

# Self-Empowerment

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The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

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## CLEAN, ERASE, FORGIVE

The water was going down so slowly in the bathroom sink. I removed the stopper and pulled out matted hair and black gooey gunk. Clean, clean, clean. Gotta keep cleaning to allow the free flow of water to run its course down the drain. Other parts of the house need regular cleaning, too. So does my life!

Several spiritual systems address the need to clear our minds of painful memories, judgment, fear, guilt and resentment. The process may be called forgiveness, releasing, letting go, non-resistance, acceptance of what is, confession/reconciliation, clearing or cleaning. Whatever you call it and however you practice it, it is freeing and healing.

But what is it we are being freed from?

### Plato's Cave

Are you familiar with the allegory of Plato's Cave? Roughly, it is a description of men imprisoned in a cave, chained so tightly that they cannot even turn around. All they can see is the wall in front of them. The shadows that they see on that wall are all they have ever seen, so they think that is reality. But one of the prisoners manages to break free and see the light at the mouth of the cave. It's hard for him to adjust to the light, but eventually he sees the people whose shadows have been cast on the cave wall. The freed prisoner goes back to tell the others of his new information about reality beyond the shadows. Instead of being happy about the man's discovery, they feel their reality being threatened and want to kill him.

Plato's Cave allegory presents the idea that the world revealed by our five senses is not the real world but only a poor copy, or shadow, of it.

This idea has been believed to varying degrees by religious and spiritual people throughout history. Whether known as the Kingdom of Heaven or Enlightenment, the "Real World" is believed to exist beyond the physical world we are currently experiencing.

### Wake Up

Some have suggested that we do not have to die to experience heaven. It is said that heaven is here now, and it can be experienced by "waking up" from

the misperception, illusion, distraction or dream that is alluded to in Plato's Cave allegory. By turning toward the "light" one could awaken and be free of bondage to unreality. Such awakening is believed to be an end of suffering.

Over the years it has become clear to me that the keys to waking up are forgiveness and gratitude. I practice them as often as possible. While I have experienced rewards of this practice, there is so much more to forgive and to be grateful for than I ever thought there could be.

### Focus on Forgiveness

My initial efforts to forgive were directed toward current personal conflicts. In studying psychology and receiving counseling, I became aware that current conflicts are often repeats of past problems that have deep roots in the psyche and just recycle over and over with new players. That led to efforts to forgive those who were the early protagonists in my life – like mom, dad, etc.

While achieving progress and relief from some old negative relationship patterns, I began to recognize that past grievances are like giant icebergs, with much more below the surface of conscious awareness than could easily be brought to conscious awareness for forgiveness.

I longed for a practice of forgiveness that could handle the iceberg of psychological issues that were the foundation of my grievances.

That's when I was introduced to the study of a book called *A Course in Miracles* (ACIM). Its version of advanced forgiveness brought a spiritual component to the psychological necessity of forgiveness. Like being in a 12-Step Recovery program for an addiction to resentment and martyrdom, I came to see that a Higher Power could help me release the grievances in my mind. I began to combine and integrate psychological and spiritual understandings. (This newsletter was born as a result of such efforts.)

More recently I have learned a powerful problem-solving process of repentance, forgiveness and transmutation that is clearly on the road to awakening. It is an updated Hawaiian healing system called Ho'Oponopono developed by Mornah Nalamaku

Simeona and is currently taught by Dr. Ihaleakala Hew Len. (See "The World's Most Unusual Therapist" article on page 3.)

In this issue it is also my joy to share the inspiration of Dan Joseph and David Hoffmeister. The wisdom that these men have embodied is a blessing for all of us. I am grateful for their work and their willingness to help point the way toward our freedom and wholeness.

May all negative unwanted energies be transmuted to pure light and love.

Blessings and Gratitude,

Your fellow traveler, *Rev Jill*



## The Second World

By Dan Joseph

Imagine that you are on a visit to Hollywood, California – birthplace of your favorite films. You've decided to take a tour of one of the studios while you're there. The tour isn't very interesting, however, and midway through you slip away and wander into a giant building.

Suddenly you find yourself inside a giant studio set. The set is a magnificent reconstruction of a nineteenth century wild west town, complete with saloons and a horse corral. Even the dust feels real. You keep wandering, and soon find yourself in a futuristic city set – something from a sci-fi film. Hovercraft seem to buzz far above you; computers blink everywhere.

