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## INTRODUCTION

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### THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

My goal for this book is to inspire you to become aware of and appreciate the fullness of who you are. I know that a book is only a tool, but books have the power to take us many places—in this dimension and beyond. I would like you to think of this book as an introduction—first, to a host of people whose stories may touch your own life; and second, and most important, to your own self-discovery.

My intention is to create a field of interaction among you, me, and the universal field of intelligence that will begin to create a momentum of energy, catalyzing the recognition of your purpose, if that is as yet unclear to you. In order to do that, I am counting on your own desire to know yourself as part of the current of energy flowing between you and the book. The book is based on the perennial philosophies by which humanity has long navigated the unpredictable shallows and depths of life. My hope is that by bringing you the stories of real people, some inner knowing and recognition of your own path will be touched.

The book is based on my own lived experience both personally and professionally. As you will see in Chapter 1, I have taken the winding road to my present occupation as a teacher, writer, and facilitator of workshops on spirituality and life purpose. Along the way, I have discovered, tested, and taught certain principles and techniques that I feel are eminently practical for helping us to find our place in the world.

It is my intention that this book provide a matrix of information to feed your soul—as much as any book can be a stimulus to insights.

We make sense of our world by telling each other stories. Some of the stories in the book will move you. Some will not. Stories connect us to each other's experience regardless of time, place, or culture. According to scholar and mythologist Joseph Campbell, the first stories, or ancient myths, were designed to put the mind in accord with the body, and a person's way of life in accord with the dictates of nature.

Stories are understood as a whole, and from them we extract a meaning that is relevant to our own concerns. Each story will, however, work on your psyche in a particular way. What I learn from a story may be similar or completely different from what you learn, depending on our backgrounds, our current situations, our vocabulary, our hopes and fears, and our ability to listen—and our inherent life purpose. Maybe at a later time, a story you had not thought much about will suddenly come to mind just when you could use some support.

The right side of the brain, our intuitive and imaginative side, learns best by stories. The left side, rational and deductive in its reasoning, connects easily to techniques, principles, explanations, and step-by-step processes. This book provides both avenues to help you find your place in the world.

### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Read the book at random or all the way through. It is organized using a mix of stories, principles, suggestions, and personal questions. Hopefully, one of these methods may set off the intuitions that are ready to come forth from your intention to know yourself better.

Life is found in relationships with people, places, and things. I hope to create a relationship with you and this environment of ideas, fueled by your desire to know yourself. Two states of mind will help this process. The first is a strong intention to open up to the unfolding purpose inherent in you. The second is the capacity to live without knowing what your purpose is, yet be ready to do what is asked of you.

### THE SEQUENCE OF THE CHAPTERS

#### Part One: Principles for Finding Your Place in the World

Chapter 1, “The Call and the Journey—My Story,” gives you a brief history of my own path, and demonstrates a progression of synchronicities (meaningful coincidences, which we will discuss at length), mind-sets, catalyzing events, and the joys and despair of my unfolding

purpose. This is the background from which I have pulled together the principles I feel are relevant for the search for one's path. I have sincerely tried to include what I have found to be most important, but no one person's point of view can ever include everything—so please feel free to question and revise these ideas based on your own experience.

Chapter 2, "You Are a Self-Organizing System," establishes the domain of the book—that we are a self-organizing energy field with an inherent purpose for existing. We will learn what life purpose is and is not. You will see that your life purpose is already in progress, even though you may currently feel absolutely convinced otherwise. This chapter begins to address the idea of realigning with that purpose, and explores how to engage with it more *consciously*.

In Chapter 3, "Taking a Stand Moves You into Place," we address two facets of our path. The first is that we cannot drift aimlessly—hoping to keep every option open—because we will wind up doing nothing in the name of "being open." It will be necessary to take an initial stand or to choose a focus, and then follow the feedback that comes from doing that. Without some kind of focus, you will not be able to engage your life deeply enough to let the synchronicities take you where you need to go. One of my students, Bill Voelker, likes the statement he once heard, "You can have anything you want, but you can't have everything." Throughout life, you must choose and select. Paradoxically, being both focused and open are not incongruent.

Second, as you will see in our story of Zen master Kwong-roshi, sometimes circumstances force us into taking a stand, and that can affect the rest of our life. Circumstances may clarify who we are and what is important for this life and how we are going to live with integrity.

Chapter 4, "Anything Is Possible," introduces one of the most important foundational beliefs for catalyzing the emergence of your life purpose—and that is that almost all limitations exist as beliefs in our minds. This part of the book encourages you to trust your unfolding purpose. Anything is possible if you have a deep belief in God and Her infinite possibilities—miracles. If you merely give lip service to this idea, you may find a time-delay in the accomplishment of your goals.

Chapter 5, "The Magnetic Force Field of Your Life Purpose,"

considers life from the new metaphors of quantum physics—that we exist more accurately as a field of energy/consciousness, which acts and reacts within the collective field of energy/consciousness. As long as you are alive on the earth, things are going to happen to you and through you. Usually, a book on life purpose takes the stance that you must “find” your purpose in the outer world, and then set goals to achieve it. In this book, we propose the theory that you are immersed in a complex of personal energy patterns that magnetize purposeful people, places, and events into your life. Chapter 5 has an analysis sheet for you to use to begin to describe the components of your own attracting field.

Chapter 6, “Synchronicities Unfold Your Purpose,” describes how there are no accidents, and that certain events bring information and opportunities, and open new doorways into your purpose.

