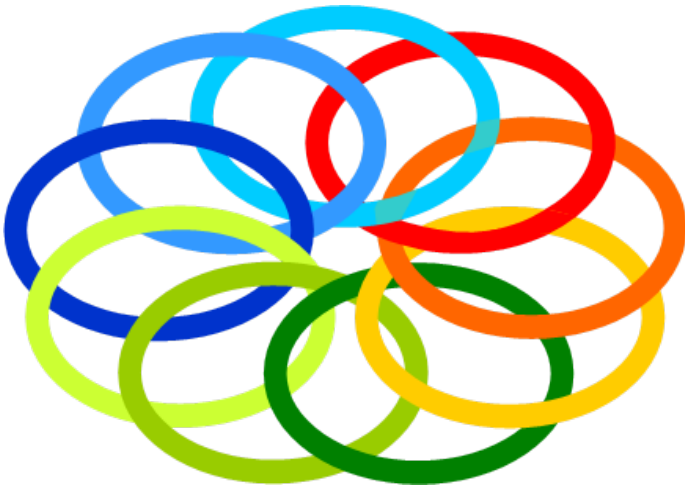

The Twelve Foundations

***A Path of Wholeness
and Recovery***



Jonathan Star

The Twelve Foundations

A Path of Wholeness & Recovery



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The Twelve Foundations of Life

A New Path of Wholeness and Recovery

The Twelve Foundations is a program based upon twelve universal truths or what could be seen as twelve life-orienting principles. As we work with these principles and incorporate them into our life—through our own effort and with the support of others—we begin to unfold our creative power, bring about a deeper understanding of our own nature, and find more joy and fulfillment in life. For people struggling with addictions, this program can be used as a template for “positive” recovery and for overcoming life-challenges in a true and empowering way.

A fundamental teaching of the Twelve Foundations is that each person is an individualized expression of Infinite Spirit; as such, our own nature contains *every* quality of Spirit including love, joy, aliveness, abundance, peace, fullness, power, creativity, and beauty. By virtue of us having the same nature as The Creative Power we have the power to improve the conditions of our life by actuating a change in our own consciousness. This is one of the sacred duties of human life, something that requires knowledge, effort, and sincerity. We can also bring about beneficial changes in our life by accepting conditions as they are, by accepting life as it is without trying to change or fix anything. With this approach we are not always asking “Why is this happening to me?” but “What can I learn from this experience?”

The Twelve Foundations is about embracing the whole of who we are—both as divine embodiments of Spirit and as work-in-progress human beings. In this process we don’t want to discount our human nature or come to view ourselves as being weak or helpless, we want to step into our own power; we want to embrace the wonder of our human existence; we want to honor ourselves as unique expressions of Spirit and do what is needed to create a true and meaningful life for ourselves and others.

The Four “Mega-Foundations”

This program consists of four major areas of involvement or “mega-foundations.” They are:

1. Active participation in a group of caring, like-minded individuals, all of whom have the intention to improve their lives and support each other.
2. Becoming a true and integral human being by understanding yourself, putting your life in order, having a proper relationship with food and the body, establishing supportive and uplifting relationships, aligning your actions with the laws of nature, and clearing up past traumas.
3. Understanding and developing your inherent creative power.
4. Realizing your spiritual nature through meditation, prayer, self-inquiry, and/or the practice of presence.

A Higher Recovery

“Recovery” is a term that is often applied to people who have overcome or are in the process of overcoming addictions and who seek to recover the “manageability” of their former lives. Such a person might say, “I am in recovery” or “I have been in recovery for five years.” However, this notion of recovery can also have a higher meaning: in the path of “higher recovery” the aim is not to recover the human life we once knew—a life that was beset with difficulties and limitations even before it was derailed by addiction—but to recover the wholeness and glory of who we truly are. We want to recover our unity with Spirit; we want to recover our creative power; we want to recover the love, joy, and fullness of a well-lived life.

The Twelve Foundations

One: I am an individual expression of Infinite Spirit, possessing every quality of Spirit such as love, power, abundance, and beauty.

Two: As a creative center of Spirit I have the power to improve the conditions of my life—and it is my sacred duty to do so.

Three: I commit to living a true and noble life, in alignment with Spirit and the laws of nature.

Four: I will take steps to know myself and to have that knowledge become a living truth in my life.

Five: I accept myself as I am, holding that there’s nothing wrong with me and nothing that needs to be fixed.

Six: I will care for my body, knowing that it is my greatest friend and support in this life.

Seven: I will put my house in order, bringing peace and stability to my life.

Eight: I will seek to have every relationship support my highest good (and not bind me to the past through anger, guilt, blame, or regret).

Nine: I resolve to give and receive support from others, to honor and be honored by others.

Ten: I accept my role as a true co-creator with Spirit—never expecting Spirit to do *for* me what it can only do *through* me.

Eleven: I resolve that through meditation, prayer and/or the practice of presence I will deepen my connection with Spirit and my true self.

Twelve: Having realized my unity with Spirit, the preciousness of my human existence, and the joyous sense of being alive I give myself in service to others.



1

Our Unity with Spirit

Foundation One:

I am an individual expression of Infinite Spirit, possessing every quality of Spirit such as love, power, abundance, and beauty.

I am an individualized expression of Infinite Spirit, a creative center of the Absolute, inseparable from the Supreme Power that is now creating the universe. As such, my own nature, though limited by my human condition, is of the same nature as Spirit and embodies every quality of Spirit such as love, power, abundance, joy, beauty, aliveness, and creativity.

This journey is about the whole-hearted embrace of who I am as an individual and who I am as Spirit. I am a human being having a spiritual experience and also a spiritual being having a human experience. I am here to become more and more of who I am, to realize my unity with all things, and to know my fullness, my wonder, and my love through the experiences of my human life.

Understanding your Inseparable Unity with Spirit

A very difficult thing for most people to “get,” especially when he/she is struggling with problems or beset with difficulties, is that he/she is ever-unified with Spirit, with God, with the Power that creates and sustains this universe—and that his/her own nature contains all the benevolent qualities of Spirit. One may ask: “How is it possible that I am inseparable from Spirit and possess all the qualities of Spirit yet be in such misery? How can I be one with the All-Powerful yet feel so limited, weak, and unhappy?” And one might conclude: “Well, it’s not possible. I must be separate from Spirit and not have the same nature as that of Spirit else I would not feel this way.”

This sense of separation from Spirit, from God—and the deep feeling that something is missing or wrong with “me”—is where most people begin their journey toward wholeness. This is where the work begins. This is where the questioning begins. This is where the deep introspection begins. At some point there may be a shift from your unquestioned position of “I am this

separate person, I cannot be one with Spirit” to, “Is it possible that I am unified with Spirit, that my own nature is that of Spirit? If so, what does that feel like? Why don’t I experience it as such? What’s blocking me?” Even though you may not directly experience your unity with Spirit, an important first step is to hold it as a possibility, to be open to a new way of understanding yourself—and from there seek to discover the truth, through your own inquiry and direct experience of life.

You need not accept anything as true or commit yourself to someone else’s dogma, especially if you don’t feel it to be true for yourself. That would be a useless show of faith. All you need do is be open to a new possibility—a much greater possibility—and either prove it or disprove it through your own experience. Be open and ruthlessly honest with yourself. Question your long-held assumptions about who you think you are and how you should live. And, in all cases, heed the advice of Shakespeare: “This above all—to thine own self be true.”

This is *your* journey. Others may help you, prayer to a Higher Power may help you—and Life itself is supporting you every step of the way—but, ultimately, it comes down to you, to your sincerity, to your effort, to your pure-heartedness. ... It’s important to understand that your mind is a useful tool for helping you function in the world but can only provide you with a rudimentary experience of yourself. So, when it comes to knowing yourself, it’s often best to “never mind.” What you seek is beyond the mind; it can only be accessed through “higher” aspects of your being, such as your intuition, your subtle sense, your heart, and your direct experience of life.

Two Centers of Consciousness

An understanding integral to Foundation One—and the spiritual path as a whole—is that we, as human beings, occupy two selves, two dimensions of existence, two centers of consciousness that are simultaneously present in the experience of our human beingness; and, ultimately, it is the seamless integration of these two selves that leads to human and spiritual fulfillment. One self may be called our divine self, our infinite self, or our true nature. This self is pure and unchanging. It is our fundamental sense of existence, of “I” or “I am.” It is this self that is one in nature with Infinite Spirit; and it is this self that we always seem overlook in our busy lives, in our deep attachment to this human identity. This self is ever-present and so obvious that the mind fails to recognize its value; so the mind takes it for granted and simply overlooks it. It is this dimension of self, however, once realized and understood, that frees us from the shackles of our conditioned mind and opens us to the boundless joy of our own life. ... The other self is our human self, our limited and conditioned self, the little “me” of our existence. This is the part of self that most people are aware of and *exclusively identify* with—and this is where the trouble begins. When we live in this curtailed existence, solely claiming one dimension of our being (and thereby excluding the other di-

mension) we naturally feel that something is missing, that we are incomplete, and that no matter what we do, we will never feel complete. And, yes, something is missing—our entire spiritual self, and its qualities, are missing from our experience of life. That is why, quite naturally, we ever-seek the qualities of our own nature, qualities such as happiness, joy, fulfillment, beauty, and love.

Our human self is necessary and integral to our whole being. Our human self is not the problem nor is it something we have to attenuate, surrender, or “get rid of.” Our *exclusive identification* with our human self—and our unwitting exclusion of our spiritual self—and the mistaken belief that this body-mind person is the whole of who we are—is the problem. This is what obscures our true self, thwarts our creative power, and alienates us from the vast wonder of life. We don’t want to get rid of anything or deny anything; we simply want to experience the whole of who we are and *all* dimensions of our being. This is the only way to live and authentic life.

Question and Answer

If we are one with Infinite Spirit then why don't we experience the love and joy of our own nature?

Most people are not aware of their unity with Spirit; they live in a truncated state of awareness where they are *fully identified* with a mentalized version of themselves; and their entire consciousness (and experience of life) is limited to that small part that they mistakenly believe to be the whole of who they are. (And they are so sure that they are this person, and nothing but this person, that they never question it. It’s an assumption treated as an unquestioned fact.) Though inseparable from Spirit people unwittingly create a version of themselves where they seem to be lacking in everything. It’s like a fish in water imagining that it’s stuck on dry land; or a king, filled with riches, believing he’s a pauper. The king is not a pauper but since he believes he’s a pauper, and lives like a pauper, his experience of life is that of a pauper. Not realizing his vast wealth, he suffers just like a pauper. People who live through a partial concept of self are always creating a reality where they feel separate from Spirit, where they feel isolated and lacking, where their own qualities—such as abundance, love, power, joy, and beauty—seem to be missing. They are imagining a state of separation and lack instead of recognizing their natural state of unity and love. This is the unenviable life of most human beings; through no fault of their own they are completely missing the truth and wonder of who they are.

