person goes through as they gradually create change for themselves and their behaviors.

In seeking a way to lead from the future as it emerges, Otto Scharmer published the seven **Capacities of Theory U** in 2007. These subtle shifts of

attention and intention offer a profound method for moving forward and creating the life we imagine.

In 1987, Bill Moyer released a Movement Action Plan that showcased the eight **Stages of a Social Movement**. Highlighting human achievements such as women's suffrage, desegregation, civil rights, and others, Moyer described the various stages social movements went through over years and decades as they brought change to human society.

In 1965, Bruce Tuckman postulated five **Stages of Group Development**. Tuckman's research highlights how people come together to make changes in their world and has been used in a variety of ways since.

Looking at changes within a community, I included the **Five Stages of Transition** initially discussed in Rob Hopkins' book *The Transition Companion* in 2011. More recently included in Don Hall's follow up, *The Regeneration Handbook*, the stages discuss the steps communities have taken as they have endeavored to develop more resilient and sustainable ways of living in the world. Originally focused on moving to a world without oil, these stages have been used around the globe to create community change toward greater resilience and develop what have come to be called Transition Towns, prioritizing self-sufficiency through initiatives like local food production, skill-share projects, tool libraries, time banks, and energy generation.

Because I'd like to see initiatives for greater resilience and sustainability become more effective and popular, I decided to touch upon more popular culture and include the **Eight Habits of Highly Effective People** by Stephen Covey. First published in 1989 and selling more than 40 million copies in 50 different languages, Covey's books have given people guidance on how to make the most of their business and personal lives.

Drawing from Mexican Toltec wisdom, Don Miguel Ruiz published **Five Agreements** in two different books. Like the work of Stephen Covey, these agreements are not necessarily stages, but they do offer great insight into the human capacity to develop a healthy relationship with the world in which we live.

With my own background in psychology, I was also curious to look at how we grow and mature as individuals, so I looked first to Carl Jung, who developed

his own map of human development he referred to in 1931 as the **Stages of Life**. As the founder of analytic psychology, Jung also opened many to esoteric ideas, and coined the term "synchronicity", also discussed in the aforementioned *Celestine Insights*.

Eric Erikson showcased how people become who they are through the conflicts we have to work through in our various **Stages of Human Development**. Outlined in his 1959 book *Identity and the Life Cycle*, Erikson lays out the stages of ego development and how people grow into a healthy personality.

Although his work has since been largely criticized for its focus on sexuality, any discussion of human psychology cannot be fully complete without discussing Sigmund Freud's **Stages of Psychosexual Development**. As the godfather of psychotherapy, Freud's work was seen as groundbreaking at the time of his initial publications in 1905 and continues to influence psychologists to this day.

Unlike many of his contemporaries who focused on human pathologies, Abraham Maslow was a psychologist who studied more of the positive aspects of human achievement. First published in 1943, his **Hierarchy of Basic Human Needs** has since become a seminal work cited in most every understanding of human growth.

Clare Graves was a contemporary of Abraham Maslow, and was working toward validating Maslow's ideas through what he called "levels of existence," but due to his death in 1986, he was never able to complete his work. However, his research was taken to the next level by Christopher Cowan and Don Beck who eventually published the eight **Stages of Spiral Dynamics** in 1996. These stages showcase how human values have developed throughout our evolution, and offer insight as to how we continue to evolve as human beings.

Aligning with the work of Clare Graves, philosopher Ken Wilber developed his own stages of human values which he referred to as the **Altitudes of Integral Development** in 2006. While the color schemes and nomenclature differ slightly from Spiral Dynamics, Wilber's work on Integral Theory has been largely heralded by many as a seminal work of our times.

Because life often includes a good deal of grief, I also decided to include the **Grief Cycle** discussed by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in 1969. These stages represent the process a person goes through as they overcome great loss and come to accept the changing world around them. It seems like a lot of people are dealing with this these days.

Lastly, originally published in his book *Power Vs. Force* in 1994, David Hawkins introduced what he called a **Map of Consciousness**. Based on his study of kinesiology, these stages showcase the vibrations found in the various stages of consciousness from the lowest of Shame to the highest of Enlightenment.

Again, obviously, these do not fully reveal the entirety of human progress up to this point or beyond. However, it is my belief that by looking at these various ways of understanding our places in the world, we may be better equipped at moving forward down The Unbroken Path.

PHASE ONE

Let There Be Light on The Unbroken Path

The journey of life is an Unbroken Path as we all come from our Source to experience these moments of interacting with matter before returning to our Source. Many have found meaning in this journey we are on while some still seek for it desperately and others have given up searching for it at all. Yet though we all have our various vantage points based on our limited perspectives, we are all on the same Unbroken Path.

People have evolved over the last 200,000 years of our species' existence as we have come to populate the planet with over eight billion homo sapiens. The journey from living in caves and forests to living in suburbs and skyscrapers has been a long one. Along the way, we have developed many ways to understand the world we are living in and our places in it.

In the time we've inhabited this planet, we've cultivated religions and spiritual understandings, created governments and infrastructures, produced arts and culture, and established many observational sciences, like anthropology, psychology, and sociology, that help us better understand who we are and

what we are capable of. Similarly, in the time each of us spend on this planet, we evolve from helpless infants to curious children to hormonal adolescents to relatively cognizant adults... if we're lucky. We are now so fortunate to live in a time where we can have this perspective of The Unbroken Path that has brought us to this point so that we may more wisely know where we are going from here and open ourselves to the Wisdom Revolution. For if the Agricultural Revolution took thousands of years, the Industrial Revolution took hundreds of years, the Information Revolution took decades, the Wisdom Revolution could happen in years, or quite possibly in the length of a breath.

In the tradition of Kabbalah, our engagement with the world is based on the Tree of Life. In some traditions, Kether is the first component of the Supernal Triad, what could be considered the mind of God. In other traditions, the first level is the Intellect Triad, starting with the position of *Chochmah* or *Wisdom*.

Chochmah is the flash of inspiration, where a seed of an idea can bring something from nothing, just as our lives come from nothing and become something. Before anything comes into being, there is a Divine spark that initiates creation with the light of destiny. This is where raw expansiveness finds purpose in its potential and the first step of The Unbroken Path is first illuminated.

According to the biblical book of Genesis, on the first day of Creation, God said, "Let there be light", and there was light. So as we start down this Unbroken Path, the light of creation helps us recognize that from here on out, change is the only constant as we continually desire to take the next step, and we can only change our lives by changing our behavior in order to fulfill the new demands guiding us toward our new desires. For those who are inspired to accept the challenge, a new life awaits us.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night.' And there was evening, and there was morning - the first day." - Genesis 1:1-5

There are similar Creation stories throughout the world with different imaginings of this "God" character. Some traditions use language to describe

this Being as of a more feminine nature, some regard it as limited, and some as more colorful and textured. For some who have become so incensed and cynical over the hypocrisies and evils performed in the name of religion, they shudder with disdain at the very use of this word "God", and some consider even the concept of Higher Intelligence guiding the path of this thing we call life as completely ludicrous.

Nevertheless, as our current version of reality has manifested from the interplay of consciousness over the course of human history, this concept of a Higher Intelligence, also called, God, Gaia, Atman, Allah, the Source of All Being, I Am That I Am, et cetera, has played a pivotal role in guiding the evolution of our species. Good or bad, we have utilized our notion of this Entity beyond the limitations of our temporal minds and bodies to guide us toward our imagined destinies as Divinity continues to write out our fates as we respond to the purity of Its calling and restore a proper relationship with All That Is.

Regardless of the attributes we have come to give the Divine, and how we have managed to use our imaginations and artistry to create it in our image, often condensing the Source of All Being into characterizations of ourselves instead of realizing ourselves as mere shadows of complexity dancing in the colors of Its radiance, the fact remains that all of this stuff which has congealed itself around us to fashion this thing called Life has come from the same place. Just as the planets have emanated from the star we call the Sun, orbiting around it like a celestial hula hoop in the cosmic dance known as Universe, we, the inhabitants of reality, have emanated from the One, that from which All things emanate.

If Light was the first thing created, and before Light, there was only the Void, darkness, then our Being is of the Light, for non-Being is only darkness. In cellular division, mitosis occurs when one cell becomes two cells. On a quantum level, creation is the same way, only with more fractals. We came from our Source and expand from there. Some of us have a more theatrical concept of the actual hands of God scooping up a glob of clay, sculpting man into God's own humanoid image, then placing him ever so gently into a garden and waking him softly with the kiss of the wind.

It's actually a lot more messy.

As we come into our own being as humans, we reach a point of what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced Chick-zent-mee-high) refers to as *differentiation*. We realize that "we are unique individuals, responsible for our own survival and well-being, who are willing to develop this uniqueness wherever it leads, while enjoying the expression of our being in action." This gives us that feeling of independence and the happiness that is assumed along with it. But as we realize ourselves as part of a greater whole, as coming from a Source greater than our smaller differentiated selves, and we find ourselves able to celebrate that Being just as much as our own, we experience *integration*, "the realization that however unique we are, we are also completely enmeshed in networks of relationships with other human beings with cultural symbols and artifacts, and with the surrounding natural environment. Complexity is created," Csikszentmihalyi states, "when one is fully differentiated and integrated."

Just like the poles of the Earth, this complexity of creation has its positive and negative charges, the points of being and non-being, light and darkness, or as some might say, good and evil. If we are truly emanating from the Light as the Source of Being, whatever complexity we create also creates a shadow effect. It is in this shadow that the tragedy of humanity so often plays out. The Unbroken Path allows us to look at that shadow, understand how it has been created through the complexity of our being, and help in working our way back toward the Light of our Essence.

The Sun Rises on The Unbroken Path

According to Carl Jung, the first half of life is likened to the *sunrise* while the second half is likened to *sunset*. Every morning, darkness secedes as the light of the sun emerges from the horizon and we are able to discern the variances in our outward reality. As the light of creation shines upon us as individuals, we spend the first half of our lives on this journey along The Unbroken Path trying to establish our persona and the outer development of the world in which it lives.

Let's consider humanity to be a macrocosm of an individual human life, and that the history we have experienced and learned about has been the sunrise of our existence, and that it's now 11:11 or so. The civilization we have carved out has been roughly 10,000 years in the making, a rather short amount of

time when you consider our species has been around for about 200,000 years, and the planet has been around a lot longer than that. But let's shed some light on how we have grown over these last few millennia to get us to this point in our collective lives.

We've gone through quite a few changes as our various revolutions have come into circulation. And as much as we have changed throughout the Agrarian, Agricultural, Industrial, and Information Revolutions, we still have some changing to do if we want to see the onset of the Wisdom Revolution.

I don't recall if I heard someone talking about the Wisdom Revolution or if it's something I came up with, but the challenge that I have with achieving it is that I happen to be an idiot. I mean, I would really love for humanity to embrace wisdom beyond our emotional traumas and insufficient education, but I don't always embrace wisdom in my own behavior, and there is a heck of a lot of stuff that I don't know. So I have a bit of trepidation in hoping that the rest of humanity will be any better than me. And if no one is any better than me, we may have some problems.

Fortunately, I have experienced many people who are much better than me at doing a great number of things, and so I still have hope that the sun will continue to rise and that we will bask in the light of existence.

Embracing Our Folly on The Unbroken Path

The Unbroken Path leads to transformation, an activity very well outlined in the Stages of Change proposed by Carlo DiClemente and James Prochaska. Used primarily in social work and addiction recovery, the first stage of change is *Pre-Contemplation*. This is when the person does not recognize that a change is even needed, and has rarely considered the possibility of changing their behavior in order to create a better life for themselves.

"When we are mired in the precontemplation stage," they write in *Changing For Good*, "it is denial that holds us there. If we are accused of doing something wrong, one of the ways we learn to avoid punishment is to deny responsibility. This is especially true if we take pleasure in our misbehavior. Another step we take is to admit but justify our behavior, creating good reasons for our bad

actions. This is one of the reasons we so often defend our right to defeat ourselves.”

There are many of us who see no need to change anything about who we are, what we do, or how we interact with the world. Many of us are very happy with our current worldview and see no need to expand beyond it, instead choosing to cling to the behaviors we've developed or the traditions we've been raised with, including whatever limitations may come with them, even those that do not work in our best interests. As the biblical proverb says, "as a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly," and for many of us, The Unbroken Path is indeed a Fool's Journey.

Considering how much ignorance and misunderstanding surrounds it, it is a bitter irony that the Major Arcana of the Tarot is called The Fool's Journey. I think it's entirely appropriate as we are all fools in some regard or another. That's not necessarily a bad thing.

As a matter of fact, if we can come to the point of accepting the pure wisdom that we actually know nothing, it could quite possibly be the most empowering thing to ever happen to us. Because regardless of how much we think we know and how masterful we believe ourselves to be, the collective knowledge that we possess will always pale in comparison to our individual ignorance. But that may be exactly how it's supposed to be.

The folly in which we find ourselves is simply the journey to find our own way. The concept of the Fool himself is seen in both positive and negative lights. Biblically, it is an utter disgrace to call someone a fool, yet in many courts, the fool is the king's most favored servant. Bringing laughter and glee even in the darkest of times, the fool is the harbinger of smiles, and with few worries to weigh him down, he may just be the most fortunate among us. Yet as the butt of all jokes, the clown also finds himself crying on the inside.

In the tradition of Tarot, there are two basic groupings in a deck of cards - the Minor Arcana and the Major Arcana. The Minor Arcana are grouped into the four suits of cups, swords, coins, and wands, (representing the four elements of nature - water, air, earth, and fire - as well as the four elements of humanity - heart, mind, body, and spirit), and the Major Arcana is what is known as the Fool's Journey. It is a series of twenty-two cards which lead the aspirant

through a sequence of steps along life's path, the stages of the Fool's metamorphosis from he who has nothing to he who has everything.

The first card of the Major Arcana is the *Fool*, but it is given the number Zero because it represents the nothingness from which we all come and the field of infinite possibilities. The character portrayed on the card is rather androgynous and is meant to portray all of us - each of us is the Fool, for we are all on this journey of life in search of our own experience.

The card depicts the sun rising behind the Fool as if it is a new day and we are at the beginning. The Fool steps toward the edge of a precipice, eyes toward the sky, unaware and unassuming of what the next step will bring, just as we all are at the beginning of our endeavors. The Fool carries all that is needed for the journey in a bundle and has a flower in hand in appreciation of beauty. At the Fool's heel yaps a dog, perhaps warning of the impending danger, perhaps saying goodbye. In the distance is a range of mountains symbolizing the ups and downs of the adventure in store.

Throughout the following series of twenty-one cards, the Fool's Journey will introduce us to a variety of characters, virtues, and concepts that culminate in our inheritance of the world. Yet it is in this first step that we actually gain it. As Lao Tzu said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

Each of us, in every moment of our lives, is given the opportunity to begin and end this journey. By giving up our control of the world around us and giving ourselves over to mere blissful cooperation with our place in it, we become the rulers of the world. It is when we operate out of a forceful state attempting to bludgeon the world into our submission that we are actually at our most foolish. But when we acknowledge our folly and let go of our preconceived outcomes, opting instead to simply play our roles in the unfoldment of Life with a peaceful humility, it is then that we realize our truest power. The Fool, when we truly own our folly, has the faith of a child and the vision of the kingdom of heaven. By accepting our folly, we embrace wisdom.

As each of us steps off on our own Fool's journey, we must move forward with a leap of faith, unsure of what lies ahead, but with the full knowledge that there is no challenge that we cannot handle. Although the journey ahead of us may be daunting and hold unseen challenges we may not know if we are ready for, it is the same path that has always been travelled by dreamers, heroes, and

visionaries. Each of them found their footing, even on the steps leading to stumble. Have faith that your journey down The Unbroken Path will offer you the same.

"A piece of advice
Given to a young Native American
At the time of his initiation:
As you go the way of life,
You will see a great chasm. Jump.
It is not as wide as you think."
— Joseph Campbell

Suffering and Sin on The Unbroken Path

In the Buddhist tradition, the First Noble Truth is that *All Life Is Suffering*, what the Buddha calls *Dukkha*. Although it seems like a bleak place to start a philosophy, it is the first step toward the unfolding of a greater sense of reality. The life mentioned refers to *samsara*, this veil of illusion that we see before us. It is our clinging to this, grasping at it for some sense of connecting with its illusory permanence which actually brings on our suffering, and so there lies our folly.

According to the Buddha, there are five aggregates of life to which we often connect, and as life's journey separates us from them, suffering ensues. These five aggregates are form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. When we identify with any of these five aggregates and create an attachment to them, as Life changes and things are not as we want them to be, we experience suffering.

When the form of our physical body experiences discomfort, or when the feelings of our emotional body are unpleasant, when our perception is askew, when our mental formations are not working in our favor, and when our consciousness is bound to these challenges we find in life, life is something to be suffered through. In the mainstream culture of consumerism, where marketing is designed to make us identify and connect with all sorts of impermanence, we endure quite a lot of undue suffering. The normalcy we have adopted in this ordinary world of ours, downloading the same

information over and over again while the world is constantly changing, has us in an endless cycle of trauma.

From an Eastern perspective, it would seem we have some major problems. But it doesn't seem nearly as intense as the problem that the Western world has given us.

Our suffering has been immortalized in our society largely through the proliferation of Christianity and the first of five cherry-picked verses from the biblical book of Romans referred to as the Romans Road. Christianity as we know it today was established by the Roman Empire as an official religion, and after seven crusades, six hundred years of inquisitions, and a whole lot of imagery about damnation and hellfire, it has become quite an authority on suffering. Unfortunately, the message of Christianity is quite different than the message of Jesus Christ, upon whom it was theoretically based.

Much of the foundation in the belief structure of Christianity is based upon the writings of Paul. With the majority of the New Testament being comprised of letters written by Paul to regional churches, he is, without a doubt, the predominant voice of the traditional Christian movement. Although he never met Jesus personally or heard him speak, and though he had a number of conflicts with the apostles that actually walked with Jesus, Paul is usually quoted by Christians far more often than Jesus.

Of course, that is largely because Paul has more words in the Bible. All the words attributed to Jesus in the four gospels selected by the Roman Catholic Church to be included in the biblical canon add up to 37,747 words. However, the words attributed to Paul in the 14 books the Romans selected to highlight his message add up to 43,403, giving Paul 13% more influence in the Bible than Jesus.

And, of course, their messages were quite different. While Jesus preached about repentance, forgiveness, and serving others, Paul preached about having faith in Jesus's death and resurrection, and that our works were like "filthy rags". When people came to Jesus for healing, Jesus told people *their* faith made them well, but Paul said only Jesus' blood could heal. Nevertheless, Paul's message is the predominant message shared through Christianity and has formed the mindset of people throughout western civilization, regardless of whether or not they consider themselves to be Christian.

Starting in Paul's letter to the Church of Rome, chapter 3, verse 23, the author sets the foundation for the Roman religion with "*for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*", starting this journey into religious ideology as completely separated from God. The sentiment often shared by evangelists is that humans are so wretchedly sinful that God cannot be in their presence. Personally, I think this notion of God's limited ability makes Christianity a hard pill for many to swallow and doesn't offer a very flattering portrait of God.

Much like the Buddhist's First Noble Truth, this seems like a rather bleak place to start a philosophy, but if we can look at it pragmatically and look at the state of the world around us with its methodologies based so fully in areas of lower vibration like lack, judgment, fear, and greed, it does not take a far stretch of the imagination to concede that something is wrong with us. Biblically, this concept is derived from the second and third chapter of Genesis.

After God created the world in the first chapter, proclaiming the projects for each day as "good," the second chapter starts with God taking a day of rest and gives the account of Creation as it happened in the Garden of Eden, as if it is God's own dream, or as it has turned out for mankind in the third chapter, possibly a nightmare. In this Garden, what has been proposed as a paradise in the midst of what has already been deemed as good, God placed two trees, one of which mankind was commanded not to partake of: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. As the story goes, the man and the woman ate of the fruit of the latter, and now realizing the existence of evil where there had previously been none, realized it within themselves and felt shame. Ever since Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, so it is rationalized, mankind has been mired in sinful behavior and deserves to be tortured in Hell for all of eternity.

When I was growing up, philosophy wasn't a huge part of my educational regimen. I was raised in a Christian household. Born into and confirmed in the Lutheran church, I started going to a Christian school run by a fundamentalist Baptist church when I was in sixth grade. I had Bible classes five days a week, chapel services twice a week, and by the time I was 16, I was going to church at least three times a week.

Unfortunately, I was never much of an evangelist, but that seemed to be the only of the spiritual gifts that the church was cultivating at the time. I still wish

there was better training for those with the gifts of healing, teaching, and prophecy Paul wrote about, but evangelism is the only gift Christianity generally recognizes.

At the time, I thought little of the ramifications of this first step toward salvation. It was what all of the people around me believed, and even in the short time I'd lived on the planet, I'd noticed my own imperfections.

A number of years ago, I was walking down Sunset Boulevard thinking about the seeds of my understanding of the world. I reasoned that focusing on our imperfection was not a very healthy place to start a philosophy. However, since, it has helped me to realize how far mankind has come in moving beyond this belief, or at least growing from it.

In his book, *Power vs. Force*, Dr. David Hawkins outlines the stages of consciousness that mankind deals with on a regular basis. The lowest stage of consciousness, just above death, is that of *Shame*, what Carl Jung calls a "soul-eating emotion". It occurred to me that by starting with this step of the Romans Road, it was this principle upon which the Judeo/Christian heritage was largely based. It was also where my foundation had been based.

