

**THE ANSWER IS
YOU!**

Awaken to your self-responsibility

Tony Steven

THE ANSWER IS YOU! Awaken to your self-responsibility
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For
Adam
Luke
James
and
Caitlin.

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Disclaimers

Now, here are the expected disclaimers: I know many people will read this book with preconceived ideas and expectations, so as you read through keep an open mind. I know it's impossible not to have these negative thoughts and views, but the message is important to all of us.

Let me say first up that I am, by nature, an analyser and therefore I put things into categories in order to understand them; the book reflects this. This will suit some and not others; however, none of us can ever understand it all, so stay open. Language alone is also a limited form of communication, so understand that as conscious beings we are only parts of the whole, not its entirety, therefore every little bit will help you put the answers together for yourself. However, if this book helps explain life to anyone, young or old, and they have an 'Aha!' moment, then it has done its job.

Another disclaimer I make is I am not the perfect person who achieves everything I have written; in fact, it seems to me that I battle harder than most sometimes. I do not present myself as a role model: just a commentator, a reader, and hopefully a friend.

My last disclaimer is that I do not know it all. I am not trained in medicine or psychology although I have relied on many other authors and experts, some of whom are. Much of what I say in this book and my presentations have been learned

from others exploring the same questions. It's up to you to work out if you agree with the facts and opinions I offer.

Your view of the world is different from mine and you have to be responsible for what you accept or not. Logic is dependent upon knowing all the facts, wisdom is having an open mind. Both are more valuable than a closed mind.

I have had a gifted life and have been blessed by being pushed through to the knowledge I now have, and eventually my perceived awareness. The best thing I can say as the author of this book is: we are here to experience life not to watch it, so get involved!

About the Author

After twenty-nine years of working for many not-for-profit associations as CEO, most of them professionally-based, I have found I have a very broad perspective on life and its demands on people. My own experiences with love and grief have also provided opportunities for me to learn.

As a child, I attended Sunday School but as an adolescent, I could not reconcile the miracles with what I knew of physics, so I rejected religion like so many others. However, in 1980, at twenty-three years old, I met a gentleman in Launceston called Rex McLean.¹ I learnt from him the concept of—and reason for—parables in the Bible. My grandmother Valerie Carter then encouraged me to be confirmed in the Church of England.

It was then that I first developed an interest in the meanings behind the stories of the Anglican Church. Then in the 1990s, I found the Theosophical Society which, to my delight, asked more questions than it answered. With my spiritual and logical sides desperately trying to reconcile answers, I realised that there was so much more information available than we were taught within the regular institutions.

I have a diploma in Business Management which included some modules in law and economics.

When my marriage ended around 2007, my own emotional upheaval propelled me towards the self-help genre of literature,

and ever since I have been building a wealth of knowledge that has its foundations in logic and the wisdom of many older cultures.

I hope this book is as helpful to you as the information in it was to me.

Witness to History

During my time on earth (the late 1950s to the 21st century) I have witnessed the most amazing era of development. I have experienced a worldwide awakening to fairness; science, including information technology and the environment we live in; and I've been amazed by many incredible steps taken towards world peace. I was born twelve years after the end of World War II and we haven't seen the likes of that again, even though most of us thought we would. I feel humbled and awestruck by the amazing achievements that have happened around me. But when I was younger, I battled to understand the significance of it all; this book is my still-developing view of where we are now, and why.

My biggest personal awakening is that I am responsible for my life and how I react to it, not Mum and Dad, not the government, not God: just me. I assert that you are the same.

The second revelation I received was that you only ever receive what you give. These two major understandings are the keys to living life well.

I have written this book on two levels. The first is a surface message that may seem a bit fractured, however, it will provide you with answers to questions you may have about how to take control of your life. Also, at a deeper level, there is a message to the *real* you: the whole person, the decision-maker. A message that will hopefully prod and awaken a sense of purpose that will guide your outer bodies here on earth and how they interact with others as you experience this world.

Preface

Throughout the ages, humans have become more and more aware of our own circumstances as individuals; we have been learning about and developing the current level of self-awareness we all have today. As this has taken place over the centuries, we have also been asking deeper and deeper questions, like: Why are we here? What's it all for? Are we all there is?

Life after death is a question that has been asked by all generations since the first moment we recognised that we could think: 'I think, therefore I am.'² These spiritual questions have been asked and many answers have been given throughout history; answers that often seem to have common foundations.

