

Introduction

Welcome to my world of Qi Dao, the ancient energy art of Tibetan Shamanic Qigong. My spiritual tradition named Qi Dao (or *Ch'i Tao* if you like this spelling), which literally means “the path of energy,” or “the flow of life force,” is a style of Qigong (also spelled *Ch'i Kung*) rooted in the Tibetan Shamanic tradition of self-realization called Bön. Following many generations of Tibetan lamas and Shamans since time immemorial, I explore this magical world where the stuff of myths and legends is quite real. Along my spiritual journey, the miracles of natural healing and amazing feats of power have been common place. I came to believe that everyone practicing this “Adventure Yoga” can receive revelations directly from spirit and learn to follow the inner guidance to enjoy being in the flow of the dream called life.

Have you ever thought that your life journey was meant to be a grand adventure, rather than a misadventure? Perhaps, you are one of those lucky individuals who have experienced “being in the flow” or, as some athletes call it, “in the zone.” If you have experienced it, you will probably never forget the profound sense of harmony associated with being in the flow. And if you have never experienced it, at least, you may be able to imagine yourself being empowered, centered and present. Your imagination may be as potent as your memory in preparing you for this exciting adventure in self-realization and learning to live a dream life.

Imagine a world where men and women can travel through life in harmony with each other and the world around them; where every human being can be in touch with his or her inner nature. Everyone there feels confident and free of any artificial limitations that religions, society, or family upbringing tend to impose on people. In such a dream world, everyone has an opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle, enjoying all the abundance life has to offer. Picture yourself in a world where every child and adult can feel empowered to openly experience and

explore their greatest potentials, allowing them to blossom fully. In this dream world, the powers that used to be considered paranormal or supernatural are daily occurrences. Now you have a chance to turn your life into a heroic quest to discover the true nature of Being.

Of course, being in the flow is not an exclusive prerogative of Tibetan lamas and top-notch athletes. Virtually every indigenous nation on the face of the Earth has some stories about the heroes, whose lives were dedicated to the exploration of the unknown, be that unknown lands or their inner realms. Those spiritual adventurers, regardless of their origins and personal histories, experienced the most profound transformations and astonishing feats of power that most people could only dream about. In our Qi Dao tribe, we call this way of being “dream being,” which means, among other things, experiencing life as though being in a dream. Dream Being is not only a verb, but also a noun representing the source of all your dreams: daydreams as well as night dreams. It is the mystical source of the big dream called life that in many Oriental schools of thought is referred to as the Dao (or *Tao* if you will).

What is this mystical Dao? It is unseen, but it is everywhere. You may want to know it, but it cannot be intellectually understood. You may strive to find it, even though it has always been within you. “To become one with the Dao” has been the ultimate purpose of meditation retreats, pilgrimages and other spiritual adventures for millennia. Anyone who experiences oneness with the Dao can effortlessly navigate through life, being continuously in the flow, free of attachments, conflicts, or suffering. Nobody can harm or kill such a person, because anyone, who would dare to go against him or her, would also go against the power of the entire universe. Such an awakened being can fully enjoy the great power and freedom coming from realizing that the daily life and Dream Being are inseparable.

This awareness, however, has hardly anything to do with intellectual cognition or understanding. The more you try to comprehend

this by logically thinking about it, the more you employ your linear mind, which will keep you stuck in the head. Trying not to think about it usually does not help either, because, if you try to stop thinking, you must, at least, have thoughts about not thinking. The practice of Qi Dao offers an alternative way to experience a practice of self-realization tailored for spiritual adventurers that is both extremely effective and easy to implement.

You may be asking yourself, “What does it have to do with me? How can reading this book change the way I live my life?” If you live in a modern society, you are likely to be exposed to so much stress and artificial stimulation that you may feel disconnected from your body, a condition often referred to as “being stuck in the head.” This can restrict the free flow of *Qi* and limit your availability to life. Being out of synch with the flow of things in your life may even manifest as depression, disease, or chronic pain. The more disconnected you are, the more discomfort you may experience. This book will teach you to switch from going through one misadventure after another (that are usually perceived as problems causing suffering) to living a dream life filled with genuine adventures that you start perceiving as excellent learning opportunities.

Exploring this path, begin by taking small steps, which are always easier to take than large leaps. It is like learning a foreign language. First, you learn the alphabet; then, using the letters as building blocks, you learn to form words. Subsequently, you learn grammar that should enable you to put words together to create sentences. With practice, you will develop an ability to communicate more eloquently with others, who speak this language. The language you will learn with the help of this book is the language of Harmonious Culture of Movement.

