

Praise for *The Roadmap Home*:
Your GPS to Inner Peace

“I heartily endorse *The Roadmap Home* to the seeker of ‘a better way.’ ”

- Karen Casey, best-selling author of *Each Day a New Beginning*, www.womens-spirituality.com.

“The *Roadmap Home* offers us hope. Leonard Szymczak provides an honest portrayal of his personal life and demonstrates that hardships can offer blessings in disguise. He provides a map to help us connect with the Guiding Power of Spirit so we can find our way Home.”

- Gerald G Jampolsky, M.D., author of *Love is Letting Go of Fear*

“Where is Dorothy going in the Wizard of Oz? Where is Pilgrim going in Pilgrim’s Progress? The last line of the original Star War’s Trilogy is ‘Let’s go home.’ Home is where the heart is. We are always headed home. Thank you Leonard for providing us with such a steady compass and a clear Roadmap Home.”

- Jon Mundy, Ph.D., lecturer and author of *What Is Mysticism?*

“I have been forever impacted by the beautiful stories, exercises and experiences that Leonard so wonderfully presents in his newest book. It is a powerful extension of the man himself. He answers the questions of who we are, where we come from, where we are going, and how we get there. By sharing his own personal story, Leonard immediately resonates with the reader, assuring them that we are all on a journey together.”

- Harry Tucker, strategy advisor and author in *97 Things Every Project Manager Should Know: Collective Wisdom from the Experts*

“A journey home requires a guide who has both been lost and found, a guide who is gentle in approach but frank and confident in offering direction. Leonard Szymczak is just such a guide. Many books are more of a walk around the block, providing hope but only returning us to where we began. The book you are holding in your hand is different, it can authentically make a true difference in your life by bringing you to feel, perhaps for the first time, at home within yourself.”

- Dr. Lee Jampolsky, author of *Smile for No Good Reason* and *Healing the Addictive Personality*

“Finding peace in our lives can often seem as difficult as setting a VCR. But, when you realize that you have your own GPS to do just that, you can relax and enjoy the ride. In his book, Leonard Szymczak shares his personal journey of finding that GPS and offers practical ways that you can find it too. Through guided exercises he helps you to set and follow your own GPS to inner peace.”

- Beverly Hutchinson McNeff, editor of *The Holy Encounter* magazine

LEONARD SZYMCZAK

THE ROADMAP HOME

Your GPS
to Inner Peace



To my mother, Estelle Szymczak, who demonstrated, time and time again, the meaning of sacrifice and perseverance as she overcame adversity to provide a home for her family.

To my sisters, Marilyn and Rita, and my brother Jim, who drew upon heroic qualities as they courageously scaled their own difficult mountains.

To my children, Melissa and Nate, who blessed me with their loving spirits and taught me about the meaning of home.

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ISBN: 1-4392-5126-6
ISBN-13: 9781439251263
LCCN: 2009907522

GPS cover concept: Marilyn Reilly
Back cover photograph: Bill Motlong

1. Self-help. 2. Personal growth. 3. Spiritual

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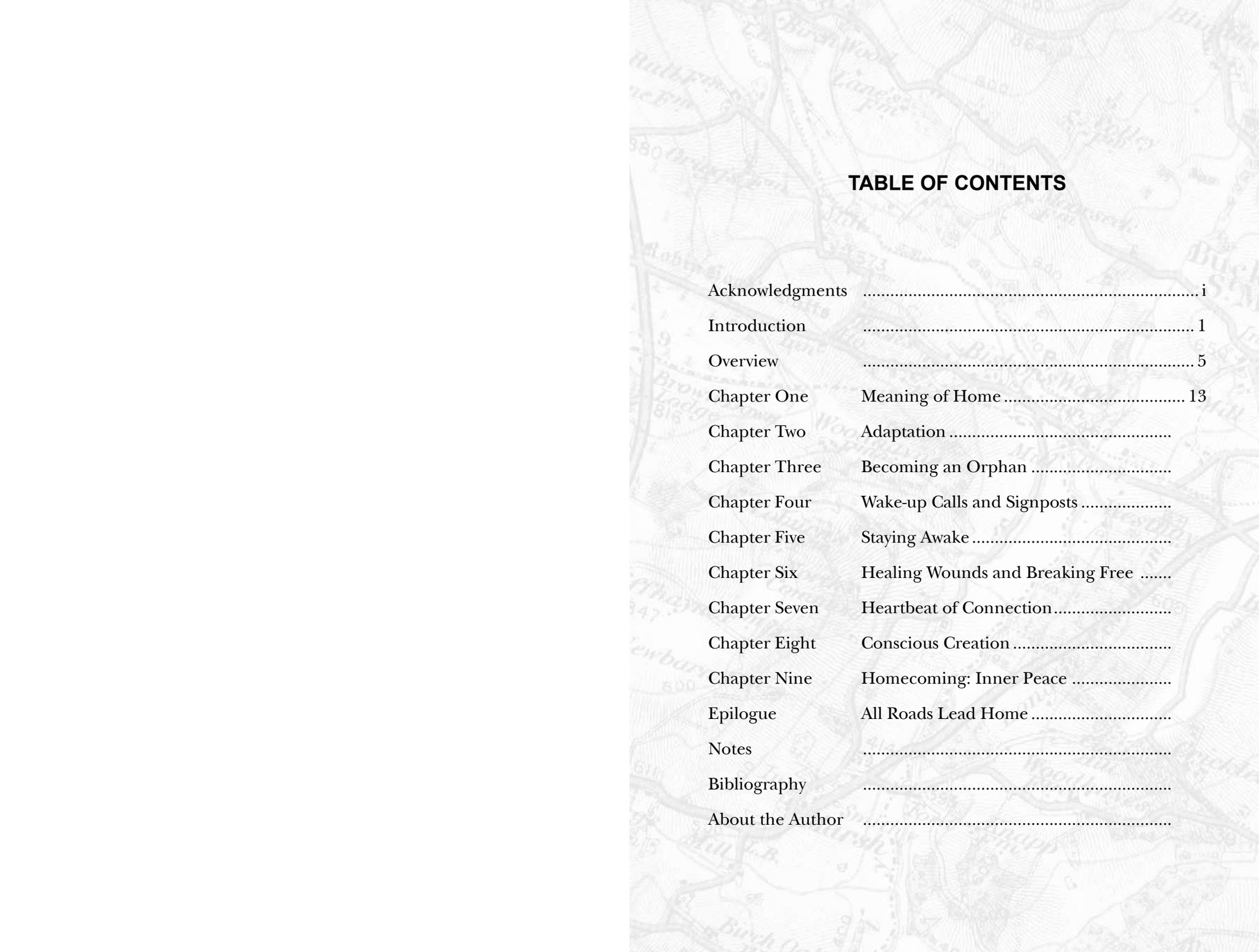
A faint, light-colored topographic map serves as the background for the page. It features contour lines, roads, and various place names such as "Bull Run", "Lone Pine", "Bishop", and "Wood". The map is oriented vertically, with the top of the page showing higher elevations and the bottom showing lower elevations.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing is a solitary process. However, completing a book involves a community. There have been countless people who have supplied help, offered suggestions, provided loving support, and inspired my writing odyssey. It would take a chapter to fully recognize all those who contributed to this book. Clearly, the courageous stories that my clients shared with me had an enormous impact on my own life and for that, I am forever grateful.

