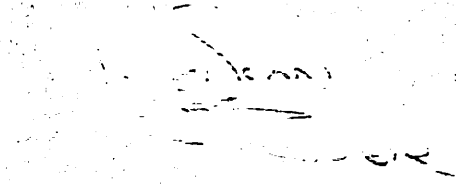


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River of Consciousness

Spirit Exercises
For
The New Millennium

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Welcome & Introduction

A revolution in consciousness swept across the planet in the twentieth century. Local people awakened to their nationhood and individuals matured at younger and younger ages. A 13-year-old ranked in the top golfers in a recent tournament. Two-year-olds are learning to speak sentences. Teenagers are taking their lives and others' into their own hands. Consciousness is not all sun and light. It is also confusing, isolating, and baffling -- especially when social structures and forms have not yet caught up with the mystery, freedom, care and fulfillment people are embracing.

The definition of spirituality may be presumed by many. But the truth is human spirituality and human consciousness knows no bounds. Hence no labels fit. This revolution is deeper and wider than any we have known before in our human history. It is deeper. Conventional wisdom is only an aide, not a final answer. It is wider. All ages, all cultures and peoples, all creation is participating in the glories and the pain.

We are on an unprecedented journey, a journey in consciousness and a journey of inventiveness. We are creating a range of spirit practices to help us navigate through these waters. We pause to think. We meditate and pray. We move our bodies. We dance. All of these are in dialogue with a rich heritage from world cultures and religions. But each practice plumbs new depths, opens new windows and charts oceans of awareness in ways that surpass the priests and sadhus of past centuries.

One way to map the internal life of humans is to describe our spiritual states of being. Scientific analysis and dictionary definitions fail to capture the richness of this inner world. Poetry -- metaphor, simile and graphic stories -- do a better job.

In 1972 the staff of the Institute of Cultural Affairs created a map of the human interior universe. Literature was studied. Lives were perused and consciously examined. Lectures were given. Workshops were done. Four areas of human consciousness were developed. Within each area four treks [or ways of experiencing consciousness] were named. The charts are amazingly holographic. Each "trek" is found in each of the other treks -- mystery, freedom, care and tranquillity is in each of the four treks. In each state of being the whole spirit realm is present.

The poetry of this interior landscape went something like this: "In each person there is:

- a Land of Mystery that beckons us with fear and fascination,
- a River of Consciousness that floods our being with freedom and obligation,
- a Mountain of Care that challenges us to responsible service
- a Sea of Tranquillity that fulfills our highest aspirations and cosmic being itself."

When we are conscious of our consciousness these areas are within and around us constantly. It is the Other World in the midst of This World, the realm of the sacred in the ordinary world of the day-to-day.

As ICA staffers worked with this poetry they began to find ways to name both the objective reality of each state as well as its subjective, or feeling, impact. From this, poetic analogies were created for 64 states of being in The Other World.

- In The Land of Mystery we meet the "inescapable power" and mystery of life itself. This mystery transforms and recreates all that we are.
- The River of Consciousness is our human experience of true freedom. We are free to be aware of life, being conscious of how we live, think, act, and be who we are. We are free to be inventive with our lives, inviting others to be free as well. We are free to decide what duties we will honor or not honor and what we will do with our lives.
- On The Mountain of Care we are reminded of our innate compassion for the world about us and our desire to serve it somehow. We are called to give ourselves to our world and to live out our unique purpose in this moment of history.
- The Sea of Tranquillity celebrates the realization that we can live fully as the spirit beings we are. We come to know who we are and where we stand in this world. We know meaning is everywhere in life. We find the indescribable peace and unspeakable joy of being who we are. And we discover that life itself goes on beyond us into the realm of eternity itself.

This Spirit Book invites you to explore one of these four areas: The River of Consciousness. By Friday afternoon the seven streams in the Millennium Connection conference will converge into one river. This is the realm of human freedom: the freedom of awareness, the freedom of inventiveness, the freedom

of decision and the freedom of obligation. Eight states of being in this area of the Other World provide us with exercises for our journey together.

The intent of this book is to make possible a quality spirit experience for each of us. So we invite you to experiment. Use this book as a tool, not an answer. Explore, note what works for you, risk your own intuitions and behavior to make this week a quality journey for yourself and for all of us together. Your inner journey this week is a sacred trust.

Each exercise includes poetry, questions, and an opportunity for you to reflect on your own journey in the River of Consciousness by creating something new for yourself alone or to share with others. May this journey be a meaningful one for you.