I recommend using this book in two ways: as a guide for learning to be in the flow, no matter where your journeys may take you, and as a tutorial for mutual coaching with your practice partner or partners, practicing with whom can make your exploration more interactive and fun.

I also recommend watching the companion DVD that is available online at www.qidao.org/dvd101.htm. Upon perusing our website, you may choose to deepen your studies by receiving Qi Dao coaching from me or one of my apprentices. Moreover, you may choose to join one of the programs offered through Academy of Qi Dao to become a Certified Qi Dao Coach yourself, so you can assist others in transforming their lives into profound spiritual adventures.

Now, you may be wondering, “Do I have to have a partner to practice Qi Dao with?” Of course, you can and are encouraged to practice it on your own whenever you have a chance. It is more fun and challenging, though, to put to rigorous test all the practices you learn, which is much easier to do with another person. That does not have to be the same person all the time, although some continuity usually helps. Besides, when a person gets to experience just a few applications of even the most basic principles of Qi Dao, he or she will likely become curious to find out more. This is where you will be able to launch your coaching career by encouraging that brave soul to become your regular adventure partner.

Can anyone practice Qi Dao together with you? Ideally, I recommend finding a partner who shares your enthusiasm about venturing outside the box, as it were. In other words, your prospect partner must be eager to explore things that are on the edge of his or her comfort zone. On the other hand, this practice can be very beneficial to anyone looking for some ways to improve the quality of life in general, or one’s mobility, flexibility, wellness, and attitude, in particular.

Hundreds of people from all walks of life went through Qi Dao Coaching programs at Portland Qigong Clinic, which assisted them with self-healing and advice as to finding more harmonious ways of dealing with the challenges on their life journeys. One of the reasons why I recommend practicing with a partner is a much greater efficacy of the semi-private sessions attended by two students or a client and an

apprentice that I regularly observed throughout the years. People often commented about feeling the atmosphere of mutual empowerment and encouragement, which is often lacking in a traditional clinical setting. The effectiveness of the Qi Dao approach to dealing with health, relationship, financial, environmental, and other issues, has been proven time and time again.

On a personal note, as the holder of the lineage of Qi Dao, I wish to congratulate you for taking the first steps on this path of self-realization. The basics of Qi Dao presented in this book will provide you with the knowledge of Harmonious Culture of Movement. Once you have mastered these skills through regular practice, you will be able to apply them in every aspect of your life. As pieces of a puzzle, they will come together to give you a vision of the greater picture of the flow of energy in your world. I have no doubt that, once you have experienced the changes that Qi Dao can bring into your life, you will want to explore more advanced applications of this art covered in my upcoming books and to join our international tribe of fellow spiritual adventurers. I welcome you to enjoy every step on your journey along this path of living your dreams.

Qi Dao Fundamentals

Shamanism is the most ancient spiritual tradition known to humankind. Throughout its history, the human race has evolved significantly in both technology and science, but human nature has never changed. We all have the same primordial spiritual core that we often call our inner essence or spirit. This inner nature is not always apparent, for the wonders of technological and scientific progress tend to distract us more and more from paying attention to our inner nature as well as the world of nature around us.

Historically, the establishment of organized religions diverted the masses from the ancient Shamanic teachings and practices. Many religious institutions have a tendency to perceive Shamanism as some sort of witchcraft deserving nothing but persecution and extermination. No wonder, nowadays, there is so little remaining from the former worldwide prominence of the Shamanic culture. The resulting inadequacy of human connection with nature has been rather detrimental both to humanity itself and to all forms of life on our planet. Besides the devastation of natural ecosystems and extinction of many species, we, humans, tend to pay less and less attention to the world within ourselves, which separates us even further from who we really are.

Who are we, really? Are we some foreign intruders trying to colonize and enslave this planet? Are we a product of the games of uncanny forces that turn us into catalysts for our own self-destruction? To answer these and more serious questions, you would need to focus more of your attention inwards. It is exactly what the Shamans used to practice when communing with the spirit world. It is also what all prophets and mystics did when they received any profound visions and revelations. This way of receiving answers to the most challenging questions has been a direct path for many spiritual masters to self-realization and awakening to the truth of our Being. This experience of self-realization is often so

transcendental that many mystics who experienced it never became prophets, since they could not even start translating their incredible revelations into the language of the everyday life. Some of them did speak out and shared the remarkable sense of awakening and enlightenment as to the real source of our existence. They became well-known prophets and founding fathers of different spiritual teachings and world religions.