I want to recognize and offer my heartfelt thanks to my Home Team:

Marilyn Reilly, for her tremendous support, suggestions and cover concepts; and her husband, Bob, for his good-humored input.

Nate Szymczak, the graphic wizard, for his encouraging words, computer help, and gifted vision in transforming concepts into images.

Rita Szymczak, for enthusiastically cheering me up the mountain, offering wonderful advice, and creating tables.

Melissa Szymczak, for her practical advice to keep my feet firmly planted on the ground.

Bill Motlong, for being my sounding board, honest reviewer, creative consultant, longtime friend, and personal photographer.

Suzie Trisler, for her sound advice and cheerleading.

Mary Harris, for her generosity of spirit as well as her wordsmithing.

Janae Stewart, for her astute editing and assistance.

Gary Dukarich, for reviewing the manuscript with the keen eyes of a hawk.

Irene Vincent, for creatively expressing the initial design.

Stephanie Lloyd and Reverend Pamela Murphy, for their ongoing intentional support.

Lisa Nichols, author of *No Matter What*, for suggesting the format of teleseminars to review chapters of the manuscript.

Those who regularly attended the teleseminars and offered feedback and encouragement, chapter by chapter, to prod me up the publishing mountain: Diane Coutre, Alexandra Kaplan, Bonnie Lewis, Chuck Miller, Jesi Silveria, Richard Smith, and Harry Tucker. The annotated pages of corrections by Harry and Richard provided gold nuggets of advice. Thank you.

Those who stopped in, every now and then, for the teleseminars and contributed ideas and encouragement.

Those who attended The Roadmap Home Seminars, for helping me refine the concepts so they were more easily understood.

Those others who, in their own unique and special way, contributed to the process of birthing the manuscript: Grace Avalon, Brad Axelrad, Danna Beal, Jeannine Caryl, Robin Condro, April Durrett, Don Hobbs, Jonathan Morgan Jenkins, Audrey Jones, Diana Kenny, Marcus, Charlene Michel, Barbara Motlong, D'Marie Mulattieri, Susan Robertson, Michelle Morris Spieker, Elaine Stahlhofen, Robana Stevenson, Leti Stiles, Barbara Sunday, Sarah Sutton, Theresa Swift, and Diane Wisner. Thank you all.

I also wish to acknowledge those whose shining light helped to illuminate my own path: Reverends Sandi and Kirk Moore and the Center for Spiritual Living Orange County; CEO Space; Chicago South Suburban Men's group; A Course in Miracles Study Group; Dahn Yoga Center; The Law of Attraction Center Orange County; Light Bearers of the World; Miracle Distribution Center; and Toastmasters of Dana Point.

And finally, to the many others who encouraged me up the mountain, I offer my deepest gratitude. Your helping hands made the climb toward publication less arduous and more joyful.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone's life is a story. Within each story there's an amazing journey. That journey comes with a narrative – how we describe the journey and the meaning we give each experience. That narrative provides a framework that shapes the way we view the past, live the present, and perceive the future. It's a roadmap that sets our course and highlights lessons. Roadmaps and stories, however, do change. Since this book is about change and transformation, it seems fitting that I start with my personal journey.

The first time my father left the family I was six. The second time was for good and I was nine. My mother worked in a factory on the south side of Chicago and with four children to feed, her hands were full. Too full to clean, cook, work and tend children. Too full to cradle a frightened child or whisper, "I love you" to a broken heart.

Out of desperation, she considered a heart other than her own to pump life into her children. She took my brother, two sisters and me to visit Mooseheart, a residential childcare facility outside Chicago. Her intention was clear. If she couldn't care for us, she would explore an alternative.

Even if a moose had a heart attached to its name, I knew it was an orphanage. It wasn't an awful facility but it was a disturbing venue for a Sunday excursion in the summer of '57. When we toured the grounds, I didn't get mad, sad or act bad, even though I was faced with the prospect of leaving the familiar to live in a frightening new place with a group of strangers. I was ready to accept the decision, for I had learned to adapt and accommodate – keys to survival. At that tender age of nine, I didn't need an orphanage to realize I had lost my home.

Home is about belonging – to a place, a group of people, a wellspring of love. A place where one is comforted, nurtured and

protected. Where one can feel safe and secure and can gather strength in the face of adversity. Most importantly, it's a place to live one's truth.

That was not my home. Mine was a place ravaged by my father's mental illness, domestic violence, blaming parents and their impending divorce. It was a place riddled with conflict, fear and anxiety. Home was not a fortress of protection. Rather, it was a crumbling castle with dragons spewing hot flames. I felt insecure and unsafe, and realized later that I had lost a more sacred space – that place of inner knowing where I had inalienable rights – the right to exist, to feel, to think and act, to love and be loved, to express myself and be heard, to see my potential and have it recognized and blessed. That home was clearly lost by the time I visited the orphanage.

To survive my childhood I learned to shut down. I forgot about that inner knowing and replaced it with voices of anxiety and fear. Becoming orphaned from my sacred truth was the harshest of losses. To manage the fear, grief, anger and shame simmering underneath, I adopted defenses – silence, avoidance, and suppression, along with a dash of sarcasm and dark humor. I had learned that life was not about love, it was purely survival.

Fortunately, there were slivers of hope. My three siblings as fellow orphans offered some companionship and comfort. As well, my Polish grandmother helped soothe my soul. Her English was poor so I couldn't talk about problems, yet she acted as a haven in an ugly firestorm. With her support my mother, thankfully, made the courageous decision to rear her children for better and for worse.

Though we never moved to that place with the heart of a moose, my anxiety and fear remained. It turned into a faint hum coursing through my veins like electricity, urging me to be alert, ever ready, on edge, because home as I knew it could be stolen in a flash.

I never talked about the humming and carried on as if nothing was wrong. During times of uncertainty and insecurity, the hum would vibrate more intensely, forcing me to be vigilant about any possible threat. I often ignored the hum and followed my mother's dictum, "Get busy and forget your problems."

It wasn't until after I became a psychotherapist that I realized the damage caused by neglect, abuse and abandonment. Deeper

insidious wounds resulted from the ways I adapted and accommodated. No talking, no feeling, no crying, no sign of a whimper – even when my heart was humming with pain. Denial and disconnection were not the best ways to manage wounds, yet without much guidance or direction it was hard to act otherwise.

Nonetheless, out of our deepest wounds come our greatest gifts. The amazing gift I received from my childhood was a quest. And that quest was to find home.

My quest led me to a Catholic seminary where I attended high school and college. I needed a "father" and what better place to find one than in the priesthood? My quest, however, eventually guided me away from organized religion into the field of social work and family therapy. I could easily relate to families whose broken homes were fraught with conflict and despair and needed healing and repair.

My quest led me to love and marriage and to Australia where my two children were born. After 14 years Down Under, my family returned to Chicago where I faced many potholes and detours. After 26 years of marriage, I went through a difficult divorce in 1996. That period rocked my foundation. But out of the rubble, I began to hear the cry of the orphan.

