



CHARLENE M. PROCTOR, PhD

LET YOUR GODDESS GROW!

*7 Spiritual Lessons
on Female Power
and Positive Thinking*

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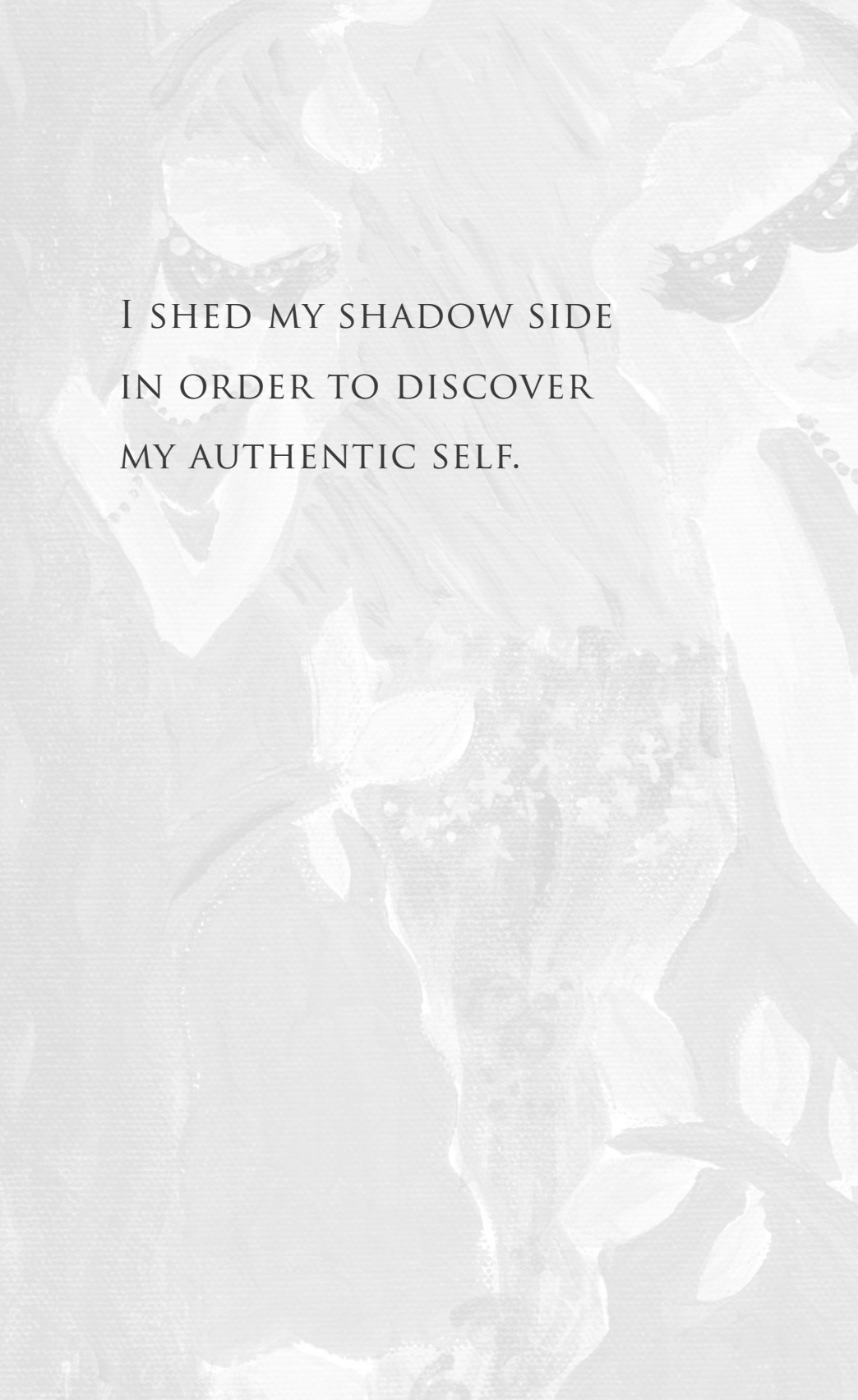
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*For all women in the universe
who desire to become who they truly are,
which is their divine self:
this book is for you.*



I SHED MY SHADOW SIDE
IN ORDER TO DISCOVER
MY AUTHENTIC SELF.

Your Authentic Self

Define Who You Are by
Knowing Your True Self

WHO ARE YOU?

Spirituality is my own unique definition. It's what I say, with whom, how, and where. I'm constantly adding to it as my life changes.

– Pauline, marketing manager

Throughout history, every culture has questioned the nature of the eternal self and the soul. We've kept a dialogue running from one generation to the next, handing off our best scientific observations, psychology, and religious convictions about who we are and how we fit into a vast plan, a plan that gives us assurance that we are more than what we see in the mirror. It doesn't matter if we reach consensus or not. As long as we are judgment-free, everyone's ideas have merit. It's designed to be an exploration process.

Religious diversity gives us an opportunity to reach across conceptual miles and discover common ground in our imagery and saviors, inviting us to open our hearts and embrace similar ideas. It's an ongoing process of self-definition enhanced by the flavor of whichever scholarly thought you subscribe to. To date, membership in an exclusive club is not required – no one has cornered the market on knowing the Divine.

Looking at where we've been and where we're going is all part of the program, courtesy of our wisdom wrinkles and the inevitable stumbling blocks encountered on the path through kids, careers, divorces, moving, and aging. Shouldn't life begin to make sense by the time we're forty and be the expansive experience full of self-love, self-worth, and self-approval we've heard about in yoga class? We're supposed to be self-aware by then, pretty much finished with self-improvement; we've read every self-help book on

the market and, with a bit of luck, should be just plain happy with ourselves.

My dear friend Sue, in a conversation we had about what men want from women they've been married to for twenty years or more, once said, "They just want more of what you've got!" "What's that?" I wondered, as I considered my expanding waistline after the meal we had vigorously attacked after a hike in the northern Michigan woods. "When you get older," she explained, "we simply become more of who we are." Our men want more of the *essence* of us? Insightful words when applied to the journey we take to find ourselves.

It's true: the older we get, the easier it is to settle into an unhindered "who we are" comfort zone, unafraid to express our opinions. We quit worrying over who buys our paintings or whether we show up wearing the proper attire, taking controversy on the chin like WWF wrestlers, knowledge and ego intact. But with wisdom and age comes the profound realization that the more knowledge we acquire, the more we think we know, until we discover we have just had a glimpse of what we *don't* know. On second thought, we realize we cannot possibly achieve a state of knowingness through knowledge itself. At that moment, we resign from structure and intellect and take up residence with the embodiment of intellect, which is none other than our *self*, within this whirlwind we call life, in all its mystery.