THE OTHER WORLD
in the midst of this world

THE LAND OF MYSTERY - Human Contingency
MY ULTIMATE LIMITATIONS

Humbly in my daily life - I meet the Mystery

THE RIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS - Human Freedom
MY RADICAL AWARENESS

Waking up, I am responsible, boundlessly free - A Self

THE MOUNTAIN OF CARE - Human Passion
MY INCLUSIVE SERVICE

In love - I discover how I can uniquely serve this world

THE SEA OF TRANQUILITY - Human Beatitude
MY ULTIMATE REALIZATION

In ordinary life - I find happiness, peace and fulfillment

THE RIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS

THE FREEDOM OF RADICAL AWARENESS

Freedom of Awareness – Critical Consciousness

Exercises One and Two

Freedom of Inventiveness – Natural Creativity

Exercises Three and Four

Freedom of Decision – Moral Ground

Exercises Five and Six

Freedom of Obligation – Necessary Accountability

Exercises Seven and Eight

Exercise One



Loire River
France

The Freedom of Knowing I Am My Awareness

I have a feeling that my boat
has struck, down there in the depths,
against a great thing.

And nothing
happens! Nothing ... Silence ... Waves....
-- Nothing happens? Or has everything happened,
and are we standing now, quietly, in the new life?

Juan Ramon Jimenez

Your Experience: If this poem is a metaphor for the human experience of meeting our own awareness through a life event, take some time and write your response to the questions below.

- When, in your life, have you felt that your boat struck "a great thing"? What was the great thing? How would you describe it both literally and figuratively?
- How would you describe your response -- did you experience the sudden stillness of nothing happening? was there an awareness of something totally new happening -- a New Life emerging?

Your Poem: Read back over what you have written and circle key words that have power for you. Using those words, create a short poem.

Example:

New Life in India

Brown skinned fish in an ocean of awe & wonder.

Altars, shrines and statues lined its shores --

Immersing me in care and love.

Amidst poverty, misery and daily suffering,

This frail, weak person felt a strange energizing power.

We all breathed water without fins.

"The first step to preserving the soul in our individual lives is to admit that the world has a soul also, and is somehow participating with us in our work and destiny.... Looking at the mountain for its own sake opens up a life that can be described only in the numinous effulgence of poetry or the essence of firsthand experience."

The Heart Aroused, David Whyte

Exercise Two



Zaire River
Zaire, Africa

Sometimes My Consciousness
Brings Me Pain

A chickpea leaps

A chickpea leaps almost over the rim of the pot
where it's being boiled.

"Why are you doing this to me?"

The cook knocks it down with the ladle.

"Don't you try to jump out.
You think I'm torturing you
I'm giving you flavor,
so you can mix with spices and rice
and be the lovely vitality of a human being.

Remember when you drank rain in the garden?
That was for this."

Grace first. Sexual pleasure,
then a boiling new life begins,
and the Friend has something good to eat.

Rumi

Translated by Coleman Barks

Your Experience: On the back of this page write for 5 minutes answering the questions posed or others that arise for you.

- Is there a "boiling pot" in your recent experience? One you want to jump out of?
- This is a body poem. You are the chickpea in the boiling pot and your body feels the discomfort.
 - In the space below draw a human figure, a small outline of a human body, your body.
 - Where is the pain in this body? Mark it with a dot.
 - What do you say to this person? What do you do for him or her?
 - What might be the flavor you are getting or the call to vitality within - or just beyond - this experience?
 - What is it you were born for and nurtured for?

- You may want to draw a second outline of a human body. Suppose this body is your organization or one you work with. Describe the pain. What would you say to the organization? What can be done?

*"Life uses messes to get to well-ordered solutions....
It uses redundancy, fuzziness, dense webs of relationships,
and unending trials and errors to find what works."*

Margaret Wheatley

Exercise Three



Mississippi River Delta
U.S.A.

I Create Who I Am
With My Awareness

The Caller

I don't know what sort of a God we have been talking about.

The caller calls in a loud voice to the Holy One at dusk.

Why? Surely the Holy One is not deaf.

He hears the delicate anklets that ring on the feet of an insect as it walks.

Go over and over your beads, paint weird designs on your forehead, wear your hair matted, long, and ostentatious, but when deep inside you there is a loaded gun, how can you have God?