Wandering farther, you find yourself in an elaborate English garden filled with flowers, cobblestone paths – even real-life rabbits. You sit down among the splendor and take it all in. The grass is real. The fountains bubble with water. It's a remarkable re-creation.

As you sit there, you begin to lose the sense that you are in a Hollywood building. Your senses tell you that you're in a European garden. Indeed, the only way that you can remember that you're in California is to remind yourself of that fact. The English garden seems to be your world; there's nothing to contradict the experience. However, you hold the awareness that this is just a remarkable movie set.

Eventually you stand up and look for the exit door. There it is, hidden in the corner. You walk through, and head back toward the tour. From the outside, it's clear that these elaborate sets are just buildings. Inside,

though, the illusion is remarkably complete.

### Remembering

In that example, you reminded yourself that you were on a movie set rather than in an English garden or a wild west town. Remembering that fact helped you to appreciate the sets for what they were. Each set seemed to be a world unto itself. However, you remembered that there was a "second" world – a far bigger world – just outside the studio walls.

In much the same way, we can remind ourselves of a "second" world as we wander through the scenes of our lives. This second world is a spiritual world – a world that is far more vast, permanent, and powerful than the immediate world that we see.

Many spiritual teachings, including *A Course in Miracles*, support us in seeking out and experiencing this spiritual world. Even though our concrete senses attest to the material world, we can begin to touch the second, spiritual world beyond.

Eventually we can reach a point where we can experience both worlds simultaneously – just as an actor in a movie might interact with the set, while simultaneously perceiving the director, camera, and audience beyond.

This, you could say, is the goal of many spiritual practices. As we do this, we are "in" the first world, but "of" the second. By seeing both, we can bring the riches of one to the needs of the other.

### Not So Unusual

I remember when I first read these ideas in various spiritual books. I thought to myself: *What the heck are these books talking about? Seeing a second, spiritual world? What does that mean?*

Now, however, I realize that virtually everyone has experienced this – at least, for brief moments.

Think, for example, of two parents looking upon their newborn baby. On one level, they see – just as a camera might – a seven-pound human body. But the parents vision goes far beyond that. They see a miracle of life – an indescribably beautiful soul whom they will be connected to for the rest of their lives.

Other people have a similar experience when they fall in love romantically. Regardless of how their romantic partner "looks," the material characteristics of this person are profoundly transcended by a sense of connection and love. The person seems to "glow." There is a powerful sense of the person's beauty, worth, and presence. Instead of two disconnected individuals, both people see themselves as joined.

These are beautiful experiences; in fact, most people describe them as among the most real and powerful experiences of their lives. However, these experiences don't need to be rare.

In a way, the spiritual teachings are simply reminding us that these types of experiences can be ours all the time. We merely need to allow that "second world" – that world of the spirit, of love, connection, and glory – to shine forth.

### **The Practice**

You might be thinking: Hey, that loving glow thing sounds good! But if that "spiritual world" is so great, why don't we experience it all the time?

There are a lot of answers to this question. However, one part of the answer is: It takes practice to experience it. Sometimes a lot of practice.

To return to the original metaphor, imagine that everyone was born and began their lives on that English garden movie set. Imagine that very few people ever ventured beyond. Imagine, in fact, that most people were quite content living on the set, and had no interest in experiencing anything else.

Imagine further that "seeing past" the set didn't involve walking through an exit door, but rather training the mind – from moment to moment – to focus on the elements of a world beyond. Those who *did* engage in this practice might be looked at curiously. And they might have a hard time communicating what they were seeing to the people around them.

In that situation, few people would engage in the practice of seeing beyond the immediate garden. (Or, to borrow a metaphor from Plato, looking outside of the cave.) It might seem "abnormal" to try to look beyond the immediate world. And it would certainly take work.

So it does take practice and willingness – often a great deal of practice and willingness – to see beyond the immediate scene. Not many people even try. But it can be done.

How? There are countless methods; you might very well have your own favorite techniques. However, let me share three simple approaches that I have found helpful.

#### 1. Classic meditation or prayer

In traditional forms of meditation and prayer, we set aside time in which we can quiet down the stimuli of the world and seek another type of experience. We close our eyes, turn off the radio or television, and seek an inner experience of warmth, love, connection, wisdom, or other spiritually-inspired qualities. This is one way of touching that "second world."

#### 2. Seeing people through spiritual vision

Another practice is to practice seeing people – even strangers – through a spiritually-inspired vision. Think of what it is like to see your newborn baby, or

your deeply loved romantic partner. Then try to see the people around you through that same perspective. Each person's soul is radiant and beautiful. As you open your vision to that radiance, you will see the second world shining forth.