A corollary to this first question might be: “If I am one with Spirit, and if I am living in a way that deprives me of experiencing this, what steps can I take to experience my true nature and my unity with Creation?” Providing an answer to this question—both in terms of understanding, experience, and

practical steps—is the aim of The Twelve Foundations. There is no quick answer; it took years of mis-conditioning to get into this bind and it may take years of applied application to get out of it. Addiction to substances is one response to this sense of lack; an addiction is a human way to try and appease or fill up what a person feels is lacking in his life. But becoming addicted to this or that substance is a must-miss approach; it does not address the core issue. One way to appease or remedy this false sense of lack is to expand your sense of self so as to include the whole of who you are, your human and divine natures. ... But there is also a true sense of lack (or limitation) and that is the lack that Infinite Spirit feels when it is limited to a human form; this is the sense of lack fundamental to the nature of every human being. This divine-human sense of lack “is integral to who you are as an individual. So, running from *this* sense of lack, trying to spiritualize it away, trying to drown it out with substances or busy-ness is akin to running away from yourself. How can you do that? Accepting this lack, this fundamental limitation, and embracing it from a position of wholeness, is one’s sacred duty as an individual—and perhaps the only way to truly get beyond it. The sense of lack created by a misunderstanding of yourself can be dispelled, but the core sense of lack that comes with the territory of being human must be wholeheartedly embraced.

Quotes

You are God conditioned as a human being. All that you believe God to be, you are. ... The most difficult thing for a person to really grasp is this: That the “I am-ness” in himself is God. It is his true being or “father state”—and this is the only state he can be sure of. (Neville, *Freedom for All*, p. 4)

The Great Affirmation is the perception that the “I AM” is ONE, always harmonious with itself, and including all things in this harmony for the simple reason that there is no second creative power; and when the individual realizes that this always-single power is the root of his own being, and therefore has center in himself and finds expression through him, he learns to trust its singleness and the consequent harmony of its action in him with what it is doing *around* him. . . . (Troward, *Doré Lectures*, Chapter 7)

Me, in the most personal sense of the term, is the ultimate reality—but it takes itself for something it is not. As inadmissible as this might seem to most people, this personal Me is the infinite, the absolute being, the ultimate. Whoever doesn’t conceive things this way cannot hope to knock at the door of himself with the chance of seeing it open. (Jourdain, *Radical Awakening*, p. 152)



2

Creative Power Power Over Conditions

Foundation Two:

As a creative center of Spirit, I have the power to improve the conditions of my life—and it is my sacred duty to do so.

I have power over the inner and outer conditions of my life. Spirit is the Infinite Power and I, by virtue of my unity with Spirit, have the power to “infuse with Spirit” all the conditions of my life. The conditions of my life are, essentially, an out-picturing of my own consciousness, a reflection of who I feel myself to be. Thus, the extent to which I can alter my own consciousness, my own beliefs, and that which I hold to be true about myself—bringing them more in accord with Spirit—is the extent to which I can bring about beneficial changes in my life.

My own nature contains every quality of Spirit and those qualities can only find expression through me, through my own livingness. The grace of Spirit alone cannot transform me: I, as a human being, through the intelligent and earnest application of my own consciousness—in consort with Spirit’s creative power—am the crucial factor that can bring about my own transformation. Being the whole of who I am, experiencing love, connection, and joy, and using my creative power to uplift the conditions of my life is my sacred duty, it is how the will of God is expressed through me.

The Creative Process

The creative process comes through the individual, through you. Though Infinite Spirit creates and sustains the whole universe it can only act on the plane of the particular through an individual, through you. It can only experience the fullness of its glory through you. That is why you, in your unique expression as a human being, are so dear to Spirit and its creation. It is your sacred duty as a human being to experience this fullness and joy for yourself, through the creative upliftment of your own life.

What is your sacred duty in life? What is God’s will for you? Is it to live, obtain a few goals, enjoy a few pleasures, do some good deeds, and then die? Or were you called for something more, something greater? The greatest thing is to become an instrument of Grace, to become a living testament

to Spirit itself. But you don't do this by becoming holier than thou, or quoting scriptures, or donating to your local church—or giving up your individuality—you do this by becoming an authentic human being, by experiencing the divine and wondrous qualities of your own nature in and through your own life. That is your most sacred duty. That is why you were created in the first place—to know and be the divine human that you are.

Power Over Conditions

You are not powerless. You—when you're truly able to co-create with Spirit—have the power to change the conditions of your life.

Having power over the conditions of your life does not mean that you can change everything, or create any reality you want, or overcome all of your basic tendencies, or transform yourself into some perfect person; yet, by actuating a positive change in your consciousness, in your belief system (and in your very sense of who you are) your outer conditions will begin to change accordingly. And that is because your own consciousness is the *cause* and the outer conditions of your life are its *effects*—however, because of a lifetime of mis-training, most people have it backwards.

You may not always be able to create or attract what you want but you will always attract who you are and what you believe. So, be the greatest you can be. Believe that you are a creative center of Infinite Spirit and live your life accordingly.

Looked at from another perspective, having power over the conditions of your life means that you do not allow conditions to define you or the thoughts, actions, opinions, feelings, etc. you have to determine your fundamental sense of self. You can gain this power when you are rooted in the solid center of your own existence—a center that is beyond the ever-changing thoughts, feelings, and outer circumstances of your life.

Having power over the conditions of your life also means that you are not impelled to react to circumstances (or even your arising thoughts) in your usual, conditioned manner; that you are able to embrace the present moment just as it is, without trying to change or fix anything; that you have thoughts and emotions, they don't have you.

Self-effort is necessary but it can only get you so far. For true transformation you must find a way to open your existence to the all-giving power of Spirit, the very Spirit that exists as your own true nature. The extent to which you are aligned with Spirit, the extent to which you are open to Spirit, to that extent you will recognize Spirit (and yourself!) in all things.

Life is Positive

Life is positive. Spirit is positive. All the qualities of Life and Spirit such as life, beauty, abundance, and power are positive; and these qualities are drawn into your life by contemplating and aligning yourself with the positive pole of Life. Spirit always creates from the position of the positive. Nothing

is created or transformed through the negative. Only positive intentions, only creations springing from your one-with-Spirit qualities can produce truly positive and beneficial results; creations (and actions) that are born of negativity, such as fear, frustration, anger, selfishness, powerlessness etc., (all of which are alien to Spirit's own nature) produce the opposite results.

This foundation involves the re-alignment of oneself and one's consciousness with the positive pole of life; it involves making a conscious choice to entertain the positive (and the highest potential) in oneself and in others. It involves the conscious creation of positive thoughts and emotions, and the cultivation of positive beliefs (while not dwelling on negative thoughts and emotions). Through our constant and conscious application toward the positive, life-affirming pole of life we will begin to effectuate a positive change in our subconscious mind; over time our alignment with the positive pole of Life will become "second nature" and effortless, and this will bring us a constant supply of all the good things in life.

Creative Power

In terms of your creative power, it's important to understand that *every* thought is creative; *every* feeling is creative; *every* belief is creative—meaning that every thought, feeling, and belief directs Spirit to manifest corresponding conditions in your life. Constant creation takes place whether you are aware of it or not. In fact, most of what is being created in your life, by you, is something you are completely unaware of. Since our consciousness is one with the creative power of Spirit we are always creating, we are never *not* creating, both on the conscious and subconscious levels. And this is why most people cannot create the kind of life they want—because they are divided against themselves. They think one thing yet feel something else; they consciously strive to fulfill one desire while deep-down feeling something that counters that. In this state of division one's creative power is difficult or impossible to direct because the subconscious mind is always creating a counter-creation that nullifies ones' consciously-intended creation. What we must do in order to fully possess our creative power is to have our sense of self be whole and undivided where our subconscious beliefs are in accord with our conscious desires, where the whole of our consciousness is in harmony with the all-creative power of Spirit.

In every case, *what you believe to be true* (the deep-seated, subconscious beliefs you have about yourself and the world) is what you get; this wins out over what you want, or desire, or ardently pray for. What you believe to be true (about yourself and the world) is what you are *always* creating for yourself and what you are always getting. So, if you want to change what you get you must first change what you believe to be true.

For example, you may pray to a Higher Power to bring you wealth but deep-down you may feel that wealth is not important, or that you don't deserve wealth, or that it's not your destiny to be wealthy, or that it's selfish to

pray for wealth, or that God's bounty is limited so you should not ask for too much, or even the pernicious sense that you are not deserving of God's favor. So, you consciously seek one thing but subconsciously feel something else; in all cases you get what you believe to be true not what you pray for. Every time you don't get what you want or what you pray for it's because you are unwittingly creating another reality for yourself.

At this point some people just give up. They take the approach of doing nothing, of avoiding any kind of conscious participation in their own development, or of giving up their will to some conceived-of Power (so it can handle everything for them), but this does not stop their creative power from creating because it is *always* creating, on every level. The only thing this give-up approach does is transfer your power to your subconscious mind and out of your conscious control. Then, the past (and your old beliefs and concepts) simply get repeated. Without your conscious intervention, without you making a change in your fundamental concepts and beliefs, what you had in the past is what you will get in the future. The subconscious mind is limitless in its capacity to support the individual yet it can only repeat existing patterns; it cannot create something new. Only the individual, through his own intervention, through his conscious participation in the creative process—in accord with the All-Giving Power of Spirit—can do that.

For true and lasting transformation, one that opens a person to love, beauty, power, fulfillment, etc., he must be undivided. His conscious and subconscious minds must be in sync and both minds must be aligned with the creative Power of Spirit. How can we create anything of true value for ourselves by being out of alignment with the very Power that is creating everything including ourselves? Well, we can't.

Quotes

The world is my conditioned consciousness objectified. That which I feel and believe to be true of myself is now projected in space as my world. The world—my mirrored self—ever bears witness of the state of consciousness in which I live.
(Neville, *Freedom for All*, Ch. 1)

We cannot think into manifestation a different sort of life from that which we realize in ourselves. ... we cannot give what we have not got. And, on the other hand, we can never cease creating forms of some sort by our mental activity, thinking life into them. Therefore, think [and feel] Life, illumination, harmony, prosperity, happiness—think [and feel] these qualities rather than this or that condition of them. And then, by the sure operation of the Universal Law, these things will form themselves into the shapes best suited to your particular case; they will enter your life as active, living forces that will never depart from you because you know them to be integral to your own being.

