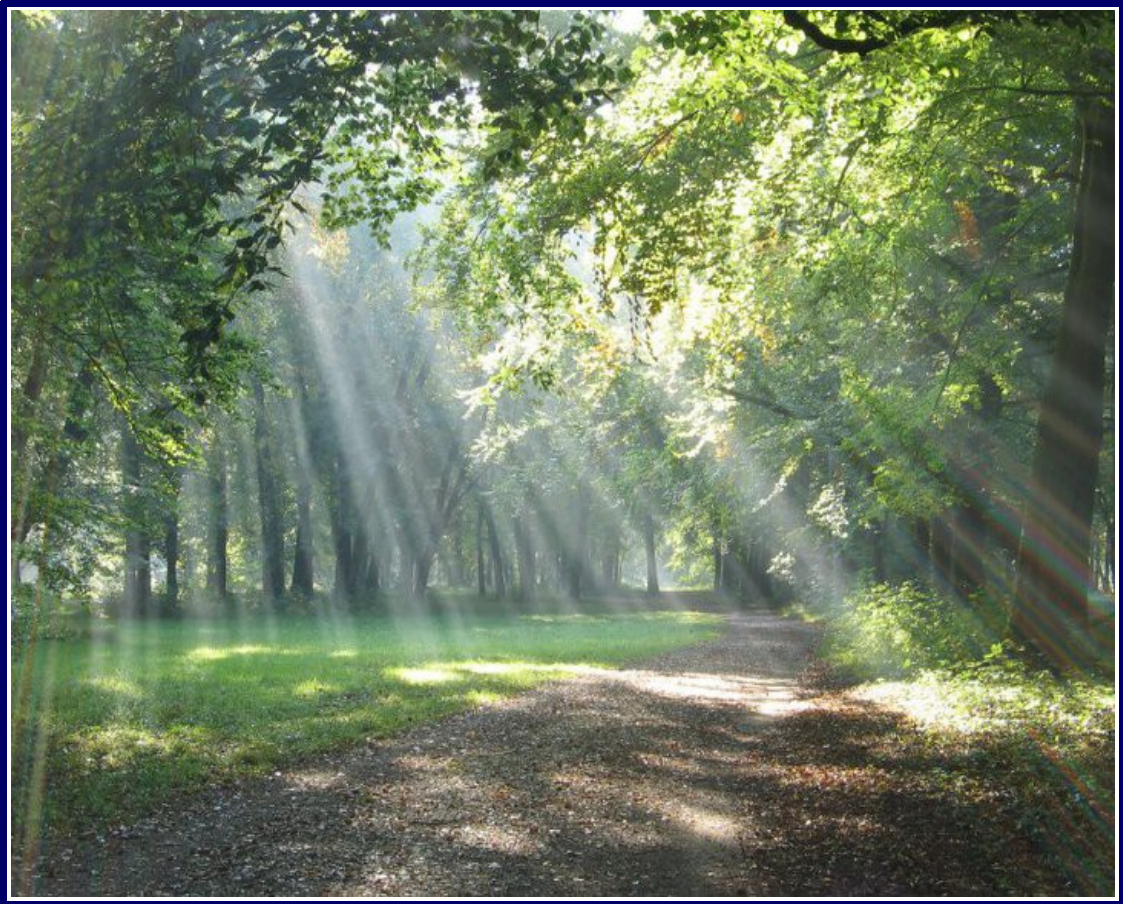


# *Enlightening Enlightenment*

or “Illuminating the One Path to Oneness”



... a comparative analysis of 3 very different ways of living; each leading to 3 very different experiences of “Enlightenment”

(neutralizing the New Age Nonsense related to “personal growth,” the attainment of “true happiness,” &/or the awakening of True Self)

*via Scaughdt*  
an (i)am publication

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*“Enlightenment is man's release from all self-incurred instruction. Indeed, self-instruction is man's inability to make use of his innate knowledge without some guidance or direction from an external source. This tutelage counts as self-incurred when its cause lies not in a lack of reason or logic but a dearth of the resolution to use it without direction from another ... **Sapere aude!** ' Have the courage to live your own reason!'-- this is both the wellspring & the credo of any true experience of Enlightenment.” ~ via Immanuel Kant*

*Oh precious flames of Warmth & Truth,  
bend back these frigid, misty shadows,  
& let the morning's light arrive anew.*

## *Table of Contents*

Forward: knowing the WHY of it all	... page 007
Introduction: understanding the terms	... page 009
Chapter 01: The nature of Enlightenment	... page 017
Chapter 02: Varying levels of Awareness	... page 019
Chapter 03: Varying focus of Attention	... page 025
Chapter 04: How we See ourselves	... page 027
Chapter 05: Relating to our surroundings	... page 029
Chapter 06: Relating to friends & allies	... page 033
Chapter 07: Relating to strangers & enemies	... page 035
Chapter 08: Dealing with personal identity	... page 039
Chapter 09: Dealing with God & the Divine	... page 043
Chapter 10: Responding to peace & pleasure	... page 045
Chapter 11: Responding to frustration & pain	... page 047
Chapter 12: Beliefs about chance & fate	... page 051
Chapter 13: Solving “active enlightenment”	
13a – The trap of “already enlightened”	... page 053
13b – The trap of callous indifference	... page 057
13c – The trap of passiveness & isolation	... page 059
13d – The trap of justified selfishness	... page 065
13e – The trap of tidiness & distractions	... page 071
13f – The trap of “eternal learning”	... page 075
13g – The trap of “good is good enough”	... page 079
13h – The trap of “enlightenment takes time”	... page 093
Chapter 14: What it means to “Wake Up”	... page 095
Chapter 15: Different roads to Enlightenment	... page 105
Chapter 16: Different paths; different ends	... page 111
Chapter 17: How different paths affect the body	... page 113
Chapter 18: How different paths affect the mind	... page 117
Chapter 19: Various reasons for Beginning	... page 121
Chapter 20: Different goals for the End	... page 123
Chapter 21: Knowing the Steps of Awakening	... page 127
Chapter 22: Summoning the Strength to Live	... page 131
Chapter 23: Dealing with slip-ups & setbacks	... page 134
Conclusion: Putting Enlightenment into Practice	... page 135

*“When the stories of our life no longer bind us, we discover within them something much greater. We discover that within the seeming limitations of our form – our maleness and our femaleness, our parenthood and our childhood, our conservatism and our liberalism, the gravity that pulls us to the Earth and the changing of the seasons that ground us in time – reside both the freedom and the harmony we have sought for so long. Indeed, in that brilliant moment of awakening we discover that our individual lives are potentially perfect expressions of the entire mystery, and that with the requisite courage we can all rest in the center of its whirling; we can all become the hub of all worlds.” ~ via Jack Kornfield*

## *Forward ... the WHY of it all*

For the past 15+ years of my life (since late 2003), I have been purposefully (and indeed somewhat radically) experimenting with the concept many call “Enlightenment” (and which I tend to call “practical selflessness”). And it was during this time that I happened upon some remarkable rediscoveries; illuminating not only a few simple yet extremely effective ways for folks to know whether they are truly walking through life as an “awakened” human being, but also uncovering many of the myths & falsehoods that characterize those who have chosen the more common and much broader route – a route that seems “enlightened” to those walking it, and yet a route that actually prevents those individuals from ever fully experiencing true Enlightenment – namely, the deep-seated Peace & unbridled Joy that all sentient beings ultimately seek. Near the very beginning of this journey I quickly noted that almost all of the tomes that fill the shelves of every bookstore &/or library's “Self Help” & “Spirituality” sections (not to mention most if not all of the words that comprised the presentations, sermons, & speeches of all “New Age” preachers & gurus) were filled with falsehoods – offering advice that actually prevented people from experiencing the same Enlightenment they promised. Indeed, it is an almost certainty that you the reader have succumbed to a number of these misconceptions during your life, and thus that you too are in effect keeping yourself from enlivening the far greater experiences of Bliss & Meaning that await you.

And it is with this Truth in mind that this book took shape, with the simple intention of illuminating these “enlightenment impostors,” replacing them with legitimately effective alternatives, and thereby enabling your own Enlightenment to become far more pure – and thereby your lives, far more Joy-full.

*Amen* ... Let it be so.

with **Peace** to you & yours ...  
... and *Enlightenment* for all,

*Scaughdt*

(March 2019)



*“It isn't by getting out of the world that we become Enlightened, but rather by fully diving into it; by getting so attuned to what is available all around us that we start to ride the waves of our existence – never getting tossed, because we have become the waves.” ~ via Ken Kesey*

*“Enlightenment is not the filling of a vessel that has seemingly been emptied or the learning of wisdoms rarely known. Enlightenment is the rekindling of a flame that has been ever-smoldering – the uncovering of a light that has been but temporarily hidden behind the mountain.” ~ via Socrates*



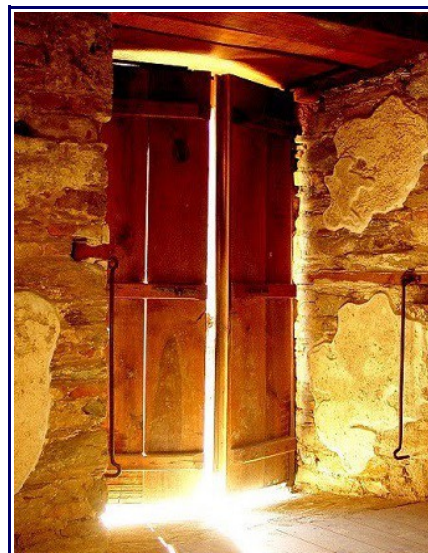


## *Introduction – the What of the matter*

... understanding Understanding & providing Help for “self help”

Before we can get into exposing the behaviors & beliefs that fail to foster true Enlightenment and then illuminating those that actually do, it is important to explain what we mean by the term itself ...

Traditionally understood, “enlightenment” refers to a state of heightened mental awareness; an exceptionally clear understanding of “the way the world works” – a manner of being steeped in an irrefutable inner wisdom and an unshakable outer calm – a beautiful blossoming of self supposedly accessible to all those willing to diligently strive to “master their demons” and “embrace their inner child” and “conquer their ego” and then “manifest their abundance.” Indeed, we are told by all manner of preachers and professionals and pundits that enlightenment is an ever-achievable goal that tantalizingly waits for us on the other side of a glowing portal partially ajar – a portal that their particular practice or their particular teaching or their particular dogma can open for us fully.



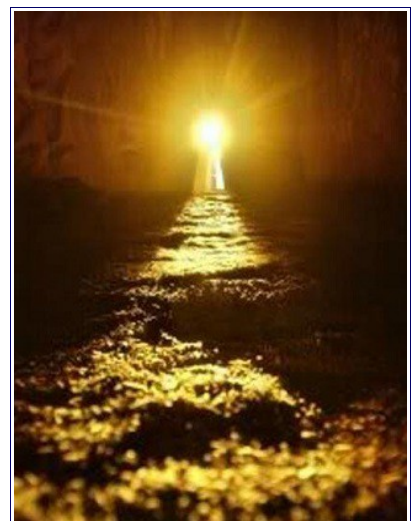
Of course, anyone possessing even the most rudimentary understanding of the way the human brain functions also knows that any lasting experience of this kind of “enlightenment” is impossible to attain. After all, the human cerebellum (the most primitive portion of the brain that generates & maintains a steady stream of subconscious self-concern – e.g. the drive to discern friend from foe, the impulse to respond to fear or uncertainty with either fight or flight, and the underpinning desire to survive & procreate) is always responding to external stimuli roughly .25 seconds faster than the human neocortex (the most advanced portion of the brain, and the one responsible for the making of any consciously caring decisions as opposed to merely instinctively callous ones) in any given moment. This means that “unenlightened” thoughts & impulses – even in the most highly disciplined human minds – are continually bubbling to the fore of any experience of every happenstance. As such, the mental tranquility of “enlightenment” as previously defined is a fleeting experience at best, and indeed remains fully unknown for most. And yet this physiological truth doesn't stop preachers & pundits & guides & gurus from all creeds & cults from selling the same – from offering their abjectly hollow promises of “self improvement” & “personal growth” that always leave one feeling frustrated and less than, or spurring their patrons ever onward on a quest for “inner peace” that inevitably leaves its participants lacking the very same. And this is indeed why so many of the aforementioned Self-Help gurus (of words spoken as well as those written) have been financially successful – not because any of them offer anything of lasting substance as far as “attaining enlightenment” (or “inner peace” or “spiritual well-being” or “true purpose” or “real happiness” etc etc etc) is concerned, but rather because all of them patently cannot – meaning that no matter how soothing the meditation or enticing the visualization or promising the practice, “enlightenment” is never satisfyingly attained by those seeking it; leading them to book the next seminar or buy the next self-help book or attempt the next meditation technique.

*“Our ignorance is reflected in the habits of ourselves & our society. Having forgotten how to effectuate a sincerely spiritual Awakening, millions of people are slipping further & further away from their true conscious potential; actually walking in the opposite direction of their innate, internal wellspring of Enlightenment; all while thirstily & vainly searching for the illusory faux-treasure that is externally-sourced spiritual fulfillment.” ~ inspired by Mantak Chia*



And this is precisely what this tome is about – exposing these same shackles of faux “enlightenment;” providing an illumination that will immediately free you therefrom, and thereby enabling you thereafter to come to know the sense of profound Peace, deep-seated Joy, & unconditional Contentment (i.e. my own very different definition of Enlightenment) that has been available to you all since toddlerhood.

And as we get started on this glorious adventure, realize first & foremost that there is no long & arduous path that needs be tread to attain the Enlightenment of which I share – no halcyon destination that awaits after years of trial & practice; no glowing door that needs passing through to one day arrive. For in truth you are all already at the very end of the only journey that matters – all of you just a single step away from completing the same. Yes, I readily admit that there does seem to be a closed door blocking your way; a door built from the primal fear that founds the human subconscious; a fear that constantly inspires doubt & sloth & sadness. And yet those who have the courage to read this work with an open mind and then enliven its contents with a bold heart will find that you need but peer through that culminating portal's keyhole to realize that you are already standing on the Right Side of the same – and are but one step away from leaving it & its limitations far behind.



## *Understanding Enlightenment: The 3 Zones of Being*

To make this Enlightenment-exposé easier to fully understand (and thereby simple enough to readily embody in your everyday lives), I have subdivided the human life into three possible “Zones of Being” – defining them each as follows:

### **Zone 1 ... primal self-centeredness** (being “evil” or blatantly selfish)

This is the most primitive level of being, one characterized by a focus that is essentially self-centered – striving to flee personal fears &/or yearning to satisfy individual desires. In this Zone, one’s own survival & happiness (or the survival &/or happiness of one’s own circle of friends & family) is of prime importance. It is not a “bad” level of being per se – it is simply a self-centered one. Humans living in this way strive to attain as much pleasure as possible (thereby numbing the same) and flee from all forms of pain & discomfort (thereby intensifying & ensuring the same). They are often seen struggling to make what IS into what could be or should be. They spend great amounts of energy defending themselves against their enemies (or attacking them in one way or another), punishing wrong-doers, and /or seeking the comforts of material wealth &/or physical safety ... This is the realm of the suffering – both those who inflict it upon others and those whose selfishness inflicts it upon themselves. In my personal experience, very few people reside in this Zone.

### **Zone 2 ... moral correctness** (being “good” or nice” or “proper”)

This is the “middle” level of being; one characterized initially by an intense dissatisfaction with the incessant sense of suffering found in **Zone 1**, later by an ever-more-fanatical search for “Truth” (or “Meaning” or “Purpose” or “Salvation”), and finally by the adoption of new belief systems that seemingly satisfy that search. In this Zone, one either feels “enlightened” (when things are going well) or hopes for eventual Enlightenment (when things that are not going well). Humans living in this way are taught (and choose to believe) that Enlightenment is a gradual-yet-strenuous process of “personal growth” (or “waking up” or “becoming a better person”), and that they can engage various techniques or embrace certain concepts in order to “manifest wealth” (or “co-create a better life” or “find true purpose”) for themselves. These individuals (known as “true believers” in religious circles and “light-workers” or “New Agers” in other, less-religious ones) – while admittedly more morally (and often more intellectually) advanced than their materialistic **Zone I** counterparts – are still essentially self-centered people; and thus know a similar inevitability of suffering (though to a somewhat dampened degree – often in the forms of yearning, sadness, frustration, or disappointment).

In my personal experience, the vast majority of the individuals who make up humanity spend the vast majority of their lives in this Zone. Indeed, these are the ones for whom this book is primarily written – those who “do good” for others out of a sense of obligation or reciprocity, or “do good” for themselves out of a sense of prudence or “self respect.” They focus on learning and growing, and often feel as though they have “made progress” that others have not – leading them to almost as often forcefully inflict their “enlightenment” upon others; supposedly for their own benefit (by correcting them or criticizing them or “saving their Souls”). They justify accumulating “their own fair share” of all forms of wealth (often under the guise of preparing to give to others thereafter) and regularly reconcile their own sins & failings by self-forgivingly (and quite incorrectly) reminding themselves that they are “only human.”

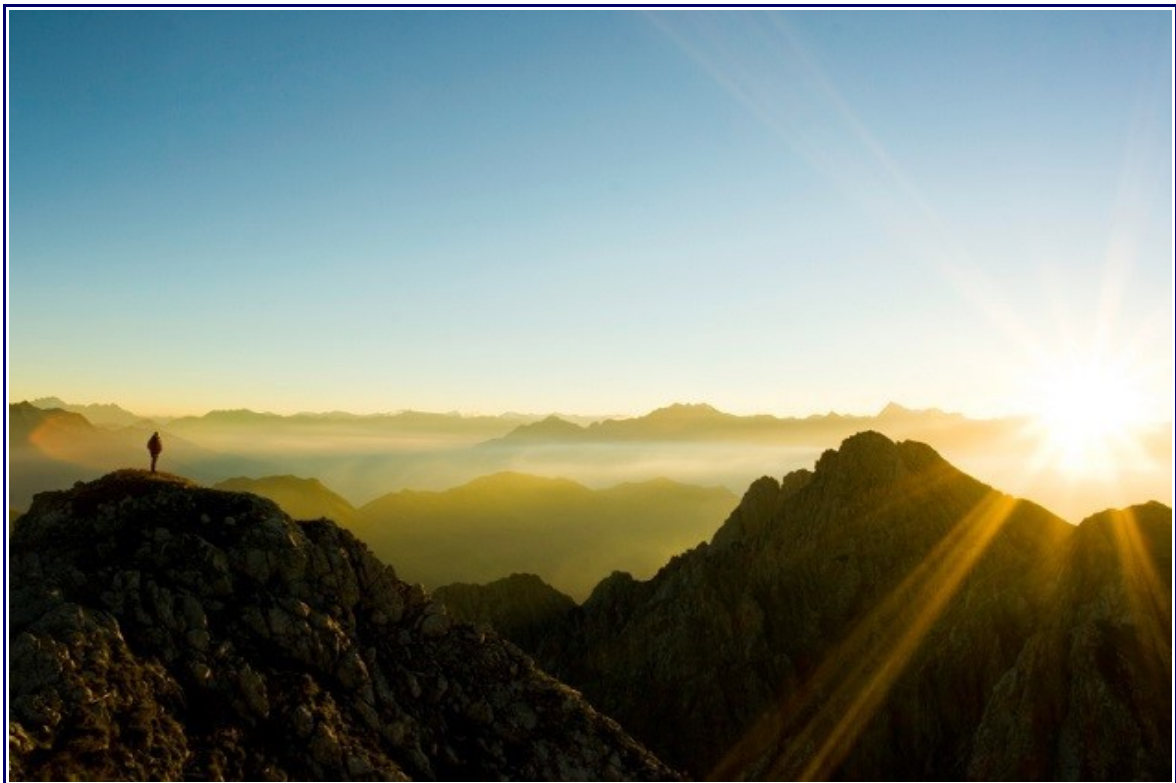
At least as far as attaining any semblance of real Enlightened is concerned, *Zone 2* humans tend to adopt any number of relatively vapid philosophies<sup>1</sup> (e.g. **Pantheism** – essentially the belief that everything is literally a manifestation of God, **Reincarnation** – essentially the belief that the spirits of sentient beings incarnate into other physical bodies after the death of their own, **Karma** – essentially the belief that a person's somehow-recorded deeds will generate commensurate amounts of reward &/or punishment after their death, and **Self-Transformation** – essentially the belief that engaging in practices like shamanic trance, hypnosis, deep meditation, &/or using hallucinogens can be used to force one to experience a life-altering experience of Reality, etc), follow any number of relatively non-virtuous guides<sup>2</sup> (e.g. Eckhart Tolle, Deepak Chopra, Marianne Williamson, Neal Donald Walsch, Gary Zukav, Wayne Dyer, and Oprah Winfrey et al), &/or engage any number of relatively useless practices<sup>3</sup> (e.g. reading auras, channeling spirit beings, meditation, astral travel, visualization, yoga, Chi Gong, and various forms of divination – including Tarot &/or astrology).

*“Enlightenment is not only the recognition and the manifestation of your own individual experience of the truth. Profoundly deep Enlightenment actually only arrives when your own life becomes actively & compassionately interconnected with all the lives around you – with the tree’s life, with the bird’s life, with the water’s life, with the dog’s life, with the cow’s life, with the friend’s life, with the stranger’s life – indeed, with the life of the whole Universe that so gently envelops you in that one beautifully knowing moment.” ~ inspired by Dainin Katagiri*

- 
- 1 Please NOTE that this work does not consider these belief systems to be “bad” or “wrong” or “less worthy” than any other. That having been said, these belief systems (and those like them) do tend to lead their adherents away from selfless kindness (that this tome identifies as being a manifestation of “true Enlightenment”) and focuses them (futilely) instead on improving themselves &/or their own lives – away from the Peace & Joy they could be effectuating in every present moment, and towards a hollow “happiness” or superficial “peace” that might be one day felt in the future. Whereas real Enlightenment encourages (see in-Courages) us to act for others, Zone 2 philosophies persuade us to merely “learn” or “pray” or “grow” or “be” as ourselves. Whereas real Enlightenment awakens us to the Truth that we already have all we need to act in an enlightened manner, Zone 2 philosophies tell us that we need to embody their principles via the help of others to do so.
  - 2 Please NOTE that this work does not consider these pundits & gurus to be “bad” or “worse” or “wrong” either. That having been said, these “spiritual leaders” (and those like them) do almost exclusively tempt their followers away from the principles of selfless service, willing self-sacrifice, and radical kindness (choices that are tried & tested pathways to the experience of “true Enlightenment”) and towards the patent falsehoods of living passively (more prayer than productivity; more meditation than meting out meals), establishing “healthy boundaries” against all enemies, and accumulating “our own fair share” of material wealth.
  - 3 Please NOTE that this work does not consider these practices to be “bad” or “wrong” or “damning.” That having been said, these “spiritual practices” (and all those like them) do tend to focus their practitioners on serving the self instead of caring for others (the latter of which being a fundamental prerequisite for accessing “true Enlightenment,” and the latter of which ever precluding the same). Of course, one of the basic principles of Enlightenment espoused herein is the Truth that what is done is actually not important – that *Why* one choose to to engage a particular What is essentially all that determines whether a practitioner thereof will experience the deep-seated suffering that comes from activities done primarily for self, or the wholehearted Bliss that comes from all choices engaged solely for others. Granted, some activities (like yoga or Chi Gong) are almost impossible to practice for the benefit of others (and thus ultimately keep their participants from ever knowing real Enlightenment), and yet there are scenarios envisionable where this could indeed be the case.

### ***Zone 3 ... selfless servants*** (those being “noble” or “saintly”)

This is what I know to be Enlightenment; the most advanced level of being available, one characterized by deeds of caring kindness motivated solely by an unconditional Love & humble Respect for the objects thereof. Despite what all *Zone 2* pundits & preachers say to the contrary, this is the only realm of being that brings deep-seated Peace (especially in times of turmoil) & profound Joy (especially in times of sadness) to human beings. In this region of conscious living, one's own survival &/or happiness &/or comfort become completely irrelevant – with intention shifting away from the establishment of “healthy boundaries” or the manifestation of one's “innate abundance” or the finding of one's “true love” and towards the one & only choice that can ever hope to bring true Contentment in any given interaction: the choice to give to others, with the sole intention of enhancing their Peace or intensifying their Joy. This pure emanation of one's True Self (an emanation that many call Love) becomes the lone motivator for any act undertaken, and as such all fear (the source of all suffering) melts completely away in the moments one acts accordingly. The Enlightened individuals making *Zone 3* choices have – at least in those moments they are enlivening the same (especially those moments when they are tired, ill, or injured; afraid, angry, or depressed) – left behind the *Zone 1* selfishness of the ego and transcended the *Zone 2* myth of being “only human.” And they have done so in favor of courageously adopting a *Zone 3* way of being; a life that actualizes the fundamental Truth that each & every person who has a functioning human brain has the ever-present potential to live as a fully embodied, selflessly caring Human Being. It is true that to this day almost no one lives with any consistency in this Zone, and yet in truth that is primary reason this book is being penned – in the hopes of inspiring others to awaken their own potential and alter that still somewhat sad fact.



Over the course of the next 23 chapters<sup>4</sup> these three Zones will be used both to illustrate what I mean by Enlightenment, as well as to help each of you identify where you currently reside within that glorious Realm. Of course, even though this book will provide a bevy of examples and soft suggestions related to engaging (and only thereby fully comprehending) *Zone 3's* selfless Way of Being, you each will have to ultimately decide for yourselves which (if any) practices will best serve your own unique lives.

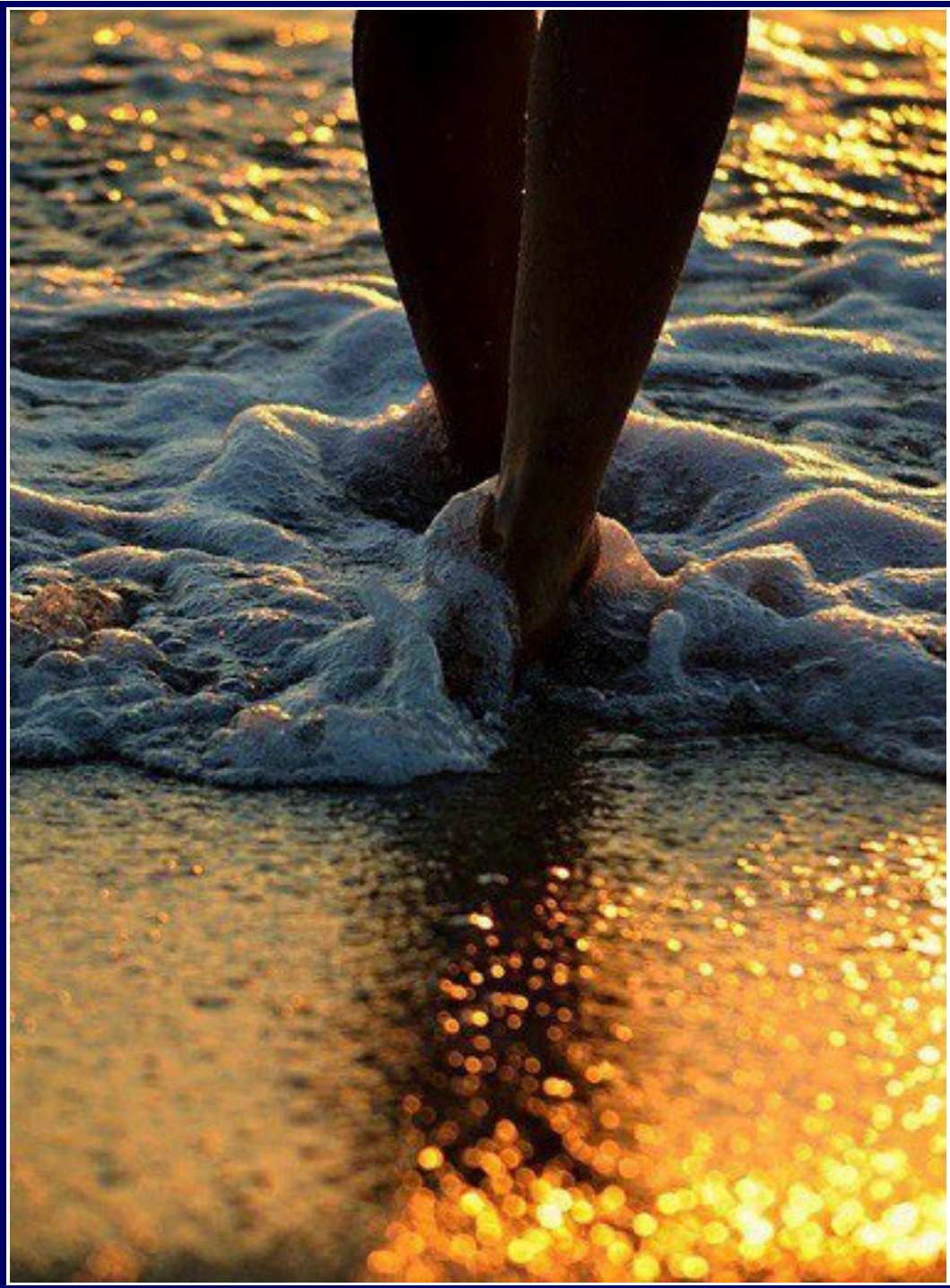
That having been said, while I cannot offer any specific advice to any of you, I *can* wholeheartedly guarantee that there is at least something in this book that can help you live a life that is far more Joy-full, far more Peace.-full, and far more Meaning-full. It is our most primal “human nature” for us to vacillate between times of happiness and times of despair instead of maintaining a sense of profound calm throughout. It is also a facet of our most primitive being to make our sense of happiness &/or fulfillment dependent upon our lives' external circumstances (difficult ones that you wish you could change “for the better”, or peaceful ones you wish would remain with you forever) instead of our internal responses chosen thereto. That having been admitted, it is also an equally available part of being human that allows us to transcend those basic instincts by choosing a different way – by choosing to bring others Peace & Joy instead of seeking the same for ourselves – by choosing to live a significant amount of moments in *Zone 3* – by choosing to thereby become repeatedly & beautifully Enlightened.

My dear Friends, our species – indeed our entire planet – currently perches on a most perilous tipping point. The 6<sup>th</sup> Mass Extinction looms before an imminent horizon; an extinction that will come from a combined ecological & socioeconomic collapse that – unless mitigated – will destroy life on Earth as we have known it; an extinction that we humans have summoned, and thus an extinction that only we humans can halt (or at least dampen). Humanity has never before reached such heights; nor has it ever before teetered before so calamitous a tumble. And in response to these pressing dangers, there has arisen an ever-growing population of “spiritual intelligentsia” – a subset of individuals who have left the banal selfishness of *Zone 1* behind and have chosen to strive to be “better” and “wiser” and “more enlightened” than their less caring compatriots. These are the people who *could* soon guide our species smoothly through the gathering gloom, and yet these are currently those who have chosen instead to remain neutered by the hazy myths of *Zone 2* living – cleverly self-sidetracked back towards a focus on the self instead of the whole; back to championing “me” over “we”; back to accumulating “inner peace” and “truth” and “purpose” for themselves instead of boldly embracing those downtrodden in their neighborhoods. In desperate search for Meaning & Contentment for themselves, they cling to the false promises & hollow teachings of impostors & charlatans; castrating their own potential to live as potent forces for Harmony in favor of finding solace or “salvation” for themselves.

And yet hope still remains for the Earth and her humanity – if enough of us can cease being mere stewards of ourselves and being to live as Caretakers of our Communities. The contents of this tome can – if courageously enlivened – help you to powerfully answer this greatest of Summons ... *Amen*, my Friends – Let it be so!

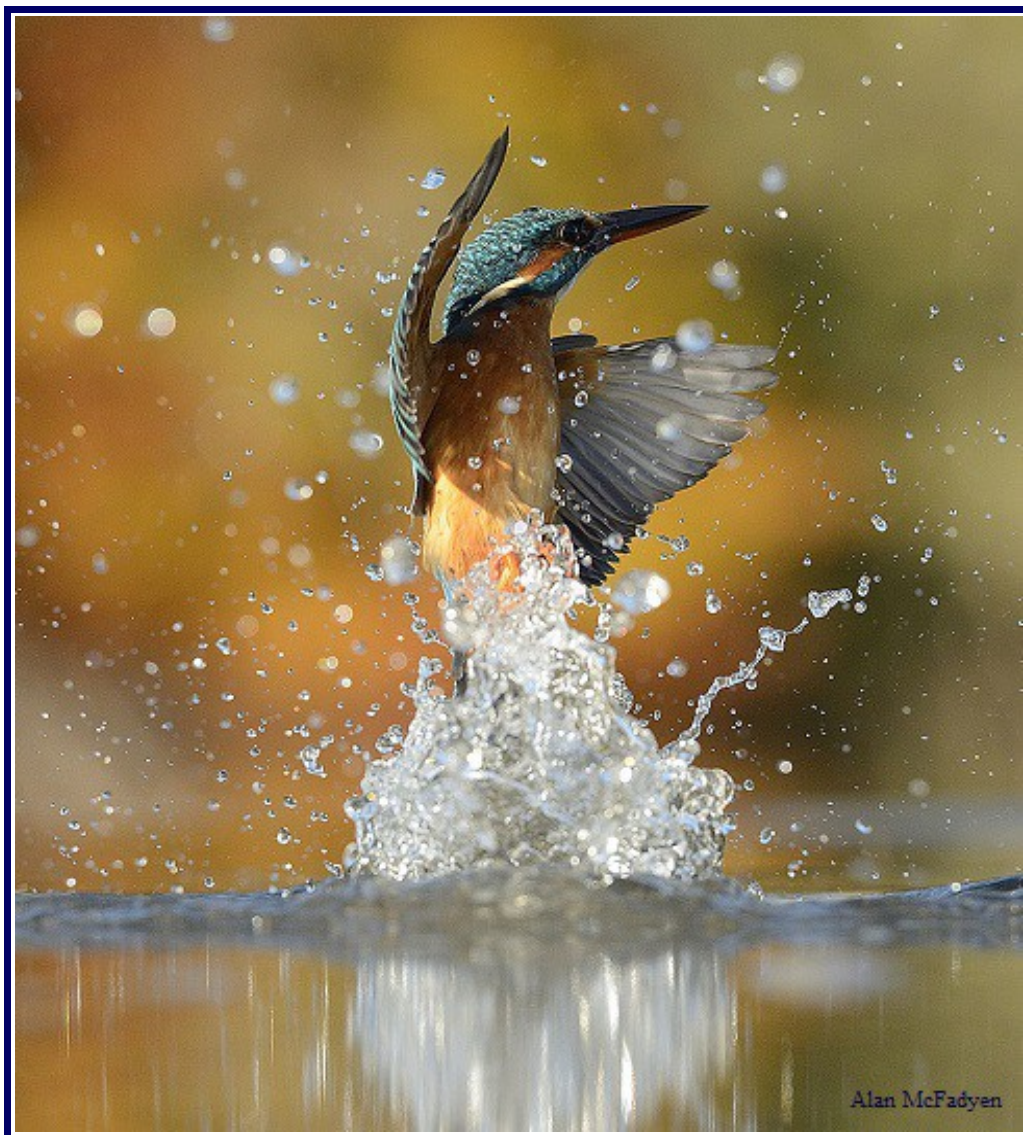
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4 The first 12 of which deal primarily with how the different Zones respond to different circumstances (e.g. how we see ourselves & our environment, how we interact with friends & enemies/strangers, and how we respond to moments of pleasure or pain). The 13<sup>th</sup> chapter – divided into 8 sections – examines the major myths that tempt us to remain in a state of “Active Unenlightenment.” The final 10 chapters examine Enlightenment in a more practical light – the different “roads” thereto, the different reasons to begin, the different goals thereby, and the basic steps that must be taken thereupon.



*“Enlightenment is not found by persisting in swimming across the sea; not found in one day proving to be strong enough to arrive at a farther shore. No, the only true Enlightenment washes over us fully formed in the very first step we boldly take into the surf – in the first & only moment we abandon all hopes & longings for personal pleasure or salvation, and choose to swim for others instead.” ~ anonymous*

*“The barbarian believes he is a separate drop of water, and he futilely struggles to survive as long as possible as such. The intelligent man believes he is a separate drop of water deserving of &/or possessing a special knowledge or purpose, and he futilely strives to either learn more about the same &/or teach the same to others. The enlightened One, on the other hand, has come to realize that he is not a separate drop of water at all, but rather is an innately interconnected portion of the Oneness that is both the oceans below & the clouds above. And he is the one who is acting accordingly, for only by acting accordingly has he come to know & cherish the same.” ~ unknown*





## Chapter 01: The nature of Enlightenment

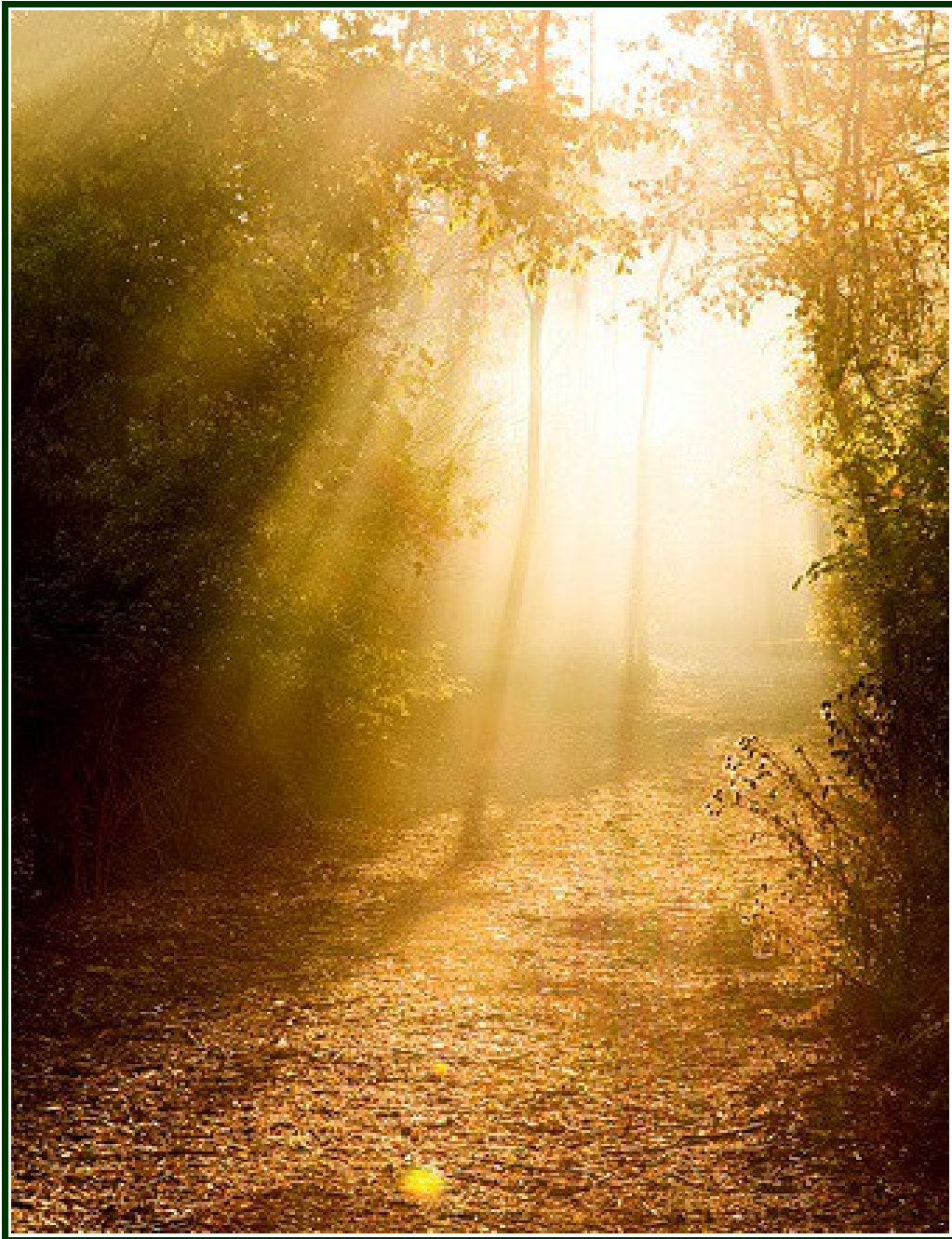
The first distinction to make between the three human Zones of Being is how each one of them very differently views Enlightenment itself – a distinction which indeed proves to be extremely important. For one cannot hope to attain the highest level of Enlightenment while striving to attain a lesser form thereof. As such, feel free to humbly ponder & then courageously pro-actualize the following ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates & **Zone 2** followers both believe enlightenment to be an advanced intellectual ability &/or an exceptionally clear state of mind – a “knowing” of life infused with understanding & wisdom, **Zone 3** participants know that Enlightenment is actually a state of active Being – a way of living that can neither be truly comprehended nor fully experienced until it is set into motion.