This step in the Romans Road can be likened to the first step of Alcoholics (or any other addiction) Anonymous. It is admitting that we have a problem. One only has to look around at the state of our world to realize that mankind has a few issues and often falls short of the glory of God.

In Romans 3, Paul states that "no one is righteous; no not one," and then goes on quite a rant hating on his fellow humans for how terrible he thinks we are. However, in the second chapter of Mark, the first gospel written, Jesus says, "I have not come for the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance." Obviously, Jesus wouldn't refer to things that don't exist, and since our natural state is "good" according to the first chapter of Genesis, God created us as righteous, but quite a few of us fall short of that from time to time.

It has been postulated by Marianne Williamson that the term "sin" is actually an archery term meaning that one has "missed the mark." The term "sin" has, in the evangelical realm, come to mean a deviation from the perfect will of God. Whether it is a slight hiccup in excellence or a complete malfeasance, the

concept that we are all sinful creatures by nature has brought an undoubted amount of shame to us all.

The question I really have is how do we rise above it and live in the glory that God designed for us, the “good” God saw when we were first created. Although many of us do not live our lives entertaining depravity as vile sinners, our attachments to form, feeling, perception, mental formations, or consciousness may still be causing us to fall short of our highest being and creating undue suffering in the world.

Moving Through Shame on The Unbroken Path

According to David Hawkins and his study of kinesiology, there are various stages of human consciousness with different vibrations. The lowest vibration is that of *Shame*, when we feel completely separated from our Source and unworthy of the lives we have to live. This is the horrible state in which so many people live a miserable existence, believing that God is separate from them and despair is their normal reality.

According to Hawkins, this is one step above death. At this level, the primary emotion one feels is humiliation. It’s not surprising that this level, being so close to death, is where most thoughts of suicide are found. Those who suffer from sexual abuse are often found here, and without therapy, they tend to remain here.

Whether *Homo sapiens* truly are the incorrigible, wretched, selfish, vile, distrusting sinners Paul makes us out to be or we are the children of God Jesus taught us we were, it’s safe to say that over the course of the last 2,000 years since this journey of Christianity has been underway, the weaponization and misinterpretation of the message has produced a suitable amount of stinkin’ thinkin’, at the very least. And if we’re going to open up to what was promised to us and do greater works than Christ did, as he said his followers would in the gospel of John, we’re gonna have to recognize that and admit we have a problem.

The first step toward recovery, according to the 12 step program, is doing just that. “*We admitted we were powerless over our addiction - that our lives have become unmanageable.*” Starting with Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939, the 12

steps have been used by many people to overcome a variety of addictions from chemical substances to gambling to sexual depravity. But the first step is always admitting that there is a problem. Until that sentiment is embraced, there will be no journey of recovery.

Einstein regarded insanity as repeating the same behavior while expecting different results. Nowhere is this more evident than in our addictions, not only on a personal level, but also on a societal level. Just as our personal addictions, such as alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling, sexual deviations, eating disorders and other such compulsions, cultivate harmful patterns that impede our growth as individuals, our societal addictions like consumerism, outrage, and greed also keep us from evolving as a civilization.

While certain innovations do enable us to move forward technologically by experimenting with that which has never been attempted before, thereby moving beyond our normal patterns into new operating procedures, in many ways, we continue to persist in traditions and rituals which have outlived their service to humankind and do more to impede our growth than they do to incite the changes they once promised, and often delivered. Such is the case with many of our religious adherences, militarism, nationalism, and hierarchical devotion, where although they no longer bring us the harmony, peace, freedom, and societal well-being they promise, we still maintain an otherwise blind subservience to them that is in conflict with the unified worldview we may envision.

Just as a crack addict constantly returns to the use of the drug to chase after the initial high it delivered although the need is never met, so we find ourselves as a society repeating patterns which do not fully meet the needs they were initially designed to fulfill. As we overcome our own personal addictions and our compulsions to continually consume things which we have found to be harmful to us as they prove to no longer fulfill our greater needs, so must we realize and release our addiction to the consumer methodology which plagues our society by enslaving us more than giving us the freedom it offers.

Needless to say, this cultivated shame in our society and the problems it creates for us results in a lot of grief. Intrinsicly, we know we come from Source and can feel the light of perfection deep within us, providing us with every breath. However, in this ordinary world we inhabit, we feel that state of

connection with the Divine being ripped from us as we are manipulated into ideologies and ontologies designed to separate us from what we really are, and the grief we feel can be unstabilizing.

Since the idea that life is suffering is shared by many people, and many more spend their lives resonating with the shame of their sinfulness, many people live their lives in a constant state of grief over what they have to endure between birth and death. According to the Stages of Grief established by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in 1969, the first stage is *Denial*. This is where we are engulfed in avoidance, confusion, and fear, unable to recognize the state of the situation and the potential for moving forward on The Unbroken Path.

I think there are a lot of people in the world today who are in denial over just what we have lost due to the machinations created to have dominion over us. Yet humanity continues to evolve, and we have reclaimed much of our freedom as we as a species have nearly abolished slavery, established civil rights for so many, and developed at least a working model of democracy, still flawed as it may be. And although many were in denial about any of those things being any kind of a problem, eventually, enough people started to recognize the problem that it started a social movement, and the world was changed.

Normal Times in The Ordinary World on The Unbroken Path

In 1987, Bill Moyer developed a Movement Action Plan to build on what he saw working in successful social movements. Mapping out how social movements had progressed over years and decades, their journey always begins in what he calls *Normal Times*. This is when Injustice has reared its ugly head and someone's freedoms, rights, or securities have been threatened or abused, but the powers that be don't feel that inclined to address it.

Because leadership isn't addressing it, there aren't many people very concerned over the problem. However, there are some, and those are the people who have generally become world changers. While many are comfortable with whatever suffering they must endure, there are always those heroes who set out on their journey to alleviate suffering and make the world a better place.

According to Joseph Campbell, every Hero's Journey begins in the *Ordinary World*. This involves the status quo that he faces every day. Luke Skywalker's dirt farming on Tatooine. Frodo's unremarkable life in the Shire. Neo's oblivion to the Matrix. We are living our ordinary days, holding space to continue downloading the same stuff, and suffering through this life of drudgery. It is the place from whence we all come that compels us to where we must go.

The Ordinary World, though possibly filled with comfort and security, carries with it a banality that we know is not our full potential. We know there is more that we are capable of, and we know that there is more that the world has to offer.

What is your Ordinary World? Perhaps you feel as if you are just going through the motions. Perhaps you feel unchallenged by your current profession. Perhaps you feel trapped. Perhaps you just have a deep knowing that there is more to life than you are presently experiencing.

In this Ordinary World I live in, people don't always do their best. I know because I am one of them. In this Ordinary World I live in, people often look out for themselves before looking out for others. I know because I am one of them. In this Ordinary World I live in, people are often selfish. I know because I am one of them. In this Ordinary World I live in, people are frequently jaded, stressed, afraid, and cynical. I know because I am one of them. In this Ordinary World I live in, people are addicted to all manner of things. I know because I am one of them. And in this Ordinary World I live in, people have a vision of a better world coming and becoming a better version of themselves. I know because I am one of them.

Whether we are religious looking to a paradise beyond the grave or hopeful in the continued evolution of mankind, heroes dream of a brighter tomorrow. We look forward to a world with no war and no poverty. We dream of a time when the power of love overtakes the love of power and the forces of politics so the abundance of the world can flow free like the promised land of milk and honey.

We imagine the possibilities of co-creating a world built on guiding principles and all possibilities. And although many have imaginings of these things and more, few believe that it will happen within our lifetime. So we sit and wait in the Ordinary World.

Of course, in this Ordinary World, we have also made other advances which distinguish us greatly from the worlds that have passed before us. Throughout history, we as a civilization have made progress in a great number of things as we have been walking this Unbroken Path since before we can remember, always pressing forward toward a more thorough becoming of what we are intended to be. And some of us are actively seeking out ways in which to do that.

In these Normal Times, in The Ordinary World we are used to, “We collectively create results that nobody wants because decision-makers are increasingly disconnected from the people affected by their decisions,” points out Otto Scharmer in *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*. “As a consequence, we are hitting the limits to leadership—that is, the limits to traditional top-down leadership that works through the mechanisms of institutional silos.”

Scharmer goes on to point out that “The crisis of our time isn't just a crisis of a single leader, organization, country, or conflict. The crisis of our time reveals the dying of an old social structure and way of thinking, an old way of institutionalizing and enacting collective social forms.”

To address the problem we are facing, Otto Scharmer and his associates developed Theory U to establish an awareness-based method for changing systems. The first stage they refer to as *Downloading*. This is where we find ourselves doing what we've always done, downloading the same information we've always consumed. Yet, to start on our journey of transformation, we open up to listening to ourselves, to others, and to the state of that which needs change.

Scharmer believes that the leadership that will guide us into the future will grow spontaneously from small groups and networks of people. So it would do us well to understand the workings of small groups so that we'll be better able

to network them. In 1965, Bruce Tuckman proposed that there are various stages of group development.

We start with the *Forming* of the group. This is the initial process of putting the team together and starting to develop a cohesive vision for the purpose of the connection. At this first stage, there is an aversion to conflict, and people are open to the possibilities.

Similarly, when he published *The Transition Companion*, Rob Hopkins articulated the five stages of Transition, the first of which he referred to as simply *Starting Out*. In this stage, people are drawn together by this idea of changing the world for the better and begin to share ideas about ways in which they can make that happen. Starting out, the Transition movement was focused on moving to a world without oil, but since then it has grown into a much larger movement of resilience, sustainability, and community.

Transitioning into the better world many of us imagine is largely a matter of maturity. As I mentioned before, if we are looking at humanity as a macrocosm of an individual *Homo sapiens*, we could be such a young species that this Ordinary World is merely our childhood.

Childhood on The Unbroken Path

Carl Jung describes the first stage of childhood as the *Anarchic or Chaotic* stage. If you've spent any time with infants, anarchy and chaos is pretty accurate. Because the child is completely dependent upon their mother, they have no ego of their own and no real personality to speak of. This is when we first start to differentiate ourselves from the world around us.

This first year or so of life is what Sigmund Freud called the *Oral* stage, when the person is focused on their mouths as an erogenous zone and as the source of their comfort and survival. As the individual grows, the weaning process helps develop the personality into greater independence, but when fixation occurs and healthy growth is deterred, Freud said problems like drinking, overeating, smoking, and other oral fixations will manifest later in life.

While Jung established his theory as the Stages of Life, Freud termed his stages as Psychosexual. It's safe to say that Freud was a bit obsessed with sexuality. Jung was more concerned with the roles we play in life and the archetypes we become throughout the various stages. Erik Erikson established his Theory of Psychosocial Development on the experiences of conflict, relationships, and social interactions that shape our egos and personas.

The first stage Erikson referred to as *Trust vs. Mistrust*. Like Jung's and Freud's explanations of this stage, this is when we experience our infancy and we reconcile ourselves with the question of whether or not we will be fed and cared for, whether we can trust the world we live in or not. This, based upon the participation of our parents or caretakers, helps to determine how capable we are in proceeding along The Unbroken Path.

If an infant is regarded with emotional support and physical care, they will carry with them the idea that they are provided for and that the world is a nurturing place. If the child is not cared for in such a manner, they will develop a much more apprehensive approach to the rest of life. In the larger scheme of things, as we develop into the world citizens we must become, we must also look at the society which provides for us and determine if it is providing not only the nourishment that we need to grow, but also the ability to provide that nourishment for the rest of the world around us.

If we consider today the first day of the rest of our lives and the infancy of our journey along The Unbroken Path, when we look at the systems in place which are meant to guide the growth of our civilization, do we find the type of caring and compassionate parenting that will mold our future? Considering the output of our current operational systems, do they merit our trust or mistrust?

There are those on one end of the spectrum who trust the system implicitly and will defend her to the end. These traditionalists find few faults in the status quo, and the only change they need to see is for more people to embrace their way of doing things. On the other end of the spectrum, throngs of conspiracy enthusiasts find very few things to trust about the powers that be, tracing the roots of our civilization back through deception after deception which will one day blossom into a fascist New World Order or an all out Armageddon. Then, of course, there are the pragmatists in the middle who

find both things to be thankful for and opportunities to change, for we are the ones who can look back on The Unbroken Path and see the changes that have come before.

In order to articulate the levels of existence in which humans participate in the development of their values, Claire Graves came up with the concept that has come to be known as Spiral Dynamics. After his death, Graves' research was continued by Christopher Cowan, Don Beck, and a number of other pathfinders from around the world in order to take Spiral Dynamics to the next level. Integrating business systems, human dynamics, and technology, they have created a systemic conceptual system that maps out cultural development as we have emerged into more complex versions of ourselves throughout history, what Clare Graves called "the emergent, cyclical, double-helix model of adult bio-psychosocial behavior."

According to Spiral Dynamics, they clarify their stages by color, alternating between warm and cold colors as the stages move back and forth from masculine individual energy to feminine collective energy. In the *Beige* stage, our basic, archaic, and automatic understanding of the world comes through our *Instinctual Self*. This stage is about survival, resulting in a focus on doing what you must to stay alive, where just as when we are in the first stage of childhood, finding our way through an anarchic, chaotic world where we are consumed by the oral fixation of eating as we decide if we can trust the world.

Ken Wilber has also developed a progression of stages he refers to as the Altitudes of Human Development. Aligning closely with the color scheme of Spiral Dynamics, Wilber refers to the first stage as *Infrared Archaic*. This is where every newborn begins, with no personality, no ability to utilize language, and no sense of personal autonomy.

This is also where *homo sapiens* resonated for several millennia until we expanded into more complex ways of living. As far as human needs go, at this stage, we are primarily concerned with our physiological needs. Before a person can address their emotional, mental, or spiritual health, they must take care of their physical health.

Abraham Maslow stood apart from his contemporaries because he studied health instead of disease. Whereas most psychologists of his day were studying the pathologies which kept men from a life of normalcy and success, Maslow studied the successful to see what made them tick. In doing so, he was able to map out an escalation of human desires that he called the Hierarchy of Needs. First among them were our *Physiological Needs*.

In order for people to grow as individuals, to think outside of ourselves as to how we can serve the world, fill a need, or even belong to a relationship, we must first reckon with the fact that we are biological creatures. As such, we need to eat and drink water. We need to have shelter from the elements. And we need to be able to rest from whatever stress our bodies encounter while making provisions for such things.

Unfortunately, although our civilization has grown by leaps and bounds in technological achievements and procured for ourselves a true predilection toward the finer things in life, we have also vastly increased the percentage of people who spend a great part of their daily energy simply striving to meet the most basic needs. Although our wealth as a whole has seemingly exploded, so has our capacity to experience poverty. As advanced as we have become as a species, the majority of us still find ourselves in a race for our survival.

Remembering Our Roots on The Unbroken Path

For roughly a thousand years, Indian culture, both Hindus and Buddhists, have considered the chakras as energy vortices and portals for the life energy of Kundalini to rise through a person and align them with their best life. Starting at the base of the spine, the various chakras converge at certain energy points and harmonize with the consciousness of the human in question.

The first of these chakras is the *root chakra*, or *Muladhara*. This is where we connect with the ordinary world of which we are a part in order to best play our role in it.

Much like the first of Maslow's needs, this chakra is largely focused on survival and is related to the "fight or flight" mechanism within us. Mentally, it creates

stability and unites us with the earth. On a spiritual level, the root chakra brings us presence and can be exercised by connecting with the earth through physical exercise or by stomping our feet on the ground.

The root chakra also balances sexuality, and when it is not consciously awakened, it can result in sexual deviancy and dysfunction. Since it is so connected to physical sensation, it is emotionally tied to sensuality. Because we as a species have not made it a priority to yet ensure the basic needs of survival for all of mankind, this may be connected to our sometimes puritanical view of sexuality and the ensuing diseases that stem from this misalignment, such as rape, gender confusion, and our fascination with pornography.

Although the alignment of the chakras, much like most of the paradigms which comprise The Unbroken Path, is an interpersonal necessity, because each person is a microcosm of the whole, our inability to reconcile the advancement of our entire species with our personal growth has created within our civilization somewhat of a cosmic misalignment, a tragedy which stands in the way of our societal evolution. Should we be able to recognize our unity with one another and develop a more world-centric view that enables us to assist the whole of humanity in meeting its most basic needs, we may be able to balance our evolution and create a more harmonious world. If not, the "fight or flight" mechanism will continue to fire, skipping like a broken record and keeping us from the advancements of which we are truly capable.

And as we begin this journey down the Unbroken Path, if we are to proceed successfully, we would be wise to empty ourselves of our selfish imaginings and open to the movement of All That Is to guide us on our journey. Jesus called this being poor in spirit.

According to the gospel of Matthew in the Bible, Jesus shared eight types of blessings bestowed to eight types of people (similar to the Buddha's Eightfold Path to Righteousness, which we will discuss later). The first of these Beatitudes Jesus shared was, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" The idea behind 'poor in spirit' is that you empty yourself so that you may be filled by the spirit of God, and as we continue on this

journey may we recognize what we have been filling ourselves with and open ourselves to that greater blessing.

What allows us the courage to empty ourselves is remembering who we really are. In *The Sovereign Way*, Elizabeth shares eight Stages of Spiritual Mastery, the first of which is *Remembering*. This is when people remember that we are spiritual beings on a spiritual journey. We remember that just as the Christian Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit represents the creator, the created, and the creativity, we each represent that incarnation as mind, body, and spirit. So are we not only conduits of consciousness, but as co-creators with All That Is, we are also sources of consciousness, the substance of particularized reality, and the spirit of power that makes life happen, or as the author of the biblical book of Hebrews (which could have been Paul) put it, “the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.”

Ultimately, we are the living embodiments of faith. As we empty ourselves of our fears, as we draw in each breath with gratitude for these unearned opportunities to experience Life and exhale our attachments to what should be and allow for what is, we are able to realize that All That Is, the Source of All Being, is providing us with an incredible journey of becoming. And just as every breath has been provided to get us this far in our journey, every gift of breath from here on out offers us the opportunity to connect with who we are as emanations of Divinity and experience our ordinary world in an all new way.

As we continue down this Fool’s Journey showcased in the art of the Tarot, we are graced with the company of the *Magician*, and the lessons he has to offer. The Magician is sometimes called the Mage or Magus, and he does indeed bring some wonderful gifts.

On the table before him are symbols representing the four suits of the tarot - a cup, a sword, a wand, and a coin - also representative of the four human components of heart, mind, body, and spirit as well as the four elements of nature - water, air, earth, and fire. In the beginning stages of the Fool's Journey, we are challenged to use these gifts to our greatest benefit.

Above the Magician's head is the symbol for infinity or eternity. His right hand holds a baton aloft (sometimes seen as a two-ended candle) and points his left hand to the ground, genuflecting the axiom "as above, so below."

The Magician's message to us as the Fools we are is two-fold. First, he lets us know that we have everything we need to accomplish our journey through the combination of mind, spirit, body, and heart. Secondly, the Magician reveals the bridge between Heaven and Earth by illustrating that all things done on the spiritual plane are manifested in the physical plane.

For each of us, as we take our own journeys, we must remember and be aware of the tools we have at our disposal. Our minds allow us to conceive of new plans and goals. Our spirits urge us on toward greater ambitions. Our bodies provide us with movement and conduits for our energies. And our hearts help us to share our journeys with those we meet along the way.

And let us not forget as we travel on our Unbroken Path that the seeds we sow in heaven are made manifest in our lives. Be it the Law of Cause and Effect or the Law of Karma or the Law of Attraction, there is profound truth in the idea that what we sow we shall also reap. Let us sow good seeds as we plant our magic beans, and may their growth carry us onward toward the realization of our dreams.

In the beginning there was light
and the sun began to rise
as it crawls to the other horizon
where every night it lies
In this time of precontemplation
as we prance like hapless fools
where we don't know our situation
or the suffering that ensues
each time that we fall short
and find ourselves submerged in shame
and we are looking for support
but in denial we remain
this is our ordinary world
and these are our normal times

perhaps understanding will better unfurl
 if we look at the world in rhymes
 for we are merely starting out
 our movement is just forming
 like children, we are merely sprouts
 and we taste our flavors orally
 we don't know if we can trust
 we live in anarchy and chaos
 hardly anything is discussed
 and this archaic stage betrays us
 when we live our lives on instinct
 and are merely striving to survive
 wisdom is pretty indistinct
 and our spirit barely keeps us alive
 this is the root of our being
 as we start to remember who we are
 and a new route we are now seeing
 amid the magic of the stars

PHASE TWO

Understanding Our Adventure on The Unbroken Path

The next branch in Kabbalah's Tree of Life is that of *Binah or Understanding*. The seed of an idea started in Chochmah begins to become more fleshed out as we find ourselves in the womb of Creation. Where Chochmah brought us raw expansiveness, Binah transforms the chaos and anarchy into order and organization.

This is where we get further into the details and limitations of what we're working with, establishing the basis for the coming journey and the direction of the story being told. This is where we begin to understand the journey we are actually on, nurturing our potential into reality as our adventure calls to us.

According to Joseph Campbell, the next stage in the Hero's Journey, after he is established in the Ordinary World, is the *Call to Adventure*. In each of our lives,

when we find ourselves in our own little comfort zones, we often get the opportunity to expand our reach to new endeavors. Be it a new relationship, a new project, or an actual journey, every day we are called to a new adventure. For those who live consciously, every day is an adventure.