The Shamans of antiquity developed their acute energy awareness for personal development, healing and protection of their tribes. Through years of trial and error, some of them fine-tuned their abilities to shift attention from the outer appearances of things to their energetic nature that is called *Qi* in Chinese, *Prana* in Sanskrit, or *Mana* in Hawaiian. Energy is the essence of all Being, flowing through all things and manifesting in the multitude of forms. The forms of things are basically vessels for their energetic essence. This applies not only to tangible objects, but also to events, relationships, thoughts, etc. Thanks to the diligent transmission of this knowledge through many generations of dedicated practitioners, now we have a method for awakening our dormant ability to perceive the flow of things in our lives and to be in harmony with that flow.

Although origination of Bön – Tibetan Shamanism – is traditionally attributed to legendary Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche, I believe that Shamanism in general was not founded by a particular founder but rather naturally evolved and developed throughout many millennia. Every Shaman had to master his or her unique and authentic ways of realizing their true nature. Rather than trying to copy someone else's steps, real masters came up with their novel ways of self-realization that were geared to their own physique, energy and mentality. In other words, to be a real Shaman is synonymous to being in the flow.

Qigong, an ancient energy art integrating Qi (or Chi – energy awareness) and Gong (or Kung – the practice of mastering it), is a system of self-realization that has been practiced for over five thousand years.

Its numerous styles and schools developed mostly along the lines of different philosophical and spiritual traditions in the pursuit of embodiment of their respective teachings. The deeper you explore the history of Qigong in search of its roots, the more apparent it becomes that all of these teachings emerged originally from the vast pool of pre-historic Shamanic practices. Most Qigong styles were organized by and for the followers of one belief system or another in ancient China, Tibet, Mongolia and Korea. Following the establishment of the main Eastern schools of thought about twenty five hundred years ago, Qigong eventually developed six distinctive branches: Daoist, Buddhist, Tantric, Therapeutic, Wushu (martial arts), and Kung Fu Tze (Confucian Qigong).

Each of them developed their teachings and methods of training following the steps of their respective founders. The history of some traditions can be traced back to particular individuals who originated their schools of thought, oftentimes even unbeknownst to themselves. As Jesus Christ was not a Christian and Buddha Shakyamuni was not a Buddhist, so most original masters of Yoga and Qigong had no idea that their disciples would institutionalize their personal practices of self-realization. The masters simply followed their own inner guidance as to how to be in the flow of things in this magical world. With time, a lot of people perceived those masters as great examples of living in the flow. The consequent generations of students, however, grew further and further apart from the roots of their respective traditions by institutionalizing them.

About 2,500 years ago, a prominent Chinese philosopher Lao Tze presumably wrote Dao De Jing, which brought together many pieces of the ancient Oriental wisdom and formed the foundation of Daoism. The adherents of that teaching created Daoist Qigong dedicated to attainment of great longevity and, supposedly, immortality. Around the same period of time, the followers of the famous Chinese philosopher Kung Fu Tze (Confucius) formulated Confucian Qigong mainly concerned with

mentoring leaders and guiding them in creating a harmonious society. Around the same time in India, Buddha Shakyamuni taught his teachings to thousands of devoted disciples, who eventually started practicing Buddhist Qigong to achieve spiritual awakening, or *Nirvana*. The adepts of Tantra, a mystical sect of Hinduism that spread via the Himalayas into Tibet, came up with Tantric Qigong dedicated to self-realization through the means of enlightening personal and transpersonal relationships. Therapeutic Qigong, initially a corner stone of Oriental Medicine, is mostly concerned with the issues of health and holistic healing. Martial, or Wushu Qigong, as the name implies, is focused on effective self-defense and protection of others.

Nowadays, many Qigong styles are still confined within the parameters of their respective doctrines, while others integrate some aspects of two or more branches of Qigong. For example, Buddhist monks from the Shaolin Temple are known for both martial arts prowess and competence in Buddhist Qigong. Many Daoist Qigong masters are also great healers and/or martial artists. In fact, Tai Chi Chuan is an offspring of Daoist martial arts. By the same token, Tantra is a major part of Buddhist tradition in Tibet and Mongolia where lamas (Shamans and Buddhist spiritual teachers) often integrate Tantric and Buddhist Qigong practices.