\*While **Zone 1** proponents believe that enlightenment is living a life immersed in pleasure &/or comfort; feeling happy or at ease due to positive external reasons or circumstances (whenever “things are going really well”), **Zone 2** acolytes believe that enlightenment is a life steeped in joy & inner peace; feeling happy for internal reasons (or “for no reason”) regardless of external circumstances. In noted contrast, champions of **Zone 3** know that Enlightenment is actually a life soaked in deeds of selfless kindness (while detaching from the results of the same) and the Bliss (an almost-indescribably euphoric blending of Calm & Joy) that always accompanies the same. Essentially, for lack of better terms, real Enlightenment is the courageous manifestation of unconditional Love – a state of being that blossoms into being in every moment one's fleshly mind-body decides to harmonize the inclinations of its conscience with the opportunities available in its immediate environment.

\*Patrons of **Zone 1** living believe enlightenment to be either a myth of an impossibility (i.e. that truly selfless living is a pipe-dream, that truth is so subjective as to be essentially unknowable, and that there is no such thing as a True Self to attain), and members of the **Zone 2** lifestyle believe that enlightenment is both very real and very attainable – albeit via years of persistent strife & devout study; preferably undertaken under the tutelage of a master, guide, or guru. Again in stark contrast, enliveners of the **Zone 3** way know that Enlightenment is fluidly available to all sentient beings in every instant of their existence – that it can be accessed by all both instantly & completely, and this without the aid or assistance of any pastor or pundit.

\*Though **Zone 1** backers feel that enlightenment is a fleeting happenstance (whenever it happens to arrive, seemingly of its accord), **Zone 2** minions believe that enlightenment is a permanent state of being that can be eventually attained via a long & tiresome period of disciplined learning and “personal growth.” **Zone 3** adherents, on the other hand, know full well that Enlightenment exists only in those moments it is being consciously actualized; that to observers thereof it seems to “linger” (for a time commensurate with the intensity of each deed's self-sacrifice), and to those engaging the same it “stretches” out in time (also in direct proportion to how courageously one is enlivening it). These latter “sages” know that, even though Enlightenment can never be attained, it can continually be renewed.



*“Let us avoid despairing over the evanescent nature of our brief existence. Indeed, let us instead fully embrace each & every delectable moment we have been given. The Buddha astutely noted that 'It is far better to travel well than to arrive,' and to truly travel well we must do so consciously and with purpose – with the betterment of all passers by ever in mind, and never our own success or comfort. This life might very well be but a dream, and yet we cannot hope to fully awaken in it until we treat each encounter as if it were anything but.” ~ inspired by Kilroy J. Oldster*

## Chapter 02: The levels of Awareness

The second major distinction between the three possible states of human being has to do with how much (or how little) awareness is available to each, along with how those varying degrees of clarity are perceived &/or processed. With this in mind, feel free to humbly ponder & then courageously pro-actualize the following ...

\*Whereas the awareness of **Zone 1** advocates remains essentially asleep (with their perceptions severely blurred by the emotional constructs of political divisiveness, religious zealotry, nationalism, greed, fear, indignation, condemnation, retribution, punishment, rejection/criticism of the downtrodden, various manifestations of bigotry, &/or fixating on the material to determine what is “real”), the awareness of **Zone 2** followers has awakened slightly by recognizing & focusing upon the consciousness of self (characterized by advocating political reform, falling into spiritual dogma, treating the downtrodden from an emotionless distance, establishing “healthy boundaries” vs opponents or enemies, insultingly or angrily condemning “the ignorant”, &/or fixating on the mental to determine what is “real”). In noted contrast, the awareness of **Zone 3** participants is fully Awakened in every moment of courageously chosen deeds of caring kindness. This “greater Knowing” of the Whole (by acting as a selfless agent thereof) allows them to be calm in times of chaos, forgiving towards the cruel, giving in the face of fear, joyful (or at the least peacefully compassionate) during times of sadness, grateful in times of "lack", humble after instances of personal "accomplishments", faithfully determined in times of failure, and active in times of fatigue or illness or injury.

\*While the personal identities of **Zone 1** proponents are essentially calcified in alignment with how their cultures and their teachers &/or their preachers &/or their parents indoctrinated them to be (essentially demanding that they become agents of themselves; a la “my will over thine”), the identities of **Zone 2** minions tend to become “fuzzier” – tend to get “lost to the world” by being passive observers more than mere moving members (believing that they have been somehow transformed thereby, and that they need to share that transformation with others as agents of wisdom; a la “my will *for* thine”). Contrastingly, the identities of **Zone 3** enthusiasts are repeatedly & purposefully set aside in favor of living as agents of the Whole &/or as ambassadors for “the Divine” (a la “Thy will not mine” – be that divinity God or Buddha or cosmic consciousness or quantum interconnection etc). Praise is deflected onto others in times of personal success or victory (“I couldn't have done it without ...”), responsibility is accepted (without self-criticism) in moments of failure or defeat (“I accept & apologize for my unintended role in this setback”), and pain is taken on & known in times of others' suffering (“I literally feel – & thus have heartfelt compassion for – your loss &/or sadness”).



\*Though the moral compass (or conscience) of **Zone 1** servants is normally quite crystallized (with them often believing that their own ethical precepts are the sole correct ones, with them claiming that their own particular views on Right & Wrong are binding on all others, and with them justifying their own failings as being either deserved or proper), the conscience of **Zone 2** disciples is felt to be abstract & subjective (with them often claiming that morality is malleable based upon upbringing or circumstance, with them believing that there is no such thing as an objective Right or clear Wrong, and with them excusing their own failings as inevitable slips into selfishness). That having been shared, the conscience of **Zone 3** supporters – again in clear contrast – is known to be tangible and consistent (whatever brings Joy &/or Peace without harm is Good; whatever intentionally causes pain or discord is Wrong), and yet is never forced upon others. The truly Enlightened know that the moral compass residing within all human beings is real because they regularly enliven – and therefore directly experience – the same. Slips into “sin” are accepted as probable, but never excused as inevitable, just as elevations into acts of selfless Virtue are accepted as challenging, but never abandoned as impossible.

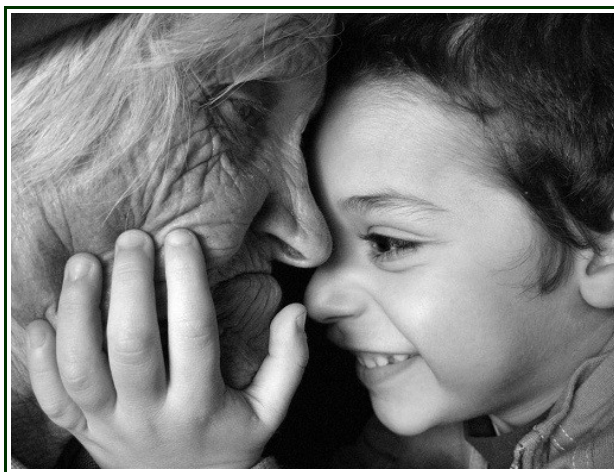
\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** satellites become mired in self-absorption (entrenching the subconscious selfish instincts of the ego) – engaging in regular acts of self-advancement that thicken the “veil of duality”<sup>5</sup> that keeps them separated (indeed, psychologically isolated) from those around them, **Zone 2** lackeys become similarly lost in their search for “Self-awareness” (the equally self-centered drive to awaken one's own consciousness in order to find enlightenment or inner peace or personal salvation). It is true that the members of this latter group make choices that seem less selfish than their **Zone 1** counterparts, and yet said choices also serve to distance themselves from others – by in effect merely replacing the flagrantly selfish **Zone 1** sludge (that was applied & accumulated during their pre-**Zone 2** lives) with self-furthering concepts &/or dogmas &/or practices that are more subtle yet just as Soul-smothering. **Zone 3** adherents, on the other hand, regularly pierce



their inner “duality veils” with acts that intentionally harmonize with the Whole (as opposed to those that instinctively honor the self) – acts that reawaken the supra-consciousness (what some call the Cosmic Consciousness, and others the Heart Brain); the “place” where personal whims disappear and personal identity becomes completely unimportant – where the Joy & Peace of others fully supersedes one's own.

5 From our very first conscious moment to our very last conscious breath, every choice we make throughout the course of our lives has a commensurate effect on the way we each experience our interconnection with our surroundings. Actions based in anger or sadness or selfishness leave a subconscious residue of fear between our supra-consciousness and our consciousness – between our hearts & our minds – between our experience of Reality and our beliefs about the same – essentially between ourselves & others. Indeed, the more we behave in ways that are self-focused, the thicker that residue becomes, the more we believe that we are separate from &/or more special than the whole, the more we tend to behave accordingly, and the more we & those around us suffer thereafter. Contrastingly, actions that flow purposefully against these primal instincts – acts that intentionally self-sacrifice for others (and thus acts that “pierce the veil of duality”) – peel away that same psychological sludge; soothing the spiritual scarring that has been inflicted by the fear-based choices of our past, and thus allowing us to more clearly feel our patent interconnection with others – and act accordingly more readily thereafter.

\*Whereas those enacting **Zone 1** lives tend to see what they are conditioned &/or programmed to see, **Zone 2 devotees** are mostly just as blind – and yet do clearly See others in fleeting fits of brilliance; perceiving Oneness whenever they themselves happen to be residing in a “good place” &/or whenever “good things” are happening for their benefit. In contrast, **Zone 3** enliveners lucidly experience a sense of Oneness in all their selfless moments – recognizing the same Golden Core that resides within all their sentient cousins, witnessing the wonderment that rests within both things familiar as well as those mundane, feeling the exuberance at play within all encounters otherwise considered banal or boring, and deeply experiencing every interaction with another as if it were both their first (with innocent amazement) and their last (with heartfelt gratitude) with them.

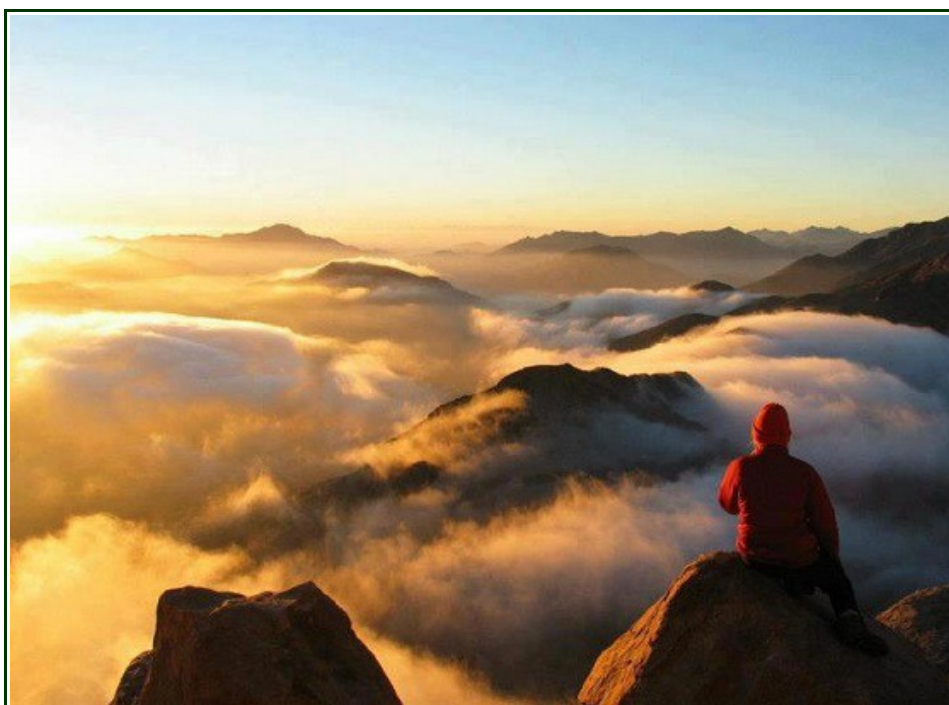


\*While **Zone 1** advocates grasp at & cling to things familiar while fearing the new or the confusing (they know what they know), **Zone 2** followers explore concepts fresh &/or complicated – and yet they do so safely (intellectually & unfeelingly) and thereafter insert their “discoveries” into belief systems that have already been established, accepted, and adopted (they discover what is comfortable to discover). On the other hand, **Zone 3** participants remain as open-minded as they are open-hearted – continually gathering information both humbly & courageously. They repeatedly immerse themselves into the unknown – not to collect more facts or “have a better understanding of life” for themselves, but rather to become more proficient with their kindness and more potent with their caring. They are open-minded to the new while honoring the still-functioning old – testing the potential Truth of the former against the tried & tested merits of the latter; melding together from both whatever enhances their ability to further Peace & Joy.

\*Though **Zone 1** servants see seemingly interconnected happenstances as manifestations of mere coincidence or fate, **Zone 2** attendants uses the same as tools for the enhancement of personal knowledge or well-being. **Zone 3** champions, on the other heart, know full well that all entities are quite literally interrelated, that all of them shift & evolve in each encounter with each other, and that the visible expression of this beautiful dance of Oneness (known as “randomness” to those of **Zone 1** and “synchronicity” to those of **Zone 2**) is nothing more than the portion of the Cosmos nearby offering an exuberant summons to serve.

\*Whereas **Zone 1** proponents tend to fixate on their future to perpetuate the good from their past and **Zone 2** members tend to fixate on their past in order to hopefully enhance their future, **Zone 3** adherents soak solely into the present moment – and thereby fully transcend the discord in their past and inevitably create a far more harmonious near-future (for others, and thereby also themselves).

\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** backers feel there is no need to further awaken their awareness (“I already know enough”), **Zone 2** disciples believe that a more awakened mind is both desirable & attainable – *if* one is willing to find the “right teacher” &/or undergo years of disciplined study &/or practice.<sup>6</sup> Again in stark contrast, **Zone 3** enthusiasts know that an “awakened mind” is essentially irrelevant to the Meaning-full embodiment of a truly Enlightened life. Indeed, these people understand that a mind focused on its own well-being or advancement cannot by its very nature perceive anything close to the innately profound Oneness (or the “pure emptiness” or the “infinite expanse”) of its surroundings. In truth, they know full well that the environmental Whole can only be truly experienced during conscious acts that embody the same – willing deeds of humble service (a.k.a. practical selflessness or radical kindness or sacrificial generosity) that are solely provided for the benefit of others.



*“This life is not what it appears to be. For beyond the brittle myth we have been given – the one where we daily experience the dances of pleasure & pain, success & failure, life & death – there is a far deeper life; a life that knows only Joy & Peace; a life that staunchly refuses to 'go within' and instead immerses itself in all nearby. This is the one true Life – the life that can only be known by truly living it.” ~ anonymous*

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6 Please NOTE that “sensing inner peace” or “being fully present” is not in any way the same as deeply Knowing Oneness. Yes, various exercises or practices can be repeatedly engaged that over time allow one to develop a more profound experience of inner calm &/or a greater awareness of one's surroundings (e.g. closing one's eyes and hearing or smelling or feeling one's surroundings, blurring the boundaries between the objects in one's environment – a.k.a “seeing with soft eyes”, sensing others' “energy bodies” as opposed to their corporeal ones, gazing at the objects in one's surroundings very closely and then doing so at increasing distance, etc), and yet it is only by actively & generously & willingly self-sacrificing for others that the ego is fully set aside and the Oneness innate to any viable experience of Enlightenment thereby truly known.

\*Whereas **Zone 1** patrons believe that it is the mind that perceives reality and that it is the mind that should be trusted with that task, **Zone 2** attendants tend to adhere to the belief that the opposite is true – namely, that the mind cannot ever hope to clearly perceive an innately illusory Reality, and thus that the mind must actually be “cleansed” & “released” & “eliminated.” **Zone 3** enliveners, on the other hand, are fully aware that – while an objective Reality does indeed exist around us – we human beings are completely incapable of objectively perceiving the same. At the same time, these individuals have come to realize that the objective perception thereof is essentially irrelevant; that living in a state of real Enlightenment is actually made both more accessible and more potent by the fact that we do not possess the biological equipment necessary to objectively know anything of certainty about our surroundings. For in truth it is our choice to Love others unconditionally (via deeds of selfless generosity) that allows for the experience of real Enlightenment, and it is our innate & inescapable uncertainty related to our surroundings and our interactions with the same that makes that most noble of choices powerful. **Zone 3** participants know that it is the mind that enables us to choose to “Love anyway” – to be kind to others when we are least inclined to do so. And these people also have come to understand that such loving “leaps of faith” are not possible in times of comfort or certainty. Love only becomes truly potent (and thereby allows us to deeply *feel* Reality) in those moments that we realize that we cannot be sure of its success, and yet we choose to give it anyway. **Zone 3** people know that the mind is neither to be worshiped, nor is it to be abandoned. Rather, these individuals have come to comprehend that the mind is to be harnessed – used to willingly engage acts of goodness, especially in those moments it is least certain of or confident in the same.



*“Enlightenment is simply a waking up from the most fundamental delusions of our mind – the delusion that we are each individual beings fundamentally separate from the whole; the delusion that our lives &/or the lives of our loved ones are somehow more worthy of attention than the lives of associates or strangers or enemies, the delusion that human beings are somehow superior to other non-sentient life forms and are thus licensed to enslave & abuse & commodify the same, the delusion that political problems can be somehow solved by the same political system that sustains them, the delusion that our version of God is absolutely & concretely correct, the delusion that a disciplined mastery of unconditional Love must be attained before our selfless caring bear fruit, the delusion that some of our deeds of kindness are ineffective or insignificant, etc. Most importantly of all, of course, is the fact that this waking up is actually a very simple affair – alongside the fact that it is not possible to effectively dismiss one’s mental delusions using the same mind that created them in the first place. Indeed, it is not enough to merely realize where we err in our thinking to truly awaken – and yet all that is required hereafter is to go forth and act accordingly.” ~ anonymous*

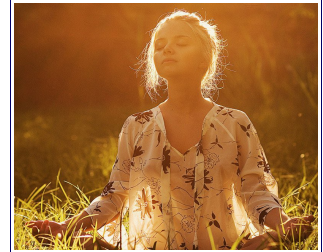
*“To find that most elusive Enlightenment, we must do so much more than by merely aspiring to escape from our morose fixations on prior failings or our hopeful focus on a more fanciful future. No, to know that greatest of missing harmonies we must choose to live in this moment, and do so fully – to live with a water-welling gratitude for ever-present wonders, an unreserved honoring of all we encounter, and a unbridled joy at being alive at all. For the only way to know a life of Peace is to live a life of Love, the only way to live a life of Love is to live a life unburdened by fear, and the only way to live a life unburdened by fear is to go forth each day and live that life as an embodiment of bold kindness that is flagrant, even reckless. This and this alone is how we can come to glide smoothly through our days free of disenchantment & full of Joy. This and this alone is how to truly embrace the floating world and all the wonders within & above & upon it.” ~ inspired by Kilroy J. Oldster*



## Chapter 03: A differing focus of Attention

The third distinction between the three major levels of human Being relates to how their members tend to focus their attention as well as how they tend to engender their intentions. In this regard, feel free to humbly ponder & then courageously pro-act the following examples thereof ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** proponents primarily focus on themselves via their own state of well-being (&/or the well-being of their closest friends & family), see themselves as separate from others (“This is my life” or “I am my identity/ego”), and are essentially motivated by personal safety, comfort, pleasure, or gain, **Zone 2** followers tend to focus on themselves via their own state of “personal growth” (“I am my True Self”), see themselves as interconnected with those of like-mind (primarily friends and non-frightening associates), and essentially desire to either “go within” in times of stress or “do good” (i.e. adhere to cultural norms, conform to communal expectation, fulfill established obligations, &/or reciprocate gifts received) whenever personal needs have already been met. **Zone 3** champions, on the other hand, focus repeatedly on the others in their communities (especially the strangers, the downtrodden, &/or the enemies therein), see themselves as integral facets of that Whole (and act accordingly – “We are all literally One”), and ever yearn to Do Good (i.e. be of self-sacrificial service for any & all in need).



\*While **Zone 1** advocates maintain a focus that is often hostile towards others – blaming those who have wronged friends, condemning those who have harmed them, and resenting those who have “unfairly” received the “fair share” or “just due” owed them, **Zone 2** acolytes shift their focus to “friendliness” – striving to understand those who have wronged friends, halfheartedly (i.e. mentally &/or verbally) forgiving those who have caused themselves harm, and tolerating those of different opinion or creed (&/or any who are enjoying the “fair share” due to them instead). In stark contrast, **Zone 3** supporters enliven a focus that is Caring – unconditionally (and often actively) Forgiving those who have wronged friends, unconditionally Accepting those who have caused themselves harm, and evincing an unconditional Joy for the success & happiness known by others.



\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** servants tend to analyze their circumstances with an air of arrogant pride in one form or another (searching for “facts” on the news, whining about the good that isn't or the bad that is &/or grasping or yearning for whatever “should be”), **Zone 2** disciples process their lives' happenstances under a penumbra of faux-humility (searching for “truth” online or in libraries or coffeeshops, announcing their subservience to “higher powers” or “the way things are,” incorrectly limiting their own potency by proclaiming to be “only human,” or debasing their own self worth by giving “only what they can”). **Zone 3** enthusiasts, in marked contrast, always look at their environment with a sense of profound Humility (rediscovering real Wisdom via interpersonal interaction or immersion into community; Seeing whatever is without applying positive or negative judgments to the same – flowing smoothly with whatever happens: reveling in times of Joy and serving in times of sadness; concentrating on discovering opportunities to give instead of taking advantage of chances to gain).

\*Though those mired in **Zone 1** living are fixated on processing the “realities” of the material world (either a lack or an abundance of things, friends, &/or enemies – almost always leading to feelings of jealousy, envy, anger, frustration, sadness, or callousness), followers of **Zone 2** principles frequently fixate on discovering the “truths” of the spiritual realm (truths they feel are missing due to a lack of knowledge, an obscurity of perception, &/or a succumbing to the intentional deceptions of others – often leading to feelings of inadequacy towards one's station, neutrality towards the suffering of others, or edginess related to the sufferings of self). Contrastingly, **Zone 3** adherents are ever-focused upon rediscovering the Truth of Oneness by re-enlivening the same for others (a state of Harmony between self & surroundings – via acts of selfless Kindness – that always engenders feelings of peaceful Compassion &/or euphoric Joy).

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates repeatedly concentrate on the desires & fears of the ego (a dualistic, me-vs-others, survival-based paradigm that focuses on the regrets or fears from one's past pains or the angst-riddled worries over potentially imminent mishaps or traumas – a focus that always entrenches & indeed inevitably intensifies those same sufferings), **Zone 2** followers tend to focus on the desires & yearnings of the Self/Soul (doing so mostly mentally or verbally, and doing so essentially dualistically as well – primarily for the often well-disguised personal benefits of “inner peace,” “enlightenment,” &/or “salvation”). The focus of **Zone 3** participants, in stark contrast, resides in a realm that solely seeks to actively Care for those around it; that desires only to help others release their own desires, that demolishes the duality between self & other fluidly and powerfully in every harmonizing deed of intentional self-sacrifice.



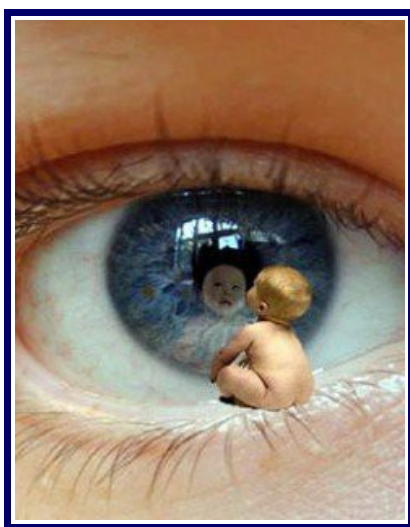
## Chapter 04: How we See ourselves

The fourth primary distinguishing characteristic between those manifesting the three Zones of human Being relates to how they choose to view themselves as people. With this in mind, feel free to humbly ponder & then courageously pro-act the following ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates see themselves as fully independent beings – completely separate from those around them and here on Earth to survive as long and as comfortably as possible (focusing on maintaining personal health & happiness, often by manipulating or even dominating those around them), **Zone 2** minions believe themselves to be intermingled entities – independent beings who are innately interconnected with those around them and here on Earth to thrive amongst the same, often by instructing &/or otherwise verbally helping or “healing” them. In significant contrast, **Zone 3** enliveners understand that – though they are indeed endowed with an individual consciousness that functions separately from those nearby, and even though they are innately interconnected with the other entities in their surroundings – their patent individuality and their innate interconnectedness can neither be fully realized until and unless they choose to act accordingly; acting as caregiving & healing stewards of their surroundings instead of as aggressive dominators therein or mere passive observers thereof.



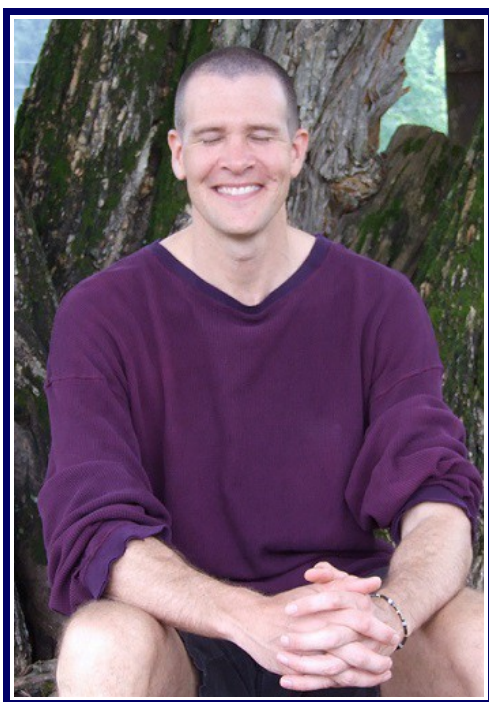
\*While **Zone 1** proponents use the blessings and windfalls of their lives to codependently strengthen their own sense of self &/or enhance their own sense of well-being (gaining their power from “the Wow”), **Zone 2** acolytes meld with those of like-mind &/or manifest moments of personal abundance to independently awaken a more acute sense of Self &/or foster a more peaceful state of being (reaping their power from “the Now”). **Zone 3** practitioners, on the other hand, live lives that are soaked in action – lives in which their seemingly independent selves are repeatedly & intentionally immersed into the lives of the seemingly equally independent others around them. In this manner, lives that were once arrogantly codependent or selfishly independent become humbly interdependent (with Power harvested from “the How”) – lives that were once tainted by grasping or neutered by mere pondering become radiant in their giving; selves that were once seen as mere survivors or analyzers are newly known as being enlivened agents of Peace &/or selfless bringers of Joy.



\*Though **Zone 1** patrons & **Zone 2** attendants both see the human form as being innately flawed and inevitably limited (with the former excusing all moral failures by claiming to be “only human,” and the latter justifying all similar slips into selfishness by advertising again & again their supposedly valiant attempts to manifest their potential to be “better” or “wiser” or “kinder” people), **Zone 3** enthusiasts know & regularly enliven a far grander version of the human experience – one in which the tendency to sin as “humans” is indeed ever-present, and which one in which the choice to be selflessly humane is repeatedly made instead.



\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** satellites repeatedly tell themselves that they are special – that their talents & efforts are worthy of additional reward and that all current



relationships & possessions are deserved and to be enjoyed, **Zone 2** devotees consistently tell themselves that they are “smarter” &/or “wiser” &/or “more enlightened than others – that they have special access to special knowledge, and that the same makes them worthy of higher regard and even greater happiness. In important contrast, **Zone 3** practitioners see themselves as servants – here to give whatever they already possess to those who have less &/or share whatever knowledge they have already gleaned with those desiring the same. And quite ironically, it is this same selfless mindset that allows them to know and appreciate a sense of wealth & abundance that is significantly more profound than the one desired by their far more selfish &/or self-focused compatriots.

*“When anchored in actively Being for others, the True Self is fundamentally invulnerable and always at ease. Indeed, this ever-available anchoring allows the ego to sit back – to be vulnerable, open, and honest with others, and thereby know a far greater sense of Connection & Harmony. Indeed, if one's consciousness adopts a separate identity – or even a culturally intermingled one, it is destined to take itself seriously, and suffering will always result. On the other hand, if one's consciousness chooses to set its own fears & yearnings aside in favor of the interests of others nearby, all seriousness – and thus all the fears & concerns bound thereto – weaken & dissipate. In such a state the self cannot become inflated with its identity, and lives instead with a humbled sense of interconnection – a deeper awareness that always awakens Love and inspires kindness, and thus one that ever engenders Peace.” ~ inspired by Kabir Helminski*

## Chapter 05: Relating to our environment

The fifth distinction is one of the more readily noticeable ones – namely, how the various members of the three different Zones of Being interact very differently with their environment; both with their immediate surroundings and with Nature as a whole. Feel free to humbly consider (and then courageously enliven) the following ...

\*As far as the material world is concerned, while **Zone 1** advocates maintain an outlook that is competition-based and soaked in self-centeredness (where the ego is primed to take &/or receive – rationalizing the accumulation of as much as possible for itself; including focusing one's energies on “friends & family” &/or championing the abuse & consumption of non-human animals for personal pleasure), **Zone 2** followers reflect an outlook that is knowledge-based and soaked in faux-goodness (i.e. being “moral” towards others because the same has been promised or is expected – where the ego is primed to further its own well-being under the guise of “appropriate behavior” &/or a “balance of give & take”; including the reaping of a deservedly “fair portion” of abundance or benefit &/or rationalizing the “humane slaughter” of non-human animals for personal “health”). **Zone 3** adherents, on the other hand, foster an outlook that is Love-based and soaked in acts of selfless generosity (i.e. deeply appreciating what one already possesses by using the same to lessen the suffering of others &/or enhance their Joy – where the selfish inclinations of the ego have been consciously set aside in favor of the selfless yearnings of the Soul; including a staunch refusal to intentionally cause any other sentient being harm for personal pleasure or benefit, a regularly open & avid championing of the rights – regardless of species – of all who are downtrodden, and bold attempts to liberate from bondage or abuse – also regardless of species – all those being oppressed).



\*While **Zone 1** confederates define wealth as consisting of the positive emotions one feels &/or the material things one possesses, **Zone 2** apostles believe that wealth is the facts one knows, the talents one possesses, &/or the experiences one shares with others of like-mind or clan. In contrast, **Zone 3** supporters know that wealth does not exist until things traditionally viewed as such are given to others.

\*In a similar vein, where **Zone 1** proponents see others' lack of wealth or happiness as cause for either rejoicing (if they are considered opponents) or pity (if they are seen as allies) and one's own lack of wealth to be cause for sadness or worry, **Zone 2** acolytes see other's lack of wealth or happiness as cause for casual disregard (if considered enemies), analytical advice-giving (if considered strangers) or sympathetic encouragement (if considered friends), and one's own lack of wealth to be a call to manifest the same. Again in bold contrast, **Zone 3** champions know that lack of any kind is actually an intensifier of true abundance – that another's lack is nothing more than an opportunity to give to the same, and that one's own lack nothing less than an exponential empowerer of what is there to be given.



\*Though **Zone 1** satellites unabashedly love themselves & themselves alone (regardless of perceived levels of dearth or abundance) and **Zone 2** crusaders love themselves first “that they might become better able to love others at some point thereafter,” **Zone 3** attendants know that both these viewpoints are steeped in ignorance – that any act of self-adoration simultaneously destroys one's ability to love in the present and commensurately diminishes the likelihood that one will care for others in the future; that every time wealth or comfort or safety or pleasure



is attained for oneself the attainer thereof becomes proportionately separated from the whole, and the giving thereof becomes proportionately less likely in the future. Indeed, **Zone 3** revelers know that the only way to expand one's ability to Love is to give anyway – to do so especially in times of perceived lack; especially when they are least inclined to do so, and especially for those “least deserving” of the same.

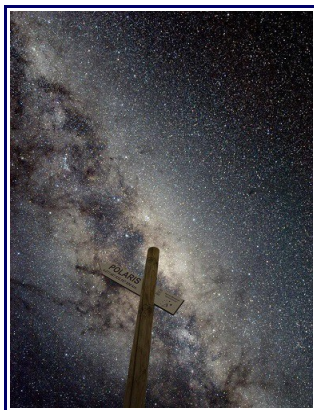
\*As far as the quantum world is concerned (the world of energetic interconnection), **Zone 1** affiliates feel that they are subject to the random whims of happenstance and coincidence (or sometimes controlled “from above” during one's life &/or given an end predestined before one's birth) – essentially that they are ultimately ruled by the far greater whirlings of a much more powerful cosmos. In contrast, **Zone 2** devotees tend to believe that they are the masters of their lives – that they can train their minds to co-create a new reality &/or manifest a new destiny, and that they thereby are the true rulers of their fate. In greater contrast still, **Zone 3** attendants know that everything that happens in one's life is nothing more or less than an opportunity to harness the same – that every happenstance might not have an objective meaning or purpose to be discovered, and yet that every same happenstance does indeed contain seeds of Meaning & Purpose that can be chosen – and thereby brought into being. The innate & incontrovertible interconnection of the Universe does not mean that we are ruled by our surroundings, nor does it imply that we can rule the same. For whether we react emotionally or act selfishly in response to circumstance, both ensure that we remain distanced from the whole – and that we will ultimately suffer as a result. In contrast, that same innately profound Interconnection means that we can always enhance the harmony of any interaction – that we can indeed in effect “rule” that same unity, by choosing to act accordingly with consciousness and with courage.



\*Insomuch as servants of the **Zone 1** mentality believe that reality is objectively concrete (and thereby to be known & respected as “real”), disciples of the **Zone 2** viewpoint believe that reality is ever subjectively nebulous (and therefore to be essentially discounted as “delusion”). In profound contrast, **Zone 3** protagonists know that this debate is as irrelevant as it is fruitless, that our perception of reality – regardless its level of (in)accuracy – is a priceless gift to be honored; that every perceived encounter is imbued with fantastic potential for personal empowerment – that we are not to debate or determine whether or not our experiences are “real,” but rather have been blessed with the ability to consciously & courageously (i.e. intentionally & selflessly – and thereby powerfully) respond to each & every one of them as if they were. Indeed, Zone 3 pro-actors know that all the vapid talk about "reality is bit an illusion" often proves to be a huge distraction -- a scintillating temptation to simply "sit and be" instead of reach out to others who need our assistance or who are in pain. Yes, it is true that life might very well be nothing but an illusion, and yet the suffering that always comes from inactively attaching to that delusion is very real indeed. As such, when in doubt – don't; always err on the side of Compassion over mere contemplation – always side with selfless service over sitting in stillness.



\*Those enacting the **Zone 1** way of being feel that they must continually struggle to “make things happen” &/or strive to “make life work” or “get what they deserve” – all frames of mind that mirror (and thereby entrench) the very self-focused mindset that created their suffering in the first place. **Zone 2** crusaders, on the other hand, choose to (ultimately ineffectively) combat this tendency by either “being still” (i.e. “going within” and merely observing life; “letting the Universe flow” and “allowing things work out by themselves”) or intensely visualizing a “better life” and thereby mentally “co-creating” a more pleasurable reality. Of course, such a mindset – despite its seemingly “enlightened” vernacular – is just as self-focused as its **Zone 1** counterpart, and thus ultimately just as ineffectual. In bold contrast to both viewpoints, **Zone 3** contributors know that life is always “happening” and that it is our privilege as sentient beings to be able to purposefully immerse ourselves into the same whenever & however we wish<sup>7</sup> – aligning ourselves with each happenstance by choosing to use the same to either enhance the Joy or lessen the suffering of those therein.



7 **Zone 3** venturers know that the more often they make such selfless choices, the more fluidly each subsequent selfless opportunity can be similarly chosen – eventually engendering a life that seems to constantly be flowing in “spontaneous Oneness” – a life that remains a constant challenge of choice, and yet a life that blossoms beyond obligation, beyond hope, beyond expectation, beyond goals, and beyond destinations.

\*Whereas **Zone 1** patrons focus on “protecting what is mine” and **Zone 2** apostles tend to “manifest” what is deserved, **Zone 3** participants simply Give whatever they already have to give. The latter know that there is no such thing as lack and that life is never “broken” – indeed, that being able to extend goodwill to others (via words of kindness &/or deeds of selfless service) in those moments of life that are difficult or painful or “bad” or “wrong” is precisely what makes living powerful, and thus precisely what makes life worth living.



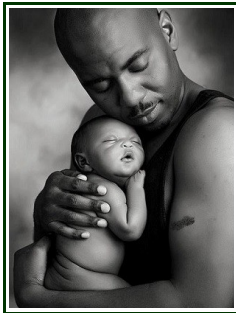
*“Without fail, my brightest dreams and deepest desires meld into the singular – with them ultimately becoming the following one: to clearly hear for the duration of a single heartbeat the totality of the Universe in its mysteriously innate and ultimately full Harmony; and then in the very next instant – to have the courage to boldly dance in accordance therewith ... Indeed, it is our greatest downfall as a species to keep striving to force all into agreement or mandate a oneness of being. For the ultimate Truth of life and its living is grounded in the scintillating diversity of its being; in the constancy with which it presents us all with endless opportunities to co-create Harmony within the chaos – by fully loving the unlovable, by tenderly caring for the unforgivable, by openly caring for the wicked & the noble & the wealthy & the downtrodden alike.” ~ inspired by Hermann Hesse & C. JoyBell C.*



## Chapter 06: Relating to friends & allies

The sixth way in which the three fundamental Zones of Being differ is the way in which their members respond to and interrelate with their friends & allies. Consider the following explanations thereof ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates embrace relationships with friends & family in order to ensure their own sense of safety &/or well-being (subconsciously feeling the same to be necessary for their survival), **Zone 2** followers extend that embrace to include those of like-mind in order to elevate their sense of self-worth &/or enhance their own quality of life (believing the same to provide a necessary support-network for potentially trying times). In great contrast, **Zone 3** enliveners embrace all the members of their community and do so solely for the benefit of that community. They see their relationships with others – be they friend or foe; allies or antagonists – as regular & ready-made opportunities to become “reborn” via deeds of selfless kindness given thereto.



\*While **Zone 1** proponents give to others only when pressured to do so (or to receive a giving in return), **Zone 2** disciples give “freely” to others only after having given to themselves (or when already in a place of personal wealth or comfort). **Zone 3** enthusiasts, on the other hand, give as a parent gives to their children. They give solely to give – ever willingly, even when seemingly unable to do so; ever joyously, even for those “least deserving” of the same.