Many religions use parables or stories to communicate these answers, their lessons; this way they stand the test of time. These lessons and their fundamental principles have some shared themes often common to all religions: love one another, practise self-discipline, respect your community, and obey the divinity, for example.

Many philosophers and writers over the years have drawn the same conclusions; their teachings are often geared toward setting rules that will provide social order and allow our communities to continue and grow and prosper. Principles such as, "Don't murder or injure others" and, "Respect your loved ones and their possessions"; these are central to living with one another in small groups.

Recently though, in my opinion, the human race has been moving from the equivalent of childhood stories to more secular spiritualism as seen today where many of us are able to see and accept the truth in these lessons without the parables. In other words, we are realising the responsibility is with us, and no one else; not a frightening God, just you and me as individuals.

But there are still many people who take these parables literally and very seriously, and therefore surrender to others their own power of reason. There are many influencers such as religious and political leaders, but sadly some have been despots and dictators who do not have the individual's best interests at heart.

The evolution of science and education has perhaps been the cause of this massive increase in self-awareness, and in the end, it will be our saviour. This book endeavours to aid that world journey towards real consciousness, self-awareness, and ultimately self-responsibility.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge a few people who have helped me over the years: Helen Steven and other past and present members of the Theosophical Society, Hobart Branch, especially John and Eve Petit. Ocean Reeve, Joshua Clifton, Jason Smith, and Marisa Parker, from Ocean Reeve Publishing. Dennice Linton for her wise counsel, the late, Rex McLean, who used to work with me at radio station 7LA Launceston. A special thank you to my grandmother, the late Valarie Carter, who had a panache for these topics. Plus, the many authors, speakers, and coaches that I have learned from over the years, many of whom I have listed as references throughout the text and included in my suggested reading section.

Much of what I write in this book may seem obvious, but hopefully, you will see it from a deeper point of view where there is a greater onus of responsibility. Either way, it is healthy to review this in words instead of just concepts as well.

Chapter 1

The Beginning

There is no greater joy than that of feeling oneself a creator. The triumph of life is expressed by creation.³

—HENRI BERGSON

Purpose and reason

If the answer is you, then what is the question? The question is, ‘Who is responsible for your life and what happens during it?’

If life is taking you nowhere, or somewhere you didn’t intend, then let’s look at it differently and in a deeper, more meaningful way; let’s ask what the reason for your life is.

Let’s ask how to build your own confidence and motivation, develop a new future, and spread a sense of calm, peace, and love all around you. What would it be like to have a solid foundation for you to build your life on? In the end, I hope that you will come to the conclusion that self-responsibility comes with the privilege of life.

This book will endeavour to:

- offer a possible answer that explains the reason for your life,
- suggest how to take advantage of that knowledge,
- build your confidence and motivation,
- develop a new future for you,

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- spread a sense of calm, peace, and love all around you,
- build a solid foundation for you to build your life on, and
- show you a more basic way to take action.

In the end, I want to show you that you are the reason for your own existence; you are intricately connected and part of the whole. Because of the privilege of life, you have a responsibility to take charge of your life.

Perception

Have you ever walked into a room that you have known well for a long period of time, and suddenly you see it differently? Nothing has changed in the room except for your perception of it; it's like seeing it from a strange angle and not recognising it at first. This can happen to you with people you know, or cities you have been to. These perception shifts show how fluid your position in the universe really is. Your perception of the room is yours, and yours alone; no one else sees it like you, and it can change.

For example, I like to use the analogy that a person's view of the world looks complete to them, however, they are only looking at it as though from one small porthole on a ship. All they can see is ocean ... all the way to the horizon; however unbeknown to them another person on the other side of the same ship looks out their porthole and sees a great city, lots of people, and the hustle and bustle of a busy port. Same place but a different point of view; the fact that the ship has yet to leave port is not apparent to the person on the seaward side of the ship.

Everything we see, we see from a limited view that is our own, and then we think with just our own brain. We are limited by our single and individual position within the universe; we can't see it all. However, we don't have to be limited. We'll look at this concept throughout this book.

The porthole metaphor shows how we can see things so differently that it can be hard to keep our recognition of reality in place. Some mentally ill patients have this problem on many different aspects; as the saying goes, there's a fine line between genius and madness.

Throughout the chapters of this book, I will endeavour to explain the depth of the analogy above and show you a new way of understanding the universe we all live in, or maybe I should say, we are all part of. I will also show you how you can use this new understanding to build your confidence and motivation, develop a new future, and spread a sense of calm, peace, and love all around you, all on a strong foundation.

The Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was founded and originally based in New York back in the late 1800s. It now has its headquarters in Adyar, India. The members explore philosophy, religion, and science. Their creed is: 'There is no religion higher than truth'.

One of the society's founders, Helena Blavatsky,⁴ who died in 1891, spent the last part of her life writing a document called *The Secret Doctrine*.⁵ This amazing and highly complex text gives significant insight into the ancient wisdom on which some of the conjecture in this book is based.

The Theosophical Society does not claim authorship of theosophy and its teachings, but provides a forum for inquiry, rather than belief.

However, Blavatsky did say the Theosophical Society was formed 'to assist in showing men [and women] that such a thing as Theosophy exists and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities.'⁶ It is a nucleus of people who come together for the study and dissemination of

theosophy, allowing each person full freedom of approaching it according to their best understanding. The Theosophical Society leaves the work of dissemination to its members and sympathisers; it does not act as an arbiter of every person's understanding.

The General Council, the international governing body of the Theosophical Society, resolved in 1949, the following:

“As The Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings, and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership”.

Around the world, the Theosophical Society has many libraries full of books written over the past century, some based on Blavatsky's work and some works of ancient wisdom in general.

The ancient wisdom describes a universal structure that presents in patterns. These patterns are irrefutable and are as much a part of nature as the laws of physics. This is a good thing because you can reliably use these patterns in your own life by setting the circumstances you need to be in the right place and build the right reality you want. This concept is partly explained in Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret* and better still in Mel Gill's *The Meta Secret*.⁷ These laws are available for everyone but people who understand them are able to use them with purpose. They include the law of attraction (as explained in *The Secret*), the principles of cause and effect, influence of vibration, and the

power of purposeful action, yin and yang, and “as it is above, so shall it be below”.

The ancient wisdom

Throughout this book, I will refer to the ancient wisdom. This is a wide concept and doctrine used by many to explain the commonality of principles that occur in most religions and Buddhism. It has always been there, in nature, available for us to learn it and use it.

I first came across the ancient wisdom through the Theosophical Society. Many old teachings relate to the ancient wisdom: philosophical writings and most religious scripts are based upon it. In modern times new authors have started writing about it and called it many things, such as in Napoleon Hill’s *Think and Grow Rich*.⁸

The reason for your life

First, let’s offer an answer to the age-old question that everyone ponders at some stage in their life: ‘Why do I exist?’ One explanation can be gained from the ancient wisdom: the answer is ‘to experience’. The universe has not just happened by accident; it is evolving, and it has a purpose, and that is to become self-aware, from singularity to duality (what we know as reality) and back to singularity. Singularity is a scientific concept suggesting all space, time, and matter are condensed into one point. Duality is a state in which there are opposites, e.g. cause and effect, yin and yang, or space (matter) and time. We are part of that process; each of us is a single spark of consciousness, a small point of self-awareness that signals and assists the universe’s journey toward total awareness as one.

We see ourselves as individuals, and we are—however, in the total scheme of things, we are one. All of us are in the same

interrelated system—our bodies, our emotions, and our minds, all of it is one. Our role as individuals in this physical realm is to experience the physical, to be part of it, and to give to it. Our anchor during this time is the ancient spiritual knowledge or wisdom that is deep within us all.

Along with our five senses, we as individuals have other tools at our disposal to help us experience our life. These five tools are: our ability to create, the confidence that comes from the habits we form, our motivation and ability to plan, our calmness, and our foundation of knowing we belong. These tools are ours to use and develop, and if we use them well, we can experience more. Let's look at each in turn:

Tool 1—Our ability to create

As individuals, we are single points of consciousness in this thick soup of matter and energy that is the universe; we are part of the same oneness. Because of this, we can create anything at any time, limited only by our imagination. We are, if you like, apprentices of creation. We do it all the time, every day, with a four-step process. We have ideas, then we think them through, then we speak to others to impart these ideas and thoughts, and then we act upon them to make something happen. This is creation in action.

Then there are three more steps: together we experience reactions to our actions and consequently the interaction between ourselves and others, and then we learn and gather knowledge and wisdom from the experience. The learning and building of our knowledge through experience is the key.

This is the structure I have used in this book to explain the influence we have over the universe, our reality. We can change the course of history at any one of these stages of creation; it's all within our power if we choose to do so and act.