I discovered that the inner Home, though buried, had not been extinguished. The heartbeat pulsed with a rhythm of life. The sound was often faint, but the message was clear – return to the place of inner knowing. Wake-up calls shook me from my unconscious state. Those bolts of lightning sent tremors rippling through my psyche. The widening fissures in my defense system allowed me to turn my eyes inward past the ruins of old preconceptions and toward the beckoning heart of authentic connection.

Finding the way back required courage and dedication. It demanded a willingness to recognize the calls, liberate the orphan and awaken from a numbed existence. I had to share stories, release tears and embrace forgiveness. The healing energy of acceptance and love provided soothing balm for the orphan's heart.

My quest has brought me to Southern California. I realize, however, that Home is not the result of finding a place, living with a person, establishing a career, or having material success. Rather, Home resides in the heart and soul and remains with us wherever we go. Home is anywhere and everywhere.

Though we may journey through the shadow of death or climb majestic mountains, we are never orphaned as long as we remain connected to the Guiding Power of Spirit. That connection endows us with wonderful gifts – to delight in the senses, to experience emotions and feel joy, to exercise our free will, to love and be loved, to express ourselves, to see our true potential and satisfy our dreams. We are never alone but rather interconnected with others in the Oneness of Being.

During my 35-plus years as a therapist and educator, as well as decades of personal growth, I have witnessed in myself and with others thousands of wake-up calls. Some took the form of marital disharmony or divorce, depression or anxiety, debilitating addictions, physical illnesses, financial losses or traumatic accidents. Those who failed to “see the light” were destined to slide back into the dark hole of unconsciousness and sleepwalk, unaware of their true potential. Nevertheless, calls unanswered persist and intensify. Old patterns need to be broken and new habits forged so that vision can be restored.

Once awakened to a heightened state of awareness, we can distinguish the stark contrast between limited living and consciously being. Our internal GPS, the Guiding Power of Spirit, beckons us back to our True Self. This may provoke both exhilaration and fear. Exhilaration about returning home; fear about the shifting ground beneath long-held beliefs. Though we may cling to a familiar false self, the Guiding Power of Spirit always emits a homing beacon to show the way.

I offer myself as a guide to your self-discovery and invite you as the hero/heroine of your unfolding story to step through a threshold and embrace the quest for your True Self. My heartfelt wish is that you open your mind and heart, connect with your GPS, and return Home to inner peace.

OVERVIEW

Taking a journey into the unknown with a map in hand fills me with anticipation.

– Michael White

The Global Positioning System is a worldwide navigational system that determines exact locations. When a receiver is activated in a car, it detects its current position, processes the requested destination, produces a map, and charts a precise course. We can then comfortably cruise along the highway without much worry. What we often don't realize, however, is that we have an internal GPS that does exactly the same thing. Our GPS, Guiding Power of Spirit, always knows where we are and steers us along life's highways toward our ultimate destination – Home. (I capitalize “Home” whenever I refer to that sacred place where we are connected with Spirit.)

Home is a place beyond the ego's identity. It's the realization that we are connected with an infinite Source of Wisdom that beckons us to love and inner peace. Regrettably, we often rush through life with little concern or awareness of this guiding system. When we lose that connection, we perceive home as outside ourselves and construct an identity and psychological defenses to protect a “false self” – a composite of beliefs downloaded from caregivers, culture and society. Our “false self” seeks material possessions, relationships and experiences to provide happiness and inner peace. We then wander aimlessly like orphans, without a roadmap, unplugged from our GPS.

This book maps a route to connect with our ever-present navigational system. That route takes us through the stages of spiritual awakening. Since all living beings evolve through phases of development, it stands to reason that spiritual development operates

under similar principles. After all, we transition through birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and finally, old age and death unless we die prematurely. Each stage follows a blueprint and is necessary for the succeeding phases. A teenager raised in New York City will have a different experience of adolescence than an Amish boy growing up in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, both will undergo puberty. Family and culture merely define what is and isn't acceptable. The same applies toward our spiritual journey.

Though we are always connected to an infinite Source, the awakening process is about shifting from one phase to the next. Some of us may be unconscious infants, oblivious to Spirit, while others are maturing into spiritual adults who feel more connected to a Divine Presence. Religious experiences and rituals may color the process, but transformation occurs as we develop through spiritual levels, regardless of religious preferences.

Consider the caterpillar. Though the butterfly receives the glory as the universal symbol of transformation, we often diminish the lowly caterpillar as far less attractive. This wiggling earthbound creature with a voracious appetite hungrily consumes leaf after leaf before it experiences a metamorphosis. It evolves naturally and perfectly through phases until it spins a cocoon in preparation for flight. Without the caterpillar, there is no butterfly.

Like caterpillars, some of us are emerging from tiny eggs while others are consuming life experiences and shedding old beliefs. Some are entering dark cocoons and others are preparing to flutter skyward. We may be at different phases but we are all, nonetheless, climbing that mountain toward freedom and a connection to All That Is.

Once we recognize that we are in process, we can rest assured that our GPS will direct us along the awakening path. Each of us follows a unique course with individualized lessons. Some of us may need to be hit by a bolt of lightning, like Paul on the road to Damascus. Others may respond to gentle reminders. It's only a matter of time before we realize our true nature and emerge from the cocoon.

The process of our evolving spiritual development is depicted in the diagram of a flower with six petals. Each petal represents a stage of development: Adaptation; Becoming an Orphan; Wake-up Calls and Signposts; Staying Awake; Healing Wounds and

Breaking Free; and Heartbeat of Connection. They lead us Home to the center of the flower which represents the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, the very core of our being, our True Self.



To appreciate the awakening process, imagine a long day of adapting to the countless demands of the world. We fall fast asleep and enter dreamland. The dreams, however, seem so real that we soon believe they are reality. We wander like orphans, lost from Home. Our internal GPS sets off an alarm, a reminder that we are having a depressing dream. We may ignore the wake-up call and bury ourselves under the covers. After persistent prodding and flashing neon signs, we eventually answer the call. Thus begins our awakening.

We are initially reluctant to climb out of our comfortable bed of beliefs but, in order to break free of the paralyzing dream, we must let go of our fears and heal our minds. With ongoing practice we strengthen the heartbeat of connection so we can return Home and experience sublime moments of inner peace and Oneness. However, the material world intrudes once again and we fall back to sleep ready to repeat the cycle.

In our spiritual development we spiral around the circle, moving steadily inward from one petal to the next. This evolving journey expands our consciousness and steadily increases our ability to stay awake. As we spiral inward, we extend our light outward. We radiate our consciousness to the outside world which mirrors it back to us. This allows us to see ourselves more clearly. The cycle shifts us to deeper levels of consciousness as we release limitations.

Like the caterpillar, our transformational journey ultimately causes a metamorphosis wherein we experience ourselves more fully as spiritual beings on a human excursion. From our center, we're inspired to serve our highest good and interact with the world in a loving, purposeful way. We understand that our GPS is always with us while we travel the winding road with its challenging detours, hidden tunnels, exhilarating climbs and wonderful miracles.

Let's briefly preview each leg of the journey.