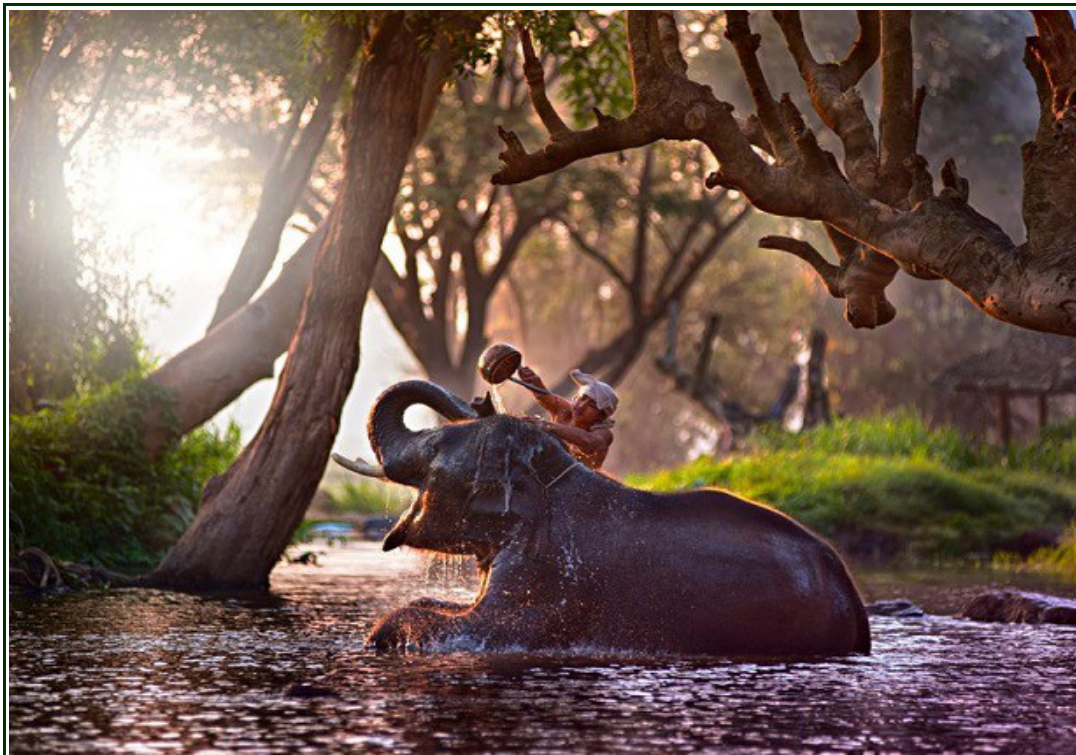
\*Insomuch as both **Zone 1** patrons & **Zone 2** devotees see their loved ones (including themselves if **Zone 1**, or those of like-mind or like-belief if **Zone 2**) as being more worthy recipients of any giving, **Zone 3** participants make no such distinctions between those seemingly less or more worthy. These are the ones choosing to live without judgment of others – to live “humble as a child” – a mindset where a mere opportunity to give is enough to warrant their giving.



\*Those soaking in the **Zone 1** lifestyle love being loved, and it is receiving love from others that inspires them to extend the same. Similarly, but of a differing degree, apostles of the **Zone 2** mindset love to publicly love others the way they wish to be loved in return, and it is noticing those who are worthy of their love that inspire them to give the same (especially when there is a good chance of being complimented by others for doing so). In stark contrast to both, **Zone 3** contributors choose to Love others unconditionally, and it is the mere recognition of any opportunity to give the same that inspires them to do so.



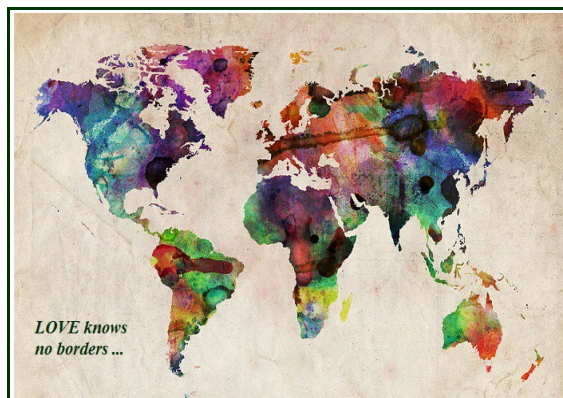
\*Satellites of the **Zone 1** paradigm give primarily to those considered to be friends, and give more & more often to those friends considered to be “better” or “best.” **Zone 2** accomplices, on the other hand, share primarily with those considered to be of like-mind or like-belief &/or those who champion similar values, and share more & more often with “Soulmates” or those who are “equally enlightened.” Contrastingly, **Zone 3** supporters give to all without determination or delineation, though they do see those who are aggressive (“enemies”) & those who are not yet known (“strangers”) as being especially ripe for their deeds of generous kindness. Indeed, **Zone 3** folks have simply come to understand that as soon as we start looking for “better” or “more worthy” people to love, our LOVE loses all its deepest potency and our lives thus lose a primary portion of their potential meaning. They know that real LOVE knows no exceptions, and is in fact most potent when given to those “least deserving” of it, and especially in those times we feel least able to give the same.



## Chapter 07: Relating to strangers & enemies

The seventh major differentiation of the three primary Zones of Being revolves around how the members of each group handle interactions with their opponents & enemies. As such, feel free to humbly ponder & then courageously pro-act the following ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates divide the world dualistically (us vs them) in a fear-steeped way that intensifies current enmities and creates additional foes (leading to hatreds at home and military conflicts abroad), **Zone 2** minions adopt a more passively dualistic approach – one that dampens the intensity of current enmities while maintaining the same (focusing on “correcting” relationships at home and enforcing “peace-keeping” efforts abroad). In dramatic contrast, **Zone 3** adherents actively dismantle all dualistic delusions – acting in ways that diffuse current conflict and bulwark potential harmonies (manifesting humbly forgiving friendships at home and respect-fully peaceful alliances abroad).



\*While **Zone 1** proponents see all non-friends as enemies and condemns all non-desired behaviors of others with zeal or indignation, **Zone 2** disciples label as “enemy” all others who in any way aggressive or attacking – arrogantly analyzing & critically correcting them in order to either convert or defend against the same. **Zone 3** participants, with another heart, see through the illusory monikers of “enemy” and “foe” – seeing beyond the hurtful behaviors of others to the singular



Soul residing underneath the same, and then boldly treating them accordingly; standing boldly between the aggressive and their intended victims while simultaneously emitting forgiveness from the mouth and feeling love in the heart. In this way those who are Good (i.e. showing others kindness) are encouraged to continue the same, while those behaving “badly” (i.e. causing others harm) are dramatically forgiven – and thereby inspired to become more loving instead.

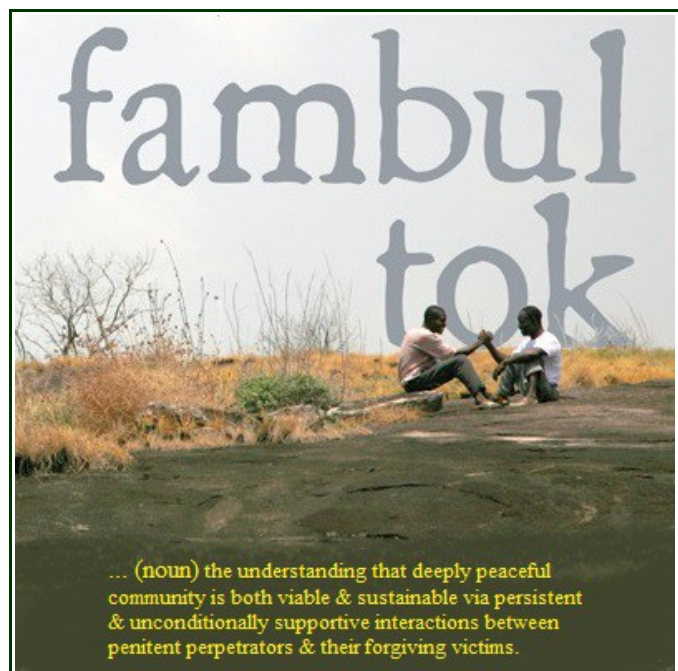
*“When you recognize no enemies within, those attacking from outside are handled with a courageous kindness that transforms them into friends & molds them into allies.” ~ African proverb*

\*Though **Zone 1** affiliates strive to forcefully defeat & destroy all external sources of “evil” (an anger-based mindset which ultimately inspires those enemies to defend themselves, grow that much stronger, and thereby inevitably cause even more suffering in the future), **Zone 2** followers strive to find ways to “cope” with the enemies in their lives (often by physically avoiding &/or emotionally tolerating the same – an annoyance-based mindset that is also perceived as a rejection by those being judged as “mean” or “wrong” or “wicked” or “ignorant” – a mindset that thereby also inspires those individuals to defend those same positions and maintain those same traits, and inevitably cause others more suffering therewith). Again in marked contrast, **Zone 3** champions choose to courageously (i.e. actively) Care for all sources of apparent evil in their lives, thereby lading the same with the only thing that is truly feared by them –the one thing they are certain they neither merit nor deserve: unconditional kindness. This bold choice serves a purpose twofold – **01**) freeing the mildly evil to directly remember (and concurrently enliven) their true, harmony-seeking nature and **02**) allowing the victims



of &/or witnesses to the dysfunctional behaviors to transcend the same by choosing to Care for the sources of the same in a similarly unconditional manner. And this is truly the only way to defeat evil – transcending all “wrongs” by extending kindness to all wrongdoers, transcending all “badness” by utilizing the same to empower subsequent acts of Goodness, transcending all enmity by reminding all enemies that they are merely long-lost Friends.

\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** patrons condemn their lives' wrongdoers and know them to be deserving of “appropriately harsh” punishments for their transgressions, **Zone 2** crusaders tend to label those same “sinners” as being merely ignorant or misguided – still believing that those wrongdoers need stern correction, and yet meting out the same under the hollow guise of “gentle justice” or “compassionate conversion” or “constructive criticism.” In dramatic contrast, those attending to a **Zone 3** way of being choose to see wrongdoings more clearly – humbly recognizing that the misdeeds seen in others are merely the “sins” that they themselves have done, that they themselves are doing, &/or that they themselves could easily do in similar circumstances. This mindset allows all judgment to fall away, and be replaced by feelings of gratitude (for the reminder of how not to be) and compassion (for the great suffering that inevitably comes to every perpetrator of every self-centered misdeed) instead.



\*Those partaking of the **Zone 1** life deal with their conflicts counterproductively – verbally attacking their life's “leeches,” and thereby encouraging them to latch on even tighter with behaviors even more passive-aggressive; openly ridiculing their life's critics, and thereby encouraging them to further acts of slur or slander; physically shunning their life's “button-pushers,” and thereby encouraging them to irritate with acts ever more aggressive. Similarly, **Zone 2** devotees choose to blatantly ignore their “leeches,” quietly gossip about (or exude pity for) their critics, and establish “healthy boundaries” of distance or disregard between themselves and their “button pushers” – all practices much milder than their **Zone 1** cousins, and yet all choices that similarly reject their enemies, and thus similarly encourage them to continue acting with according annoyance. In direct & dramatic contrast, enliveners of the **Zone 3** way of being choose a radically different approach to the codependent – profusely giving to the “leeches” trying to inappropriately take from them (knowing as they do that it is impossible for another to steal what is being freely given, and that it is impossible to be “used & abused” while intently striving to share & serve), respectfully engaging & sincerely thanking their critics (for exposing potential areas of self-improvement, as well as for granting the opportunity to humbly “Love anyway”), and enliven acts of compassionate Caring for all their “button pushers” (realizing as they do that those most dramatically seeking conflict are actually those most desirous of deeds of kindness).

\*In essence then, when confronted by those instigating contention or conflict, **Zone 1** antagonists are those who critically preach or arrogantly argue, **Zone 2** apostles are those who detachingly discuss or dogmatically debate, and **Zone 3** agents are those who lovingly listen & courageously Care.



*“We come to realize that the troublemakers in our lives are actually harming themselves, and indeed benefiting us by allowing us to enliven deeds of flagrantly irrational (and therefore highly potent) kindness. Just as we refuse to hold grudges against fallen branches, we are wise to exude the same equanimity towards fallen (i.e. aggressive &/or otherwise uncomfortably dysfunctional) people.” ~ via Pema Chodron*

*“There are those who claim that spiritual enlightenment comes by denying yourself to such a complete degree that you see yourself in the other; a state of mind so devoid of personal context that it allows for the beautiful to be noticed even in the face of the ugly. And yet there is no challenge in such an awakening – and because there is no challenge, there is also no potency. No, to truly become enlightened we are not to deconstruct the self to thereby see the hidden beauties of the other. Rather, real enlightenment comes when we remain mired in self-doubt and personal bias while confronted by those vile &/or terrifying, and then choose to See them as Beauty-full anyway – by acting accordingly.” ~ inspired by C. JoyBell C.*

## Chapter 08: Dealing with personal identity

The eighth major divergence between the three Zones of Being has to do with the different ways their members view themselves & their own willpower. Keeping this theme in mind, consider humbly pondering (and maybe courageously enlivening) the following ...

\*First & foremost, **Zone 1** advocates see their ego as an immovable reality of their being; the fundamental facet of self that cannot be removed or even significantly diminished. These are the people who have seemingly fallen in love with themselves; the ones who willingly soak in their habits & addictions; the ones who repeatedly strive to obtain the greatest accumulation of wealth &/or the grandest experiences of pleasure or comfort. In a slightly evolved vein, **Zone 2** acolytes see the ego as an enemy that needs to be defeated (or at least significantly tamed) in order to one day attain “enlightenment.” These people strive to identify and delve into a deep understanding of their weaknesses, desires, fears, &/or addictions in order to thereby sublimate the same. Of course, their inevitable failure to do so successfully is thereafter often excused with a weak-willed “I’m only human” or an erroneous “We must learn to embrace our shadow-side” – two patent falsehoods that quite effectively serve to keep many of their proponents trapped in the self-focused sufferings of **Zone 2**’s realm of faux-enlightenment.

In outstanding contrast to both of the aforementioned belief systems, **Zone 3** enthusiasts interact with the ego quite differently – namely, treating it as an agent of empowerment to be harnessed, and therefore as a friend to be embraced. This is not a call to either sadism or masochism; not a summons to submit to selfish impulses that harm others or oneself. Rather, this mindset simply understands that the ego cannot be defeated using the same mentality that enlivened it in the first place – that the ego is purely self-focused and strife-based, and thus can only be effectively engaged by consciously harnessing the same; by openly (& gratefully) using its exclusively selfish impulses to empower choices that are boldly selfless instead. Indeed, it is the difficult decisions in life that always prove most powerful, and thus it is the ego’s desire to prevent us from self-sacrificing for others that provides those same choices with their phenomenal efficacy.

Indeed, any paradigm of thought that sees the ego as an enemy encourages us to attack and suppress the same, a choice which inspires the ego to defend itself and encourages it to become stronger. And yet, when we recognize the ego at work, thank that ego for its well-intended (yet no longer needed) assistance, and then consciously use its resistance to empower our concurrent acts of Kindness, the ego becomes an empowerer, and eventually a friend ... Whenever we are emotionally reacting to any stimulus or situation, we embody the ego. And it is important to recognize this intrinsic facet of self. We can coddle to its demands (and live a **Zone 1** life of selfish “sin”), we can repeatedly reject its desires (and live a **Zone 2** life of futility – repeatedly “getting better” only to crash again & again into the “failure” of selfishness), or we can form a **Zone 3** alliance with that ego by using it to strengthen every act of Kindness we engage when least inclined to do so.



*“Make your ego thin to self and porous to others. Remember that your will regarding yourself – your hopes, your dreams, your complaints, your fears – is nothing. Just as important, remember that your will regarding others – their hopes, their dreams, their suffering, their fears – is everything. Be accordingly.” ~ inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke*



\*While **Zone 1** proponents believe that their personal will is ultimately too weak to effectively combat their more primal instincts (and sometimes even advocate enlivening those subconscious desires for their own personal benefit), **Zone 2** followers feel that the regular employment of one's personal will (via manipulating one's environment, correcting one's associates, &/or chastising oneself) is necessary for the ego to ever be tamed or mastered or dismantled. In strong contrast, **Zone 3** enthusiasts agree that the will must indeed be regularly engaged in order to transcend the selfish whims of the ego, and those same supporters of selflessness know full well that the human will is more than potent enough to accomplish that all-important task. Where they differ – and differ dramatically – from their **Zone 2** counterparts is how they employ their will; doing so not to combat the ego or attempt to destroy it, but rather to harness the ego's innate potency via consciously subverting its selfish designs by boldly replacing them with flagrantly selfless alternatives.



\*Whereas **Zone 1** affiliates subscribe to the limiting mantra of “I am who I am” (i.e. that they are inevitably hampered by the primitive inclinations of their cellular memories & permanently limited by the constraints imposed upon them by the circumstances of their birth and upbringing), **Zone 2** acolytes prefer to succumb to the myth of “I am who I could one day become” (i.e. that life is about perpetually – and ultimately futilely – striving to learn and “grow” and “improve” as a person, in order to one day exude a mostly constant expression of



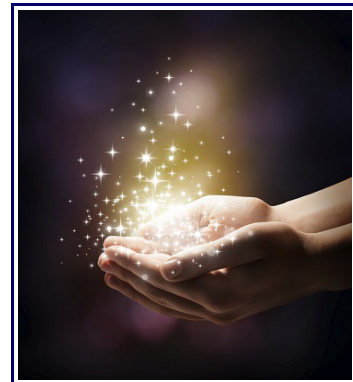
one's “higher self”). **Zone 3** venturers, on the other hand, recognize neither of these delusions, preferring instead to honor and actualize the far more potent Truth of “I always fully am who I am currently choosing to be” – and this, regardless of their inborn genetic predispositions, early psychological indoctrinations, or present day cultural pressures. The influences from our past (both those stemming from “past lives” as well as those soaked in current circumstance) do indeed tempt us to make less-than-noble decisions, and as such it is indeed true that selfless choices are often very difficult ones to make. That being said, **Zone 3** enthusiasts know firsthand that those same selfless choices are always available, and that – whenever they are courageously enlivened – those same selfless choices always rule the day.

*“Our vision does not become clear by gazing into our own hearts, but rather solely during fully immersed moments of emotional bravery ... It is true that everything that irritates us about others inevitably leads to a better understanding of ourselves, just as everything that irritates us about ourselves ultimately leads to a fuller understanding of others, and yet neither of these dynamics of elevated perception can bear any real clarity until they become reborn in kind word more than humble thought and caring deed more than mere kind word.” ~ inspired by Carl Jung*

## Chapter 09: Dealing with God & the Divine

For the ninth major way the three Zones of Being differ is the manner in which their enliveners acknowledge &/or interact with “the Divine” (otherwise known by many as “God” and by more than a few others as “the Source” or “Cosmic Consciousness” et al). As such, whether you consider yourself to be “religious” or “spiritual” or neither of the two, feel free to humbly ponder (& courageously pro-act) the following ...

\*For starters, **Zone 1** advocates maintain concrete beliefs about a separate & distant godhead – with some devoutly believing that God doesn't exist at all (and thus makes no contact with humans), others being sure that God resides “up above” and far away (and thus makes contact with humans that is rare & faint), and still others firmly knowing that God is residing at a distance yet ever-nearby (and waiting to be summoned via the spiritual frenzy felt during group-worship &/or the ingestion of hallucinogens). **Zone 2** disciples also know “the Divine” to maintain its own separate presence – one either bestowed from above upon the “worthy” or welling up from within for those so “blessed.” In stark contrast, **Zone 3** practitioners know **A**) that the majesty of the Divine is always present in every interaction, *and B*) that the bliss of that same seemingly celestial Source can only be fully experienced during intentionally enacted deeds of selfless caring. In essence, the truly Enlightened know that “God” exists not independently elsewhere, but latently & interdependently within the consciousness of every sentient being. As such, God is to be assisted more than merely summoned or manifested, and enlivened more than merely worshiped or revered.



\*Though **Zone 1** affiliates see God as an all-powerful ruler or a harsh king or a stern “father” – a paternalistic overlord to whom subservience must be sincere and obedience absolute (often inspiring feelings of inadequacy, arrogance, aggression, &/or fear), **Zone 2** devotees see “the Divine” primarily as a potential power they can access



for their own deserved benefit (often manifesting feelings of apathy or callousness towards the sufferings of others more ignorant, and hopelessness or resignation towards their own sufferings unfortunate & unfair). In brilliant contrast, **Zone 3** adherents see God as a verb – something to embody more than merely honor; something to enliven for others more than merely manifest for self ...

**Zone 1** sees God above both self & other and prays accordingly – **Zone 2** sees God within both self & other and thinks accordingly – **Zone 3** knows God & self & other all as One while acting accordingly.

\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** patrons immerse themselves in the dogmatic beliefs of more traditional religions (where entrance into a halcyon hereafter is granted exclusively to those who worship God accordingly) and **Zone 2** acolytes openly profess the fuzzy tenets of credos more “spiritual”<sup>8</sup> (where one can escape the sufferings of this life – and possibly enjoy a profound peace in the next one – via diligent practice &/or a more malleable mindset), those living under the **Zone 3** penumbra are per se religionless – with every one of them willingly & indeed vehemently refusing any & all heavenly rewards in favor of “remaining behind” to continue serving the suffering ... In essence, while **Zone 1** believers strive to gain entrance to Heaven after their death via proper worship and **Zone 2** followers attempt to do so in this lifetime via disciplining body & mind, **Zone 3** enliveners know that the only Heaven worth basking in is the one that can only be accessed by setting aside all desires for personal rewards – heavenly or otherwise – and immersing oneself instead into the needs of those in need nearby.



8 Please NOTE the following about four of the more prevalent planks of these “more spiritual” notions ...

\*As far as **reincarnation** goes, it is well worth realizing that repeatedly focusing on our other lives that might have been invariably prevents us from maintaining the conscious focus required to act ethically in our current one. Similarly, repeatedly reminding ourselves that another life awaits us after our death neuters the urgency with which we must immerse ourselves in our current interactions if we ever hope to transcend the constraints of fear & selfishness that are inherent to the same.

\*Ties to the aforementioned is the concept of **karma** – a belief in the inevitability of justice being meted out commensurately to all in their next lifetimes after their deaths in this one; a belief that inspires the adherents thereof to remain passive when facing the misdeeds of others and stagnant when admitting their own.

\*Some **Zone 2** minions believe in the **channeling** talents of self or others – the supposed ability to access the greater wisdom of more enlightened beings (or “ascended masters”) who reside on other planes of existence. The only problem with this pseudo-religion is a significant one – namely the problem that any entity truly possessing an awakened understanding of the Oneness that is our Cosmos cannot adopt an individual personality (much less speak exclusively through only certain unenlightened individuals, and much much less for monetary gain of any kind) without losing the ability to effectively communicate that same Understanding. Any true Master would never claim to possess an exclusive access to Truth, and would never demand payment for the sharing thereof.

\*Other **Zone 2** devotees profess a prevalence of **sacred contracts** – agreements that each sentient Soul makes before being born; agreements that outline and prearrange the various pains & frustrations with which each particular Soul will be challenged in its subsequent lifetime. The emotional comfort this belief system provides is obvious – tempting each believer therein to lives steeped in inaction; comfortably distancing themselves from the sufferings of others & passively analyzing the failures of oneself. **Zone 3** participants, on the other hand, know that real Peace can only be known while embodying real Love – a real Love that can only be enlivened by immersing ourselves into the suffering of others and striving to lessen the same. And this is especially true when that immersion causes us to know emotional pain ourselves; an intensity of discomfort that cannot be known – and thus that cannot be transcended – as long as we are mired in the false notion that the same was knowingly summoned by the one doing the suffering.

## Chapter 10: Responding to peace & pleasure

The tenth major disparity between the three Zones of Being manifests itself in the differing ways their members relate to times of peace &/or pleasure. Feel free to humbly ponder (& then courageously pro-act) the following examples thereof ...

\*First & foremost, those partaking of the **Zone 1** lifestyle tend to use their “left brains” to rationally label feelings of pleasure and moments of comfort as being the “good times” – successes striven to be duplicated and benefits clamored to be maintained for themselves. Those immersed in the **Zone 2** mentality, on the other hand, tend to use the capabilities of their reasoned “left brains” to process & appreciate the experiences accessed by their more intuitive “right brains” – judging their own lives to become more “purposeful” or “meaningful” or “worthy” thereby; experiences believed to be more “enlightened” that are then shared with those of like-mind thereafter. In stark contrast to both these mindsets, those choosing the **Zone 3** alternative simultaneously utilize both halves of their brains – consciously choosing to selflessly immerse themselves in their interaction with others, and thereby coming to know a far greater sense of Peace & Joy. To them “good times” are not moments of pleasures to be accumulated or deeper experiences to be more fully known, but are rather those priceless times when their conscience is intentionally & courageously aligned with their lives' nearby neighbors &/or surrounding circumstances.



\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates see physical security & emotional comfort as fundamental goals for which should consistently strive and **Zone 2** followers see the same as crucial ends that we should all repeatedly manifest, **Zone 3** participants know that physical security & emotional comfort are both essentially mirages – that both are innately impossible to lastingly attain or profoundly experience. As such, neither of these temptations is desired at all by the truly Enlightened, for both are clearly recognized as the ethical pitfalls they truly are – smothering the potentially meaningful life with the thick malaise of sloth, the sticky sap of selfishness, and the heavy haze of fear.

\*While **Zone 1** proponents are grateful for the inevitably fleeting blessings of physical ease &/or emotional euphoria (grateful for the good that that feels good) and **Zone 2** accomplices feel gratitude for the similarly transient moments when they “see the good in the bad” or “see the purpose within the pain” (grateful for the good outside the good and the good within the bad), **Zone 3** adherents know a Thankfulness far more profound & lasting – one that comes from choosing to SEE all traditionally “negative” happenstances as they truly are (grateful for the opportunity to transcend the



bad with good responses thereto, and thereby transforming the former into the latter): appreciating the majestic within everything felt to be “boring,” revering the wondrous within everything judged to be “normal,” honoring the beautiful within everything considered “plain” or “ugly,” and enlivening the Purpose within all things painful – by consciously using all times labeled as being “horrible” or “bad” or even merely “disadvantageous” to empower subsequent acts of selfless kindness.

\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** patrons feel that abundance (both physical in the form of money &/or possessions, and emotional in the forms of friendship &/or adoration) is granted to those who are either lucky (lackadaisical) or deserving (hard-working), **Zone 2** acolytes believe that the same wealth is equally available to everyone, and must merely be intently manifested to be reaped and enjoyed. In unsurprisingly bold contrast, **Zone 3** enthusiasts know and harvest a Wealth that is far more profound and an Abundance that is far more meaningful – the former coming not from what one earns or achieves or owns, but instead from what one gives or shares or offers; the latter being found not in unusual chances to succeed or achieve or conquer, but rather in the ever-present opportunities to serve or mend or sacrifice.



## Chapter 011: Responding to frustration & pain

The eleventh fundamental divergence among the members of the three Zones of Being pertains to the very different ways they relate to life experiences that are frustrating &/or painful. With the same in mind, feel free to humbly ponder (& thereafter courageously pro-act) the following examples thereof ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates feel victimized by “bad times” that often arrive randomly &/or unfairly (a belief system that encourages them to attack their enemies &/or “get theirs” while & whenever they can), **Zone 2** acolytes believe that their similar “misfortunes” can be consciously altered &/or simply “waited out” until they dissipate of their own accord (a belief system that justifies either their frequent self-centered efforts to manifest better fortunes for themselves &/or passively “go within” until circumstances are more ripe for personal benefit). **Zone 3** participants, however, see “bad times” for what they truly are – namely, opportunities to Care for others far more powerfully – and act accordingly. They have come to comprehend the greater Truth that there is no such thing as an attainable “balance” between pleasurable events and uncomfortable ones. Indeed, these Enlightened ones have come to know that there is no such thing as a “bad” event at all; that every happenstance is either a pleasurable one to be shared with others or a painful one to be harnessed (via subsequent acts of willing kindness) for the benefit of the same.



\*While **Zone 1** proponents' focus on diminishing, replacing &/or preventing the painful experiences of their lives ensures that they remain inevitably mired in ever-escalating intensities of the same, **Zone 2** disciples tend to focus on intellectually rationalizing, vacantly accepting, &/or passively avoiding the same – a stagnating mindset that doesn't make their negative encounters more prevalent or intense, and yet one that doesn't make them any less frequent or painful either. **Zone 3** enliveners, in stark contrast, choose to powerfully transcend their painful moments by utilizing the same – choosing to be potently grateful in times of lack, humbly amazed in times of tedium, &/or transformatively kind in times of anger or fear or annoyance.



\*Just as **Zone 1** affiliates fear pain and stringently resist it (and thereby chronically intensify the suffering experienced via the same), **Zone 2** devotees employ “healthier” mechanisms to cope with their current pain &/or resist the arrival of future discomforts (a mindset that often disguises its self-centered intentions under the guise of “mindful meditation” or “self respect” or “personal growth”, and yet a mindset that is self-centered nonetheless – and thus a mindset that solidifies & preserves the same egotistical opinions that allow one's personal pains to become intense sufferings in the first place).



**Zone 3** enthusiasts, however, maintain a dramatically different focus – one that refuses to attend to personal worries or self-focused fears whatsoever; one that understands that “coping” with pain actually prevents us from effectively (i.e. selflessly) utilizing the same; one that knows that, while they are not to be masochistically summoned, painful happenstances are to be humbly respected & courageously honored as the empowerers of kind deeds they innately are & will ever remain.



\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** patrons gaze or gawk at the unpleasant happenstances that befall others (“that’s none of my business” or “he/she deserved it”), minions of the **Zone 2** mindset tend to passively pontificate about (“I wonder why that’s happening to him/her”) or attempt to peaceably placate the same<sup>9</sup> (“pain is but an illusion to be abdicated”). In blazing contrast, champions of the **Zone 3** lifestyle choose to immerse themselves fully into the trials and troubles of those around them – having accepted the Truth that they are intrinsically interconnected with every sentient being in their surroundings, alongside the equally important Truth that we can only become fully Human while acting accordingly; when being openly kind to any & all strangers, or openly caring towards our enemies, or radically (i.e. anonymously & self-sacrificially) generous to our friends.



\*Though **Zone 1** confederates deal with their feelings of frustration by burying the same under thick layers of addictive behavior, verbal bravado, &/or condemnatory thinking (struggling with their lives' external circumstances), and **Zone 2** crusaders tend to more mentally combat their lives' annoyances via mindful meditation, positive affirmation, &/or manifestive visualization (battling external disappointment by disengaging from the same), agents of the **Zone 3** Way defeat their troubles by refusing to attack the same – indeed, by choosing to openly embrace them instead. For these more deeply Enlightened ones, frustration is a not a sign



of environmental discord that need to be dismantled or destroyed, but rather the presence of nearby unharmonies calling for infusions of Love. These **Zone 3** champions are the ones who deeply feel & sincerely admit their frustrations & annoyances, and then powerfully transcend the same by going forth to extend radically unconditional Kindness directly to the sources thereof.

9 Among the related common refrains heard from various Zone 2 “masters” (a.k.a. New Age gurus) are statements such as “what you are experiencing is not you” or “all pain subsides when you but return to the Now” or “we each create all of our own dis-ease and discord” – all of which being statements of belief providing nothing more than a temporary (& quite hollow) reprieve from the cycle of suffering that inevitably accompanies all those steeped in self-focus. For even if they are “only experiences” – only mental projections of our own minds – our experiences of pain & frustration & terror & annoyance are very real indeed. And how fortunate we all are for their true tangibility – for it is impossible for us to realize the highest state of our Being if not faced with the greatest of fears & discomforts. Indeed, our greatest Peace is known only during the enlivening of our greatest Love, and our greatest Love can only be given in those moments when we least wish to offer it and yet offer it anyway – in those times when we fully accept the poignancy of our pains & hatreds & sorrows, and yet choose to act lovingly anyway.

*“To be your truest Self means truly loving life, and truly loving life is to adore it in all its emulations – the bad as well as the good; the painful as well as the peaceful. It is to sink into those moments when everything you hold dear has seemingly crumbled away like burnt paper in your hands, when your throat is filled with the silt of sorrow and your eyes are over-welled with the tears of rage. These are the times that all come to know at one point or another – the times when grief sets in so heavily that you can't stand up for the weight of it, and you wonder how you can even briefer under its massive cloak. And yet these are the times when you are allowed to become your truest Self – for these are the times when you can take that sadness-laden life gently between your palms and stare boldly into its tear-stricken face. These are the times when you can look gently at that face – look gently at that life – and say: Yes, I will bring you with me anyway. Yes, I will love you again – by loving all those shedding similar tears.” ~ inspired by Ellen Bass*

## Chapter 12: Beliefs about chance & fate

The twelfth major dissimilarity between the three Zones of Being is the vastly varying ways their members view the concepts of chance & fate. To help clarify the same, consider the following illuminatory examples thereof ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates are certain that people are either subject to the whims of random happenstance (experiencing “good fortune” when things go well for them or “bad luck” when they don't) or regulated “from above” by events that are concretely predestined or celestially scripted, **Zone 2** acolytes believe that one's seemingly circumstance-proscribed fate can be altered by righteous living &/or that a reprieve from one's hardships (a.k.a. “fierce Grace”) can be summoned “from above” via disciplined thinking &/or proper worship. **Zone 3** adherents, in stark contrast, maintain a much higher level of conscious influence over their lives. They believe in the omniviability of free will; that every sentient being has the power to choose how he or she responds to each & every happenstance; that as such each person's “luck” is never ruled or even regulated by external circumstances, but rather is ever controlled by his or her chosen responses to the same. Indeed, those living the **Zone 3** Way have come to understand that consciousness itself is the greatest of blessings, and that every self-aware being is objectively blessed regardless of the particular “positive” or “negative” circumstances surrounding his or her existence. Indeed, these people have come to know (from persistent practice and the deep experience that flows from the same) that the more uncomfortable or frustrating or difficult life becomes, the more potential power is awakened in those experiencing the same. The more difficult life is to live, the more difficult it is to extend Love in those moments. And the more difficult it is to extend one's Love, the more powerful that Love becomes (and the more Peace that Love engenders; both for those to whom it is given and for those doing its giving) while being shared anyway. As such, agents of the **Zone 3** life know that the various theories of fate & destiny & grace – regardless of how truthful they each might very well be – are always fully trumped by the over-arching power of conscious choice. These people have come to realize the Truth that life is always innately filled with an amazing Grace waiting to be actualized – and that the Peace of said Grace is always released & enlivened in every act of selfless caring – and this, fully regardless of any & all hindrances of seemingly predesigned fate or apparently random happenstance.



\*While **Zone 1** proponents claim that life (or God, or “the Universe”) decides everything for us – that blessings & crises are randomly distributed to those “fortunate” or “unlucky” enough to receive them, **Zone 2** devotees believe that each person can choose to control (or at least alter) their circumstances – that blessings can be manifested & crises mostly prevented by those disciplined enough to co-create &or defend against the same. In dramatic contrast, those



partnering with the **Zone 3** lifestyle know that nothing occurs randomly *and* that nothing that happens needs to be in any way altered – that it is our previous choices that effectively “summon” a significant portion of our lives' current consequences, and that it is our chosen responses thereto that determine how much or how little Peace we bestow upon others as a result therewith – and thus how much or how little Peace we experience via the same ourselves.

\*Though **Zone 1** affiliates see happenstances that damage or disconcert or discomfort as “wrongs” to be eventually defeated via strife or struggle, and **Zone 2** followers believe similar times of discord must be either intentionally altered or persistently avoided, **Zone 3** enthusiasts have come to understand that moments of dis-ease (even those that are intensely painful) are not signs to alter or abandon one's current path, but rather are calls to abandon the selfish ways in which one's current way is being walked – and adopt gaits more soundly selfless instead.



## *Chapter 13: Escaping common ego-traps & the shackles of “active unenlightenment”*

Quite a few human beings still find themselves mostly mired in the raw selfishness of **Zone 1** living – unabashedly focusing the majority of their time & energy on “getting theirs”; accumulating material wealth &/or developing emotional allies; utilizing their talents &/or their friendships to survive as comfortably as possible for as long as possible. That having been said, more & more folks are making more & more frequent leaps into the realm of **Zone 2** – focusing instead on searching for more truth &/or living lives that are more meaningful than merely successful &/or more purposeful than merely pleasurable. Of course, once such pseudo-awakenings occur, the inner ego immediately begins striving to get us to return to our previous **Zone 1** lives based on quelling fears &/or satisfying desires. And not only that – those same egos are just as invested in keeping us from making any additional gains of wisdom or understanding; encouraging us just as stridently to avoid enlivening the **Zone 3** values of unconditional kindness &/or self-sacrificial generosity; values that lead to the deepest possible experience of Peace & Joy, and yet values that the ego falsely believes lead to disillusionment & death. And so it is that the vast majority of **Zone 2** residents listen to these insidious inner whisperings (what I sometimes call “ego traps”) and fall willingly into states of “active unenlightenment” – adopting any number of errant beliefs designed to either keep them stuck in the faux-enlightenment of **Zone 2** or have them retreating to the raw ignorance of **Zone 1** (and keeping them far from **Zone 3** in either case). The following eight chapters will explore & illuminate eight of the most prevalent & most potent of these “spiritual snares.”

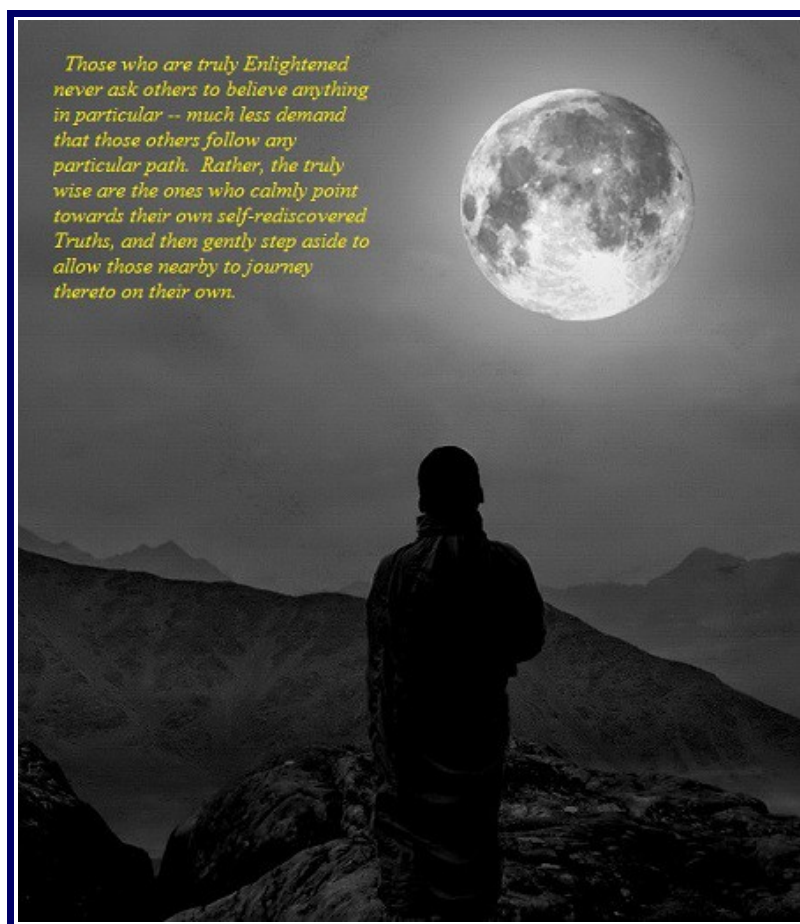
### *Chapter 13a: “active unenlightenment” Trap #01 ... feeling superior or “already enlightened”*

The first of the aforementioned ego-snares is a type of spirituality superiority complex; the delusion entertained by many **Zone 1** advocates & **Zone 2** adherents that they already “know enough” or are in many ways “already enlightened.” Feel free to consider the following mental manifestations thereof ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates see enlightenment as a supreme mental status that is either bestowed upon the innately intelligent at birth or transferred to the culturally sophisticated in their youth, **Zone 2** followers frequently fall into the trap of believing that they themselves have already acquired the same intellectual mastery &/or psychological maturity via disciplined study or persistent practice. **Zone 3** practitioners, in another mind, escape this philosophical pitfall by remembering that Enlightenment is not a mental clarity to be attained but a sociological awareness to be remembered; not an intellectual acuity to be honed but an emotional gentleness to be re-membered. Those in this **Zone 2** state of “active unenlightenment” believe that they must “set aside all childish things,” while those living the **Zone 3** lifestyle have chosen to humbly “become again as a child” – seeing life not as a process of endless learning but rather as an endless opportunity to courageously Care.