Kabir

Your Experience:

- What's the "loaded gun" within for you? What deep inner negativity, fear, anger, unresolved or unforgiven "things" might block your awareness of Life's Mystery, Joy and Fulfillment? Make a specific list [eg, fear of losing my contract, anger over Jane's comment at one of our last meetings, etc.]

Guided Visualization:

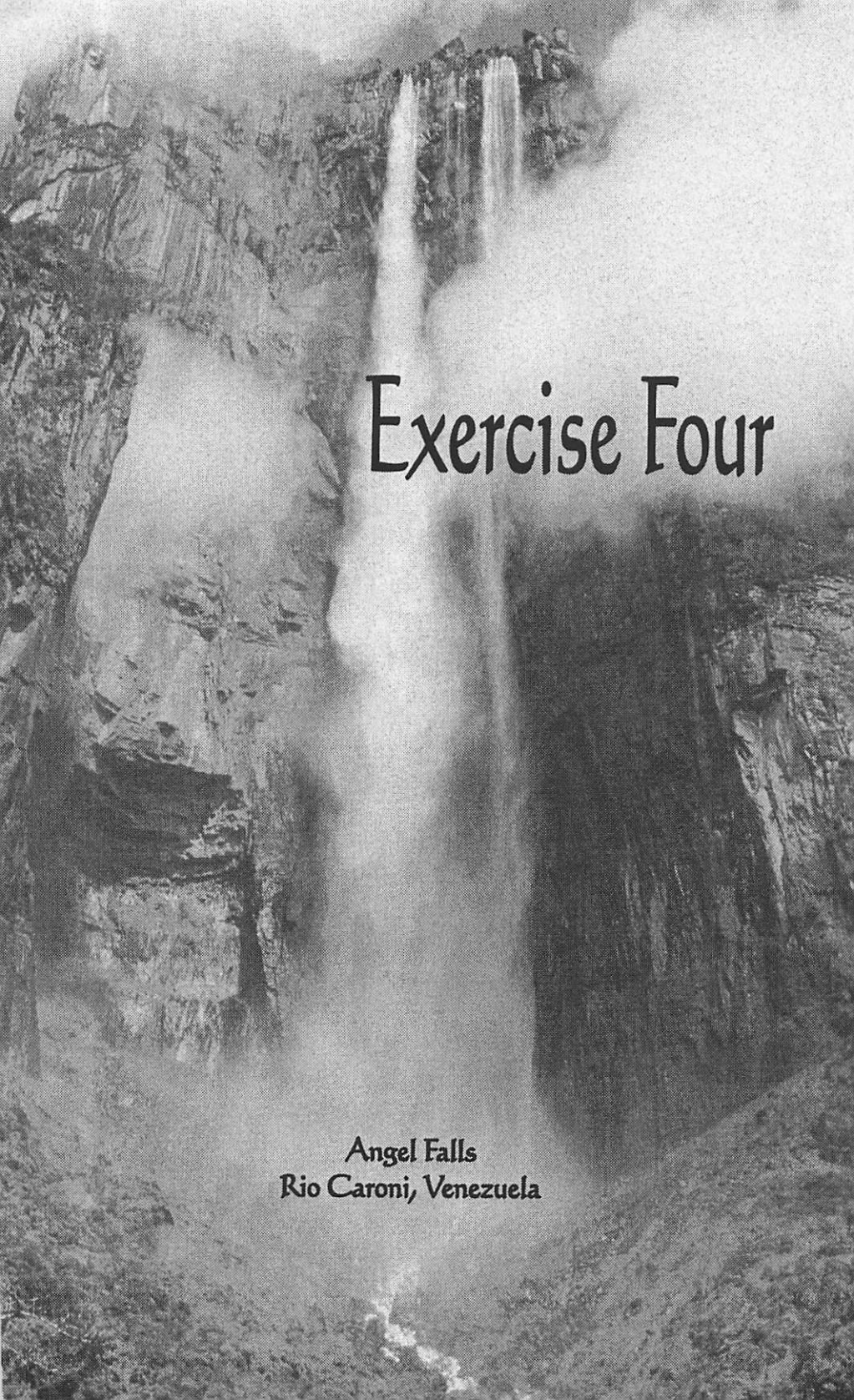
Imagine taking your beautiful, perfectly centered body of light for a walk. Slowly, easily, naturally you are walking into a setting in nature. It's your special place of peace -- by a lake or stream, on a beach -- perhaps its a woods or a mountain retreat -- a park or a back yard.