That realization makes us ready to dial our own number, 1-800-Spiritual Journey, and prepare for a direct connection to the Divine. But before we begin calling, we must first delve deeply inward and embrace ourselves in the process. We want to have a barrier-free, passionate exchange with our soul, in an effort to permanently define ourselves and the spirit that propels us to greatness.

If you take a stroll through the self-help and spiritual sections of any bookstore, you'll notice a rich spiritual dialogue that runs all over the map. But these works have enough in common that

they locate many of our observations on the same route, combining our own beliefs with a truth that is collected from life's experiences and insight. It appears everyone is still asking the same questions about spirituality. What is it? Spirituality is simply the demonstration of the Divine, the life-giving force, the All that constitutes you through every action and thought. It is your realized nature in the form of the highest ideas you can imagine, like trust, courage, wisdom, forgiveness, non-judgment, compassion, pure light, and love, conveyed through every pore of your skin.

Practicing spirituality in today's world will be subject to your own interpretation, as exemplified by many who have previously

I'm pretty solid in my faith, but as I get older, I'm more comfortable reading outside my religion. There are so many ways to see God.

Juanita, special events coordinator

walked this planet and left distinctive legacies. Yours will also have its own special character, resonating with those who have inspired you, and it may be different than the mainstream or even indefinable. There is no greater freedom than exploring and creating a personal truth that leads you to accept the Divine on your own terms.

Nothing can prevent you from being spiritual if you allow the true self to emanate, unobstructed by circumstance, and arrive at a place where you are willing to relinquish certainty.

How do you begin finding that place? Take the course everyone on earth has registered for: Spiritual 101. Substitute the poetic for analysis and listen to the beat of your own heart. Then observe the everyday. There's plenty of opportunity to be spiritual, as we've already got the important software downloaded. Installing a new version might get our drivers to recognize some important features, but it's not necessary for our system to work. We come as a complete package.

The true nature, or true self, has always been naked within us in its perfect design. It is our *spirit song*. We are all going to sing

differently. Thank goodness we have our own instruments, or life would be mighty boring, but the song operates *through* us.

It's interactive and tactile, and in the earth world, it comes from the heart as an individualized rendition. To express the true self, internalize the concept of who you are and allow it to become part of your fabric of being. Through emotions, we're going to live the idea and wear it well. It's a *living* idea.

A good massage and a
pedicure give me time to
get centered.

Kari, CEO

Not long ago, we hosted a graduation party for our two sons. As an afterthought in the party planning, I added a karaoke machine, thinking the kids would enjoy blasting away throughout the evening. To my surprise, the adults assumed complete control over the microphone, especially the mothers, who hilariously navigated through the Seventies, helped somewhat by generous quantities of wine. As I sat and laughed through my friends' attempts at funk, I also noticed the looks on their faces, as each one quit caring about what she sounded like. They sang with gusto and honesty, and overall, their expressions revealed far greater significance than Saturday-night courage: they showed abandoned joy made possible by the largely interpretive exercise of declaring *self*.

After we've stripped away the worry over whether we're going to sound like Celine Dion, self-expression propels us to self-actualization – even if it's in somebody's backyard. We can sing the same song with joy and feel irreplaceable. Who cares if we're a little off key? Jimmy Buffett and Sister Sledge never sounded better.

As I sat there, it occurred to me that most of us spend a lot of time figuring out how to show the world our own rendition of self. It's an innate desire and we just want a captive audience. We want our own music to be acutely *heard*. It's what makes us feel powerful. The problem is that because we're not appearing on the *Today Show*, we dismiss the possibility that we already make a difference.

For most of us, everyday simple acts are opportunities to demonstrate what already exists within: our true self, our song, the same eternal spirit that infiltrates the core of our being. We have permission to sing at work, within our families, in our communities. And in doing so, we discover primary true power, which is the Divine in us, our symphony. We then become *empowered*.

Empowerment is about self power achieved through knowing the true self, not about winning, joining a protest march, or converting an entire populace to your point of view. It's time to revisit our music and put the bras back on, or off, depending upon your cause. Life is about playing your spirit song over and over again in the venue of your own choice.

Why is knowing the source of our own power critical to maintaining a positive outlook on life? Because we are constantly encountering people who attempt to take our power away and diminish our light. Spiritual power is about demonstrating the empowered state *consciously* and artfully, with love, through your actions and with a deep connection to the present. It is a creative exercise, because you have a choice in how to become living art. You *can* bring spirit through yourself – that is how you express your individuality, painting a true self-portrait in the process. Over time, it will become a quilt of your own mythology, sewn in intricate symbolism and meaning, honoring your inner journey and God. When self-awareness of spirit occurs, the art then becomes you. You have realized your *true self* power. And that is why having a firm, unshakable centeredness in who you are will allow you to overcome any adversity placed in your path.

BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

When we identify with the elements of our spirituality, we can understand our purpose. We are composed of body, soul, and

spirit. Our physical body, or *physis*, is our flesh-and-blood physical body, or our outer self. It's what we see in the mirror, a vehicle for movement that houses the soul, or the psyche. *Psyche* is a Greek word meaning "soul." Think of your soul, or your inner self, as a unique thumbprint of divine expression. At the core of your identity is spirit. The ancients called it *pneuma/nous*, or spirit/intellect. Intellect does not refer to the mind or what emanates from the mind in the form of thought. It refers to the witness of experience – spirit witnessing life through us. The mystic philosopher Plotinus described the *nous* as the "knowing principle," or what we have inside us that "knows." It is the glue, our center, the subject of every experience. It is our "sense" of being, and our common essential identity.

The Gnostics referred to the *pneuma/nous* as consciousness. Consciousness is the *state* of who we are – knowing who we are while being in the body. It means we are capable of having an awareness of spirit that extends beyond our physical reality, hopefully, more often than not. So, by the Gnostic definition, we don't have a physical body that is sometimes conscious; we are consciousness that is sometimes aware of having a physical body. Our true identity, or our true self, is spirit, or consciousness, which witnesses what our soul experiences.