(Troward, *The Hidden Power*, p. 64, 66)



3

Living a True and Noble Life Following the Dharma

Foundation Three:

I commit to living a true and noble life, in alignment with Spirit and the laws of nature.

A true and noble life is one where my life (my will, thoughts, and actions) are in alignment with the laws of nature, with my own being, with Spirit, and with the fabric of creation. When my life is aligned with the laws of nature all dimensions of my being are supported and every part of my life opens up to Life itself. Thus, understanding the laws of nature, and living my life in accordance with those laws, is the path to a true and noble life, an authentic life, a life of beauty and wonder.

I will honor myself and others. I will be truthful and sincere in my actions. I will be impeccable in my word. I will be someone whom others can trust and rely upon, and whom they will feel safe and supported by when being around me. I will dwell on what I want (as opposed to avoiding what I don't want). I will shift my life toward the dimension of life that is positive, uplifting, and life-affirming while also accepting those parts of myself that are not so positive or out of alignment with Spirit.

Dharma / Alignment with Natural Law

“Where there is dharma, there is victory.” (The Mahabharata)

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)

The Sanskrit term *dharma* can be understood as “action that is in alignment with Spirit and the natural laws of the universe”—and this is what we might consider to be actions that are truthful, righteous, noble, and beneficial. Dharma can also be understood as natural law, as the laws that sustain the universe; as the truth; as the way things work and function when in accord with their own nature; and, on a personal level, as one's life's calling.

Everything has its own dharma, its true and natural way of being. The dharma of water is to flow; the dharma of the sun is to shine; the dharma of a pine tree is to grow in a certain way. If nature went against its dharma

there would be chaos and nothing could evolve to a higher level of being. Likewise, in our own lives, whenever we live in accord with dharma (with the natural laws that govern the universe and our own existence) we prosper, we evolve, we gain power, we become more alive, and we come into our own being; and whenever we go against dharma—either wittingly or unwittingly—we falter, we experience dis-ease, we are out of sorts, we are weakened, we are in disharmony. Thus, in every case, it's fundamental to our growth and wellbeing to know the principles of dharma and live our lives in accord with those principles or, second best, to at least incline ourselves in that direction.

Dharma (or universal law) is consistent throughout every level of creation. The laws that govern a drop of water are the same laws that govern an ocean of water. Likewise, the laws that govern the universe are also the same laws that govern each person's life; or, as the Hermetic dictum says, "As above so below; as below, so above."

Dharma is central to our existence and provides the foundation for our lives. Thus, the Twelve Foundations might also be understood as "The Twelve Dharmas"—the twelve principles of life, the twelve ways of living that best support and enhance our life.

Questions and Answers

What are the actions of a true and noble life? What are actions in accord with dharma?

Actions that are truthful, actions that are honest, actions that help and support others, actions that align us with our highest self and the qualities of Spirit. Dharmic actions are always beneficial and uplifting. The very nature of Spirit is love, and any action based on love is dharmic. Any action that brings about more freedom, joy, abundance, and beauty is a dharmic action. Honesty, humility, truthfulness, compassion, gratitude, generosity, as well as one-pointedness, perseverance, discipline, and enthusiasm are all actions of dharma—and these actions provide the foundation of a true and victorious life.

Sometimes people don't know what to do or which action to take. In that case the answer is simple: do what is in accord with dharma. Do as Spirit does, take the action that aligns you most fully with Spirit. Some people find it helpful to think about how a sage or saint might act in a given situation and then act in the same way. This might be beneficial. However, if taken literally, it can have its problems: Zusya was a great servant of the Lord but he never reached a state of true realization. When he died and appeared before God, he said, "O how I wished I had been more like Moses," to which God replied, "O how I wish you had been more like Zusya."

If you look at most of the world's scriptures, with all their stories and

commands, what is it about? It's an instruction about how to best live in this world; it's telling you about a way to live that puts you in touch with the truth, and your own highest self, and God. It's about dharma. If you are in touch with the wisdom of your heart, if you already know dharma, then all your actions will be guided. You need not rely on outer instructions or scriptural injunctions. All those wide-ranging commands and directives on how to live in this world would just be commentaries on what you already know.

“That which is hateful to you, do not do unto another: this is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary.” (Hillel)

There is a line from the Indian scripture the Mahabharata that says, “Where there is dharma, there is victory.” What does victory mean in this regard?

Victory can be understood as success. Spirit is ever-victorious since there is nothing in the universe than can oppose it. In the *Mahabharata*, when this line was spoken, it referred to victory in battle: whatever side Lord Krishna was on was assured victory because Krishna was the embodiment of Dharma itself (and dharma is always victorious). When a person is aligned with dharma he has the whole universe on his side and he is, on all levels, victorious. Victory in this context means success. Success means a life filled with joy, happiness, fulfillment, abundance, etc. It can also mean overcoming obstacles and outer victory as well.

So this is more about inner victory than outer victory but I suppose when you're aligned with dharma that it supports both inner and outer victory.

Yes. We've been talking about dharma and action in alignment with Spirit—and this not only applies to outer action but to the attitude and intention a person has when performing an action. Giving to another person with the hidden feeling that such an action will accrue some kind of merit, or that such an action is dharmic and so it should be done, is not dharmic action. It's an outer show of dharma; it's an action that has the appearance of being “good” but one where the heart is missing, where Spirit is missing—and whenever an action is missing in heart or in dharma that action cannot bring true benefit, that action cannot lead to true and lasting victory.

Some people seek to be happy, or prosper, or gain something for themselves, and to accomplish this end they go against dharma. To bring seeming benefit to themselves they may cheat, lie, break their promise, short-change someone in business, or take advantage of someone's weakness. But such action is bereft of Spirit and so are the results that come from such actions. I can't say that the money (or advantage) a person might gain from such action is cursed but I don't see how that money can really help them or anyone else. Tell me, can victory or success or anything good ever come

from actions that go against *dharma*, that go against the truth, that go against the laws of the universe itself? No. Never. Not ever.

Doing God's Will

Many people seek to know and follow God's will. It appears to me that "following dharma," living a true and noble life, also relates to following God's will. How does the notion of "doing God's will" factor in with this?

In order to align our will with Spirit, to "do God's will," we must be clear about the nature of God (or Spirit) and who we are in relationship to God (or Spirit). How can we surrender ourselves to God if we do not know who we are or to what we are surrendering? ... A person who is weak, who thinks of himself as powerlessness, who feels that he is a sinner, who just wants to give up (and hopefully have some Higher Power to do everything for him) cannot really do God's will or surrender to God. God is not able to accept that kind of surrender because such a state is alien to God's nature. Doing God's will, being in a state of true surrender requires inner resolve and strength; we must come into full possession of ourselves—and be in resonance with God—before we can truly give ourselves in service to God's glory. How can we give what we do not possess?

What is God's will anyway? What moves God to act? The simple answer—consistent with various traditions throughout the world—is that God's will is to experience more and more of His own nature, which means His will is to be ever-more joyous, alive, loving, abundant, and beautiful. And as a result of that Will, all of creation comes about. We, as human beings, as centers of God's glory, have come into existence to help bring about that Will, to allow God to experience more and more of His own qualities. And we do this by experiencing that self-same joy, aliveness, abundance, fullness, and beauty in and through our own lives. God's will for us is that we experience more and more of our own nature. This is the will that God has for Himself and this is the *only* will that God can have for us. God seeks to experience more and more of His own nature—His love, power, abundance, and beauty—through us. He can only experience these qualities of His own nature through us. That is why we, as individuals, are essential to God; that is why we are so precious to God.



4

Understanding Yourself Self-Inquiry

Foundation Four:

I will take steps to know myself and to have that knowledge become a living truth in my life.

I resolve to know myself, to fearlessly question my assumptions and the deep-seated concepts I have about myself, to understand my underlying beliefs, priorities, and desires, and to become aware of the subconscious forces that shape my thinking and determine my actions and reactions to life.

I will put my knowledge into action; I will “walk the walk and talk the talk,” for knowledge is a burden if it doesn’t positively inform my life ... I am grateful for all the knowledge that has come to me, and the best way I can express my gratitude is by honoring that knowledge, by having it become a living truth that uplifts my life and brings benefit to my world.

What is Moving You?

What is motivating you? What is prompting your actions? Are your intentions inspired by the positive and loving qualities of Spirit or by the negative states of fear, insecurity, selfishness, or misplaced obligation? It’s your task to find out. It’s your task to know what is motivating you and, if need be, create new motivations for your actions that are in line with Spirit and the pure positivity of your own nature.

Who am I?

Doing self-inquiry by asking questions such as, “Who am I?” or “What is true for me?”—or pondering any question about your nature—puts you into the right relationship with life. It puts you in a position of *not* knowing, of openness to possibilities that you have heretofore overlooked or have not considered. Few people dare to question the core beliefs they have about themselves because those beliefs are protected by a wall of fear—and that wall is thick and obstinate, and must be dismantled brick by brick. This is not an easy process. It requires strength, support, and perseverance. It requires us to make “a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” But it also requires that we be open, accepting, and gentle with ourselves. When doing the difficult work on yourself always remember: “Handle with Care.”

Removal of Subconscious Blocks

All of us have had incidents of physical and emotional pain that result in “trauma blocks” which, in the course of our identity development, get energetically buried or entombed in our subconscious mind. These blocks, though we are not directly aware of them, alter our experience of life and the sense of our own aliveness. They lower the vibration of our entire psyche, use up our vital life-energy, and distort our actions and reactions to life. All spiritual advance is undermined by the presence of these deep-seated trauma blocks and any complete program of spiritual and human development involves their systematic removal. This removal brings about a release of the emotional charge (associated with the original trauma) and, consequently, frees up all the life-energy that was heretofore being used to hold that charge in the subconscious mind.

Exposure of these subconscious trauma blocks to the light of our own consciousness—through a systematic, one-on-one process or persistent self-inquiry—is one way these blocks can be uncovered and discharged, and our life-energy restored. We can’t remove these blocks by running away from them or pushing them deeper into our subconscious mind; the only way to fully exorcise these embedded traumas is to shine the light of awareness on them and face them, now, from a place of safety, strength, and support.

Removal of these embedded trauma blocks is a long, systematic process that is never really complete; but every step we take, every trauma or painful incident that we remove from our subconscious mind moves us toward freedom, toward a truer sense of ourselves, and toward a more joyous experience of life.