Whatever the place is, let yourself experience it totally. Breathe and take in every sight, smell, sound. Experience yourself totally relaxed, yet energized. In this place you can commune with Pure Spirit. It is your Place of Peace. You begin to see issues in your life in a new perspective. Answers may come now, or perhaps they will come later. Relax.

Receive whatever message comes to you. If it helps, imagine the wisest person you know joins you here. He or she offers words of advice on how to let go of the negativity. Write these words and images down without judging or censoring them. Quietly ask your spirit to help you learn to trust and follow your energy more and more. Whenever you are ready, return to this time and space.

*"Living with the sacred in everyday life is not a formula.
It's a radical shift in attitude."*

Christina Baldwin



Exercise Four

Angel Falls
Rio Caroni, Venezuela

I Know That Who I Am
is a Remarkable, Original Invention

Sometimes a Man

Sometimes a man stands up during supper
and walks outdoors, and keeps on walking,
because of a church that stands somewhere in the East.

And his children say blessings on him as if he were dead.

And another man, who remains inside his own house,
dies there, inside the dishes and in the glasses,
so that his children have to go far out into the world
toward that same church, which he forgot.

-- Rainer Maria Rilke

Your Experience: Take a few minutes and answer these questions:

- When have you stood up, left the familiar house and walked to "the East"?
- What was "the church" that called you out on this adventure?
- OR . . . are you the one who stayed in the dishes and glasses? Are you both people? Are you the children who pursue what your recent ancestors forgot to pursue?

Your Poem:

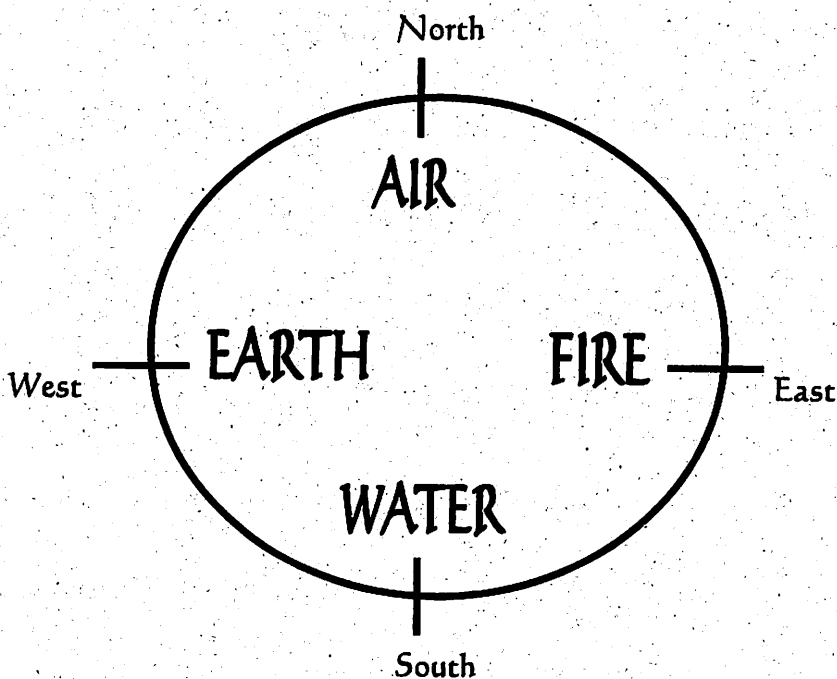
On the wheel below jot notes in answer to these questions:

Begin in the East: what calls you? beckons you onward? is the FIRE of your passion?

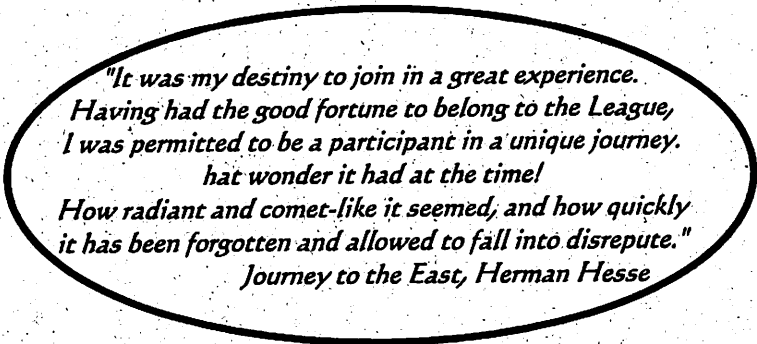
Move to the South: what nurtures you? what WATERS the seeds of your dreams?

Go to the West: what grounds you? what keeps you EARTHY and centered and on solid ground?