In his interview with Bill Moyers on the *Power of Myth* program, Campbell stated that we needed a new mythology. Although we have multiple myths that are drawn from our legends and folklore, our religions and histories, and even our books, movies, and TV shows, it would seem that the influx of these stories has somewhat diluted the message as it has been spread all around us.

I think that we are at a point where it's not that we need a new mythology, but we need to bring the mythology inward and realize that we are the heroes that we have been waiting for. Throughout our cultures we have told tales, written stories, and enacted adventures about other beings that have risen to heights of which we can only dream. But we have dreamed them. And the fact that we have created them means that we can attain them. This Hero's Journey which has encased our consciousness is our story, and on some level, we have created a map to follow in order to become that which we dream of.

This is the new Call to Adventure. Not to necessarily write a new mythology, but to become the new mythology. As we face this world we live in and the myriad problems that comprise it, we are called to supply the answers to the very questions we are asking. Though the task before us may be daunting as we look out on a world ravaged by centuries of war, irresponsibility, hatred, and misuse, it is important that we realize that just as there is no up without a down, no right without a left, and no north without south, there is no problem without a solution, and no call without an answer.

In all of our stories and legends and prophecies, there must come a point where they intersect with reality. Our history is an image from our past. Our prophecies are images of our future. But our Lives must take the essence of them and culminate them into the moment of Now.

This is our new Call to Adventure. To become the heroes we have been waiting for. We need to be proactive.

In the first three Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey illustrates the move from Dependence to Independence. This begins with the first habit of *Being Proactive*. This does not simply mean to move in a positive direction, although it is that. Being proactive means realizing our own responsibility for all that comprises our lives.

In any given situation, we are given the opportunity to be either proactive or reactive. A reactive person gives his energy away by allowing outside forces to dictate his emotions, his actions, his responses, and therefore his circumstances. The proactive person realizes that there is a space between stimulus and response, and although that space may sometimes seem finite, it is in this space that the person gets to participate in their life and take control of their behavior.

This is truly the beginning of the shift from Dependence to Independence. It is the realization that instead of being pushed about by external forces, we can influence the outcome to any challenge we may face. Through all of the paradigms and ideologies of self improvement, there is the integral recognition that we must choose to both lead and follow our own paths.

The Sacred Feminine on The Unbroken Path

As we move further along on the Fool's Journey, the next person we meet is the *High Priestess*, representing hidden knowledge, intuition, and wisdom. She sits in front of the veil between our consciousness and subconsciousness, inviting us into the Divine knowledge that lies below the surface. Whereas the Magician showed us that we have what we need outside of us, the secret that she shares is that we have everything we need inside of us.

On the Tarot card, she sits on a throne dressed in gowns reminiscent of Mother Mary, the symbol of the divine feminine, between two pillars, one black and one white, representing the duality of this world of form as she helps us to find our balance in the midst of it. The black and white pillars also represent the

masculine and feminine aspects of divinity, something our culture is recognizing after a long time of serving only masculine gods.

It was not always so. Humankind was not always so lopsided in its lauding of the penis-bearing half of our species. Before we started hailing the Divine as a paternalistic presence, a Heavenly Father figure that stands sternly in judgment of our every move, we honored the Divine as our Mother, the Earth, as the womb from which all Life emanated from the Goddess. However, as we've learned throughout the ages of dominance engineered by exhorting our masculine side, when we reconcile divinity only to the phallic-based, everything becomes aggressively penetrative, and it is not until we soften in our approach that we can embrace the grace of the feminine and find comfort in the entirety of our being.

Although our Judeo-Christian texts, written entirely by men purporting the lordship of a testosterone-laden God, claim that man came first and was separated from his connection with his Creator through the fault of the woman, a longer look at history and a closer look at biology tells a different story. As each and every *homo sapiens* is conceived, they are brought to life in the image of the Divine Mother, with two matching chromosomes ensuring that all of us are feminine first. It is the protrusion that puts us into the realms of opposites, an extra Y chromosome launching the first of many missiles on our quest for authority after recognizing ourselves as separate from the Source of our being for so long.

Perhaps it has been our feelings of isolation because we feel so separate from our Source that men feel the need to fight so much, as if dominating the world will somehow prove our worth and get us back into the good graces of the Divine.

Or perhaps it is the recognition of ourselves as different from the divinity offered through the Goddess of our origins that has compelled us to so forcibly ostracize women to the fringes of our erectile dysfunctional society, to treat the feminine as a lower status entity so that we may feel more at ease in our own dangling bit of skin. Whatever the case, it is time to stop fighting with ourselves and honor the fullness of our being.

Reconciling ourselves to the High Priestess and honoring the fact that we are each both masculine and feminine, and so should find the strength of consciousness to observe and appreciate both of these aspects of ourselves, we find ourselves at a pivotal step on our journey toward Oneness. For quite a long time, we have relegated ourselves to the rank and file of the militant mind of the masculine, lining up our soldiers to fight whatever war called to us, mindlessly masquerading as only half of what we truly are, drones of delirium who had forgotten the queen we actually serve.

Throughout our history, we have seen snippets of sanity as men have emerged as leaders not simply through their paternalistic prowess, but through their ability to embrace the maternal in themselves, to bring the mercy, grace, and sensitivity which is so often beyond the reach of penile-extended courage, men who have heralded the divine feminine by recognizing the true strength of not merely engaging in the penetrative, but also, and even more so, in the receptive and inclusive.

It was this quality that allowed Jesus to become the bastion of grace and forgiveness that he is known for, and to claim the title as the Prince of Peace. For as we come to peace with ourselves, from whence we have come and to what we are called, we can more fully come to peace with each and every person around us, realizing that we are all one, male and female, all part of the same whole.

Synchronicity and Eternal Life on The Unbroken Path

In the fictional series started with *The Celestine Prophecy*, James Redfield laid out a number of insights into the spiritual evolution of our species. The first insight revealed a new spiritual awakening as *A Critical Mass* of people have begun to experience their lives as a “spiritual unfolding, a journey in which we are led forward by mysterious coincidences.” Although the stories in the Celestine series are fictional, however, as people become aware of their spiritual nature and begin to seek out how it speaks to them, regardless of their religious traditions, they grow in awareness of the meaningful coincidences of synchronicity that unfold throughout their existence.

"Our perception of synchronicity in itself does not suggest that any one religious tradition is more advantageous than another," writes Redfield in *The Celestine Vision*. "Synchronicity, as well as the overall new spiritual awareness that we are building, is merely a consciousness of the way the Divine operates in our lives. All major religions - Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Islamic as well as many shamanic traditions share the notion of being responsive to the will of God. To put it differently, all are connected with our growth toward unity with a Godhead or coming into communion with the creative force behind the human condition. Our new awareness of synchronicity is just the perception or experience of our connection with this divine force."

The challenge that a lot of us have with this Divine Force is that it is perpetually creating the world as we are living in it, leaving things in a constant state of manifestation through change. As such, it is always becoming what it will be, but is never actually that. In other words, because life is always becoming something else, it is always naturally desirous of what it longs to be, but cannot be.

And as we perpetrate desire for the world as we want it, and the ways we attach to it as it continues to change, we increase our suffering. For the second Noble Truth, according to the Buddha, is that *Suffering is Caused by Desire*. Instead of aligning with the divine flow of things, we want something else. Instead of accepting life as it is, we long for life as it could be.

Perhaps we wish for a different form, or want to escape our feelings, maybe we seek a different perception or mental formation to bring us meaning, or perhaps we just get so overwhelmed with it all because it dominates our consciousness, but this is the life we're living and we cannot get away from us.

Just as Buddha shared the reason for our suffering, so did Paul bring the wages of sin to Christianity. After realizing our imperfection through the first step of the Romans Road from chapter 3, we jump to chapter 6 to understand the ramifications of it. In Romans 6:23, Paul says that, "*The wages of sin is death; the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.*"

Since there are two segments to this step, there are two misperceptions that I believe have caused a bit of a bump in the path for Christians wanting an

authentic relationship with their Creator. That bump is Paul. He was a fantastic poet, and I truly admire his passion, but he was a bit of an extremist, and I think, down deep, he really wanted to make up for being the coat check boy when they stoned Stephen. Then again, I may just be holding a grudge against him since the first martyr was my namesake, but I don't think his opinions are as divinely inspired as the Roman Church forced so many to believe.

The first segment of this verse states that, "The wages of sin is death." This is not a physical death, but a spiritual one. If God is the giver of life, then death would be separation from Him. This separation is the state of Shame.

It is the consciousness of failure. It is an unfortunate fact that so many of us begin our philosophical journey with this perception of reality. Before we can even begin to understand life, we are given this idea that we are actually caught up in the realm of death.

However, this verse also includes its share of hopefulness in the second segment, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." As Jesus is quoted as saying in John 14:6, "No one comes to the Father except through me." In the Christian tradition, this gift of eternal life is largely interpreted to mean the gift of Heaven in the afterlife. However, if eternal life only regards the after life, then it is really not eternal.

After all, eternity has no beginning and no ending. It is ever present. It is in actuality, the only moment that ever truly exists. While it has been historically understood that it was faith in the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross which would enable us to receive this gift, I believe it is something more than a mere belief in a story, even if it is the greatest story ever told.

Jesus lived a life of complete selflessness and faith which gave him the power to perform miracles, live peacefully, and reportedly even rise from the dead. Jesus' call to his disciples in Matthew 5:48 was to "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Would Jesus have knowingly asked us to live up to such a standard if the first step of the Roman Road were an absolute truth?

Although Paul stated that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," Jesus had a much different vision of the capabilities of humankind. So much so that he lived among us and offered up an example of how it could be done.

It has taken us quite a few centuries to figure out what Jesus was actually trying to share, and I think we still have a ways to go. Nevertheless, many are now coming to the understanding that the message of Jesus through his life and words resonates with many other spiritual teachers of other traditions.

Eternal life, this gift from God, is in the present moment. By realizing our connection to our Creator, and living in that harmony, as Jesus evidenced, we can accept the call to the adventure of faith beyond belief. Because for a lot of us, the wages of sin isn't death at all. It's just the sense of guilt we carry with us instead of forgiving ourselves for our imperfections and mistakes.

Hawkins proposes that the next stage of consciousness is that of *Guilt*, where we realize we have not used what we have for the greatest benefit. This stage is higher than Shame in that we are realizing our responsibility, but our vibration is still very low, and we don't find a lot of energy to rise from it. It is the realization that the miserableness we experience in life is of our own doing, but it can, at least, put us on the path toward forgiveness.

Especially in the Judeo-Christian culture, the concept of Guilt is rampant. In Evangelical Christianity, Guilt is where the philosophy begins. "All have sinned..." is the message Paul gives us in Romans, and it is that idea which has historically been used to convert people to that particular religion. Even for those who do not practice the religion, the effects vibrate throughout our culture.

In America today, and in the cancel culture that we are seeing, the concept of Guilt is everywhere. The covers of our tabloids seek to find it in all of our celebrities. It seems that we're often obsessed with finding it in others because we long so badly to escape from feeling it ourselves. We may love our neighbors as ourselves, but when we're mired in our own guilt, that doesn't amount to much.

But for those who find the power of forgiveness, by whichever means, when they are able to let it burn within their own hearts and purge the guilt that has plagued them and then spread that light to others, true change can occur. Just as guilt can force coercion and control, forgiveness has the power to foster freedom and choice.

I believe that the concept of forgiveness is finding new footing in our society today. I believe that we are overcoming the age old concept of guilt as the millstone around our necks. I believe that we are getting to the point where we can love our neighbors as ourselves, and love ourselves as we truly deserve to be loved.

The Refusal of the Call to Walk The Unbroken Path

According to Joseph Campbell, a common theme among those who are called to the Hero's Journey is the *Refusal of the Call*. When faced with the daunting challenge to step out of his comfort zone, the hero often flinches, doubts, or runs the other way. Both Luke Skywalker and Han Solo did it before going to rescue Princess Leia. Even Jesus toyed with the idea when he asked God if there was any way this cup could be taken from him.

Should we refuse the call, as so many of us are apt to do, as it is indeed a step in the journey of every hero, the call will still go forth. For even if the answer is 'no', the call is still there awaiting the hero to become the affirmative they are destined to become. Every hero, when beckoned to rise to their natural stature, must first face the specters of fear, doubt, comfort, and security that beg them to remain in their complacency. It is a natural response to lean on the foundation of self preservation and wait for someone else, surely someone more suitable for the task, to take up the gauntlet and answer the call we try so desperately to avoid. Nevertheless, the call will persist until we come to the realization that if we are not the heroes to our own stories, there will be no one else to rise to the task.

The Hero may find several reasons to refuse the call to adventure. We may bring up familial obligations. We may not think we have what it takes and have

intercepted someone else's call. We may simply be selfish. Or we may be afraid. In all actuality, whatever reason we may cling to, it is usually based in fear. Indeed, whenever one of us shirks from a challenge, it is often fear which motivates us.

Perhaps we are afraid of letting down our loved ones or losing their respect. Perhaps we are afraid that we are unable to succeed so we opt not to even make an attempt. Perhaps we are afraid of losing out on something which is dear to us, to let go of our security blankets. Or perhaps we are afraid of our own success.

Marianne Williamson puts it extremely poignantly in her book *A Return to Love* when she quotes *A Course in Miracles* and states, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.' We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

For each of us, in whatever adventures we may be called to, no matter how big or small, let us remember that we are never given a problem to face without the means to achieve it. Though we may flinch, or balk, or run the other direction, let us realize that we truly do have the power to face any challenge and accept the success we envision.

Potty Training and Autonomy on The Unbroken Path

As a child matures, it grows from its anarchic and chaotic existence into what Jung calls the *Monarchic* stage, occurring from fifteen months to three years old. This is where the child has developed a primitive ego, but they usually still

refer to themselves in the third person, like Elmo on *Sesame Street*. Seeing themselves objectively, they are not quite able to realize themselves as the perceiver.

According to Freud, this stage of development is the *Anal Stage*. This is when the child is starting to gain greater independence, largely evidenced when the child goes through potty training. It may not seem like much to most adults, but there is a lot of autonomy in mastering the personal skill of pooping in a bowl, especially when you're just learning how to walk.

That's why Erikson refers to this stage as *Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt*. "A child who has just found himself able to walk seems not only driven to repeat and to perfect the act of walking by libidinal pleasure in the sense of Freud's locomotor eroticism," explains Erikson, "or by the need for mastery in the sense of Ives Hendrick's work principle; he also becomes aware of the new status and stature of 'he who can walk,' with whatever connotation this happens to have in the coordinates of his culture's life plan - be it 'he who will go far,' or 'he who will be upright,' or 'he who might go too far.' To be 'one who can walk' becomes one of the many steps in child development which through the coincidence of physical mastery and cultural meaning, of functional pleasure and social recognition, contribute to a more realistic self-esteem."

During this stage, children also have more to say about what kind of clothes they want to wear, what kind of food they want to eat, and what toys they want to play with. This is where a person's will is developed and is formative in establishing whether a person will live life confidently or if they will feel inadequate. This is where they start to take personal control over their lives.

Similarly, as demonstrated in Maslow's hierarchy, once our physiological needs have provided us with survival, we are able to take more personal control of our own lives by meeting the needs of our *Safety, Health, and Security*. We must have clothes to wear, a place to live and sleep, means to provide for ourselves, and feel safe from any threats. Maslow said, "the goal of consistently meeting the need for safety is to have stability in one's life" for stability provides homeostasis.

As a species, when we reached the point where we started trusting the world in which we lived to provide for our physiological needs, we also started directing more energy into more stability through safety and security. Historically, this is when people started living in tribes and put the needs of the tribe above themselves around 40,000 BC (or BCE). This is where we started creating community.

Ken Wilbur considers this the *Magenta Magic* altitude. Like young children, those at this altitude have a rudimentary sense of self that merges with its environment. This is a stage of magical thinking, believing in miracles and superstition.

According to Spiral Dynamics, the *Magical Self* just wants to “keep the spirits happy and the tribe's nest warm and safe.” They just want to be safe and secure with their people and perform whatever rituals they've been told will keep the Divine happy and off their backs. But with that magical thinking, this is where the supernatural comes into play and people open to animism, the idea of powers and spirits beyond themselves.

For those seeking stability by overcoming addiction, they also open to magical thinking, believing that a *Higher Power greater than themselves can restore them to sanity*. This is where people start to believe that the universe could be conspiring for their benefit and that somebody up there is watching out for them. This could be seen as the first step of faith - in ourselves, in our communities, and in the Divine.

When we are called to our adventure
and inspired to become proactive
to our life we must surrender
and to our path we must be adaptive
as the veil that hides our subconscious
is pulled back by the High Priestess
and to many the response is
to let synchronicity free us
we suffer when we live in desire
and don't notice true abundance
apathy begins to conspire

and to our call we show reluctance
 we seek autonomy like monarchs
 and this can make us rather anal
 but we'd rather be free of claw marks
 and for things to just be stable
 so we pray for magic and miracles
 and we begin to build our tribe
 and while we are still individuals
 to a Higher Power we subscribe
 we honor our Empress, Mother Nature
 in the longer now we see spiritual design
 so we give our lives to our Creator
 and begin to understand the divine
 we see the difference between structure and essence
 as we live in this realm of duality
 and we recognize the power of our thoughts
 and that our words create our reality

PHASE 3

Knowing and Contemplation on The Unbroken Path

As we move into the third phase of The Unbroken Path, we close out the Intellect Triad on Kabbalah's Tree of Life with *Da'at* or *Knowing*. Traditions that consider Kether a sephiroth do not consider Da'at to be one, but they do consider the previous three sephiroth to be the Supernal Triad or Celestial Triangle, existing in the realm of Divine energy, where thoughts of Creation start. In those traditions, this space is considered the Abyss, separating Divine thought from what our limited minds can fully comprehend at our level of existence.

But for those that consider Da'at as a sephiroth and more than just a knothole in the Tree of Life, this is where the idea that is blooming becomes fully formed and integrated. Da'at is actually considered the culmination of all ten sephiroth, where the new thing we know is recognized as different from what we've known before and we are able to connect with it personally.

This is where we internalize the idea and deepen our connection to it. In the Stages of Change presented by DiClemente and Prochaska this is the stage of *Contemplation*. This is where people recognize they have a problem, but they haven't quite worked up the gumption to do anything about it yet. In social work, this is where a client is challenged to consider the pros and cons of changing their behaviors, and hope starts to glimmer on the horizon.

In Theory U, Otto Scharmer considers this stage to be *Observing* or *Seeing*. We are no longer merely Downloading life as we were before, and this new idea that has emerged along The Unbroken Path has given us something to contemplate. As Scharmer says, "our perception becomes more acute, and we become aware of the reality we are up against."

Similarly, the next stage of Transition is that of *Deepening*. According to Rob Hopkins, "your transition initiative will build momentum and practical projects will start to emerge. You may have to design for the sustaining of the organization and the deepening of its work, broadening engagement across the community and being more efficient and effective." This is when the movement must become more focused, effective, and impactful.

Of course these changes do not always come easily, for as we open to our new way of being, conflicts tend to arise, both within ourselves as we consider pros and cons, causing ourselves to Doubt and Delay, according to DiClemente and Prochaska, but also with how we associate with others. According to Bruce Tuckman, he calls the next stage for group development *Storming*. This is when the organization of the group, and its tasks and processes start to develop interpersonal conflicts as greater focus comes into play. This is where the true leaders stand up while others just jump up and down.

Yet it is through these conflicts that vision is refined and success can be more readily achieved. As far as social movements go, according to Bill Moyer, it is at this stage that we *Prove the Failure of Institutions*. We realize the hypocrisy of authority and feel that the public trust has been violated by the governmental powers that be, based upon their inadequacy in these Normal Times. Embracing this new idea with the ability to observe for ourselves the

challenge we face, our initiative grows as we more greatly pursue our need for change in the world and our anger intensifies.

In dealing with the Grief of life we are faced with, we have moved through the stage of Denial and grown into *Anger*. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross says that while Denial can cause grief-stricken people to disconnect with reality, Anger can help them connect to the world again. Yet sometimes our anger with the way things are can be overwhelming and we can lose hope, falling into the despair of *Apathy*.

According to David Hawkins, this is where a person feels hopeless and exists in a constant state of victimhood. We are characterized by indifference, low energy, neglect, and poverty. This is where people feel that we can't help ourselves or just don't want to.

People mired in the state of apathy often find ourselves struggling with homelessness and unemployment. However, as humans, we aren't hardwired to live that way as many of us have an intrinsic initiative within us that calls us to create a better life for ourselves. According to Erik Erikson, this begins in children at about 4 years old when they face their crisis of *Initiative Versus Guilt*.

As each of us contemplates this new idea of being an individual and deepening our consideration about what kind of individual we will be, Erikson says we are faced with three new developments that bring us closer to this particular crisis of individuality: (1) we learn to move around more freely and more violently, establishing a wider and seemingly unlimited radius of goals; (2) our sense of language is perfected to the point where we can ask about many things just enough to misunderstand them thoroughly; and (3) our language and locomotion allow us to expand our imagination so much so that we often frighten ourselves with what we dream up. From this crisis, Erikson says we "must emerge with a sense of *unbroken initiative* as a basis for a high and yet realistic sense of ambition and independence."

According to Jung, this stage of childhood is the *Dualistic Stage*. The child's ego is getting a little more complex, and they are referring to themselves in the first person. Their memories of life are starting to be recognized

chronologically and their personality is starting to develop in realizing themselves as different and separate from their parents.