Clearly seeing our specific beliefs about ourselves is of crucial importance because so much of our suffering is based on unconsciously holding on to these beliefs without ever questioning their validity. Until we see these beliefs clearly and repeatedly—the beliefs that make up the basic story line of “me”—they will continue to dictate how we feel and act. ... The first phase of practice is not limited to simply looking at our beliefs. We also need to become aware of and observe our most frequent emotional reactions. Do you know yours? Is it anger? Anxiety or fear? Confusion? ... Eventually, we have to move from simply observing our emotions and fears to actually entering into them, or residing in them, *experientially*—which means to feel them fully in the body. ... Residing in an emotion occurs when we feel the physical experience *nonconceptually*—that is, without being hooked into the storyline of thoughts, the storyline of “me.”

(Bayda, *Zen Heart*, p. 8-9)



5

Self-Acceptance

Foundation Five:

I accept myself just as I am, holding that nothing is wrong with me (and nothing about me needs to be fixed).

Accepting yourself as you are, without “buying into” the nagging and ill-conceived sense that something is wrong with you, that something needs to be fixed—or worse yet, that you are unworthy—is a major first step in the path of living a true life. Enough with all the striving, improving, fixing, comparing, and getting down on yourself for this or that shortcoming. Put all that aside for now and just see if you can accept yourself as you are, even with all your so-called flaws, as an individual expression of Spirit. Maybe those so-called flaws are part of a greater perfection. The moon need not be full in order to shine.

True creativity and fulfillment in life begins with the whole-hearted acceptance of yourself—all of yourself—along with the whole-hearted acceptance of whatever experience the Universe is bringing you in this moment. It is this running away from yourself, the belittlement of yourself, the ignorance of your true value and worth, and the nonstop effort to fix the conditions of your life that steer you in the wrong direction. So, first, be yourself, love and accept yourself—just as you are, just as Infinite Spirit accepts you—then do as you may, then everything shall be added unto you.

Creating from a Place of Wholeness

How can I accept myself as I am—feeling that nothing is wrong with me and that nothing needs to be fixed—but still feel a need to take action to improve my life and my conditions?

If you are an individualized manifestation of Spirit, if you are Spirit operating on the plane of the particular—if “as above, so below”—then the laws that govern Universal Spirit are the same laws that govern your life. So, how does Spirit create or “improve” things? Does Spirit do this from a sense of lack? From a sense that something is missing or that something needs im-

proving? From a sense that something is wrong with itself and that it needs to create something in order to fix what is wrong? No. Spirit creates from an overflow of love and abundance. So why should your approach be any different? Fixing what is broken, gaining what is missing, or filling what is lacking is the constant motivation behind a human being's attempt at life. But how can a human being truly live or improve his condition by acting in a way that is contrary to the laws of Nature and the Creative Power itself? He can't. How can a person further experience the qualities of Spirit in himself by operating in a way contrary to Spirit? He can't.

If you feel inspired to act then act. If you want to change things then change things but do it in a way that's in resonance with Spirit, do it in a way that leads to positive change and transformation. It's okay to want to improve your conditions but try to do it from a place of wholeness, a place of unity with Spirit, a place of total acceptance of yourself rather than from a place of need or lack or self-disapproval.

Spirit is always positive and always creates from the positive. Spirit's motivation to create is never to get what is missing but always to expand upon its wholeness, to experience more and more of Itself and its qualities. Spirit's own sense of itself—as love, beauty, abundance, fullness, etc.—is its starting-point. Creation begins from there. It should be the same for a human being—he should begin with his wholeness, his one-with-Spirit qualities, not with the notion that something is missing.

I think St. Augustine summed it up when he said, “First love, then act.” First be as Spirit—first embrace your one-with-Spirit qualities, such as love, joy, aliveness, fullness, etc.—then act.

If you can't act with love, if you can't act as Spirit acts, that's okay. Don't get down on yourself. Just, gently, keep inclining yourself in that direction. If you feel a lack and are prompted to act to improve things then that's what you should do. That's what's coming up for you. Acknowledge that. Honor that. If you can act from a state of love and abundance that would be good; if not, keep inclining yourself in that direction. Always accept yourself; always give yourself total permission to be yourself.

Greenlighting

“Greenlighting” is the total embrace of who you are; it's giving the green light to yourself, exactly as you are. It's also the embrace of whatever experience you are having without trying to change it, run from it, reject it, or mentalize it away. It's the total acceptance of life, as it is, right now.

As you may discover, when you don't accept yourself, when you reject the unwanted parts of yourself, when you avoid what you are actually experiencing you create a negative spiral in your life. The pain of rejecting yourself and running from your pain is often more painful and persistent than the pain you are trying to avoid. So don't run, don't hide from your experience

or from any part of yourself. Give whatever is coming up for you the green light. Just let it be. Feel it. Experience it. Don't try to change it or fix it. Just be with it. Just behold it from a place of wholeness, a place of pure awareness and unconditional love.

God is always giving you the green light—He is lovingly embracing all of you, every aspect of your being. You cannot truly do God's will unless you give yourself the green light as well, unless you lovingly accept the all of yourself, just as you are. Why is this so? Because it's God's will that you lovingly accept the all of yourself, just as you are—exactly as He lovingly accepts the all of you, just as you are. Now, tell me, how can you do God's will by doing something different from God's will?

God's Power is Infinite. This concept is difficult to grasp; it means that God can do anything, He exists in total freedom. The Sufis hold that God creates this entire universe from nothing a billion times a second. There is no movement, just a billion different creations of the whole universe in a second that creates the appearance of movement. A Being of Infinite Power can create all universes—every star, every planet, every atom—from nothing, a billion times a second. He can create anything He wants; and He always creates exactly what He wants. And what is He choosing to create right now?—you, exactly as you are. He is pouring the entirety of His being into you and choosing you to be exactly who you are, exactly as He is creating you now. That is His will; He can have no other will. If you desire to do God's will then whole-heartedly embrace the whole of who you are, and the whole of Life, just as God Himself is doing right now.

God is giving you more than a green light; He is giving you life itself. He is pouring the whole of His love, power, aliveness, and beauty into you right now. If God, as you understand Him to be, does not accept you, the all of you, exactly as you are, with unconditional love and without judgment—and wish that you be exactly as you are right now—then you've got the wrong God. You've got the wrong understanding of God.

If it were God's Will that you be different from who you are right now, you'd be different from who you are right now. Everything, exactly as it is showing up right now, is God's will. Even your non-acceptance of who you are right now is God's will. Even your desire to be different from who you are right now is God's will. Even your not knowing who you are right now is God's will. It is your task to know all this for yourself, to whole-heartedly embrace everything that is showing up in your life right now, even your resistance to everything that is showing up in your life right now.

Embrace Life from Where You Are

So long as you do not accept something for what it is (and keep trying to run from it, or change it, or drown it out with busy-ness, or spiritualize it into oblivion, or drown it out with mind-altering substances) it will continue to have power over you. It will continue to shape the conditions of your life.

Only by accepting it, by consciously experiencing it, by giving it the green light will you be able to change it. ... While you cannot change every condition you can begin to *strip conditions of the power they have over you* by accepting them from a place of wholeness, by not using up all your energy in your struggle against them. The mere acceptance of something from a place of wholeness brings about the alchemy that ultimately changes it.

Everything in your life is here to teach you something about yourself; it is showing you where an inner shift could take place. So, it's not so much about changing the outer condition, per se—even though that can be quite beneficial—it's more about changing the consciousness within yourself that is giving rise to those conditions in the first place.

The true power that you have, in every situation in life, is the ability to accept Life as it is, from a position of wholeness, from a position of oneness, from the knowingness that you are the unchanging awareness upon which every experience of your life is founded. You, as pure awareness, are the one true constant of your ever-changing life, unaffected by condition, undiminished by thought, unshaken by emotion. Change if you may, improve things if you are so inclined, but always remain aware of who you are in the process, always give the green light to who you are and Life itself.

We are complete in ourselves; and the reason why we fail to realize this is because we do not understand how far our “true self” extends. ... We rightly say that every person is Universal Spirit expressed as an individual consciousness; and if this is so, then each individual consciousness must find the Universal Spirit to be the infinite expression of himself. It is this part of the “Self” that we so often leave out in our estimate of who we are; and consequently we look upon ourselves as limited and suffering human beings when we might better think of ourselves as archangels. (Troward, *The Hidden Power*)



6

Caring for the Body

Foundation Six:

I will care for my body, knowing that it is my greatest friend and support in life.

My body is a wondrous expression of my true nature, the miraculous vehicle through which I, as consciousness, find life, fulfillment, and happiness in this world. Though my essential self is not my body (or my thoughts or emotions) this body is the temple of my consciousness and the sanctum of my soul. I will take steps to honor this body, care for this body, thank Spirit for this body, enjoy this body, and keep this body healthy and filled with aliveness so that it can support my highest intentions and keep me in tune with the All-Giving Life that flows through me.

Care for the Body

This foundation involves honoring the body. It involves caring for the body, eating well, exercising regularly, and cultivating the right relationship with food. Many people struggle with this one; they also get down on themselves when they fail to meet certain goals, especially when it comes to losing weight. When doing any kind of work on yourself always “handle with care.” Take small steps. Get support from other people. The goal is to live well not to struggle; the aim is to care for your body in a gentle and natural way. In the end, caring for your body and having the right relationship with food will become natural and enjoyable, and part of your full-living lifestyle.

The right kind of exercise can be fun. The right kind of eating can be enjoyable. Being in good health and feeling alive inside your body can become a constant source of support and assurance in your life.

Caring for the body also involves cultivating a true and healthy body-image. Being unhappy with your body and the way you look, or constantly trying to lose weight, or alter your appearance as your way to become happy or raise your feeling of low self-esteem are must-miss ways to live. It’s okay to take steps to lose weight, to get in shape but see if you can do it from a place of love, from a place of total self-acceptance—and not from a place of struggle, rejection, and lack.

For most people the body is the “fall guy” for every negative thought and emotion: when a person tries to satisfy emotional needs, or cover up a sense of emptiness, by overeating, eating junk food, consuming alcohol, or using drugs the body suffers. When a person is prone to stress, worry, fear—or any negative emotion—the body absorbs that negativity and suffers. We don’t want the body be our emotional dumping ground. However, since it always is, as that is one of its functions, we want to take extra steps to care for the body and support it in every way we can.