And to the North: what spiritizes you? what lifts you into the AIR and helps you fly and feel free?



Look at the key words on your wheel and create a short poem using these images.



*"It was my destiny to join in a great experience.
Having had the good fortune to belong to the League,
I was permitted to be a participant in a unique journey.
What wonder it had at the time!
How radiant and comet-like it seemed, and how quickly
it has been forgotten and allowed to fall into disrepute."
Journey to the East, Herman Hesse*

Exercise Five

A black and white photograph of a cityscape, likely Vienna, featuring a large river (the Danube) in the foreground. On the left, a prominent church spire (St. Stephen's Cathedral) is visible. The background shows a dense cluster of buildings, including the Hofburg Palace. The image has a grainy, textured appearance.

Danube River
Eastern Europe

I Know That My Decisions
Create The Life I Have

All I Was Doing Was Breathing

...All I was doing was being,
And the Dancing Energy came by my house....

But my eyes have their own life;
They laugh at rules,
And know whose they are.
I believe I can bear on my shoulders
Whatever you want to say of me.
Mira says: Without the energy that lifts mountains,
How am I to live?

Mirabai

Your Experience: Take a moment to answer these questions.

- When have you "laughed at rules"?
- What "Dancing Energy" have you felt? About what?
OR who?
- How was this moment, this experience, like an "energy that lifts mountains"? How essential is this energy for you?

Your Poem: To capture such a moment and savor it write a haiku.

Haikus, short and striking in their simplicity, often capture the essence of a moment. Write three lines of poetry, three simple sentences, about what you see. Use words that add up to five syllables in the first line; seven syllables in the second line; and five syllables in the third line. Take five minutes. If we take too long or work too hard, our poems tend to become stale and lifeless. Here's one:

I laughed at limits
Turned to face the unknown road
Found it paved with hope.

*"Often people attempt to live their lives backwards:
they try to have more things, or more money, in order to
do more of what they want so that they will be happier.*

The way it actually works is the reverse.

*You must first be who you really are, then, do what you
need to do, in order to have what you want."*

Margaret Young

Exercise Six

A black and white photograph showing a group of people in a small boat on a river. A large sail is visible in the background. The people are dressed in traditional or simple clothing. One person is covering their face with their hand.

Irrawaddy River
Burma

I Look At Myself
and See What a Delight I am.

Taking a Role

The essence of finding a role has to do with purpose....

Making a role requires the inner work of reflection and
creativity [beyond] technique

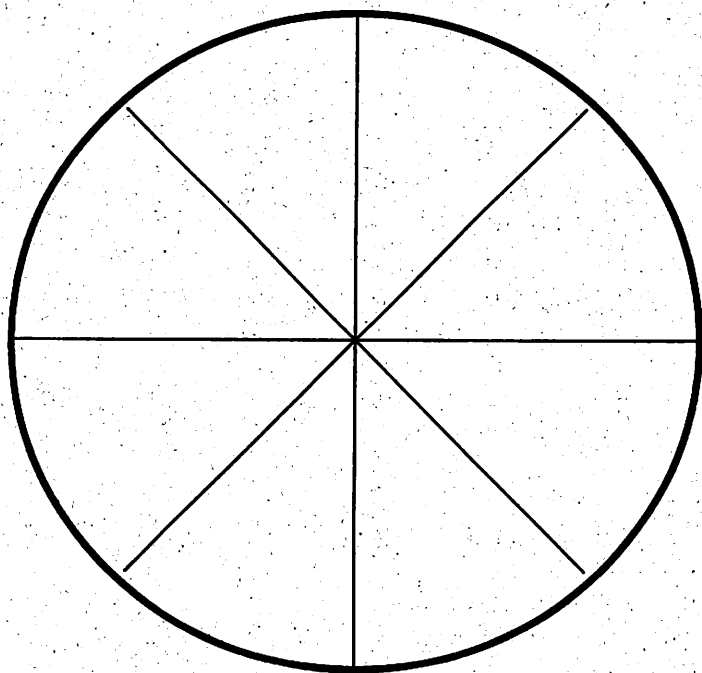
The final aspect of role is taking it

Alan Briskin

Your Experience: As you think about your unique gifts to life,
answer these questions:

- What roles have others given me to do?
- What roles have I chosen to play entirely on my own?
- How did I arrive at choosing those roles? What "inner work" did I do?
- What "inner work" do I need to do now?
- What new role(s) is calling for my gifts now?
- What inner work might I need to do to take the new role joyously?