Knowing the true self means basking in the realization that we are capable of being one with consciousness. It is about coming into being, or *becoming*, within the dynamic experience we call life. We don't realize our true self, or experience spirit, by sitting on the couch and watching what the world is up to on network television. We bring spirit through us by experiencing life through the soul and the body. If you accept this translation, it means that your origin stems from being spirit, and that the gift of life, or your soul journey, is to allow it to live through you. You are inviting spirit, or your true self, to express its *self*. In that way, you become conscious of spirit through the choices you make.

You begin to enter a state of alignment with spirit. You are working toward *being*.

What is the single most difficult challenge in facing your adversity? It is to remember that every person is an individual spark of spirit, or the Divine. When you focus on being spirit more often, and see others the same way, and when your body and soul are aligned with spirit, you grow into a living expression of the Divine within you (the inward) and of the All (the outward), because you are constantly transforming the world in the process.

The new age balancing act is not juggling kids and a career. It is learning how to be in tune with spirit, which is the equilibrium we strike between being and becoming, while genuinely loving the true self. We must love our constitutional essence – fiercely love ourselves as we love the Divine, because they are one and the same. We’re always becoming, which is why the body and the soul are in a constant state of flux, even changing outfits over many lifetimes, but the spirit is constant. The spirit already knows how to be. Our job is to find the balance between being and becoming.

The soul and the body are not only what becomes conscious over time. We are also a totality, composed of consciousness, demonstrating spirit *through* a body and soul; hence the expression “As within, so without.” It means that what we create in our experiences reflects what is inside us, which is a dynamic composite of our intellect and our emotion. It occurs in our individual life, but it is also a sum total of everyone on earth. Our goal is to become a conscious expression of spirit during our soul’s unique learning agenda and get everyone on the same page of consciousness evolution. Hopefully, we can get being and becoming straight before we depart the planet.

What is the relationship between the body, the soul, and the spirit? Plotinus thought the psyche (soul) was not in the body, but the body was in the psyche. What he meant was that we steer the body, like a car, and the soul does the steering. Although conscious-

ness is our fuel and our reason for driving the car, we also participate in the drive. Our soul decides where it wants to go and the body follows along for the ride. The body has also been thought to be an expression of the soul, which is what many body-soul-spirit practitioners have successfully taught. Louise Hay taught millions of people how to diagnose disease and physical ailments by understanding the body's deeper expression, encouraging people to first heal dis-ease within. From this point of view, what is imbalanced in the body, as an outward expression of what is within, is not determined solely by physical diagnosis. It is about what is lacking, or imbalanced, in the soul, which seems to have its own rhythm. Therefore, our physical ailments are part of the curriculum because we bring certain limitations in our lives, or challenges that help to focus our self-development on certain life themes.

No matter what wisdom tradition you explore to widen your field of vision, the relationship of body, soul, and spirit may very well be debated into infinity. What's the most basic message for everyday living? By embracing who we are from within, and projecting the idea outward, we experience a flow of a certain kind of awareness. And here's the most liberating part: we are all one in consciousness, or a state of shared awareness. Although we are experiencing life *through* the body and soul, spirit remains constant. The consensus on the subject is overwhelming: spirit is one, it is the All, and we are certainly in the All. Although what is reflected in the mirror is different for everyone, we've got the same soul substance, permanently connected to spirit/consciousness.

WHAT'S CONSCIOUSNESS?

Consciousness is like light. If we take light into a completely dark room, its energy illuminates objects in a room. These objects

reflect the light, giving us the ability to see them, so we can view the furniture, windows, and rugs. We have a sensory experience; thoughts and feelings arise as a result of what we see. Did we like the colors? Was the space pleasing to us? Could we improve the room? But without light there is nothing to reflect. It's the objects that make the light exist. Consciousness is like the light because it is defined *by* the objects that reflect it.

Without light, what is left is nothingness, the unknown. There is nothing to define and no definer. There's no dimension and we're

The more I explore my own spiritual practice, the closer I feel to spirit. I need my own rules.

Roberta, doctoral student

not aware of any experience. The dark room represents the unconscious state, or an emptiness of the conscious state. Consciousness is *that* which is, and unconsciousness is *that* which is *not*. The unconscious does not bear witness to any experience. It has no name, it is indefinable,

ineffable. It is only the void. The unconscious state, or what is *not*, is called a mystery because it has no dimension. But the *absence* of consciousness (no light) and what we see and experience in the room (our bodies, our senses, the furniture) are both included in the totality of the universe. The unconscious cannot be described because it has no characteristics. In short, we are what is and what is not, which is the All.

In non-metaphoric terms, what illuminates consciousness, or gives it experience, so it can define itself? You do, through your individual stories, your triumphs and travels. We are an entire collection of souls, each of whom brings a unique angle to the whole process. Having a soul and a body helps define consciousness in ongoing and diverse patterns. It's the most basic soul work we all do, which is astonishing. Next time someone asks you what you do for a living, tell them you are helping to define consciousness by experiencing your point of view. Without you, the system can't work. You are a co-creator with spirit. Feel delight, and know you

are free no matter what your situation. Live with the potential for ultimate joy as you define consciousness and permit it to unfold in your life.

HOW WE BLOCK OUR MUSIC

I think we get into trouble when we narrow our lens and allow our spirituality to become a dogmatic concern, overcomplicated by rules. Our spiritual status, and consequently the positive image of our selves, has unfortunately been skewered by fear: of the opposite gender, sin, color, alternative philosophies, death, the unknown, different cultures, sex, making mistakes, those who we imagine have power over us. Fear enables us to hold our selves back. It negates the spirit within us, which we *do* have choice in expressing.

Lately our society, in the spirit of mutual respect, free speech, and religious tolerance, has adopted a “hands-off” posture toward spirituality. In order to work together and attend school, we’ve decided we can’t talk about spirit, our source, our reason for being here, or our “beingness” because we can’t agree on the interpretation. Fair enough – we can’t all have the same image of the Divine. How man and woman came to be is a touchy subject. Thus we’ve detached and formed an illusion of separateness that has stripped away all identities of who we are at a primary spiritual level.

We’re told in grade school that all men (note to founding parents – add “and women”) are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator. We acknowledge that we have a spirit somewhere in our purview, but it’s been compartmentalized. We think we can be happy without knowing the true self, and nothing could be further from the truth we hold self-evident: we have been *gifted* by our creator. Our reason for being here is to *be* – we are part of a universal whole that is evident through our individual, innate gifts. We

can't feel good (God) and achieve our dreams without the entire ensemble, all the way down to the foundation garments.