Chapter One discusses the **MEANING OF HOME**, our original bliss. We understand that we can experience an ongoing connection with the Guiding Power of Spirit. From this awakened perspective, we can feel at home with six vehicles that may be referred to as instruments or petals of our flowering life:

- 1) An evolving sensory physical body that interacts with the external world
- 2) A range of emotions that provides feedback about our internal world
- 3) An inquisitive mind that processes information and directs attention
- 4) An open heart that relates with love and compassion
- 5) A voice that freely expresses our inner truth
- 6) A vision that sees through illusion and recognizes talents and a divine purpose

In Chapter Two, **ADAPTATION**, we explore our descent into the material world. Once we are born, we download files and programs, some of which contain viruses from our parents, culture and society. We construct an identity comprised of these beliefs

and adopt roles and behavioral patterns. Over time, this "false self" becomes attached to the transitory world of material possessions and relationships and begins to forget about Home. This creates separation which leads to insecurity, anxiety and fear.

Chapter Three, **BECOMING AN ORPHAN**, highlights the period when we fall asleep at the wheel and lose the connection with our GPS. An orphan is someone who is furthest away from Home. At the same time, an orphan stops being "at home" in the body, emotions, mind, heart, voice and vision. Orphans sleepwalk through life, unconscious about behavioral patterns, the interconnection of life, and the myriad of choices available. Unaware of the internal navigational system, an orphan wanders aimlessly and perceives life from the vantage point of a victim, resigned to an unhappy, and sometimes dramatic, life of desperation. Homelessness, however, creates longing for connection.

In Chapter Four, **WAKE-UP CALLS AND SIGNPOSTS**, we discover that loving whispers beckon our awakening. When we don't respond, our True Self employs a principle of thermodynamics to crack open our unconscious mind. Intense heat generated by traumas and personal crises produces transformation so eyes can turn inward toward authentic connection.

If we answer the call, signposts appear to assist us through the dense fog. They show up when we least expect and may serendipitously appear in relationships, words, music, symbols, animals, nature or dreams.

Chapter Five, **STAYING AWAKE**, asks us to leave familiar terrain and enter the tunnel of transformation. This transition stage is often marked by confusion, terror and anxiety as we face the fear of losing our identity and cherished beliefs. Since an awakened state heightens awareness, we may feel worse as painful memories, long suppressed, are brought to light. Once we make the declaration to return Home, there's no turning back.

Now we are ready to engage the Guiding Power of Spirit. With our internal gyroscope we distinguish between life choices that create discord and those that resonate with our True Self. We learn to pay attention to each holy instant by using a simple process: *Ob-*

serve, Accept, Forgive, Ask, Listen and Receive. We begin to recognize incredible opportunities in every moment.

In Chapter Six, **HEALING WOUNDS AND BREAKING FREE**, we release ourselves from a numbed existence and shift destructive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. We apply the IRSPEA anti-virus program, whereby we: *Inspect* our beliefs and life patterns; *Reject* and release outmoded thoughts and painful emotions; *Select* healing, loving beliefs congruent with our True Self; *Project* these new beliefs into the world with conscious intention; *Expect* wonderful encounters and miraculous results; and *Accept* deepening love and tranquility.

Chapter Seven, **HEARTBEAT OF CONNECTION**, expands the powerful principles of *Love, Trust* and *Self-mastery*, and teaches us to consciously fine-tune the six instruments of body, emotions, mind, heart, voice and vision so we can play in concert with Spirit. With training and focus, we become more attuned to the Home channel and expand our heart and clarify our life's purpose.

In Chapter Eight, **CONSCIOUS CREATION**, we focus on the art of co-creating from the inside out with Spirit rather than from ego. We use our well-tuned instruments to play at a higher frequency and move through the stages of conscious creation, whereby we: *Identify Needs; Clarify Intentions; State Intentions; Know and Create; Review Roadblocks;* and *Allow and Be Grateful.* Intentions that resonate with our GPS seek the highest good and vibrate with love.

Chapter Nine, **HOMECOMING: INNER PEACE**, takes us into the realm of innocent children who delight in being. We welcome *Celebration, Childlike Innocence, Abundance, Faith, Inner Peace* and a *Home Team.* We open up the throttle and roar with inspiration. We celebrate the gifts of each day, feel the wellspring of love, live a life of purpose, create loving supports and embrace the Guiding Power of Spirit. We view setbacks as lessons to practice love and forgiveness and, with raised consciousness, we experience moments of Oneness – Home.

Following each chapter, I include a mapping exercise and a guided visualization and suggest you work with a journal. It provides a sacred space and place to record your awakening process and strengthen your inward connection.

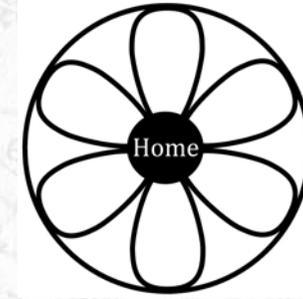
I have utilized the tools of journaling and visualization over the past 35 years. Journals expanded my awareness as I documented my dreams, aspirations, life patterns, inadequacies, emotional states, self-defeating behaviors, relationships, wake-up calls, visions, victories and mystical experiences. Visualizations brought incredible gifts of insight, healing and direction. I encourage you to make use of these valuable processes.

One further thought. Some mapping exercises and visualizations may trigger emotional responses and raise childhood memories. You may experience a wave of anxiety or sadness, or confusing physical sensations such as tightness in the throat or chest. You may also become acutely aware of your patterns with significant relationships. Therefore, consider establishing a supportive network of people who can act as resources. This may involve a friend, partner, support group, therapist or other individuals who can assist you on your journey.

When you travel in a group or with a companion, road trips can be very rewarding. Therefore, select those who can create a non-judgmental, safe environment that encourages openness, support and individual space to connect with your True Self.

You're now ready to move through any roadblocks toward the beckoning heart of authentic connection. With your trustworthy GPS and this easy-to-follow roadmap, be prepared for a transformational adventure where problems and pain become opportunities for personal growth, forgiveness and love. Wipe the sleep from your eyes and open the map. Activate the receiver and set the course.

It's time to return Home to inner peace.



CHAPTER ONE

MEANING OF HOME

*Be grateful for the home you have, knowing that
at this moment, all you have is all you need.*

– Sarah Ban Breathnach

“According to a Hindu legend, humans had so abused their divine powers that the gods decided to remove their divinity and hide it where men would never find it. . . . The wisest of the gods said, ‘We will hide it deep within man himself, for that is the last place he would ever think to look for it.’ ”¹

We are in an age where more people are actively searching within for spirituality. The visionary Jean Houston tells us that we are evolving from *homo sapiens* into *homo spiritualis*. This growing realization that we are spiritual beings having a human excursion means that we are returning to the center of our being – our true Home.

The word “home” conjures up images of our birthplace. We often think of belonging to a wellspring of love where we feel safe and secure and gather strength in the face of adversity. Our inner Home is where innocence, joy, love and peace are natural states. It is a holy sanctuary of rest and comfort. It is a Garden of Eden – paradise linked to an Infinite, All-Knowing Source. The destina-

tion is already programmed, for we are, in fact, already Home. If we return to our center, we would realize Home is always with us.