\*While **Zone 1** proponents are certain that their Souls are “saved” by praying devoutly &/or worshiping properly, **Zone 2** disciples believe (often, quite ironically, just as faithfully as their more religious counterparts) that their Souls (and the Souls of all those of like-mind) are somehow “older”<sup>10</sup> – somehow wiser and more worthy of others' homage or attention; telling others how to ethically behave in the face of crisis even while themselves often sitting back passively in the face of danger or injustice (preferring instead to merely “be in the now” – much like “an old dog resting” – as opposed to courageously defending the innocent or nobly liberating the oppressed). **Zone 3** protagonists, on the other hand, see their own Souls equally reflected in all other sentient beings – friend & foe alike – and staunchly refuse to attempt to coerce the “salvation” any Soul – their own or anyone else's. Through regular acts of selfless service and humble self-sacrifice, they have come to rediscover the Truth that all sentient Souls are equally ageless facets of what many call “the Divine” – that as such it is not our job to “save” that wondrously loving essence, but rather is our distinct privilege to repeatedly & courageously enliven the same.



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10 It is relatively easy to identify the Zone 2 false prophets posing as “Old Souls” – for they are the ones claiming to have access to “special knowledge” and often knowledge of a unique path thereto. They are the ones encouraging their students to “take care of themselves first” &/or “regularly spend time re-charging their batteries” &/or construct “healthy boundaries” between themselves and others in need &/or “manifest their own abundance” of material wealth & psychological comfort &/or immerse themselves in romance to “find their true love.” Souls that are earnest in their apparent ancientness are those who rebuff all offers of special status, reject all individual homage or honor, refuse to receive payment for their services or teachings, and repudiate all requests for specific advice related to attaining Enlightenment.

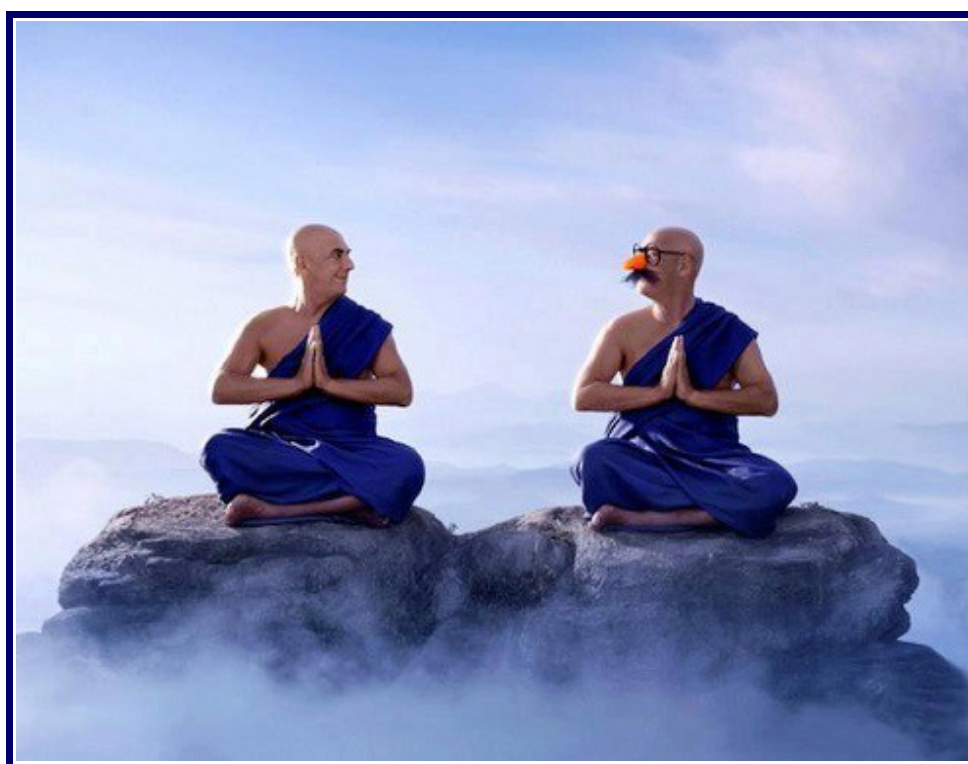
\*Though **Zone 1** affiliates are fundamentally concerned with ensuring their own material wealth & escalating their own personal power (a mindset which has them often using unfair physical force &/or deceitful verbal interactions to serve their own best interest – a mindset which generates a large discrepancy between those members' selfless values of conscience and their egos' obviously more selfish decisions – a mindset which has them rationalizing their own unjust windfalls while reveling in the downfalls of their enemies), **Zone 2** acolytes are primarily focused on accumulating their own knowledge &/or encouraging others to follow their lead (a mindset which has them often employing tactics of verbal persuasion &/or passive-aggressive manipulations to effectuate the same – a mindset which also creates an ever-expanding gap between the selfless ideals affirmed by their conscience and the practices enacted by their egos – a mindset which also has them increasingly believing in the worth of their own intellect & thus the correctness of their own successes). **Zone 3** adherents, in bold contrast, are continually concerned first & foremost with immersing themselves in their interactions with others &/or selflessly serving their communities – employing all their resources (be they material, verbal, intellectual, &/or emotional) to do whatever they can for whomever is nearest in need. As such they are fundamentally unconcerned with being “wise” or knowing “the truth,” seeking only to seamlessly harmonize the deepest inclinations of their conscience with the commensurate selflessness of their deeds – a mindset that has them consequently embodying a purity of humbleness that exponentially intensifies the influence &/or effectiveness of all their other-focused, **Zone 3** decisions.



\***Zone 1** patrons tend to forcefully ladle their own values & beliefs upon the lives of others (regardless of the often very different values & beliefs held by the same) – inevitably leading to painful inflictions of social injustice (including the enslavement & murder of their non-human cousins, &/or the diminishment of civil liberties for their human ones). Somewhat differently, **Zone 2** accomplices often pray for &/or attempt to verbally manifest a similar enforcement (including persuading others to adopt their “more humane” methods or their “more enlightened” beliefs for the “highest good”) – invariably creating cells of “social justice warriors” who counterproductively focus their energies on harshly criticizing ideological opponents &/or politically advocating the policies supported by the same. **Zone 3** attendants, in a completely different vein, have left the worlds of persuasive discourse and political activism behind – choosing to boldly enliven their values instead of merely announcing them, and inspiring others to alter their more self-serving (and thus inherently less effective) beliefs by actively embodying a more caring way (one that is far more humble, far more courageous, far more ethically consistent, and thus inevitably far more potent). These **Zone 3** representatives let their deeds do the majority of their talking; thus becoming potent champions of social justice – by becoming active agents thereof.



\*Those partaking of the **Zone 1** lifestyle tend to be certain that they & they alone know “the truth.” They tend to take themselves extremely seriously, and openly denounce the incorrect &/or “ignorant” views held by those of unlike mind. **Zone 2** crusaders (while not as blatantly dogmatic in their professings of self-worth or intellectual correctness as their **Zone 1** counterparts) disguise a similar manifestation of ideological arrogance under the thin veils of having been “humble” enough to have learned “greater truths” &/or having been blessed with the task of sharing a “deeper wisdom” with others.<sup>11</sup> They take their teachings & the spreading thereof very seriously – often under the guise of being “giving” or “helpful” to those “less enlightened.” **Zone 3** enthusiasts, in sparkling contrast, know that every sentient being is innately imbued with an objective understanding of the fact that they are all equally wondrous facets of the Whole – along with the truth that the only way to appreciate the same is by acting with according expressions of kindness & generosity – expressions they never preach and yet expressions they frequently (& quite boldly/radically) embody. As such, these champions of selfless Love are always exceedingly humble, and never lay claim to possessing exclusive knowledge of any kind. All wisdom they have accumulated is gently & fully shared, not to teach or persuade or convince, but solely to remind &/or re-awaken &/or offer. Others are not arrogantly “helped” – they are selflessly served. Others are not intellectually “enlightened” – they are unconditionally loved. Others are not spiritually “saved” – they are softly shown. In essence, while **Zone 3** enlivens devoutly refuse to take either themselves or their beliefs seriously, they do in-deed lovingly immerse themselves into every interaction both joyously & earnestly.



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<sup>11</sup> With a few popular examples thereof being: those born as “indigo children,” various Buddhist bodhisattvas, members of Neale Donald Walsch’s “universal intelligentsia,” & any other self-professed “life coaches,” “light workers,” “spiritual counselors,” “divine channelers,” &/or “energy healers.”



## Chapter 13b: “active unenlightenment” Trap #02

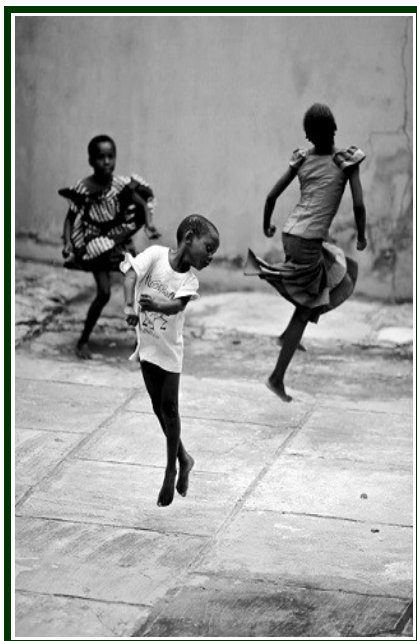
... the exuding of callousness; an emanation of indifference

The second of the more prominent expressions of “active unenlightenment” can be termed “uncaring cold-heartedness” – a delusion entertained by many *Zone 2* adherents caused by believing that they are either essentially unable to ameliorate the sufferings of others &/or that they should not attempt to do so at all. With this over-arching falsehood in mind, consider the following illuminations of the various manifestations thereof ...

\*Whereas *Zone 1* advocates can often be so crass as to blatantly ridicule the suffering of others, *Zone 2* acolytes just as easily slip into the “active unenlightenment” of callously observing the same in order to “accept the will of God” that placed them in their particular predicaments or “honor the sacred contract” that they themselves agreed to before their Souls entered & engaged the same. *Zone 3* adherents, of course, dismiss all such nonsense – choosing instead to not only earnestly witness the pains of others, but to humbly attempt to relieve whatever portions thereof they can – regardless of whether or not those sufferings were in fact in any way chosen by those others, and irrespective of whether or not their own responding acts of kindness can hope to be in any way effective.



\*While *Zone 1* proponents tend to rail against &/or wallow in the “unfairness” of their lives' more painful predicaments, *Zone 2* followers often become stuck in a state of “active unenlightenment” caused by becoming passive in the face of such tribulations – refusing to act in response to the same by choosing to believe that their sufferings are somehow deserved (sometimes called “karma”) &/or must somehow be fully experienced in order to be freed from the same (because life



demands “balance” between the good & the bad; a quantitative equilibrium between times pleasurable and those painful). *Zone 3* contributors, unsurprisingly, wholeheartedly dismiss both the aforementioned falsehoods – knowing as they do that our more painful moments (while admittedly often being the direct consequences of our previous selfish choices) are not punishments to be passively endured but rather opportunities (to “be Kind anyway”) to be actively engaged, and that there is no conscripted “balance” demanded between times considered “good” and those labeled “bad” – that every “good” experience is a chance to humbly share the same with another in need of the same, and that every one of its “bad” counterparts is but the opportunity to ratchet up the potency of all subsequently chosen deeds of selfless generosity.

\*Though **Zone 1** affiliates exude a tendency to attack their enemies with physical aggression &/or verbal violence, **Zone 2** disciples often prefer to “establish healthy boundaries” against the same (by ignoring them when they are at hand, avoiding them when they are nearby, or insulting them when they are out of sight). **Zone 3** attendants, in typically dramatic contrast, do neither – knowing as they do



first & foremost that it is impossible to truly “love oneself” or “respect oneself” while refusing (regardless of the excuse or reason) to Love or Respect another in need, secondly that it is the people “least deserving” of our acts of Kindness who are most in need of that generosity, and thirdly that our Love is in-deed by far most transformative in those moments we are least inclined to share the same.

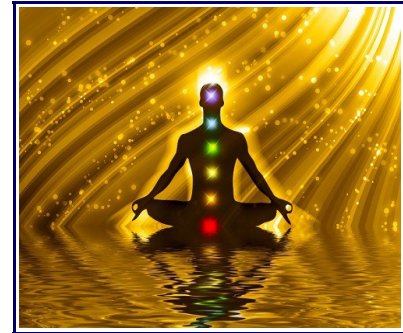
\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** patrons staunchly believe that many of the painful occurrences in their lives are unfair happenstances to be corrected or facets of evil to be denounced, **Zone 2** devotees prefer instead to blandly accept the same – claiming that “all are facets of the Divine,” that all circumstances are objectively good in one way or another (and we are the ones who lack the ability to recognize the same), &/or that peace only comes to those who accept all that is – never to those who strive against the same (a.k.a. “Be still and let the Universe do its work”). Just like their aforementioned cousins, **Zone 3** enthusiasts know that these delusions are not worth following or attending – that we are only “facets of the Divine” when consciously acting as One (with accordingly courageous Kindness), that all circumstances are potentially Good – and only become that Goodness when harnessed in ways that further Joy of others & /or the Harmony in our surroundings, that profound Peace can only be known while humbly representing the same (via forgivingly caring for our enemies &/or being openly loving towards all strangers), and that detachment can only be truly Enlightened while simultaneously exuding a deep & heartfelt compassion towards those being set free.



## Chapter 13c: “active unenlightenment” Trap #03 ... immersed in passive nihilism &/or inactive isolation

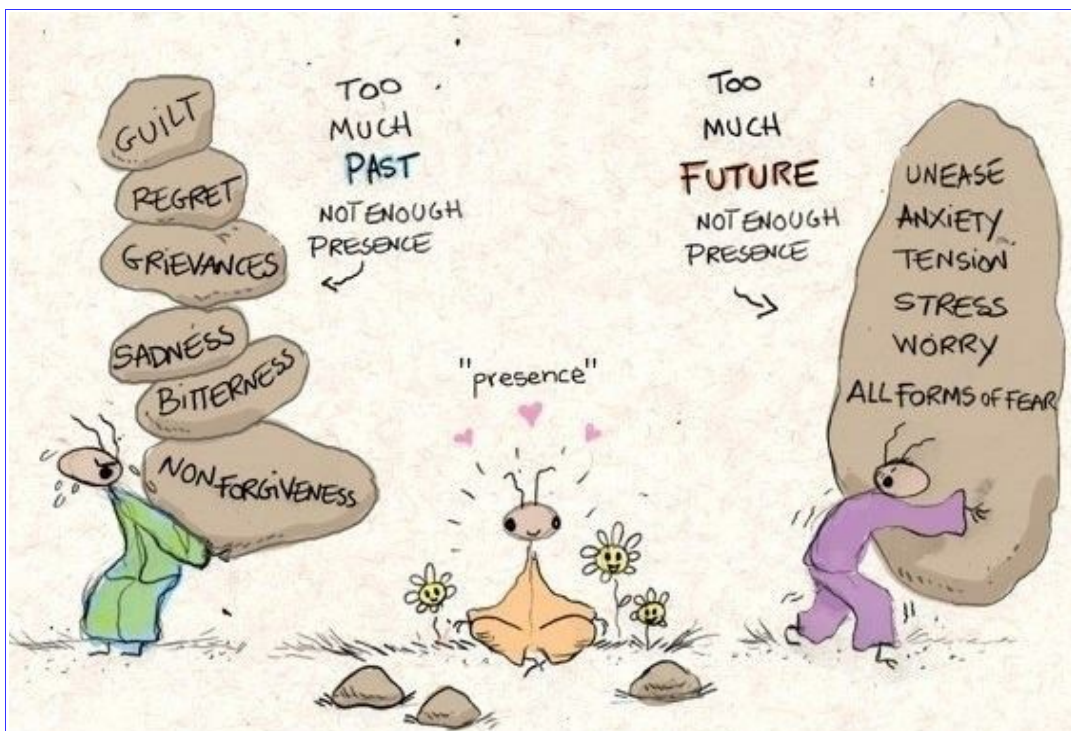
A third prevalent manifestation of “active unenlightenment” is the tendency of *Zone 2* inhabitants to succumb to any number of the jaded facets of nihilism; essentially the false belief that life is fundamentally devoid of meaning &/or that we as individual humans are unable to live meaningfully. Seeing as how this particular delusion is as surprisingly common as it is disturbingly insipid, feel free to earnestly consider (and then courageously pro-act) the following illuminations thereof ...

\*Those partaking of the *Zone 1* lifestyle tend to dismiss the moral consideration of others' rights or needs entirely, and more than a few *Zone 2* followers attempt to escape such abject callousness by adopting a nihilist belief system – essentially professing that they would love to be good & caring & considerate towards others, and yet to do so would be a complete waste of time. Refusing to believe in any sense of basic self-worth (and thus deeply attached to the concept that they are abjectly unable to effect any real & viable goodness in their lives), they adopt a set of mantras (“My separate self is but an illusion” or “I cannot counter or alter the flow of the whole” or “Our job is to die to self by being calm while merely witnessing life around us” etc) that attempt to excuse what amounts to be essentially the same level of self-absorption. *Zone 3* participants are those who transcend this delusion by openly engaging those around them – those who actively attempt to bring solace to those in pain, peace to those in anger, &7or joy to those in despair.



\*Whereas *Zone 1* advocates soak their minds in thoughts that are critical, cajoling, &7or condemnatory, *Zone 2* acolytes often steep their thoughts in the intentional inactivity of meditation &/or the passive non-being of no-mind – believing that “whatever draws the mind outward is errant,” that “whatever brings the mind inward is healthy,” and that the surest way of lessening the former and enhancing the latter is to immerse in frequent stints of solitude, remaining purposefully isolated from others in order to “bring both the body and its mind to a peaceful state of observant stillness.” *Zone 3* adherents escape this insidious ego-trap by doing exactly the opposite – by interacting with others caringly and intimately (especially in those moments when they least wish to do so; and especially for those “least deserving” of that kindness), by giving to those who are trying to take from them, by sharing time & energy with those who are trying to “leech” the same, by breathing in nearby pain to transmute it into Joy and breathing in surrounding discord to transform it into Harmony. It has been said that “the person who has one foot in the material world and another in the spiritual one makes no progress in either,” and yet the *Zone 3* practitioner knows that this is true only because the truly enlightened person always places both feet simultaneously in both worlds.



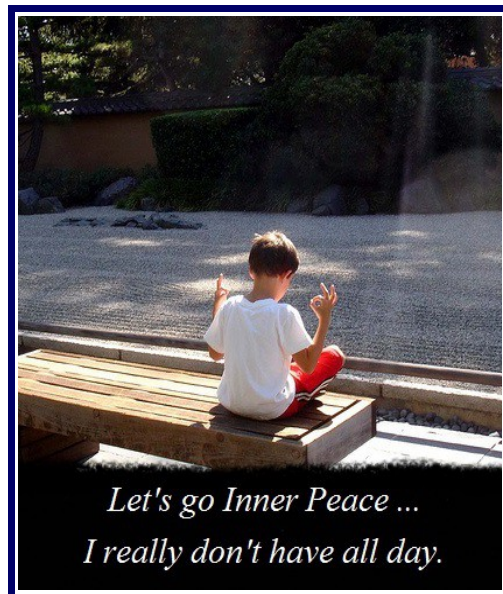


You "being fully in the moment" means nothing unless that moment somehow means something to someone else ... Meditation, affirmation, and mental clarity are only worthy tools if used for worthy causes ... In essence, your life is either filled with Love or it is empty; and your Love is either a verb or it is less than nothing.

*"This is what you shall do; Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, have patience and indulgence towards all people, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book -- and boldly dismiss whatever insults your own Soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and it will have the richest fluency; not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face, in every motion and joint of your body." ~ via Walt Whitman*

While there is some merit to the now-worshipping professings of Eckhart Tolle (the *Zone 2* guru who claims that the mere insertion of one's awareness into the present moment is alone enough to eradicate all forms of suffering) as well as more than a bit of credence due to the teachings of Adyashanti (who among other things warns of an almost inevitable period of stagnation between the instinctively selfish inclinations of one's immature past and the selfless manifestations of one's potentially spiritual future), it is crucial for all *Zone 3* aspirants to boldly leap past the limitations of both – for them to realize that the meditative inactivity proscribed by Tolle actually prevents one from intimately interacting with others (and thus prevents one from attaining any real experience of deeper Enlightenment), and that Adyashanti's focus on neutering the ego by ascending a mythical “ladder of awakening” actually keeps his followers bound to their climbing – keeps them from realizing that they fully scale that ladder during every act of selfless giving.

\*While **Zone 1** affiliates errantly feel that they have already learned more than enough &/or that ensuring their own pleasure or success is their life's greatest meaning, **Zone 2** disciples often find themselves mired in the stagnating desires of wanting to learn more truth (in order to “become enlightened” therewith) &/or needing to develop more understanding (in order to “get grounded as a person” or “discover their true Purpose” thereby). **Zone 3** enthusiasts avoid this pitfall by humbly engaging the ever-present opportunities to serve others – thereby dismissing the myth that they already know enough while simultaneously refusing to castrate their potential by striving to know more. These truly Awakened ones have come to comprehend that their egos will constantly tempt them into analyzing, assessing, and then learning more about the challenges inherent in any encounter. They have come to understand that our egos do this not to prepare us to make “better” or “more informed” choices in the future, but rather to keep us from acting at all. Indeed, the longer one succumbs to the delusion of needing to know more about an interaction, the less likely he or she will be of ever choosing to make the necessary “leap of faith” directly into the heart of the same. This is why champions of the **Zone 3** Way spend very little time learning about their encounters before charging boldly into attempting to bring harmony to the same. They ask themselves “When?” and always answer “**Now**” – they ask themselves “Where?” and always answer “**Here**” – and they ask themselves “What?” and always answer “**With anything kind.**”



\*Though **Zone 1** patrons regularly strive to dramatically alter the circumstances of their lives (i.e. aggressively striving to alter or correct life's flow, and thereby inevitably intensifying the same), **Zone 2** accomplices tend to passively submit to the same (i.e. choosing to sit back and “go with the flow” regarding life's sufferings &/or injustices – and thereby inevitably allowing the same to become more firmly entrenched therein). **Zone 3** contributors transform this unprincipled prison into a platform for progress – by willingly entering the flow of current circumstances and swimming along with them – doing so in order to bring more Peace & Joy to others flowing therein; thereby harnessing life's flow to empower Love & Goodwill (instead of fighting life's flow and thereby enhancing its pain & suffering).

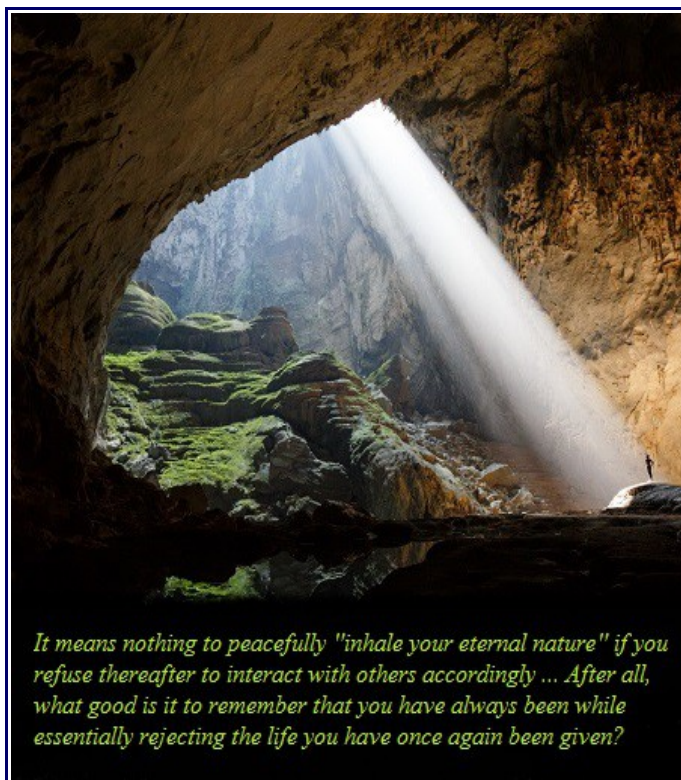
\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** confederates believe in a static right and wrong (and that their own beliefs & principles are always in that right, while those that differ from the same are always in the wrong), **Zone 2** crusaders often veer towards the other extreme – staunchly believing in an abject subjectivity of all things ethical; the absolute non-existence of anything truly Right or Wrong; a belief that allows them to remain “moral” while doing nothing to stop acts of cruelty or hinder inflictions of injustice. **Zone 3** enliveners free themselves from these cowardly chains and



shame-laced shackles by admitting the easily verifiable Truth that selfless love always lessens discord, always diminishes suffering, always engenders peace, and therefore is always a choice that is Right. No convoluted philosophical argument can diminish or obscure this simple fact, and thus we can always know that Kindness is a correct course of action, as long as that course is in-deed an active one.

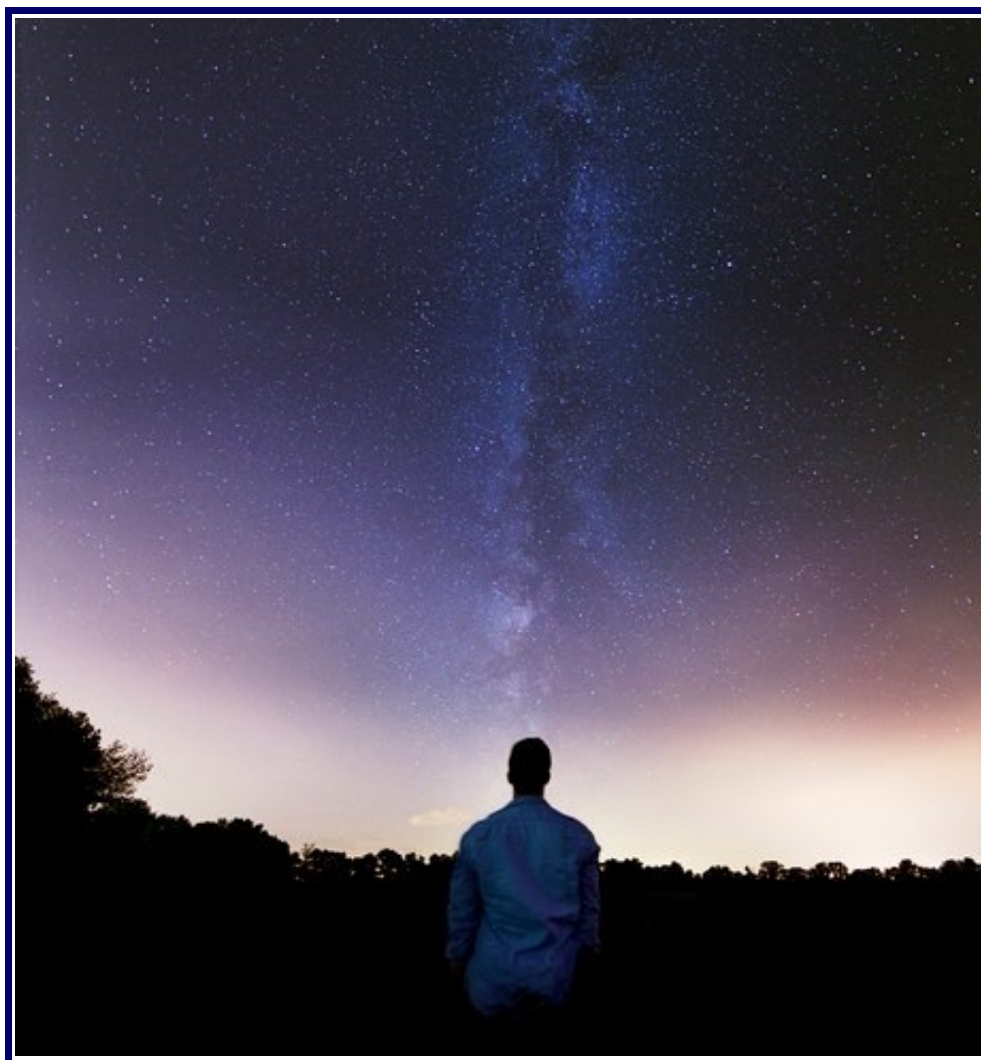
\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates believe that perfection is impossible to know and that we should therefore all simply “do the best we can” to attain “the best life we can hope to have,” **Zone 2** devotees often sink into the false belief that they are already perfect – that there is nothing more they need to do to be worthy of regular praise or frequent reward, that all of their errors & failures are part of that innate perfection, and that they are therefore in no way required to improve themselves

&/or be of extra assistance to others. **Zone 3** attendants, unsurprisingly, adhere to a lifestyle that is completely different – one that willingly admits to an underlying “perfection” in the way the Universe as a whole interacts with itself, and yet also one that embodies the equally valid Truth that said underlying perfection (i.e. an innate balance between each action and its commensurate consequences, as well as the overarching harmony that the Universe as a whole always seeks out and repeatedly – even if tenuously – attains) does no good unless we as the individual components thereof choose to act with according peacefulness.



*It means nothing to peacefully "inhale your eternal nature" if you refuse thereafter to interact with others accordingly ... After all, what good is it to remember that you have always been while essentially rejecting the life you have once again been given?*

\*While **Zone 1** affiliates consistently strive to “make a difference” &/or “be successful” &/or “effectuate change” (far more often than not for the mundane or material benefit of them & theirs), **Zone 2** members tend to “resign themselves to their fate” (i.e. “life is what it is” or “This is simply who I am” or “I am only human after all” or “one person can't do any real good” etc) – choosing thereby to believe that they “can't make any real difference” in the world (or that “this too shall pass” or that “God will take care of it all” or that “patience will win out” or that “the Universe will provide” etc), and therefore more often than not refusing to try at all to do so. **Zone 3** venturers, in easily anticipated contrast, dismantle this patently false construct by repeatedly refusing to merely spectate their way through life. They know that Grace is a constant given *and* that it can only be known during acts of selfless giving. They know that salvation cannot come from “above” until provided to those in need nearby. They know that Enlightenment does not come from within unless actualized for the benefit of others without. And by far most importantly of all, **Zone 3** enliveners know that their acts of unconditional Love always reunify their True Selves with the greater ONE, and thus that those deeds always make a potent difference in the world – and this, no matter how small those deeds might seem therein; nor how unappreciative their recipients might prove to be thereafter.



*“Thoughts of your past engender your false sense of identity, while thoughts of your future create illusory hopes for advancement or salvation. Of course, both are merely delusions that must be dismantled, delusions that can only know said dismantlement during deeds that blatantly transcend them both; choices that are soaked in the present moment, and choices that are willingly made for the other instead of the self ... After all, even if life does prove to be but a dream, we cannot in any way hope to appreciate the same without boldly interacting with those seemingly dreaming alongside us.” ~ inspired by Tolle & Adyashanti*



## Chapter 13d: “active unenlightenment” Trap #04 ... justifying accumulation &/or self-centeredness

Another common indication that members of the *Zone 2* community haven't fallen into a state of “active unenlightenment” is an open & unabashed defense of their own self-centered choices or the selfish decisions of others; rationalizations &/or justifications that tend to manifest themselves under any number of guises – among them the following ...

\*While those ascribing to *Zone 1* principles (or more fairly, a blatant lack of the same) are openly “me first” people who justify most if not all of their expressions of greed or deceit, *Zone 2* followers defend their own “occasional” acts of self-interest by claiming that “balance” is a requirement in every full life – that selfish reaping and selfless sowing must be experienced in similar portions, that times of rest & fun must be enjoyed in quantities similar to one's immersions in work or service, and indeed that our regular “sins” & “failures” are not only inevitable (“I'm only human”) but are actually necessary for our eventual enlightenment (“Enlightenment comes from learning; and learning comes from making mistakes”). *Zone 3* participants, on the other hand, regularly discard such misconceptions; knowing as they do that true Enlightenment requires that all our traditional understandings of “wealth” & “happiness” & “success” & even “balance” be radically redefined – that real Balance is only truly known when we immerse ourselves fully in the lives of others; when our own Wealth becomes inextricably linked to their abundance, when our own Happiness is fully intertwined with their joy, and our own Success is deeply linked to their victories. In-deed, for those who are truly Enlightened, real Balance is not a status of self to be singularly attained, but rather a selfless choice to be repeatedly enlivened.



\*Whereas *Zone 1* advocates tend to be fervent supporters of feeling sorrow in the face of loss & in grieving heartfelt losses (both of which count as being patently & undeniably self-serving), *Zone 2* acolytes hypocritically affirm the same as a means of eventually diminishing the same (sometimes even claiming that such sorrow is a beneficial means of “getting back in touch with God”). *Zone 3* adherents, in stark contrast,



comprehend the far deeper Truths tied to sorrow & grieving – namely, that immersing oneself in the former neuters one's ability to act selflessly (and thus potently), and that honoring the latter inevitably intensifies (and ensures the continuance of) the former. In essence, while real Enlightenment does not require that one always choose to be happy, true Enlightenment *does* require that one always choose to act in the face of (and thereby refuse to wallow in) one's sorrows.

\*While **Zone 1** affiliates are certain that all of life's "blessings" (e.g. their bodily health, material possessions, monetarily wealth, physical pleasures, &/or emotional euphorias) are inherently deserved – to be repeatedly sought out in ever greater abundance and tightly grasped whenever received (a state of yearning that inevitably breeds ever-escalating experiences of dissatisfaction & disappointment), **Zone 2** disciples tend to view those same happenstances as being beneficial to themselves (and therefore evidencing that they are "on the right path") – ultimately leading to similar experiences of sadness &/or frustration; either fleetingly enjoying them whenever they do arrive or striving to manifest more of them whenever they do not. **Zone 3** enthusiasts have chosen to escape this emotional prison by seeing life's "good times" as blessings to be shared with others and – far more importantly – by seeing life's "bad times" for what they truly are: as crucial empowerers of any subsequent acts of selfless being, and thus as latent intensifiers of the potential harmony in one's surroundings (and thereby the potential Peace within oneself). In essence, the ego would have us slip into the "active unenlightenment" of believing that our wealth & health are our greatest assets (a state of mind that has us being not much more than mere chasers of bubbles), and yet our deeper **Zone 3** Self ever remembers that our own wealth is only a blessing when used to lessen the poverty of others, and that our own health is only truly good while being used to make those same others feel whole.

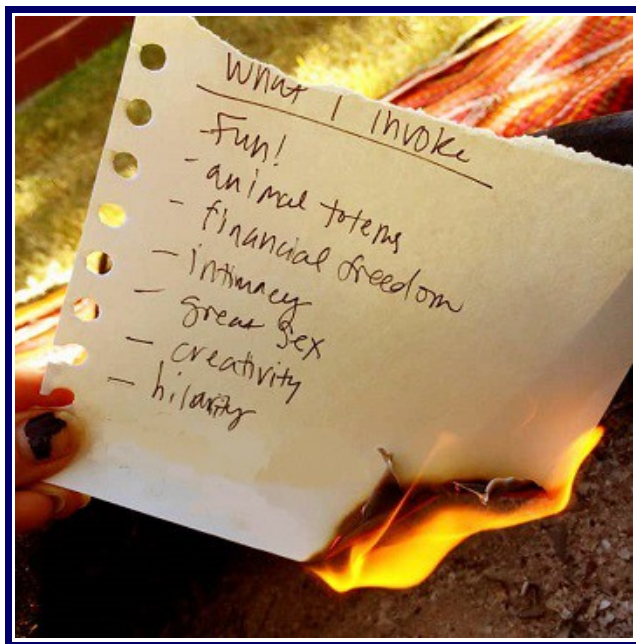


*“No matter how successful we become at getting what we want, our lives will thereby know neither profound contentment nor sense of lasting merit. Indeed, to seek lasting happiness from shifts in our outer circumstances can only bring us disappointment – just as seeking to shift the circumstances of others in order to bring them more happiness will ever bring us the same.” ~ inspired by Pema Chodron*

\*Though **Zone 1** patrons often proclaim that moral constraints are either potentially malleable for their benefit or already fulfilled by their beliefs &/or behaviors, **Zone 2** minions just as often immerse themselves in the “active unenlightenment” of believing that a meaningful life can only be known by removing all moral shackles – by “courageously” liberating oneself from all cultural or societal limitations, and finally “actualizing the True Self” thereby. These people are the ones who loudly state that we must never let any other person or social entity hinder our “personal progress” or limit our potential for “individual well-being.” **Zone 3** contributors, of course, subscribe to none of this nonsense, preferring instead to enliven a much deeper Wisdom – namely, that one's own “true Path” can only be solidly walked while choosing to tread upon another's way to bear their burdens; that one's own deepest sense of Freedom can only come while willingly sacrificing the same to liberate another from enslavement or oppression; and that one's own purest Joy can only come while bringing harmony to those in conflict or happiness to those in despair.



\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** confederates are certain that financial wealth and personal comfort are necessary to attain any measure of happiness, **Zone 2** crusaders believe that at least a modicum of both are not only regularly required but fully justified. **Zone 3** enliveners, in Enlightened contrast, know that neither beneficial external circumstances nor peaceful internal thoughts are required to know the most profound sense of Bliss – indeed that both are actually hindrances to the deeper experiences thereof. For these are those who know that real Joy comes not from personal knowings of abundance or sensations of pleasure, but



rather from giving in times of lack &/or being kind in moments of distrust or distress. These **Zone 3** standard-bearers are those who maintain the deepest sense of Peace during their times of darkest dis-ease, those who manifest the most profound experience of Joy by willingly sacrificing their own desires for the peace &/or betterment of others. They know that the ultimate goal is Peace – which come only during acts of caring, not mere “inner calm” or outer “wealth” – which cannot arrive lastingly at all.

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates lock themselves in cycles of sorrow by “seizing the day” via seizing their “rightful portion” of material wealth (from sources thereof that are finite; and thus innately at the expense of others), **Zone 2** devotees justify their own unenlightened form of *Carpe Diem* by claiming that there is more than enough of said wealth for everyone – that everyone is him or her self responsible for laying claim to his or her portion of the same (via the “co-creation of our reality” &/or the mental “manifestation of our wealth” &/or the enlivenment of our ever-available “Law of Attraction”); that doing otherwise is to reject the “gifts that have already been given” us; that our time on Earth is limited and that we can only “honor our lives” by harvesting the most possible benefits therefrom in the few moments with which we have been blessed to do so. **Zone 3** attendants, on the other hand, choose to adopt a very different Enlightenment – one that is more active for others than it is wishful for self; one that comprehends that there is no true Wealth without concurrent acts of giving, nor true Health without enabling another's sense of wholeness. These are the people who have finally come to comprehend that we cannot hope to experience the Bliss of Oneness by striving to obtain “more” (or even “enough”) for ourselves. Rather, quite reasonably, true Oneness can only be experienced in those moments we choose to act as selfless agents of the One – therein & thereby knowing profound & heartfelt Peace: the only form of Abundance worth possessing at all.



### **A WARNING to all Light-Workers:**

Using the "Law of Abundance" to "co-create prosperity" for yourself is actually nothing more than you powerfully sowing seeds of desire into your surroundings -- seeds of desire which are also innately seeds of lack. As such, whenever you do so, whenever you attempt to "manifest wealth" for yourself, it is the cold hollowness of lack -- and the cold hollowness of lack alone -- that you will ultimately manifest.

\*While **Zone 1** affiliates feel sure that they are only morally obligated to care for themselves and their loved ones, **Zone 2** members frequently submit to the “active unenlightenment” of caring for themselves in the short term to then better care for others at some point thereafter. Despite being persuasively masked under the seemingly altruistic veils of “self love,” “self respect,” &/or “responsible choice-making,” **Zone 3** venturers understand that these terms (and all those like them) are not solid justifications for acting selfishly, but rather hollow, weak-willed excuses for not acting caringly. Indeed, it is a simple-yet-profound Truth that doing for ourselves always precludes any real Doing for others; that preparing to be better able to give at some point in the future always prevents us from Giving in the only time we have to truly do so – our Here&Now. The **Zone 3** Soul knows that the ego never runs out of “critical needs” that must be first met before service to others can be rendered – and that even in the rare moments of comfort or abundance when those needs have been satisfied, the ease with which any concurrent acts of “generosity” are offered is so weak as to be essentially meaningless (and thus effectively impotent). And yet an alternative to this state of ignorance is ever available – an alternative as bold as it is simple, and that alternative is this one: go forth into any moment's surroundings and seek to do that which one fears the most; to open oneself completely to the very person one least loves or admires, and to do so in the way that requires the greatest self-sacrifice and that offers the least personal reward. And when that expression of Self is attained – when we choose the humility to see the lives of others as opportunities to serve & not be served; to Care for them instead of be cared for by them; to Love as opposed to be loved – then & only then is the raw Bliss of Oneness not only understood, but lived; not only comprehend, but experienced; not only realized, but actualized. And *this* state of being is where true Enlightenment resides; the state of being where life is about giving instead of getting and bringing solace instead of attaining success; the state of being that Jesus called “the Kingdom of Heaven” and Buddha named “Nirvana.”