For the package to work, and so far it does, the All or the source – spirit, God, consciousness, unconsciousness – must always change because what we are thinking and feeling is always changing. Do not forget: everyone creates together in a participative endeavor. That is why you are so important. You are constantly contributing to an enormous composite of the totality of the universe! That alone is a powerful feeling: your presence, within a dynamic system of organized complexity, helps to define All that is (and is not, if you really want a broad outlook). You belong. You contribute. Your valuable journey is your input to a divine database. You have a say in deciding how and what we all become through your conscious awareness.

LOSING YOUR MASK AND DISCOVERING YOUR SELF

The All, the self, and the unconscious are certainly not new ideas, especially in the field of spiritual psychology. Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, thought the deepest part of the mind extended far beyond the parameters of an individual. He called it the “collective unconscious” and viewed it as a possession of all humanity, readily accessible through archetypes that shape the development of our lives by showing us a universal pattern of human behavior we adopt in life. Identifying with a particular archetype – for example, a mythological character such as Odysseus, the seeker, or Artemis, the independent and competitive goddess – can help us make sense of our own beliefs or actions. When we embody those qualities, like building from a construction blueprint, we identify with who we are. We make sense of our pattern and “become” the house.

Jung envisioned the self as the central organizing archetype in the human psyche, the center of the unconscious. As we engage in an effort to define self (the process of individuation), we bring together all the qualities we develop as individuals, both conscious and unconscious. The first part of the process involves the symbiosis of the healthy persona, or mask, that we adopt in the first half of life, in order to cope with the demands of society, with the discovery of comprehensive meaning and wholeness in the second half of life. Essentially, we complement our strengths with their forgotten opposites, as we reconcile our persona, or outside presentation, and tell the ego to take a back seat in organizing what we show the world.

Middle-agers take note: before you knock yourself unconscious and tell your ego to lighten up, realize that coming to full circle in the second part of life mirrors your innate desire to explore the relationship between the inner and outer worlds. We want to reconcile what we've done with our *selves*. It takes us half our life to remember what we have forgotten, because we are coping with the everyday. And after that, we realize that self-discovery is not the only goal. It only prepares us for yet another phase: the need to demonstrate who we are.

In order to discover your authentic self in a process to become "whole," there is no choice but to cast off Jung's mask and take a peek at your shadow side. What has laid stagnant for too long; which ideas no longer serve you about who you are? Do you feel that your inner world defines your outer world? All we see in the outer world is an expression of our inner selves. You are a Leonardo da Vinci of the creative force of All that exists, and you honor it by being your true *self*. In an abstract sense, it is an awakening to your own divinity. According to Shakespeare, we can choose to be

In the old days, I cared so much about my clothes, the house, where I traveled. Now it's beginning not to matter because I'm thinking about inner peace more often.

Ann, age fifty, business owner and mother

or not to be every day, by opening our rational minds to the possibility that we *are* divine from the minute we come on the scene – we’re just creating additional content. Everyone has the capability of being who they are. Be all you can be, which is nothing less than your true self.

If you make a direct call to the Divine, you will know you are both self and source. You are in the same area code. The only difference between you and the totality of the Divine is that you do not have perfect awareness of All that is, a perfect memory of everything that has transpired since the beginning, and perfect preservation of love. You haven’t given perfect guidance to everyone involved. Sure, it’s something we can work toward, but even so, at this moment in time, the whole and the part are present within each other – we’re just the center of choice, helping to define the All. Be delighted at knowing you are so important. Let that realization resonate within you, let it rip, let it go, let it flow like a river, let it *be*. It is the first, surest, and most efficient beginning to find your self. Remember, the path to self begins inside. Look in a mirror and love your self. You are absolutely divine.

THE AUTHENTIC SELF VERSUS THE SOCIALY CONSTRUCTED SELF

There is a big difference between the authentic self and the socially constructed self, or the personality. Defining our selves by what we see does help to form our personality and is a consequence of living in a physical world. Our self-opinion, self-image, and self-confidence are partially shaped by other people. We’ve all taken personality tests, or analyzed our personalities, and selected friends on the basis of their personalities. From the minute we come home from the hospital, our personalities begin to be defined – by our environment, by others of influence, or by our own hand.

However, the personality is not your true self; it is a role we adopt along the way in order to cope. It tends to be fragile and thrives on approval, sometimes seeking to be sustained by power. If we choose to identify our entire being with an outer presentation, we make our biggest mistake. The true source of our power is *not* the ego or the personality, it is our authentic self, our true self, or spirit. When we reach a point in life where we look to spirit or consciousness as our foundation, we know we are not what we see – we are enlightened only when we know we are pure spirit underneath.

That's why dictators and other misguided leaders get themselves into so much trouble; they are operating from the perimeter and not from the true self. They think the source of their power will be enhanced by increasing their own ideas of self-importance, placing their false selves on a pedestal; consequently, they put their divine power in the back row. They are “full of themselves” but not of their expanded selves. They want others to stroke their individual talent or position of power but have forgotten they are simply a frequency that the Divine operates on. They are out of tune, their intentions are wrong, and essentially, by wanting constant reinforcement and making bad choices, they are doing exactly the opposite of what they desire – and that is to enhance their power. They are not operating from the higher self. Power used to glorify the false self always crumbles in the end.

Remember that, when you encounter egotistical people in your own life. Their act of self-love is directed to their ego, and they may think their accoutrements enhance their power. They are not empowered by their true self. True power comes from allowing the Divine to work through you, which is the real meaning of being “self-centered” or “self-aware,” which is good. That is what we appreciate and admire in others, and passionately love. Self recognizes self at an unconscious level, like perfect substance reflected in a mirror. When powerful people are focused only on their outer

layers, we usually react by being either hypnotized or completely repelled.

Never claim your physical identity as your true self. You are not the body, and even though you have a soul that may help cart you around, you must reach *beyond* your individual soul to realize your true being. Stay focused on consciousness as your essential nature: it is the reason for being, the reason for the reason, the step in your groove. You will be enlightened by knowing who you are: a state of complete light and love, which is spirit.

TWO FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE DIVINE AND YOU

In research, assumptions provide a foundation, or infrastructure, for our conceptual models. As there are many paths to defining a truth, we're not all going to have the same fundamental assumptions underlying our ideas, especially those that help you make the leap in knowing you are divine. In a discussion about spirit, you might rely upon the stories, myths, or teachings offered by many enlightened people in addition to some of your own insight gathered from the experience of living. Here are two common assumptions that help us make sense of who we are.