This is also the age in which we start to recognize the differences between males and females. According to Freud, between the ages of 3 and 6 years old, the primary focus of the libido is on the genitals. It is during these years that Freud proposed boys start seeing their fathers as rivals for their mother's affection, and the Oedipal complex comes into play. Freud also postulated that girls go through the Electra complex, which gives them penis envy.

As Erikson explains it, "Girls often have a difficult time at this stage, because they observe sooner or later that, although their locomotor, mental, and social intrusiveness is increased equally with, and is as adequate as, that of the boys, thus permitting them to become perfect tomboys, they lack one item: the penis; and with it, important prerogatives in some cultures and classes. While the boy has this visible, erectible, and comprehensible organ to which he can attach dreams of adult bigness, the girl's clitoris only poorly sustains dreams of sexual equality."

Jung's theory on these now conspicuous differences expanded his Dualistic viewpoint to posit that all men have a feminine aspect within them that he called the *Anima*, and all women have a masculine aspect within them that he called the *Animus*. While Jung sought to help people find balance in their emotional and spiritual development, Freud thought emotional and mental health could be found in suppressing feminine ideologies and embracing the masculine. Basically, he encouraged men to be dicks.

The mentality we have as toddlers, moving into what Freud called the *Phallic* stage, is similar to what Spiral Dynamics refers to as the *Red Impulsive Self*. This is when we are driven by our ego's need for power and glory, often erupting in rage and revenge. The theme of this stage is "be what you are and do what you want, regardless."

While this stage does include a lot of unhealthy aggression, it also moved humanity into the Bronze Age, heralding the onset of both heroes and domination. Many still operate from this world view, which allows our advertising practices in the world of consumerism to work fantastically. Ken

Wilber also uses the color red to signify this stage, but refers to it as *Magic/Mythic* stage instead of the Impulsive Self.

Nevertheless, he still recognizes this stage as impulsive. It is often driven by aggression, anger, and unbridled self-expression. This is when we perceive the world as separate from us and cannot recognize the perspective of others as we are consumed by our own egos.

Considering that we live in a culture that dramatically celebrates the cultivation of our egos, this mindset is relatively prevalent. While many resonate more deeply with some of the other stages to come, all of us have a little bit of this Impulsive Magic Mythic self inside of us. And each of us gets to decide how much energy to give this aspect of our individual selves as we continue along The Unbroken Path.

A Matter of Energy on The Unbroken Path

With the Third Insight of the Celestine Prophecy, we see the world not as a mere material construct, but as *A Matter of Energy*. According to the insight, *"We now experience that we live not in a material universe but in a universe of dynamic energy. Everything extant is a field of sacred energy that we can sense and intuit. Moreover, we humans can project our energy by focusing our attention in the desired direction... where attention goes energy flows... influencing other energy systems and increasing the pace of coincidences in our lives."*

Currently, we regularly see the world and its inhabitants, as little more than material constructs. In our Agricultural/Industrial systems, our food, and indeed all of the "stuff" that we use in our day to day operations, are something "out there" and separate from us, things that are created by other people that we must attain. However, there is now a growing understanding of our symbiosis with the world and a realization that these things which sustain us need not be so far removed. As a matter of fact, it may just be this symptom of the Agricultural/Industrial mindset which has created such a feeling of separation and disparity in so many of us. Fortunately, that mindset is

changing into a more fully developed understanding of our place in the world and how it truly operates.

With the recent scientific findings now reinforcing what the spiritually minded have known for a long time, we are fully understanding that even the material world that we so take for granted is nothing more than energy in motion. Should we be able to recognize that, as well as our ability to harness and cultivate the kind of energy we want to see reciprocated in our lives, we will be able to use our own energy to nurture the life around us, in people, in animals, and in plants.

On a practical level, this means that we are able to develop a healthier relationship with the community of people around us, and with the food that will fill our tables. No longer do we need to subjugate ourselves to food that is grown with genetic modification and harsh poisons where profit is the grandest motive. By integrating permaculture design and realizing the potential we have by growing food throughout the land we share with one another, we have the ability to grow food with the energy of love instead of merely money. And if we can harness that potential in the food we grow, we can also use that energy to transform our relationships with people from the competitive order of industrialism to the collaborative nature of true wisdom.

Drawing our attention to our *Sacral chakra*, spinning behind our naval, from which we were fed for nine long months of gestation, *Svadhishthana* gives us the power to nurture and channel this energy. It is where we find our capacity to weave together the roles we play every day into the beautiful tapestry that is the artistry of our lives. Breathing into this space drives our creativity, self expression, and self-worth.

As we transmute the energy flowing through us into this vibrant creativity, we can consider the next day of creation as God made the endless sky. *“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day” - Genesis 1:6-8*

According to this verse, God created this space between the waters of the oceans and rivers and the waters in the clouds, and he called this place Heaven. Although our penchant for chewing on the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good And Evil keeps us from recognizing it, this expanse in which we live between the waters of life is actually Heaven. Our true apocalypse will be opening our eyes to it.

Releasing Our Grief on The Unbroken Path

As the Stages of Grief is one of the twenty-six paradigms used to map out this Unbroken Path, it is certainly worth looking at more closely. *Grief* is the next level of consciousness above Apathy, according to David Hawkins. We no longer feel the numbness, but fully feel the weight of sadness and loss. Although we may have accepted failure and sorrow as a part of our lives, we manage to slog our way through it. While many people feel grief as an emotion when we lose someone or something we love, many of us live most of our lives in this state of depression and remorse.

Many of us have felt grief at times of tragedy in our lives when we have lost loved ones or our reality has been otherwise disrupted. However, for those who experience this as our primary level of consciousness, we live lives of constant regret and remorse. This is the level where we feel all of our opportunities have passed us by, and ultimately, feel like failures in Life.

However, with those who have ears to hear, we can find comfort in the next beatitude offered by Jesus. "*Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.*" Regardless of how bad life may seem in this ordinary world in which we live, we can find comfort in that whatever we are facing, it came to pass. Whatever grief we may experience due to our attachments to the world outside of ourselves, we can find comfort by embracing what is inside of us.

Suffering, as the Buddha stated in his Fourth Noble Truth, *can be alleviated by the loss of desire*. Much of the grief we experience in life is due to longing for that which we do not have, whether it is something we treasured that was taken from us or a fantasy that remains unfulfilled. Basically, we grieve for

what we desire, and would feel a whole lot better if we stopped wanting so much.

When we are able to let go of the lives we want and embrace the lives we are actually given, we find a new realm of fulfillment. Some find the renunciation of desire as the way to Nirvana, opening to the direct energy of *prana* and releasing the suffering of *dukkha*. Especially as people release their attachments to the material world and all of the temptations it offers, we are more able to embrace the joys of emotional, mental, and spiritual pursuits.

Yet some of us are very attached to our suffering and to our grief. Often part of our own grief is the suffering we wish upon others. As our impulsive selves cross paths with others dealing with their impulsive selves, we do things to hurt one another and hold a lot of grudges, adding to our grief and suffering.

Letting go of the grief we carry with us has a lot to do with forgiveness. If life has taken something from us, we must offer forgiveness to life for not turning out the way we wanted it to. If we've not achieved whatever goals we've imagined, we must forgive ourselves. And for those who have caused us to stumble along this Unbroken Path, we must give them forgiveness as well.

We find the strength to forgive through the Third Mastery of The Sovereign Way, *Releasing*. The mystical process of forgiveness allows us to transform the falsehoods encoded in our subconscious and dissolve the ties that bind us to the world.

"Remember: you are not your trauma. You are not your triggers. You are not the stress, anxiety and fear that comes from the trauma triggers. You are not the energetic frequencies in the air. You are not the one who controls how others should be experiencing Life. You are the one God is experiencing *Your* Life through."

Begin with the End of The Unbroken Path in Mind

The second habit leading us from Dependence to Independence is to *Begin with the End in Mind*. The objective here is to realize what the ultimate goals are for our life's journey and to develop a personal mission statement to best address them. By having a vision of our goals and aligning them with our values and principles, we are more able to remain focused on our endeavors and to achieve our objectives.

When Dr. Covey talks about the second habit of highly effective people, he says that as we begin with the end in mind, we should use the vision of how we want things to be to help write our own personal mission statement based on our personal principles. Personally, my mission is to “write the world”, delivering the response to this singular experience of life in hopes of creating a more bountiful, jubilant, peaceful, and enjoyable experience for the plural.

If Nelson Mandela was right when he said, "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings," then I would like my words to be used in its eradication. I would like to do that by recognizing, appreciating, and celebrating the abundance that we have, and helping others to do the same. In the end, I want my words to be used in the development of avenues toward sustainability, natural harmony, community-building, and as many smiles as I can assist with.

As a recovering Baptist, the end, if there can be an end to eternal life, has usually referred to the denouement which follows the drama of Jesus' rapturous return, a 1000 year war of Armageddon, and the creation of a new heaven and new earth. I now believe that whatever event the metaphorical mythology of my or anyone's tradition says is going to happen, it's happening in a way that the myth can only give us glimpses of. I believe that we are at the end of looking to our stories of others for heroism and hope, realizing that we are the heroes with the hope we've been waiting for. I believe that at the end, the new Heaven will be one we won't have to wait for and the new Earth is something with which we live in harmony.

In the end, I want my words to have helped elucidate minds and soften hearts. I don't necessarily want my words to tear down the prevailing systems of myopia and injustice. I would rather have them used to cultivate developments

that will make those systems irrelevant so that we may grow out of them like a child grows out of its toys. In the end, money, oil, and war will have played out their part in our evolutionary process and will have been dismissed like eight-track cassettes and steam engines.

In the end, I want the place I live to be the best place in the world for me to live. I want to have strong relationships and connections, and to be a part of helping the community thrive so that we can teach others how to make their place to live the best place for them to live. In the end, every human being on the planet will have a home and access to clean water, and edible plants every hundred feet throughout the world. In the end, we will recognize how greatly the merits of collaboration outweigh the costs of competition.

In the end, there will be a new Heaven and a new Earth. We will realize what eternal life truly means. In the end, love prevails and we return to our Source. In the end, everyone will know that they are beautiful. In the end, we will know that we are All One.

When we arrive at contemplation
 as we observe life we begin to deepen
 our brains storm with imagination
 while our institutions weaken
 anger is often our response
 and these sins only separate us
 which can make us quite despondent
 we become dualistic generators
 things are phallic or they are flaccid
 our guilt is removed by initiative
 by our impulsivity we are distracted
 and our egos become rather prohibitive
 and where we seek love and belongingness
 we notice this matter of energy
 and as we recognize our individual sacredness
 we look to the sky for serenity
 and here we find our knowing
 as we begin with the end in mind
 in every way we are growing
 as we release and leave our old world behind

and for all we lost and mourn
 and for all that we may grieve
 each day a new world is born
 only when you let go can you receive

PHASE 4

Unbounded Love on The Unbroken Path

The next branch in Kabbalah's Tree of Life is *Chesed* or *Unbounded Love*. As the previous three sephiroth created the Intellect Triad that birthed the idea in the realm of Divinity, this is the first part of the Emotional Triad, where we really begin to feel it. This is where the unbridled love for the idea causes it to expand and enlarge.

Recognizing that our lives are in the care of the Divine and we are fully provided for as we make our way along The Unbroken Path, this is the realm of expansion, generosity, mercy, and sharing in the Divine capacity to give.

As we allow benevolence and optimism to flow through us, we open ourselves to all possibilities, and we are able to open to the next Stage of Change described by DiClemente and Prochaska. We reach the stage of *Preparation* and begin to form a plan of action. This is when we start to set small, achievable goals, which allow us to take small steps forward. We are able to identify resources, skills, and other support, while also being able to consider potential pitfalls and problems which may provide difficulty on the path ahead.

In Theory U, this stage is referred to as *Sensing*. Here, we are preparing for the experience at the bottom of the U, where we will begin to round the bend and actually start to implement change. To prepare for this next phase of The Unbroken Path, this stage requires us to tune three inner instruments that will help us craft the art of our lives as we allow ourselves to be part of the change occurring: an open mind, an open heart, and an open will.

But if we're still working our way through Grief, this is going to be a challenge because here is when we get all caught up in *Bargaining*. For those actually going through Grief, we're not necessarily overflowing with optimism, and all of these possibilities are largely tiny bubbles of false hope, but at least our minds are a little more populated with ideas of "what if".

Those of us in Transition are already embracing the concept of "what if" as we are opening to ways beyond "what is", and the next stage is about *Connecting*. Early on, the organization has connected like-minded individuals as we have started out and deepened our initiative, but at a certain depth, the movement starts connecting with the greater community. Several initiatives may have a small core of people who are involved, but the movement really starts to grow when it connects with those outside the inner circle.

As we are Preparing our action plan, Sensing the possibilities for change, Bargaining with our desires, and Connecting with the greater community for our group's development, according to Bruce Tuckman, this is the stage of *Norming*. Since we've already been through the stage of Forming, this is when the group starts to trust one another more deeply and find new ways of working and being together. Leadership changes from one teammate in charge to sharing leadership as the group develops more effective cohesion.

The group starts to more creatively collaborate as they share feelings and ideas, asking for and offering feedback to one another. As our group grows into this healthy state of sharing ideas, so does our social movement reach the stage of *Ripening Conditions*, according to Bill Moyer. When a growing number of the population sense the victimhood being thrust upon them, grassroots opposition rises against the present conditions and provides the means for the required change to occur.

As far as our human development goes, Erik Erikson defines this stage as *Industry vs. Inferiority*, for this stage asks the question, "How can I be good?" According to Erikson, this stage of development occurs between the ages of 6-11, but what actually occurs in this stage manifests at various times in a human life as we all mature at our own rate, and in various aspects of our being. The growth in this stage is found when we are able to assume more confidence by taking on new responsibilities and living up to them. It is this

interaction with the world and the cultivation of a healthy self esteem that drive us toward a feeling of industry, the recognition that we are part of something greater than ourselves and that what we do matters. If this understanding is not cultivated, we often feel inferior and unable to cope with the rigors that life has to offer.

Erikson purported his theory of these stages of development in the 1950's, a time when schools were almost idyllic and the American Dream seems to have hit its high water mark. Since then, as the Dream has dwindled and schools have seemingly become more about teaching facts than teaching children, and parents have had to spend more time working and less in conscious parenting, it would seem that many of us are not fully embracing the context of industry in establishing a life worthy of our highest good. Many of us relegate ourselves to just getting by and accepting inferiority as our station in life.

However, because each of us is a microcosm of the whole, and has the ability to find each and every one of these stages somewhere within our own consciousness, we each have the ability to reconcile ourselves with the bad lessons we may have learned in our development and choose to follow the higher path. Although our history may have us feeling inferior due to either lack of proper support and encouragement or the missed opportunities to engage in activities that would give us the necessary confidence to participate wholeheartedly in the lives we are given, we each have the ability to recognize this consistent possibility for self-growth and maturation, and choose to be industrious in our own personal evolution.

Freud refers to this time in our development as the *Latency* stage. Although most of Freud's theories are focused on the psychosexual aspects of development, during this stage, we are more interested in exploring intellectual pursuits and social interactions. Because children start attending school at this time in life, they are mostly engaged in developing communication and social skills, values, relationships with peers and adults outside family, and their self-confidence.

For Freud, in this stage of maturation, we are not as focused upon our own genitalia, but more open to sensing the possibilities for connecting with others

as we strive to meet what Abraham Maslow describe as our *Belongingness and Love Needs*.

According to Maslow, once we have our physiological and security needs met, our ambitions are drawn toward our needs to find a place to belong and a people or person to love. Whether it be a community of like-minded people or a soulmate, this basic human connection is one of the primary motivators of humankind once they have reached a point of survival beyond living hand to mouth. Even among those who simply scrape by from day to day, there is a draw toward camaraderie and connection with others.

In this stage of Unbounded Love for Life, during our Preparation for the road ahead, Sensing the possibilities for change, Bargaining for the opportunities available to us, Connecting with the community around us and Norming our ability to address the Ripening Conditions in which we live, we move through this period of Latency as we become what we are becoming by seeking Industry over Inferiority and realizing the fulfillment for our needs of Belongingness and Love. May we all keep moving forward together as we continue along The Unbroken Path.

Advancing to the Emperor on The Unbroken Path

As we revel in this time of Unbounded Love, on our Fool's Journey we are reminded that we also need order as we come to the throne of the *Emperor*. In order to bring stability to all of these new connections we are making along our Unbroken Path, the Emperor reminds us that we need organization, structure, and rules, and he has the authority to bring it. On the card, he sits upon a throne adorned with four rams' heads, inspiring fearlessness and confidence and reminding us that while the natural world should be complemented by civilization, it should not be overrun by it.

In the realm of Spiral Dynamics, in this stage, we identify as the *Blue Rule/Role Self*. The theme of this stage is, "Life has meaning, direction, and purpose with predetermined outcomes." Locked in the battle of good versus evil as we are trying to find stability in the world, this stage is absolutist, authoritarian, and obedient.

For humankind, this stage emerged with the development of moralistic religions like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, coming to full maturity around the time of the Renaissance. This stage is grounded in the belief in rules imposed from a higher power for the good of society, absolute morals, and a strict hierarchy based on divine power.

Ken Wilber alters the color on this stage and refers to it as *Amber Mythic*. This is where we are able to empathize with others and better understand their perspectives, but unfortunately, thinking here is still absolutist and concrete. Although we are able to transcend our egos slightly, we still connect with our peer group and derive our identity from that involvement, still fully embracing the "us" and "them" mentality.

This is the true balancing act of the Emperor, to bring law and order to the situation of life so that it may flourish, yet not overpower with so much dominance or authority so that what should be cherished is crushed. And so if we are to claim our personal autonomy and sovereignty, each of us must connect with the Emperor within us and realize that it is ultimately up to us to establish the guidelines, principles, and self control necessary to be the ruler of ourselves lest someone else take advantage of our weaknesses and make us part of their empire.

This is a common action in the world today as people seem to give over their power to others hand over fist, be it to domineering personalities, governmental organizations, or sometimes religious groups and cults. Yet each of us, if we are to move forward on this evolutionary journey of becoming the people we imagine ourselves to be, must ascend our own throne and declare our authority over our own rules, regulations, and activities. The Empress declared to us that we have the bounty of creation at our disposal through the gifts that nature offers, and so the Emperor tells us to use those gifts wisely, resourcefully, and with the discipline necessary to work harmoniously with the rest of our neighboring empires, realizing our autonomy yet recognizing the responsibility of directing it toward greater unity.

The larger and more complex an empire gets, the greater the chance of its toppling under its own weight. Thus is the challenge of the Emperor, to

recognize the limits of his control and guide his energy to where his influence will be felt.

As we create our own empires, may we rule our lives with authority based on principles of fairness, equanimity, and all of the virtues that have been shared with us up until this point in our path. And though we must use a certain level of rigidity to be true with ourselves, we must also allow enough flexibility to incorporate the lessons that we will learn from this point on. For although we must each claim our own sovereignty, we still have a long way to go before we reach the end of our journey together.

Embracing Adolescence on The Unbroken Path

Yet with authority also comes rebellion as we also address this stage of adolescence we find ourselves in. According to Jung, *Puberty* is when children break free from our psychic dependency on our parents and achieve our own psychic birth. Seeking to establish our personal identity, this is a time for rebellion as we spread our own wings and more greatly identify with our egos. We achieve sexual maturity, expand our consciousness, and start embracing the responsibility of adulthood while leaving childhood fantasies in the past.

When a person is going through Puberty, one of the challenges is dealing with what Jung called an *Adolescent Crisis*. When we have a hard time adjusting to the new demands of life, we may maintain “exaggerated expectations, underestimation of difficulties, unjustified optimism, or a negative attitude.” If we are not able to successfully develop our personas, Jung says we are found “often nurturing a deep resentment that they are not allowed to grow up.”

In this insecurity over becoming who we want to be, we feel the cold hand of *Fear* creeping up on us, which is the next level of Consciousness according to David Hawkins. When the Emperor behaves like a dictator and demands authoritarian rule, or when we find ourselves in other types of abusive relationships, we live in this miserable state of consciousness as Fear becomes our constant reality.

Operating out of fear, we feel a heightened sense of paranoia thinking everyone is out to get us. We are in a constant state of defense and suspicious of all we experience.

And as we work through this stage of Grief, according to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, we experience our *Depression*. All hope is emptied from us, sucked from our souls by our overwhelming Fear, and we truly start to feel the emptiness. Yet just as we think we can't go on, if we open ourselves just a bit to the community around us, we will always find someone to help us continue on our journey along The Unbroken Path. Sometimes we meet a friend, sometimes we meet a new family, sometimes we meet a mentor, and sometimes, we find religion.

The powers of the Emperor have been transmuted into the *Hierophant* as we used this time in our societal development of Rules, Roles, and our Mythic fascination with storytelling. On the card, the Hierophant is dressed in regal attire, mirroring the image of a pope, ensconced in immaculate clothing and surrounded by opulence. He bestows his blessing on two acolytes that kneel before him. Historically, the Hierophant is a person who guides people toward the holy. And though it is often mucked up by the politics and power plays within the Church, we can still honor the holiness that it guides us toward without being constrained by the pageantry and pompousness. "Remember where you came from," this card tells you, "the traditions of your forefathers, the lessons of your faith, and you will know how to survive this crisis."

We are all on our own path here. Some will wish to linger with the Hierophant and become his acolytes. Some will wish to quickly move on, disregard the structure and stability he offers, and find their own path to the holy. Yet if we all recognize that it is there, that there is a holiness to this life that we can each connect with, and if we can begin to see it in one another, beyond our robes and rituals, then we can each become a hierophant, and lead one another to the holy.