Tool 2—Our confidence in patterns

When we make something happen, such as building a house or even just driving to the shop, we do it by remembering patterns. We perform these patterns of behaviour knowing that the laws of physics won't change, and we can rely on the immutable. These patterns and habits become everyday skills; we become very good at them and we build our confidence knowing we can achieve them again, just like a baby mastering the art of walking, or—when we are older—learning to drive a car.

Our ideas are unique, but by repeating thoughts, words, and actions, we can form habits so we can live our lives without being overly conscious about every action we take. These habits become who we are as individuals.

Each of us operates our daily lives by habit and we build on those habits by gaining knowledge through our listening and our repetitions, and exponentially, we create the world we know. But it's when we do something outside of these set patterns, or break or make a new habit, that we truly show we are human and that's where we really do have the power of choice and true awareness. Animals have a certain level of choice and they exercise it all the time; just try to feed a fussy cat to see my proof. But, as far as we know most animals can't voluntarily break a habit or pattern or choose to try another direction in life. That is what makes us different and it's surprising how rarely we exercise this gift during our lifetime.

Tool 3—Our motivation

When we build confidence, we do it through repetition. The more we practice, the more success we have; it gives us the motivation to continue to repeat the process and build towards even greater achievements. But we have downtimes as well—depression, low

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mood, or sadness when we think the success is not forthcoming. What we must understand, and I hope this book will help, is that we are in charge of these emotions and we can choose to be happy or sad, lazy, or driven. All we have to do is take responsibility for each step of the creation process as I outlined above. Having direction and making goals is essential and then taking joy from each small step on the way builds your motivation.

Tool 4—Our calm

Take time out to remember you are a spiritual being as well; our bodies are just our physical beings. We have many aspects to us, much more than just the physical. We should ensure all these different sides of us are nourished and healthy; exercise for the body plus taking time out for the soul. Calmness is very important; relaxation is required often. I am not just talking about sleep either. I mean meditation and calm relaxation. We need these skills just as much as we need exercise to thrive and to be efficient. It's during these times of stillness that we can find clarity and purpose for ourselves, enhance our awareness, and build our non-attachment.

Tool 5—Our foundation

Knowing you are precious and wonderful and worthwhile to the world is a gift you should protect. We all need to belong; it's one of the patterns that is the universe. This happens through love, the universe's strongest force. I say this because real love is felt most when we are connected. Real love is the metaphysical force that flows between all of us and everything. Love is felt when we are rewarded by knowing or sensing that we have contributed to the overall good. If we can build a strong foundation of good values and ethics, we have the tools to receive this gift of real love and it leads to other rewards.

Let me start by explaining the seven stages of the creating process or manifesting something into being. These stages form some of the chapters in this book and are the backbone of my message.

The seven stages of creation

The best way I can explain the fundamental message of this book is to show you that you are in control. You have influence over each of the seven stages of creation.

All these stages are within your control directly and indirectly. You can influence each at the time you make a decision and in how you project them into the physical world through your approach to them.

They are:

- 1. Ideas:** Spirit, intuition, higher self.
- 2. Thoughts:** Mental, thinking, and connection.
- 3. Words:** Spoken and written.
- 4. Actions:** Physical, doing.
- 5. Reactions:** Cause and effect, others.
- 6. Interactions:** Individual, social, economic, and political.
- 7. Experience** – Learning and wisdom, your own awareness, knowledge, and understanding.

In this book, these stages have been organised, as chapters that will outline the steps of creating something in the physical world, and help you understand the influence you have over each one of them as an individual and as a member of this universal community.

To do this, first, we need to look at who and what you are.

The seven layers of you

According to the ancient wisdom as studied by theosophists,⁹ there are seven “layers of you”. Each of them lives in a different degree of existence, each finer or less dense than the last. They are the physical, astral, mental, buddhic, nirvanic, monadic, and finally the divine:

1. Physical

The first, and densest layer, is, of course, your physical body here in this earthly world: your head, torso, arms, and legs. Your body, heart, and brain, in all its incredible intricacy and amazing design, have evolved by using the basic laws of the universe; it was meant to be. However, your physical representation is only a seventh of the total “you” and it’s a temporary vessel built to enable you to experience the life you are having now as an individual.

2. Astral

The second layer of you is your astral body, part of which is often depicted in the ancient wisdom as your colourful aura; this is close to, but not to be confused with, the emotional side of you. Your astral body is larger than your physical body and vibrates out into the space and time around you, and through your physical body. Almost like layers or planes interpenetrating similar energy, it envelops other things and other people, receiving and giving its messages, both positive and negative.