The Divine is All (everything) and we are part of All that is; therefore, we are never separate from the Divine.

This is the tallest hurdle for most people to overcome: why do we have difficulty seeing ourselves as divine beings? We are part of the Divine and already know what *being* is about. The Divine is All. That means everything that was, is, and is about to be. If the Divine is eternal, that means timeless and without intermission, including the previews as well as the sequel. The Divine cannot be something separate from us,

higher or lower; it infiltrates every aspect of our being, at all times.

For example, if I create a fish, I can say that the fish is an entirely separate product of my thinking, of my “thought skill” as a fish designer. I have produced something of value, it works, it looks great, and I send it off in the ocean on its path to whatever a fish might need to experience. But I, as the fish designer, am not separate from the fish. The fish holds my image of what it is: it has the *idea* of creation, the intellectual blueprint, the *knowing* of what was present in my mind as I created it. Therefore, I am part of the fish, and because it will make other fish and perpetuate itself, evolve, or sustain someone or something, I will *always* be connected to the fish, in the past, present, and future.

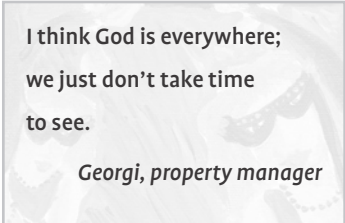
I also gave the fish energy to power itself so it can live on its own. I did not create the energy from outside of myself, just pulling it out of thin air. If I am All that is, then the energy came from within me, as some aspect of my being. Therefore, if I give the fish energy to power itself, I am also present within it, because it is part of All that is, which is me.

This first fundamental assumption illustrates that we are more like fish than we think. Put yourself in the position of the Divine for a moment. The Divine is all-encompassing and part of All that exists at any point in time. At this very moment, *you* are part of All that is. Therefore, you are never separate from the Divine.

There is elegance in unity, a simplicity that transcends all religions, races, genders, sciences, and philosophies. If this fundamental assumption underlies your life, you will begin to live knowing it is impossible for you to be anything other than as one with everyone else. You are permanently joined at the hip not only with the Divine but with every person on the planet, past, present, and future. At the fundamental level, there is no separateness.

Because we are part of the Divine, we are the same substance. That means we're divine too. Science gets us thinking about ourselves in a universal perspective, surprisingly, by picking apart our essence through reductionism. What science has uncovered through holograms and their implications for the ideas of part and whole lend further insight as to who we are.

A three-dimensional hologram is created by bouncing a laser beam of light off an object, then bouncing another laser beam off the reflected light of the first. The interference pattern – the



I think God is everywhere;
we just don't take time
to see.

Georgi, property manager

area where the two beams come together – is captured on film. When the film is developed, and illuminated by another laser beam, a three-dimensional image of the original object appears. What's remarkable is that if a hologram of a rose is cut in half and then illuminated

by a laser beam, each half will still be found to contain the entire image of the rose. If we keep dividing that rose, over and over again, each film would contain an intact, although smaller, version of the rose. Every part of a hologram contains all the information possessed by the whole, implying that the idea of separateness is an illusion.

It is entirely possible that our souls work the same way. This is not proven yet, but it is certainly possible if we accept what the hologram suggests. There is a deeper level of reality, an underlying unity that explains our physical reality, like the rose. Consult the research on the matter and you'll find it is not such a stretch to rethink our nature. We're like subatomic particles: the distance between them is only an illusion, and our separateness is also illusory because we see only a portion of reality. In the big picture, at the level of consciousness, all is infinitely interconnected. Location doesn't matter, because we are projections of a much deeper order, subject only to our own perceptions of limitation. In a

holographic universe, we are in charge of altering our perceptions of reality, without space or time.

It's helpful to look at such phenomena regularly, when searching for understanding of who we are. We've been told that the source is divine. But we've already established that the Divine is all and we are part of the Divine. So does that make us all the same? At an abstract level, why would we be different? By definition, "divine" means of, relating to, or proceeding directly from God. Many wisdom traditions have stressed that we are far less than God; God is perfect, and it appears we are not God because we are certainly not perfect, as our numerous faults have shown over the centuries. But why do we think we aren't perfect in what we are *designed* to be? Or what we are designed to become?

Our purpose seems perfectly logical. If we are engaged in a learning journey for our soul, to perfect the soul, then we are entitled to make a few errors, even though we may have seen a few teachers who have been able to pass the course without doing any homework. It doesn't mean we are *not* divine, not God substance. All is within everything else, as science would have it, and we are the rose replicated. Our spirit contains all the information possessed by the whole. We are, in fact, a smaller whole of the totality of spirit. Our self is God, our lives are God, our experiences are part of All that is, was, and ever will be; therefore, we are operating within, in all dimensions, as God, or the Divine.

If we rely upon the universe for inspiration, we already know that subatomic particles, such as electrons, are able to communicate instantly regardless of the distance separating them. Why not take comfort from science and rethink the distance between us and our spirit?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE DIVINE?

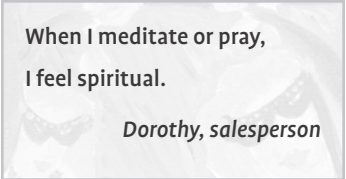
Let's forget about woman power, man power, teen power, military power, and flower power for a moment. We would do well to express divine power more often, by grasping the meaning of the higher self, or the "divine I." Those who explore the Gnostic gospels find lessons that explain why everyone has the power to impart *gnosis*, direct experiential knowledge of God, by realizing that we are more than part of the whole. The Gnostic gospels were among a collection of documents found at Nag Hammadi, an ancient city in upper Egypt. They predate the Bible. Among them is the Gospel of Truth, written by Valentinus, an Alexandrian Gnostic poet in the second century. Valentinus taught that when the human self and the "divine I" are interconnected, they achieve perfection and eternity, two fairly powerful ideas.

The Gnostics were mystic and creative thinkers. They had no knowledge of holograms, but they believed that each person has a mortal lower self called the *eidolon* and an immortal higher self, the *daemon*, considered to be each person's spiritual identity. The *eidolon* is the physical body, the embodied self, and the ego/personality. The *daemon* is the true self, the spirit – a portion of the Divine given to each individual, representing *part of the whole*, or a person's spiritual connection to God.