Our individuality is beautiful, and each of our journeys is exquisite in its own unique way. Yet what we can do as a community is astounding. Where we can find the energy to connect, let us connect. Where we can find shared values, let us share. Where we can grow together, let us grow.

If we can transcend our egos and acquiesce to the harmony that exists between us, we can cultivate common ground and grow into what we truly long to be. Personally, with the Hierophant, I'm recognizing the holiness that exists in the world around me, realizing that it is far too incredible on every conceivable level to be fully constrained by the shackles of governments, churches, or schools. For it truly cannot fully be legislated, preached, or taught. It must simply be realized.

Throughout the revolutions of our evolution, governments, churches, and schools have played an imperative role in forging us into the people that we have become. They are all holy in their own way. Yet the holy must also be sacrificed. Embrace and release so that only the essence remains and its vessel is no longer required.

The word *sacrifice* means "to make sacred." Each of these institutions are sacred to us. For the guidance they give us to help us maneuver through this life we are given, they must be honored, as each and every one of us needs to be honored for our participation in the life that we share.

But we also must recognize the difference between sacredness and idolatry. What we cling to for buoyancy in this flow of life may also weigh us down. If we can hold to the sacred while simultaneously letting it go in openness to the holiness that is beyond it, we can open ourselves up to the continuance of our evolution. As we as a species have moved from nomadic grunters through the revolutions of Agriculture, Industry, and Information, it's about time we stop leaning on how much we know, and open up in faith to what we don't know, thereby opening ourselves to the Revolution of Wisdom.

The Greatest Love of All on The Unbroken Path

Although Paul is no longer a part of my Bible, he has been a pretty big part of it for the last 2,000 years or so for anyone that has ever called themselves a Christian, even those of us who are Christian adjacent. The third step Paul gives us on the Romans Road is found in Romans 5:8. It states, "*But God*

demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." This step on the Romans Road at least starts us on the journey toward a higher consciousness. While we began the Romans Road in the state of Shame by focusing on our imperfections and fallibility, we now have the Guilt of realizing that a sacrifice had to be made in order to atone for our sins.

In much of contemporary Christianity, a majority of the focus is on the blood of Christ, his death, and the necessity of the cross. Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* offered a brutal depiction of the last hours of his life, but offered little regarding his life and the example of love he shared through it. In actuality, the word "love" is mentioned in the King James Bible only 280 times compared to 447 mentions of the word "blood." There is no doubt that it is a violent religion.

Yet there is also the realization that this sacrifice was done in love. In spite of our imperfections, God still loved us enough to send his only begotten son to not only die for us, but to show us the path to a better life.

For me, Jesus was my first true hero and a true mentor on how to treat people by standing my ground while still emanating Love and having faith in each step of my journey, as challenging and difficult as some of them may be. On the Hero's Journey, Joseph Campbell says one of the most significant stages is the *Meeting of a Mentor*, that sage advisor who acknowledges, supports, and spurs the hero onward. For me, it was Jesus, but Luke Skywalker had Obi Wan and Yoda. Bilbo and Frodo Baggins had Gandalf. King Arthur had Merlin. Danielsan had Mr. Miyagi.

But a mentor can be more than a wise old man with a flowing white beard. Though the textbook adventure might paint him as such, the mentor can often be found in those we least expect. I've talked to many parents whose children have offered them unparalleled wisdom. Sometimes, even the challenge from a would-be enemy can spur us on and help us to realize our full potential as we truly learn to see Christ in others.

Additionally, few of us are given a singular mentor for we are often on multiple journeys without even realizing it. For each role we fill, we are faced with new challenges and have the capacity to act with heroic abandon. In our roles as

parents, employees, employers, artists, athletes, statesmen, and citizens, we are given abounding opportunities to both accept the help of mentors that we meet and to serve as mentors to others who are on their own hero's journey.

Everyone is our teacher and everyone is our student. It's just a matter of who is playing which role when and how important we find the lesson on our journey. As we go forth on our journeys of excellence, let us be thankful for those who share their wisdom with us, and let us also be open to encourage others on their paths. A big part of being a hero is being a mentor.

In order to determine where we are going, we must determine where we are, and in order to determine where we are, we must determine where we have been and from whence we have come. Mentors help us to do that. Because they have often trod the same path as us, they are able to warn us of the pitfalls, help us free ourselves from snares, and direct us as we move closer toward our goal of becoming what we imagine ourselves to be.

To me, Jesus was the first Renaissance Man. A carpenter by trade, he also excelled in the healing arts, the culinary arts, the literary arts, the teaching arts, the magical arts, and considering the mythic proportions his story has achieved, he was an incredible artist of life. Also considering that he probably knew how it would end, cultivating the self control to endure such pain and mockery, and having the grace to still offer forgiveness, even to those that delivered the brunt of the suffering, he stands in my mind as the coolest cat the world has ever known, hands down.

As far as the mentorship goes, the greatest lesson Jesus taught was to love your God (and I assume that to mean whatever Source from which you have been spawned and continues to provide you with life) with all of your heart, mind, body, and strength. So I'm hopeful that the revival we see in the Church, what some might call the Second Coming of Christ, is a movement of people using whatever strength we have to open our hearts, open our minds, and open our wills to the service of Love. Then we will start seeing everyday miracles abound.

While I recognize that there is a difference between the magical and the miraculous, I find it interesting that Jesus' most profound message, what he

called the greatest commandment, so incredibly aligns with the message of The Magician, the first person we met on our Fool's journey through the Major Arcana of the Tarot. On the card, the Magician (a Magus, not dissimilar to the Magi that visited Jesus shortly after his birth) stands in front of a table on which are spread the four suits of the Tarot - a cup, a sword, a wand, and a coin. Each of these suits is representative of the four avenues of love that Jesus prescribes in order to establish a healthy relationship with your God.

The cup represents love, emotion, the heart, and is indicative of the mythical Holy Grail which caught the blood of Jesus after the greatest display of love for mankind to ever occur. The sword represents the mind, as in the double-edged sword of truth that cuts through the illusions of this world (also interesting to note that Jesus was quoted as saying that he did not come to bring peace, but to bring a sword to help you open your mind). The wand represents the physical world, the body, the temporal resources from which we construct the lives around us. And the coin represents value, strength, and spiritual connection.

However, if we can look at this story again with the same sort of forgiveness that Jesus displayed on the cross as he demonstrated the second greatest lesson of loving your neighbor as yourself, we can forgive the generations of imperfect men that have gone before us for developing imperfect systems based upon imperfect understanding to bring us the imperfect civilization we regard as reality today. For although the religion that hails Him has fallen incredibly short of carrying out His mission, and many are tempted to turn away from the whole scenario and ignore the fulcrum upon which Western civilization was based, if we do not allow for the forgiveness of proven human imperfection through the stages of our education and our evolution as a species, we will never find the balance that we seek, and we will most assuredly crumble into nothingness.

But if we can open our eyes to the deeper truths which are always revealed to those willing to love the Source of All Life entirely, with heart, mind, body, and strength, then the apocalypse we seek truly will be the lifting of the veil required to allow us to see reality as it really is instead of the system of enslavement and lack that limits the access to our birthright of abundance as sons and daughters of God.

The Magician's magical word is *abracadabra*, which is directly interpreted as "what I will say is what will become," and it is aligning your will with the will of what will be. This is akin to how God described Himself to Moses when he spoke through a fire that did not consume the bush that it burned when He called himself "I Am That I Am." Jesus, realizing the power that each of us has in creating the life around us, left our interpretation of his role up to us when he said, "Who do you say that I am?" As we create the magic of our own lives and open ourselves up to the miraculous life we share, should we listen to the Mentor and let love course through all of our heart, mind, body, and strength, we will most certainly realize that we are I Am. And once we determine who we are as we move through this age of adolescence and into our mature selves, we can determine who we're going to become.

Putting First Things First on The Unbroken Path

The third Habit of Highly Effective People culminates in bringing us fully from Dependence upon others to Independence. *Putting First Things First* involves aligning our integrity with our execution. By looking at our goals and the values put forth in our personal mission statement, we can more adequately adapt our behavior to those tasks which support them.

Whereas Habit 2, Beginning with the End in Mind, is the mental creation of our vision, Putting First Things First is the physical creation. It is the action which manifests the thought. In the development of Independence, it is just as important to realize which things not to do as it is to realize which things to do.

The next tradition for Anonymous practitioners is to make "*a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*" This is where we look at our past behavior and recognize the mistakes we have made that have caused us to stumble and to bring pain to others. This is where we learn what has not been working for us and let it go as we open to the greater abundance of The Unbroken Path before us.

When we look back to the biblical Creation account to see how the provision for our satiety has been established. In Genesis 1:9- 13, it says *"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day."*

It's quite an odd state of affairs in this society that we play so often with this concept of lack. Many believers in the Judeo-Christian tradition say that the American way is based upon that tradition, yet the way that we seem to grapple for scraps as if we will someday run out, or that there simply isn't enough to go around, seems to offer up a resounding lack of faith. However, according to this tradition, before mankind was even added into the mix, provisions for our existence, survival, and downright abundance were made.

On this Unbroken Path, whether we want to align ourselves with the Judeo-Christian heritage or not, we come to this point where we realize that the world really is abundant and does provide for us quite nicely. The magic, if you will, is really the ability to harness our attention so that we can avail ourselves to the highest concentration of this flow. So often we get so bogged down with the minutia and trivialities of contemporary living that we forget to recognize why we're really here and what an incredible here this place really is.

On this third day of Creation, after the creation of light (fire) and firmament (air), God institutes the foundation for the next two elements of water and earth. It is through these four elements that the planet functions in such amazing ways, utilizing these building blocks to give us all that we need in order to prosper. May we recognize the provisions before us and realize that should we be able to implement the practical use of wisdom in the cultivation of our resources, then will we know true abundance on the Earth.

The third chakra is in the *Solar Plexus* and is referred to as *Manipura*. “Mani” means “shining gem” and “Pura” means “place”. It is about finding our confidence and embracing our individual perspectives of The Unbroken Path.

As we are doing so, let us not forget the second agreement offered by Don Miguel Ruiz, *Don't Take Anything Personally*. This speaks to the humbling realization that there is an awful lot of stuff going on in the world, and very little of it may actually have to deal with us. Every person on this planet is perceiving life through our own senses, not only our five physical senses, but their emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual senses. When our senses are out of alignment, we are out of alignment, and if you come across someone who is out of alignment, it has nothing to do with you. Quite often, although they may direct their frustrations toward us, we are not actually the cause of their frustrations. Regardless of what they do or say, we must not take it personally for we are not responsible for their perceptions of life.

When we allow the words and actions of others to dictate our own emotional state, we lose a lot of our own personal power. Through the lives that we live, each of us is coursing with energy which gives us the power to not only live physically, but respond emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. It is our task to align our own senses, not those of others. If we truly are responsible for someone's frustration, we can act accordingly, try to fix the situation, and make amends. But more often than not, if we are living consciously, the frustrations of others have nothing to do with us, and we should not react to them as if they do.

When we empower our own solar plexus chakra and connect with who we really are and the individuals we represent, we are offered the grace and poise to accept the gift of meekness. The next Beatitude Jesus had to offer was “*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the Earth.*” The meek are not those who are bashful and shy, but rather those who exercise gentleness and self control. The meek sacrifice their own wills to the will of God. The meek are those willing to serve, and by subduing their own desires, they open themselves up to more greatly enjoy the world in which they live.

Those who have the strength of meekness are more able to understand the fourth Celestine insight about *The Struggle For Power*. As James Redfield

explains, "Too often humans cut ourselves off from the greater source of this energy and then feel weak and insecure. To gain energy, we tend to manipulate or force others to give us attention and their energy. When we successfully dominate others in this way, we feel more powerful, but they are left weakened and often fight back. Competition for scarce human energy is the cause of all conflict between people."

The reason we feed off one another in such a way is often grounded in the stage of consciousness known as *Desire*. Desire is a major motivator for much of our society. Although it can be an impetus for change, the downside is that it leads to enslavement to one's appetites. This is the level of addiction to such things as sex, money, prestige, or power.

The Desire that Hawkins refers to falls between the stages of Fear and Anger. It's a higher consciousness than the Fear, Grief, Apathy, Guilt, and Shame below it in that it at least offers some motivation beyond the sedentary life of depression offered through those particular stages. However, the direction that it takes the person in is more toward more carnal addictions than positive goals. When we're talking about Desire here, it is more of that insatiable want, the overwhelming lust that draws us up out of the doldrums of consciousness beneath it, but nowhere near the place we truly want to be. This is the reason the Buddha says it is the cause of all suffering.

Unfortunately, Desire is a very popular stage of consciousness in the Western world. The very wealthy have an insatiable desire for more money, and utilize an imbalanced economic system to get it. This results in an even larger number of people that are thrust into this realm of desire because they now have needs that cannot be filled due to the sickness of hoarding by the wealthy. So everyone is in the state of Desire, and no one is getting what they really want.

I heard once from Rev. Toni Lamotta that the word "desire" was derived from the Latin "de sire" or "of the father." Basically, part of her message was that we get many of our desires because God gives them to us. While this way of looking at the word helped me come to grips with many desires that helped draw me toward the path intended for me so that I may accomplish my

journey of discovery, considering the state of the world, and the desire which abounds in our patriarchal society, I've been looking at it another way.

As our society has progressed the way that it has over the last ten thousand years or so, as we have grown more accustomed to utilizing a monetary system to account for our physical resources and start developing this debt-based system of economics, masculine-based religious systems have become the norm. Just by watching boys on the playground, one can tell that males have a natural proclivity toward aggression, much of which comes from this need to control, Desire, if you will. I think that because we have for so long viewed God as a male, we have on some subconscious level, recognized in this universal creative energy more masculine traits than the feminine traits of comfort and acceptance that also reside there.

I've written before about our need as a society, yet first as individuals, to give more credence to the feminine aspect of God. This is not to say that the Celestial Source of All Being has a penis or a vagina, or that It is hermaphroditic. It is only to say that were we to embrace the entirety of who we are, recognizing the fullness of our being, we would be less likely to be so reliant upon the destructive nature of our desires, but find an unsurpassable level of content in the knowledge that we are complete just as we are.

If we listen to the Buddha we find the fourth Noble Truth to be that Desire can be overcome by following the Eightfold Path of Righteousness. According to The Sovereign Way, the Fourth Mastery is *Expansion*. This is where we "do only the next thing God puts in front of you that is in line with your core values, and your Ascension is guaranteed." As we embrace this new stage of maturity, recognize our responsibility to Put First Things First, and claim our own righteousness, repenting from whatever sin may be making our journey more cumbersome and opening to this new expansion along The Unbroken Path.

We prepare our preparation
as we sense changes coming
we bargain for our expectations
connecting as we are norming
in these ripening conditions
we grow our way into latency

as we follow our new traditions
 and pit our industry against inferiority
 this is where we build our self-esteem
 in the roles we play and the rules we follow
 we are operationally concrete
 whatever the emperor says, we swallow
 in our crisis of adolescence
 we often fear the world we live in
 we struggle through our depressions
 and open ourselves to religion
 finally, we have found us a mentor
 to assist in our struggle for power
 we consider how we could have done better
 and plant seeds for what we want to flower
 when we put first things first
 and realize the shining gems that we are
 our meekness lets us inherit the earth
 when we learn to not take things too far
 with unbounded love, we embrace ourselves
 and we do our best to adhere to commands
 the path of righteousness compels us
 and we know that we must still expand

PHASE FIVE

Strength and Esteem on The Unbroken Path

As the next part of the Emotion Triad, the next branch on the Tree of Life in Kabbalah is *Gevurah* or *Strength of Boundaries*. This is where the idea starts to come into focus and where limits are set. As Unbounded Love represented the burst of raw potential, this stage represents using judgement, restraint, and restrictions, creating boundaries and discipline to increase the quality of creation.

In Theory U, we have reached the stage of *Presencing* and find "The capacity to connect to the deepest sources of self - to go to the inner place of stillness where knowing comes to surface."

With this firm foundation we embrace the next stage of Transition and start *Building*. After establishing a base of support and starting out, strengthening the initiatives' foundations through Deepening, and expanding the reach of the movement through Connecting, Building is when the movement starts to take on the really big projects it has been dreaming about.

This is the stage Bruce Tuckman describes as *Performing* in our group's development. This is when the team has achieved true interdependence and is fully functional as an organization. Roles are clarified, and there is a greater understanding of one another's strengths and weaknesses.

Because the movement is growing, our Social Movement is ready to *Takeoff*. This is when the movement we've been building under the surface for quite a while becomes an overnight sensation. A "trigger event" will kick off a non-violent action campaign involving rallies and dramatic civil disobedience, and these activities will be repeated by people in communities all over the country.

Now that we have matured into young adults, according to Carl Jung, "in every adult there lurks a child - an eternal child, something that is always becoming, is never completed, and calls for unceasing care, attention, and education. That is the part of the personality which wants to develop and become whole."

When the world we are Presencing as we are Building our new world and Performing our best as part of the Takeoff of the Social Movement we are part of, we get a lot of angry people. And Billy Joel warned us about Angry Young Men.

As one moves out of Apathy to Grief and then out of Fear, they begin to want. Desire which is not fulfilled leads to frustration which brings us to *Anger*. This anger can cause us to move out of this level or keep us here.

We get angry at the many things that stand in the way of our getting what we truly want. We get angry when things seemingly distract us from our paths. We get angry at ourselves for the foolish mistakes we make over and over

again. We get angry when we are constantly undermined on our journey toward a better life, whether it is because someone else has done something to work against us or whether we ignored our own better knowing and sabotaged our ability for success.

For Freud, once a person reaches puberty, everything from here on out is the *Genital* stage. The onset of puberty incites the libido, and for the rest of our lives we're just looking for someone to have sex with. However, it's not just about sex. It's about connection.

Whereas in previous stages, we are focused primarily on our individual needs, this is where we start caring about the welfare of others and seeking greater balance in our lives. This is where we start finding the strength to sublimate our private urges in order to conform to the demands of reality and social norms.

Erikson's next stage of development is about *Intimacy versus Isolation*, which adults process from ages 18 to 40 or so. "Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results and loneliness and isolation. This stage covers the period of early adulthood when people are exploring personal relationships. Ericsson believed that a strong sense of personal identity was important for developing intimate relationships. Studies have demonstrated that those with a poor sense of self tend to have less committed relationships and are more likely to struggle with emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression. Successful resolution of this stage results in the virtue known as love. It is marked by the ability to form lasting, meaningful relationships with other people."

As we continue on our Fool's Journey, wouldn't you know it, we come to the *Lovers*. On the bottom half stand a man and a woman. They are naked before the world. A tree of flames stands behind the man, while a fruit tree with a snake around it is behind the woman. In the middle of the card, is a cloud with an angel emerging from it, radiating the light of Divinity.

Most interpretations of the card view the man and woman, the lovers, as Adam and Eve. Standing naked in front of what appears to be the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life, that seems like a pretty appropriate

explanation. And if we draw from that story, I think it helps to get a little clearer picture.

The Lovers card is about choice, and as it is number 6 in the Fool's Journey, it is also related to the card of the Devil, number 15 ($1+5=6$), in that it bears a striking resemblance in both design and meaning. We'll get more into the Devil when he shows his face again, but the choice we face with the Lovers is largely one between attachment and autonomy. While our connection to those that we love, whether it be an intimate partner, a group, a mission, or some other object, can help us feel as if we are more fully whole, there is also the danger of losing ourselves in the relationship and being thrown off of our own personal course.

In the story of Adam and Eve, Adam seemed to be faring pretty well in the Garden of Eden, tending to the stuff God made and hanging out with the animals, when God slipped him a roofie and formed a woman out of one of his ribs (ok, so I'm modernizing it a bit). So then the woman decides to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the one tree God said that they shouldn't eat from, and the dopey, old lovelorn man joins her in the feast, and what was once perfect becomes a whole lot less than.

Now, seeing that this book was written by men, who tend to always want to blame somebody else when they screw something up, I can't account for the actual accuracy of this story, but suffice it to say that if Adam had just held his ground and kept on doing what he was called to do instead of attaching himself to her plan, he probably would have been a lot better off and humankind would still be living in eternal bliss.

Nevertheless, as humans, we always seem to want something more. Now, being raised in this Judeo/Christian heritage, I was always taught that there was one woman for every man, an idea perpetuated by our adoration of the romantic idea of true love. In many ways, this made me very selective of the women I've shared time and intimacy with, and in many ways it made me very screwed up in that I was always looking for someone to "complete me." However, as I've gotten older, and seemingly wiser, learning from the relationships that I have nurtured, I've realized that I am a complete person in my own right and don't need to look to any other person to fulfill me.

It seems that when we spend our energy trying to find that one special person to fit into the hole we have in our hearts like some kind of socio-emotional jigsaw puzzle, we tend to distract ourselves from just loving ourselves as we are and get drawn into attaching ourselves to an often unrealistic notion of creating something that doesn't necessarily need to be.

From what I've come to understand, there are a few different kinds of love. Just like eskimos have several different words to describe different kinds of snow, so did the Greeks have different words for love. There is a brotherly love called *phileo*, the open love of God called *agape*, and a romantic love called *eros*, which we've become accustomed to attributing to life-mates.

However, we've also got to account for loving ourselves as well. After all, we can't truly love others until we can truly love ourselves, and a lot of us aren't always good at loving ourselves, for all the failures we have amassed along our journey or for whatever other reason our ego attacks us. It can often be this anger and our unwillingness to forgive ourselves that keeps us from continuing on and cultivating the self-esteem we need.