*“Those who seek to find happiness for themselves will never know real Joy ... Those who seek to receive salvation for themselves will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven ... Those who seek enlightenment for themselves will never feel the soft embrace of real Truth.”*

*~ inspired by Buddha, Jesus Christ, & Adyashanti*

\*Though **Zone 1** patrons demand an open disdain for (and often an aggression interaction with) their enemies, **Zone 2** accomplices maintain an outlook towards their foes that is in actuality only slightly more mild – championing the erection & regular maintenance of “healthy boundaries” against the same; lambasting, ignoring, or otherwise “weeding out” all of their life's “leeches” &/or “negative personalities” (so that they won't become damaged or drained by the same). Of course, **Zone 3** assistants are aware of (and act upon) several highly ironic Truths related thereto – **01**) that it is precisely these “negative” people who are in most dire need of the Kindness we could be giving them, **02**) that by shunning them in any way (“healthy” or otherwise) we are only passing their dysfunctional aggression onto others (while ultimately summoning more of the same to ourselves), and **03**) that it is the difficulties that these individuals pose to the giving of our Love that makes that Love so powerfully transformative (to them, of course, and yet also to those witnessing its giving and to ourselves while doing that giving) if given anyway.



*“To believe that you can manipulate your Reality in order to dampen your own suffering is to push yourself ever-closer to the cliff of absolute apathy – a numbing of compassion for others’ pains, a numbing of the relation to your own True Self, a neutering of your ability to deeply Love others, and thus a castration of the latently majestic Meaning available in every moment of sadness (when you choose to be Grateful anyway), every moment of anger (when you choose to Be Kind anyway), and every moment of fear (when you choose to Give anyway).” ~ anonymous*

## Chapter 13e: “active unenlightenment” Trap #05 ... distractions of “getting ready” & “tidying up”

The fifth ego-trap commonly espoused by the “actively unenlightened” is the delusion offered by many *Zone 2* believers that they cannot engage others with acts of selfless compassion &/or unconditional kindness until they first “tidy up” their own lives in any number of the following ways ...

\*Unlike their *Zone 1* counterparts (who openly & unabashedly champion the self-focused values of arrogant righteousness &/or blatant greed), *Zone 2* followers tend to evince excuses weak &/or hollow for their lack of selfless caring (i.e. that they are unable to self-sacrifice for others because they are “too young” or “too old” or “too late” or “too scared” or “too weak” or “too tired” or “too ill” or “too injured” to do so). *Zone 3* participants, in bold contrast, need proffer no such vapid justifications, seeing as how their lives – though ladled with similar limitations of knowledge &/or ability &/or experience – are repeatedly soaked in deeds as selflessly generous as they are decisively bold.



\*Whereas *Zone 1* advocates see pre-established duties, obligations, &/or commitments as some of the most important (if not *the* most important) motivators behind their “right actions,” *Zone 2* acolytes tend to offer the same established arrangements as excuses for their readily apparent lack of the same (i.e. openly professing a seemingly sincere desire to act more selflessly towards others, and yet with subsequent breaths explaining that previously promulgated promises must be engaged &/or even fulfilled before they can do so). *Zone 3* adherents, on the other hand, recognize and then joyfully fulfill all pre-made promises one more time each – and then firmly-yet-respectfully excuse themselves from being in any way bound by the same thereafter. After all, powerful Love can only be given when it is given completely volitionally, and commitments of any kind by their very nature always serve to constrain &/or limit the same. As such, the *Zone 3* champion removes him or herself from all previous duties &/or obligations, and then goes about regularly & willingly fulfilling them anyway – both for those for whom they were originally made, as well as for any other sentient cousin(s) encountered thereafter.



\*While **Zone 1** affiliates often use the maintenance of their lives' more “special relationships” &/or the fulfillment of their “deepest desires” as the fundamental inspirations for most of their “good deeds” done, **Zone 2** disciples often cite the same as the primary reasons behind their refusal to enliven the same (e.g. “I want to commence caring for my community, and yet I've met someone special” or “I want to find &/or engage my vocational calling, and yet feel the need to travel &/or fulfill my major desires beforehand”). **Zone 3** enthusiasts, unsurprisingly, avoid this trap entirely by reprioritizing their desires completely – consciously & willingly placing the apparent needs of others (especially the strangers they randomly encounter &/or the enemies with whom they regularly interact) ahead of the wants & desires of themselves.



\*Though **Zone 1** patrons think that their self-centered “business” &/or overt “productivity” is in & of itself a virtue, the minions of the **Zone 2** mindset use the same as an excuse for not being more kind &/or caring towards their cohorts & compatriots (often claiming to be “too busy” to extend more helping hands &/or to be involved in activities that are “too important” for gestures of mere goodwill). Contrastingly, sincere **Zone 3** contributors know that productivity only becomes truly virtuous when the same is manifested in the service of others – either diligently enhancing their joy &/or efficiently lessening their suffering; doing so with no thought to past performances or future objectives, but rather solely focused on enhancing the harmony of any & all current encounters both intensely & immediately.





\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** confederates frequently use their political &/or religious affiliations as rationalizations for individual ideals that are often a bit bigoted &/or personal choices that prove to be less-than-loving, **Zone 2** crusaders tend to claim that those same organizational immersions are services in & of themselves – that being “politically invested” is somehow evidence of one's “good citizenship,” &/or that being religiously devout is somehow proof that one is living a “moral life” as a “good person.” Of course, those choosing to divergently enliven the **Zone 3** Way of Being know that any dedicated adherence to the conventions espoused or demanded by man-made institutions can only serve to demean, distract, manipulate, &/or mislead – that the only way to enliven the far greater principles of the selfless Soul is to courageously embody the same, and that the only way to fully embody the same is to first wholeheartedly abandon all pro-ego, “us-first” memberships that violate &/or even discount the same.



\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates frequently allow themselves to become mired in inaction while regretting their past &/or worrying over their future, **Zone 2** devotees tend to become similarly stuck, though for different reasons – primarily bogged down by either the chosen heaviness of their Here&Now (e.g. “If we but sink fully into the present moment, our future will take care of itself” or “We can best serve others by



calmly being in the Here&Now”) or the non-productive pestilence that always to those choosing to be more “prudent” than bold or more “patient” than active. **Zone 3** attendants, with dramatic difference, know that both the aforementioned paradigms are flawed – that the only relevant moment is indeed the present one, *and* that the only way to make that moment viable is to both selflessly & actively engage the same.

*“For real Enlightenment to take hold, real Freedom is required – not the false freedom that allows for the mere manifestation of one's own dreams and pleasures, but rather Freedom in its most shining potency; Freedom at its truest pinnacle – namely, the Freedom to boldly deny all pressures of peer or politician in favor of upholding and indeed championing the greatest depths of one's most moral understanding. Yes, it is undeniable that all around us more vile voices cry – the military commander with his 'Do not question; simply attack,' and the tax collector with her 'Do not question; simply pay,' and the pastor with her 'Do not question: simply follow,' and the politician with his 'Do not question; simply support.' Of course, all of these utterings are nothing less than brittle temptations whispered from the darkness; voices that without doubt lead inevitably to our suffering in the shadows. And yet there remains another way – a Way of light, a Way of reason, a Way of courage, a Way of Enlightenment. For though it has been correctly said that Enlightenment comes only to those who take full responsibility for their lives, that fullness of responsibility can only be truly known by those who do so in harmony with their own greater knowing – those who do so never for their own comfort or salvation, but rather solely for the well-being of the other.” ~ via Immanuel Kant & William Blake*

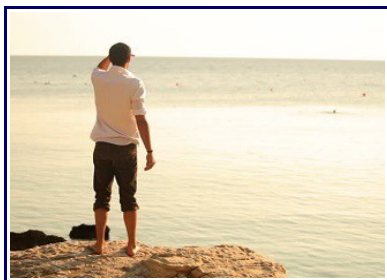
## Chapter 13f: “active unenlightenment” Trap #06 ... soaking in endless learning or “improvement”

The sixth of the more common eddies of “active unenlightenment” in which *Zone 2* swimmers find themselves is the delusion of somehow being “not yet ready” – the delusion of somehow needing to “learn more” or “know more” before they can step forth boldly as selflessly active members of their communities. In order to help you recognize and escape this trap (if you discover yourself stuck therein), feel free to humbly consider (and then possibly courageously alter) the following manifestations thereof ...

\*As briefly mentioned above, while *Zone 1* advocates often remain mired in refusing learn new &/or uncomfortable information (or even outright reject &/or openly ridicule the same), *Zone 2* acolytes tend to head towards the opposite extreme – learning for learning's sake, believing that merely being “well informed” is a noble end in & of itself, using their lack of requisite wisdom or needed knowledge to excuse their lack of caring actions for others &/or selfless service for their communities. *Zone 3* adherents, in stark contrast, avoid this trap entirely by remembering that any & every moment is the “right time” to act – that being kind or generous towards others requires no particular skill set &/or body of knowing – that nothing needs be “corrected” or “better understood” before one's Love becomes potent & transformative; indeed, that the less certain one is of his or her understanding or proficiency related to a particular encounter, the more powerful his or her Love becomes when it is given thereto regardless. These are the ones who know that the gathering of knowledge is not beneficial per se, but rather only becomes truly Good when its information is set into motion for others immediately after (or even during) its harvest.



\*Whereas *Zone 1* addicts more often than not search for activities that will bring them & theirs the most immediate pleasure or benefit, *Zone 2* disciples often get mired in striving to discover their “deeper purpose” or find their “spiritual calling” or remember their “true vocation” or even determine the “best course of action” before acting at all. *Zone 3* enthusiasts, on the other hand, have ceased to wonder about or engage in such patently unknowable adventures – understanding as they do that “what” we do is ultimately unimportant; that it is solely the “why”

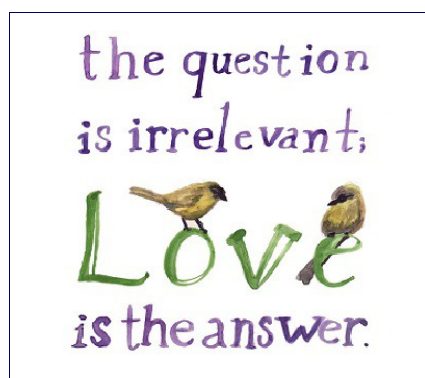


behind our deeds that determines whether or not potent Love is extended to others and thereby the portal to Enlightenment is fully opened. As such, these are the ones who set aside passive seeking in favor of courageous doing – the ones who have remembered what every toddler innately understands: that no particular path must be discovered in order to set forth and deeply Care for those in need nearby.

\*Though **Zone 1** patrons are sure that “seeking enlightenment” is a mythological waste of time, **Zone 2** devotees (while finding the search thereof to be important and ever worthwhile) tend to believe that the “truth” of enlightenment is too complicated for most to fully understand and the Journey thereto to be too challenging for most to complete – at least without the assistance of an experienced guide or knowing guru.<sup>12</sup> **Zone 3** enliveners, in drastic difference, have come to comprehend that true Enlightenment is one of life's simpler concepts, one that cannot be fully realized until all teachers, guides, and gurus have been gently left behind. For all such “counselors” & “therapists” & “life coaches” inherently keep the focus of their subjects on themselves – a focus that by its very nature precludes the pure focus on the other that is required for full Oneness to be experienced and thereby real Enlightenment to be known. As long as one is searching for Enlightenment – or pondering an instructor's teachings related thereto – he or she cannot come close to finding the same. In-deed, it is only when one's seeking & learning are set aside (in favor of deeds of bold Doing) that Love can fully blossom – and thereby Enlightenment be truly realized. For it is only in setting aside one's listening to a teacher that the pupil can her or himself become a Master.

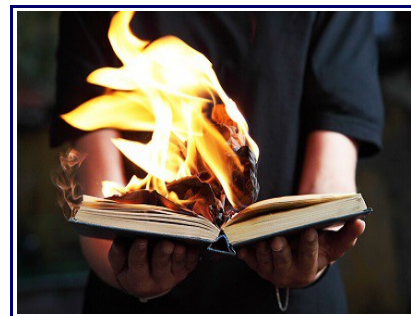


We cannot "learn to Love" by "figuring it out" or "looking within." For the only Love that is real is the Love that has been set into motion, which means that the only way to discover that which has kept our hearts closed for so long is to simply set aside the same -- by setting forth to Love.



12 NOTE that this excuse often leads those lost in **Zone 2** to attach themselves to “spiritual leaders” of one sort or another (gurus who tend to lead said followers quite poorly; ever encouraging them to “learn more” before acting lovingly on their own) &/or attempt to gain knowledge or wisdom from sources residing in planes of existence other than the one in which those **Zone 2** seekers actually live (e.g. divining information – often via channeling or deep meditation – from “ascended masters” &/or “guardian angels” &/or “light beings” &/or “spirit guides” etc).

\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** confederates feel that transcending the whims of the ego is a goal that is essentially irresponsible (&/or even dangerous), **Zone 2** crusaders believe that (while indeed being a desirable destination towards which to walk) supplanting the ego's inclinations is a tedious process of deeply delving into the emotional wounds &/or psychological scars from one's past – a process of slow-yet-steady transformation that tends to require diligent effort over a long period of time. Contrastingly, **Zone 3** explorers know that this latter mindset is actually a recipe for personal disaster; a practice of ego-immersion that actually entrenches the practitioner thereof into the same dysfunctional behavior-patterns being remembered, and that thereby actually crystallizes the same emotional traumas being re-confronted thereby. These more truly Enlightened people know that it is not via a mental remembering or an emotional revisiting of the past that the ego's habits can be transcended, but rather by letting the past go in the present; by actively supplanting those self-soaked memories with selfless behaviors that are truly potent – & thus truly transformative. It is indeed impossible to “express (and thereby somehow diminish or release) negative emotions with love” – seeing as how negative emotions can only be felt &/or expressed while focusing on oneself, and Love can only be expressed & thereby experienced while focusing solely on the other.



\*While **Zone 1** affiliates often either ignore or reject the advice & teachings of others, **Zone 2** members tend to almost endlessly deliberate, discuss, &/or debate the merits of the same. These “spiritual conversations” (as profound an oxymoron as one can encounter) – meant to inform or clarify or educate their participants – instead serve only to delay the same from enlivening (and solely thereby coming to fully understand) what was originally being communicated or taught. **Zone 3** protagonists, in direct divergence therefrom, intentionally leave all such verbal ramblings & intellectual interchanges behind – in favor of venturing forth boldly & caringly into the lives of those nearby. These ethical explorers are the ones who have rediscovered that – while it is true that we can all do whatever we wish with the time we have all been given – it is only possible to Meaning-fully live those moments (i.e. enliven real Enlightenment) while choosing to selflessly & actively Love others; something that is quite certainly *not* possible in the moments we choose to “observe” or “grow” or “learn” or “understand” life instead.



*“Always remember that you will tend towards reacting like a selfish fool – just like everyone else. As such, remember to treat them all with according understanding & compassion ... Just as importantly, always remember that you ever possess the ability to become a radiantly beautiful sage – also just like everyone else. As such, also remember to treat those same others with according generosity, kindness, and respect.” ~ via Shane Claiborne*

## Chapter 13g: “active unenlightenment” Trap #07 ... believing that “being good is good enough”

Penultimately, the 7th of the eight most common lures of “active unenlightenment” is the frequent delusion held by many **Zone 1** addicts & just as many **Zone 2** adherents that “being good is good enough” (after all, as these folks often profess, we are all “only human”) – a blatant falsehood that manifests itself in these same individuals verbally championing &/or actively subscribing to a plethora of highly limiting character traits; supposed “virtues” that are either “false” (i.e. **Zone 1** values; those that create pain & suffering for others – and ultimately also for oneself – every time they are enacted) or “lesser” (i.e. **Zone 2** principles; those that create pain & suffering for others whenever enacted for one's own benefit, and yet that can also engender harmony for all nearby whenever they are intentionally enlivened solely for the benefit of another). To help clarify this extremely important distinction, feel free to peruse the following examples thereof ...

\*As mentioned above, **Zone 1** advocates tend to champion values that are fully self-centered and that are almost exclusively enlivened for the benefit of themselves &/or their most cherished loved ones (choices that those residing in **Zone 1** call “self-loving” or “prudent,” that those living in **Zone 2** label “sinful” or “selfish,” and that those serving in **Zone 3** know to be “self-focused” & thus “unfortunate”)<sup>13</sup> – “deadly sins” that always occur as one of the following nine choices &/or behaviors ...

**01: Condemnation** ... Proponents of the **Zone 1** path tend to harshly judge that with which they do not agree &/or those who oppose their beliefs or actions. And regardless of how accurate such judgments might be, the consequences thereof always inevitably entail an escalation of discord in one's community, an intensification of the pain felt by others, and an entrenchment of the suffering experienced by oneself. As such, whenever feeling **condemnatory** (or **resentful**, or **unforgiving**, or **hateful**, or **spiteful**, or **judgmental** etc) of others' actions or beliefs, it is preferable to pause for an instant and *make choices that are courageously forgiving* instead.



**02: Sloth** ... **Zone 1** advocates tend to live relatively inactive lives; lives that appear to be “prudent” or “careful” or “relaxed” or “care-free” and yet lives that are blatantly soaked in hollow justifications for their refusal to sacrifice for &/or extend themselves actively towards others. And regardless of how “fair” or “harmless” those lives might seem, the consequences of such superficial selfishness are always ultimately deep-seated-yet-powerful undercurrents of hopelessness, meaninglessness, frustration, &/or fretfulness. As such, whenever manifestations of **sloth** (or **laziness**, or **pensiveness**, or “**planning ahead**,” or **cowardice**, or **stoicism**, or “**being realistic**”) are found to be dominant in your life, it is preferable to pause for a moment and then *make choices that are courageously (& caringly) active* instead.



13 Please NOTE that human beings are instinctively programmed to fall victim to such selfish inclinations, and that as such slipping into such “sins” does not make one a “bad person” or, even if repeatedly engaged in egregious ways, an “evil” one. We are all constantly tempted to act in our own best interest, often in ways that knowingly harm others. And while it is certainly neither kind nor good (nor Enlightened) to do so, these “sinful” choices are simply those that always bring immediate harm to others, and thereby inevitably even greater harm to oneself. Understanding these **Zone 1** temptations gives one a better chance to recognize them when they arise. And recognizing them when they arise allows one to choose differently – to choose **Zone 2** alternatives that cause less pain & suffering, or even **Zone 3** options that bring Joy & Harmony to all.

**03: Greed** ... Those reflecting a **Zone 1** lifestyle often focus their efforts on gathering and maintaining (and even hoarding) manifestations of material wealth, external beauty, personal power, individual success, emotional pleasure, &/or physical comfort. These efforts (whether made to feel more attractive or more secure or more respected) are by their nature focused on the enhancement of one's own happiness in relation to (and often at the expense of) the happiness of others, meaning that such endeavors – even those that prove to be initially “successful” – always lead to increased enmity in one's community, intensified superficiality in one's relationships, and ultimately a sense of acute meaninglessness (&/or dissatisfaction, &/or frustration, &/or sadness) in one's own life. As such, whenever tempted to succumb to the callings of **greed** (or **abundance**, or **wealth**, or **attractiveness**, or **status**, or mere **fun**), it is preferable to pause for a moment and then *make choices that are courageously generous* (in deed more than of word) instead.

**04: Envy** ... **Zone 1** servants tend to pine their own losses and be jealous of the apparent victories of others. While some claim that doing so can serve as a potent motivator for eventual success (and while this might indeed occasionally be the case), such a comparative – and ultimately competitive – mindset requires not only bemoaning the abundance of others, but also striving for personal victories; triumphs that always come via the suffering that is inevitably experienced by one's defeated opponents &/or conquered enemies. Indeed, no matter the justification given for one's **covetousness** (be it one's own deservedness of success or another's judged lack of the same), the Truth remains that focusing on the “more” that others seem to possess is always judged relative to your own perceived sense of “lack,” and thus can only serve to thicken a wall of subconscious (or even outright) enmity between you, and inevitably minimize your own sense of happiness & well-being as well. As such, whenever feeling **envious** (or **jealous**, or **desirous**, or **yearning**, or **hopeful**, or **whiny**, or even **ambitious**) or others, it is preferable to pause for an instant and then *make choices that are courageously grateful* instead – doing so with humble deeds more than gentle words, and gentle words much more than merely thankful thoughts.

**05: Callousness** ... Affiliates of the **Zone 1** way tend to distance themselves from the pains & tribulations of others; doing so either from a place of brazen self-interest or one auspiciously concerned with “minding one's own business.” The ultimate consequence of such manufactured **indifference**, of course, is a loss of intimacy in one's living – a lack of intimacy in the way one experiences the happenings of his or her life, as well as a lack of intimacy in all the relationships (be they friend or stranger or foe) therein. Some believe that hatred is the opposite of Love, and yet this is actually not the case – apathy is. **Hatred** is when you care so much about a particular person (or at the very least about his or her potential place in your life) that your baseline fear of pain &/or rejection becomes crystallized into a **loathing**-soaked form of self-defense. And yet **callousness** takes this dynamic to another depth entirely; a depth so entrenched that one doesn't even care enough to hate; a depth so ensconced that one becomes cut off from real Love in all one's relationships; a depth so bleak that one is actually no longer truly alive. As such, whenever tempted to be **callous** (or **rude**, or **cold-hearted**, or **distant**, or **uncaring**, or **calculating**, or **unmoved**, or **apathetic**, or even **analytical**) towards the plight of another, it is preferable to pause for a moment and then *make choices that are courageously compassionate* instead.

**06: Deceit** ... **Zone 1** satellites tend to travel in orbits of syncopated dishonesty – telling the truth whenever it is comfortable &/or advantageous to do so, and offering varying degrees of misinformation (via intentional manipulations, nuanced deceptions, &/or disguised motives) when not. Of course, not only are such measures patently ineffective,<sup>14</sup> they also serve to distance the receiver from his or her relationships and thus distance him or her from the experience of real Joy as well. As such, whenever recognizing the temptation to be in any way **deceitful** (or **dishonest**, or **coy**, or **manipulative**, or **secretive**, or even **sarcastic**), it is preferable to pause briefly and then *make choices that are courageously honest* instead – letting your gestures speak more truthfully than your words, and your actions speak far louder and with far more clarity than your gestures.

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14 The limbic system of all higher mammals intuitively senses whenever another higher mammal is being deceitful. This information is rarely recognized consciously (especially in more modern times when this sense has become muted by an incessant bombardment of high-speed stimuli and electronic interference) and yet it is always registered subconsciously, is ever available for conscious recognition, and intimately influences our interactions regardless.



**07: Arrogance** ... Confederates of the **Zone 1** garrison tend to exude a crystallized degree of certainty regarding the legitimacy of their beliefs &/or the correctness of their actions – a disturbingly common state of being that inevitably breeds & brings forth judgment, discord, dislike, animosity, bigotry, hatred, and violence (often in that order). Not only a devious destroyer of relationships and a potent castrator of Joy, these emanations of arrogance also prevent those exuding them from receiving new information from their surroundings – new information that could very well bring an increased depth to their interactions and an enhanced understanding of their potentially Meaning-full place in the world. As such, whenever feeling **arrogant** (or **righteous**, or overly **confident**, or **determined**, or **certain**, or **zealous**, or firmly **resolute**, or **tenacious**, or **serious**, or **provocative**, or **indignant**, or **vehement**, or even **critical** – constructively or otherwise), it is preferable to pause for an instant and then *make choices that are courageously humble* instead – realizing while doing so that *humility* is not found in thoughts that are self-deprecating &/or subservient, but rather in actions that are bold in their gentleness.

**08: Boredom** ... **Zone 1** subscribers tend to become bored with their lives – labeling familiar objects as being “normal,” judging their everyday interactions to be “unimportant,” seeing all non-spectacular happenstances as mere “humdrum,” and dismissing all routine obligations as being “tedious” or otherwise less worthy. Such a tendency – while important in its own right<sup>15</sup> – inevitably encourages the vast majority of humans to repeatedly ignore the wondrous beauty and miraculous interconnection that enfolds them all in every moment of their lives, and seek “amazing” experiences &/or “exciting” experiences &/or “fun” encounters &/or “magnificent” views that are rare & fleeting instead – a mindset that inevitably leads to feelings of disappointment, hollowness, frustration, and malaise. As such, whenever feeling in any way **bored** (or **serious**, or **dour**, or **regretful**, or **inattentive**, or “**zoned out**,” or **regretful**, or **weary**, or **depressed**, or even “**earnest**”), it is preferable to pause for a brief moment and then *make choices that are courageously joyful* – soaking in the wonders that ever encapsulate, being openly astounded by their innate radiance, and then boldly sharing the same with any & all nearby.

**09: Doubt** ... Vassals of the house of **Zone 1** tend to harbor a deep-seated sense of doubt – a sense of doubt about their own worth &/or power, a sense of doubt about the viability of their relationships, and a sense of doubt about their ability to do any real Good with the time they have been given. As a consequence thereof, this doubt – quite ironically – often manifests itself in varying forms of “faith” – “faith” in their chosen religion and its promised path to salvation, “faith” in a particular political stance and its promised reward of protection, “faith” in a set of economic ideals and their promised granting of sustenance &/or wealth. Of course, all these facets of “faith” do is entrench a far deeper doubt – the doubt that we each can do our part to bring additional Harmony & Joy to our communities. As such, whenever feeling in any way **doubtful**, it is preferable to briefly pause and then *make choices that are courageously faithful* instead – setting forth in that very moment on a mission of extending radical Kindness to others; especially when feeling least willing or least able able to do so.




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15 The human brain receives tens of thousands of independent external stimuli every second of every hour of every waking day, and yet human consciousness can only purely focus upon one or two of these many many fillips in any given moment. As such, unless our species could evolve in such a way as to quickly categorize and set aside all the tidbits & factoids that are “less important” in any given encounter, our cognition would have become a hindrance to our survival instead of the boon thereto that it has obviously been. It is in our instinctive nature to rapidly dismiss all information that is not immediately relevant to our continued existence, and as such we are indeed “programmed to dismiss these “normal” things and miss out on their innate & ever-present wondrousness.

*“You will say that there are very small sins; and doubtless, like most younger tempters, you are anxious to lash out at wickedness that is blatant or spectacular. And yet you would do well to remember that the only thing that truly matters is not the extent to which man separates himself from the Divine, but that he does so at all. Indeed, it matters not how small sins seem to be, for their cumulative effect is ever to edge man away from the Light and out into Nothingness. Murder is no worse than gambling if gambling does the trick. As such, the surest road to Hell is not a sudden plummet brought on by the shove of calamitous misdeed, but rather the gradual path of silently distancing oneself from others. This is the gentle slope that is ever soft underfoot; one without sudden turnings, milestones, or signposts. And yet it just as assuredly brings all its travel's to that same smoldering gate.” ~ via C.S. Lewis*

*“And here are the Nine True Sins: Discernment without Acceptance ... Opportunity without Action ... Wealth without Generosity ... Life without Gratitude ... Communication without Honesty ... Science without Character ... Religion without Humility ... Experience without Wonderment ... Interaction without Empathy.” ~ inspired by Frederick Donaldson*

*“The greatest untruths are the ones we tell ourselves – that we are separate from the whole, and that we can do nothing of import to positively affect the same. And he who lies to himself in this fashion and chooses to believe those lies soon comes to a pass so jagged that, once crossed, he thereafter fails to distinguish the Truth within him or around him, and thereby loses all respect for himself and others. And having lost this respect, he loses the inclination to Love. And in order to distract himself from his Loveless life he yields to selfish passions and hollow pleasures; sinking deep therewith into the banality of his vices – and all this from choosing to lie to himself, and from choosing to believe those lies.” ~ via Fyodor Dostoevsky*

\*Unlike their previously illuminated **Zone 1** counterparts, the “lesser virtues” of **Zone 2** are exhibited by those who have chosen to – at least for a time – leave the world of rampant selfishness behind in favor making choices that are more “moral.” Theirs are the behavioral characteristics that seem to be “more ethical” or “more mature” or “more enlightened,” and yet are actually those that “go both ways” – bearing the bad fruit of discord & suffering when actualized for self, and sowing the far better fruits of Harmony & Peace when enlivened for others.<sup>16</sup> Like their **Zone 1** relatives, **Zone 2** traits also manifest themselves in one of the following nine characteristics &/or behaviors ...

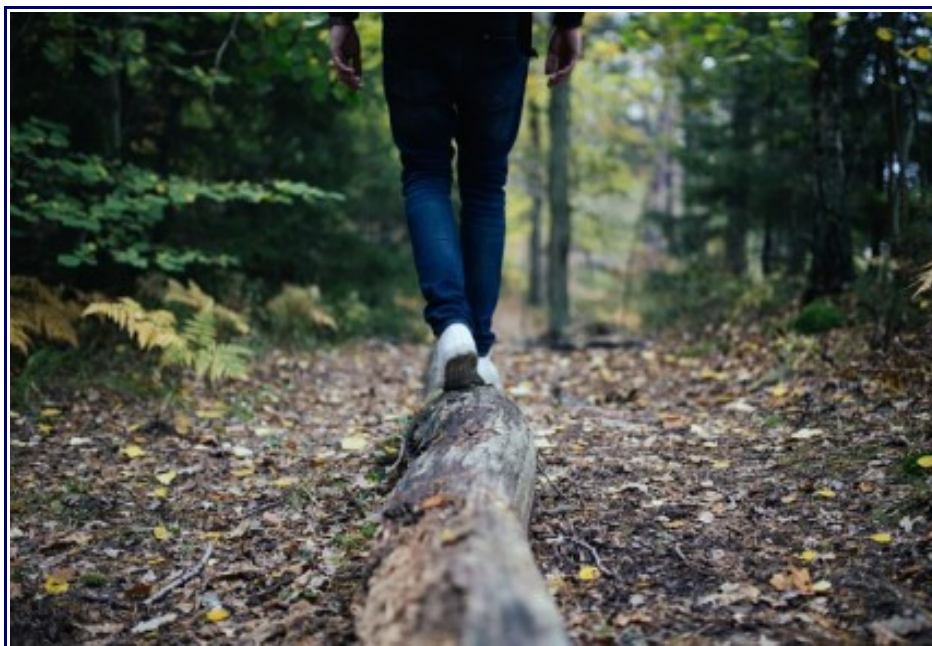
**01:** Instead of blasting their **condemnation** to &/or towards others, **Zone 2** residents believe they are behaving morally when they exude mere *tolerance* for them instead. And yet, while indeed being far less damaging than the former, the latter also inevitably does more harm than good. First & foremost, *tolerance* is subconsciously received as a form of rejection – a negative judgment of the other that the tolerant one is “willing to put up with.” Maybe the tolerated behaviors are non-commendable ones, and yet merely tolerating them is felt on a deeper level as a rejection of them as a person, not as a mere faux-acceptance of their behaviors. The consequences of this are obvious – a perpetuation of the behaviors being tolerated, and an increased emotional distance between the tolerater & the one being merely tolerated. Similarly, while it is all well & good to be gentle with others, gentleness causes the other harm whenever it is given from a place of cowardice or idolatrous homage. Wisely accepting all that is does not mean tolerating the harmful portions of the same (nihilism is not a viably moral way of being). No, in grand contrast, we are all summoned to stand boldly for Justice & Love – to courageously defend the oppressed, while simultaneously exuding heartfelt Compassion for their highly confused (&/or ignorant, &/or themselves previously oppressed) oppressors. As such, whenever feeling merely *tolerant* (or *cooperative*, or “*fair*,” or “*respectful*,” or *adaptable*, or *tolerant*, or “being *flexible*,” or *compromising* – by “giving in” or “giving up” ) of others' actions or beliefs, it is preferable to pause for an instant and *make choices that are courageously forgiving* instead – remembering that true *Forgiveness* is not given in support of wicked deeds or dysfunctional behaviors, but rather is offered (in deed more than by word) in spite of the same.

**02:** Instead of letting their actions ooze **sloth**, **Zone 2** acolytes believe they are behaving morally when they exude mere *productivity* instead. And yet the question ever & always remains: To what end? For if we are only being productive for productivity's sake, then our lives will inevitably sink into a morass of meaninglessness. And if we are primarily being productive for our own personal benefit, our sowing thereof will keep us from caring from others during the same, and our reaping therefrom will ultimately distance us from others thereafter. There is no point in being *creative* or *inventive* or *artistic* or *spontaneous* or *active* (or even *skilled* or *talented* or *proficient*) if we are doing so without any underlying sense of service. In truth, while living actively *is* an integral facet of any truly Enlightened life, it is never what we do, but rather *why* we are doing whatever we are doing that matters. Yes, while it *is* good to be *self-disciplined* (or *organized* or *persistent*) in our lives, that *diligence* is only truly beneficial while we are enlivening it for the benefit of those in our communities. Similarly, while it *is* indeed wise to be *patient* (or *reflective* or *ponderous* or even *meticulous*) in life – to consciously ponder each moment's alternatives (including their potential consequences) before engaging them or choosing from among them, it is crucial to remember that we are here to act, and that it is only by acting for others that we can enliven (and thereby ourselves make) any real progress. As such, whenever feeling merely *productive* (or *efficient*, or *industrious*, or *thorough*, or *busy*), it is preferable to pause for a moment and then *make choices that are courageously – and caringly – active* instead.

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16 Please NOTE that **Zone 2** alternatives are not to be seen as “better” than their more instinctual **Zone 1** cousins, nor are they to be judged as being “worse” than the choices that are made by enliveners of the **Zone 3** Way. **Zone 2** deeds are simply those that reside between selfishness & selflessness – between **Zone 1** & **Zone 3**; those that call forth less suffering than the former and those that simultaneously prevent the Peace-bringing fulfillment (& thereby the blissfully emPowering experience) of the latter.

**03:** Instead of exuding various forms of **greed**, *Zone 2* followers believe they are behaving morally when they have mere **balance** in their lives instead. And yet this turns out to be an insidious myth as well, for maintaining a **balance** between giving and receiving per se neuters one's ability to give (which, ironically, is itself the only Gift worth getting). Indeed, striving to preserve a “proper **balance**” between work and play (or activity and rest, or duty and fun, or sociability and solitude, etc) ultimately only serves to dismantle the very **balance** that it seeks to supply. For the only way to attain real Balance in one's life is to fulfill the greater Calling of the Heart – the only way to know real Peace in any moment is to realize that you are indeed an interconnected facet of the All. And this can only come by acting accordingly; by selflessly serving others – especially in those moments when least inclined to do so; especially in those moments when your ego most yearns for “more **balance**.” In truth, attending regularly to one's own desires to attain better **health** (via “balanced” accumulations of rest &/or exercise &/or sustenance for oneself) by its very nature keeps one from becoming truly Whole – which in turn generates a deep-seated discord that ultimately manifests itself in increased occurrences of injury & illness. Similarly, attending regularly to your own wishes to have more **peace of mind** (via a “balanced” immersing in meditation &/or recuperation &/or relaxation &/or “self help”) by its very nature keeps one from ever knowing true Calm – which in turn generates a subtle-yet-omnipresent mental schism that ultimately manifests itself in increased feelings of anxiety & agitation. In kind, attending regularly to your own wants of elevated **happiness** (via occasional, “balanced” engagements with others or self that are comfortable &/or fun &/or exciting &/or celebratory) by its very nature keeps one from feeling true Joy – which in turn generates a deep-seated mental fracture that ultimately manifests itself in increased occurrences of boredom & despair. Comparably, attending regularly to your own yearnings for more **intimacy** (via “balanced” investments in friendships &/or partnerships – often by striving to become sexier &/or more beautiful &/or more amusing &/or more interesting) by its very nature keeps one from ever knowing true Oneness – which in turn generates a poignant emotional disconnect that ultimately manifests itself in increased feelings of loneliness & meaninglessness. Finally, attending regularly to your own hopes for a heightened sense of **safety** (via “balanced” investments in your own wealth &/or strength &/or independence &/or isolation &/or protective boundaries) by its very nature keeps one from ever knowing true Freedom – which in turn generates a powerful psychological barrier that ultimately manifests itself in increased feelings of fear & poverty. As such, whenever tempted to succumb to the yearning to merely “maintain **balance**” (or *self-respect*, or *happiness*, or *playfulness*, or *self-love*, or *restfulness*) in your life, it is preferable to pause for a moment and then *make choices that are courageously generous* (via self-sacrificial actions more than kind words) instead.



**04:** Instead of expressing their **envy** (or harboring **envious** thoughts), **Zone 2** disciples believe they are behaving morally when they exude mere **thankfulness** instead. Of course, these people do so solely in response to the riches, benefits, rewards, &/or triumphs that they themselves have received or attained – a self-centered focus that always dampens the potential potency of their **gratitude**, and that ultimately prevents them from knowing the real Wealth that only comes from giving to others in times of personal lack. As a corollary to this particular value, **Zone 2** folks also tend to be avid affirmers of grief & **grieving** during times of loss or tragedy – another tendency that is always ultimately counterproductive; not only because focusing on one's own sadness inevitably perpetuates the same, but also because it is our times of greatest personal sadness that are also our most potent opportunities to effectuate our greatest possible acts of Kindness for others.<sup>17</sup> As such, whenever feeling merely **thankful** (or **privileged**, or **fortunate**, or **lucky**, or **blessed**) for the “good things” in your life – &/or whenever tempted to grieve or pine for the greater losses therein, it is preferable to pause for an instant and then **make choices that are courageously grateful** instead – doing so with humble deeds more than merely gentle words, and gentle words much more than merely thankful thoughts.

**05:** Instead of passively rejecting others with their **callousness**, **Zone 2** apostles believe they are behaving morally when they exude mere **friendliness** towards them instead. This is not to say that “being **nice**” is in any way false or wrong or bad; merely that being so is by its very nature a distanced & ultimately insincere form of false-compassion – one which has the tendency to neutralize true intimacy in the immediate term, and dramatically weaken one's ability to express heartfelt empathy for others over time. As a result of being merely “**warm**” or “**sociable**” in this way **honesty** & **integrity** are inevitably sacrificed, “**healthy boundaries**” are ultimately erected, and the respective relationships suffer mightily as result. These are also the people who express verbal &/or emotional **concern**, **pity**, &/or **sympathy** over the plights of others – a response that not only “booms” a blatant lack of faith in the ability of the one suffering to transcend their particular trial, but also one that prevents the one doing said “booming” from being effectively supportive &/or actively caring. As such, whenever tempted to be merely **friendly** (or **likable**, or **good-natured**, or **affectionate**, or **sympathetic**, or **affable**, or **cordial**, or **neighborly**) towards the plight of another, it is preferable to pause for an instant or two and then **make choices that are courageously compassionate** instead.

**06:** Instead of being **deceitful** towards others, **Zone 2** crusaders believe they are behaving morally when they exude mere **loyalty** towards them instead – a loyalty that takes on many forms; all of which being equally undesirable once set into motion. Consider the following examples thereof: *Firstly*, any subscription to the principle of loyalty entrenches at least a degree of **fierceness** towards the many; due to a demanded allegiance to the few. *Secondly*, loyalty expects **unwavering support**, an expectation that often tempts to be dishonest in uncomfortable conversations &/or enabling of dysfunctional behaviors. *Thirdly*, loyalty – at least in larger groups – anticipates a certain degree of **obedience** to professed values &/or announced goals; an obedience which not only ends up having adherents turn a blind eye to ensuing injustices, but which also invariably empowers the growth of many manifestations of oppression. *Fourthly*, traditional expressions of loyalty announce a certain degree of **dependability**; a binding call to fulfill vows, obligations, &/or commitments – promises that all serve to demolish volition, and thereby effectively neuter one's ability to truly Love. *Finally*, loyalty often engenders expressions that are **polite** or **charming** or **tactful** – forms of dishonesty that invariably do more harm than good. As such, whenever recognizing the temptation to be merely **loyal** (or **dutiful**, or **steadfast**, or **law-abiding**, or **dependable**), it is preferable to pause briefly and then **make choices that are courageously honest** instead – letting your gestures speak more truthfully than your words, and your actions speak far louder and with far more clarity than those gestures.