If our experience growing up was traumatic, we may react to the concept of home with revulsion. Our ego will tell us to stay away from home because we will only get hurt. That was my experience growing up. In the summertime I was usually the last kid on the block to return indoors after spending the day outside. My mother was often asleep on the couch after a long day working in the factory, followed by a list of chores to care for the family. I didn't feel particularly welcomed or desired. That seemed normal to me. I knew my mother had plenty on her plate.

When I studied psychology and social work, my perception changed. I began to question the meaning of home. Over many years, I have come to realize that the real Home is our connection with Spirit or whatever name you wish to use – Creative Intelligence, All That Is, Higher Power, Source, the Force, the Divine or God. Whatever the name or concept, suffice it to say that Spirit pulsates through us and our world. As Ernest Holmes wrote, “There is a living Spirit at the center of your being. The original Author of all life is in and around you.”²

Our Home is a place of incredible inner peace where love is our natural state. Love goes beyond ego, without guilt or shame. Love is joyful and unconditional and has nothing to do with performance or behavior. It simply is, without limits, boundaries or expectations. True love encompasses all that we are.

The universal story is about returning back Home to that place of love and peace. Our minds and thoughts have created a veil of illusion that prevents us from embracing that world. Yet we all yearn to return.

The Wizard of Oz epitomizes our quest. By the end of her journey, Dorothy realized there was no place like home. The ultimate quest is to muster the courage to bring our minds and hearts back to that inner knowing.

When we're Home, we perceive each moment as an opportunity for growth. We have what the Buddhists call a “beginner's mind.” Unattached to outcomes, we see every encounter as a holy lesson. With a stillness of mind, we step into Oneness.

To return to that Oneness, we need a navigational system. The Guiding Power of Spirit is, in effect, our internal GPS. It permeates

all areas of our lives and charts the course to our ultimate destination. We may not understand the lessons along the way, but our individual routes offer all that we need. Faith allows us to comfortably cruise on life's superhighway without worry. However, we must activate our receiver and tune in to the Guiding Power of Spirit.

Before proceeding, let's clear up a few misconceptions. Religion often promotes a dualistic approach about body and soul, heaven and earth. This concept separates the physical from the spiritual and creates the appearance that only in death can souls be liberated and experience heaven.

Thomas Aquinas described the soul as the ultimate intrinsic source of vital living activity. The word intrinsic suggests that it is basic, inherent and essential. James Thornton, in *A Field Guide to the Soul*, described the soul as “Already fully awakened, perfect, always sustained, unborn, and undying. It knows the sacred in everything.”³ It is our True Self.

The soul is intrinsically connected with the divine and expands outward through six vehicles – body, emotions, mind, heart, voice and vision – that create a matrix of interactions and interconnections in the community and with the environment. Spirit pulsates through us continually and extends outward to others.

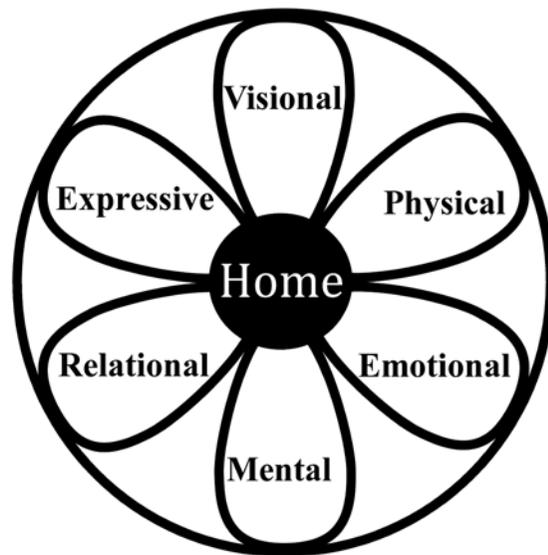
We may not experience this continual flow because our vehicles often stall in stressful, dark tunnels, thereby affecting our ability to receive the signal and be conscious of our GPS. Think of our cell phones. We may periodically lose the connection when we enter a ‘dead zone’; then we ask, “Can you hear me now?” In reality, Spirit's signal is ever-present. We merely have to move out of our defensive tunnels to get better reception.

This requires that we cycle through stages of spiritual growth. As we travel through each cycle, we move deeper within to that place where heaven and earth are one. From this perspective, we are meant to be at home with six vehicles: an evolving sensory physical body that interacts with the external world; a range of emotions that provides feedback about our internal world; an inquisitive mind that processes information and directs attention; an open heart that relates with love and compassion; a voice that freely expresses our inner truth; and a vision that sees past illusion and recognizes our divine purpose.

When we're at home with both the internal and external worlds, we can experience Oneness merely by walking along the beach, talking with a close friend or eating a sumptuous meal. With our body, emotions, mind, heart, voice and vision connected to Spirit we would know what we're meant to do, where we're meant to go, who we're supposed to talk to, why we're supposed to meet and what we're supposed to say. And it would flow easily and naturally.

If we do experience that depth of connection, it usually lasts for brief moments that become "holy instants." The reason has to do with our own evolution. After birth, we began to move away from our center and consume experiences like a voracious caterpillar. All this is a prerequisite for transformation. At the moment, our species is entering a grand awakening. Similar to the cicadas that, after years of hibernating underground, erupt en masse through the earth's crust, we are accelerating the return to our Source.

Returning to the center requires that we expand our concept of Home. Instead of thinking of our body or mind as separate from Spirit, we can recognize that Spirit permeates a flowering life. This is illustrated by a flower with six petals



Spirit spirals outward into the physical, emotional, mental, relational, expressive and visional realms. (This process reflects elements of the Eastern system of chakras – energy vortexes in the body. For further information on chakras, see Dr. Anodea Judith in the bibliography.) Spirit shines the Home light into each petal, which then becomes a vehicle for awakening. Every petal can exhibit the light and take us inward toward Home.

Each petal is an essential aspect of our flowering creation. If we perceive them as separate from Spirit, we, in essence, pluck the petals off the flower. Of course, we can become so preoccupied with the petals that we forget the oneness of the flower. Therefore, we must learn to bring Spirit into the six realms of our lives and, at the same time, use them to establish a connection with Home.

Let's use a computer analogy. Imagine that Home represents a wireless connection to Spirit. We have the capacity to receive unlimited information from our GPS. The computer frame and motherboard symbolize the physical body while electricity or power represents emotions. The software programs and files signify the mind and the online social networks represent the realm of relationships. The speakers and keyboard symbolize expression while the screen becomes the symbol for vision. If we neglect or abuse the hardware, disconnect the power source, download viruses and dysfunctional programs, avoid social networks, turn off the sound, disable the keyboard and shut off the screen, we could never access the wireless connection. Every aspect of the computer is vital.

In a similar fashion, we need a body, feelings, mind, heart, voice and vision to receive and follow the direction of the Guiding Power of Spirit. The ego would have us believe that we are our bodies, feelings and thoughts, when in actuality, they are on loan, ours to use just like the computer with all its components. As we come to know each petal as a vehicle for our GPS, we realize that we have a sacred task to expand them. If any realm is shut down, such as our emotions, we limit the inflow and outflow. We don't want to detach the petals from the stem. Rather, we want to strengthen the connection with each petal. This increases our receptivity to the Guiding Power of Spirit.