#### 3. Seeing the beauty in little things

*A Course in Miracles* talks of a vision in which "the smallest leaf becomes a thing of wonder, and a blade of grass a sign of God's perfection." The poet William Blake wrote about seeing "infinity in a grain of sand, and eternity in an hour." These are descriptions of seeing the second world shining through the first – the glory of the spirit infusing the scene before us. Some people find it easiest to adopt this vision in natural settings – in forests, mountains, or by the ocean. However, we can eventually learn to see all things in this way.

Those are three basic approaches; there are countless others as well. Regardless of the techniques, the important thing is to remind ourselves about the presence of the spiritual world, and to seek the experience of it. Even just a glimpse can be heartening. And every moment we spend touching that world makes it a bit easier to access.

Blessings to you,  
Dan Joseph

*Dan Joseph is the author of Inner Healing and Inspired by Miracles, two books based on A Course in Miracles. He invites you to sign up for his free Quiet Mind newsletter at [www.DanJoseph.com](http://www.DanJoseph.com)*

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## **The World's Most Unusual Therapist**

by Dr. Joe Vitale

Two years ago, I heard about a therapist in Hawaii who cured a complete ward of criminally insane patients – without ever seeing any of them. The psychologist would study an inmate's chart and then look within himself to see how he created that person's illness. As he improved himself, the patient improved.

When I first heard this story, I thought it was an urban legend. How could anyone heal anyone else by healing himself? How could even the best self-improvement master cure the criminally insane? It didn't make any sense. It wasn't logical, so I dismissed the story. However, I heard it again a year later. I heard that the therapist had used a Hawaiian healing process called ho'oponopono. I had never heard of it, yet I couldn't let it leave my mind. If the

story was at all true, I had to know more.

I had always understood "total responsibility" to mean that I am responsible for what I think and do. Beyond that, it's out of my hands. I think that most people think of total responsibility that way. We're responsible for what we do, not what anyone else does. The Hawaiian therapist who healed those mentally ill people would teach me an advanced new perspective about total responsibility.

His name is Dr. Ihaleakala Hew Len. We probably spent an hour talking on our first phone call. I asked him to tell me the complete story of his work as a therapist. He explained that he worked at Hawaii State Hospital for four years. That ward where they kept the criminally insane was dangerous. Psychologists quit on a monthly basis. The staff called in sick a lot or simply quit. People would walk through that ward with their backs against the wall, afraid of being attacked by patients. It was not a pleasant place to live, work, or visit.

Dr. Len told me that he never saw patients. He agreed to have an office and to review their files. While he looked at those files, he would work on himself. As he worked on himself, patients began to heal.

"After a few months, patients that had to be shackled were being allowed to walk freely," he told me. "Others who had to be heavily medicated were getting off their medications. And those who had no chance of ever being released were being freed."

I was in awe. "Not only that," he went on, "but the staff began to enjoy coming to work. Absenteeism and turnover disappeared. We ended up with more staff than we needed because patients were being released, and all the staff was showing up to work. Today, that ward is closed."

This is where I had to ask the million dollar question: "What were you doing within yourself that caused those people to change?"

"I was simply healing the part of me that created them," he said. I didn't understand.

Dr. Len explained that total responsibility for your life means that everything in your life - simply because it is in your life - is your responsibility. In a literal sense the entire world is your creation.

Whew. This is tough to swallow. Being responsible for what I say or do is one thing. Being responsible for what everyone in my life says or does is quite another. Yet, the truth is this: if you take complete responsibility for your life, then everything you see, hear, taste, touch, or in any way

experience is your responsibility because it is in your life.

This means that terrorist activity, the president, the economy - anything you experience and don't like - is up for you to heal. They don't exist, in a manner of speaking, except as projections from inside you. The problem isn't with them, it's with you, and to change them, you have to change you.

I know this is tough to grasp, let alone accept or actually live. Blame is far easier than total responsibility, but as I spoke with Dr. Len, I began to realize that healing for him and in ho'oponopono means loving yourself. If you want to improve your life, you have to heal your life. If you want to cure anyone - even a mentally ill criminal - you do it by healing you.

I asked Dr. Len how he went about healing himself. What was he doing, exactly, when he looked at those patients' files? "I just kept saying, 'I'm sorry' and 'I love you' over and over again," he explained.