Our perceptions of this energy can vary, but one theory is that our energy field, or aura,¹⁰ is a protective “shield” that encompasses our physical body, creating a barrier between us and unwanted energy and influences. Although this energy shield is there to protect, there are many aspects of life that taint its ability to operate, and since it’s fairly invisible to most of us, it also suffers from neglect; colours dull, and vibrancy slows.

Our auras change regularly according to what we are feeling, thinking, doing, speaking, and exposing ourselves to at any given moment; therefore, they become frayed when exposed to things like smoke, high electrical current, excessive negative energies, traumas, and intoxication.

The more damaging energy we are exposed to, the less bright our aura becomes. This, in turn, reflects the energy we are putting out, in other words, our “vibe”. Therefore, this affects our vibrations and the frequency within which we are choosing to live. The energy we project governs what we receive, hence the “law of attraction”.¹¹

3. Mental

The third layer is your mental body. It’s even bigger again than your astral body, or I should say, more far-reaching. The higher mental body reaches towards the divine and the lower mental body manifests as what I call our “concrete thought”. It’s the voice in your head, the chatterbox that Buddhists call the “monkey mind”. Within the mental body, though, is the *real* you that has control, the part that taps into your knowing and intuition. The layer of you that instinctively knows the truth, right from wrong, and knows the degree of love there is in an action, a word, or a feeling; your decision-maker.

The above three layers—or bodies—take up space and time in differing levels of vibrations or energy. The next four levels are not really “bodies” but rather levels of integration with the universe as a whole.

The four higher levels

The four higher levels are spiritual and often described as “divine”. They are the levels where you are more part of the whole, rather

than differing degrees of an individualised persona, as in the lower three.

These are the buddhic, nirvanic, monadic, and finally the divine (or adi) planes,¹² all Sanskrit terms. These four planes are spiritual by nature and are all closer to being at one with the universe as a whole than being just you as an individual. In other words, most of you is actually part of the grand designer and only a small part of you is separate and alone. All this information comes from the ancient wisdom as studied by the Theosophical Society along with many other enlightened religious and spiritual groups.

I recommend you explore this subject to discover more about the three initial levels and the four higher planes. The Theosophical Society has branches in most larger cities around the world. But let me provide some proof about what I have said above and explain a bit about the true nature of your body.

Proof of your divinity is in your hands

According to an old story I once heard, if your hands were made of the hardest steel known to humankind, they would be totally worn away by your seventh birthday, but, because of the process of cellular regeneration, your hands are still here to turn the pages of this book. So, if the hand in front of you is not the hand you were born with, is it you? At this moment it is, but your hand, in fact, your whole body, changes its cellular make up many times during your lifetime. You don't die in old age with the body you were born with. Your cells are constantly regenerating.

So, what is it that is you if it is not your body? Genetically speaking it is the program imprinted in your DNA that builds and rebuilds your cells; they even have the process of aging embedded in them.

Physically speaking you are a program that is running on this platform called reality.

Emotionally speaking you are the chemicals and neurons interacting, not only in your brain but everywhere in your body, so as to produce feelings.

Mentally speaking you are the memories, habits, and lessons learned throughout your life, once again stored in your brain and body.

Spiritually speaking you are a part of nature the universe; just like everyone else.

Can you now see that your body is your vehicle whilst here, it's not you? Neither are your emotions or even your thoughts. You are the controller—the decision-maker, and you have the responsibility for driving these vehicles throughout your lifetime.

Singularity and Duality

In the science of physics, a singularity is described as a point where everything is so condensed it takes an infinite value, especially in space-time when matter is infinitely dense, like at the centre of a black hole. A point theorised to be the condition of the universe before the Big Bang.

Throughout this book, I will refer to a singularity to show the opposite to duality which I theorise is the condition of the universe after the Big Bang. A condition that relies on everything in time having an opposite and equal effect on matter.

I understand, the concept of dualism is unlikely to be familiar to everyone, but the idea of duality being the 'opposite' of singularity is important as nothing in the universe can exist without something else to be compared to.

Without this concept, consciousness would have nothing to perceive.

Awakening into self-awareness

This book will help those at the very beginning of their awakening. The information herein will push you over the line into self-responsibility. Very much like taking the red pill in *The Matrix*,¹³ where the main character Neo was awakened to the terrible truth which changed his perspective of life forever. Unlike the movie, if you are not ready you will just lose interest and nothing more will happen. None of this should be confused with any political movement as the very act of doing so means you've lost the point.