The Gnostics taught that creation goes beyond the physical and the duality of the higher/lower self, the two complementary aspects of our being. They believed in one spirit shared by everyone: a "universal self" which inhabits everyone. Since each soul is part of this "God-soul," when we embrace our selves, or understand our true identity, we know we are also made of divine substance. They lessened the distance between their students and God through the realization that the same consciousness inhabits everyone. And by embracing that consciousness within, they

discovered we are one with God and we *are* God. This provides the opportunity to experience a state of enlightenment.

In Western theology, God has been tied up with the dualistic categories of transcendence and immanence. Traditionally, the Divine has been viewed as dominant over nature and human nature, and ascribed *transcendent* qualities, meaning “surpassing” or “supreme.” If we can be part of the Divine only by transcending, the goal seems unattainable, at least in this earthly realm, a seedbed of sin where we must deny our human impulses to feel holier, or closer to God. In fact, the concept of rising to meet divinity is about raising our spiritual awareness to meet God in any situation. We are meant to be united with the Divine, because it is our natural state, but unfortunately the idea has been spiked with all sorts of negative messages about aspects of our bodies and denying our sexuality. You still have to take your body and soul along to raise your spiritual awareness, because you are currently in a body, and indeed you have embarked on a physical chapter of your soul journey. Love your body as a sacred vessel, and your soul for the opportunity it gives you to learn while you are raising your spiritual awareness.



When I meditate or pray,
I feel spiritual.

Dorothy, salesperson

Being divine also reflects *immanent* characteristics, because the Divine permeates all we see, touch, and feel, and we certainly are part of what we observe. “Immanent” means “existing within.” It means that God *does* exist within you, within human nature, and in nature itself, which sustains your body and provides you with all the enriching earth experiences that allow you to learn. If spirit permeates everything, then that would mean “as above, so below.” It’s a bit like having a foothold in two very big, dynamic ideas, both transcendent and immanent. The Divine is everywhere, not just in some unattainable galaxy above or beyond your grasp. But where do we find our selves within this seemingly dual formula?

In Vedantic philosophy, a branch of Hindu mysticism, we discover the Mandukya Upanishads, considered to be the work of Indian sages who lived between 3,000 and 2,500 years ago. They are among the oldest collections of spiritual messages on record, referring to the self as a unitary consciousness. Undifferentiated unity is the self: a single mind, void of all contents, a place where the individual self merges with the universal self, or Brahman. It is a world soul, beyond duality or multiplicity, where the soul realizes its own identity with the Divine. “All this is Brahman; this self is Brahman” means that the self is God.

Found in the Bhagavad Gita, a gospel of Hinduism, is the concept that the Atman, the self, dwells in all beings, but the creative energy of Brahman is that which causes all existences to come into being. In the Upanishads, the concept “Brahman is all and the Atman is Brahman” means that anyone who realizes or becomes *conscious* of the Atman, or the higher self, reaches Brahman, which is the supreme spirit. By having such awareness, we know we are derived from a single source. This idea reminds us that as long as we are conscious of our individual self, we don’t have to become the universal self. We always were that self. And in that moment of illumination, we realize our truth once again: that we meet our selves neither on the way up nor on the way down, we simply dissolve into being.

In Hinduism, as in many world religions, the unitive nature of the divine ground, which I interpret as the abstract space where we congregate with God, is achieved through an act of choice. We have the potential, the *choice* to become what we already are. We can be unified with the Divine not in some revelation in an afterlife, but here and *now*. We can demonstrate our divine substance here on earth, in the form of our work, through our relationships, and by loving one another.

So by identifying with God, as the Divine, we discover who we are in our soul studies. Are you ready for your exam question?

Q: Who are we?

A: We are one, we are a unitive, divine substance. Our authentic self is our true self, which is divine.

For 100 points extra credit, if you answer in five sentences or less:

Q: Where do we find the true self?

A: It exists inside of us. We are inherently divine substance by having an awareness of that substance. We are everywhere. We are the total sum of the entire life force, of all energy in existence. And there is no separation at the fundamental level.

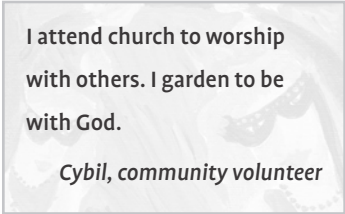
TO BE OR NOT TO BE

To be conscious, you must focus on the permanent presence of what constitutes you, the source, who is witnessing your experience. Stop focusing on *what* you experience. When you allow the presence within you to be your witness, you will allow consciousness to flow. You will become conscious of consciousness. It is natural, effortless, and spontaneous to exist in a state of consciousness as long as we know we are witnessing the soul/psyche who appears to be a person. The Gnostics taught that even though we are active participants in the world, we are also a witness to that experience through conscious awareness.

If we radiate from inside as a stream of consciousness, our life experiences bear witness to our soul. At first glance, we appear to one another as separate individuals. Remember, life itself is not the illusion – that is the mistake you will make in thinking that all we've got to do is transcend to a higher realm. Don't forget about the work that needs to be done here and now. The illusion we are born into is that of *separateness*, because we all look different, have different bodies, and have unique personalities. If we go deeper

within, beyond the light, back into darkness and even before *appearing*, we would simply “be.” We’d find ourselves simply in a state of beingness.

When we choose to identify with a state of beingness, we are choosing to identify with the whole concept of All that is and is not – even what is before consciousness, or without it. When we meditate, pray, or get quiet, and focus our attention within, we can strip away all identities and labels of who we think we are and the roles we play. We can shed images of God that make us feel



I attend church to worship
with others. I garden to be
with God.

Cybil, community volunteer

less than meaningful, images to which we might have assigned far less than ideal human qualities. We leave everything behind and enter an abstract space that everyone exists in, and doesn’t exist in, at the same time. We simply know that *we are* – a very good place to be. Where, or

what else, could we be? We can’t get away from our selves. You’ll find “being” on a regular basis allows you to identify with everyone. It is a daily equalizer, helping keep your perspective on living a balanced life because, at a fundamental level, you are always the same as the next person. We’re all in it together.

The self articulates by giving us the power to co-create reality. Calling ourselves co-creators implies that we are God. It’s an outlook than means viewing the world, or your circumstances, as something that can be changed to what you desire. It requires a shift from seeing yourself as separate from spirit – the creative force that is both thought and the power to animate, to manifest thought into form – to *identifying* with that force. It’s a more integrated view of who you are and what you can do; it moves you, philosophically, from one who is animated, who is simply moved around by circumstance, into the one who does the animating.