Let's explore each petal.

Physical Home

Your body is your temple, or so I've heard it said. Is that because it houses our Being to which we each are wed? – Robana Stevenson

When we're connected to Home and travel in the vehicle of our body, we experience union, which is what the word "yoga" means. Consider the perfect union of a tiny baby floating safely in the uterus, symbiotically connected with the mother. The infant's needs are easily provided through the umbilical cord.

Once the baby is born, s/he learns to become a self-regulatory organism that relies on senses to register temperature, odor, taste, sound, touch and images. These senses provide critical feedback so the body can interact with the external world and establish union. Senses activate parts of the brain that register pleasure and pain. An infant smiles or coos when pampered and cries when distressed. His or her survival is dependent on the sensory input and response. When a child feels cold or hungry s/he reacts so the caregivers can respond.

Humans record experiences with a multitude of senses. We may remember a time when we snuggled against a parent, munched a yummy cookie, smelled a fragrant rose, watched a crawling caterpillar with wide-eyed curiosity, or sang a melody. The images, sounds, touches, tastes and smells of our childhood are stored in our memory banks. Our senses can lead us to experience life as heavenly if we had loving encounters or hellish if we endured hardship, trauma or suffering.

When we experience fear, the fight/flight response becomes activated. The survival instinct triggers the body to shut down peripheral systems such as the digestive tract and re-allocate resources to flee or prepare for battle. Living out of survival shuts down the connection to Home.

We can also sever the connection by flooding our lives with multi-sensory inputs. Consider the number of people rushing through life, multi-tasking on computers and cell phones while listening to music and wolfing a meal. Is it any wonder that we rely on medication to regulate our body?

Our body as an intricate working organism is truly incredible. The sympathetic and parasympathetic systems operate in the background to regulate temperature, circulate blood and oxygen,

maintain our organs, regenerate cells, and more. And these processes occur without conscious attention. If there is a problem, the body sounds an alert. Hunger or thirst signals the brain for fuel or fluid. Our brain processes information so we can perceive, assess, evaluate and make decisions with incredible speed.

According to Ilchi Lee, founder of Brain respiration, "When we are sensitive and responsive to the signs and rhythms of our body, we are more deeply connected to the rich, wonderful texture of all life experience."⁴ Not surprisingly, when we're connected with our body, we become better receptors for our GPS. Our eyes, ears, nose, taste buds and skin can recognize divine moments. We can soak in a sunset, listen to Mozart, smell freshly baked bread, savor a mango and feel the warm embrace of a loved one. Without senses we couldn't feel the rapture of love.

Since the body is the temple of Spirit, we can refurbish the temple by making time for exercise and nutrition, rest and rejuvenation. We can pamper and strengthen the body with balance, not obsession. We can treat the body as an intelligent organism that talks to us daily and offers guidance. Should we have pain or a malady, we can listen to the body's messages to act in a way that guides us back Home.

Even if we were born with physical restrictions, we can still find Home. Helen Keller was deaf and blind, but she used other senses to connect with the Divine. Christopher Reeve was paralyzed from an equestrian accident yet said that some people with all their limbs were more paralyzed than he. In *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Mitch Abom wrote the incredible story of Morrie Schwartz who, though dying from Lou Gehrig's disease, remained connected to life while in a debilitating body until the very end.

No matter what condition the body is in, we can slowly move back into alignment with our physical form so that it becomes a vehicle to connect with and express Spirit. We can delight in the body, awaken our senses, connect with nature and become both grounded and expansive. We can learn self-mastery tools such as conscious breathing and yoga to generate power and establish a bridge to the Divine.

This inventory offers you an opportunity to check in with your physical vehicle.

Physical Inventory

- Are you comfortable in your body?
- How do you take care of your body?
- What aspects of your physical self need attention, i.e. exercise, nutrition, rest, etc.?
- What gives you physical pleasure?
- Can you think of ways in which your body helps you connect with Spirit?



Emotional Home

God turns you from one feeling to another, and teaches by means of opposites, so that you have two wings to fly, not one. – Rumi

Our emotional home connects us with our internal world, propels energy into motion and teaches us about relationships and the environment. It becomes a vehicle for authentic expression. We're meant to experience a wide range of emotions and learn about expressing and managing them.

While we obviously want to feel joy and love more often than pain and grief, it's important to realize that all emotions, including sadness, fear and anger, play an important role. They help us identify needs, wants and desires and move us toward action. Discordant emotions alert us to problems and harmonious ones lead us to inner peace.

The interplay of opposites assists us to fly as suggested by Rumi's poem. Without fear we don't experience courage. Without sorrow, we don't fully embrace gratitude. Without anxiety or worry,

we don't appreciate ease and contentment. The thought of losing a partner can heighten our desire to share love.

Each emotion, like a color on a painter's palette, offers contrast. An artist can utilize hues of reds, blues and yellows to create a richly textured picture. We are all artists and emotions are the colors on life's canvas.

Young children tend to express themselves freely. When upset, they cry and when happy, smile or laugh. Over time, they are conditioned to refrain from using certain colors. Boys are taught not to paint with tears; girls not to use anger. However, suppressed emotions stifle energy and creativity. Depression is repressed anger turned within. Any time we deny our feelings, we cause them to go underground where they ferment and expand until they find an alternative form of expression.

I learned this firsthand as a child. I suppressed truckloads of sadness and anger. Furthermore, I spent eight years in the seminary, not the best place to learn about sensuality or sexuality. When I was in my mid-20's, I knew I had to expand my box of emotional colors so I attended sensitivity groups which were quite popular in the seventies. They awakened my senses and helped me get in touch with feelings I never knew existed. It was as if I took the lid off a giant box of crayons that contained 96 colors, including gold and silver. I left the groups emotionally expanded and began to connect with others on a deeper level. With added colors to draw upon, I became more enthusiastic about life. Interestingly, "enthusiasm" comes from the Greek words *en* and *theos*, which mean "in God."

It must be said that being at home with our emotions doesn't mean we have license to infringe on others' rights. If we're angry, we can't just smack someone. Staying present in our emotions merely suggests that we acknowledge our feelings and process them. When we take time to review an emotion without judgment, we increase our self-understanding. We can learn to express feelings appropriately so that we move toward connection with others rather than away from them.

Most of us feel closer to a person after we share intimate feelings. And if we resolve conflict together, we're drawn even closer. Emotions are the glue in relationships. Therefore, it's important

to stay present without shutting down feelings or moving toward excessive extremes.

When we're out of balance, Spirit uses our emotions to guide us back Home. We may be instructed to forgive when we feel angry, to love when we are frightened. As we move closer to Home, we nurture gratitude and joy. We recognize that emotions are a vehicle to extend love and forgiveness to others.

Take a moment to check in with your feelings.

Emotional Inventory

- Do you feel comfortable with your emotions?
- What emotions do you express or suppress? (joy, anger, love, sadness, happiness, fear, playfulness, guilt, pleasure)
- How do you satisfy your emotional needs?
- How often do you allow yourself to feel good and under what circumstances?
- Can you think of ways in which your emotions help you connect with Spirit?