The next tier of Maslow's hierarchy is that of *Esteem Needs*. Maslow stated that there were two kinds of esteem, the lower and higher. The lower esteem is what we get when other people think well of us. The higher esteem is when we think well of ourselves.

As we continue to Presence, Build, and Perform as the artists of our lives and our movement Takes off, may we be grateful for the journey that has brought us here and feel the Esteem we rightly deserved.

Assumptions and Egos on The Unbroken Path

The third agreement proposed by Don Miguel Ruiz, *Don't Make Assumptions*, compels us to be clear not only in our desires for what we want out of life, but also our communication of those desires to others. In all relationships, clarity of desire is imperative. Far too often, we assume that others know what we

want. In actuality, far too often, we assume that *we* know what we want. Taking that few extra moments to communicate what we need can help us to maneuver around a lot of the pitfalls we often get stuck in.

As Don Miguel points out, there is, in fact, a difference between the reality we experience and our perception of it, just as Maslow points out the differences in our higher and lower esteems. We must not assume that others are perceiving reality the same way that we are. Given enough time, even our own perceptions of reality can change.

When communicating with others in both business and relationships, it is important to find common ground and gain clear understanding on our perception of each situation and the direction we take from there. Assuming that we are on the same page often makes for a very difficult read.

Because now we're really starting to get ramped up on our journey, the next stage in Spiral Dynamics is the *Orange Achiever Self*. This is where we are driven by achievements, ambition, autonomy, individualism, and material success. The theme of this stage is to "act in your self-interest by playing the game to win." This is the foundation of capitalism as we know it today.

This is the stage humanity reached in the 18th-century Enlightenment, "with its emphasis on critical thought, rationalism and the emergence of a new society based on science, industry, capitalism, and individual achievements. Meritocracy replaced the old order of hereditary aristocracy, while science and progress overtook the dogma of religion."

Ken Wilber again agrees on the color scheme, but refers to this stage as *Orange Rational*. This altitude is still individual oriented and stresses achievement and material abundance, but it also allows us a greater appreciation for the perspectives of others. We move beyond our chosen social groups and expand into a broader worldview where we can use logic and reason to change our opinions based upon the validity of facts we are presented with.

With this new sense of drive on our Fool's Journey, we come to the *Chariot*. The card depicts a well-dressed man on a gilded chariot, pulled by two

sphinxes of black and white as our ego races full on into duality. This is where we identify with what we think we are by what we can control, whether in ourselves or in our environment.

One of the big challenges we're going to face here is *Pride*. According to David Hawkins, since the majority of people are below this point, this is the level that most people aspire to. It makes up a good deal of Hollywood. In comparison to Shame and Guilt, one begins to feel positive here. However, it's a false positive. It's dependent upon external conditions such as wealth, position, or power. It is also the source of racism, nationalism, and religious fanaticism.

Carl Jung said, "Through pride we are ever deceiving ourselves. But deep down below the surface of the average conscience a still, small voice says to us, something is out of tune."

Nevertheless, we make a commitment to ourselves and to the powers that be, which directed us to chart this course of victory, to live up to the heights to which we are called. When we hear the call, condemn our stubborn refusal, and cross the first threshold of acceptance in our journey, we make a commitment to write our own mythology and become the heroes we have been waiting for.

This is where we live up to Gandhi's call to be the change we want to see in the world. This is where we live independent of the good opinion of others. This is where we do the right thing simply because it's the right thing to do. This is the hero's way.

When we take that first step toward becoming the heroes we are called to be, it is truly one of faith, trusting that the courage which compels us to cross the First Threshold will be maintained throughout the rest of our journey. And though the specters will continue to whisper in our ear, deriding our sense of self worth and seeking to immobilize us with fear, we must trust in the strength that provided the impetus to take our first step.

Truly, that first step is the journey. Lao Tzu said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. In that step, the hero finds all of the hope, faith,

and courage that he will need to complete the journey, provided he can maintain the impetus.

Joseph Campbell said *Crossing the First Threshold* also opens us up to an all new world of possibilities. When we step out in faith and leave the life that we knew behind, with all of its securities, rules, and safeguards, we introduce ourselves to a new world as if we are turning from night to day.

"Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.' and it was so. God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the fourth day." - Genesis 1:14-19

This world beyond the threshold of the old, having none of the securities, rules, and safeguards that defined the Ordinary World, offers us untold boundaries, unset limitations, and the freedom to blaze our own trails. When we make this first step toward becoming what we are called to be, we step directly into our new being by becoming that which we have never been, a step closer to what we imagine.

Mystics and Genius on The Unbroken Path

The fifth Celestine insight by James Redfield refers to *The Message Of The Mystics*. "Insecurity and violence ends when we experience an interconnection with Divine energy within, a connection described by mystics of all traditions. A sense of lightness and buoyancy, along with the constant sensation of love, are measures of this connection. If these measures are present, the connection is real. If not, it is only pretended."

The *Anahata* chakra is located in the region of the *heart*, where love radiates, and where we get our sense of attachment, compassion, and trust. As we make

these connections with others, we realize the true power of trust and seek to cultivate it in our relationships.

At this stage, the fifth step of the Anonymous program comes when practitioners say they “*admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*” By admitting our faults and shortcomings, and fully communicating with people we care about that they are cared about, we are able to let past wounds heal rather than fester with unforgiving grudges.

Moving forward, now that we have realized our Independence with the first three Habits of Highly Effective People, the next three habits are focused on realizing our Interdependence, our collaborative living with the other people and organizations that share in our life experience. We do this first by practicing the fourth habit, *Think Win/Win*.

In accepting what Stephen Covey calls an “abundance mentality,” we open ourselves up to the prospect that there is enough to go around for everyone. In creating diplomatic solutions among creative beings, there is the promise of always finding agreements that will be mutually advantageous to all parties involved.

The sixth Celestine insight speaks to *Clearing The Past*. “The more we stay connected, the more we are acutely aware of those times when we lose connection, usually when we are under stress. In these times, we can see our own particular way of stealing energy from others. Once our manipulations are brought to personal awareness, our connection becomes more constant and we can discover our own growth path in life, and our spiritual mission - the personal way we can contribute to the world.”

As we are honest with how we have let people down and done wrong by them, we exercise our muscles of *Courage*, the consciousness level of empowerment. It is the first level where we are not taking life energy from those around us, but actually starting to give it. Courage is where we see that we don't need to be tossed to and fro by our external conditions. This empowerment leads us to the realization that we are stewards unto ourselves, and that we alone are in charge of our own growth and success. This is what makes us inherently

human: the realization that there is a gap between stimulus and response and that we have the potential to choose how to respond.

This brings our Fool's Journey to *Strength*. In the strength of our honesty, we learn patience and tolerance for others. On the card, an angelic being softly holds the gaping jaws of a lion. Above their head is the symbol of infinity and behind, the journey we have traveled to find our strength.

As we move into the Fifth Mastery of The Sovereign Way, we realize that every little thing we do has just the right amount of *Genius*. This is where we understand, synthesize, and formulate. "The Sovereign Mastery of Genius is the craft of bringing yourself into a state of malleable mental mastery, no matter where you are in relation to 'the zone'"

The relationship you have with the world is your responsibility, as is your own righteousness should you seek to walk in true sovereignty. And as Jesus reminded us with his next Beatitude, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*"

When we realize the sacrifices made for us
and the life that we are presencing
what we are building is enormous
and what we perform is trending
young adults can be angry
and they can often make quite a spectacle
their problem, if I can speak frankly
are that they're way too obsessed with their genitals
everyone is looking for their lover
to find identity or remain in confusion
when we don't make assumptions we discover
our cognition may just be a delusion
this is where we become achievers
in our chariots, we can compete
we are doers more than we are dreamers
our pride is now filled with conceit
we have finally crossed the first threshold
and heard the message of the mystics

admitting our faults helps us feel bold
 though we are rational, our hearts are idealistic
 and so we now must think win win
 and may we hunger and thirst for righteousness
 this is where courage will begin
 as our strength will help enlighten us
 and so we open to our genius
 and look to the sun and moon and stars
 and realize nothing stands between us
 and we have come so very far

PHASE 6

The Beauty of Engaging the Flow on The Unbroken Path

As the third sephiroth in the Emotion Triad, *Tiferet* or *Beauty* is about holding the opposites of Unbounded Love and Strength of Boundaries and bringing them into convergence. By taking the unbridled enthusiasm of creation and fusing it into the structure of order, here we can create a blueprint or plan. Tiferet is about finding the beauty of harmony and establishing true justice by harmonizing the opposing forces of kindness and strictness through empathy and understanding.

Tiferet is the only sephiroth to connect to all of the other sephiroth, with eight paths leading to all of the other aspects as it balances the flow of Divine creation. As such, as we move forward along The Unbroken Path, we realize how each of our relationships helps to ground us in the world in which we live. From our mentor to the allies and enemies we meet as we face the tests and challenges of life, this is where our connection with all things inspires us to be fully who we are.

In our initial Call to Adventure, we are called to strive toward the highest aspirations of ourselves to become the hero we have only dreamed of. When we meet our mentor, they inspire us to go beyond even our own preconceived notions and imaginations. Just as the valor that has brought our people thus

far seems almost inconceivable, that which we are truly capable of can go beyond even that.

The mentor reminds us that though we may aim for the moon, we will at least fall among the stars. And so we are driven to fix our gaze even higher, surpassing our supposed pinnacles to heights we have yet to imagine.

This reaching is not done in vain under the auspices of fame and glory, but with the understanding that just as the luges taken by those that have gone before us have propelled us further along, so will our leaps inspire those we love and for whom we fight, to follow in the wake of our own victories and yet surpass us. The hero is not concerned solely in his own progress, but in the service it will offer to those who depend upon him and those who follow after.

The seventh Celestine insight is about *Engaging The Flow*, where our connections to others open us to greater revelations along our journey. “Knowing our personal mission further enhances the flow of mysterious coincidences as we are guided toward our destinies. First we have a question; then dreams, daydreams, and intuitions lead us towards the answers, which usually are synchronistically provided by the wisdom of another human being.”

Patanjali said that when we set out with an intention, unseen forces will rise to our aid. Thus, as we embark upon our quests as the heroes we are becoming, forces rise to help us on our way. In our journeys toward excellence, we will meet with allies to stand beside us, trials to sharpen us, challenges to strengthen us, and enemies to test us.

Throughout our journeys, we will stumble upon a myriad of forces, seen and unseen. Though some may be seen as obstacles that would deter us from our endeavor, we must remain steadfast in the knowledge that we are the heroes of our stories and are fated with victory over every challenge that stands before us. For there truly are no obstacles to achieving our fate, but only the challenges which guide the way there and help us become who we must be to claim it.

Furthermore, though the allies that would stand with us may offer to help us to carry our load, let us still not forget our place in our own story, neither to hand off our burden to them or to take theirs upon ourselves. For just as we are each living our own mythology, each ally we meet must also rise to the level of their own hero, whether conscious of the fact or not.

When we make the commitment to become our own hero and strive to go beyond even our own imaginings of what that entails, we will begin to hear the echoes of the calls that go out to those we meet along the way. In the new mythology, there is the understanding that the same essence of valor that has extended throughout time and tradition, through the stories of heroes past, is open to each and every one of us.

With the realization that each of the allies that accompany us on our journey, for however long they hold our company, are on their own hero's journey, we find one of our greatest resources. To cultivate this resource, it becomes our simple imperative to inspire our fellow aspirants to reach beyond the length of their capabilities. In so doing, they in turn inspire others and the personal mythology we are developing becomes a social paradigm, making our rise to heroism all the more glorious because it is shared.

Powerlessness and Stagnation on The Unbroken Path

As our social movement continues, though we may be encouraging and supportive of our allies, Bill Moyer states that we invariably face a time when we *Identify a Crisis of Powerlessness*.

"After a year or two," Moyer says, "the high hopes of movement takeoff seem inevitably to turn into despair. Most activists lose their faith that success is just around the corner and come to believe that it is never going to happen. They perceive that the power holders are too strong, their movement has failed, and their own efforts have been futile. Most surprising is the fact that this identity crisis of powerlessness and failure happens when the movement is outrageously successful - when the movement has just achieved all of the goals of the takeoff stage within two years. This stage of feelings of self identity

crisis and powerlessness occurs simultaneously with stage six because the movement as a whole has progressed to the majority stage."

Although we have worked so hard and come so far, this feeling of powerlessness overtakes us, as it does with those struggling with addictions. Regardless of how successful they may be in conquering their own cravings and urges, there is this stage when the Anonymous practitioner reaches the sixth step when they "*were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*"

Similarly, there are those of us who just want the world to be a better place and for injustice to be a thing of the past. Regardless of how much progress we may have made, there comes a point when we just want the struggle to end.

This is the stage Spiral Dynamics refers to as the *Green Sensitive Self*. This is the stage of community, connection, consensus, and egalitarianism. This stage was brought to light in the hippie movement of the 60s and has inspired the activism which brought us civil rights, animal rights, and the struggle for equality.

Unfortunately, this has also brought us cancel culture. It is hallmarked by "the excesses of capitalism, with the huge disparities in wealth caused by unbridled individualism, but also the destruction of the Earth for the sake of profit brought about a reactionary current of egalitarianism and ecology, accompanied by relativism, pluralism and multiculturalism."

Ken Wilber continues on with the color scheme, referring to this stage as *Green Postmodern*. This is the last of what he calls the first tier stages. This is where we have a greater appreciation for ecology, emotional connection, and take on a more advanced world-centric understanding. At this altitude, we feel the desire to remove the artificial boundaries and hierarchies that serve to separate people and embrace ideas and practices often dismissed by popular culture.

As we progress along our way in our quest for heroism, in finding our own virtue, valor, and value, we begin to see the value in those that share in our

journey, in each and every aspect of it. Our allies are teachers and students, masters and servants. Our trials sharpen our senses and hone our skills. As we leave the life we knew behind, we appreciate the things that we had with a new fervor and begin to more greatly understand their usefulness.

With each new entity that rises to greet us, so comes a new assessment of worth. Just as we come to appreciate each aspect of our own being and see the merit in those that aid us, we find that each entity gleans a new type of resource. The understanding comes to us that with each challenge faced, the opportunities to conquer it lie hidden within the world around us, and our metamorphosis into the hero we imagine lies in seeing the resolution to the puzzle of resources before us.

For part of our journey toward heroism is the journey inward, where we find that still point in our souls that lets us know that all things are as they should be, giving us the innate ability to find the true, and as yet unseen, value in all things. With this great gift, we are able to truly appreciate the grand resourcefulness of life and the brilliant tapestry that comprises our journey through it.

Taking this inward journey brings us to the *Hermit* on our Fool's path. He holds a lantern in front of him to light the path within as he encourages us to withdraw from society to seek introspection and solitude.

For in order to fully embrace the beauty of our connection to the world around us, we must first illuminate our own souls through searching.

This is where we must reflect on our own path through analysis and meditation, listening for the still small voice that will guide us onward to help expand our consciousness. In focusing on our own self growth, we are able to gain the knowledge and wisdom of those who have come before, and as our mentors have done for us, we are prepared to share with others. Jung describes this point in our development when we reach *Middle Life*, releasing the zest and enthusiasm of youth to embrace new meaning in life beyond merely material success.

Eric Erikson describes this stage of human development as it regards *Generativity versus Stagnation*. He says that most humans feel this need to procreate and leave a legacy, but it is not always through our own progeny. "Generativity is primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation, although there are people who, from misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this tribe to offspring but to other forms of altruistic concern and of creativity, which may absorb their kind of parental responsibility." However, without that, we feel a "pervading sense of stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment."

Progressing on our Hero's Journey, it is this specter of stagnation that brings us to the point where we must face our greatest fears, those which reside inside of us and have fooled us into thinking that they are actually a part of us. As we *Approach this Inmost Cave*, having conquered many a challenge, these fears return to us, whispering their vile diatribe into our ears, filling our minds with doubt, and barraging us with attacks upon our self esteem. At the height of our journey, when we feel most strong, that is when we are most greatly attacked. And though we have glimpsed the hero within, we falter in the face of this new challenge.

However, heroes are not judged by how many times we falter, but by how many times we rise from it. Though we are attacked and assailed by every remnant of memory from times past that taught us bad lessons of our worthlessness, that attempt once again to overcome us with despair, the sword of our spirit has been sharpened and tempered. And in the inmost cave, where all of our worst fears conspire to overcome us, we stand brazen and bold, knowing without doubt that we surely do have the strength to overcome anything.

Even our greatest fears are without merit as False Evidence Appearing Real. It is here that we must realize the potential of Forgiveness as we apply it to the person that we were. It is here that we realize the true meaning of Reincarnation, as we are reborn from the ashes of our former selves. It is here that we realize Salvation, as we conquer the demons of our past with the full knowledge that even in our inmost cave, the Light of Truth shines brightly. We are, each of us, heroes inasmuch as we are capable of believing It to be.

Fortune and Understanding on The Unbroken Path

Up to this point, according to David Hawkins, we have been operating from the paradigm of Survival. Now we move into Reason and Integrity as we reach the stage of *Neutrality*. This allows us to be flexible, non-judgmental, and relaxed as we trust the Divine that is enabling us to carry on in our journey.

We embrace the freedom of not being dependent on the outcome anymore, and are able to embrace a greater sense of safety and well-being. We don't get frustrated when things don't go our way, for we have realized the wisdom in meeting life's challenges for what they are as a way to continually improve us.

With Neutrality we find an interconfidence in the world in which we live and feel no need to control it. We feel neither the need to contribute to or destroy anything on our path, but have enough faith in the process to merely live and let live.

From this sense of freedom, we gain the poise to embrace the eighth Celestine insight that James Redfield refers to as *The Interpersonal Ethic*. "We can increase the frequency of guiding coincidences by uplifting every person that comes into our lives. Care must be taken not to lose our interconnection in romantic relationships. Uplifting others is especially effective in groups where each member can feel the energy of all the others. With children, this is extremely important for their early security and growth. By seeing the beauty in every face, we lift others into their wisest self, and increase the chances of hearing a synchronistic message."

We recognize that giving energy increases our synchronistic experiences, and we feel much more inclined to give to those who share our journeys with us so that the Unbroken Path can more clearly unfold before us. But in order to give, we must give up.

For the Anonymous practitioner, this is where they reach the sixth step and "*humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.*" As our shortcomings are

removed, we are able to move forward in life with a greater sense of optimism and rise to the stage of consciousness David Hawkins calls *Willingness*.

In *Willingness*, we see life as one great big possibility. We see amazing potential in every challenge and strive to do our best in every task we undertake. We throw off complacency and develop our self-discipline and willpower, feeling the importance of our contribution and the need to follow through until the very end.

However, stepping into this sort of openness also involves risk as we learn when we approach the *Wheel of Fortune* on our Fool's Journey. The card depicts The Wheel of Fortune with eight symbols intertwined to represent the four elements of nature - water, air, earth, and fire - and the four letters of the name of God, YHWH, I Am That I Am. Four angelic creatures are perched on clouds in each corner in the image of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. They are each writing a book as they represent the four gospel writers - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - reminding us that our journey along the Unbroken Path is the Divine living life through us.

The depictions of the animals on this card also bring us back to the fifth day of Creation. "*And God said, 'let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the Earth across the expanse of the sky.' so God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged Bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and to let the birds increase on the earth.' and there was evening, and there was morning - the fifth day.*" - Genesis 1:20-23

As we share our fortune with the world around us, may we remember all of the other creatures who share this world with us for the Divine has much wisdom to share with us through them as well.

Yet on the periphery of The Wheel of Fortune are the serpent of temptation, Anubis, king of the Underworld, and the Sphinx and the mysteries it holds. Although the Wheel of Fortune is surrounded by the gospel writers and their message of hope, we must also realize that not every spin will bring good

fortune, and we always face the risk of succumbing to temptation and other unknown obstacles.

While we can appreciate how everything connects through the patterns and cycles in the world around us, we must also recognize that change is inevitable. Sometimes we may be raised to the top of the Wheel of Fortune, and sometimes we are dragged under it. Our destiny is not entirely about what happens to us, but how we respond to what happens to us.

When we are able to adapt to the turning of the wheel and the changing of the tides, and we can use them as opportunities for growth, we greatly increase our chances of good fortune. Yet when we struggle against what we cannot control, fate is not nearly as friendly. But wisdom is found in accepting that sometimes we are up, and sometimes we are down, and the same is true for everyone we need on our journey.

Since we are practicing the Think Win/Win Habit of Highly Effective People, we can now expand that as we *Seek First to Understand, then to Be Understood*. As Stephen Covey said “Most people don't listen with the intent to understand. They listen with the intent to reply.” In striving for Win/Win scenarios with those we deal with in our endeavors, it is important to listen empathetically and truly understand another person's perspective before trying to enforce our own will.

This concept is also visited in the teaching of Jesus where he says to treat your neighbor as yourself and in the universally spiritual principle of the Oneness of all. Seeking to truly understand one another draws us closer to our realization of Interdependence with the world around us so that we may also understand it and our place within it.

Maslow suggested that the next level on the hierarchy deals with *Cognitive Needs*. This is where people crave education, as our curiosity seeks out greater comprehension of the world in which we live, information on how to improve our lives, and knowledge that will fuel our creativity and purpose in life.

When we understand the people we are with and the world we are in, we are more confident in our interactions with it and in the words we speak. This gives us strength to take our first step on the Eightfold Path of Righteousness that the Buddha said would release us from suffering as we offer *Right Speech*.