This fundamental change of outlook is the basis of all empowered thinking. It explains why we’re responsible for what we see in

the world. This idea has been a tough sell over the centuries, especially when we observe people getting the short end of the stick, through poverty, illness, catastrophe, or discrimination. It's easier to come up with all sorts of explanations about the state of the world that do not place any responsibility on what we've done. But the world won't change unless we put forth the effort. In every action of our lives, we are co-creating with a shared mind, or one God. It means we *can* speak the same language of spirit by processing the world through our thoughts, emotions, and actions. Every person on earth is on a soul journey to experience life for their own self-development. We manifest, or demonstrate, what we hold in our thoughts; otherwise, the journey makes no sense. We can create poverty and discrimination or choose to do away with them. It's our choice – and not as abstract as it sounds.

Every day and always, you exist and are as important as everyone else. Not easy, when you look at what's on your plate. But if we get in the habit of resetting our thinking while engaged in living life, and become consciousness expressing itself through a series of experiences, we become part of what we are choosing to do and also part of our beingness. We are *achad*, a united one, one power, one presence. And that means we are connected to one another, and to our source, always. There is no other way to be.

USING AFFIRMATIONS TO FIND YOU

Remembering who we are eliminates obstacles to making our own spiritual composition shine in the world, for the benefit of others. Negative circumstances or family relationships often create a barrier between you and your image of your self. Your family was probably not perfect for a reason but, at a soul level, you chose them as a learning environment. They also unconsciously gave you a few roadblocks to make it *necessary* for you to develop into your

higher self. If you had it tough, accept it, and quit bashing your head against the wall, wondering why you wound up in a family of aliens. Each day, move forward to increase your energy level and stop blaming others, society, and the world. You'll pick up speed knowing you have selected more difficult circumstances than others in order to evolve more fully, and rapidly, into your self.

Why does knowing who you are make it possible to take ownership of your life? Because you are able to simplify, accept, surrender, and practice compassion and forgiveness more easily. As you think, so shall you be. Clear the spigot of what has held you back in the past; not a single reason exists that will prevent your true self from flowing. Turn on the faucet and affirm that you are a beautiful illustration of perfect light.

Don't ever be afraid to take a look in the mirror. Initially, you may create a definition of you that is based on illusion. You are not your clothes, you are not your wrinkles, and you are certainly not the body. You are not where you live, how much formal education you have, how much money you make, or who you know. Your worth is not determined by possessions or by holding a position of organizational authority. You can't demonstrate a life-giving force in every action and thought if you identify yourself solely by what you see. Finding self is about allowing your essence to express itself at an intuitive level, knowing what you like to do, what you are good at doing, and cultivating those inherent qualities with love. Know where your true power resides and regularly affirm that you are rising above your circumstances.

Many people I meet seem to resonate with a core within them, no matter their situation. They know the difference between doing what they need to do to cope and doing what they want to do to resonate with their own essence. Their essence is a combination of knowing the true source of their own power, and letting that which is within operate as a communications network. They are, both consciously and unconsciously, broadcasting the power

within and giving it their own special rendition wherever life has plunked them. We would all do better in life if we held on to this simple image of co-creation of the life force we all share.

So love God, love the Divine, love your consciousness, and love your authentic self. *That is why we affirm:* I am conscious of who I am. I am my true self, I am loved and beloved, and I am in love with my self. I am a marvelous spark of the Divine and celebrate my remarkable learning journey. I am timeless, living without boundary, and full of my beautiful, unique, and divine self.

CONSCIOUSLY CREATE YOUR DAY

Your life is a demonstration of spirit. You are filled with the Divine. To continue to correct old programming that may hold you back from this knowledge, here are a few affirmations to help you reinforce the Divine within.

DON'T FEEL SPECIAL

I am an important and unique spark of the Divine, just like everyone on the planet! There is but one dimension of love and we all channel from the same source. There is but one universal order, even though we may speak to that voice in different languages. I am challenged to step outside my intellectual boundaries and facilitate a loving acceptance for people in my life, no matter how they label their source. I am a universal human filled with the presence of the Divine wherever I go.

AGING

Each stage in my life is wonderful. My wisdom and experience acquired from life make me a person who has a lot to offer the world. Every moment I continue to engage in the world is valuable to others. I no longer need disease or illness to secure a place

in the world. I am shining, with all my wisdom, in my security. I feel safe knowing no one can take my place.

BAD SELF-IMAGE

When I look in the mirror, I see a loving person. My capacity to love knows no boundaries. I accept myself and love what I see in the mirror. There are no imperfections because I am perfectly constructed. I am an example of a miracle and a spiritual work in progress.

UNRECOGNIZED TALENTS

I am a unique and beloved individual who has already changed the world by being present. I am filled with joy knowing I have offered the world my gifts. I shine no matter what my family says; my talents reach far outside of this realm. I now focus on what my talents can do for the greater good. I love what I can do!

For more affirmations, see my companion book, *The Women's Book of Empowerment: 323 Affirmations That Change Everyday Problems into Moments of Potential* (The Goddess Network Press, 2005). Available through any major online book retailer or at www.thegoddessnetwork.net.

Taking Spiritual Inventory:

What Constitutes Your Authentic Self?

Analyze

Have you allowed people, jobs, relationships, or circumstances in your life to create a definition of who you are? List your sources of influence, with the most powerful at the top of the list. Ask yourself:

- ✧ Has this situation led me to discovering more of who I am?
- ✧ Has this person supported me in bringing out my best?
- ✧ What has prevented me from expressing my talents? My opinions?
- ✧ What is the single most important thing I do that makes me feel I am expressing my true self? Have I spent enough time cultivating my gift to the world? How often do I spend time in my self-expression?
- ✧ In my occupation, am I able to allow my true self to operate through me? If so, how?
- ✧ As I consider the patterns I have created in my life, what do I think my soul is here to learn? Do these patterns occur repeatedly? What could they mean?
- ✧ What events in my life have signaled the need to look deeper within to find meaning?

Affirm

Affirm the existence of your true self by centering your awareness and feeling the source of spiritual power. Ask whether you have allowed anyone, or any circumstance, to take away your power to create the life you want. Do old hurts keep manifesting in your relationships? Affirm to release those feelings and affirm that you are empowered with divine love.

LOVING MY TRUE SELF

Because I love my self, I release old hurts forever, making it easy for me to demonstrate the Divine in my every action and thought. I play an important part in the world's work, which helps to evolve my soul. I nourish my self when I am in a state of self-love.