There is one style, however, that does not merely try to reach for the fruits on the ends of the branches of the “Qigong tree,” but rather goes back to the Shamanic roots of the entire tree and empowers its practitioners to stay true to the original universality of the art. Its practice allows advancing to high levels of achievement in all six applications of Qigong as a result of integrating the power and wisdom of the six branches into one. This non-sectarian tradition of Tibetan Shamanic Qigong has been preserved through the centuries by twenty-seven generations of masters who explored numerous possible applications of

energy awareness in all spheres of life, from fighting to healing and sexual energy arts.

Our system has been known under several different names, depending on the culture and language of the person you speak to. In Tibetan, it may be referred to as *Trul Khor*, but in the States, I prefer to use the Chinese name Qi Dao, due to the issues with the Tibetan pronunciation (which really sounds like “true whore”). It originated from an ancient Shamanic tradition called Bön that existed for many millennia prior to the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet by Padmasambhava.

Historically, Tibetan culture did not exist in as much isolation as many Westerners seem to think. Both Indian and Chinese influences have been very strong in Tibet for centuries; without them there would be no Tibetan Buddhism as such. Over the centuries, Qi Dao developed into a refined distillation of the ancient Bön traditions, Indian yogic practices and Chinese energy arts. It has many similarities with a number of other systems such as Tummo, Yantra Yoga and Tai Chi Chuan.

The Mongols, who are culturally close to the Tibetans, disseminated Bön throughout Asia when Genghis Khan and his descendants created the largest empire in human history. As all empires eventually collapse, the Mongol Empire also fell apart 300 years later, and different parts of it became primarily Christian (Russia), Muslim (Central Asia), Hindu (India), Buddhist (Tibet and Mongolia), or Daoist/Buddhist/Confucian (China). Siberia ended up as the only part of the vast empire where the Siberian Shamanism smoothly blended with the Tibetan/Mongolian traditions and survived to the present day.

During the existence of the Soviet Union, it was quite difficult to perpetuate our practice, since the Communist regime persecuted all types of spirituality and even outlawed all martial arts, fearing that the common people might experience any kind of empowerment. Being born and raised in the former Soviet Union, I experienced on my own skin the brunt of the Communist oppression. Many years ago, the Soviet KGB even

gave my Grandfather, from whom I learned most of my skills, an ultimatum: “You must work for us or else...” Well, they used to send people to Siberia, but if you were already living there, what else do you think they might do to punish you for non-cooperation? Reluctantly, he agreed to train the top echelon of the KGB, including Stalin’s bodyguards.

Many aspects of our tradition can be seen in the Systema – the Russian martial arts developed by such masters as Mikhail Ryabko and Alexei Kadochnikov, both of whom trained the Russian Special Forces too. If you have an opportunity to experience that art in action, you will find it very fluid and formless, quite distinct from the vast majority of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean styles of martial arts, but very similar to Qi Dao. As you can imagine, it would have been totally suicidal to teach any spiritual aspects of our art to the Soviet spooks; that is why the deepest parts of Qi Dao cannot be found in the Systema.

Bruce Kumar Frantzis, a well-known American Qigong master, pointed out to me a few years ago that I might want to call my teachings Shen Gong (spiritual practice) rather than Qigong (energy practice), because they are ultimately dedicated to self-realization and awakening to the dream-like nature of reality instead of focusing on the cultivation and manipulation of *Qi* as in most styles of Chinese Qigong. My respect to Mr. Frantzis notwithstanding, I still continue referring to Qi Dao as Tibetan Shamanic Qigong, whose foundational principles are the subject of this chapter.

Being Natural

Being natural requires paying attention to the inner nature of all things rather than their forms. When most people think of Qigong, they usually think of “doing forms” – sets of choreographed movements practiced repetitively. I do not believe that the sages of antiquity, who originated Qigong thousands of years ago, had to study any “forms.” Those masters created their systems of self-realization not by practicing some forms, but by discovering their own, authentic ways to experience their true nature. Since they were the original founders, they had no human teachers to emulate. They had to learn from Mother Nature as well as their inner nature. The founders of the oldest systems of self-realization had to rely on the knowledge gathered from their own personal experiences and some anecdotal stories about the miraculous powers of the ancient Shamans. They had to find empirically their own unique methods of being in the flow of *Qi* and experimenting with it. Such a genuine approach reared great Qigong masters, whose mastery was based on personal observation and exploration, rather than a routine repetition of forms. Playing with each other and with different animals was the testing ground for their skills and powers.