This is where we must empower the fifth chakra, the *Vishuddha*, located in our *throat*. This is where inspiration creates healthy expression and the ability to communicate well, not only in our ability to speak, but also our ability to listen. When this chakra is balanced, we are able to have positive, constructive communication that allows us to both understand and be understood.

As we accept our fate from The Wheel of Fortune, when we are honest with ourselves, we come to *Justice*. By embracing balance, fairness, and divine order, we realize that the lives we lead are consequences of our decisions. Justice sits upon the throne with scales of balance and the sword of truth, inspiring us to accept our karmic debt and realize that all of the events in our lives have worked out the way they were meant to work out to bring us to this point.

We also realize that we are able to influence our future by the lessons we learn and the decisions we make in the present moment. Justice also reminds us of the mistakes we have made in the past and gives us the opportunity to rectify them. For those in the Anonymous program, the eighth step comes when they "*made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*"

Yet as Justice is divinely appointed to hold us accountable for the mistakes we have made, it is also divinely balanced with mercy. As such, Jesus reminds us of yet another win/win scenario with his next Beatitude, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*" And so shall mercy light the path ahead.

We meet up with tests and allies and enemies
 as we continue engaging the flow
 we recognize our powerless tendencies
 and we are ready for our defects to go
 we are finally clearing the past
 as we are in the middle of our aging
 our need for aesthetics has surpassed

the battle we've been waging
 our self becomes more sensitive
 we are postmodern pluralistic
 we are more representative
 and we have a more caring characteristic
 and yet we find ourselves in isolation
 if we don't discover intimacy
 and we give more consideration
 to what we've given others traditionally
 with our newfound neutrality
 we approach our inmost cave
 life has new dimensionality
 as synchronicity guides our way
 our shortcomings are behind us
 and we find ourselves most willing
 to treat one another with kindness
 because it makes life more fulfilling
 as we spin the Wheel of Fortune
 may we seek first to understand
 may we put aside distortions
 and not be constrained by land
 when we do our best it is beautiful
 from our throats we offer right speech
 true Justice must be merciful
 and with those we've wronged, we must make peace.

PHASE 7

Victory in Jesus on The Unbroken Path

Reveling in the beauty of the Tree of Life, we reach the sephirot called *Netzach* or *Victory*, the first aspect of the Instinct Triad. Gaining what we have from the intellect Triad and the emotion triad, we are filled with the determination to persevere and cultivate the resilience to overcome any obstacle to make our vision manifest.

This is a stage of ambition, drive, passion, and persistence. We meet challenges with faith in our overcoming and press on with endurance as we find new ways to creatively express ourselves.

For those seeking change, DiClemente and Prochaska, this is the state of *Action*, where change makers have "developed clear plans for change and are implementing them. They are easily identified by their direct actions towards accomplishing their goals. As clients become more active, clinicians take on less active roles. The intervention strategies in this stage include periodic reviews of client motivations, resources, progress and enthusiastically praising success. Then, as clients gain greater confidence and ability, counselors provide additional support, advice and guidance only as needed."

The Buddha would agree as the next step on the Eightfold Path of Righteousness is indeed *Right Action*. This involves our ethical conduct and moral principles, which guide us away from actions that would harm ourselves or others. Evangelical Christianity is often a bit more particular about what our right action should be.

The fourth step on the Romans Road is found in Chapter 10, Verse 9 as Paul states "*If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*" Although this entire methodology of the Romans Road has been designed and used to bring people to a sense of eternal salvation and an afterlife spent in Heaven, in this chapter, Paul makes a point to state that his focus here is not on the afterlife. Instead, he speaks of living righteously.

The contemporary evangelical Church has long been fixated on "saving souls" in order to assure that they do not go to Hell when they die. Yet in this chapter, when the verse is actually put into context, Paul states that it is not about going to Hell. He actually goes so far to point out that it is not about ascending into heaven or descending into the abyss. Paul's reference is about living out of your heart and speaking what you believe in order to guide others toward a life of righteousness.

I don't mean to be blasphemous, but as I may have mentioned before, I'm not really a big fan of Paul. He was the coat check boy for those who were

murdering Christians before his conversion, and he was still an opinionated sexist afterward. Nevertheless, Hemingway was a bit of a jerk too, but that doesn't mean he didn't write some amazing things. That's kind of the way I feel about Paul. I don't believe his words are the Word of God, but he has a few nice sentiments.

Yet in this chapter, although Paul's conversion experience definitely pointed him in the direction of becoming one of the first Christians, Paul also reveals the fact that whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, there is still only one God. In Paul's understanding, Jesus was the revelation that God truly could work in the hearts of men and that he offered a course to salvation, not just from the place called Hell, but from ourselves. As he states in verse 3, "Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes."

Regarding the necessity to call Jesus "Lord," it is widely regarded among scholars that the word "Lord" was added to the King James Version and stuck. Since then, it has been accepted among those in the Church to mean that calling Jesus "Lord" means that you must become a Christian. However, I believe that it is a term of reverence. Not to take anything away from Jesus, but I believe Paul's focus was more on extolling the glory of God for raising Jesus from the dead. Obviously, Paul was an evangelist and out to convert people to believe in his views of Jesus, however, for how this Romans Road works toward our understanding of higher consciousness, I think there is more to look at.

Although Christianity has in many ways lost popularity over the years, and indeed many have come to despise it due to the bigotry, hatred, and hypocrisy evident in much of the contemporary Church, it is important to realize that Jesus was not a Christian, and never held a Bible aloft when he preached. If one can accept the historical validity of the man and believe that he did do what the Bible says he did in spite of those who misguidedly claim to follow in his name, there is still much to learn about his life and his teachings beyond the religious rigmarole.

After all, Paul did say that Jesus' death was a *demonstration* of the power of God's life over death. He demonstrated that even in the face of the worst

possible circumstances, being abused, attacked, betrayed, derided, and mocked to the most extreme form of violence, we can overcome. *A Course in Miracles* calls it “the last useless journey”, and when it was done, the last words Jesus spoke were, “It is finished.”

To confess that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead does not need to be interpreted to mean that you must become a fundamentalist evangelical Christian. Regardless of which tradition you come from, recognizing the magnificent life that Jesus offered as an example, and the idea that there is a Creator who wrote the rules of nature and can bend them at will, reveals the possibility of a new understanding on how to live. For if one man, at least, can live so selflessly as to become a conduit for the good of God to shine through, even to the point of resurrection from death, then each of us can have that ability to live in such harmony with God.

Sacrifice and Synergy on The Unbroken Path

Considering the portrait of Jesus on the cross, our Fool's Journey next brings us to the *Hanged Man*. On the card, a man hangs from his ankle on a wooden cross with one of his legs bent to create an inverted four, possibly referencing the four gospel writers, the four elements of nature, the four aspects of humanity, or the four suits of the Tarot. His face is serene and his mind is illuminated.

At this stage we fully surrender the lives we are given and are able to see from a different perspective in order to continue our transformation. This is where we pause from our action in order to embrace contemplation, and relax our involvement in order to embrace unattachment. This is where we relinquish control and find true peace in our inner quest for wisdom.

This brings us to the final stage of our Grief, *Acceptance*. We've made it through the Denial, Anger, Bargaining, and Depression, and we are finally ready to move on with our lives.

Combined with the skills learned in the Willingness phase, according to David Hawkins, when we rise to the stage of consciousness he calls *Acceptance*, we begin to awaken our potential through action. Here's where we begin to set and achieve goals and to actively push ourselves beyond our previous limitations. Up to this point we've been generally reactive to what life throws at us. Here's where we turn that around, take control, and truly become proactive, letting go of victimized beliefs and pushing ourselves to reach our goals.

As we continue to lead from the future as it emerges, according to Theory U this is the stage of *Crystallizing*. "When a small group of changemakers commits to a shared purpose, the power of their intention creates an energy field that attracts people, opportunities, and resources that make things happen. This core group and its container function as a vehicle for the whole to manifest."

In the growth of our Social Movement, Bill Moyer says this is where we receive a *Majority Public Support*. Our initiative transforms from spontaneous protests responding to short-term crises to a long-term popular struggle capable of actually achieving positive social change. We inspire people to rise from their neutrality, gain sympathy, and even support of an increasingly larger majority of the populace, involving many of them in the process of opposition and change.

"The majority stage is a long process of eroding the social, political, and economic supports that enable the power holders to continue their policies," Moyer warns. "It is a slow process of social transformation that creates a new social and political consensus, reversing those of normal times."

The reality that it takes many drops to dig a canyon brings us to the consciousness of *Reason*. This is the level of science, medicine, and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. As we know we're on the right track, we don't waste time in activities that do not provide educational value as we begin to categorize all of life and its experiences into proofs, postulates, and theories.

The challenge we face at this level is the inability to separate the subjective from the objective, and can often fail to see the forest because we're

tunnel-visioned on the trees. Paradoxically, Reason can become a stumbling block for further progressions of consciousness if we don't get out of our heads and into the world.

As Don Hall has seen it firsthand in the Transition movement, this is the stage of *Daring to Dream*. "Having contemplated this for years now," he writes in *The Regeneration Handbook*, "I've come to believe that the only way the Transition movement will achieve this level of power and influence is by helping enough Transition initiatives move through the Starting Out, Deepening, and Connecting stages to thrive at the Building stage. If we are able to network hundreds or thousands of these Building initiatives together, we will be able to prove Transition really works, not just a little in some places but a lot in many different contexts. At that point, it might be possible to break through to a much larger world of high profile partnerships, major government and foundation support, national and international media attention, and real political power. This will only happen, though, if we're able to show Transition is significantly improving people's lives on the ground."

Describing the Hero's Journey, this is what Joseph Campbell calls *The Supreme Ordeal*. Upon conquering ourselves and mastering our own fears, we are faced with the challenge of manifesting them in the outer plane. Here is where the crux of our journey is brought to life. The Supreme Ordeal is to take the hero that resides within us and put him to action, squaring off against our most dangerous foe.

As we crossed the First Threshold, we thought of ourselves as heroes. When we faced our fears in the Inmost Cave, we wrote the name of Hero across our hearts. Facing the Supreme Ordeal, we turn our thoughts and words to deeds.

In the culmination of life, one might say that the Supreme Ordeal is death. And indeed, the Supreme Ordeal of the Hero's Journey is death as well, for through this ordeal, we forever die to the person that we were and unequivocally leave the Ordinary World behind. Reaching the completion of the holy trinity of Thought, Word, and Deed, we create the actuality of Hero.

As we embrace the death of our old selves, our Hero's Journey indeed brings us to *Death*. This is less about throwing off our mortal coil and more about the

end of our struggle and the transformation of rebirth. It is indeed letting go of the old and shedding our skin in order to embrace the new and start a new chapter in our lives.

As Joseph Campbell said, "We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

From this death, according to the next Celestine insight we see the rise of *The Emerging Culture* which allows us to fulfill our human destiny. "As we all evolve toward the best completion of our spiritual missions, the technological means of survival will be fully automated as humans focus instead on synchronistic growth. Such growth will move humans into higher energy states, ultimately transforming our bodies into spiritual form, and uniting this dimension of existence with the afterlife dimension, ending the cycle of birth and death."

In starting this new life, practitioners of the Anonymous program pass the ninth step when they "*made direct amends to people we had harmed whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*" By healing these old wounds, we are able to cultivate new relationships from the ashes of the old and find the ability to Synergize.

According to Stephen Covey, in fully realizing Interdependence, we begin to *Synergize* as a habit. By doing this, we seek out creative collaborations and experience the full meaning of "the sum being greater than the parts." Synergizing means to find the strengths inherent in all of the individuals involved, pooling them together so that the relationship between them creates opportunities that would have been impossible by the strengths of the assorted individuals alone.

According to Joseph Campbell, this is where we receive *The Reward for Seizing the Sword*. After we have accepted the Call of the Hero's Journey and stepped out in faith, realizing the resources at our disposal and the Truth at the center of our Being, we stand boldly in the knowledge that we have overcome our greatest odds.

As the Buddha states, “It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you, not by angels or by demons, heaven or hell.”

This is when we seize our sword. This is when we truly realize ourselves as the hero. When we can, in the face of our own psyches, not allow our pasts, our fears, our neuroses, or our supposed mental disorders to assault us anymore. We hold our sword aloft with great fervor and a new understanding and control over who we really are. We sever our attachments to the past. We swing through our fears, dissipating them into the nothing they really are. We parry and thrust through neuroses and disorders, conquering all of our demons with one fell swoop, standing for a single instant as the master of our destinies, and swearing to carry that moment for the rest of our lives.

As we swing, as we attack, and as we fight, we realize that we are fighting ourselves. All of the fears and neuroses and each moment of our past that has developed into a current problem are part of who we are, or at least who we’ve come to accept as who we are. But by plunging the sword through our own hearts and killing the person that we were, we defeat all that stands against us. We die to ourselves. We let go. We wait for the second coming.

Aesthetics and Alchemy on The Unbroken Path

With this new life emerging on our Fool's journey, we find *Temperance*. The card depicts an angel pouring hot water into cold water with one foot on land and another in the water. Although a volcano explodes behind her, she is poised and calm.

This is where we embrace balance, harmony, and moderation. This is where we learn to blend opposing forces in order to reach a new form of equilibrium, accepting self control and self-mastery in order to achieve stability through centeredness and moderation. This is where we release ourselves from the extremes of vices and excessive indulgences in favor of harmony.

With the poise we have claimed, we move on to the Sixth Mastery of The Sovereign Way, the power of *Alchemy*. "True alchemy is in the willingness to restore the manifest to truth and give the created back to God. True alchemy is in the process of infusing actualized structure with new spiritual essence to create a product which is greater than the sum of its parts."

This is where we can again look at the world around us and the beauty of creation, appreciating again all that has been provided for us on this Unbroken Path. *"And God said, 'let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.' and it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the Sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God bless them and said to them, 'be fruitful and increase in number; fill the Earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Then God said, 'I give you every seed bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food, and to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on to the ground - everything that has the breath of Life in it - I give every green plant for food. And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the 6th day." - Genesis 1:24-31*

As we look at this beautiful world around us having fulfilled our Cognitive needs, according to Abraham Maslow, we are more open to address our *Aesthetic Needs*. This is when we feel compelled to appreciate the beauty around us and beautify our environment and ourselves in order to bring more beauty into the world. We achieve greater appreciation for the beauty of nature and a greater intimacy with the world around us.

And then we are able to see the world with our *third eye*. The sixth chakra is called *Ajna* and is situated between and just above our physical eyes. Meditating on this chakra helps us destroy the karma of our past, bringing liberation and intuitive knowledge. With the ability to see with heightened

intelligence, strengthened intuition, keener insight, and greater knowledge of our selves, here we are able to become our own masters and free ourselves from attachment to material things. This is where the promise of Jesus's next Beatitude, "*Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God*", allows us to more fully take in the scope of the Divine at work.

Seeing this new vision, we recall the vision we had for ourselves before we came to this material plane. It is here that the tenth Celestine insight encourages us to *Hold the Vision of Heaven on Earth*. "The 10th insight is the realization that throughout history, human beings have been unconsciously struggling to implement this 'lived' spirituality on earth. Each of us comes here on assignment, and as we pull this understanding into consciousness, we can remember a full birth vision of what we wanted to accomplish with our lives. Furthermore, we can remember a common World vision of how we will all work together to create a new spiritual culture. We know that our challenge is to hold this vision with intention and prayer every day."

Because we are still not yet completely perfect beings, we still will make human mistakes, yet we will be much more willing to recognize and rectify them when we can. Anonymous practitioners reach the tenth step when they "*continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*"

At this stage we open to the next step the Buddha guides us toward on the Eightfold Path of Righteousness, *Right Effort*. We are also reminded of the next Agreement proposed by Don Miguel Ruiz, *Always Do Your Best*.

That might seem like a no-brainer, but what we often fail to take into consideration is that our best isn't always going to reach the same plateau. When we are sick, tired, or imbalanced, our best isn't going to be what it might be if we are healthy, rested, and balanced. Taking that into consideration and doing our best in spite of our circumstances helps us to avoid self abuse, self judgment, and regret.

Because self abuse and the like is usually something we like to blame the *Devil* for, as we continue on our Fool's Journey, that sneaky ole demon shows his ugly face again. The card depicts a large, goat-like devil sitting on his throne

with the Lovers now chained at his feet. Yet the chains around their necks are loose and slack, and they have every opportunity to free themselves.

For although we may have visited Temperance, it is not always easy to apply her wisdom, and just like the success of any social movement, often our recovery from addictions, fears, and unhealthy patterns are gradual as well. Yet the Devil reminds us that he only has the control we allow him to have.

And so we seek out our right action
 and we confess what we believe
 our acceptance gives us traction
 and we crystallize what we conceive
 we give up like a hanged man
 and yet we still dare to dream
 though we have support from the public majority
 the ordeal is still supreme
 this is where we die to ourselves
 to allow for the emerging culture
 as we make amends, we can excel
 and synergy becomes our new structure
 with temperance, we practice alchemy
 to create the world in which we live
 and with our third eye we can finally see
 and we learn how to truly forgive
 and as we feel the pureness in our heart
 and we can feel that victory
 we receive the reward for seizing the sword
 and holding the vision, we embrace the mystery
 we continue our personal accounting
 and we open ourselves up to reason
 when we finally find our grounding
 and realize that no one's a heathen
 now we may offer right effort
 and feel the power in our soul
 we are free to pursue our endeavors
 because the devil has no control

PHASE 8

Surrendering to The Unbroken Path

Building on the acceptance we learned from the Hanged Man, the next sephiroth in the Tree of Life is *Hod* or *Surrender*. This surrender is not about giving up, but rather giving away. It is where we devote ourselves to a higher cause. This is a state of gratitude and submission.

We can operate out of gratitude because our social movement has now reached the stage of *Success*. Our long process of building opposition against the status quo has reached a new plateau, and our new social consensus as concerned citizens has turned the tides of power against the former power holders. Whether our showdown was dramatic or quiet, or if we achieved our purpose merely through the art of attrition, we now stand victorious, having been justified by our faith in the movement we created.

Christians find this surrender in the fifth and final step of the Romans Road. As Paul states in Chapter 5, Verse 1, "*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" As I may have stated before, our faith need not be relegated to any one religion. Paul even stated that whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, there is only one God. In today's theological climate, this could be extended to say that whether one is a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim, or a Hindu, there is only one God... well, maybe not the Hindus; they have a pantheon. Nevertheless, we all may have different names and understandings of who and what the Divine actually is based upon our tradition and culture, but we all still come from the same Source. It is the faith in that Source which brings us justification, not our semantics.

Now the zealously elite will disagree with me on this point, and I am sure it's not the only place they will disagree with me. But my goal here is not to pander to the religious, but to understand the underlying truths of our religious and cultural traditions in order to better understand how to live our consciousness in harmony with the Divine.

Just as the second step of the Anonymous program acknowledges a Higher Power, it is that faith which gives us hope. Even many atheists can look to quantum physics and see the energy which brings matter together and forms the world around us, continuously creating all that we behold. One need not be

religious to believe in the Divine if you recognize It as the mystery It will always be.

For Paul, and for the majority of Christians that have followed in his path, this belief in God is inextricably tied to an understanding of and relationship with Jesus. Even the sentence used to denote this step of the Romans Road to acknowledge that faith was brought about through Jesus Christ is completed in the next verse: "through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God." For all who take this route, Jesus does indeed offer access to grace through the demonstration of his life and his miraculous resurrection. But in the end it is about standing in the hope of the glory of God.

Personally, I have come a long way in my struggle with faith since leaving the evangelical Church and the judgment I felt forced to hold against others. But I still have the utmost respect and admiration for Jesus, and I have seen too much in my life to discount the existence of an Intelligence greater than my own. If you have come to a point where Christianity does not make sense to you any longer, I hope this helps you to dig a little deeper. There is more to Jesus Christ than the religion which usurped his name.

As we stand in this hope and surrender ourselves to it, we also take the next step on the Buddha's Eightfold Path of Righteousness and live out our *Right Livelihood*. We do this by choosing work that is in harmony with our ethical and moral principles, and refraining from participating in activities that deceive or harm other sentient beings.

According to Theory U, this is the stage of *Prototyping*. "Moving down the left side of the U requires the group to open up and deal with the resistance of thought, emotion, and will; moving up the right side requires the integration of thinking, feeling, and will in the context of practical applications and learning by doing."

Since our goal has been achieved, our group development now reaches the stage of *Adjourning*. Though the movement continues, it is time for us to move on to another life and perhaps another group. It is bittersweet as we let go of what we've been through and the relationships we have built, but like all we may create, the certainty of change makes all things impermanent.

This is where our Fool's Journey brings us to the *Tower*. The card depicts people jumping from a tower in flames as a lightning bolt blows the crown off of the Kingdom. As we found the strength to remove the Devil's chains from our necks, we open to the understanding that it was our egos that bound us to him and that all of the towers we build and the fortresses we construct are merely our egos' doing. This is where we must accept the reality that all of our constructs will crumble, yet we remain surrendered to hope.

This is not an easy surrender, and at this stage many people reach what Carl Jung first called the *Midlife Crisis*. This is where we question our relevance and must stop to consider if all of the work we put into the towers we built was worth it. Should we continue to regale our ego with doubts and regret, this will be a crisis indeed, but if we can find that place of surrender, we can accept the grace of what is and continue our way along The Unbroken Path.

DiClemente and Prochaska refer to this stage of Change as *Maintenance*. We have left our old habits behind for a while, and continue to live out our commitment to our new life. We are practicing our coping skills and embracing our support systems as we consciously avoid the temptation to fall back on our old ways.