Good luck. The road ahead—should you decide to take it—is hard, but so much more rewarding.

Chapter 2

Ideas: The First Step to Manifestation

I have a dream.

—MARTIN LUTHER KING JR,
from his speech at the March on
Washington for Jobs and Freedom, 1963

Spirit, intuition, and the higher self

There is a connection between the whole of existence and you; many eastern philosophies teach this “oneness principle”, the fact that every soul is really a different aspect of the same reality.¹⁴ This thinking is based on ancient wisdom and confirmed by some of the most normal events in our lives. One of these is when you have an idea. Where do ideas come from; how are they generated? Are they just calculations from existing information, or are they injections of new information, or a combination of both?

Think about the nature of the word “creativity”: to create with imagination. We all understand that we have self-awareness and the ability to choose, but is there something else? For example, how and where do ideas come from? I’d suggest that when we put ourselves into the right situation and/or frame of mind, physically, emotionally, and mentally, we are ready to receive ideas. By this, I mean learning; bringing on new information that adds to what

we already know. Then we are in a state where we are prepared to receive something that was not there before: a new point of view, a new understanding, or a different frame of mind.

The universe gives these gifts to anyone ready to receive them, such as inventors, after finally understanding a complex issue and many trials; or artists, when their feelings match their expression; and all of us, whenever we open our minds and become ready to experience a new idea. If ideas come from higher levels, the finer planes of the universe, then they are tools to influence and direct us while we are immersed in the solidness of the physical; a synergy where the whole becomes more than just the sum of the parts.

A good example is writing new music; songwriters get inspirations by waves or chains of thoughts, or a series of notes coming to their mind. Each of these additional thoughts provides a new opportunity for a new thought or series of notes, and a brand-new melody comes to life. But to get to that stage they have to be ready to receive all these ideas. The right setting, their mind attuned to being able to play, connected to the music they have already played and written. I have had many moments just like that during the writing of this book. You have to work at it, discipline yourself, it's not a gift for nothing.

Inventors

To my mind, history's inventors all have one thing in common; they practised a sense of discipline often born from an obsession to create the right circumstances to let ideas in. These circumstances were often made up of long periods of study and learning, an open mind, and a willingness to work plus determination. According to Quora Online and Rutgers University, Thomas Edison experimented several thousand times before he perfected

the light bulb. Leonardo Di Vinci worked tirelessly on all his projects with masterful obsession.

These geniuses were gifted, but these gifts were not just given to them out of the blue. These gifts are there for all of us; however, it was these inventors that worked hard enough to set the right circumstances so they could receive their ideas.

The universe is planned, and we are all part of it; we can all create whatever we want but the seven stages of creation (See page 19) as outlined in this book have to be present for it to happen.

The first stage of creation—ideas—are the result of the opening of a small gap in the physical fabric of the universe to the reservoir of all knowledge on the other side. We all have the opportunity to tap into this; we just need to be responsible for setting the right circumstances to make it happen.

Past, present, and future: influence on ideas

People are programmed by their past experiences, but they still have a choice; we are aware and can choose not to comply with our inbuilt and learned programs and previously-set patterns. Real choice doesn't have to be encumbered by the past. When I say "real choice" I don't mean "habit choice" or your programmed reactions like taste in colours or food; I mean the choice we have when we break or make patterns and habits. These real choices are yours to use over and above your daily actions. For the purposes of explaining my point here, I'll assume an average person would exercise real choice on average just once a month; these choices only occur when we take new directions in life or make changes to our behavioural patterns that we have previously built up in our past.

A common aphorism is 'Time is relative; its only worth depends upon what we do as it is passing.' It's relative to your

position and perspective, you can draw on the past, the present, or even the future for your ideas.

Concepts that are shaped in your mind will be influenced by your experiences from the past; for example, your understanding of the laws of physics. As a child, I learnt that fire would burn me, so I don't put my hand near it today. Also, concepts can be influenced by your present—namely, the attitude you have and how open your mind is. Are you ready to receive? Also, these concepts can be influenced by the future, a concept that can come to you along with a new perspective. This new perspective may even include new information. You may say, 'I know I can't afford a holiday', then you find a partner who can help pay, so you decide to take a trip anyway. The potential was always there.