Alas, the tendency of the human mind to be focused on appearances instead of the inner essence eventually reduced many styles of Qigong, as well as Yoga, Kung Fu, Tai Chi, etc., to merely “doing forms.” You would be hard pressed to find anyone who managed to achieve anything profound by emulating their teachers’ external appearances. In order to experience the authentic mastery of being in the flow, you will need to start by shifting attention from forms to the true essence of everything, starting with your own inner nature, which is pure energy.

Comparing yourself to others is such an insidious tendency that many artists never transcend the stage of mimicking their role models.

Yet the entire idea of mastery implies being natural in your art and authentic in your artistic expression. Qi Dao teaches you to develop an attitude of authenticity from the very beginning while allowing yourself to be natural.

Since change is the most constant thing in the universe, **the flow is always different from one person to another and from one moment to another.** This means that to copy the master's movements or other actions is to grasp the form of the master's experience rather than the essence. Such imitation would not enable anyone to be in the flow, because being in the flow implies being in one's own flow, not in someone else's flow. Through the practice of Qi Dao you will learn to be truly authentic by perceiving the flow of life force within you and throughout the world around you. You will learn to surrender to the flow and allow it to guide you in whatever way is appropriate. It will allow you to manifest your dreams effortlessly and gracefully.

This is precisely what the Founder of Aikido, O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba, did when he created (perhaps, unbeknownst to himself) a superb style of Internal Martial Arts geared toward dealing with attacks by opponents stuck in their heads. Virtually all Aikido techniques operate from the energy center in the pelvis often referred to as Lower *Dan Tien*, or *Hara* in Japanese, which conducts the energy of the element of Water. In Aikido, *Atemi* (distracting counter-attack) is most often directed towards the head because it is where the attackers get their energy as long as they operate on the energy of the element of Earth. In fact, exhibiting aggression is an indication of being stuck in the Upper *Dan Tien* or another energy center. It often takes just a slight slap in the face to recycle this energy or even to turn the energy center off. Then it becomes so much easier to throw the opponent on the ground utilizing his or her own inertia and lack of balance.

An interesting example of being natural when challenged by someone familiar with the element of Water can be found in Yi Chuan, a

modern style of Internal Martial Arts founded by Wang Xiangzhai. Similarly to Tai Chi Chuan, the practice of Yi Chuan incorporates *Tui Shou* (often translated as “pushing hands”), a method of transcending opposition and establishing perception of your opponent as your adventure partner. In fact, the practice of *Tui Shou* is mostly about energy awareness rather than pushing. It is about developing acute sensitivity and ability to move with the flow of the opponent’s *Qi* (paradoxically, Wang Xiangzhai did not teach his students that *Qi* was used in Yi Chuan). Seemingly slow movements do carry a lot of power, though this power is not to be used against the opponent’s attack, but along his vector of force just slightly redirecting him to miss his aim. Following this principle, the one who pushes harder, as a rule, has less balance and must quickly choose whether to relax standing or on the ground.

Being Attentive

One of the multiple translations of Dao De Jing states:

**“To experience without intention is to sense the world;
To experience with intention is to anticipate the world.”**

Replacing intention with attention is a crucial prerequisite for being in the flow. When you are driven by your desires, you negate the present by striving to achieve what you think will be better than what is present. Every intention is based on expectations, projections and/or judgments. Since life never seems to meet expectations, intentions set you up for disappointment and suffering. Letting go of intentions and becoming attentive allows you to be more present.

Attention is the interface between what you know and what you do not know. You cannot learn without paying attention, since you cannot remember that which you pay no attention to. Development of attention always requires acceptance. Being attentive is only possible when you accept what is. You cannot be attentive to something you do not accept, simply because when you are not accepting it, you are busy resisting it or

running away from it, engaging in “fight or flight” instead of just being present. Such lack of acceptance creates the rigid dualism of right and wrong, judgment of actions and threats of adverse consequences. For instance, when you label something as “good,” you may create an expectation that it should be good not only for you but also for others. It may also imply an expectation of continuous goodness or badness despite any common sense. Many things that were deemed good yesterday may not be so good today and what resonates with one person may not resonate for others. Labeling something “bad” is just as misleading. Being accepting will help you transcend this dualism, allowing you to be more content and happy with your life.