Not the Body

It’s important to care for your body, and form a positive and healthy relationship with your body, while bearing in mind that your true self is not the body but the luminous consciousness that animates and enlivens the body. The body is your temple, your storehouse of wisdom, and your greatest support in this human life—and it’s your sacred duty to support and care for the body—but it’s not who you truly are. It is something you have; it is *your* body but it’s not you. You are something much greater. Even so, in every case, having a healthy body enables you to discover the totality of your being and the greatness that you truly are.

Some Healthy Practices

- Eat healthy food, in the right amounts, at the right time
- Exercise regularly (including use of the stick routine)
- Get ample amounts of sunshine
- Understand and use the right supplementation
- Drink pure water, in the right amounts
- Get fresh air, engage in proper breathing
- Have your living environment be mold-free, toxin-free, and stress-free
- Eliminate internal toxins and mental toxins (including stress)
- Minimize electro-magnetic pollution
- Cut down or eliminate PUFAs and overly-processed food
- Maintain the right balance of pH and blood sugar
- Get a good night’s sleep (with grounding)
- Have healthy connections with other people, animals, nature
- Stay informed about healthy practices through books and online forums



7

Taking Care of Business Putting Things in Order

Foundation Seven:

I will put my house in order, bringing peace and stability to my life.

*I will do what is needed on the material plane in order to support my growth, full-life living, and sense of well-being. I will take care of business. I will put things in place. I will clear up loose ends. I will take steps to have my living space be in order such that I feel good whenever I step into it. All said, I will get my sh*t together.*

Order and Balance

Bringing about a state of order and balance with regards to the things around you (such as your room, your living environment, your paperwork, your finances, etc.) puts you in a positive relationship with your physical world and provides a good foundation for personal and spiritual growth. It clears up a lot of static energy that can put you (and your mind) in a state of imbalance and confusion. It frees your mind of undo concerns and creates more space and lightness. It makes life easier and lighter.

It's time to be practical, to get down to business, to get things done. This involves clearing up loose ends, completing unfinished tasks, keeping everything in its place, throwing out energy-depleting items, preparing a will (if applicable), and keeping your living environment clear and uncluttered. It involves cultivating a positive relationship with every possession you have, as well as taking care of your financial obligations.

Ultimately, this is about preparing for your own death. Do everything now, put everything in place now; prepare everything so if you leave this world tomorrow you will leave without regrets. If you were told that you have 6 weeks to live and that you should put your affairs in order why not have all that done now? Why make a frantic scramble at the end?

Formulating a life goal or intention in order to focus, clarify, and empower your energies is also a good way to bring balance and order to your life.





Uplifting Relationships Letting Go of the Past

Foundation Eight:

I intend to have all my relationships support my highest good and not bind me to the past through anger, guilt, blame, or regret.

Trust

All relationships are supported and enhanced when there is mutual trust. When there is a lack of trust, your time, energy, and vital life-force are wasted. Being involved with someone you do not trust will not likely support your life or your highest intention.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a powerful way to free up your positive energy and release you from the painful burden of an “ego-driven” life. When you hold a grudge—for very good reason, I’m sure—it binds you to your painful past, misaligns you with the qualities of your true nature, and puts you out of sync with Spirit and its abundant qualities. It keeps you stuck; it strips you of your livingness. All in all, the cost of not forgiving is too high a price to pay, too big a sacrifice to make, too great a loss to suffer.

Forgiving others is essential but the most important thing is to forgive yourself. So long as you do not forgive yourself, so long as you hold onto an outmoded version of yourself (and support this with feelings of regret and shame) you obscure the glory of your presence and your own nature, you lose your state of repose, you lose the full experience of your life, and you lose the ability to do God’s will. That’s way too high a price to pay.

It’s difficult or impossible to truly forgive ourselves and others so long as we are attached to an ego-driven version of ourselves. Simply put: the ego-self is incapable of forgiving. We can only truly forgive (and love!) when we are able to get in touch with that sense of self that is beyond ego, beyond our self-image, beyond the divisions we set up between ourselves and others. We can only truly love when we come to the place in ourselves which is love—selfless, unconditional love. Forgive everyone and get there.



9

Living in Mutuality Honoring Others and Yourself

Foundation Nine

I resolve to give and receive support from others, to honor and be honored by others.

I, as an individualized expression of Spirit, honor and welcome others as that same expression but I also welcome them as a person, as a unique individual—with all their human struggles and apparent shortcomings—just as they are.

The Sanskrit term *Namaste* means something like, the divine self in me honors and welcomes the divine self in you. Welcoming the divine self in others is a great first step, welcoming every person exactly as they are, as a person—with all their apparent flaws, shortcomings, dark places, struggles, etc.—comes next. In true mutuality we want to welcome the whole person—their divine qualities as well as the good, the bad, and the ugly. The way we welcome and honor others reveals our true worth; it reveals how we welcome and honor Spirit and ourselves

The First Cornerstone

The Twelve Foundations consists of four cornerstones or “mega-foundations.” The first is: active participation in a group of caring, like-minded individuals, all of whom have the intention to improve their lives and support each other. (The other three are: 2) becoming a true and authentic human being, 3) understanding and developing one’s creative power and 4) realizing one’s spiritual nature.) This path is not something you can do on your own. This life is not something you can do on your own—nor would you ever want to. The creation of, and full participation in, a supportive group, where true mutuality can be experienced, is essential for life, growth, and fulfillment in this world.

True mutuality cannot take place in a vacuum or in an environment that does not support it. There is a certain vulnerability that takes place in this kind of mutual exchange and it requires a safe space where a person can be held and accepted, and where a person is free to hold and accept others. There has to be a high level of trust both in the group as a whole and

among its individual members. The more trust, the more safety there is in the group, the more benefit and support it brings.

Seeing Others as Oneself

In order to truly give and receive support from others, in order to truly honor and be honored by others one must see oneself as inseparable from others, made out of the exact same Spirit-stuff as others. If you are an individualized center of Spirit and inseparable from Spirit so is everyone else. This notion is impossible to fathom for people who are wedded to the unshaking conviction that they are this individual person, separate from everyone and everything, and having to struggle against the world to survive. You are a unique individual, with your own kind of autonomy, but you are not separate from others (or Spirit) any more than a unique wave is separate from others waves or from the Ocean itself.

Learning About Ourselves from Others

It's much easier for people, at least outwardly, to give to others, to put the needs of others before themselves. Such "self-sacrificing" behavior may make us feel better about ourselves but more often than not it is just a way to hide one's lack of self-worth. Others are deemed worthy of receiving our help—and so, we can be great givers—but when it comes to being vulnerable and asking for help for ourselves, this is more challenging.

We live in a world of other people. Others are constantly reflecting back to us who we are and how we view the world. There is no path to higher growth and understanding without the inclusion of others, without the recognition of others, without the respect and honoring of others.

The awakening is, in a way, the death of the "other" since the consciousness of another constitutes the very heart of the hallucination. ... The story of awakening isn't that of a fusion into a great, anonymous mass, but that of the birth of a new person. (Jourdain, *Radical Awakening*, 64, 121)



10

Co-Creating with Spirit Accepting Responsibility

Foundation Ten

I accept my role as a true co-creator with Spirit—never expecting Spirit to do for me what it can only do through me.

I, as a true co-creator with Spirit, have the power to bring about positive changes in my life as well as my own transformation. Spirit creates everything yet I, through the creative power of my own consciousness, can direct Spirit's creation as it applies to my life. Whatever I wish for or imagine for myself—that is exactly what Spirit sets about to create for me. And the highest I can wish for or imagine for myself is what Spirit wants most for me.

I accept my role in this divine partnership, which is to direct Spirit to create more and more love, joy, abundance, fulfillment, and beauty for me to experience in my life. This is a sacred duty because my experience of Spirit's qualities in me is also the way that Spirit is able to experience those qualities for itself. Spirit exists on the plane of the universal and can only experience itself through an individualized expression; it can only experience its love, joy, abundance, and beauty through me.

Co-Creation

Once we understand the nature of Spirit and our individual role in the creative process it becomes our noble endeavor to use our creative power in a way that is truly beneficial, in a way that actuates a positive change in our life, restores us to wholeness, and reveals all the divine qualities of Spirit in and through our own lives. Our consciousness, which is one with the Consciousness of Spirit, is the crucial factor that we bring to the alchemical process of creation. Divine intervention is afforded to us through our own consciousness, through our own one-with-Spirit actions, through what we are able to conceive for ourselves.

As individuals in touch with our creative power we have a choice with respect to how we direct our own power. The Power of Spirit is automatically directed through what we believe, what we hold to be true, what feels natural to us, and what we conceive to be possible for ourselves. However, by changing our beliefs we change what Spirit creates. The influx of Spirit,

and the redeeming power of Grace, is always dispensed to us and through us in accord with what we conceive (and believe) for ourselves.

Throwing in the Towel

When people are faced with a crisis or an insurmountable problem their solution is often to do nothing, to give up, to throw in the towel so to speak. But what exactly are they giving up? The simple and somewhat infantile approach is to give up on everything, on yourself, on your life—and then see if some Higher Power can take care of everything for you (like mommy once did). But this is a must-miss approach. This outdated way of thinking and doing things, this misinformed concept about yourself, and this untenable view of life has led you into this mess—so get rid of all of that but not yourself, not your will, not your power. Surrender all of that to some Higher Power if you will but don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Trying to discover the right course of action has been the subject of inquiry for thousands of years. The most famous scripture of India, the *Bhagavad Gita*, addresses this very issue. The scene takes place in the middle of the battlefield; Arjuna, the greatest warrior of the age, is besieged with doubt and despair just as he is about to go into battle against his cousins and teachers. In his dejected state he tells Lord Krishna (who is the embodiment of God Himself) that he would rather lay down his weapon and die than kill his own cousins. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that such action is not the will of God, that fighting and defending dharma is his duty and, thus, the will of God. After a long discourse Arjuna finally understands and is ready to fight, saying to God, "I shall do thy bidding." I shall give up this wrong and self-defeating way of thinking and take the right action, the dharmic action.

Giving up, not acting, or hoping that some Higher Power will take care of everything for you has nothing to do with God's will because God's will is that you claim your own power, that you follow dharma, that you be an instrument of His grace through your loving and beneficial actions. What you are called to give up is your incorrect way of thinking and the outmoded concepts you have about yourself, not yourself, not your will, not your power to act in a way that serves God and his creation. You are an irreplaceable vessel of God's glory. Do not rely upon God to do the very things He is relying upon you to do.

Questions and Answers

Could you talk about the creative process in the individual? What are some of the elements involved?