Mental Home

Our life is what our thoughts make it. – Marcus Aurelius

We possess a beautifully inquisitive mind that processes information and directs our attention. Our mind is the vehicle that steers us through life. It provides focus, direction and willpower. Every day it processes thousands of thoughts like incoming text messages and makes countless decisions. Some thoughts receive immediate attention; others are filed away.

The power of our thoughts cannot be underestimated. We become what we think. The mind is a collection of interacting thoughts that create energy. It organizes information into structures and patterns in order to create stability or homeostasis. But the mind is not static. It also follows the principles of morphogenesis, meaning that it continually evolves and changes. It takes information, associates it with past experiences, evaluates the input, then decides on the best course of action – all at lightning speed.

The mind is both a sending and receiving station, much like a radio transmitter, and interconnects the internal and the external worlds. Emotionalized thoughts and beliefs act like positive and negative poles of a magnet. This is the law of attraction. We draw to us what we think. What we perceive mirrors our inner beliefs.

Awareness deepens our consciousness of our mental processes, which then furthers our personal choices. With attention and intention, we send out our thoughts on a “universal frequency” that allows us to connect with other minds. A collective consciousness creates the visible world. This is clearly mimicked by the worldwide web. However, there is also a collective unconscious or universal pool of invisible thoughts and patterns. An example is when humanity falls asleep, we forget that we are spiritual beings. However, each mind that becomes conscious awakens the collective.

These principles help us understand synchronicity or coincidences. A friend comes to mind and the phone rings. Though we may be surprised to hear the friend on the other end, the connection has occurred because of interacting minds acting like radio transmitters. We may not visibly see radio waves when we tune a channel but we know they exist. We may not see our thoughts but we can observe them in action if we pay attention.

The Guiding Power of Spirit uses our powerful mind to receive instructions and roadmaps. The signals may initially be faint, but with fine-tuning and a still mind, we can increase the reception. Guidance is ever-present. An open mind allows us to hear the messages. Every time we tune into our GPS and follow the instructions, we allow the vehicle of our mind to be directed with purpose, direction and will.

Take another moment and check in with your mind.

Mental Inventory

- Are you comfortable with your thoughts?
- Do you entertain more positive, loving thoughts or critical, fearful ones?
- Are you open to change your beliefs?
- In what ways are you able to shift negative thoughts and beliefs to more uplifting ones?
- Can you think of ways in which your thoughts help you connect with Spirit?



Relational Home

Relationships represent assignments made by Divine Intelligence, bringing together those who represent the greatest opportunities for learning from each other. – Marianne Williamson

One of our primary needs is to belong and feel loved. Infants immediately establish an attachment to a mother or caregiver. That attachment creates a pattern and becomes a building block in future relationships. If we felt protected, secure and loved, we would bring those memories to relationships. If we developed anxious or avoidant attachments, we would become fearful with intimacy.

Though our caregivers may not have provided us with the most loving experiences, we can overcome past conditioning if we move inward toward our True Self where our natural state is love. From that place, we can extend love to others and receive love in return. This creates a genuine, heartfelt bond and deepens our sense of belonging. Our heart can open and we can experience oneness rather than separateness.

That connection to others is the meaning of the relational home. With relationships that come from our heart, not from our ego, we generate peace and well-being. We naturally move toward unconditional love and the highest good. The realization that we are innate beings of light causes cooperation.

We recognize that resonance and dissonance are part of any relationship and that setting appropriate boundaries are acts of love, for they acknowledge that we can't fulfill everyone's desires. When we remain mindful of the expansion of our heart and of healthy boundaries, we become more comfortable expressing our True Self in relation to other Selves.

When Abraham Maslow researched the qualities of self-actualized persons, he found that their relationships tended to be deeper and more profound. They were capable of greater love and their ego boundaries dissolved. He also found there was a deeper sense of compassion for the whole of mankind.

Humans exude great compassion for those who suffer even if they're in other countries. Despite cultural or political differences, people come together in the face of shared tragedy. Natural disasters often stimulate an outpouring of help from around the globe and remind us that we are all brothers and sisters. Many of us have

had experiences of being touched deeply by strangers. When we connect from the heart, we can be at home with anyone.

Our GPS uses the vehicle of relationships to spread love into the community. Spirit guides us to the right people to help us on our journeys. Some may assist us in healing relational wounds; others will strengthen the feeling of love and belonging. Our only mission is to stay in our heart.

Take a few moments and check in with your heart.

Relational Inventory

- Are you comfortable relating with others?
- Can you give and receive love?
- What aspects of your relationships need attention or clarification of boundaries?
- What types of relationships satisfy you the most?
- Can you think of ways in which your relationships connect with Spirit?



Expressive Home

The voice of the intellect is a soft one but it does not rest till it has gained a hearing. – Sigmund Freud

The home of voice is the vehicle of communication and self-expression. It is the way we deliver our messages to the outside world. We communicate thoughts and feelings through words, song, prose, dialogue and non-verbal action. We may write in a journal, speak on a cell phone, relate a story, or gently touch a loved one. Whatever the medium, the intention is to express ourselves.

As social animals we are programmed to share our world. Communication is a vehicle to bond with others, exchange information, and satisfy needs and desires. However, since we were instructed as children how to use our voices, some of our voices may be shut down while others boom out of control.

Speaking our truth means authentically sharing our thoughts and feelings to others. Using our voice requires honesty and courage to openly reveal ourselves without judgment or condemnation. Uninhibited, without the need for others' approval, we become channels for Spirit.

Our GPS remains in constant communication with us and downloads information for us to express. We may be asked to share messages of forgiveness and love. A musician may be guided to play a song, a writer may be instructed to create a story, a healer may be asked to dispense advice, or a painter may be encouraged to splash colors on canvas. We all receive the call to share our lives and express our Inner Truth.

Take another moment to check in with your voice.

Expressive Inventory

- Are you comfortable expressing yourself?
- How do you communicate your needs, wants and desires?
- How can you be more honest with yourself and others?
- What forms of self-expression provide joy and satisfaction?
- How do you communicate with Spirit?



Visional Home

Vision is freely given to those who ask to see. – A Course in Miracles

The home of vision is about seeing from within – insight. It makes visible our inherent talents, gifts and dreams, and weaves them together with imagination and creativity for a Divine purpose. Our ultimate purpose is to serve Spirit and embrace love and inner peace. That requires an expanded vision.

To expand our vision, we must expand our consciousness. When we open our third eye, we recognize the invisible web where life is interconnected. Vision offers us the power of reflection to see what normally cannot be seen. It's about exploring the deeper realms of humanity and discovering who we are. It's about using intuition as a guiding light so we can penetrate illusions, tap an inner knowing, and enter the place of revelation and Holy Truths.

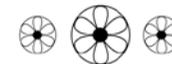
Vision is also about vocation, which comes from the Latin noun *vocatio*, meaning summons. The word suggests that we are summoned by the Divine to make a unique contribution on Earth. We may be called to create a business, teach children, or write prose. We can narrow our focus by adopting a mission, such as promoting an inspiring message or healing the planet. The mission leads us back to our broader vision.