Your practice of Qi Dao must begin by learning to shift from the mode of having attention to the mode of being attentive. This entails learning how to be fully accepting of what is; being present and awake to the reality that is unfolding right in front of you and within you moment by moment. It requires letting go of expectations, projections, and judgments of things or persons as good or bad. As you practice, you will learn to pay attention to the flow of *Qi* and to be in the flow.

Through the practice of Qi Dao you will learn to enjoy less doing and more being. This means that you do not always need to do something to manifest your dreams. For example, **people usually heal when they are ready to heal**. The process of re-discovering health and wellness depends more on being open and available to life, than on doing any deliberate healing practices. Awareness is particularly crucial in this process, since your health, relationships, spiritual and other issues can only get efficiently resolved when you are receptive to the lessons presented by those issues. Your readiness to embody vibrant health and wellbeing promotes a greater sense of being in the flow and empowers you to “awaken the healer within,” as my friend Dr. Roger Jahnke puts it. This requires that you develop an intimate awareness of the *somatic* (bodily) manifestations of your identity and beliefs.

“Yi Dao Qi Dao” is a common expression among Qigong practitioners that means: **“where awareness (or attention) goes, energy flows.”** It mostly applies to beginners though, while advanced practitioners and Qigong masters learn to follow the reversal principle – *Qi Dao Yi Dao* – **“Where energy flows, awareness follows.”** In other words, mastery of being in the flow entails transition from moving or projecting energy to going with the flow of *Qi* and being in the flow.

Many people in the modern society live in the mode of striving to have attention and thriving on the energy of attention they receive from others. You probably know people willing to do, say or wear whatever it takes to receive as much attention as possible. It certainly feels good to have attention. Since attention can direct energy, you get energized when you receive attention. Why is this pattern of behavior so pervasive? Some blame Western society that provides no role models of attentiveness. Actually, this pattern keeps repeating itself because people have a habit of forgetting that they have an abundant source of attention within them. If you think about it, you will realize that **nobody can give you as much attention as you can give yourself.** When you do so, you recycle a constant flow of energy within your energy system, which gives you an access to an abundance of *Qi* within you.

Being in the Flow

Imagine coming to a crossroads and feeling the energies of different directions you could choose. You may notice that your energy resonates with some directions better than others. Where there is resonance, your energy is attracted to flow in that direction. If you pay attention to such resonance, you can allow the flow of life to unfold naturally and spontaneously. But if you do not pay attention to this resonance, you may feel compelled to take a path based on your preconceived ideas or stereotypes. Rather than following your own ideas, you may be indoctrinated to conform to traditional beliefs or stereotypes handed down from past generations. Letting go of such programming is not simply an intellectual exercise but rather a process of discovering mental alertness, spiritual openness and authenticity. These qualities can empower you to reconnect with the flow of life and promote freedom of choice.

When you imagine yourself at a crossroad, you are in a position where you have the freedom to choose your direction. Personal freedom is necessary to be able to make a choice in any situation of this sort. Your freedom, however, may often be restricted by some beliefs distorting your perception. If you follow the beliefs that do not promote your perception of the flow, they become an impediment to being in the flow. Therefore, you may need to look into your belief system to check which beliefs resonate with your consciousness and which ones do not.

One of the central beliefs that promote being in the flow is the belief that **everything always happens exactly the way it needs to happen**. Perhaps, you had some experiences in your life that were dramatic or even traumatic at the time. Some time, maybe even years later, you might realize that you actually became wiser due to having had those difficult experiences under your belt. As it were, what did not kill you really did make you stronger. Moreover, the energy of the circumstances of your life

and its flow at that particular time had to match the energy of the event; otherwise, there would have been no way for the event to manifest. If you wish that things went differently for you in the past, consider that they actually would have been different only if your energy had been different. Indeed, your awareness and beliefs have everything to do with your energy moment by moment.

You can apply the same awareness to the present time as well as the future. Everything is and will be manifesting according to the resonance of energies involved. You may even observe the process of manifestation by paying attention to your energy, including your psychological state, beliefs and quality of attention, which you are ultimately free to choose. As you will discover through observation, nobody is doing anything to anyone, we manifest our own realities according to our current energy. Once you have learned to stop taking everything personally, thus dissolving your energetic chains, nothing will be able to prevent you from experiencing much greater degrees of freedom. At the same time, you will learn to question reality and give yourself an affirmation that life is but a dream. This will enable you to relate to everything you perceive as energy and learn to feel the flow of the energy everything is made of in the dream called life.