To understand the essence of creation, how the individual creates, we must look at the creative process of Spirit and how Spirit creates. We are one with Spirit and possess the same creative consciousness as Spirit but we

are unwittingly using our vast creative power in a way that limits our true creative potential and obscures our divine qualities rather than expanding them. We are misapplying or inverting our creative power in a way that limits us, and hurts us, and keeps us bound instead of delivering us to freedom and delight. As individualized expressions of Spirit, however, that is our choice; we are allowed to misuse our creative power. We are given the freedom to create misery for ourselves, we are given the freedom to ignore our own nature and seemingly go against Spirit itself. This is not something we are doing consciously but, yes, on one level we are choosing it. So, we want to change all that. We want to choose something else for ourselves.

To fully participate in the creative process we, as human beings, must create as Spirit creates. We must use our power in the same way that Spirit uses its power. Spirit creates from a pure sense of self, from an overwhelming sense of fullness, not from a state of desperation or lack. We must do the same. Spirit is always certain about its creation; it has no doubt about itself and the efficacy of its creative power. We must be the same. Spirit is always “all in,” giving itself completely to that which it creates. We must do the same. Spirit creates from a place of love and beauty, seeking to ever-expand these qualities in itself. We must do the same. ... However, if you’re not there yet—and who is really there?—then incline yourself in that direction.

Is there any “secret” to employing our creative power other than creating as Spirit creates?

No. That’s the whole of it. That’s the entire “secret.” The more closely you can create as Spirit creates—with the same motivation, “all-in”-ness, and certainty—the more manifesting power your creation will have and the more magical your co-creation with Spirit will be. So, your first task is to discover exactly how Spirit creates, and then take whatever steps are needed to be and do the same. Again, this is not so easy. Years of faulty and fearful mis-conditioning—all of which causes you to create a reality for yourself that goes against Spirit and your own nature—needs to be removed and/or overcome.

To actuate your creative power you have to be “all in.” You have to give yourself completely to your creation. You can’t hold anything back, you can’t be divided, you can’t have countervailing doubts going on. That is the way Spirit creates this whole universe—it’s “all in.” It’s *always* all in. It can never *not* be “all in.” It gives the all of itself to everything so completely that it becomes the very thing it creates. It’s never divided, separate, uncertain, or at odds with its creation. So in order to create as Spirit creates, in order to direct your creative power in the most positive and beneficial way, you have to be “all in.” And you cannot be “all in” unless you realize your unity with Spirit, unless your intention is fully aligned with the very force that impels Spirit, which is the sheer outpouring of love. You cannot be “all in” if you’re

not completely yourself, if you're disconnected from Life and living as some mentalized version of yourself. You can't be "all in" if you're at odds with your own creation, if you doubt your own power, if you're divided against yourself, if you consciously want one thing but subconsciously want something else. Spirit never creates out of fear, or selfishness, or from a sense of lack (feeling that it needs something in order to be whole). So if your actions are motivated by these lesser forces then your creation will reflect those lesser forces; it will be at odds with the fullness, and power, and beauty of Spirit.

When you've mastered the creative power and are aligned with Spirit then you're at the very heart of creation, then you'll find that everything is showing up exactly as you wish but in a way that's even more magical and wondrous than you could have ever wished-for or imagined. In this state of pure creativity, this state of effortless grace, you get all of yourself and all of Life as well. Now what could be greater than that?

Quotes

We must do our share in the work and not expect God to do *for* us what He can only do *through* us. (Troward, *Doré Lectures*, Ch. 2)

If we clearly realize that the creative power in ourselves is *unlimited*, then there is no reason for limiting the extent to which we may enjoy what we can create by means of it. Where we are drawing from the *Infinite* we need never be afraid of taking more than our share. That is not where the danger lies. The danger is in not sufficiently realizing our own richness, and in looking upon the externalized products of our creative power as being the true riches instead of the creative power of Spirit Itself. (Thomas Troward, *The Hidden Power*, p.118)

Your imagination is the instrument, the means, whereby your redemption from slavery, sickness, and poverty is effectuated. If you refuse to assume the responsibility of the incarnation of a new and higher concept of yourself then you *reject the means, the only means, whereby your redemption—that is, the attainment of your ideal—can be effectuated.*

Imagination [i.e., the operation of the creative power of Spirit in a human being] is the only redemptive power in the universe. However, your nature is such that it is optional to you whether you remain in your present concept of yourself (a hungry being, who longs for freedom, health, and security) or choose to become the instrument of your own redemption, imagining yourself as that which you want to be. ... The only fate governing your life is the fate determined by your own concepts, your own assumptions; for an assumption, *though false*, if persisted in [and accepted as being true] will harden into a fact. . . . Everything depends on your attitude towards yourself. *That which you will not affirm as true of yourself can never be realized by you for that attitude alone is the necessary condition by which you realize your goal.*

(Neville, *The Power of Awareness*, p. 4, 10, 12-16)





Meditation Prayer Presence

Foundation Eleven:

I resolve that through meditation, prayer, and/or the practice of presence I will deepen my connection with Spirit and my true self.

It is always beneficial to set up some kind of regular spiritual practice or engage in “spiritual tuning” on a daily basis. Being mindful of your actions, treating others with kindness, acting in accord with dharma, studying sacred texts, etc. are all beneficial practices but this foundation is about the kind of practice that puts you directly in touch with your higher self, one that brings about a resonance between your personal self and your divine essence.

Meditation

There are dozens of mediation techniques, all of which still the mind or direct it toward our higher self, however true meditation does not involve the mind; it’s about abiding in that pure dimension of self beyond the mind. So, more correctly, “meditation” should be understood as “abidance.” The mind is always directing us to improve ourselves or attain things but meditation is not about that; it’s about realizing that which is already present, that which is beyond the mind, which is our own true nature.

The heart of meditation is to abide in the presence and fullness of your own “I,” in the very sense you have of yourself, of your own existence; this can also be understood as a state of pure awareness, stillness, or wonder. In deeper states of meditation you may come to recognize that your very sense of “I,” that sense of self that you feel is you, is actually the Supreme “I” of Spirit residing in you and existing as you.

Meditation is beneficial when it’s done as a regular practice, usually in the morning and in the evening; but, ideally, the energy of meditation should be something you contact throughout the day.

Prayer

True prayer is a call of the heart. The love for God that inspires a human being to pray is nothing other than the felt vibration of God’s love in one’s heart. So, prayer is always an act of co-creation.

In general, we can talk about three different kinds of prayer. First there is what might be called “beseeching prayer” or “petitioning prayer.” This is where a person asks God or some Higher Power—be it real or imagined—for help, blessings, guidance, or some kind of favor. The person wants something so he turns to God or a Higher Power to grant him his wish. He might be asking for material things, health benefits, wealth, a resolution to a problem, etc.—things related to the betterment of his personal self. A higher form of this kind of prayer would be when a person seeks to obtain some spiritual quality that would deepen his connection with that Power or his own nature. This would be a beseeching prayer for the benefit of his spiritual self as opposed to a prayer for personal gain. A pure-hearted prayer—for anything and to any power—puts a person into a higher resonance with his own being. He might not get what he is praying for but the mere act of prayer, the act of reaching out toward God with a pure heart will, to some extent, align his soul with all-giving power of God.

Another kind of prayer is “creative prayer” or “affirmative prayer.” This is where a person is not asking for anything but consciously creating what he wants through the power of prayer, through the power of his own creative imagination. In this kind of prayer a person imagines as *already existing* what he wants; he adopts the state of consciousness wherein he feels himself to be in full possession of what he wants, right now, and then, regardless of outer conditions, lives as if he already has what he wants. This kind of imaginative prayer, where a person appropriates the state of fulfillment *and embraces the feeling* that he already has what he wants, prompts Spirit to bring about a corresponding creation in the real world. For example, if you win the lottery, you might feel a sense of abundance, power, freedom, relief, etc. But why wait to win the lottery when you can create and feel those self-same feelings now? By feeling those feelings now (the same feelings that you would feel had you actually won the lottery) you set up a “spiritual resonance” that attracts the wealth and conditions corresponding to those feelings.

Then there is pure prayer or “divine prayer,” which is the state of pure communion between the soul and the Beloved. This kind of prayer might be understood as loving meditation (or loving abidance). At the beginning, this kind of prayer may take the form of a feeling of selfless devotion and be directed to some Higher Power that you believe to be outside yourself. Later, when the prayer takes hold, there is no sense of separation; the one praying is not separate from the one who is being prayed to. There is no prayer at this point, just the experience of pure love; the prayer becomes a reveling in the state of union with God—a state that is filled with all the qualities of your nature, such as love, joy, peace, devotion, gratitude, and beauty.

All three kinds of prayer can attune a person to a higher resonance and they all have their place. Our emphasis is on creative prayer and divine prayer yet even beseeching prayer (if approached in the right way, with the right attitude) can be beneficial. However, if you pray from a position of weakness, feeling that you are in a state of lack, and in need of help and rescuing from some Higher Power, then the prayer can be self-defeating; you may unwittingly be using your creative power to perpetuate more weakness and lack. The whole basis of your prayer—which is based upon your belief that you are lacking and that praying to God might help you get out of this lack—is what you create for yourself. This kind of prayer is based on a denial of your own power as a creative center of God. ... If, however, you're able to pray from a position of loving wholeness—and ask for wisdom, guidance, and a pure heart—things that support your unity with God—then such a prayer will bring great benefit.

The Practice of Presence

Human beings exist in two simultaneous dimensions: a dimension that is timeless, ever-present, self-aware, and conscious (which might be called the dimension of the soul or one's true nature) and a dimension that is temporal, ever-changing, physically-bound, and conditioned (which might be called the body-mind-ego dimension). In normal consciousness we are mostly aware of, and fully identified with, one dimension of ourselves—our body-mind-ego self.

In the practice of presence, we want to become more and more aware of our ever-conscious, ever-present self. As it says in the scriptures, "Everything and every moment reveals the presence of God." We want to know the truth of that. We want to expand our awareness of that natural presence in and through the activities of our life. This presence or state of presence may seem bland, nondescript, and ordinary at first but as we contact it more and more, its true glory begins to unfold. The more we stay aware of our presence the more it becomes a living force in our lives and the more we recognize it as the Presence of Spirit, the more it becomes the gateway to the wonder of life and our inseparable unity with Infinite Spirit.

Forming the Right Relationship with Thought

What to do with that monkey mind? The good news is that you are not your thoughts; the bad news is that you most likely identify with every thought that passes through your mind, believing somehow that those thoughts are you. However, you need not do this. You have the choice to not believe or "buy into" every thought, or react to every thought, or let your thoughts define who you are or how you experience life. You have the power to take a step back and see thoughts for what they are—energetic pulsations of consciousness bubbling up from your subconscious mind, but not you.