As the last of the initial Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey refers to this sort of maintenance as *Sharpening the Saw*. It is taking the time to constantly go back to reevaluate our goals and mission statements, simultaneously aligning them with our mental, spiritual, physical, and relational values. By refining our activities and seeking our consistent self-renewal, we can create more effective means of operation and productivity.

The Resurrection of Love on The Unbroken Path

The next stage of Spiral Dynamics is the *Yellow Integral Self*. This stage allows a person to reach a level that incorporates all previous levels cohesively. This is the stage of awakening to greater intelligence, understanding, and opening to a more conceptual, flexible, and systemic worldview. The theme of this stage is to "live fully and responsibly as what you are and are learning to become."

“The extreme egalitarianism and pluralistic fairness of the green meme fails to recognise or accept the presence of other memes in the hierarchy. This leads to complacency and encourages people at lower levels of development to remain stuck where they are, rather than seeking to evolve. The green will assert 'I do my thing, you do yours', failing to integrate all people in society into a coherent whole. This is where the yellow meme comes in, with its systemic, integrative approach. It is the first to understand and accept all stages of development in human nature and to try to find a place for everyone in society and encourage development towards higher rungs of the spiral.”

Ken Wilber changes up the color scheme again, referring to this stage as *Teal Integral*. Clara Graves recognized this as the first of the second tier stages, where we take a “monumental leap” in meaning. This is where the big picture really comes into view.

At this Altitude, we are able to embrace and integrate all of the previous Altitudes of Development. As the Green Postmodern stage spurred on the deconstruction of societal norms, at this stage we reconstruct, with the ability to recontextualize and open to natural hierarchies and the connecting patterns that help us thrive in working systems. Although this stage is individually focused, we are able to find unity beyond our diversities.

Abraham Maslow would refer to this as *Self Actualization*. In its earliest stages, Self Actualization was the pinnacle of Maslow's hierarchy. He said, “What a man can be, he must be,” yet every person, regardless of gender, has an inner drive to accomplish all they are capable of and become the most they can be. This is the fulfillment of becoming who you are as a human being and being able to exist in that reality.

After the snares of the Devil and the ravages of the falling Tower, we are now able to look to the *Star* for some respite on our Fool's Journey. The card depicts a nude woman with two pitchers, pouring one into a pond and pouring one onto the ground, where it runs into five streams. In the sky above her is one large, eight-pointed star surrounded by seven other smaller stars. As with all of the Tarot cards, much is said in symbolism.

The Star is about hope for the future. It is said that the eight, eight-pointed stars, and the sum of eight reached by adding the numbers of the seventeenth card together, are indicative not only of the Strength card, but also the

Eightfold Path of Righteousness the Buddha guides us toward to reach enlightenment. We open to wisdom by having Right View and Right Intention. We develop ethical conduct by cultivating Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood. And we develop mentally by practicing Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. The seven smaller stars also represent the seven chakras, and call us to align them before we continue on our journey.

As we rebuild from the calamities that have befallen us along our path, if we have the strength to nurture our entire being, we can prepare ourselves for the future that awaits us. This is why the woman pours water into the pool to replenish the spiritual nature, and onto the ground to replenish the physical nature, which we experience through our five senses. In the background, an ibis, a bird representing thought and the Egyptian god Thoth, sits in the tree of the mind as a subtle reminder of how this is all connected.

The Christian tradition celebrates the birth of Jesus and the star which led the magi and shepherds to the stable where he was born. Whether we seek salvation from something external or realize it as something which emanates from our higher Self, the Star draws us on toward our goal. Since time began being noticed, humans have looked to the stars for guidance and direction, mapping out their rhythms and deriving our stories from them. Although they each seem so tiny as they twinkle in the sky, they are each as big or bigger than our own sun and serve as the center of their very own galaxy, where it's possible that beings on planets similar to ours are looking at our sun in the same manner that we look at theirs.

Each star brings with it a myriad of stories and possibilities. By following this Star, we open our story to the realm of all possibilities, and our Hero's Journey provides us *Resurrection*. After we seize the sword on our Hero's Journey and find ourselves as the heroes we knew we were capable of becoming, we are reborn as new creatures, ones that we had one day only imagined. Having died to the selves that came before, we understand even the power that Christ showed us, as we are resurrected from our deaths and brought to a New Life.

Emerging from the cave with our sword in hand, we now wear the epaulets of the hero, and we are no longer the creatures we were when we went into the cave. We have killed ourselves. We have been born again. We realize that holding to the past and the demons therein that clamored for us to remain with them was death for us. By killing that part of ourselves, letting go of the

old, we have allowed for the opportunity to embrace life, and made room for the new.

In our new role, we stand ready to face all of life's challenges. Though we have finished one journey, we must embark on yet another, and another after that, each time vanquishing the inner demons and outer challenges that face us, forever realizing that we are more than conquerors. In each task we accomplish, we are born anew, with new knowledge, new skills, and new abilities to better achieve the next goal.

Here, we embrace *Right Mindfulness* on the Buddha's Eightfold Path. Channelling the power of this resurrection toward mental discipline, knowing the capacity of our thoughts, we observe ourselves and the world we are in with non-judgmental awareness as we realize that everyone we meet has a completely different perspective of this Unbroken Path.

From our perspective on our Fool's Journey, we need only move our eyes slightly from the Star to open our gaze to the *Moon*. Though the Star shines brightly to illuminate our path, the Moon shines a different kind of light. As the light emitted from the moon is a reflection of the sun, the theme of this card is one of an indirect connection to our own Source through intuition, shadows and faith. The night brings with it many shadows in which we play, it is where artists often find their muses hiding, and where we often find the most courage as we face the things that creep through the darkness.

The card depicts a domesticated dog and a wild wolf howling at the same Moon as a lobster crawls from the water with his claws clinging to land, and in the distance two more towers have been erected where our Tower fell before. In the midst of the night, the Moon calls us to align our conscious and subconscious worlds, as the wild and tame within us run together, blending amidst the light and shadows.

The Moon speaks to our shadow side. Though we often think of the night as the opposite of day, through the reflection the Moon offers us, we know that it is all part of the same revolution. In the dark of night, when our imaginations run wild, there is still a glimmer of light which lights our path. Just as with the dark side of our consciousness, when we find ourselves embroiled in those emotions of disturbance and despair, we are never out of reach of higher consciousness, for it is always calling to us.

Regardless of how dark it gets on our Unbroken Path, there is always a glimmer to light our way. This is where we must rely on our intuition, and though we may not be able to see the Source of that which guides us, it is by faith that we continue on in our journey toward oneness.

When we embrace our shadow side and all that we are, we find the freedom to completely love ourselves as we should be loved, which in turn allows us to completely love others. David Hawkins describes the Consciousness level of *Love* as "pure selflessness and charity work. It is loving others with no expectation of return, without being entangled within the desires of the ego, and is using your logic only in service to the highest good." This is where we integrate Love into all we are.

Finally we have reached success
 we have been justified by our faith
 our livelihood produces no regrets
 and our integration demonstrates
 but now our beginning is ending
 and our towers always fall
 on maintenance we are depending
 because we must always sharpen the saw
 for in midlife we have a crisis
 between generativity and stagnation
 and hopefully it will provide us
 the opportunity for self actualization
 and we look up to the shining Star
 and we claim our resurrection
 integral beings are who we are
 and there are really no exceptions
 it does us well to be mindful
 and to the flow of life we surrender
 as the Moon influences the tidal
 in love, we find our true center

PHASE 9

The Foundation of Peace on The Unbroken Path

Remaining in the light of the Moon that glows upon our imagination and opens us to our collective unconscious, on the Tree of Life we come to *Yesod* or *Foundation*. As the third corner of the Instinct Triad, this is the funnel for all we have attained in our journey this far. Secure in who we are, we can now focus on our connections with greater ability to focus on others and allow the altruism of our being flow through us.

Here we practice the Seventh Mastery of The Sovereign Way and embrace the gift of *Adventuring*. "With Sovereign command of both your mental and vibrational worlds, you can develop the magnetism and Mastery of metaphysical mechanics of true freedom, abundant provision and safety across realms of consciousness."

Throughout our journey, we have developed an addiction to our own heroism. It's not a bad thing. But as when we faced our demons and came out of our cave on the other side, we were reborn into a new creature, and the life that emanated from us in that moment brings with it an irresistible drive to continue on with it through the succession of minutes that will comprise the rest of our lives. In order to accomplish this task of living in a continued state of heroism, we must dedicate ourselves to it.

Though we have completed our initial course, we will be eternally ready to stand as the heroes that we have become. We hold victory in our hearts and will accept nothing less in any venture that comes our way. We dedicate ourselves to heroism. We dedicate ourselves to valor. We dedicate ourselves to excellence and we open ourselves to the joy of fully being.

According to David Hawkins, the consciousness of *Joy* is primarily the level of saints and advanced spiritual people. As love becomes more unconditional, there follows a constant accompaniment of true happiness. No personal tragedy or world event could ever shake someone living at this level of consciousness. We seem to inspire and lift all those who come in contact with us. Our life is now in complete harmony with the will of Divinity and the fruits of that harmony are expressed in our unyielding joy.

Since few of us are able to remain in the unwavering state of Joy, Joseph Campbell says we all must eventually take *The Journey Home* from our Hero's Journey. When we are called to return home, to go back to the life we lived before our adventure, we are often reluctant. As we have dedicated ourselves

to heroism, we can surely rationalize how the doldrums of our old lives would do nothing to contribute to our new way of thinking and new mode of living. However, with a deep breath of contemplation, we realize that the journey of the hero is not in our outside endeavors, but in our hearts where our valor and the convictions of our conscience create the characters we truly are.

So we return to the life we once knew, but we don't return to the same type of living. There is a simultaneous spring in our step and purpose in our gait. There is a newfound interest in everything that we have seen before, as if we are seeing it for the first time. And indeed, we are seeing the place again for the first time. Because we are new creatures, wiser, stronger, and more able than ever before.

There is the temptation to forget this and to truly return to life as it was before our victory. There is the temptation to look at the outward world, to see that nothing has changed in it, and to forget about the change that has occurred within us. We must remember that who we are lies within and emanates from there. As we return to the world we once knew, let us bring the change they are longing for.

Recalling that we are called to be the light of the world, our Fool's Journey invites us to look up to the *Sun*. The Sun shines its lucid clarity on all the world, illuminating even the hidden places. The card depicts a child on a horse waving a banner of freedom amidst a field of sunflowers under the warm radiance of the Sun glowing above, representing our inner child opening to the authenticity of our true selves.

In this stage, Theory U says we are now *Performing* or *Coevolving*. While we have achieved success and made the change, now we learn to embrace it as life continues on. Bill Moyer refers to this stage of a Social Movement as *Continuing the Struggle*. "The success achieved in stage seven is not the end of the struggle but a basis for continuing that struggle and creating new beginnings."

As we reach the end of our human experience, Carl Jung wrote that *Old Age* causes many of us to rediscover our spirituality, and the struggle we have is how to share the wisdom we have learned through the gift of experience. Erikson regards this stage of Psychosocial Development as the final battle of *Integrity versus Despair*.

"At this stage," says Erikson, "people reflect back on the events of their lives and take stock. Those who look back on a life they feel was well lived will feel satisfied and ready to face the end of their lives with a sense of peace. Those who look back and only feel regret will instead feel fearful that their lives will end without accomplishing the things they feel they should have."

For those of us who find integrity with the journey that has brought us to this point, we often find it better to continue our struggle with prayer. The eleventh step of the Anonymous program is reached when practitioners "*sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.*"

And as we open up to this incredible ability to speak with the divine as we co-create our new world, the eleventh Celestine insight refers to *Extending Prayer Fields*. "The eleventh insight is the precise method through which we hold the vision. For centuries, religious scriptures, poems, and philosophies have pointed to a latent power of mind within all of us that mysteriously helps to affect what occurs in the future. It has been called Faith power, positive thinking, and the power of prayer. We are now taking this power seriously enough to bring a fuller knowledge of it into public awareness. We are finding that this prayer power is a field of intention, which moves out from us and can be extended and strengthened, especially when we connect with others in a common vision. This is the power through which we hold the vision of a spiritual world and build the energy in ourselves, and in others, to make this vision a reality."

Peace is achieved after a life of complete surrender to the Creator, knowing that we are playing our part in this spiritual revolution. It is where we have transcended all and have entered that place that David Hawkins calls illumination. Here, a stillness and silence of mind is achieved, allowing for constant revelation. Only one in ten million (that's .00001 percent) people will fully resonate at this level, but all of us are able to visit and share the experience of peace with others. As Jesus shared in his next beatitude, "*Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of god.*"

We achieve this peace when we take on the *Right Understanding* the Buddha shares on the Eightfold Path of Righteousness. This is where we correctly understand the law of karma as well as the impermanence and interconnectedness of all things. This is where we gracefully live out our recognition of the nature of suffering and how we can open to its cessation.

To continue making peace and embracing our right understanding, the Fifth Agreement Don Miguel Ruiz proposes is to *Be Skeptical, But Learn to Listen*. We shouldn't accept anything as complete truth without first questioning the intention. The intention I have for writing my way through this outline is to help people find balance in their lives, but it is also to help me find balance myself. Don't assume that I am completely right in all that I perceive through this paradigm I've created. Challenge me. Ask me questions. Test what I write against your own belief systems and seek to find greater understanding than either of us currently has.

Now we are fully adventuring
 and we are experiencing the joy
 on the road back we are endeavoring
 right concentration for us to employ
 as we look up to the Sun
 and we embrace acceptance
 our struggle is not done
 and we must continue our performance
 in this old age we seek integrity
 lest we fall into despair
 and we pray with regularity
 as we become more aware
 of the fields that are extending
 as we meditate on peace
 though making peace is never ending
 right understanding continues to increase
 our enjoyment of life's spectacle
 as we find ourselves in this position
 while we still must be a bit skeptical
 we must also learn to listen

PHASE 10

The Elixir of Enlightenment on The Unbroken Path

Finally, we reach the final sephiroth on the Tree of Life. In *Malchut* or *Sovereignty*, we fill this realm of reality with the full manifestation of divine energy. We recognize our egos and gratefully use them to achieve the beautiful continuation of realizing potential by communicating with the world around us the elixir we have found on The Unbroken Path.

This is what Joseph Campbell regards as the *Return with the Elixir*, and the reward that we bring with us is the elixir of heroism, which we drink now in sips or gulps, however called for. For each task we partake of, we commit ourselves to it, answering each call with not only the hope of finishing it adequately, but in doing it better than ever before because our ambition has taught us that the joy is in doing, and doing well. We relish each task as we appreciate the tools to complete it and the company we keep in the process, understanding the value in all things and practicing resourcefulness as religion. We dedicate ourselves to further service for we realize that the journey of the hero never ends. It has its highs and lows, trials and rests, climaxes and valleys. But it never ends.

It is with this knowledge that we serve as mentors for others on their journeys. As each of us rises to the level of hero, the collective of humanity rises with us. It is up to each of us to encourage our brothers and sisters in the knowledge we have gained and the experiences we have surmounted. It is up to us to help each other realize the hero in us all.

This is where the Buddha shares the final step on the Eightfold Path of righteousness and teaches us to maintain *Right Thoughts*. Detaching ourselves from worldly pleasures, we think first of the welfare of others, reveling in thoughts of benevolence, goodwill, and loving-kindness. This is where we realize we are not here for us, but we are here for one another. We are here to be emissaries and emanations of the light of God.

The twelfth and final Celestine insight is about *The Hour Of Decision*. "Armed with Divine confidence, we begin to take the next step to self knowledge. We experience times when a greater sense of the Divine begins to dwell within us. This indwelling feels like a sense of God's presence. We still have our personal

identity but this status becomes subservient to a complete consciousness of love, patience, and openness to action. For this presence to remain or get more powerful, we must be totally transcendent of our 'Control Dramas', or moments where we do not act on our intuition of other people's best interest. In this sense, Divine presence is always there, unless our bad habits put distance between us.

"Simply put, the process is this: when we are not in the flow, we feel disconnected and either anxious or frustrated. So we distract ourselves with various compulsive activities designed to make our misery go away. It could be anything from over shopping, compulsively watching sports or celebrities, and actual addictive behavior, from sex to drugs. Everyone knows what his or her vices are, including you, and transcending them keeps you in touch with the magic of Synchronicity."

With right thoughts, our Fool's Journey brings us to *Judgment*. An angelic being blows its trumpet with the banner of the crossroads of decision hanging from it as the dead rise from their graves and new life begins. We are now all reborn as our true selves, and in this Day of Judgment, the veils are lifted from our eyes as we awaken to the true Apocalypse. Here is where we find the power of forgiveness for ourselves and others as we all align with our authentic purpose and devote ourselves to it.

The Eighth Mastery of The Sovereign Way is *Devotion*. "What's coming is that you will allow, formulate and practice the devotional expression of service and discipleship, the delight of true participation with Life and the fulfillment of extending your real magic to the world in an ultimate Knowing of your belonging here."

While many may stand in judgment over us because they have not yet reached our perspective on this unbroken path, and while they may be filled with such confusion that they may even attempt to bring us harm, emotionally, physically, or otherwise, we remember the final Beatitude Jesus shared before accepting the abuse and persecution that was afflicted on him, "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

And as we enter the kingdom of heaven, we also receive our Crown. The seventh chakra is *Sahasrara*, or the *Crown Chakra*. This vortex is the center of our spiritual understanding and opens us to cosmic consciousness.

This is where we reach the ultimate tier on Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, that of *Self Transcendence*. This is where we rise above even the Self Actualization we realized when we still entertained our own egos. This is where we fully integrate our consciousness, behaving and relating as ends rather than means.

In Spiral Dynamics they refer to this stage as the *Turquoise Holistic Self*. This is the stage of compassion, harmony, and peace. The main theme of this stage is to “experience the wholeness of existence through mind and spirit.”

“Unable to change the world by himself, the individual in the yellow meme moves to a transpersonal approach based on collective consciousness and collective intelligence in a vast interconnected network of like-minded individuals.”

Again lining up with the color scheme, Ken Wilber refers to this stage as *Turquoise Mature Integral*. This is where we view the world as alive and evolving, infused with love. This is where we move beyond the limitations of our own egos and the ontologies they may be clinging to in order to open up to a greater knowing beyond the intellect. Here, we are able to bring healing to the fragmentation caused by previous Altitudes of Development. We are more comfortable with not knowing, because we know everything is under control.

This is the closest I can probably get to describing *Enlightenment* with the few meager words I have at my disposal. David Hawkins says this is the highest level of human consciousness experienced only by avatars like Jesus, Buddha, or Krishna. This is the consciousness that affects all humankind, fortunately, we all fall into it somewhere. This is where God rested on the seventh day of Creation.

In the end, we find ourselves alone. For the journey we take, though many share in it with us, we take it alone, for each of us must blaze our own trail and follow our own path. But as we mature into our place in the annals of heroism, we realize that though we were alone, we were on the same voyage as everyone else. And though the scenery changed and the challenges differed, the journey was the same. For the hero who has died to himself and been resurrected as the selfless being of service realizes, though our stories are told in different languages throughout different cultures, though they are echoed

throughout different generations by way of different mediums, because the essence of our valor is one of Spirit, we are all One.

The Eighth Habit of Highly Effective People takes us beyond Effectiveness to Greatness - *Find Your Voice and Help Others Find Theirs*. By rising from Dependence to Independence, and rising still to Interdependence, we are able to realize our place in the world and help others to find their place. When a flight attendant gives the pre-flight speech about dropping air masks, she makes sure to tell us to put our own masks on first so that we can help others. Self improvement is the same way. We are far more effective in inspiring others if we first become an inspiration to ourselves.

In the same way, the twelfth step of the Anonymous program happens when practitioners "*having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles and all of our affairs.*"

And finally, on our Fool's Journey, we find the *World*. Having integrated the various parts of us including our shadow and inner child, we embrace the world with new meaning and purpose. We have learned our profound lessons from the archetypes that have guided us along this Unbroken Path, and feel the fulfillment of the journey we have made.

The card depicts a woman with two staves similar to those of the magician, reminding us not only "as above, so below", but also the power of balancing this duality. The four corners are again portraits of the four gospel writers, floating on clouds as their avatars of man, eagle, bull, and lion, reminding us of the heart, mind, body, and spirit that allow us to live in this wonderful, beautiful world.

And so we reach our *sunset* on The Unbroken Path and must now decide which route we will take next.

When we think right thoughts
in our hour of decision
we hold no judgment for our faults
and our devotion gives us vision
if we are persecuted for righteousness
we can build on that foundation

and if we can reach self-transcendence
we can wear the crown of creation
when we see life as holistic
and we mature into the integral
the way we live life is artistic
and our return with the elixir is literal
when we find our place in God
and find our voice to share with others
we are able to see beyond
the veil and see we are all sisters and brothers
we may reach that point of enlightenment
whether you identify as a boy or a girl
but we must still live in our environment
at the end of our journey, we achieve the World
it doesn't matter where you find yourself
your heart, mind, and will must be open
and we will always continue to excel
because the path remains unbroken

Others books by Steve McAllister

A Group of Critters (as Steve McAlphabet)

Steve McAlphabet Explains ABC Squared Economics

The What If Journal

Money, Sex, Power & Faith: Questioning the Building Blocks of Civilization

Cowboy Up: The Poetry of The Cowboy Cabaret

How to Survive an Estralarian Mind Meld

The Rucksack Letters

Mindful Manifestation Meditation

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