The point here is that you can choose to take on board each concept influenced by time or not. Plus, your karma will influence any new perspective as well, if you make choices which are in line with the set patterns of the universe—then benefits will flow more easily. For example, I come to understand that my body needs to exercise to stay fit to live longer—here I have been influenced by the past; it may have been my family or my education. If I act then it's because I choose to adopt the right attitude to exercise and see it as something I would like to do; the benefits outweigh the negatives and so, this is being influenced by the present. When I get the idea to go to the gym, I can see the future, and it's time to make a decision. This is all happening within the next stage of creation that is outlined in the next chapter, "Thought".

Ideas are sudden flashes of inspiration that influence thought and send you thinking in other directions. They influence us, but at the same time, we guide them by ensuring the settings are in place for us to receive them.

How ideas influence us and our experience

When I think about it, I'm surprised how few real ideas happen to us during our lifetime. We have such enormous potential, but we don't put ourselves in the right circumstances very often to receive these inspirations. They happen on occasions when we are ready, and on many levels and degrees. Small ideas like becoming aware of someone else's point of view, or great ideas like the first understanding of how an aeroplane wing may work.

Sometimes we'll recognise a great idea and how, if implemented, it would change our lives. These ideas can excite us, even motivate us to make it so. Other times we let them slip. Ideas can change the direction of our lives, such as an idea for a new career path. They are totally within our control, but we have to ask ourselves, *How did we get to that point in the first place, to recognise and comprehend them?*

Habits versus inspirations

It seems to me that creative people exist in this state of readiness more often than the rest of us. It's about their state of mind and their openness to receive. Ideas come from the mind, then thoughts are a process of the brain as it works to make sense of the concept and tie a sense of usefulness to it.

The mind is an all-encompassing system that incorporates the total result of the brain, the body, and maybe even, some etheric¹⁵ forces. The brain uses synapses¹⁶ to operate and these are physical structures, albeit staggeringly complex and magnificent. The brain will learn and create habits, a routine of behaviour that is repeated regularly, and tends to occur subconsciously to ensure you survive and live well. The mind will ask questions, see into the future, and project forward using imagination; this provides us with the opportunity for ideas.

It seems to me that the study of quantum physics has, to date, unknowingly encountered the edge of consciousness. It has been discovered that the observer influences the observed;¹⁷ therefore, the universe exists as we see it: we are in part, the designer of the experience that is our own reality.

As a result, it makes sense that we can influence it by changing our perception of it. We do this at each of the seven stages of creation. Our picture of reality is ours alone. We have no proof that our picture of reality is, in fact, the one everyone else sees; note my comment in the last chapter on seeing rooms differently. Also, until I can see through your eyes how will I know if you see the colour red the same as I do? Perception is ours alone.

So, if we really have that much control over how we see things, our perceptions, then we can be in charge of making these perceptions as we want them, therefore we are in charge of making our future. We are the ones creating things in our reality. If we accept this, then we have to stop externalising the responsibility for it all to an external God, rather accept that it is you that has the power.

Ideas are not just about what you knew plus something extra; it's also about being able to think about it and articulate it. It needs to be fully understood to come into existence, then we can have an influence. Our brain will want to repeat our habits, inspiration will only come from our mind ... but both are ours to control.

Connection

I feel our brain and mind should be servants to our spirit. Our spirit is the decision-maker, the connection between the whole universe and our conscience selves. This is where we get ideas from, this is who has responsibility for them.

The word “spirit” is fascinating. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, one of its definitions is ‘the characteristics of a person that are considered as being separate from the body, and that many religions believe continue to exist after the body dies.’ The word is used in many areas of language and yet it has an accepted meaning being that “extra something” that connects us to others and everything—the spirit of a team, being in high spirits, and the religious spirit.

Our spirit is our genuine decision-maker. If we make a decision based on emotions or thought alone, we fail to apply spirit to the word or action we make. Our consciousness gives us the opportunity to look further than what we feel or think; we can apply lessons from the past, moral values, and other people’s interests ahead of our own. If a calculation of presently known information was conducted it would just be a projection—only when we input consciousness does it become a prediction. We can choose to project using our emotions, or we can choose to apply our consciousness—our spirit—to a decision and venture into the unknown.

Intuition, however, is the ‘ability to understand or know something immediately based on your feelings rather than facts’ (Cambridge Dictionary). It is the process of delving into the spirit and seeing or feeling something from elsewhere.