Most people are centered in the stream of thoughts that continually flows through their mind. When their thoughts are good, they feel good, when their thoughts are bad, they feel bad. Moreover, almost every experience one has is accompanied by a running commentary of thought that is constantly telling you *about* what you should be experiencing. This commentary supplants your actual experience with a mentalized version of your experience, with a reaction to your experience—and what you end up getting is a dull, mentalized experience, far removed from the immediacy and power of life.

Having power over the conditions of your life, which is a theme that runs throughout the Twelve Foundations, can mean having the power to *not react* to every thought that passes through your mind; having the power to observe your thoughts from a stable center of self and not believing in the realness of every thought nor allowing every thought to determine your experience. It means not giving your power to every thought that flashes through your mind. Remember, you are not your thoughts. You may *have* thoughts but you are not your thoughts.

When working with your thoughts there are two fundamental approaches you can take. The first is to consciously engage with thought, endeavoring to change your negative thoughts to positive ones. For this you must be mindfully aware of your thoughts and thought patterns and constantly “checking” yourself to see what thoughts are arising; and each time you catch yourself dwelling on the negative side of things see if you can gently shift your thoughts toward the positive. This might be seen as a “hands on” or as a creative approach. The second approach is to abide in a dimension of self that is beyond thought and from that place of stillness allow your thoughts to be. Rather than being pulled in the direction of every thought—even with the positive intention to replace a negative thought with a positive one—simply allow a thought to be as it is, without getting involved, without reacting, without giving it any of your power, and without feeling the need to change it. Just be aware of the thought from that pure place of knowing, from that place of stillness that is beyond thought. This, in and of itself, is a creative act.

The kind of relationship you want to form with your own thoughts is to see them as suggestions from your subconscious mind (that are consistent with your past conditioning)—suggestions that you can accept or reject, and not as commands you must follow.

Bear in mind that you cannot truly take a step back from your thoughts, or disidentify from thought, or stop giving power to thoughts if you’re subconsciously identified with them. You must have access to a center within yourself, where your identity is anchored, and where your center of self is beyond the sway of thought—and then behold your thoughts from there. Trying to change your thoughts (and the pattern of

your thinking) while you're still identified with thought is like trying to move a carpet while you're still standing on it. Not so easy.

It is not possible to turn away from something if you are unconsciously identified with it. It's not possible because you believe you *are* it in a way that is deeper than your awareness at that moment. It is your ground. You cannot disidentify from your ground. (Almaas, *Diamond Heart III*, p. 73)

There's a saying: "Thoughts can make you and thoughts can break you"—and this is true to the extent that you *believe in and assign realness to your thoughts*. One thing you should understand is that thoughts in and of themselves are never the problem. It's our belief in the realness of thought, our identification with thought, our empowerment of thought, and our total involvement with thought that brings about difficulties. The oft-quoted line from Proverbs, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is" sheds some light on this truth. This line does not say "as a man thinketh so he is" (or "the way a man thinketh determines his life") it says "as a man thinketh *in his heart*, so he is." In other words, it's only those thoughts that we believe, that we "take to heart," that have power over us. (And every time we take a thought to be real, and deem it to be important, we empower that thought, and the subconscious mind will be sure to send us more of the same.) Thoughts that we do not believe, that we do not hold in our heart, that we let come and go as they may do not command any real power over us. So, the choice is yours. The only power that thoughts have over you is *the power that you give them*.

A similar approach can be applied to emotions but since emotions carry more psychic power than thoughts taking a step back is more difficult. The general approach to uncomfortable emotions is to simply feel them; just let them arise without adversely reacting to them, without trying to run away from them or mentalize them away. Just give them the "green light" and simply feel what is arising. More often than not it's the resistance to the emotion, the refusal to feel the emotion, and the mental aversion to the emotion that is more painful than the emotion itself. Just feel it. When emotions are met with avoidance, or fear, or with the dismissive rationalization of "why me?"—in other words, when they're resisted—they persist. They stick around. They grow in power. They will not go away until they're felt and metabolized. These emotions are being brought up for a reason, for you to experience them, for you to feel them.

Quotes

"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye *have* received them, and ye *shall* receive them." (Mark xi. 24) The difference of the tenses in this passage is remarkable. The speaker bids us first to believe that our desire *has* already been

fulfilled, that it is a thing already accomplished, and then its accomplishment *will* follow as a thing in the future. This is nothing other than a concise direction for making use of the creative power of thought by impressing upon the universal subjective mind the particular thing that we desire as an already-existing fact.

(Troward, *Edinburgh Lectures*, Ch., 5)

You are told, “When you pray, believe that you have received, and you will.” Can you pray in that form? —for that is the only successful prayer in the world. Begging is not going to do it, for when you beg you are confessing you don’t have it [the very thing you are praying for]. You’ve got to appropriate it. It is a subjective appropriation of the objective hope. That’s praying. (Neville, *Immortal Man*, p. 235)

Prayer, fundamentally, is the feeling of the Beloved in the Heart, which includes an intention. This intention can be unconditional, where the Soul surrenders herself to the Beloved in the experience of love and unity. Or it can involve a more personal communication in which our desires, fears, and longings are expressed. ... Prayer is part of the blueprint of being human. It means that it is expected by the Divine. It is the Beloved’s wish to be communicated with in this way.

(Aziz, *Transmission of Awakening*, p. 49)

Your endeavor, then, is not so much to find God as it is to realize His Presence and to understand that this Presence is always with you. Nothing can be nearer to you than that which is the very essence of your being. Your outward search for God culminates in the greatest of all possible discoveries—the finding of Him at the center of your own being. (*Holmes, This Thing Called You*, p. 140)



12

Being Your True Self Service to Others

Foundation Twelve:

Having realized my unity with Spirit, the preciousness of my human existence, and a joyous sense of being alive I give myself in service to others.

This new understanding and experience of myself, this appreciation of my human existence, this feeling of gratitude, this deepening of my connection with Spirit, and this coming upon my own aliveness and joy inspires me to reach greater depths of self-realization and to lovingly share my illumined state with others.

An Outpouring of Grace

Sharing your inherent qualities is not something you have to work on or complete; it's the natural expression of your true self. Spirit creates this whole universe by the overflowing of its own nature, and its qualities naturally abound in us, and through us, when we're in touch with the fullness and joy of our own life in unity with Spirit.

We are not here to convert anyone; it's not about signing up people, or trying to promote a movement, or trying to meet some need in ourselves through helping others; it's about the natural and selfless overflow of our own divine qualities into the world. It's about the purity of Spirit expressing itself through us. It's about our love overflowing and bringing benefit, and aliveness, and joy to everything and everyone it touches.

Give as Spirit Gives

Selfless giving is a natural expression of our boundless nature. Giving as Spirit gives opens us to bounty of the Infinite Source. There cannot be any "should" in our giving, or thoughts of gain, or the attitude of "I give this to get that," or any motivation to acquire praise or merit. It has to be pure, selfless giving, giving from the heart. If not, it's just a business transaction.

Spirit is one. It's never divided. It's always "all in." Spirit can never give but a portion of itself because Spirit's giving is absolute. When it gives, even to a blade of grass, it gives the whole of itself; it gives so completely that is

loses itself in the giving—and only that which is given to remains. To truly give, give as Spirit gives; to truly love, love as Spirit loves. And to do this, to approach this kind of selfless giving, your heart must be in it.

Whatever you do—if you wish to bring value and aliveness into your life—your heart must be in it. The primal feeling of Spirit, the feeling that gives rise to all creation, is love; it's the fullness of the heart over-flowing. So give with all your heart. Welcome others with all your heart. Be yourself with all your heart. Feel what it's like to be you. Enter into the spirit of life, of overflowing love and grace with all your heart. This is the gateway to the splendor of everything. And if you cannot put all of your heart in it, keep inclining yourself in that direction.

By entering into the spirit of anything we establish a mutual vivifying action and reaction between it and ourselves; we vivify it with our own vitality, and it vivifies us with a living interest that we call its *spirit*. Therefore, the more fully we enter into the spirit of all with which we are concerned, the more thoroughly do we become *alive*. The more completely we do this the more we shall find that we are penetrating into the great secret of Life. It may seem a truism but the great secret of Life is its Livingness and it is just more of this quality of Livingness that we want to get hold of; it is that good thing of which we can never have too much. (Troward, *The Hidden Power*, p. 147)



Q & A

Questions and Answers

The Four “Mega-Foundations”

Could you talk a little more about the four main areas of involvement or what you call the four “mega-foundations”?

The first mega-foundation is the integral involvement with a group of like-minded individuals, all of whom have the same intention to develop their human and spiritual natures and support each other. Ideally, everyone would have a sense of belonging, a sense of being welcomed and accepted for who they are. In this age of discordant energies and alienation—and with so much inertia in support of low-consciousness living—true growth and transformation is rarely supported. We need the support of a group; we need a place to belong, a place to be accepted and acknowledged. We need a place where we can be held, embraced and appreciated; where we feel safe, connected, and “gotten”; where we can have fun, and feel alive, and express our love and appreciation; where we can be ourselves and be free of judgment. Such groups are rare and difficult to find so our first task is to set about creating such a place for ourselves and others.

The second mega-foundation involves developing and understanding our human self. This is about becoming more and more conscious of ourselves, of our subconscious conditioning, of our deep-seated motivations and beliefs. Part of this is about developing a positive, empowered human identity and feeling the full aliveness of life. This is about accepting and embracing who you are as this person. Not much is gonna happen on the spiritual dimension without grounding oneself as a human being.

The third area is the cultivation of our creative power. This not only involves getting in touch with our integral oneness with Spirit, and owning our creative power but also working with ourselves in a psychological way, uncovering subconscious tendencies and taking steps to change outmoded beliefs and thinking patterns. This whole area is based upon the teachings of the New Thought movement which began in the early 1900s and which includes the teachings of Thomas Troward and Neville Goddard.

The fourth area is about realizing our true nature, about feeling and living from the state of our divine presence, and about becoming established in our inherent state of unity with Spirit. This mega-foundation is in keeping with most of the world’s spiritual traditions and is supported by an informed practice of meditation, prayer, and/or presence.

In regards to a group, what kind of structure would a group meeting have?