That's it?

That's it.

Turns out that loving yourself is the greatest way to improve yourself, and as you improve yourself, your improve your world. Let me give you a quick example of how this works: one day, someone sent me an email that upset me. In the past I would have handled it by working on my emotional hot buttons or by trying to reason with the person who sent the nasty message. This time, I decided to try Dr. Len's method. I kept silently saying, "I'm sorry" and "I love you," I didn't say it to anyone in particular. I was simply evoking the spirit of love to heal within me what was creating the outer circumstance.

Within an hour I got an e-mail from the same person. He apologized for his previous message. Keep in mind that I didn't take any outward action to get that apology. I didn't even write him back. Yet, by saying "I love you," I somehow healed within me what was creating him.

I later attended a ho'oponopono workshop run by Dr. Len. He's now 70 years old, considered a grandfatherly shaman, and is somewhat reclusive. He praised my book, *The Attractor Factor*. He told me that as I improve myself, my book's vibration will raise, and everyone will feel it when they read it. In short, as I improve, my readers will improve. "What about the books that are already sold and out there?" I asked. "They aren't out there," he explained, once again blowing my mind with his mystic wisdom. "They are still in you." In short, there is no out there.

It would take a whole book to explain this advanced technique with the depth it deserves. Suffice it to say that whenever you want to improve anything in your life, there's only one place to look: inside you.

"When you look, do it with love."

*Dr. Joe Vitale, author of many inspirational books, appeared in "The Secret" and subsequently on Larry King Live, and has numerous successful careers through internet sales and marketing. The book "Zero Limits: The Secret Hawaiian System for Wealth, Health, Peace, and More" authored by Dr. Vitale with Dr. Len, expands on his experience with Ho'Oponopono. Visit [www.ZeroLimits.info](http://www.ZeroLimits.info) for more of Dr. Joe Vitale's Ho'Oponopono related info.*

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## Opening Our Heart

by David Hoffmeister

Greetings Beloved,

The Love we attempt to withhold is the only pain we carry with us here. As we learn to help without wanting something in return, we remember the meaning of true Love. Love does not possess. In helping and letting go of the desire to possess, we are helped to understand unconditional Love.

We are all soooo totally in Love with everyone, but seem to have amnesia about our Oneness in Love. In the sleep of forgetfulness we tried it apart from God, but deep inside we've known we'd be back to set things straight. The roles we seem to take on in this world have been where the confusion and conflict arise. These roles change and repeat in

many patterns. And though every memory (the past) seems to repeat, every step on our inward journey retreats toward our Source and True Reality. And in the End/Beginning we remember how it is meant to be with God and All, forever together.

The characters of novels and plays and movies are like the characters that people the world. Fear and insecurity are the threads that make up the tapestry of the world. Yet as we learn not to take the people and events so seriously and have a change of heart about the world, we gain a broader perspective. We gain a glimpse of the Big Picture. Every "body" has "played the part" perfectly on the stage of the world so we could learn our one lesson. The Innocence within is all that remains when the play or movie or novel comes to an end. And when we finally learn the only lesson that needed to be learned, forgiveness of the belief in separation, the characters offer us a standing ovation for all the gratitude and Love that was always present deep inside.

There is glorious Inner Beauty to behold the Instant we cease attempting to judge anything at all. For Divine Love is ever extended, and accepting this Love is realizing that It has always been so. Love whispers gently "You haven't really done anything wrong. You are a Love beyond compare."

Thank You God and thanks to All for shining so brightly. You are a Love beyond compare! I am forever in Love with You.

Many, many Blessings,  
David

*David Hoffmeister has traveled extensively, sharing the message of God's Unconditional Love for all. David lives a simple life of trust and shares the message of Oneness through the Foundation for the Awakening Mind. Visit [www.awakening-mind.org](http://www.awakening-mind.org)*



# Daily Word

*With spiritual intuition, I see all - clearly and completely.*

My perception of the world around me is not limited to what I see with physical eyes. Though I may feel at times like a photographer peering through a finite lens, the reality is quite different. I am endowed with intuition, a spiritual tool that offers unlimited insight and perspective.

Releasing my narrow field of vision, I open myself to greater levels of understanding. I trust God to reveal the complete picture to me, and I remain open and receptive to intuitive cues.

With practice and purpose, I learn to apply this inner knowing throughout my day. My intuition is a connection to God's unlimited knowledge, and it helps me see with greater clarity and wisdom.

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*Blessings to you!*

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