Your Poem: In the circle below, write the name you would give to your new role. On the spokes of the circle, write qualities you will need to need to play the role. For each quality find a visual image that might serve as a reminder of that quality -- e.g., a bear for strength, a tree for flexibility or groundedness, a bird for perspective or freedom.



After completing the image above free write for 10 minutes about concerns over taking your new role, **AND** the delightful possibilities of playing it.

*"In the silence I hear music.
And I see the blessing I am to the world."
Kellie Mitchell, Age 9*

Exercise Seven

Volga River
Russia



Now I Know That I Am Finally Accountable
For What and Who I Am

From *Song of Myself*

I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times,
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the
steam-ship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm,
How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was
faithful of days and faithful of nights, . . .
How he saved the drifting company at last,
How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated
from the side of their prepared graves,
How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick,
and the sharp-lipp'd unshaved men;
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,
I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

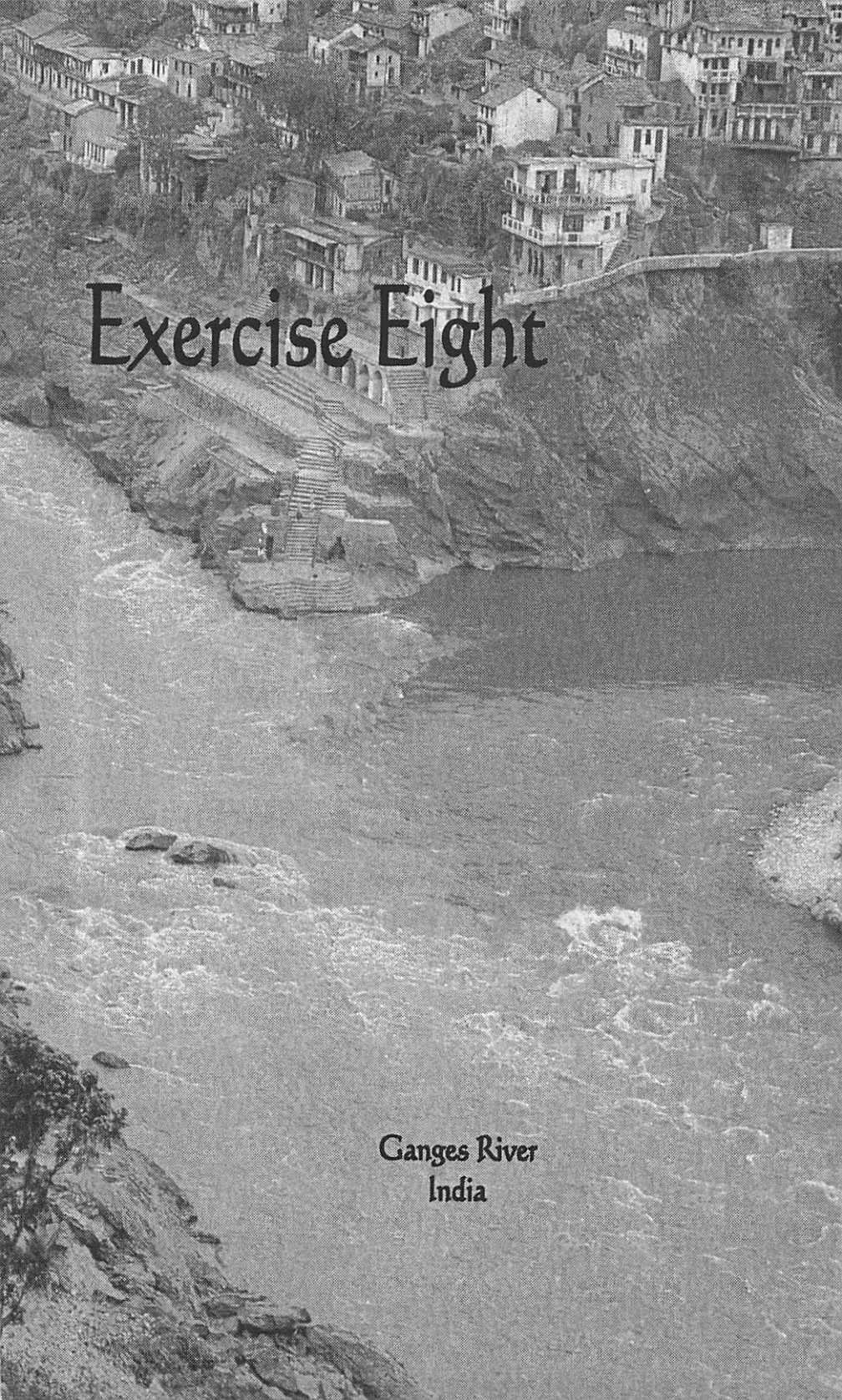
Walt Whitman

Your Experience: Read this poem aloud to yourself. Read it with various moods, emphasizing different phrases and words.