There are no hard-and-fast rules. I think a ninety-minute meeting, with time afterward for people to share with each other, would work. The meeting could open with an acknowledgment of the space and a mutual welcoming of each other. That sets the tone or motif for the meeting. There could be a one-minute “check-in” where people share with the group where they’re at and how they’re feeling at the moment. Then there could be some kind of group-sync activity or vibration-raising activity such as a short meditation or chant. If there’s going to be sharing, a set time for each person to share, plus a time for feedback from others (if a person wants that) would work. Feedback would not be about trying to fix anyone, or give advice, or offer “I like this” and “I don’t like that,” or shift the focus away from the person and onto oneself. Feedback has to be supportive and empowering; it could be something that inspired you, something you could relate to, something positive about the person and what they shared, etc. After about an hour or so there could be a short period of ritualized walking or physical movement. There could also be a time when the large group breaks up into small “clarity” groups, where two or three people get together to work on specific issues. (If some people need a period of catharsis they need not involve the whole group; two or three people could get together and do that.) At the end, there could be a short “check out” to close the space, where people tell how they feel after the meeting or share something they gained from the meeting. These are a few ideas. Although there would be no leader the meeting would need a facilitator to keep things on track.

The Twelve Foundations and the Twelve Steps

Every time I hear about a new “recovery” program I’m curious to see how it compares to the Twelve Steps. What are some of the main differences between the Twelve Foundations and the Twelve Steps?

The Twelve Foundations is a path of personal empowerment that can be used to overcome addictions but the focus is not on addictions or overcoming them. When a person has a solid foundation in life, when he comes into more and more of his fullness and power, addictions and negative conditions won’t be able to take hold and derail his life as they did before. The central problem, often related to a sense of weakness or isolation—and the subsequent need to use alcohol or drugs to cover up, deaden, or appease that problem—is no longer there. Well, the problem may still be there but it will no longer derail a person’s life as it did before.

When we become more whole and more connected to life—and have greater access to the joy and fullness of our own being—addictions lose their power over us. A person does not have to exert some kind of super will-

power to overcome addictions—nor base his life and identity on that aim—for as the fullness of his own nature begins to emerge it overshadows, or over-lights the dim glimmer of addictions.

Another difference between the two approaches relates to valence, where one approach can be seen as negative and disempowering while the other can be seen as positive and empowering. If you want to get a sense of what I mean just compare the feel of Foundation One with that of Step One: Foundation One says: “I am an individual expression of Infinite Spirit, possessing all the qualities of Spirit such as love, power, abundance, and beauty.” Step One says: “We admitted we were powerless over our addictions, that our lives had become unmanageable.”

The Twelve Step program certainly has value for people whose lives have been overtaken by addiction but more valuable and life-transforming than the central teachings, perhaps, is the love and support a person gets from others who are involved with the same struggles. Being part of a supportive, loving group is also integral to The Twelve Foundations.

One thing I’ve noticed about many people who have been involved with the Twelve Step program for a while is that they adopt an identity based upon weakness or the giving up of their will. In order to remain a part of the Twelve Steps community (which provides an essential anchor for a recovering person) he may have to keep that weakness-based identity going, even if it no longer suits him or if it begins to feel more and more confining.

To realize and experience our all-fill spiritual nature is to feel the fullness of life. So long as this is not experienced one feels a sense of sad imperfection and man’s intellect suggests methods of regaining his sense of fullness, which are called desires. Each desire in the heart of man is an attempt of his intellect to discover a fuller sense of satisfaction in his life. (Swami Chinmayananda)

Doing God’s Will

Many spiritual seekers, and those involved with the Twelve Steps, strive to know and follow God’s Will. How does the notion of doing God’s will fit in with the Twelve Foundations?

Doing God’s will is a creative act on the part of the individual. I don’t see how a person who believes that he is weak or powerless, or who just wants to give up—or thinks that he can do nothing for himself and that his only option is to have some Higher Power do everything for him like Mommy once did—can truly do God’s will. Doing God’s will requires inner resolve and strength, and being in a position of choice. It’s not about giving up. We must come into full possession of ourselves (and know our likeness to God) before we can truly talk about doing God’s will. How can you give what you don’t have?

In cases of desperation or hopelessness, giving up your will to some Higher Power, real or imagined, can be a remedial first step; anchoring yourself to something you believe is greater than yourself might give you a cause or a reason to improve your life. But I don't think this is the kind of surrender that makes you whole or can deliver you to you the magnificent splendor of Life. However, for some people, it may be needed as a first step.

As already mentioned, God's will, what moves God to act, is the desire to experience more and more of His own nature, what He feels Himself to be. This means that God's will is to be ever-more joyous, alive, abundant, loving, and beautiful. The all of creation comes into existence as an expression of that. To truly do God's will we must have the same will for ourselves as God has for himself, we must be moved to experience more and more of our own nature, more and more of our magnificence. That's how we do God's will—by being more and more like God. We were made in the image and likeness of God, how can acting contrary to our own nature, and our own likeness, align us with God's will?

The Creative Process

Could you talk about the specific components of the creative process, how a person goes about creating what he or she wants?

To go about creating what you want, the first thing you have to do is get clear on what you want, what you really want. If your heart is not in it, if you're not certain about what you want, if you're divided, if you don't really want what you think you want then your desired creation will lack manifesting power. Once you're singular and clear about what you want then you have to uncover your deep-seated concepts and beliefs that run contrary to what you want. These are the subconscious blocks and counter-creations that neutralize your desired creation; these are the countervailing conditions that you are, unawares, creating right now. You may want a relationship but at the same time you may feel it's going to confine you; or you may want wealth but at the same time feel that you are not deserving of it.

So, first you need to get clear on what you want; second, you have to uncover all the counter-creations that are nullifying your conscious intention; then you need to expel, deflate, and/or disempower those counter-creations (or bring them in line with your conscious intention) so that they no longer nullify your creative efforts. After all that—and most people never get past all that—you have to imagine what you want in explicit detail, you have to feel the realness of your imagined reality, and then enter your creation, thinking and living from that position just as you would had the same reality taken place on the physical plane. This is the only way to make real, or realize, your imagined reality; this full embodiment of your imagined reality is what Spirit needs in order to go about creating such a reality for you—it

needs you to impart realness to your own creation, to believe wholeheartedly in the efficacy of your creative power. It needs you to fully occupy your own creation. Only then can Spirit give you what you already got. In his writings, Neville Goddard explains this process in much greater detail.

The bottom line is that your Imagination and the Imaginative Power that creates the universe is one and the same, the only difference is in degrees of efficacy. You can create anything you can imagine. And you can manifest what you imagine to the degree that you can occupy your own creation.

Did Jesus demonstrate this kind of creative, manifesting power?

Yes. We, too, can direct that same power but our efforts are nullified by doubt, uncertainty, and subconscious counter-creations. I know people who have reached the same state of God-realization as Jesus, realizing their inseparable unity with God, but I don't know anyone who has mastered the creative power to the extent that Jesus reportedly did. In addition, Jesus exhibited true humanity and love through his human form. That's why he was the rarest of beings. But you have all the potential power that Jesus had, you are as dear to God as was Jesus—and this is what he tried to teach his followers—but you have lots of things that Jesus didn't have, and that's the problem. You have lots of doubt about who you are and your creative power, you have lots of mistaken concepts, you have lots of limiting beliefs that cause you to feel weak and powerless and somehow less than Jesus. So, you need to get rid of all of that stuff. ... If you are inclined to accept Jesus as your lord and savior, that's okay. But the best way, and perhaps the only way to do this is to become more and more like Jesus, which includes honoring and accepting the whole of who you are.

Food

Can you talk about food and Overeaters Anonymous? How do the Twelve Foundations relate to this issue?

As stated, the Twelve Step program relating to food struggles is called "Overeaters Anonymous." And notice that, right from the start, this program requires a person to adopt the negative title of being an "overeater." This struggle, however, has little to do with overeating. People who habitually overeat, or eat a predominance of comfort foods, are often besieged by a sense of dissatisfaction, emptiness, lack of meaning, lack of power, isolation, and/or low self-esteem—and this applies especially to women. And the vast amount of attention placed on food, eating, dieting, one's body image, thoughts that no one will love me if I am fat, etc., only perpetuate the problem by lowering one's "life-vibration" and keeping one's consciousness riveted to a negative and desperate sense of self. By dwelling on the negative,

by trying to get away from the negative, we keep on creating more of that negativity in our lives. The central approach of the Twelve Foundations is based on coming into your own power and developing positive self-esteem, not on the notion that you are weak, a sinner, or that you must give up your will to a Higher Power to bring about changes in your life.

The best approach for people who want to overcome eating problems is to establish their center, increase their sense of self-worth and self-love—and focus more on life (and the positive side of life) than on food, food issues, and a constant sense of struggle and failure. Bringing a further sense of weakness and powerlessness to a person whose power and esteem is already diminished—in an attempt to overcome their “addiction”—can be especially problematic and counter-productive, particularly for women. In that case the treatment would be worse than the disease.

Ultimately, the best way to fully resolve a food addiction, or the need to fill or comfort yourself with food, is to feel your own sense of wholeness, to be centered in your own power and love. Any program that fosters a sense of weakness or dependency on something outside your true self will only take you so far. It may be helpful in the beginning but soon it can become the very thing that blocks you from becoming a whole, integral human.

Loving Oneself

A big formula for Oprah, especially as it relates to food issues, is that we have to love ourselves; we have to feel good about ourselves. How does this fit in with the Twelve Foundations?

The better you feel about yourself, the more value you find in life, the more in touch you are with your own qualities of love, aliveness, creative power, and beauty the less sway food (or any outer “promise”) will have over you. However, when Oprah says that we have to love ourselves, or feel good about ourselves, which self is she talking about? Most people think she is talking about our personal self, our self-image (i.e., the self that most people identify with). However, Oprah may also be talking about our true self. This is a much deeper part of our being; it is something much more profound and empowering than simply having a positive self-image. Once we are in touch with our true self, our innate sense of love naturally emerges; we don’t have to “do” anything or love ourselves because when we enter the core of our being we discover that love is who we are.



Twelve Foundations Groups

Groups may be formed around two general categories:

1. Spiritual Development and Wholeness

This group is for people who want to recognize their spiritual nature, cultivate their creative power, and find greater fulfillment in their life. It's for people who have ordinary life-struggles and challenges yet who are called to experience something greater and/or who want to find more joy and meaning in their lives.

2. Recovery and Overcoming Addictions

This group is for people who want to be involved with a “positive recovery” program and overcome additions in a balanced and empowering way. This type of group may also be used as “the Next Step” for people who have had some success with Twelve Steps programs but who now want to move beyond that approach and the identity that goes with it.

[For more information on joining or forming a Twelve Foundations group, please visit our website at: www.twelvefoundations.net]



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