SELF HONOR

My soul magnifies the Divine through experience. I am awakening to my own sense of purpose and to my higher self. I am connected to my source through my experiences. I honor my soul and the All by working to expand the idea that spirit is in everything I do.

Now write your own affirmation that allows you to feel empowered by spirit.

Walk the Talk

Frustration with life is sometimes a result of expecting too much after we fill our minds with doing instead of being. What will you do this week to begin an expanded state of awareness and surrender to your soul journey? List three areas where you can permit life to happen through you, without fighting upstream.

Share the Spirit

What changes can you make in your life during the next year that will help you express your true self? List those changes, after shar-

ing your beliefs about your concept of spirit at work in your life. Have those beliefs facilitated your self-expression, or inhibited you? Have you been able to grow with those beliefs intact? Discuss with your group the idea of being one with All that exists. If you accept that idea, how has it changed your life so far? How could it change your life now? If you can't accept the idea, talk about why. Share any experiences in your life that may have brought you to that conclusion.

Or try with your group a meditation called "Spiritual Superhighway." Having a better understanding of our source, or our true self, is often accomplished through meditation: take a moment to connect with your center of wisdom and open your mind to the possibility that we are far more than just physical bodies. Open your mind to becoming one with a higher power with this exercise. You can have someone guide you while in a group by reading out loud the following guided meditation. Visualize the scenario below.

Sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Imagine you are breathing in a beautiful shade of pink. With every breath you take, the pink stays in your body and fills every part of you, from your fingertips to your toes. When you feel full of the beautiful color, imagine you are on a spiritual superhighway. You are traveling on a bright light path that reaches across the fabric of time and the universe. You are on the path to meet the Divine. As you reach the halfway point, you are embraced and lovingly thanked by God for all you do. Stay in this embrace until you feel completely loved and appreciated for all you are experiencing on earth. Visualize the Divine permeating your entire being, as you become a fusion of your self and the Divine. As you begin to return to the earth plane with the Divine, know that you can travel on this spiritual superhighway at any time you feel lonely. Know that you are loved. Take that feeling with you throughout this day, every day, and always.

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While I was writing this book, my joy and gratitude have expanded because of:

My friends, who remind me that I am a beautiful, unique soul

My family, who believed in The Goddess Network from the beginning

All those in our worldwide electronic community at www.thegoddessnetwork.net, who share a part of their soul with me daily

My office staff and vendors, who provide positive energy in serving the greater ideas that bind us together

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And especially Mother God, who continues to provide infinite wisdom about loving my authentic self.

I thank you with all my heart for bringing more spirit into my workplace, my home, and every corner of my life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlene M. Proctor holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Michigan and provides guidance through everyday complexity with female imagery and positive thinking. She is the founder of The Goddess Network, Inc., an organization for women who want to discover the feminine principle within. Her lectures, workshops, and electronic programs reach a worldwide audience daily. Although Charlene has written numerous papers on the subject of simulation, organizational learning, and recycling technologies, her material for a wider audience gives her the greatest pleasure. *Let Your Goddess Grow! 7 Spiritual Lessons on Female Power and Positive Thinking* and *The Women's Book of Empowerment: 323 Affirmations That Change Everyday Problems into Moments of Potential* are her two current works. She lives with her husband and two teenage boys in the Detroit metropolitan area.

About the Goddess Network Press

The Goddess Network Press publishes books on the Goddess, spirituality, personal growth, women's issues, simulation and learning environments, and positive thinking. We hope to make a difference in the lives of those who write books, as well as for our readers. Of course, we are in love with the Goddess and see our publishing company helping to spread divine feminine energy around the globe.

We believe everything on earth is a reflection of what is inside our heads. Our challenge in life is to allow our divine nature to work with ideas that make sense. A balanced world will be created by individuals who understand and embrace their true self.

As a member of the business community, The Goddess Network, Inc. is a venue for both live and electronic gatherings for anyone interested in expanding their intellectual and spiritual boundaries, especially women who want to nurture their spirit. We promote programs that foster deeper meaning and purpose in an individual's life.

Thanks for being our reader. We value your input and suggestions on this book and on others you would like to see published. Why not contact us? We are only an e-mail away.

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Inspire yourself and others through positive thinking by reading the affirmations posted on www.thegoddessnetwork.net under “The Women’s Book of Empowerment.” Mail them to your family and friends, even yourself, when you need encouragement. The Goddess Network is dedicated to helping women manage their multiple lives through greater self-awareness. Our job is to empower *you*. Join one of our electronic groups and send a positive thought to someone, or discuss the self-help exercises in one of our forums. Take us to Grandma’s house electronically with your laptop and wireless card – there’s no reason to be without inspiration and support! If you have a story to share, or an affirmation that will help other women get through their day, please register and leave your suggestion in our company mailbox at tgn@thegoddessnetwork.net. In this way, we can become something better together by supporting one another on our spiritual journeys.

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Divine feminine
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CHARLENE M. PROCTOR PHD

Dr. Proctor is an author and founder of The Goddess Network, whose research ranges from learning organizations and the environment, to corporate spirituality. She has a series of new books available in SPRING of 2005, "Let Your Goddess Grow" - 7 Spiritual Lessons on Female Power and Positive Thinking, "The Women's Book of Empowerment" - 323 Affirmations That Change Everyday Problems Into Moments of Potential.

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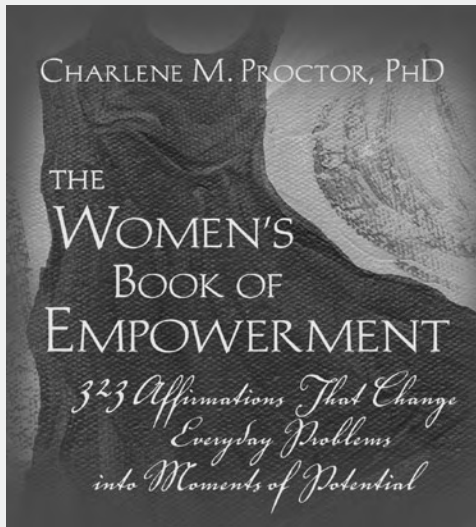
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Charlene M. Proctor, PhD, the author of *Let Your Goddess Grow!* and *The Women's Book of Empowerment*, helps lead people to a more positive mind and heart set. Her powerful suggestions circulate worldwide through her website, newsletters, articles, and books. She believes in your potential to transform the world through higher levels of conscious awareness.



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