I’d say most of us feel we are more than just a body and that there is a higher self. This is where we find our closest connection to the universe as a whole. When we can tap into that reservoir, we can help generate the ideas that create our future. This connection or intuition is the same pathway that the spirit uses to assert itself, through the process of ideas, affecting the decisions we make in our lives.

Good and bad ideas

The universe has no provision for good or bad, just cause and effect. Any judgement on whether something or someone is good or bad is our own. The concepts of “good” and “evil” are human manifestations; these learnt concepts guide our concrete thoughts (a greater definition of “concrete thought” is in the next chapter). It is in the realm of concrete thought that many of us build a refusal to understand the deeper self, a blindness to the knowledge of the oneness, that is when we become selfish and it is then that we enable an ability to do harm. The deeper real self is incapable of this. This blindness is built by our ego. When we are caught in this rationalising state where we are capable of hurting others, we open ourselves to destructive emotions such as envy, pride, lust, and even hate.

Self-awareness, learning, and meditation take you to higher levels of understanding and in turn, this breaks down selfishness. A self-aware person has to face these rationalisations because they can see the truth and it conflicts with the programmed or adopted self-beliefs, many formed in childhood. When you take charge and face these truths you open yourself to opportunities and possibilities that fit the patterns of the universe.

Truth

Truth is a token of trust, not what is correct; it's what you know within yourself to be right. The truth relies totally on you and your application of self-responsibility to exist. But to know the whole truth you have to know all the facts, and none of us can know it all, so therefore on many questions in life—not all—truth is a matter of perspective.

Mark Cole wrote, ‘It's been said that a person can live forty days without food, four days without water, four minutes without

air, but only four seconds without hope.¹⁸ Hope will only exist when there is truth for you.

Because our minds can project into the past and the future, we must have hope, and because we can't know all the facts, the "truth for you", and not "truth", is what we have to be aware of and work with. It's about what we see and what we experience and it's then from our point of view that we decide what makes sense. Because of this ambiguity we have a responsibility to make sure, as much as we can, what we regard as the truth is logical, considers reality, and incorporates the concepts of others. We must work at it and exclude emotions. It's up to us to decide.

For example, in Westminster-based law, there are two levels of judgement for truth: 'beyond reasonable doubt' for criminal law and 'a balance of probabilities' for civil law. We can judge a situation from two points of view or two levels of degree; both may have contrary ideas of what is true. It takes a special effort to learn enough to ensure an informed truth is applied. It is our responsibility to comprehend as much as possible and see the biggest picture we can to comprehend any truth in our lives.

What we must understand is that we cannot and will never know it all, so total truth will always elude us. So, it is important to keep an open mind and ensure when new information is presented to us, we don't reject or accept it outright but evaluate it and apply what is appropriate in our judgement. These decisions are ours to make and the ability to do so is evidence of the divine.

Remember, good ideas rely on truth.

Influence over ideas

If you look through the words above again you will notice that even at the ideas stage of creation you have an influence over the

outcome. It is here (along with the other six stages set out in this book) that you can make a difference.

It's all about getting yourself into the right state to receive ideas, and you are in charge of that. Your self-awareness allows you to be in control, you can decide to consider and or act on the following:

- Education—circumstantial or formal.
- Experience.
- Trial, error, and judgment.
- Meditation and focus.
- Physical readiness.
- Accepting the truth.

A Buddhist's goal is enlightenment; if everyone were to reach this universal awareness—can you imagine it? A time when we all act in harmony with the universe and each other. This would require massive worldwide education and unimaginable levels of self-awareness and critical thinking. *Not in my lifetime*, I chuckle. But it is happening very slowly. Most countries around the globe now have adopted a secular approach within their laws, excluding mandatory religion, and as a species, I feel we are well on our way. The number of people adopting a secular philosophy is increasing.

As a step into the next chapter, let's look at the work of Tasha Eurich, a psychologist and researcher from the USA. Tasha's studies identified and investigated self-aware people. Her surveys looked at internally aware people, and external awareness, or awareness of how others see you. She found that people who were good at both were much more successful than others and comprise somewhere between 10% and 15% of our population, a surprisingly small amount, especially when about 70% stated they think they are self-aware in her surveys.¹⁹

One of the determining features of self-awareness was that her study participants didn't emotionalise facts as many of us do; they asked what can be done in the face of adversity instead of asking "Why?" Asking the right questions is key, and to do that you need to think the right thoughts. Self-aware people exercise the thought, 'What is, just is.'

To conclude, I'd like to say that you are in charge of your ideas, and your creative thinking.