- Circle key phrases and words that came alive for you.
- What pictures came into your mind? what did you see?
- What emotions did you feel?
- What does this poem have to do with your freedom? Your obligations?
- What in life are you accountable for? finally?

Your Poem: Read back over your notes. Circle key words and phrases. From these words, phrases and images, write your own poem about being the courageous one in your life.

*"....I was alone without a
ny expertise or experience whatsoever.
All I had was my dream and my inner resources.
Paradoxically, at this moment had the
feeling of certainty that I would accomplish
this dream. I felt nothing could deter me;
I would not let anything get in my way."
Synchronicity, Joseph Jaworski*



Exercise Eight

Ganges River
India

I Also Know I Live Before
And Through the Mystery of Life Itself

The Soul, Like the Moon

The soul, like the moon,
is new, and always new again.
And I have seen the ocean
continuously creating.

Since I scoured my mind
and my body, I too, Lalla,
am new, each moment new.
My teacher told me one thing,
Live in the soul.

When that was so,
I began to go naked,
and dance.

Lalla

Your Experience: Pondering this poem answer these questions:

- In what way is your soul "new, and always new again"?
How does this shed light on the movements of your soul?

- If you followed the teacher's advice to "live in the soul," what difference would that make in what you would

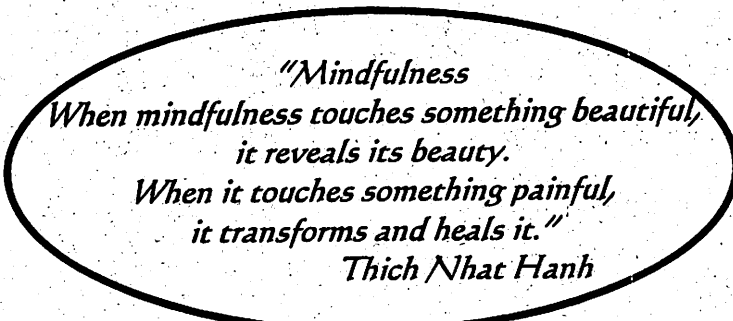
Do?

Not do?

- How would you "go naked, and dance"? What other images or words come to mind?

—

Your Poem: Stand up. Go outside or in some free open space. Begin moving about. Hum or sing. Walk slowly and mindfully aware of your feet touching EARTH. Let yourself go for at least ten minutes. Come back and write whatever comes up for you without editing it.



*"Mindfulness
When mindfulness touches something beautiful,
it reveals its beauty.
When it touches something painful,
it transforms and heals it."
Thich Nhat Hanh*

SONGS OF THE OTHER WORLD

CREATE THE NEW WAY Tune: Find a Wheel

Winds of change are whirling round and round
And a new world dawns; let everyone take heed.
Winds of change are whirling round and round
And they call for all to risk a deed.

All the past is but a stepping stone on the trek into this present
day
But the future cries for something more, cries to all: create a new
way.
Winds of change are whirling round and round
And I choose with those upon the Way.

What shall be, somehow, depends on me
What I am, have been and now decide to be
And all those of Way become my we
And this we becomes the larger me.

We the Way in time have ever been, with our now we march
toward yet to be,
Ever on, to forge the ever new for each one in all history
What shall be, somehow, depends on me,
And I'm one with those upon the Way.

Winds of change are whirling round and round
And a new world dawns; let everyone take heed.
Winds of change are whirling round and round
And they call for all to risk a deed.

MORNING OF FREEDOM Tune: Morning Has Broken

Morning of freedom, final awareness,
Standing on nothing, groundlessly there.
Myself inventing, ever becoming,
Never completed, always undone.

All life is given, creatures of fortune,
No one for blaming, never excused.
I am entrusted, history creating,
Offspring of ages, measure of life.

Crossing the river, beyond the moral,
All is permitted, only decide.
I am accepted, dearly beloved,
Endlessly chosen, servant of all.