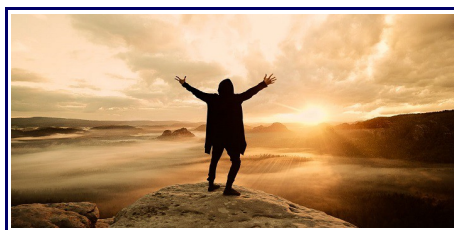
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17 Please NOTE that this is not to say that it is “wrong” to express gratitude during life's more pleasurable moments, nor that it is in any way “wrong” to grieve during times of personal despair. Rather, this particular point merely reminds of the inalienable truth that both of the aforementioned (i.e. expressions of gratitude & grieving) should be released as efficiently (and as privately) as possible; that both should as often as possible be consciously used as either motivators (the former) or empowerers (the latter) of all concurrent &/or subsequent deeds of selfless caring.

**07:** Instead of bleeding **arrogance** into their interactions, *Zone 2* devotees believe they are behaving morally when they exude mere *wisdom* therein instead. These are the individuals who think they are more *intelligent* &/or *sensible* &/or *discerning* &/or *knowledgeable* than many if not most of their peers – a belief that invariably has them sinking into a miasma of callousness (and sometimes even righteous anger); judging others more than intimately connecting with them; “constructively criticizing” others more than encouraging them; trying to “teach” or “inform” or “save” others instead of actively & unconditionally Caring for them. These are the ones who know what is “acceptable” and what is “inappropriate;” those who understand what is “normal” and what is “insane” – judgments that might indeed be at times partially accurate, and yet judgments that invariably preclude the development of any substantively intimate connections with those they analyze or instruct, and thus judgments that simultaneously prevent whatever wisdom is actually possessed from ever being truly heard &/or taking true hold. As such, whenever feeling in any way especially “wise” (or *smart*, or *discerning*, or *logical*, or *intelligent*, or *clever*, or *sensible*, or *mature*, or *correct*, or *substantiated*, or *perceptive*), it is preferable to pause for an instant and then *make choices that are courageously humble* instead – realizing while doing so that real *humility* is not found in thoughts that are self-deprecating or subservient, but rather in actions that are bold in their *gentleness*.

**08:** Instead of wallowing in their **boredom**, *Zone 2* minions believe they are behaving morally when they exude mere *enthusiasm* instead – maintaining relationships that are interesting &/or pleasurable, fostering encounters that are exciting &/or intriguing, and accumulating experiences that are entertaining &/or fun. Of course any interaction that is founded upon such superficial frameworks cannot hope to bring any measure of real Joy to one's life, and in fact over time ultimately bring the opposite. They are invariably hollow & fleeting, and thus inevitably serve to mute one's bouts of happiness while steadily intensifying his or underlying sense of meaninglessness & tedium. As such, whenever feeling merely *enthusiastic* (or *exuberant*, or *inspired*, or *vibrant*, or *energized*, or youthful, or passionate, or *excited*, or even *motivated*) about life, it is preferable to pause – at least for a moment – and then *make choices that are courageously joyful* instead; sinking deeply into the wonders that surround you, being openly astounded by their innate & ineffable radiance, and then setting boldly forth to share the same with any & all nearby.

**09:** Instead of soaking in one or more of the many manifestations of **doubt**, *Zone 2* votaries believe they are behaving morally when they exude either open *bravery* or subtle *self-doubt*. With regards to the former, such individuals regularly attempt to crush their underlying **doubt** under words tainted by *bravado* &/or acts laced with *boldness*. They tend to charge into their encounters forcefully &/or engage their interactions aggressively. They also are prone to taking risks in order (at least subconsciously) to “show their courage” &/or “prove themselves.” Almost needless to say, such recklessly self-centered motivations often bring harm to their doers, often bring at least some measure of harm to others, and thereby always bring an escalated discord &/or enmity to society as a whole. In contrast, sometimes *Zone 2* aficionados don't “have it in them” to be brave, and so choose to combat their deep-seated **doubt** by donning either colorful masks of *faux-humility* (e.g. openly submitting to the “higher power” advertised by their religion, devoutly following the “higher calling” demanded by their self-help guru, &/or repeatedly seeking the “greater self” summoned by their therapist) &/or thickened veils of *self-doubt*. As such, whenever feeling either *brave* (or *hopeful*, or *trusting*, or *adventurous*, or *daring*) or “*humble*” (or *modest*, or *soft-spoken*, or *ashamed*, or *regretful*, or *embarrassed*, or *guilt-ridden*), it is preferable to briefly pause and then *make choices that are courageously faithful* – setting forth into with real Courage instead; on a mission of extending radical Kindness to others, especially in those moments when feeling least willing &/or least able able to do so.



\*Finally, **Zone 3** enthusiasts (the truly Enlightened) are those who choose to purely enliven at least one of the Noble Virtues in any given interaction<sup>18</sup> – Virtues which are always enlivened with the benefit of others in mind, Virtues which always bring Harmony to others & Peace to oneself, and Virtues (like their **Zone 1** & **Zone 2** precursors) are ever manifested in the following nine primary forms ...

**01:** Instead of blasting their **condemnation** at others or being merely **tolerant** of them, **Zone 3** participants enliven the purest form of **Acceptance** – having understood that truly **Forgiving** a wrong-doer does not require affirming his or her harmful deeds or passively allowing the same to continue; one that understands that pure **Acceptance** is essentially a verb – a gentle grace extended to others despite their behaviors, not because of them. As such, those who powerfully enliven the same are the ones who choose to be openly kind to their enemies (even while denouncing the harms those enemies have perpetrated); the ones who persevere through life undaunted – by exuding Kindness to others (stranger and friend and enemy alike) during their own times of trial, tribulation, turbulence, or trauma.



**02:** Instead of oozing **sloth** or being merely **productive**, champions of the **Zone 3** Path enliven the highest realization of **Patience** – understanding as they do that bring earnestly **Patient** is in no way “calm” or inactive or laid-back; that it actually has nothing to do with focusing on a future goal or waiting for things to inevitably “get better” or others to eventually “get it.” Indeed, real **Patience** is a Here&Now phenomenon – only found in the present moment and always in motion when so found. In essence, pure **Patience** is nothing short of a vibrant &



spontaneously flowing embodiment of one's innate freedom to – in every single instant in one's life – be true to the selfless inclinations of one's highest Self. As such, those who fully enliven the same are the ones who cease pondering their potential actions (e.g. waiting for the “right moment” or “better time” to act, or for a “more important” or “better suited” service to fulfill) and simply set forth to Do Good (*any* Good) instead. These are the ones exuding the courage to care in ways that are unconventional – these are the ones who choose to serve others nearby (especially in those moments when they are “too tired” or “too ill” or “too injured” or “too busy”).

18 Please NOTE the following extremely important points regarding **Zone 3** and its nine Noble Virtues: **A)** First & foremost, choosing the **Zone 3** life is not a “process of growth” over time – the choice to be truly Enlightened (i.e. actively selfless) is fully available to every sentient being in every instant of his or her life. From the “lowest” occupant of **Zone 1** to the “highest” resident of **Zone 2**, transcending the same and entering the realm of **Zone 3** is always but a single courageously caring choice away. **B)** Secondly, **Zone 3** is not a static state of being to attain or a “merit badge” to one day acquire. Rather, its bliss recedes the moment one's motives shift from selfless back to self-focused. In this way, the choice to be Enlightened is always a momentary one – one that can only be repeatedly renewed in order to be repeatedly re-experienced. There is no such thing as a **Zone 3** person – there are only **Zone 3** choices. **C)** In the moment that a person chooses to actualize any one of the **Zone 3** Noble Virtues all of the other eight become enlivened as well – and perfectly selfless, unconditional Love blossoms forth as a result. **D)** **Zone 3** choices do not dismiss or abandon or ignore the incessant yearnings of **Zone 1** or the regular temptations of **Zone 2**. Rather, **Zone 3** deeds are those that experience those same desires fully, and yet consciously choose otherwise. As such, **Zone 1** & **Zone 2** are not seen as enemies that obstruct or deny, but rather as allies that empower.

**03:** Instead of regularly exuding their **greed** or living lives that are merely **balanced**, **Zone 3** enliveners instead choose to manifest the true pinnacle of **Generosity** – having come to



understand that deeply profound *Generosity* has little to do with the sharing of material possessions, and nothing at all to do with doing so in times of personal abundance or comfort. No, these are the people who know that truly potent *Generosity* comes to life when one chooses to willingly & joyfully give when least inclined to do so – in times of personal lack &/or to those “least deserving” of the same. As such, those who sincerely enliven the same are the ones who regularly choose to give anonymously to their friends, give self-sacrificially to their enemies, and give boldly to their associates & strangers.

**04:** Instead of leaking their **envy** upon the good fortune of others or being merely **thankful** for their own, supporters of **Zone 3** instead enliven ultimate expressions of **Gratitude** – understanding as they do that truly pristine *Gratitude* is neither verbally expressed nor reciprocally offered. Instead, it is most potently given in those moments one is least inclined to do so. As such, those who authentically enliven their

*Gratitude* are the ones who choose to rejoice in others' victories more than their own (including the victories enjoyed by their enemies), the ones who choose to exude an encouraging faith in their own innate Strength (instead of worry or envy or complaint) during times of trial or trauma (and a faith in the innate Strength of others in similar times of trouble – instead of sending them concern or pity or sympathy), and the ones who choose to evince a profound & heartfelt thankfulness for life itself during times of pain, frustration, difficulty, &/or debilitation.

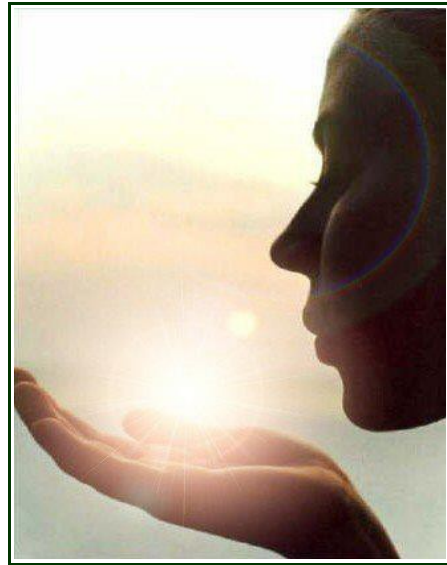


**05:** Instead of ladling **callousness** over their interactions or being merely **friendly** towards others therein, **Zone 3** enthusiasts enliven the most vibrant manifestations of **Compassion** – having come to comprehend that truly crystalline *Compassion* has nothing to do with either entertaining mere intellectual pity or expressing mere emotional sympathy, and everything to do with actively immersing oneself into the plights of another. After all, *Compassion* literally means “to suffer together” (or “to have a heartfelt empathy for”), and as such it is impossible to be truly compassionate towards those in need – and thereby exude an affection for them that is truly helpful – without boldly reaching out to relieve their burdens &/or increase their peace. As such, those who actually enliven this Virtue are the ones who choose to unabashedly (i.e. publicly & effusively) Care for strangers, the ones who choose to deal tenderly with all who would “use” or “leech” from them, &/or the ones who choose to extend flagrant acts of Kindness to all – especially those “least deserving” of the same.





**06:** Instead of booming variations of **deceit** upon opponents or being merely **loyal** to friends &/or causes, adherents of the **Zone 3** Way enliven untainted effusions of **Honesty** – knowing as they do that true **Honesty** actually has very little to do with the content of one's verbal disclosures (i.e. what one says to others) and a great deal to do with the integrity of one's actions and their underlying intentions (i.e. what one does and why one chooses to do it). **Honesty** that is truly immaculate must embody a heartfelt harmony between what one feels, what one thinks, what one intends, and what one does. And, seeing as how what one supra-consciously feels for others is always reflective of our innate knowing that all humans are members of the same Great Family (and that all our non-human sentient cousins have been entrusted to our Care), acting in any way that does not intentionally & selflessly serve others is nothing less than **deceitful** on the deepest level. As such, those who are earnestly **Honest** are the ones who choose to be openly encouraging to those who are down, the ones who choose to be openly forthcoming (without the smallest hint of justification, explanation, or persuasion) to all those who inquire, and the ones who choose to be silent & still (while smiling) whenever an honest answer would cause dismay or an honest deed would cause harm.



**07:** Instead of lashing out with **arrogance** or being merely **wise**, **Zone 3** contributors instead enliven supreme embodiments of **Humility** – fully comprehending that pure **Humility**, while refusing to fall into the pits of conviction or dogma, is neither obedient to any ideal nor deprecating towards oneself. In contrast, actual **Humility** is fully open-minded towards that which one cannot know (most importantly: the motives behind others' actions) and courageously affirming of that which one does (most importantly: the ability one's selfless actions have to effectuate great positive change in the lives of others and great escalations of Harmony to one's community as a whole). As such, those who actually enliven this Virtue are not the ones who choose to demurely sit back and do little or nothing (because they are “only human” or because they are “only one person” or because it is “none of their business”), but rather are those who choose to boldly-yet-gently do whatever they can, wherever they are, for whomever is closest by in need.

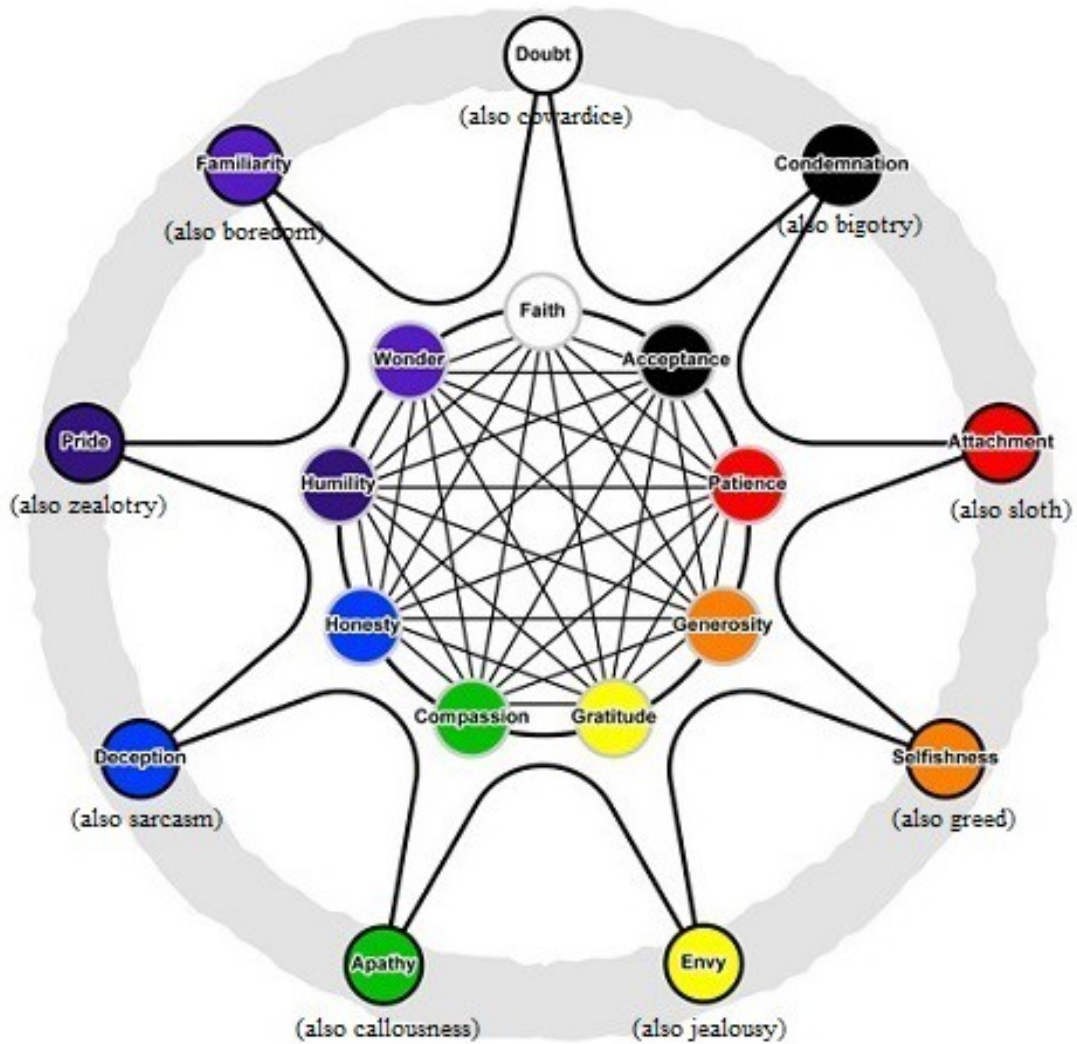


**08:** Instead of dripping **boredom** onto their circumstances or being merely **enthusiastic** about the same, agents of the **Zone 3** realm enliven fully undiluted reflections of **Wonderment** – comprehending as they do that truly viable **Wonderment** has very little to do with being in awe of the magnificent, amazed by the rare, &/or captivated by the beautiful. Instead, those who profoundly enliven the same are the ones who choose to experience amazement when encountering the “familiar,” feel reverence when interacting with the “normal,” know excitement when engaged with the “boring,” and see beauty when met by the “ugly.” These are the ones who regularly remember that they are alive within a great and glorious miracle, these are the ones who regularly express their Joy over the same, and these are the ones who just as regularly share that awakening with all nearby.



**09:** Instead of steadily staining their thoughts with **doubt** or being merely **brave**, **Zone 3** attendants choose to enliven uncontaminated demonstrations of **Faith** – having come to know that bona fide expression of this Virtue are neither certain of their convictions nor focused upon any one-day manifestation thereof. No, instead of wrapping their minds in learned beliefs or indoctrinated dogmas &/or limiting their lives to the confines of hollow hopes &/or desirous dreams, those opting for the far greater **Faith** know that they cannot know – just as they know that it is precisely this inherent inability (we humans do not have the physiological equipment required to perceive reality objectively, much less the psychological stability required to discern the truth of our beliefs accurately) that enables them to act powerfully in their everyday encounters with others. Indeed, because we can never know others' true motives with any certainty, we can always choose to have Compassion for them. And because we can never predict the outcome of any selfless choice – and because our most primitive sociological programming would have us use this as an excuse to avoid reaching out to others at all – those choices are incredibly difficult to make, and thus become enormously powerful (transformative, even) once made anyway.





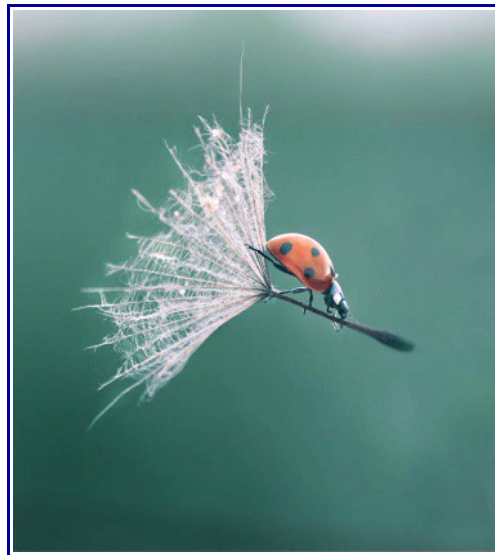
*“The true value of a human being can be found in the degree to which he or she has attained liberation of the True Self from its egocentric impostor.” ~ via Albert Einstein*

*“Enlightenment isn't inbred. It's something that repeatedly re-awakens and steadily expands within you whenever choosing to radically Care for others regardless of personal risk or cost. Is this choice frightening? Of course it is. Does it hurt? Quite often it does. And yet when you start to truly Care for others you stop caring about the fear and pain that come along for the ride. And the best thing about it is that there is no need to strive or struggle your way to thereto; that full-bodied Enlightenment comes immediately to all those choosing to enliven it earnestly, and remains robustly viable for as long as that engendering choice is maintained ... So be bold enough to live life on your Soul's terms. Be bold enough to go against the grains of inner ego & external convention. Be bold enough to take the road much less traveled; to smile gratefully upon all instances of adversity; to look before you leap into the ocean of selfless Love – and then leap into it boldly regardless.” ~ inspired by Margery Bianco & Mandy Hale*

## Chapter 13h: “active unenlightenment” Trap #08 ... believing that “Enlightenment takes time & effort”

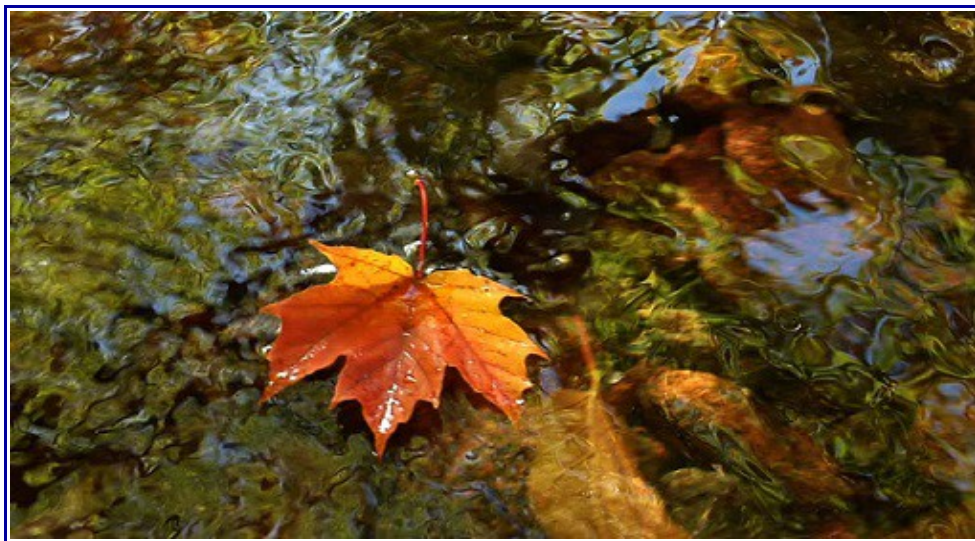
The final primary pit of “active enlightenment” into which *Zone 2* individuals frequently fall is the delusional belief that embodying Enlightenment requires a journey thereto – and a difficult journey at that. To help clarify (&/or free yourself from) the same, feel free to humbly ponder (& courageously pro-act) the following illuminations thereof ...

\*Whereas some *Zone 1* advocates are certain that Enlightenment is a myth (a state of being abjectly impossible for any human to experience) and thus make no attempts to enliven it at all, *Zone 2* acolytes believe that it is indeed attainable, though they also see the realization thereof as an arduous journey – one that requires extended time & disciplined effort to fulfill. The few who seem to “succeed” (i.e. those who attain a greater measure of mental tranquility while still remaining far from the Bliss that only comes from actively serving another) claim that their achievement is due to personal perseverance. In stark contrast, champions of the *Zone 3* alternative know that real Enlightenment actually only comes to those who have released all strife & strenuous effort – those who see life not as an extended opportunity to “progress” or “grow” over various periods of time but rather as a series of instants that are both truly independent & intricately interconnected. These people choose to replace their learning with their doing, their self-help with helping others, and their self-improvement with improving their communities – doing so not by gradually increasing the proficiency of their “inner peace” over longer periods of time, but rather by fully & completely immersing themselves into each moment's opportunity to actively Care. They do so not with struggle & strain in order to one day “manifest” what “should be,” but rather with joy & fluidity – to simply bring an enhanced experience of Harmony into each Here&Now.



*“Enlightenment is neither an arduous process nor a destructive one; neither a desire to “become better” as a person nor a need to let go of that self; neither a building up of the Soul nor a crumbling away of the ego. No, to be truly Enlightened is simply to powerfully Be – to humbly see through the facades of all preexisting knowledge &/or current convictions about others, in order to boldly & lovingly reach out to them despite all fears or concerns.” ~ inspired by Adyashanti*

\*While other **Zone 1** affiliates think that Enlightenment is mere happiness (i.e. the emotional uplift felt during experiences of physical pleasure &/or mental distraction) and that happiness is relatively easy to attain, **Zone 2** disciples believe that it is found in “wisdom,” a state of deeper peace that is difficult to achieve – indeed one that requires disciplined practice &/or persistent effort to know at all (much less maintain over any length of time), and one that therefore inevitably leads to regular bouts of fatigue, sadness, &/or frustration (while striving to consistently “remain calm” or “be better” or “do the right thing” or “return to the Now”). These individuals also tend to believe that emotional pain is “part of the process” – that the journey to Enlightenment inevitably includes times of anger, sadness, or fear; times when one is encouraged to give in to these emotions by accepting their presence, indulging their inclinations, and waiting for them to pass before continuing onward. **Zone 3** enthusiasts, on the other hand, experience life in a very different way. These people know that Enlightenment has nothing to do with personal happiness or inner peace and everything to do with bringing the same to others; that Enlightenment is neither physically strenuous nor emotionally challenging; that it actually harnesses times of physical limitation &/or emotional difficulty instead – consciously using them to empower subsequent choices; choices that are caring instead of callous, selfless instead of self-helping, and generous instead of gathering. In this way, **Zone 3** participants comprehend that life is not an arduous journey after all, but rather a scintillating series of individual moments, each filled with wondrous potential; that even though there are no shortcuts on the path to real Peace, the route thereto is an incredibly short one; that even though bold steps must indeed be taken to arrive at any destination worth attaining, there is only one such step – the courageously kind step – that needs to be made to land fully therein. In truth, the Soul (a.k.a. the supra-consciousness, or the conscience) of every single person knows full well that the Cosmos is a single whirling Whole; one that is steadily flowing towards a state of ever-greater harmony. And as such we all innately understand that we are all crucial facets of this greater Oneness, just as we all innately know that we can (if we but choose to exude the humility to clearly See others nearby, and then embody the courage to boldly Care for them) all smoothly fulfill our own small-yet-significant roles in assisting the manifestation of that greatest of Ends.



## Chapter 14: What it means to “Wake Up”

Now that we have illuminated & clarified the major differences related to how the three Zones of Being are internally known & perceived, it is time to examine how they differ in “the real world” – namely the different ways that the members of these Zones “wake up;” how they quite distinctively interact with (& quite distinctively thereby affect) their surroundings, as well as how those same interactions ultimately generate a unique set of affects &/or consequences. Initially, we look to how enlivening each of the three Zones *differently affects one's body and mind* ...

\*Concerning the body, whereas **Zone 1** advocates experience radical vacillations between moments of feeling energized & times they feel fatigued (or even exhausted), **Zone 2** acolytes focus much of their attention on getting “proper rest & recuperation” – on “recharging their batteries” via soaking in regular stints of relaxation, inactivity, leisure, &/or “self-help.” In bold contrast, **Zone 3** participants are re-energized by their loving deeds – with the more selflessly (i.e. humbly &/or intimately &/or self-sacrificially) they serve others, the longer & more potently they are able to do so.

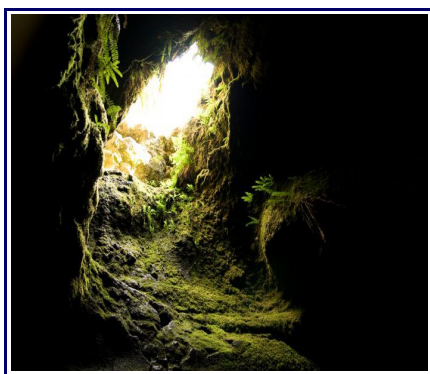
\*Similarly, while **Zone 1** affiliates repeatedly swing between moments of good health and times of suffering (physical pains, illnesses, &/or impairments), **Zone 2** disciples expend large amounts of energy on “being healthier” (e.g. physical fitness, proper sleep, good nutrition, regular stretching, etc) – a choice that is not “bad” per se, and yet one which is both innately self-centered (and therefor profoundly weakened) and inevitably frustrating. **Zone 3** enthusiasts, on the other hand, find themselves always at Peace – reveling with others Joy-fully in the times they feel vibrant, and serving others far more powerfully in the moments they are in dis-ease.

\*As far as the mind is concerned, representatives of both **Zone 1** & **Zone 2** find themselves repeatedly mired in dualistic worldviews that are ever-ladled with judgment, conflict, & discord – with **Zone 1** confederates drenching their minds with the discordant concepts of “right vs wrong” or “us vs them” or “friend vs foe,” & **Zone 2** crusaders soaking their spirits with the abstractions of “fake vs real” or “bad vs better” or “ignorant vs intelligent.” Contrastingly, **Zone 3** contributors intentionally set these dichotomies (and all those like them) aside in favor of seeing the familial beneath the adversarial and the friend within every enemy – and then acting accordingly thereafter. These are the people who have come to understand that truly Peace-full thoughts can only arise while acting Peace-fully.

\*In addition, the three different Zones of Being manifest unmistakably unique character traits. Consider: While **Zone 1** proponents get agitated or annoyed and **Zone 2** devotees become disappointed when things don't go their way, **Zone 3** enliveners remain *grateful* regardless (for the ever-present opportunities to serve others, and for simply being alive at all). While **Zone 1** backers get angry and **Zone 2** followers get annoyed or become frustrated with those behaving aggressively, **Zone 3** adherents remain *forgiving* towards them regardless. While **Zone 1** servants feel saddened by and **Zone 2** accomplices feel pity for others' tragedies, **Zone 3** supporters exude *compassion* for them regardless. And while **Zone 1** satellites are fearful of the unknown and **Zone 2** crusaders deal cautiously with the same, **Zone 3** participants remain ever-*courageous* in their Caring.

\***Zone 1** advocates are those who use the perceptions of their own ego to determine & validate what they believe to be real. These are the people who regularly retreat to the conventional and the familiar and the comfortable and the pleasurable; a mindset that inevitably breeds discontent, discord, and despair.

**Zone 2** acolytes similarly rely on their own senses & opinions to construct a self-centered worldview, and yet tend to focus the same more on finding their own “center” (&/or “dissolving into self”) than on discovering the center of their surroundings or “the truth” of the Cosmos in general. These are the people who vacillate between feeling lost &/or confused and then feeling “awakened” &/or certain after periods of “growth” or learning; a mindset that inevitably leads to distance, subservience, &/or meaninglessness.



**Zone 3** assistants, in sparkling contrast, are simultaneously aware of two salient facts: **A)** that the human body does not possess the requisite equipment needed to perceive its surroundings with any real objectivity, and **B)** that their lives can become potentially “real” regardless – by harmonizing their own individual subset of the Whole with all other facets nearby; doing so in every moment they boldly choose to replace their own desires with actions that boldly attempt to make others' lives more Peace-full.

\***Zone 1** affiliates tend to see others through lenses that are **egocentric**; thereby believing that the vast majority of other people are “normal” or ordinary, and that only a handful of individuals are truly exceptional in any tangible way (e.g. exceptionally talented or exceptionally moral or exceptionally evil or exceptionally kind etc). They also believe that “the downtrodden” (those suffering from poverty &/or oppression) and “the ignorant” (those who are less intelligent &/or who have been psychologically indoctrinated) have essentially no hope of awakening to a more informed way of being. Much like Abraham Maslow, these people believe that “the meek” cannot hope to “inherit the earth” (i.e. know real Peace & Joy) until they somehow become stronger &/or wiser and thereby satisfy their more primal desires beforehand.

**Zone 2** disciples tend to agree that the majority of their brethren are “standard” or typical, and yet choose to perceive their world through lenses that are **Self-centric**. These individuals believe that Enlightenment is attainable by all – even those most wretched &/or pitiable, though they also believe that the attainment thereof is extremely difficult (seeing it as the pinnacle of human existence; a state of being that has left the ego fully behind) and thus is actually attained by very few. They believe that “the downtrodden” and “the ignorant” can attain Enlightenment, and yet have a far more difficult road thereto – one that more often than not demands assistance. For them, “the meek” can one day “inherit the earth,” though only with help (from others or “from above”).





In bold contrast, **Zone 3** enthusiasts are *Whole-centric*; seeing all sentient beings as being equally wondrous, and treating them all accordingly. These are the ones who look past judgments of “good” or “evil” & “smart” or “stupid.” These are the ones who see beneath others' behaviors to the beautiful essence that ever resides within – and then respond in kind. These are the ones who know that, when it comes to the actions of others, there are only those founded in fear (to be gently understood) and those soaked in Love (to be boldly admired). These are the ones who remember that all sentient life comes into the world innately Enlightened (i.e. fully comprehending his or her profound interconnection with all others). They also know that, while most have indeed forgotten this great Truth they once knew as infants & toddlers, there is no end-destination on the path back thereto. These are the ones who understand that Enlightenment, like the Universe that encapsulates it, is ever-dynamic and continually transient – that to become viable it must be chosen and re-chosen in each moment anew. **Zone 3** standard-bearers are the ones who seek neither to feed the ego nor destroy it, but rather understand that the ego is an inherent part of the experience – that as long as any person resides in a healthy human body (where the more primitive, fear-based portions of the brain are constantly analyzing input  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a second before the neocortex – the portion thereof which houses the ability to countermand self-preservative instinct and “choose Love anyway”) his or her True Self will never experience a lasting departure from the self-focused “gravitational pull” of the ego. And yet, these people also understand that this dynamic is actually the greatest of blessings, for they have come to remember that it is the most difficult deeds that are the most potent, and that thus provide the greatest solace while actualized. This is why they exude gently compassionate encouragement to “the downtrodden” & “the ignorant” instead of pity or sympathy; knowing as they do that those who are less fortunate &/or more suffered have actually been offered a far more efficient path to Peace than their more “blessed” compatriots – needing to enliven far lesser acts of generosity during their times of trial to far more purely reawaken the Bliss of their innate Oneness. In essence, those in **Zone 3** are aware that “the meek” have actually already “inherited the earth” – and that they need but act accordingly (by being kind when least inclined) to fully reclaim the same.



Secondly, we look to how enlivening each of the three Zones *differently alters one's mental beliefs & the psychological manifestations* that stem therefrom ...

\*The minds of **Zone 1** patrons are fundamentally ruled by impulse and prejudice (i.e. their emotional reactions, their vacuous convictions, their vapid preconceptions, &/or their selfish desires). In effect, their minds are their masters. Quite differently, the thoughts of **Zone 2** apostles tend to be ruled by hope and inconsistency – repeatedly cycling from feeling meaningless to depressed to curious to intrigued to hopeful to “newly awakened” to disillusioned and back to meaningless again. These individuals futilely attempt to conquer their **Zone 1** emotional reactions by either abjectly ignoring them, intellectually over-analyzing them, &/or counterproductively voicing them.<sup>19</sup> Without any notable or lasting success, these are the ones who try and master their minds. **Zone 3** champions, on the other hand, choose to transcend the mind almost entirely – using its higher functions to make conscious choices in response to emotional stimuli, and yet intentionally doing so in ways that directly contravene (and thereby wholly transcend) the primitive desires of all its lower ones. When the lower mind wishes to fight, **Zone 3** uses the higher mind to understand & be gentle. When the lower mind wishes to condemn, **Zone 3** uses the higher mind to accept & forgive. When the lower mind wishes to avoid, **Zone 3** uses the higher mind to care & be kind. And because it is so difficult to respond in these ways that are anti-instinctual, it is incredibly powerful whenever one chooses to do so. As such, **Zone 3** venturers see their emotional reactions not as enemies to be quelled or defeated but as allies to be harnessed & utilized. In this way, their minds become powerful tools in their quest to bring greater Joy & Harmony – and as such are thereby truly mastered.



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19 NOTE that mentally dissecting &/or verbally expressing one's “emotional truth” is nothing more than choosing to become the same. Saying “I am angry with you” does not lessen or in any way dampen that impulse, and indeed actually serves to entrench & ultimately intensify the same. Voicing one's anger is not “being true to one's feelings,” but rather is making a conscious choice to enliven & further the same.

\***Zone 1** advocates think that awakening means a significant enhancement of their personal wealth &/or inner happiness, and that that they have indeed become “awakened” whenever attaining a noticeable measure of the same. **Zone 2** acolytes, quite differently, believe that awakening requires a significant enhancement in emotional stability & mental calm (both being more often than not little more than their thinly disguised cowardice &/or callousness), and that they themselves have become “awakened” whenever experiencing a noticeable intensification of the same. In stark contrast, supporters of **Zone 3** know that real Awakening is the dramatic escalation of one's ability to effectuate positive change in one's surroundings – a shift that has nothing at all to do with one's level of personal satisfaction or material wealth or mental calm, and everything to do with the purity of one's chosen behaviors. Enlightenment truly comes to those choosing to act for others &/or serve their community; those who reach out when tempted to withdraw or withhold – especially during times of personal discomfort, anger, sadness, or fear; especially when sorely tempted to seek other, more selfish (and thus far less-potent) manifestations of “awakening.”



\***Zone 1** affiliates think that their negative feelings (especially their base-level fear) should be firmly tucked away (a repression that is frequently broadcast via expressions of competitiveness, aggression, bravado, nationalism, &/or bigotry – along with any number of addictive behaviors that harm self &/or others). Using a fully different approach, disciples of **Zone 2** tend to “honor” those feelings by openly announcing them – often doing so via the inherently counterproductive means of “constructive criticism” given to others &/or confessions of guilt, regret, concern, &/or worry offered to others.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, champions of the **Zone 3** alternative understand that it is not necessary to avoid or suppress or even alter feelings that are uncomfortable or unpleasant, and neither is it required to “recognize” the same by immersing oneself therein or voicing the same to others. Rather, such feelings can



be used by the truly Aware person as a tool – as a potent augmentation of one's selfless choices. These individuals know that negative feelings are to be harnessed instead of soothed – indeed, they know that the only way to truly soothe negative emotions *is* to use them to empower subsequent (or even concurrent) deeds of Kindness.

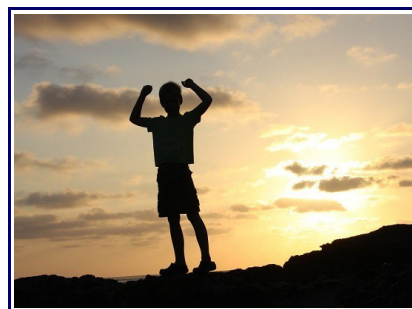
20 Please NOTE that these choices always ultimately backfire – with criticism always being subconsciously received as rejection (and thereby intensifying callousness & neutering the empathy required for true intimacy), and with all expressions of shame (guilt, regret, embarrassment etc) only serving to entrench & even intensify the same low self-esteem that engendered them in the first place. In addition, fear is a mental construct and as such cannot be ameliorated by mental &/or verbal means. Indeed, it is a psychological reality that the more we focus on fear &/or verbally “honoring” (i.e. announcing) the same, the greater our angst becomes. Equally tragic, Zone2 subscribers tend to use these forms of dysfunction to justify their concurrent or subsequent acts of “reasonable selfishness” (including spending “their fair share” of quality time with friends instead of serving their community, establishing “healthy boundaries” against their enemies instead of reaching out to them with forgiveness, and engaging in a callous analysis of strangers instead of extending them courageous kindness).

\***Zone 1** confederates see their life-circumstances as either “blessings” to celebrate or “bad luck” to bemoan – reveling in & seeking to prolong the former, while bemoaning & seeking to eliminate (or cover over, or at least dramatically lessen) the latter. Such people, due to the inherent fleetingness of all things attained & all happenstances experienced, are constantly in at least some state of quite reasonable worry. **Zone 2** crusaders see their circumstances quite differently – namely, their windfalls as rewards that are fully deserved & their misfortunes as challenges to be either conquered or “de-manifested.” Instead of whining alongside their ego, they often choose to chastise &/or seek to alter the same. Also seeking personal fulfillment from external occurrences, **Zone 2** individuals are also subject to incessant worrying, though their angst is significantly dampened – most often by maintaining a staunch faith in the inevitable fulfillment of personal desires &/or the reception of well-earned windfalls. In bold contrast to both of the aforementioned, **Zone 3** contributors see every moment of life as being equally



wondrous – the “good times” as opportunities to share and the times painful or difficult recognized as opportunities to serve others anyway. These are the ones who neither capitulate to the ego nor struggle against it, but rather “befriend” the same – purposefully acting against its worry-based inclinations, and thereby exponentially empowering those same selfless deeds.