Our GPS will show us what we need, where we're meant to go, what we're supposed to do and who we're supposed to meet. Once we surrender old images and perceptions, we can open our eyes and truly see.

Take another moment and check in with your vision.

Vision Inventory

- Are you comfortable with your personal mission and vision?
- Do you recognize your talents and life purpose?
- What elements of your mission or vision need redirection?
- How do you nurture imagination and intuition?
- Can you think of ways in which your talents, purpose and vision connect you with Spirit?



MAPPING EXERCISE

Before beginning the first mapping exercise, you may want to obtain a journal so you can record your responses. The journal will help you keep track of the many places you'll visit. Some exercises will require time to stop by the roadside for reflection; others will call for spontaneous responses.

The Home Inventory will help you increase your self-awareness so you can assess your current life and notice the patterns in your physical, emotional, mental, relational, expressive and visional homes. Honest review is necessary before you can make any decisions about altering your course. Therefore, complete this inventory with the attitude that the correct answer is what rings true. In each row select a statement that most reflects how you currently view yourself.

When you've completed the inventory, total the number that you checked under each of the three columns. The column on the left indicates that you tend to adapt to the world by holding on, contracting, shutting down and erecting protective barriers. The column on the right indicates that you tend to adopt a more excessive state of letting loose, indulging, obsessing and becoming absorbed in the world. Higher scores in either the right or left columns highlight patterns you may wish to change. The middle column shows the golden mean with a balanced natural state of being at home. You might slide across the spectrum and discover some areas that are balanced and others that require counter-balancing. This inventory can then act as a rough guide to review your current course and present alternative routes.

We'll discuss these columns more fully in the following chapters. For now, log the entries in your journal. You can refer back to them later and highlight any changes.

Home Inventory		
I tend to neglect my body.	I actively care for my body.	I tend to become preoccupied with my body.
I'm not very aware of my senses and have difficulty experiencing pleasure.	I enjoy my senses and feel alive.	I need a lot of sensory stimulation to feel alive.
I feel cut off from my feelings.	I am at ease with my feelings.	I tend to be highly sensitive.
I tend to suppress my emotions.	I manage my emotions well.	I can swing from emotional highs to lows.
I tend to be a pessimist.	I see both the obstacles and the opportunities.	I am almost always optimistic.
I tend to be quite definite in my opinions.	I have an inquisitive an open mind.	My opinions can be easily swayed.
When completing projects, I am highly disciplined.	It's easy to focus on projects and accomplish them.	I tend to procrastinate.
I prefer being alone.	I feel connected with others and set clear boundaries.	I tend to overwhelm others and often have difficulty with boundaries.
I tend to be very competitive.	I enjoy cooperative relationships.	I tend to sacrifice my own needs in relationships.
I tend to be shy and inhibited.	I openly share my life with others.	I really enjoy the spotlight.
I keep my thoughts and opinions to myself.	I easily share my thoughts and opinions with others.	I make sure my opinions are heard.
I have difficulty being direct with others.	When communicating, I enjoy listening and sharing.	I often get impatient listening to others.
I have difficulty giving and receiving.	I freely give and receive.	I often make sure that my needs are met.
I lack direction in my life.	I have a clear vision, purpose and direction.	I have many dreams and aspirations but have difficulty taking action.
I often don't recognize my talents and gifts and am dissatisfied with my life path.	I feel inspired and creative and incorporate my talents into a life purpose.	I am continually marketing my life and my services.
Total	Total	Total



GUIDED VISUALIZATION

Guided visualizations can expand your consciousness. They work best when you're in a relaxed space free of distractions such as cell phones. You can treat visualizations as reading meditations. You could read the visualization and then close your eyes to deepen the images. You could also record the visualization and play it back at your leisure. Alternately, you could ask a partner to read the visualization while you relax into his or her voice. Consider playing soothing music and lighting a candle to accentuate the mood.

The visualizations are organized to take you on different routes that, ultimately, will take you Home. Use your imagination to create your own personal inward journey. Allow the images to unfold and access your many senses. Let us begin:

Make yourself comfortable and take a deep breath. Hold it a moment, then exhale, letting go of all the tension. Take another deep breath. Hold it a moment. Then exhale, releasing any stress and worry. Take another deep breath. Hold it, then exhale, releasing doubts, fears and anxieties. Let them disappear and dissolve. With each breath, allow yourself to go deeper so you can become more conscious of your different homes. Allow whatever happens to happen. There is no right or wrong.

As you move into a gentle rhythm of breathing, become aware of your body. This is your physical home. Notice the areas where you feel tension or tightness. There may be places where you hold stress. With each exhalation, allow the tension to dissolve. Notice the places in your body where you feel comfortable. Allow your breath to expand your connection with all your senses. You have the right to experience sensual pleasure. You have the right to be supported as your body carries you through life.

Now allow your awareness to shift to your emotional home. You have the right to feel, so allow any emotions to surface into awareness. There is no right or wrong. There just is. Notice your emotions. Honor them. Allow them to become your teachers. You may feel comfortable with some feelings and uncomfortable with others. Your emotional home adds color and texture to your life.

When you're ready, shift your awareness to the home of your mind. It helps you think, process the world, and make decisions. Notice whether your mind is busy or quiet. Observe your thoughts. They show you what's going on in your mind. Watch your thoughts as if they are passing clouds. You have a beautiful mind. Know that you have the right to think and exercise your will.

When you're ready, shift to your relational home. Bring your attention to your heart. Notice if there are any constrictions around your heart that prevent you from giving or receiving love. Breathe love into your chest and allow your heart to expand. Just allow whatever happens to happen. You have the right to unconditional love. Inhale that love and let it circulate through your body and into all of your cells.

And when you're ready, shift your attention to your expressive home. Breathe into your throat, knowing that you have the right to express yourself and be heard. Notice if you have any inhibitions. Notice also a desire to communicate and share your experiences. With each breath, feel the connection with your voice and your inner truth. The world is waiting to hear from you.

When you're ready, bring your awareness to the home of inner vision. Imagine an eyelid opening to your third eye. This allows you to see through the fog of illusions and recognize your talents, creativity and Divine purpose. Allow any visions to emanate from your third eye. Insight flows into your life. You have the right to see your True Self and be acknowledged by others. You are perfect just the way you are.

Now imagine a loving Divine light flowing down through the top of your head. The loving light flows down through all of your homes: your visional, expressive, relational, mental, emotional and physical homes. Receive the loving connection as it circulates around your eyes, your voice, your heart, your mind, your feelings and your body. Realize that you are never alone but rather connected with an Infinite Source of Wisdom. Feel the light pouring into your many homes. Receive the love. Feel the peace. Enjoy the sacred space.

When you're ready to step back into the material world, prepare yourself for the return. You may feel limitation and constriction, but you now have a way to connect with your True Self. Home

remains inside of you. It is everywhere and anywhere. You can always return to that place of unconditional love and inner peace.

Hold onto that peace and love and slowly bring yourself back into present time, ready to continue with the rest of the day, feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. As you become aware of your surroundings, stretch your arms and legs and allow yourself to become fully present.

When you are ready, take a few moments to record any significant thoughts, feelings or images in your journal.