Anchored securely, wholly united,
Warring gods fallen, painful relief.
My yoke is easy, light is the burden,
The day is coming, destiny won.

ON A CLEAR DAY

On a clear day, rise and look around you,
And you'll see who you are.
On a clear day, how it will astound you,
That the glow of your being outshines every star.
You feel part of ev'ry mountain, sea and shore.
You can hear from far and near,
A world you've never heard before.
And on a clear day, on that clear day,
You can see forever, and ever, and evermore.
[Repeat the whole song.]

BELIEVE

Tune: The Sloop John B

Chorus:

Believe that the time has come.
This world's going to live as one
And people are ready now to create a new way.
New Spirit alive, new dream on the rise
One world together, create the new day.

Everybody can see a new way that it can be,
But so many things just seem to get in the way.
The chains that bind us are strong.
The road to liberty long,
One world together, create the new day.

CHORUS

Listen and you will hear, the future is coming clear
And everybody alive has something to say.
Sharing a bit of the load,
We're walking down the same road,
One world together, create the new day.

CHORUS

AT THE CENTER Tune: Try to Remember

When you encounter the light at the center,
The final dawn of worlds converging.
When life's illumined by light at the center,
Assured by wisdom's swift emerging.
When knowing's ended in light at the center,
And life's sacred meaning is in you surging.
Then at the center, in blinding encounter ... you be it.

When you encounter the peace at the center
Where earthly hopes are all transcended.
When life's unburdened with peace at the center
Where worldly cares are all suspended.
When you're delivered to peace at the center
And for mortal foes your hatred's ended.
Then at the center, where no problems enter ... you be it.

When you encounter the joy at the center,
Your tingling deeps in animation.
When you're possessed by the joy at the center,
All things received with affirmation.
When you are speechless in joy at the center,
And each moment brimming with wild vibration,
Then at the center, in wonder filled rapture ... you be it.

When you encounter the life at the center,
Condemned to be a dead man waking,
When you are boundless with life at the center,
Compelled to live on water waltzing,
When you are risen to life at the center,
As one who is ageless with history walking,
Then at the center, while dancing forever ... you be it.

I AM THE ONE Tune: 76 Trombones

I am the one set free to embrace the world,
I am the one compelled all to give.
I am the one condemned to be ever sorrow filled
and to die each moment that I live.
I am amazed my life is in history,
I am amazed this world's where I'm bound.
I am amazed I'm one with creation's family
and in each the mystery is found.

The guardian of the world for all eternity,
living, living, with all who've gone before,
The director of the world in all its future,
and the key history is waiting for.
The wise one who can always know her knowing,
standing, standing ever in the fray.
The watchman who is always on the stage
in every single age,
And moves a million mountains every day.

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This book was written in Oklahoma City, edited in Bombay and printed in Reston, Virginia—a small global enterprise in itself.

We would like to thank Jack and Judy Gilles for launching this book and for their encouragement on each step of the path to its completion. They are two of the many Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) staff who poured their love into *The Other World* research and exercises almost 30 years ago.

Our gratitude also goes to Forrest Craver, Craver Creative Services, Arlington, Virginia and our printer, Franklin's Printing, Reston, Virginia.

Lastly, we thank you -- the participants in the Millennium Connection Conference for lending your gifts to the creation of life-giving spirit in our world today. We have thoroughly enjoyed adapting ICA's work in *The Other World* to our new millennium. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on this book.

Patricia Webb & David McCleskey
The Silence Foundation

MORE INFORMATION ON THE OTHER WORLD

We see important work to be done in finding language to express the spirited awakening that marks the new millennium. The ICA's poetry on *The Other World*, setting forth 64 unique states of being, is a start.

The Silence Foundation dedicates itself to ongoing research and the development of books like this one. We welcome partners from the business world, from diverse global perspectives and from the arts – poetry, dance, visual arts, music – who could add depth and vitality to the work.

If you are interested in obtaining existing work, exploring an exercise book for your group or organization, or being a creative partner, please contact us.

The Silence Foundation

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In a world polluted by noise and clutter, Silence offers every individual an opportunity to contact the "still small voice" within – a source of wisdom, comfort and healing. The Silence Foundation embodies the uplifting possibilities of inner work for individuals and groups as we seek to address the global cry for Peace. Its publications and workshops reveal Silence as an aid to creativity – from personal problem-solving or artistic endeavor to conflict resolution in small or large scale situations.

NOTES:

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Front Cover – The Yangtze River, China
Back Cover – The Amazon River, Brazil