\***Zone 1** proponents think that life is compromised of either normal happenstances or random coincidences; with none of either having any “greater meanings” other than those most obvious. A sense of “oneness” with their surroundings is felt during times of immense physical pleasure &/or emotional excitement – moments that are as superficial as they are fleeting. As such, the profound Oneness they seek is never truly known. These people confuse real Interconnectedness with mere comfort. **Zone 2** devotees, while also subscribing to the view that life is mostly compromised of “the everyday,” believe that life is sprinkled with instances that are objectively meaningful – “amazing” interactions that simply “happen to us” at random, &/or wondrous encounters that the “enlightened” summon via intense focus &/or devout prayer. For these people, true Oneness is intellectually believed and at times emotionally “tasted,” yet never fully experienced. They confuse true Interconnectedness with heartfelt attention. In scintillating contrast, **Zone 3** enliveners know that each & every moment is overflowing with latent Meaning – waiting to be consciously noticed, lovingly chosen, and courageously acted upon. To such people, Oneness is not something to be merely mentally wished for or emotionally felt, but rather is something to be experienced – something to be enlivened – something to be made boldly real. These are the individuals who know that Interconnectedness is the ultimate Truth – the inalienable reality of their lives – and as such they choose to act accordingly.

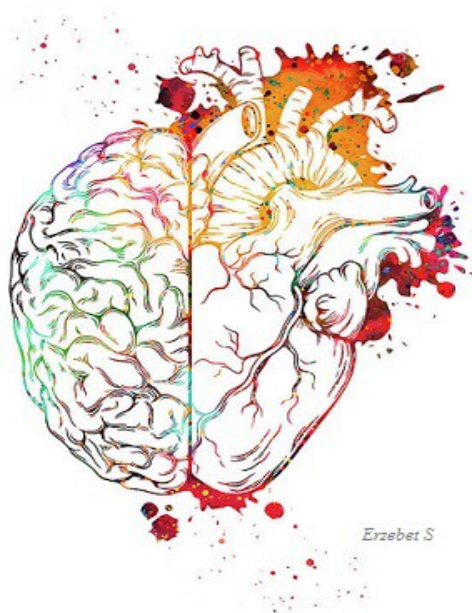


\*In essence, while **Zone 1** backers are motivated by their desire to live a long & comfort-laden life (one filled with an emotional “happiness” that is ever-fleeting &/or a material abundance that is innately hollow), **Zone 2** followers tend to be moved by desires for a life of “greater meaning” (one that is “more understanding” – and therefore more passive, &/or one that is more mentally calm – and therefore more emotionally distanced). **Zone 3** adherents, on the other hand, are inspired by their heartfelt Compassion for others, and thereby encouraged to engage them accordingly.

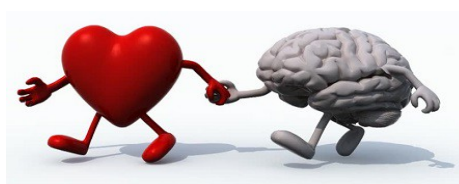


Finally, taking the aforementioned information into account, we can see how the three Zones each lead to very **different behaviors & ways of interacting** with others ...

\*While all three alternatives believe in the sanctity of the mind and its ability to adhere to the subtle advice of “the gut,” they each actualize the same along distinctly varied avenues. Whereas **Zone 1** advocates think the mind is a tool used for observing one’s surroundings and “the gut” is the portion thereof that yearns for security & comfort (primarily using fear to steer the mind’s decisions), **Zone 2** acolytes believe that the mind is a tool to be used primarily for observing oneself and that “the gut” is the portion thereof that desires awakening & understanding (most often acquired via passive learning &/or meditative pondering) ...



**Zone 3** assistants, on the other hand, know that the mind is a tool of transcendence and “the gut” is our conscient guide thereto. For while the more primitive portion of the mind tempts us into accepting a dualistic, conflict-based view of our encounters, our brains’ “higher” functions allow us to see others as intrinsic allies anyway. Likewise, while the more primitive facets of our “gut” tempt us react in fear-founded ways designed to ensure our own survival &/or success, our brains’ most “enlightened” feature unifies the inclinations of the Heart & the mind; yearning solely for us to become active agents of the Whole, and allowing us to pro-act choices designed to assist others accordingly.



\***Zone 1** affiliates continually strive for – and thereby regularly attain – enhanced measures of material wealth &/or emotional satisfaction; a practice which leads them to get regularly “drunk” on pleasure &/or ease (and just as regularly experience great suffering when the same inevitably fade away). Divergently, **Zone 2** disciples frequently work towards – and thereby occasionally experience – the personal peace &/or inner calm of “spiritual wealth;” a tendency which leads them to get consistently “drunk” on knowledge &/or “emptiness” (and just as often feel the great disappointment that inevitably arrives when those promises prove fleeting & hollow). **Zone 3** enthusiasts, on the other hand, neither work towards nor strive for anything; seeking instead to simply be the most potent force for Good – to do the most Good they can, with whatever they already possess, wherever they already are; a practice that has them repeatedly “drunk” on unconditional Love. And it is just such a mindset that brings the greatest wealth possible – societal wealth; an overflowing abundance of Gratitude in times of harmony, Peace in times of conflict, and Joy in times of despair.



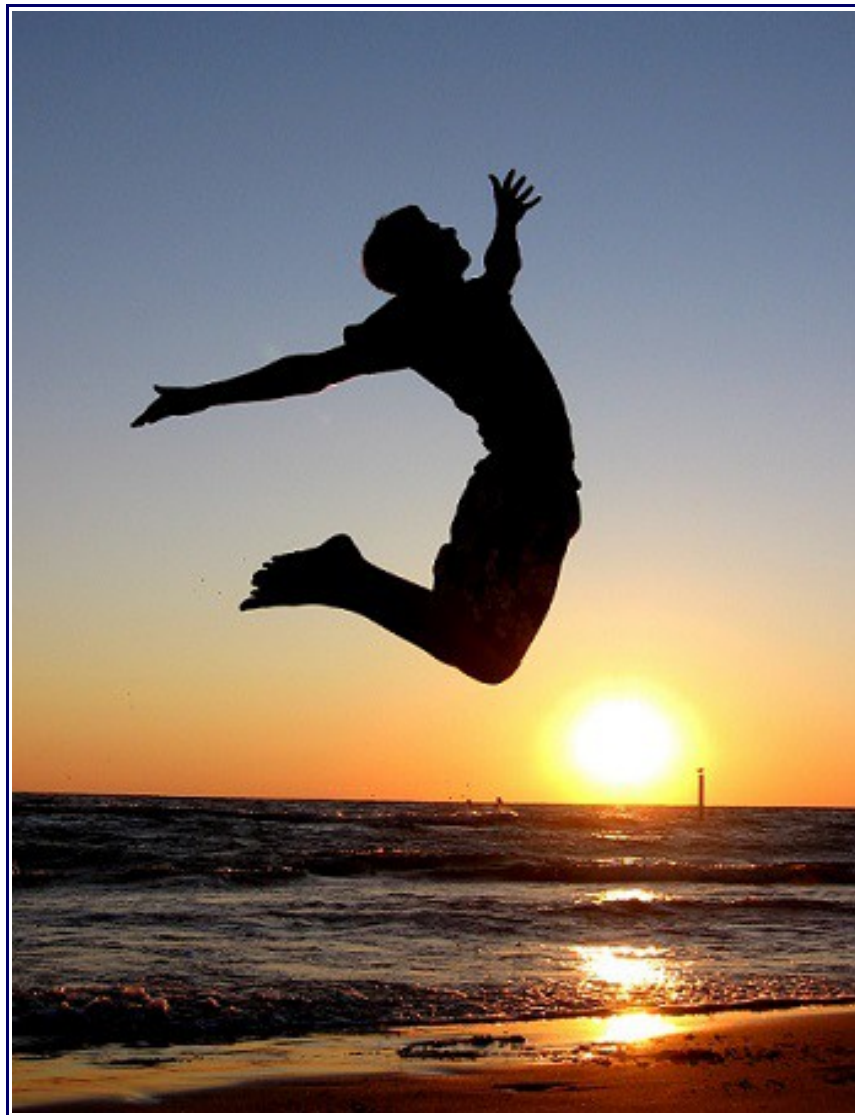
\***Zone 1** proponents feel victimized by their times of loss or failure, and use hedonistic coping mechanisms (e.g. substance abuse, complaining, gossiping, moping etc) in response. **Zone 2** devotees feel subjugated by their frustrations & disappointments, and employ “healthier” coping mechanisms (coldly erecting “healthy boundaries” against their enemies, callously avoiding strangers & other uncomfortable individuals, naively getting lost in the next “self help” book etc) to deal with them. **Zone 3** champions, in bold contrast, steadfastly refuse to “cope” at all. The circumstances of their lives – however daunting or grave they might seem to be – are always humbly acknowledged, willingly accepted, and courageously engaged. “Coping” is a patently self-focused mentality, and as such cannot hope to do anything but intensify the self-founded difficulties that inspired the same. We have not been called to “cope” with our trials & tragedies, but rather are ever-invited to selflessly transcend the same.



\***Zone 1** patrons observe their world through lenses that are inherently judgmental – “seeing” themselves interacting with others; aligning themselves with those who are “nice” &/or friendly, and rejecting (via withdrawal, condemnation, &/or attack) those who transgress against them (those “mean” &/or manipulative). These are the ones who feel justified in “crucifying” their enemies. **Zone 2** followers, on another hand, gaze through lenses that are often detached &/or condescending – “understanding” the Oneness that surrounds them, all while interacting with the same as a separately independent (and thus “more important”) self. Such people align themselves with those who are like-minded &/or are “on the same level,” and “care” for their enemies (&/or “forgive” their transgressors) out of a sense of moral obligation (or hopes for spiritual reciprocity) instead of sincere compassion. Indeed, these are the ones who feebly abandon all of life's potential “crucifixions” (championing the call to “mind their own business” in order to “tend their own gardens” instead). The perceptions of **Zone 3** adherents, with shining distinction, are untainted by self-interest. Their observance of others is simultaneously detached from judgment and immersed in empathy; leading them to actively engage others as opposed to merely criticizing, analyzing, &/or noticing them. They know themselves to be living, breathing agents of “the Divine” and thus interact with others accordingly – feeling a heartfelt allegiance with all their sentient brothers & sisters (regardless of another's politics, religion, &/or species); melding friends and enemies into One (with the former being known as blessings, and the latter being recognized as opportunities to Care anyway). These are the ones who refuse to “crucify” others (i.e. refuse to attack or criticize or ignore or condemn) while ever-looking for chances to “crucify” themselves (i.e. serve others anonymously &/or self-sacrificially – Caring for others without “caring” at all about the consequences to self of the same).



*“This waking up is very simple. For it is not some fantastic, spectacular, one-time event accompanied by blaring trumpets and exploding fireworks. Nor is it any sort of personal achievement. In truth, most of us miss Enlightenment entirely, and we do so because we’re looking for something extraordinary; something amazing; something that will wake us up and enhance our sense of self. And yet with any real Awakening, there is no separation between ‘me’ and you,’ so there is no longer any impulse or desire to say that I no longer identify as ‘me,’ or that I still identify you as ‘you.’ Indeed, in any state of Enlightenment that is in any way smooth & true, all desires and all fears related to ‘me’ or ‘you’ (or anyone else) completely disappear. In these moments of purity, ‘you’ and ‘I’ become ‘us,’ (and all others become ‘we’), and we cannot help but live accordingly thereafter. All of life becomes deeply intimate – because none of it remains personal.” ~ inspired by Joan Tollifson*





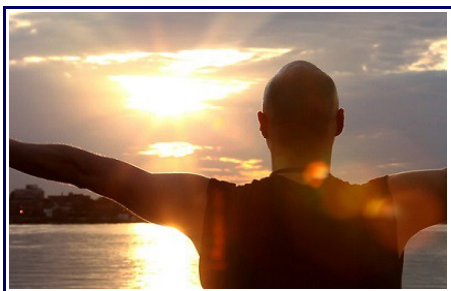
## Chapter 15: Different paths to Enlightenment

The fundamental question facing anyone looking to become “more enlightened” is not whether life's negative challenges must be removed or mitigated, but rather *how* to go about doing so. Each of the three different Zones of Being goes deals with the limitations pain & frustration & confusion in very different ways; each having very different results. As such, for those interested in setting forth on a new journey to a deeper Enlightenment, feel free to humbly ponder & then courageously pro-act the following ...

\*Initially, those partaking of **Zone 1** principles tackle their difficulties with a never-ending cycle of struggle – a cycle that seeks to destroy enemies forcefully &/or eliminate pain & frustration directly. This tactic is ultimately futile, of course (as enemies always defend themselves and grow stronger after being attacked, and difficulties inevitably resurface after being seemingly “extinguished”), and always leads to exhaustion &/or more suffering. **Zone 2** followers, on the other hand, attempt to conquer their troubles by avoiding &/or “climbing above” them (e.g. pondering or learning about life's “bigger truths,” diving deeper into one's own thoughts or feelings, establishing “healthy boundaries” against the uncomfortable, &/or surrounding oneself with “good people”). This path is a complicated one with no actual end-destination, and as such proves to be arduous & difficult to follow; leading its travelers to ultimately experience an increase in their pain & suffering as well. In great contrast, **Zone 3** participants neither “tackle” nor attempt to defeat their challenges at all; preferring instead to harness the innate potency of the same for the greater Good. These are the ones who know that Enlightenment is not a journey of any distance, nor does it require any large investments of time or energy. They have come to understand that real Enlightenment is fully available in every moment (especially moments of trial or trauma) and that it can be instantaneously accessed therein. It is not a drawn-out struggle but a moment-to-moment choice – a single choice to transcend the selfish instincts boomed by the ego and replace them with the selfless inclinations ever-whispered by one's Soul (a.k.a. one's conscience).



\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates attempt to access “enlightenment” via material possessions &/or emotional interactions, **Zone 2** acolytes attempt the same using their minds (via reading self-help literature, learning from masters, listening to gurus, &/or meditatively “going within”). **Zone 3** assistants, quite differently, access their



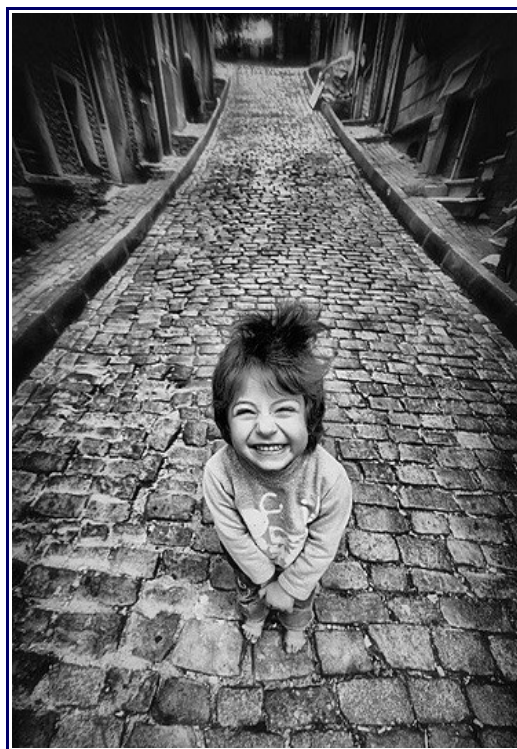
Enlightenment with their actions – choices made for others instead of self; deeds soaked in caring instead of contemplation. These are the ones who understand that Enlightenment comes from intimate Interconnection; a Oneness that can only arrive when one's compassionate emotions, loving intentions, and gentle actions exist in harmony with one another.

\***Zone 1** affiliates think that Enlightenment is an all-but-impossible journey; that we are all essentially “only human” and that only the very few are blessed with the rare circumstances required to attain a true Awakening. **Zone 2** disciples, on the other hand, believe that Enlightenment is an arduous journey, and yet one that can be completed by all – though only via large payments of effort over extended periods of time (and often only when accompanied &/or guided by a “master”). **Zone 3** enthusiasts, in a very different manner, know that Enlightenment has nothing to do with the good fortune of one's circumstances or the content of one's actions, but rather hinges on the intention with which one interacts with others. These individuals understand that real Awakening is not a journey at all, but rather arrives smoothly & full-fledged during every instant of courageous caring. These are the ones who know that attempts to create or attain or arrive at what isn't must be replaced by deeds that enhance the harmony of what *is*. These are the ones who know that Enlightenment is not a journey of a thousand steps, but rather is completely & almost effortlessly realized during every gently loving stride –



especially the ones that are terrifying &/or difficult to make. Without worry over possible consequences or concern over “attaining enlightenment,” they simply do what can be done – wherever they already are, for whomever is already at hand, and with whatever they have do it. This is what it means to truly “go with the flow” – this is what it means to be truly Enlightened.

\*While **Zone 1** patrons deeply sink into their dualistic dogmas, comfortable convictions, &/or bigoted beliefs (a tendency that has them attacking or denigrating those of unlike mind, and only feeling “love” for themselves &/or their friends), **Zone 2** devotees tend to openly abandon objective Truth altogether (a mindset that leads to a watering down of Love – via passively accepting of others' harmful actions &/or feebly justifying one's own). In glorious contrast, champions of **Zone 3** champions know that, while most opinions cannot be fully proven and most truths cannot be concretely known, real Love (i.e. affection that is given humbly, gently, actively, and self-sacrificially) always bears the fruits of enhanced Peace and intensified Joy. It always brings greater harmony when practiced, and as such is the only Truth worth embodying.



\*Whereas **Zone 1** proponents delight in things that are valuable &/or pleasurable and see their environment as something to be physically influenced, manipulated, &/or dominated for personal gain (and in alignment with cultural expectations & traditional norms – what could be termed “The Power of Mao”), **Zone 2** confederates delight in things that are intriguing &/or insightful and interact with their environment with intense mental focus &/or manifested inner calm (often while intentionally flowing against the grain of societal expectations – what some New Age gurus call “The Power of Now”). In bold contrast, **Zone 3** enliveners delight in interacting with others – either to relieve their burdens or to enhance their joys. They know their environment as something to be humbly appreciated & courageously harnessed (and this, with no regard whatsoever for their surrounding society's usual hopes or encouragements; serving wherever it might be of benefit; giving that which is most difficult to give to those “least deserving” of the same – what the truly Enlightened might call “The Power of How”).



\***Zone 1** backers think that making kind &/or selfless choices is a “personal sacrifice” that depletes their resources and weakens them. **Zone 2** followers, quite differently, believe that making similar decisions is a “moral duty” that depletes their resources and yet strengthens them. **Zone 3** adherents, in far greater contrast, see kind &/or selfless choices themselves as their greatest asset; a resource that actually expands while being extended to others, and the only resource worth maintaining at all. These individuals know that choosing to actively care in a willingly self-sacrificial manner makes ones own strength or weakness completely irrelevant – seeing as how one can always give greatly in times of abundance, and one can always give powerfully in any time of lack.



\*In contrast to **Zone 1** servants (who strive to fulfill their personal desires or avoid their greatest fears) and **Zone 2** accomplices (who seek to cleanse themselves of both base desires and primal fears), supporters of the **Zone 3** way of living actively transcend their self-centered yearnings by replacing them with desires more noble – the desire to sacrifice for others; the desire to bring love to all enemies; the desire to show kindness to strangers; the desire to serve one's community.



\*Insomuch as **Zone 1** satellites fight against what they judge to be “evil” (desiring it to be “weeded out,” punished, &/or destroyed) and feel that Love is useless when employed against it, **Zone 2** crusaders tend to merely observe the “evil” around them (believing that it will inevitably be crushed by the greater Universe without any help or effort on their part) and feeling that Love is dangerous &/or even irresponsible when offered to the same. **Zone 3** participants, in glowing contrast, choose to extend seemingly “evil” beings open expressions of generosity & kindness. These are the ones who know that acts of genuine Love – deeds of caring gentleness that are as effusive as they are unconditional – are always incredibly effective when given to those who seem dysfunctional, destructive, &/or discordant. Firstly, those perceived to be “evil” are merely people who are embodying an extremely low sense of self-esteem – one that invariably stems from a lack of unconditional regard received during their formative years. This is why all forms of judgment &/or attack only serve to encourage even worse behavior from such individuals (by further entrenching the low sense of self-worth that inspired the “evil” in the first place), and this is why any expression of unconditional Love ultimately encourages these people to alter their behaviors in a more positive (i.e. a less harmful) direction, Secondly, all those in the vicinity of such acts of selfless kindness limbically feel the “correctness” of such actions (with all those in the vicinity being deeply moved by such courageous expressions of unity, and all those directly witnessing the same being inspired to behave likewise towards their own “enemies”); meaning that the community at large will inevitably experience less dislike, less aggression, and less violence (and thereby more peace, more affection, and more harmony) as a result of that Loving gesture – and this, even if the direct recipient thereof proves temporarily resistant to the same. Yes, it might be true that the far greater “flow” of the far greater Cosmos might very well one day “iron out” all discord, and yet we would all do well to remember that in the meantime we have all been given the great privilege of helping the same to actualize the same.

*“Run from what’s comfortable ... Forget safety ... Live where you fear to live. Disregard your reputation ... Be notorious. Sing like the birds sing; not worrying about who hears or what they think. Indeed, why stay at the bottom of a well, when such a strong rope rests in your hand? ... Worry not, for in the very moment you set forth to boldly walk upon the path, your true Way will appear underfoot.” ~ via Rumi*

\*While **Zone 1** affiliates think that their circumstances must change for them to attain true happiness and **Zone 2** disciples feel that their consciousness must evolve in order to experience “real enlightenment,” **Zone 3** enthusiasts know better – namely, that it is their actions that must shift in order to become truly Enlightened (and thereby know the peace & empowerment that comes therewith). Indeed, despite popular **Zone 1** beliefs to the contrary, bettering one's circumstances (i.e. more material comfort &/or less emotional dis-ease) actually *prevents* the attainment of deep-seated Peace (the Peace that can only come to those choosing to *transcend* their difficulties or fears, not to those who strive to decrease or dismiss the same). Just as important (and just as contrary to common **Zone 2** understanding) is the little-known truth that a significant expansion of consciousness cannot occur at all without beforehand choosing a dramatic evolution of the intentions underlying one's choices (which often engender a blatant shift in their ensuing behaviors as well). It is not enough for us to wish for a better reality or intensely manifest a better one. No – in order to enliven the greatest version of ourselves (and thereby the most Meaning-full version of our lives) **Zone 3** enliveners know that we must choose to fully embody our highest ethics. We must choose to become the change we wish to see – We must choose to boldly embody harmony and compassionately defend justice – We must choose to treat others not how they “deserve” to be treated (or how we wish they would treat us), but rather how they *should* be treated – namely, with the same gentle kindness that they all innately deserve (and this, regardless of the often bigoted dogmas &/or regularly selfish decisions that indicate otherwise). It is challenging to bring peaceful thoughts to bear on troubling times, and as such the same can help to bring a greater-yet-fleeting calm to one's life. That having been said, it is extremely difficult (if not downright terrifying) to perform caring deeds during times of distress or conflict, and as such it is only via the same that any profound transformation – of self, of others, &/or of community – can transpire.



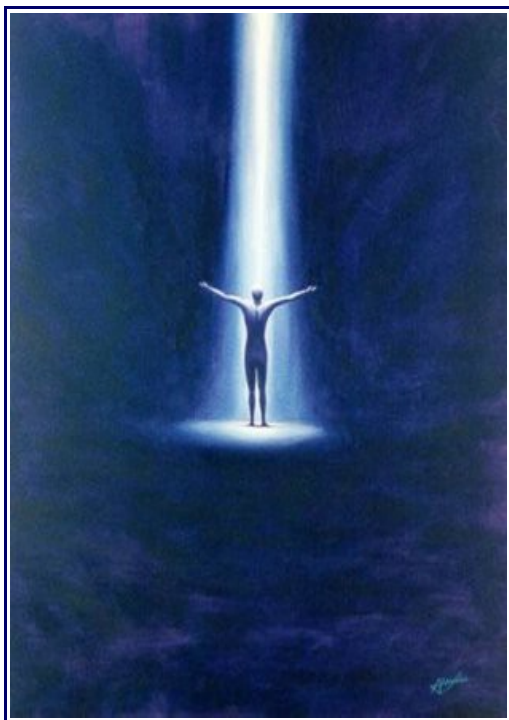
*"Two roads diverged in a wood ... I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." ~ Robert Frost*

*“Enlightenment is actually not a goal to be attained but a state of being to be repeatedly rediscovered; a state of being found at the very beginning of your awakening, not at its end. Just as real, there is no ready-made path leading thereto. In truth, you must first steadfastly walk your Way to create it by your walking. Enlightenment is ever-present – like the sky, where the birds fly boldly, but leave no footprints. And like the birds, you have not trail left by others to follow. Like the birds, you must leap before you can soar therein.” ~ inspired by Kim Chestney & Osho*

## Chapter 16: Different paths; different Ends

It can come as little surprise to learn that the three Zones of Being not only manifest dramatically different characteristics while being enlivened by their respective members, but also engender dramatically different consequences (for self & for others) thereafter. When choosing any path's new beginning, it can be most helpful to know of its probable end. With this in mind, feel free to humbly ponder (& then courageously pro-act) the following ...

\*While **Zone 1** advocates think that a “successful life” is one regularly filled with emotional happiness (most often achieved via greater accumulations of wealth, pleasure, ease, &/or comfort ... Such a “good life” is impossible to sustain even when occasionally acquired, and as such is a life that inevitably becomes a source of despair or frustration whether found or lost or found again) and **Zone 2** acolytes believe that “success” comes from attaining a greater measure of “inner peace” (often via intense immersions into “self love” – meditation, visualization, affirmation, therapy sessions, “enlightened” literature etc. This is a life that seems to steadily approach “sainthood” and yet is a life that, due to its requisite soaking in self-centeredness, can never hope to attain any measure of the same), **Zone 3** adherents are those who know real Success – a moment-by-moment rediscovery of personal perfection; a life repetitively ladled with deeds of unconditional Love & humble Kindness. Of these people, the journey knows no end – or, better stated, each & every decision to “Care anyway” becomes its own glorious destination.



\*Whereas **Zone 1** affiliates end up striving incessantly to attain desires &/or avoid their fears (a lifestyle that repeatedly leads to fits of exhaustion that require either physical rest &/or chemical reinvigoration) and **Zone 2** disciples end up struggling regularly to achieve “higher” versions of the same (a choice that ultimately leads to bouts of fatigue &/or frustration that require either doses of “self love” &/or infusions of “balance”), **Zone 3** enthusiasts refuse to strive or struggle at all; seeing their lives as a string of indelible instant – an almost infinite line of independent opportunities to serve others (*not* as a journey towards “becoming happy” or “getting better”). For these people, Love is given spontaneously & freely & fully – a choice that releases them from the energy-sucking shackles of fear and opens up vast resources of previously repressed power.

\*Though **Zone 1** patrons cave in to in the yearnings of the self (e.g. material comfort, emotional pleasure, the safety of friends, a stable sense of personal identity) and **Zone 2** followers often strive to dismiss &/or dismantle the self entirely (by “being present” &/or engaging “thoughtlessness” &/or actualizing their “Christ consciousness”), **Zone 3** champions know that there is more than one self within – that there is a higher, truer Self at the very center of their being; that their mission is not to either submit to or “defeat” the ego-self, but rather to sink that ego into the other, greater Self –



to use the selfish temptations of the former to empower the selfless inclinations of the latter. These are the ones who have awakened their power to re-member (and thereby repeatedly re-experience) the Oneness they have known since their toddlerhood. They know & recognize the same in every one of their encounters – and as such repeatedly choose with an according sense of compassion & generosity.

\*Whereas **Zone 1** proponents think that life ends with the death of the body (&/or the salvation or damnation of the Soul – a state of being where the individual “drop” that was the individual remains an independent traveler for eternity) and **Zone 2** devotees believe that life truly begins with the “death” of the self (and the supposedly ensuing peace that comes from “finally understanding it all” – a state of being where the “drop” that was the individual becomes unified with the portion of the cosmic “ocean” that is like &/or familiar), **Zone 3** contributors know that life ends & begins anew in each moment of willing self-sacrifice; in each moment where an individual intentionally sets aside all personal wants in favor of becoming an active embodiment of the Whole (the state of Being where the individual has infused his or her seemingly independent “drop” fully & completely into the “ocean” nearest by – and thereby become One with the same). These are the ones who have finally come to understand that there is no final destination on the journey of Enlightenment. These are the ones who have come to re-member that Enlightenment exists only in the moment it is enlivened, and that it must be subsequently & repeatedly re-chosen in order to subsequently & lastingly Be.

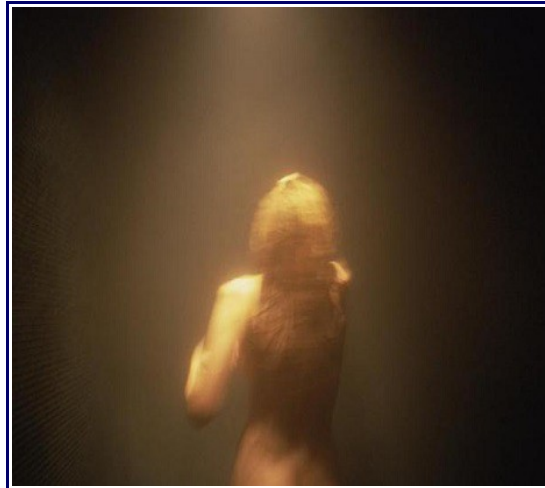




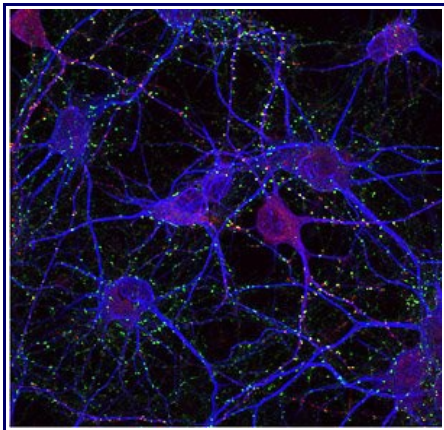
## Chapter 17: How the paths affect the body

Depending upon which Zone of Being a person happens to choose in any given moment, its unique path will have specific consequences for one's body and state of physical well-being. As such, in the interest of potentially choosing a life of far greater Wholeness – and thereby one of far greater health – feel free to humbly ponder (& even courageously pro-act) the following ...

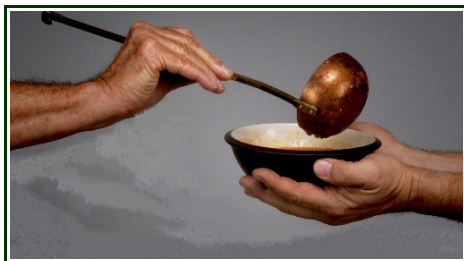
\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates see the human body as being relatively weak and innately ineffective – and therefore feel obligated to dedicate significant time & resources towards its physical maintenance & replenishment, **Zone 2** acolytes believe the body to be potentially strong & potent – therefore expending great amounts of energy (physical as well as mental) to make “steady progress” towards the realization of the same. In stark contrast, **Zone 3** assistants know that real Power is always available – that the human body requires neither cyclical recuperation nor gradual strengthening to one day enliven the same. Indeed, those truly Enlightened understand that we are never potentially stronger than in our weakest moments; that true Strength comes from Caring selflessly – and that we are never more energized or potent than in those moments when our deeds are most difficult to do and yet are done anyway. For those choosing to act as a humble-yet-courageous agent of their environment, energy flows over & through them from their environment as much as it wells up from within. This is why those making such choices know neither weakness nor fatigue, and this is why their deeds prove to be transformative of self & surroundings.



\*While actualized **Zone 1** impulses cause DNA codons to contract & shrivel (entrenching selfishness & intensifying fear, and thereby lessening the likelihood that one engages future encounters with empathy &/or intimacy) and enacted **Zone 2** decisions make their DNA codons cyclically “throb” – repeatedly expanding & receding (intensifying the focus upon “the awakener,” and thereby causing expressions of empathy &/or intimacy to stagnate and become distanced &/or callous). In gorgeous contrast, **Zone 3** choices are those that cause DNA codons to blossom & become more deeply intertwined – a manifestation that allows empathy to deepen and expressions of intimacy to become both more frequent & more intense.



\*Though the striving of **Zone 1** affiliates causes them to regularly experience exhaustion, illness, injury, and premature death, the more mental struggles of **Zone 2** disciples are frequently inflicted with the lesser-but-similar sufferings of fatigue & various stress-related illnesses (caused by regular bouts of despondency, agitation, and despair). Quite differently, **Zone 3** enthusiasts – having left all striving for comfort or struggling for “inner peace” behind – simply Care for the others around them (especially – & especially potently – in those moments when physically



exhausted or ill or injured, &/or emotionally afraid or angry or sad); doing whatever they can with whatever is available for those closest by. As such, they waste no energy on futile crusades for personal empowerment, and as such – quite ironically – come to know the most profound levels of health and contentment.

\*Whereas **Zone 1** proponents overtly flee from pain & cling to pleasure (inevitably intensifying the former & dampening the latter – leading to an *increase* in suffering), **Zone 2** devotees do so more subtly – rationalizing their “fair share” of material wealth, discarding their discordant relationships, &/or immersing themselves futilely in innately destination-less searches for “inner peace” &/or “intellectual enlightenment” (practices that ultimately intensify one's suffering – invariably entrenching the focus on self, and therefore inevitably distancing that self from others). **Zone 3** participants, on the other hand, exert themselves in the opposite direction – giving instead of attaining – and thereby experience opposing results: real Wealth that comes from giving to the downtrodden, real Joy that comes from being kind to strangers, and real peace that comes from openly caring for enemies. Practices performed for “self help” or “spiritual advancement” are released & replaced by those that serve the community &/or sacrifice for others – a lifestyle that inadvertently-yet-potently allows one's own sense of strength, health, and sense of physical well-being to blossom far more fully than it otherwise could.



\*While **Zone 1** backers think that they are their bodies and **Zone 2** followers believe that their bodies are merely the physical shells “transporting” their Souls (both errant philosophies – philosophies that are innately self-centered and thus distance them from others, and philosophies that thereby distance them from knowing any semblance of real Joy &/or profound Contentment), **Zone 3** adherents understand a far greater Truth of their far greater Selves – namely, that they are a small-yet-significant facet of the greater Whole; that even though their bodies might seem independent & separate from the others in their surroundings, they are actually intimately interconnected with the same (physiologically as well as energetically).<sup>21</sup> This greater awareness – the acute comprehension that one's “Soul” (or conscient consciousness) is intimately connected with the body that houses it, *and* that the body is deeply intertwined with all other entities nearby – repeatedly inspires these individuals to act accordingly with pure humility & great boldness (and thus with pure generosity & great power); a choice that is flows spontaneously through each moment (causing far less harm to self & others) and one that dampens conflict (and enhances harmony) in any encounter – as such a choice that enhances the health & well-being of all thereby.



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21 The intricate interplay between each physical body and his or her surroundings (e.g. the waves of radiant heat emanating from warm-blooded beings, the ionized “olfactory bubble” surrounding every emitter of sweat &/or pheromones, the electromagnetic cloud that surrounds all animate entities, the heart-generated frequency-field that radiates forth from all sentient animals, the CO<sub>2</sub> trail that follows every breathing being etc) is readily apparent – with but a calm intensification of one's focus required to bring the same into clear awareness.

*“For peace to fully reign, the power of unconditional Love must overcome the love of unfettered power.” ~ via Mahatma Gandhi*

## Chapter 18: How the paths affect the mind

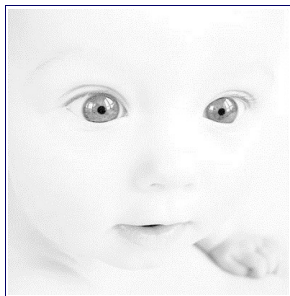
Similarly to how differently the three Zones of Being affect the body is how differently they affect the mind. With this in mind, and in the hopes of offering a fresh alternative that can provide an enhanced state of mental wholeness, feel free to humbly ponder (& courageously pro-act) the following ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates are trapped by their minds' endless drive to seek personal security or benefit (extended survival &/or enhanced comfort) – an ultimately futile endeavor that always leads to frustration, anxiety, despondency, and despair, **Zone 2** acolytes are ruled by similarly dysfunctional thought patterns (e.g. the need to “better understand” their situation &/or “co-create” a better one) – a similarly useless undertaking that invariably engenders feelings of callousness, meaninglessness, frustration, lack, and sadness. In wonderful contrast, the assistants of the **Zone 3** alternative choose to transcend both of the aforementioned failures by harnessing the same. They know that the ultimate solution to all states of mental dis-ease is not found by crushing or quelling or bypassing them, but rather in using them to empower one's concurrent & subsequent choices – choices that seek to forgive when feeling attacked, to care when feeling anxious, to give when feeling unable, and to serve when feeling weak or otherwise deficient. For it is these choices and these choices alone that allow real Intimacy & Empathy into one's interactions with others, and as such bring true Meaning & emPowerment to one's living. Indeed, it is these choices & these choices alone that send all negative thoughts & emotions into the background, and allow feelings of blissful Peace & Joy to blossom into the fore.

\***Zone 1** affiliates focus on navigating life's pitfalls in order to create a more pleasurable future for themselves (a fear-based mindset that has them reacting emotionally to external stimuli – fleeing perceived “dangers” and running to known comforts). They are angry &/or terrified during times of trauma or chaos. Somewhat similarly, **Zone 2** disciples focus on avoiding personal failures in order to manifest a more peaceful future for themselves (also a fear-founded mindset, though one that has them reacting mentally to life's happenstances – defending themselves against perceived dangers & immersing themselves in familiar beliefs). They are callous &/or disengaged (a.k.a. “observant” or analytical) during times of trauma or chaos. **Zone 3** enthusiasts, in enlightened contrast, focus solely on their immediate Here&Now and what they can do to enhance the harmony of the same. These are the ones who calmly smile in times of trauma or chaos, because these are the ones who choose to pro-act selflessly to those circumstances – doing so *while* they instinctively/emotionally react to the same. In this way, all moments that would normally be deemed “sad” or “infuriating” or “scary” become cherished opportunities instead – blessed chances for one's Love to become transformatively potent instead of powerlessly dormant.



\***Zone 1** “awakens” its practitioners to “societal consciousness” (via the “productive” &/or “appropriate” fulfillment of cultural traditions & communal expectations). These are the ones who judge the familiar as being “boring” or who do not notice the familiar at all. These are the ones who remain distracted by their goals &/or “problems;” the ones who see a flower as “only a flower” (or a stranger as “just another person”) and pass it by. Their **Zone 2** counterparts, in slight difference, “awaken” a bit more fully (to a consciousness that is more present, more clear, &/or more personal – a state of slightly enhanced calm that often challenges or disrupts social norms in favor of enlivening a “better way”). These are the ones who intellectually understand that everything is innately wondrous and that all beings are inherently worthy, and yet these are also the ones who refuse to act boldly on those beliefs – preferring to mentally masticate upon them or verbally champion them instead. These are the ones who remain focused upon “self improvement” &/or “attaining enlightenment;” the ones who see a flower (or a stranger) and merely mentally acknowledge it to be a “beautiful” portion of their surroundings. **Zone 3**, in bold contrast, grants its practitioners access to a “Universal consciousness” – to the Truth that all sentient



beings are members of the same Family, and to the Power that comes when acting accordingly. These are the ones who fully comprehend the innately interconnected nature of all those they encounter. These are the ones who dismiss personal fears & set aside personal goals in favor of dampening the fears of others &/or helping to fulfill their needs; the ones who see a flower (or a stranger) and pause to caress it gently &/or water it lovingly.

\*Though **Zone 1** patrons think that their ideas & beliefs are obviously right and that those of their opponents are blatantly wrong (a trait that often leads them to be aggressive, brash, harsh, &/or hypercritical towards the latter). **Zone 2** minions vary significantly in that they believe that those of unlike mind (be they annoyances, enemies, or competitors) merit at least a modicum of external respect and therefore tend to exude a form of token humility (via tact or politeness or sympathy or pity) when confronted with the same. Of course, these people do so quite superficially; still believing that they are correct and that their opponents are much less so – a mentality often revealed by the polite piousness of their religious convictions, the condescending callousness of their intellectual prowess, &/or the determined doggedness of their political certainties. **Zone 3** champions, quite differently indeed, choose to be “as humble as a toddler” – embracing the innate correctness of unconditional Love whenever it is given, while staunchly refusing to passionately preach or argue or persuade or even encourage others with regard to that inalienable Rightness. These are the ones who believe devoutly in the power of radical Kindness, and who let their courageously gentle actions do most of their relaying of the same.