#### Part Two: Techniques

Chapter 7, “Intention and Nonattachment,” provides practical techniques for living your purpose on a daily basis—even if you have not clearly grasped what it is. Even if you cannot articulate your purpose, you can initiate its unfolding more quickly if you have a strong desire to be shown what it is! Therefore, we see *intention* as an initial stage of the unfolding. In the deepest metaphysical and scientific levels of understanding, we learn, in the words of physician and author Leonard Laskow, that “in the subtle realms (of cellular communication) *intention is action*” (my emphasis).<sup>1</sup>

Chapter 8, “Using Intuition to Follow the Movement of Your Life Purpose,” helps you understand and practice this nonphysical sensing faculty that is the key to knowing what to do when.

In Chapter 9, “Increasing Creativity and Developing Your Abilities,” our purpose is to offer some easy ways to play with your inner images. Finding and living your life purpose requires that you venture into uncharted territory. You will, at times, have to let go of conventions and the opinions of other people. You will have to have confidence in your creative power and in your power of interpretation of the messages from your intuition and inherent in synchronicities.

In order to strengthen your intuitive side, the book offers you a variety of simple ways to increase your creativity. These practices have at least three purposes. The first is to help you evoke who you are so that you can see things about yourself you would not otherwise have

access to with your everyday mind-set. The second is to give you easy-to-use tools for allowing your intuition to speak to you on definite issues. The third is to entertain you: The exercises are fun. When you are relaxed and having fun, you are more likely to attract like energy!

#### Part Three: Deep Water

Chapter 10, "In the Void," helps you deal with the difficulties of being in "the desert"—an inevitable part of the spiritual path. The void is a natural and necessary part of our life cycle. It forces us to change, or to accept those things which we cannot change. The void fosters growth at a deep level, and germinates the seeds of our life purpose.

Chapter 11, "The Shadow and Life Purpose," describes how we might tap into the parts of ourselves that we have turned away from, and the common pitfalls of how we spend our energy around other people in counterproductive ways. The purpose for this chapter is to heighten our conscious awareness of these patterns so that we can change our behavior. There is an analysis sheet to help you determine just how much energy you spend this way.

Chapter 12, "Transforming Obstacles," shows you how the problems you face may contain seeds of growth that may change your outlook in life or provide you with new ways of handling barriers. You will learn rational and intuitive ways to work interactively with and release the creative energy of your obstacle.

#### Part Four: Being There

In Chapter 13, "Doing What You Love—and Were Meant to Do," you are reminded to follow your heart, and keep your mind open so that you, too, can live the purpose you hold inside.

*I discovered that people are not really afraid of dying; they're afraid of not ever having lived, not ever having deeply considered their life's higher purpose, and not ever having stepped into that purpose and at least tried to make a difference in this world.*

JOSEPH JAWORSKI

PART ONE

PRINCIPLES FOR  
FINDING YOUR PLACE  
IN THE WORLD



CHAPTER 1

The Call and the Journey—My Story



*You are born with a character; it is given, a gift, as the old stories say, from the guardians upon your birth. . . . Each person enters the world called.*

JAMES HILLMAN

The reason that this book is being written, I believe, is that one day I “snapped.” In August of 1993, at the moment that it happened—that I snapped—I was standing in the exact middle of my very small cottage in the East Bay hills of Richmond, California.

The first time I saw this house, I thought to myself, “This place looks like a writer’s cottage.” I assumed it had been a summer cottage, built in the 1940s, for people who came over to the East Bay from San Francisco. From the tiny front porch on which I have tried to grow purple pansies and pink geraniums, I can see the Golden Gate Bridge. If the pine trees and bushes were not planted in front of the house, I would be able to see Mount Tamalpais, the magnificent mountain spirit of Marin County. The entire front wall of the cottage has small-paned windows, which make me feel as if I’m sitting on a sun porch, and not in a “real” room. I see clients here, and write looking out from these windows, which offer both vista and wooded nature. I am very happy working here.

This living room and work area, the space where I snapped, holds my computer, file cabinets, chests of drawers, and tables on which I have placed vessels and vases collected from my travels—vessels that

I have reproduced in pastels, in drawings framed on my living room walls. There is a small, green-striped couch, which doubles as guest bed, the back of which is draped with a red Peruvian weaving. Supported on the window ledges are Mexican pottery, pictures of my children and their spouses, candles, and a prim and serious picture of me at age two resembling Shirley Temple—my mother's archetypal model of the perfect child. Besides a few exuberant houseplants, the only other significant feature of this room is an overcrowded bookshelf and stacks of books that do not fit on the shelves.

I now see that definitive moment in August of 1993, as painful as it was, as a turning point that allowed my perception of myself and my life's work to come into harmony. At the time, of course, I had no idea that my life was going to change dramatically. I only knew that *something* had to change, or I was going to have to seriously rethink how I was to make my living and stay sane. I had turned fifty-two that year and was living alone, struggling to make sense of a career that seemed to be slipping away under my feet. I had no idea that the intention that I was affirming that day—to live in alignment with my artistic nature and my deep metaphysical values and interests—would actually lead to what I now see as my life purpose.

Since 1976, I had been living a dual life. On the one hand, I skirted the edges of regular mainstream life, raising two children as a single parent, and working in administrative positions, usually for directors of education or health-oriented nonprofit organizations. On the other hand, I considered myself an artist, and a student of the psychospiritual nature of life. From the age of nineteen, my goal had been to avoid suburbia and "the ordinary." During the years I was a single working mother, I tried to choose work that seemed to have social value. I was probably what I would now call a "classic under-earner," but that may just be another label for being a college-educated woman with no heart for the corporate ladder.

In the beginning, when I was four or five years old, my main preoccupation was playing house. Around the age of seven, I decided I would be a secretary like my mother had been before she began to take over the administrative and design duties for my father, who was a building contractor. I would sit at the coffee table—my desk—and play with pads of paper and pens and pencils, shuffling the pieces of paper, hitting them together to make sharp, crisp stacks, and talk to myself in a very serious way. Excellent training for my later years.