Struggling against the flow of a night-dream is a sure way to turn it into a nightmare. Similarly, if you struggle against the flow of your daily life, you single-handedly turn your life into a nightmare. Going against the flow of things only exhausts your energy, takes a toll on your health, and wastes your time. As soon as you realize that **life's challenges can be perceived as learning opportunities rather than problems**, you will become less tense or "stressed-out" and find yourself in the flow of life. Being in the flow will empower you to live your dreams.

Being Awake

Being awake is somewhat similar to the sense of awakening to the reality of dreaming when you become lucid in a night dream. Lucidity – being awake to the reality of your dreams during the process of dreaming – can teach you a great deal about life in general. Just think about it: most of your knowledge about life has to be based on your memories and everything you know about your dreams is based on memories, too. Since you use the same memory mechanism in knowing about both your dreams and your daily life, the distinction between dreaming and waking is essentially illusory. Indeed, being fully awake in daily life is very much like being lucid in a night dream.

Consider what everything in the world of dreaming is made of. However tangible, heavy, or solid things may appear in your dreams, all of them are made of nothing other than pure energy. What else could they be possibly made of? Similarly, as modern physicists echo the sages of all ages, everything in the world of “waking life” is essentially made of energy, too. Analogies between dreaming and daily worlds can continue *ad infinitum*.

Imagine an iceberg – a tiny part of it is visible above the surface of the water while its massive main part is hidden deep under water. In a similar fashion, everything you know about yourself, whatever you may refer to as your self, including your personal history, character, ideas and beliefs, is just a little tip of the iceberg. Whatever you do not know about yourself, as well as all your unmanifest potentials and dreams, constitutes the underwater part of the iceberg that supports and manifests the existence of the tip. The deeper part of the iceberg is connected underwater with all the other icebergs – everyone and everything in the whole world. They are not separate from you but rather interdependent and interconnected by the means of energy fields that everything is made of. We are all interconnected dream beings – the facets of the universal

Dao – like waves that are inseparable from the ocean. You may feel as though you are a separate entity, but to perceive a wave as an independent entity is certainly an illusion.

When having a lucid dream, you can recognize that everything and everyone in the world of dreaming are projections of your own consciousness. Every dream character represents a certain part of your consciousness that you may not be willing to identify with, so you dream it up as an entity separate from you. Being totally awake in the world of dreaming encourages you to accept every single aspect of your dreaming. Even when you dream up anyone or anything challenging you in your dreams, they enact certain disconnected parts of yourself that are trying to get your attention. They may feel disempowered due to lack of attention they receive; once you start being attentive to them, they will be able to manifest their dreams of healing and empowerment. **The more parts of yourself you help manifest their dreams, the more they will help you manifest yours.** You may discover that some aspects of yourself have been split off so that you can learn about them and fully reintegrate them into the wholeness of your being.

Since everything in both dreams and in daily life is made of the same universal energy, you can learn to be in the flow of life in the same fashion as you learn to be in the flow of energy in dreaming. With practice, you will learn to recognize that everything and everyone in your daily life are also projections of the dreaming mind. It is your Dream Being dreaming up the entire world as you dream up everything in your dreams. It is that deeper part of you that manifests not only your precious self but also the entire world as you know it. It is both the deeper part of you as well as the deeper part of each and every one of us. **If you think that you live in a stupid world full of stupid people, it is high time to wake up!** You cannot awaken anyone other than yourself, for everyone in your “waking life” is your dream character. Becoming awake will invite you to start relating to people and things around you in a very different way –

aware of the inherent oneness of everything in the holographic universe of your being, Dream Being that is.

Most interestingly, awakening is not a one shot kind of a deal, because even after the most profound awakenings, we all have a tendency to fall asleep over and over again. Although this process has its own ebb and flow to it, you can catch and ride a wave of awakening by consciously identifying with the creator of the dream, the dreamer of the dream drama you call your life. Becoming one with the dreamer will encourage you to accept full responsibility for your destiny as well as empower you to manifest a more creative and abundant life for yourself and all your dream characters.

I would summarize self-realization as realizing that **the source of your individual dreams is the same as the mystical source of the big dream called life.**

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