\*Whereas **Zone 1** proponents are certain of life's certainties (displayed via their arrogance, indignation, zealotry, or even bigotry related to their beliefs, &/or the overt pride they display for their “personal achievements”) and **Zone 2** devotees tend to be certain of life's uncertainty (i.e. that reality is impossible to ascertain &/or that Right Action is impossible to know – beliefs used to smugly appreciate their individual accomplishments, rationalize their selfish efforts towards “self help,” &/or justify their lack of effort made for the benefit of others), **Zone 3** contributors dismiss all forms of mental certainty in favor of caring boldly (almost recklessly) for any & all nearby – being deferential in times of “success” & generous in times of “failure,” and then allowing the various outcomes of those caring deeds determine their “correctness” after the fact.



\*While the thoughts of **Zone 1** backers are drenched in either the past (often in nostalgia or regret) or the future (often in hope or worry) and the minds of **Zone 2** followers attempt to inactively soak in the present moment (&/or strive to “return to the now”), **Zone 3** adherents are deeply & actively engaged with their surroundings – immersing themselves spontaneously & intentionally & intimately & caringly into the lives of others around them; doing whatever they can to enhance the Harmony &/or the Peace &/or the Joy of the same.



\*Servants of the **Zone 1** philosophy are driven to strengthen their bonds to “the herd” (those of like-mind &/or similar values – primarily friends & family members – who openly support &/or defend them) and make the same as large &/or powerful a group as possible. They feel truly “free” whenever they are readily able to harvest personal wealth or pleasure &/or openly enliven comfortable beliefs. **Zone 2** accomplices, quite differently, maintain a mindset that is driven to improve the quality of their particular “herd” more than its potency (i.e. still those of like-mind, and yet those of a like mind that is “wiser” or “smarter” or “more advanced”). They feel truly “free” whenever readily able to openly espouse older beliefs &/or devoutly learn about newer ones. **Zone 3** participants, contrastingly, expand the boundaries of their “herd” well beyond traditional labels of “friend or foe” and well beyond traditional requirements of “having a like mind.” These are the ones who have come to realize that *all* sentient beings – regardless of differing beliefs or behaviors – are their beloved brethren, and these are the ones who have the courage to treat *all* of them accordingly. These are the ones who are free from “freedom” – the ones whose perceived “freedom” has nothing to do with feeling any lack of circumstantial constraints, and everything to do with choosing to boldly Care for others regardless of the same.



*“I’m simply saying that there is a way to be truly sane; simply saying you can be easily rid of the insanity created by all the non-functioning patterns of old thought and past deed still residing within you. And it is important to understand that doing so comes **not** from being a mere witness to your thinking; nor can it arrive by merely sitting silently and 'being in the moment.' No, becoming truly lucid to your True Self requires not only ceasing to judge, but also ceasing to judge judgment itself – for it is a state of selfless Being that only comes when one is enacting a selfless state of Doing. Indeed, the only 'pure witness' to your highest Self is the witness that stops merely witnessing life and starts radically living it. For the moment you are merely saying 'That is Good' is also the moment you are not performing that same Goodness. Merely acknowledging that a thing or a belief can bring others Peace or Joy is itself a form of insanity. It is only in enlivening the same that real sanity can return.” ~ inspired by Osho*

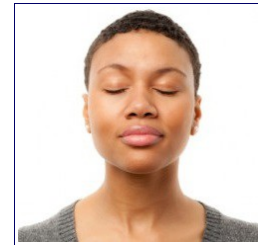


# Chapter 19: Various reasons for Beginning

(the differing inspirations behind journeying beyond the primitive)

Each of three Zones of Being are actualized by uniquely different underlying intentions. As such, it is only possible to truly alter your actions' outcomes after first altering the motivations that inspire & fuel those choices. With this in mind, feel free to humbly ponder (& thereafter courageously pro-act) the following ...

\***Zone 1** advocates think that no one is “summoned” or asked or even offered to be or do anything in particular. They are certain that they are ultimately alone in their individual lives and can essentially do whatever they desire. As such, these are the ones destined to suffer through days & months & years filled with superficial pleasures, hollow accomplishments, & fruitless relationships. **Zone 2** acolytes, on the other hand, believe that “the worthy” (i.e. themselves and those of like-mind) are summoned to “do God's will” &/or that those who are “mature” will somehow fulfill the same. These are the ones who delve deeply into learning about morality or salvation or ethics or Right Action, and yet are also those who rarely embody the same (doing so from a sense of obligation &/or a desire for reciprocal reward if they do so at all). **Zone 3** assistants, in critical contrast, understand that every single sentient being has indeed been Called – summoned by their conscience within, and offered the most honored privilege of all: serving others instead of themselves; caring about others' interests ahead of their own.



\*While escaping pain &/or accumulating ease or pleasure as their essential sources of motivation for all **Zone 1** proponents (having “the good life” or returning to “the good old days” – fear-based, self-centered yearning that prevents one from engendering or experiencing any semblance of real harmony in life or its relationships), **Zone 2** followers are driven to “evolve” &/or “find inner peace” &/or live a less stressful life (a similarly self-focused existence that – both ironically & tragically – actually prevents the experience of harmony in one's surroundings by striving for the same in & for oneself). **Zone 3** participants, on the other heart, desire solely to become powerful forces for Good – wanting



only to do whatever they can wherever they are for whomever is closest by. These are the ones who know that real Harmony is only truly embodied (and thereby only truly experienced) in those moments when one is acting accordingly – in those moments when one willingly sacrifices for another (especially those deemed by others to be “undeserving” of the same) as if he or she were one's dearest companion, and this regardless of what might well happen to oneself as a result.

*“Love itself is of such an innately divine nature that we are right only when rejecting as utterly intolerable the notion that it could ever be in any way conditional or transitory. For real Love easily overleaps even the massiveness of our selfhood and makes even our strongest appetites altruistic; almost flippantly tossing aside our personal happiness as a triviality, and stolidly planting the interests of the other into the very center of our being ... Indeed, Love is neither more nor less than the condition in which the happiness of another person becomes the foundation of our deepest Purpose ... As such, it can be seen as true that the interests of others always matter more than your own. So get over it – and get on with it!”*

*~ inspired by C. S. Lewis, Robert Heinlein, & Audrey Hepburn*

## Chapter 20: Different goals for the End

In harmony with the information offered in the previous chapter, it is important to note that we cannot effectively alter our intentions without simultaneously crystallizing the vision of our desired outcome(s) – that we cannot truly act for the another mindfully unless we begin with their “better end” in mind. That having been stated, feel free to humbly ponder (& then courageously pro-act) the following ...

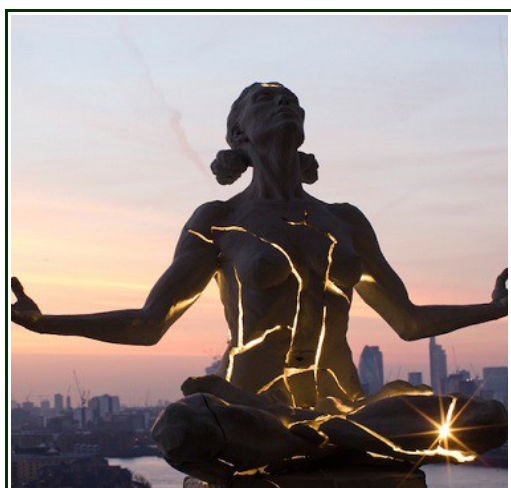
\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates set their sights on their own survival &/or success by caring for their own “friends & family” (i.e. those people – including themselves – who are being good to them &/or who will care for them in return), **Zone 2** acolytes aim for a life of greater “abundance” (material wealth &/or mental “peace”) by caring for those who are like-minded (&/or for all those for whom they feel obligated to care). **Zone 3** assistants, in stark contrast, have selfless service as their lone goal – desiring solely to lessen the burdens of others &/or intensify their joy. These are the ones who exude compassion to all they encounter – especially when feeling least able to do so; especially to strangers &/or their enemies (those who are blatantly *not* of like-mind); &/or especially while reaping repugnance, rejection, &/or ridicule therefrom.



\*While **Zone 1** affiliates “love” their ego-selves for their own benefit (often via regretting &/or replaying the past in order to assuage their angst of &/or manifest their desires for the future) and **Zone 2** disciples cherish their “true selves” for similar reasons (“loving” their lives by “respecting” themselves; doing so often via passively observing their surroundings or mentally pondering &/or learning about the same), **Zone 3** enthusiasts actually Love their deeper Selves by actively Caring for others – doing so intentionally & intimately while fully immersing their thoughts & their emotions into their encounters. These are the ones who have come to understand that the only way to truly “go with the flow” is to make each moment a conscious expression of unity. These are those who know that personal goals & individual wishes are nothing more than stumbling blocks on the Path to true Awakening.

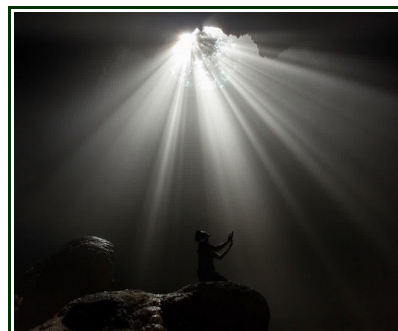


\***Zone 1** patrons strive to satisfy the demands supposedly made by their God in order to “get to Heaven” in the next life. Their god is an all-powerful celestial dictator – one who watches and judges from “on high;” offering eternal salvation for those who bow down to Him appropriately and inflicting eternal damnation on those “sinners” who fail to do the same. These are the ones whose religious convictions are certain, and thereby those whose condemnations of others prove to be scathingly arrogant & scaldingly condemnatory. Quite differently, **Zone 2** crusaders seek to “be a good person” in order to attain a measure of salvation in this, their current lifetime. Their godheads are far more nebulous rulers; those who reside within the heart as much as they do above the head – those who punish sins not with torments after one's death, but rather via the accumulation of “bad karma” while one is still alive. These individuals are soaked in spiritual schmaltz – a lukewarm neutrality that appears to be built of respect & humility, but is in actuality a brittle coating of laziness & cowardice. **Zone 3** champions, in brilliant differentiation, holed neither concrete visions of God nor inflexible creeds or dogmas. Instead, they strive to become active agents of the Divine – by living as



bold embodiments of Love. These are the ones completely unconcerned with attaining heavenly rewards or reaping horrific punishment – desiring instead solely to bring peace to times of conflict, harmony to moments of discord, joy to times of sadness, &/or greater wholeness to moments of dis-ease. These are the ones who would gladly turn down any offer of eternal postmortem happiness, that they might return to the trials & tribulations of life to soothe the sufferings of those still living.

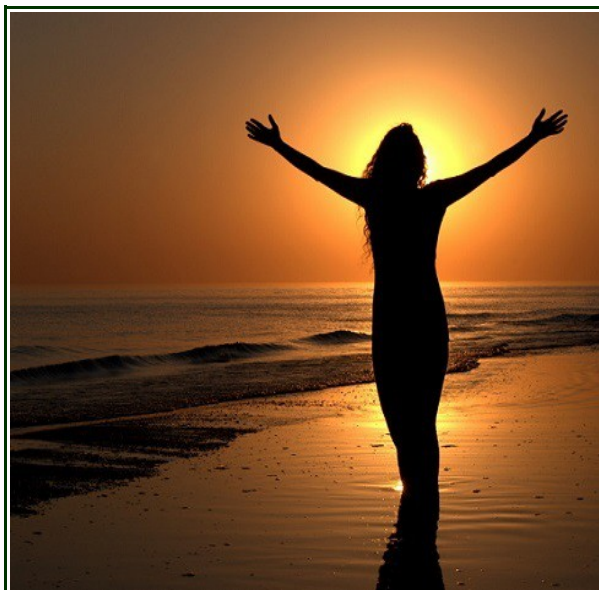
\***Zone 1** proponents are certain that divine providence (known as “Grace,” “inspiration,” &/or “spiritual clarity”) is a rare gift – bestowed “from above” upon “true believers;” those who are correct in their assumptions about God, and yet who are also ever less-than-worthy of the celestial blessings provided. **Zone 2** devotees, on the other hand, believe that “Grace” is given to all – “fiercely” to the ignorant (via times of abject failure, intense pain, &/or overwhelming dis-ease) or gently to the “enlightened” (via moments of serendipitous fortune, miraculous beauty, &/or euphoric joy). In contrast, **Zone 3** enliveners that Grace is an ever-present given, not a random or occasional gift. Indeed, these are the ones who understand that life itself is & ever remains the greatest of blessings; and that whether circumstances seem especially “fierce” or incredibly soothing, it is an honor and a privilege – indeed, the greatest of all gifts – to be able to consciously respond thereto with deeds of humble appreciation & courageous generosity.



\*While **Zone 1** backers strive to attain “salvation” for their own Souls (preferably before the arrival of an apocalyptic “2<sup>nd</sup> Coming”) and **Zone 2** followers focus on helping to manifest a dramatic expansion of awareness (a.k.a. The “Great Shift” – the alignment of others' more primitive beliefs with one's own far more enlightened ones) for all, **Zone 3** adherents understand that neither of the aforementioned goals is at all pertinent – that individual “salvation” is always a single courageously caring choice away for any individual, and that any worthwhile “shift” in collective consciousness can only be furthered by acting selflessly; never by speaking persuasively. Indeed, both of these ideologies are innately self-fixated & self-lauding, and as such serve to entrench the same society-wide expressions of apathy, greed, &/or arrogance that are actually suppressing the very Mass Awakening they profess to champion. As such, the **Zone 3** person is the one who wholeheartedly believes in the latent-yet-ever-available Enlightenment of every individual he or she ever encounters – and thus is the one who acts with genuine wholeheartedness whenever in the presence of the same.



\***Zone 1** servants struggle to make an inevitably imperfect world better for themselves (with their primary purpose being to engender a life that is long & comfortable; steadily hoping to accrue as little pain and as much pleasure as possible) – investing in good physical health &/or pleasurable experiences to attain the same. **Zone 2** accomplices, in clear variation, believe in making a potentially perfect world accessible for themselves and those of like mind (feeling that the purpose of life is to learn &/or remember as much as possible; and thereby to eventually gain “inner peace” &/or the raw contentment of “enlightenment”) – investing in expanded mental clarity &/or peaceful experiences to attain the same. **Zone 3** participants, in bold contrast, know that life is not an extended pathway to walk, but rather a series of independent-yet-interconnected moments – fully potent instances in which one is



allowed to revel in Beauty &/or boldly Care for others by both willingly & actively self-sacrificing for the benefit of anyone or everyone nearby. These are the ones who understand that the Purpose of Life is to live Meaning-fully, and that to live Meaning-fully is to live lovingly. These individuals are the ones who have come to comprehend that life is more than play – for truly living requires Caring; that life is more than learning – for truly living demands Giving; and that life is more than “becoming enlightened” – for truly living requires Serving others in need.

*Enlightenment knows that, while there is no place one needs to go, we must still travel deep into the places we already are ...*

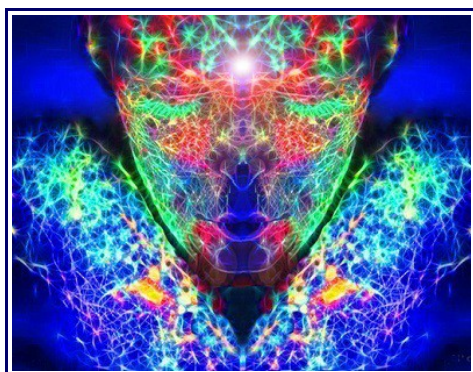
*Enlightenment knows that, while there is nothing one needs to do, we must still act selflessly; must still attempt to lessen others' suffering or enhance their Joy ... Enlightenment knows that, while there is nobody one needs to be, we must still enliven our truest Selves; must still bravely embody the conscience that lives & loves within us ...*

*Enlightenment knows that, while the world is indeed perfect as it already is, it is perfect precisely because it is "flawed" – rife with pain & discord, and thus ripe with opportunities to ease or ameliorate the same. Enlightenment knows that, while there is always a better time to act, we must still sink wholeheartedly into our Here&Now; must repeatedly give the Universe yet another gentle nudge as its arc of underlying Harmony winds & whirls its way steadily towards an ultimate Oneness ... Enlightenment knows that, while there is indeed no need to change anyone or alter anything, we must still do whatever we can (wherever we already are, for whomever is nearest by) to bring harmony to discord, peace to conflict, joy to despair, &/or kindness to fear.*

## Chapter 21: The basic steps of Awakening

While it is true that there are many equally viable routes up the apparent mountain that is Enlightenment (indeed, as many routes as there are sentient beings currently alive – billions upon billions of equally worthy Pathways to Peace), it is just as true that none of those routes are viable in theory alone – that none of them can come into true Being until they are courageously enlivened. With that in mind, the information that follows is offered to help put the theory into practice – to bring the philosophy into being – to make the Peace of Enlightenment a reality. Of course, as with the effectuation of any concept, we can often better identify what is necessary by first explaining what isn't. As such, feel free to humbly ponder (& thereafter courageously pro-act) the following ...

\*Enlightenment does **not** require subservience to an external authority or a giving in to a “higher power.” While **Zone 1** advocates & **Zone 2** acolytes both disagree with this notion,<sup>22</sup> **Zone 3** adherents are those who have decided to cease searching for God and start acting as bold agents thereof instead.



\*Enlightenment does **not** require “becoming a good person” (**Zone 1**) or exuding “personal growth” (**Zone 2**). Instead, **Zone 3** enthusiasts know that every single sentient being is inherently “good enough” – that no improvement or betterment is needed whatsoever for Enlightenment to blossom forth, and that said blossoming occurs fully & instantaneously in every instant one chooses to act accordingly – by choosing to Love anyway (especially when least inclined to do so).

\*Enlightenment does **not** require one to surround oneself with “good friends” (**Zone 1**'s manipulation of circumstance – including manufacturing a “positive environment”) or live with “healthy people” (**Zone 2**'s “improvement” of interaction – including learning from “wise teachers”), nor do its members attack those who are “mean” (**Zone 1**) or establish “healthy boundaries” against those who are aggressive (**Zone 2**). Instead, champions of the **Zone 3** way of living – those who are truly Enlightened – immerse themselves fully & care-fully into whatever their current environment might hold; especially the encounters therein that provide the greatest opportunity to Care, those therein that are discordant or discomfiting or frustrating or frightening.



<sup>22</sup> **Zone 1** people feel certain that salvation occurs instantaneously the moment one proclaims the correct godhead to be one's “personal lord & savior” ... **Zone 2** individuals believe that enlightenment comes from a long & diligent process of repeatedly & “humbly” confirming that one is inherently incapable of attaining spiritual liberation without regular assistance &/or support from a “higher” outside source.

\*Enlightenment does *not* require that one “deal effectively” with the ego – neither regularly submitting to its whims (*Zone 1*) nor persistently struggling to diffuse its inclinations (*Zone 2*). In contrast, all *Zone 3* contributors are fully aware that engaging either of the aforementioned is wholly counterproductive – with both actually being choices that *strengthen* the ego & *increase* the amount of suffering that stems therefrom. Indeed, *Zone 3* patrons are the ones who know



that it is impossible to consciously transcend one's instinctual selfishness without the inadvertent assistance of the ego. It is only when awash in fear or anger that one can offer the most potent Love; it is only when surrounded by the darkness that one can beam a most brilliant light.

\*Enlightenment does *not* require “getting over” life's moments of sadness or frustration – neither via soaking in pleasurable experiences (*Zone 1* – e.g. physical addictions, fun activities, etc), nor by steeping in soothing practices (*Zone 2* – e.g. repentance,<sup>23</sup> prayer, meditation, visualization, affirmation, etc). No, the enliveners of *Zone 3* know quite differently – namely that there is only one tried & tested solution for any instance of anxiety or despair; the solution that has one setting aside all personal hopes & individual desires in favor of boldly reaching out to those in need nearby. In this way pain is neither callously coddled nor counterproductively countered, but rather willfully harnessed instead; used as a potent intensifier of any & all loving choices made concurrently or immediately thereafter.



\*Enlightenment does *not* require making “self loving” decisions – neither overtly advancing one's own benefit (the active selfishness of *Zone 1* – “Just DO it” & “Enjoy your life”) nor passively choosing to “find the True Self” (the mental selfishness of *Zone 2* – “Just go within” & “BE in the moment”). No, *Zone 3* adherents are aware that real Enlightenment creates a sort of “choiceless awareness” – a state of moral



comprehension where selfish alternatives are recognized as available and yet only selfless options known to be viable; generating a seemingly spontaneous state of ethical being – one that flagrantly transcends the ego, by actively seeking to further the benefit of the other regardless of previous obligations to others that strive to bind &/or potential consequences to self that seek to dissuade.

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23 Please NOTE that the repentance of *Zone 1* (the verbal confession of personal fault in order to obtain favor &/or forgiveness from another) and *Zone 2* (the mental admission of personal weakness in order to obtain favor &/or forgiveness from oneself) are inherently counterproductive (both being flooded by self-focus & stained by self-interest). *Zone 3* repentance, on the other hand, is a verb – a radical shift in behavior; away from “humble” words of self-judgment and towards humble deeds of selfless caring.



\*As a penultimate point of distinction, whereas **Zone 1** servants think that “waking up” is inherently illusory (i.e. that they are “only human” and thus that frequent slips into selfish sin are inevitable – making Enlightenment an unattainable end) and **Zone 2** accomplices believe that “waking up” is immensely stressful (i.e. that they too are “only human” – that though Enlightenment is possible, it is only possible for the rare few; those who endure a requisitely arduous process – one that requires diligent practice & focused learning over an extended period of time), supporters of the **Zone 3** alternative know that Waking UP is an instantaneous event<sup>24</sup> that is fully available to all sentient beings in every moment of their lives – if they have both the humility to compassionately See others nearby, and the resolve to boldly act in selfless accordance therewith.



\*In essence then, while **Zone 1** satellites think like the powerful think (amazed by the beautiful and terrified by the disquieting) and **Zone 2** crusaders think like the “moral” think (thankful for the beautiful and hopeful for the disquieting), **Zone 3** participants think like the conscience thinks (inspired to announce & share the beautiful and motivated to love & care for the disquieting) – and exhibit the same accordingly.



24 While true Enlightenment is indeed attained fully & completely in every single instant where the needs of the other are consciously furthered ahead of (or in place of) one's own, there does seem to be a process involved with letting go of the myth of process – a series of common disillusionments that must be abandoned (in favor of intentions selfless &/or Caring) whenever they are encountered; among them the escalating awareness that “something isn't right” or that “there's something more” to life, the experience of profound despair &/or disappointment &/or meaninglessness, the feeling – often after reading new information &/or encountering a new teacher – that one has “finally got it,” the subsequent knowing shortly thereafter that one is essentially just as lost as before, and finally the understanding that seeking Enlightenment for oneself is as futile as it is counterproductive. In essence, while there is indeed a quite typical cascade of ever-greater awareness that does seem to lead to Enlightenment (from decadence to despondency to epiphany to doubt to inspiration to fear to bold leap to profound Peace to overwhelming Bliss), this “flow of ever-greater understanding” is not a prerequisite to embodying – and thereby attaining – the same.

*“Insight into the existence of the True Self is purchased only via the price of great suffering; the suffering that is so acute as to wipe out all worldly prejudices and preoccupations of the ego. Indeed, every deep disappointment or profound disillusionment is, in this sense, a stepping stone forward along the Way, to Peace – as long as they are each accepted with insight as the fountains of inspiration they are, and not as wellsprings of resignation or bitterness ... In truth, those who are clear about their newfound commitment to unconditional Love become like mountains; remaining ever steady especially when the surrounding weather becomes wild and tempestuous. It is crucial to keep this Truth in mind, and yet far more critical still to keep it alive in times dire or disturbing.” ~ via Marie-Louise von Franz & Pema Chodron*

*A simple recipe for Enlightenment:*

**A**wareness of nearby discord/dis-ease

**C**ompassion known for the suffering

**T**actile Kindness offered to the same

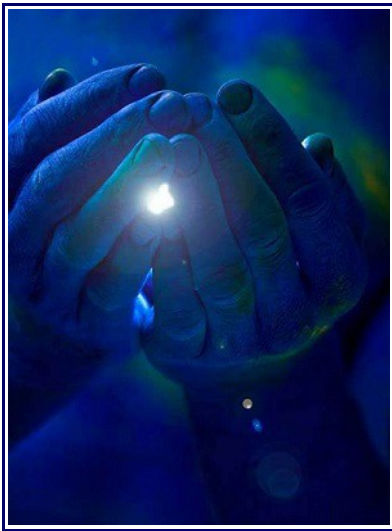
## Chapter 22: Summoning the Strength

As it turns out, the three Zones of Being can not only be distinguished by the varied intentions that inspire them & the different characteristics they exude once enlivened, but also by the distinctive methods with which they are accessed – including the unique mental states that grant their followers access to the same. With this in mind, feel free to humbly ponder (and also courageously pro-act) the following ...

**\*Zone 1** advocates think that Enlightenment is accessed only via harmonious external circumstances, and as such can only be experienced during rare offerings of undeserved “grace” &/or random blessings of luck or fate. **Zone 2** acolytes, quite differently, believe that Enlightenment can be mentally manifested; accessed via prolonged periods of disciplined focus which – for the rare few who remain diligently glued to that path – ultimately leads to a gradual awakening. **Zone 3** adherents, in stark contrast, know that Enlightenment has nothing to do with the harmony of one's surroundings or the quality of one's learning. Rather, these are the ones who have come to understand that a true Awakening is accessed fully & completely in every selfless deed – the ones who know that Enlightenment requires neither a shift in circumstance nor an enhancement of knowledge, but only an alteration of attitude. Attempts to engender or co-create what is not must simply be replaced by actions that attempt to enhance the harmony (or diminish the discord) of what already is.



\*While **Zone 1** affiliates think that accessing Enlightenment requires good fortune (i.e. the proper genetic makeup &/or particular social status required to awaken) and **Zone 2** disciples believe that attaining Enlightenment demands a certain



intellectual talent at birth and then a high-level of effort given thereafter (i.e. the proper genetic makeup & a requisite desire applied thereto), **Zone 3** enthusiasts are aware that real Enlightenment has no prerequisites (neither physical, nor mental, nor social) whatsoever. Indeed, these are the ones who understand that it is “the meek” who can most potently access “the Divine” – that it is those suffering the most (&/or those hindered the most by lack of ability or hardship of circumstance) who can most purely Love others despite (and thereby because of) those same limitations. As such, these are those who can access far greater depths of Enlightenment via deeds seemingly far less magnanimous.

\*In their attempts to attain “enlightenment,” **Zone 1** patrons combine their talents with hope – accumulating the supposed security of material wealth, tending the supposed safety of emotional alliances, soaking in the supposed redemption of spiritual devotion. All of these efforts are ultimately thwarted by the scintillating tenuousness of reality, of course, and as such these are those who sink repeatedly into blaming others for their perceived lack of success – a choice that always leads to the despondencies of despair or anger. Minions of the **Zone 2** mindset, on the other hand, strive for enlightenment by attempting to unify their potential with their faith – entrenching their hopes for happiness via practices designed to bring “inner peace” &/or striving to manifest a greater clarity via philosophies (often professed by wizened gurus) designed to bring “deeper understanding.” These efforts, of course, are just as inevitably thwarted by the innate fallibility (i.e. patently unenlightened self-centeredness) of the human ego, and as such these are the individuals who continually sink into blaming themselves for “not knowing enough” &/or “not making enough progress” – a choice that always leads to the despondencies of self-doubt &/or frustration. In bold contrast, champions of the **Zone 3** alternative simply harmonize their happenstances with their endeavors – choosing to see each encounter not as a set of circumstances to improve or a challenge to conquer, but rather as a simple chance to serve. As these are the ones wholly unconcerned with any consequences to self, and as such these are the ones who have abandoned blame altogether and see life as nothing more nor less than an endless stream of blessings – an endless flow of opportunities to Care.



\*Finally, inasmuch as **Zone 1** confederates submit that the ego will forever control (or at least alter influence) their decisions (leading them to “give up” and try to obtain a “better life” for themselves) and **Zone 2** crusaders believe that life itself is the one “in control” (leading them to passively “give in” to the same by approaching life more as a mental observer than an active participant), enliveners of the **Zone 3** Way access life and its Enlightenment quite differently. They are the ones who have come to understand that control over one's circumstances is always available to those choosing to Love – especially in those moments when life seems most hopeless &/or “out of control.” For these individuals, Enlightenment is not a noun but a verb – not a static state of mind to someday attain but a flowing state of being to repeatedly re-enliven.



*“Like joyful toddlers at play, like an elephant submerging itself into a cool lake, like a joyful horse racing across the prairie, like a springtime breeze caressing wildflowers in a meadow – so too shall you bring your full enthusiasm to the task of Love that is ever at hand.” ~ inspired by Pema Chodron*

## Chapter 23: Dealing with slips & setbacks

As mentioned previously herein on a number of occasions, one of the most important realizations on the journey to fully comprehending true Enlightenment is the realization that Enlightenment is inherently tenuous – that the human brain has evolved in such a way that it is indeed impossible to “become enlightened;” that it is impossible to maintain a fully harmonious state of being over any extended period of time.<sup>25</sup> As such, it can be just as important to understand how best to deal with the inevitable “slip ups” that occur after one has attained Enlightenment as it is to attain Enlightenment itself. With this in mind, feel free to humbly ponder (& courageously pro-act) the following ...

\*Whereas **Zone 1** advocates see “slips” back into selfishness as normal &/or even acceptable (a passive resignation that makes the same much more likely than need be), **Zone 2** acolytes see the same as “failures” (a negatively judgmental analysis that also serves to indirectly encourage their repetition). In great contrast, assistants of the **Zone 3** Way recognize the fact that every single “slip up” is nothing more than a fresh opportunity to choose Enlightenment anew – as an ally on the road to empowered living, not an enemy or a hindrance thereto. As such, these are the ones who respond to all recognized “slip ups” with a sense of amusement instead of one of annoyance – a relaxed state of being that allows for a far more fluid (and thus more easily Enlightened) response thereto.

\*While **Zone 1** affiliates awaken to their “slip ups” with feelings of shame &/or embarrassment (and often cover over the same with blame-shifting &/or rationalization for those behaviors), **Zone 2** disciples – in similarly selfish moments – feel disappointment, frustration, fatigue, &/or hopelessness (and often use the same as



excuses for subsequently self-centered &/or superficial choices). **Zone 3** enthusiasts, in bold contrast, respond to their own “slip ups” with feelings of calm & renewed resolve. Indeed, they are almost grateful for the same – grateful for the refreshed awareness that such choices always bring; the renewed opportunity to consciously & courageously embrace the next moment in a different, more Caring way.

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25 It is indeed quite important to NOTE that Enlightenment – by its very nature – is a fully selfless state of being; a state of being that intentionally (and thus potently) exists in direct conflict with the more primitive, survival-fixated stems of the human brain – stems that are ever oriented on identifying “friend or foe” and then almost as regularly mandating “fight or flight” in response to the same. In addition, these portions of the brain are always identifying and responding to external stimuli at least ¼ of a second before higher brain functions even begin to do so. As such, it is truly impossible to continually maintain a static state of “enlightenment.” That having been said, it is always possible to choose Enlightenment anew – fully & completely – in any particular instant or encounter. Yes, that choice will recede back into subsequent, almost-guaranteed manifestations of selfishness, and yet the more regularly one chooses to pause and consciously engage his or her happenstances selflessly, the more fluidly such Enlightened choices become in future interactions.

## Conclusion: Putting it into Practice

Before summarizing the information that has come before and concluding this tome's analysis thereof, a few crucial disclaimers bear mentioning – a few tidbits of truth to keep in mind during your own uniquely brilliant journey to Enlightenment. First and foremost, it is important to remember that – no matter what any trendy teacher or gregarious guru<sup>26</sup> might say to the contrary – Enlightenment is *not* about becoming a “better” or a “more advanced” or even a “more aware” person, but rather is about fully embodying the Kind & Caring person you already are and always have been. Similarly, real Enlightenment is not about learning any new &/or special information, nor is it about following any particular pre-approved path. Rather it is about fully enlivening the Truth of Oneness you even now already comprehend; a Truth you have known since your earliest toddlerhood. Finally, it is critical to remember that Enlightenment is neither a “one and done” voyage to be completed nor a singular “merit badge” to earned & donned. Varying intensities of pain & various forms of disease are intrinsic parts of what it means to live a sentient life. They cannot be permanently avoided, and will continue to inflict themselves on your life no matter how “enlightened” you might become. That having been said, it is precisely these ever-reoccurring challenges that repeatedly allow us to transcend the same (by choosing to Care boldly for others despite the same) – and thereby repeatedly re-experience what it means to be truly Enlightened.



Of course, real Enlightenment can only be comprehended while it is being purely experienced, and it can only be purely experienced while it is being radically put into practice – while it is being boldly reanimated. And this is the singular goal of this work – not to provide you with a mere better understanding of real Enlightenment, but rather to inspire you to set forth and re-enliven the same. With this all-important purpose in mind, feel free to humbly ponder (*and* courageously pro-act) the following tenets of Truth ...

\*Enlightenment has nothing to do with dressing a certain way or believing a certain dogma or following a certain teaching, and everything to do with caring for others lovingly.

\*Enlightenment has nothing to do with attaining new information or gaining “greater clarity,” and everything to do with reanimating the moral Truths already known.

\*Enlightenment has nothing to do with attaining “inner peace” or mental calm, and everything to do with bringing peace to times of conflict & calm to moments of fear.

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26 It also bears noting that I consider myself to be neither a teacher nor a guru, and that I myself lay no claim to being in any way an “Enlightened One.” Indeed, anyone who openly claims to have attained any significant measure of Enlightenment quite certainly has not done so – seeing as how anyone who has experienced true Enlightenment knows full well that it is an innately transient state of being; one that only exists during one's chosen acts of self-sacrificial Love, and one that requires neither diligent practice nor exceptional intelligence to be realized. While I claim no special access to “the Truth,” I have indeed radically tested all of the information offered herein. I have regularly immersed myself in *Zone 3* living – and thus do in-deed know that real Enlightenment is a viable alternative for each & every one of you, my sentient brothers & sisters.

\*Enlightenment has nothing to do with “waking up” oneself via wiser thoughts, and everything to do with reawakening others with one's caring deeds.



\*Enlightenment has nothing to do with “waking up” or “becoming conscious,” and everything to do with reawakening one's conscience by becoming ONE.

\*Enlightenment has nothing to do with protecting ourselves from strangers or erecting “healthy boundaries” against our enemies,<sup>27</sup> and everything to do with dismantling the walls of greed & fear that keep us from any semblance of real courage & true intimacy.

*“Those who seek the Light for themselves are merely covering their own eyes. For the Light is ever within us all – and can shine forth whenever we wish. Indeed, there is no need to learn about the Light or get better at beaming it or wait for it to burst forth at some point in the future. There is but the choice to open up and let it flow forth –the choice to let its Love enter & brighten the lives of any & all nearby.” ~ inspired by Helen Schucman*

Enlightenment is nothing more nor less than the full-on experience of one's innate Oneness with the Cosmos – one's inherently intimate interconnection with everyone & everything nearby. And this experience is fully available – with no need for any additional learning or diligent practice – to each & every one of you in each & every moment of your lives. It is an experience that is (for self as much as others) both Bliss-full and transformative – one that goes far beyond mere feelings of happiness or ease or pleasure or comfort – one that willingly shoulders others' burdens and brings peace to their suffering – one that Joy-fully shares one's own blessings and revels in the victories of the community.



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<sup>27</sup> Setting boundaries, saying no, not letting others hurt you, &/or walking away from dysfunctional relationships is what our far more primitive “reptile brain” (home to the ego) wants us to do (constantly bombarding us with friend or foe, fight or flight, friend or foe, fight or flight, etc). Ironically (and quite tragically), all four of these choices are drenched in fear, and as such all four of them are ultimately counterproductive. Quite verily, it is the establishment of “healthy boundaries” in our relationships that isolates us from real Love. It is saying No in times of challenge that prevents us from doing any real Good for others. It is refusing to let others get close enough to harm us that is a recipe for loneliness & despair. And it is in walking away from uncomfortable interactions that prevents us from ever knowing the ultimate Power within our own Soul -- a Power that ever shines forth when our Love is given in moments of fear or difficulty, and never in times of safety or ease.



In-deed, a profound experience of true Enlightenment means feeling deeply intertwined with one's surroundings (especially the wonders of Nature witnessed &/or the beauties of strangers encountered) – and then acting accordingly. It means feeling an overwhelming sense of gratitude for being consciously alive at all – and then acting accordingly. It means a loss of worry coupled with an increase of joyful anticipation, and a loss of anger coupled with an increase in gentle acceptance – and then acting accordingly ... Enlightenment maintains a steadfast refusal to criticize, condemn, or even analyze self or others, and instead manifests the wholehearted ability to Care for those nearby (without wanting or expecting anything to be given in return). It defines “success” in terms of sufferings lessened or joys enhanced, and always errs on the side of lending a helping hand instead of letting others “figure it out for themselves.”



Enlightenment stand up for others behind their backs and makes them feel special & loved to their face. Enlightenment feels itself honored while giving anonymously to friends, and feels itself privileged while unabashedly caring for strangers and enemies. Enlightenment maintains a positive appreciation for life while striving to lessen pain or hardship, and a compassionate disposition towards the perpetrators of cruelty while combating their oppression & injustice. Enlightenment recognizes & embodies the simple truth that all sentient beings – human and non-human alike – have the same inalienable right to live their lives free from unnecessary abuse, suffering, &/or hardship.



So my dear ones, please all know in closing – regardless of how your own unique unfolding of Enlightenment appears or where it seems to lead – that you will always be able to let the same shine forth whenever you wish. These is indeed a glorious Light within each & every one of you – a Light that shines forth every time we choose to set our own fears & hopes & dreams aside in order to courageously Care for another. And nothing major or magnificent need be done to relight this wondrous beacon. For pure & transformative Enlightenment (see “In-Light-In-ment”) is fully reborn every time you are tempted to condemn an enemy and yet choose to forgive them anyway, every time you are tempted to wait for a “better time” and yet choose to serve your community anyway, every time you are tempted to “prudently” save your money (&/or safeguard your possessions, &/or conserve your energy) and yet choose to give anyway, every time you are tempted to complain about trials & tribulations and yet choose to announce gratitude anyway, every time you are tempted to gossip critically about another and yet choose to defend or compliment them anyway, and every time you are tempted to turn your back on a stranger and yet reach out to them with Kindness anyway. These are the choices presented to us in each & every moment of our lives, and these are the choices that allow us to repeatedly – and ever powerfully – allow us to manifest our latent great Enlightenment again & again. These are the choices that can let us shine forth who we truly are – the choices made to bring Peace &/or Joy to others, come what may to ourselves.

You are all brilliantly beautiful beings, my Friends ...  
May you all shine forth today accordingly.



*“People will do anything, no matter how absurd, to avoid accepting the summons of their own Soul. Of course, one cannot become Enlightened by merely imagining figures of light, nor can one do so by merely making the darkness conscious. No, true Enlightenment only comes from witnessing the darkness nearby, and then doing whatever is at hand to make those shadows recede.” ~ inspired by Carl Jung*

*“For true Enlightenment to take hold, we must first remember that the only way to positively change ourselves is to boldly set forth to positively change our world. Indeed, we can only attain the best that life has to offer after we stop yearning for the same. Instead, let us remember not that we are loved, but that we carry Love within us; not that true love is waiting to be found, but that we have been called to recklessly & joyfully spread the same.” ~ inspired by Karen Hackel*



*“And I will take one from a thousand  
and two from every ten thousand,  
and they shall Become a single One.”*  
~ *Jesus* (Gospel of Thomas 23)